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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IATTC REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAM FOR TRANSSHIPMENTS AT SEA

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The following acronyms are used in this document:

BLZ Belize	IDN Indonesia	MHL Marshall Islands	PYF French Polynesia
CHN China	JPN Japan	PAN Panama	TWN Chinese Taipei
EUR European Union	KOR Korea	PER Peru	VUT Vanuatu
FJI Fiji	LIB Liberia	PHL Philippines	WSM Samoa
BET Bigeye	SHK Sharks	SWO Swordfish	YFT Yellowfin

1. INTRODUCTION

The IATTC observer program to monitor transshipments at sea by carrier vessels in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) authorized to receive tuna and tuna like species on sharks at sea from large-scale tuna longline fishing vessels (LSTLFVs) is regulated by Resolution [C-12-07](#).

In 2019 and 2020, the program was funded by the six IATTC Members that participate in it through their authorized LSTLFVs: China, Japan, Korea, Panama, Chinese Taipei, and Vanuatu.

With the approval of the participating Members, the Secretariat signed in 2019 a three-year contract with the *Marine Resources Assessment Group* (MRAG) consortium to operate the program during the period 2020-2022.

2. IMPLEMENTATION AND PARTICIPATION

2.1. Participation

The Secretariat maintains on the Commission website the [List of carrier vessels](#) authorized to receive transshipments at sea, which is continually updated with information supplied by the participants on additions or removals of carrier vessels or changes in their data. As of September 2020, the list includes 87 vessels of eight CPCs¹:

CPC ¹	CHN	EUR	JPN	COR	LIB	PAN	TWN	VUT
Number of vessels	8	1	3	7	16	47	4	1

¹ IATTC Member or Cooperating non-Member

Also, each CPC with longline fishing vessels is required to define the specific carrier vessels to which its fishing vessels are allowed to transship fish at sea. That information is included in the last column of the list (“CPCs that authorize use of this carrier for transshipment from their longline vessels”).

Resolution C-12-07 specifies that longline fishing vessels that transship at sea must be on the list of longline vessels authorized to fish in the IATTC Convention Area. The list includes longline vessels from the six participants.

Paragraph 19 of Resolution [C-12-07](#) establishes that “Each CPC shall report annually before 15 September to the Director:

- a) *The quantities by species transshipped during the previous year.*
- b) *The names of its vessels on the IATTC LSTLFV [large-scale longline vessels] List which have transshipped during the previous year; and*
- c) *A comprehensive report assessing the content and conclusions of the reports of the observers assigned to carrier vessels which have received transshipment from its LSTLFVs.”*

The Secretariat received reports for 2018 and 2019 from Belize², China, Japan, Korea, and Chinese Taipei, but not from Panama, and Vanuatu. At 2019 and 2020, the Secretariat sent the observer reports for 2019 and 2020 to each participant.

In 2020, as a result of the COVID 19 Pandemic, it was necessary to authorize two trips to be made without an observer on the condition that the captain of the corresponding carrier vessel provide the information on the transshipments to MRAG and the IATTC. Likewise, two trips by Panamanian-flagged carrier vessels were monitored using an AIDCP observer who was specially trained to carry out his work on a carrier vessel.

2.2. Safety of observers at sea

As previously reported, MRAG has provided observers with an emergency alert device, with which they can send an immediate signal to the MRAG office, and there is a protocol to follow in case of emergencies ([MRAG Americas: IATTC Observer Program - Emergency Action Plan](#)).

The reports by observers on carrier vessels include a section for recording situations or incidents that affect the performance of their functions, such as harassment or matters related to their well-being. All information recorded in this section, and any other related to possible lack of compliance with working conditions for observers, is reported to the flag CPC for its consideration.

The emergency devices have already produced a good result: in 2018 an observer notified MRAG that he had been threatened aboard the vessel and faced situations that made him fear for his safety. MRAG immediately informed to the Secretariat, which notified the flag CPC, which ordered the vessel to take the observer to the nearest port.

Another issue mentioned by several in observer reports is that the emergency drills required by the [International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea](#) (SOLAS Convention, Chapter III Part B-1, rule 19, Points 2.2 and 2.3) are carried out only in very few cases. This requirement, a safety issue both for observers and crews, should be complied with because the Antigua Convention, Article VII (*Functions of the Commission*), paragraph n), lists as one of the functions “*promote the application of any relevant provision of the Code of Conduct and of other relevant international instruments including, inter alia, the International Plans of Action adopted by FAO in the framework of the Code of Conduct*”, which covers not only the SOLAS Convention, but also the [International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships](#) (MARPOL), which governs situations such as fuel spills at sea.

² Belizean longline vessels transship occasionally in the EPO and pay per transshipment. There were no transshipments by Belizean vessels in 2018.

The report on compliance in 2019 includes cases of possible non-compliance of carrier vessels with an observer on board.

3. Results to date

In 2019, all 36 observer requests received were met; in 2020, to 30 October, there have been 36), with a total of 2,583 days at sea. In 2019, the total number of days at sea (2,627) (**Figure 1**) was 18% less than in 2018 (3,194).

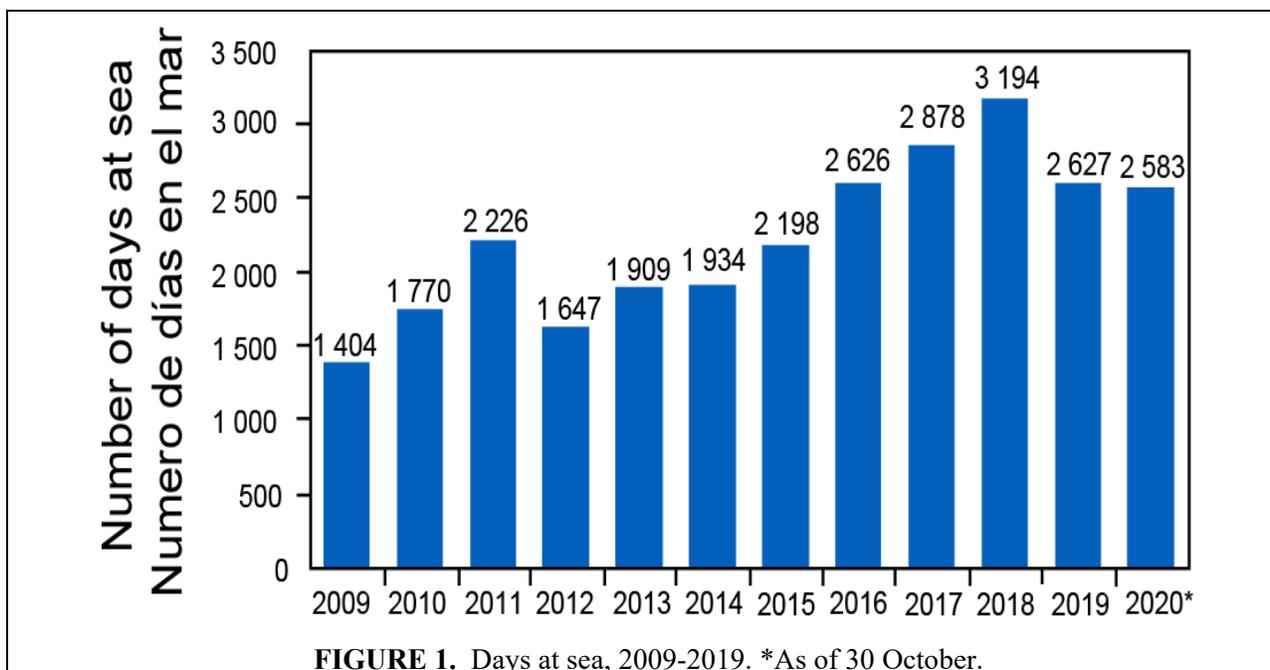


FIGURE 1. Days at sea, 2009-2019. *As of 30 October.

In 2019, the number of transshipments (593) was about 17.3 % less than in 2018 (717) (**Figure 2**). **Figure 3** shows the transshipments in the EPO from 2014 to 2019, by flag of the fishing vessel. China and Chinese Taipei are still the participants with the largest amount of fish transshipped in the EPO.

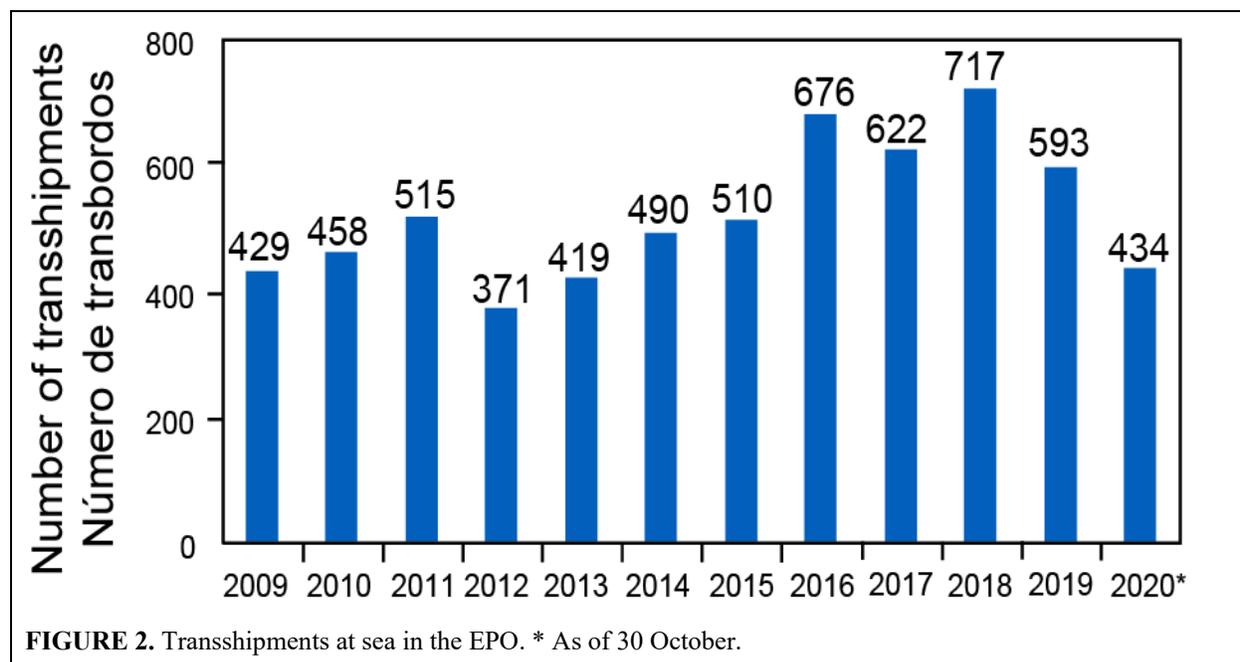
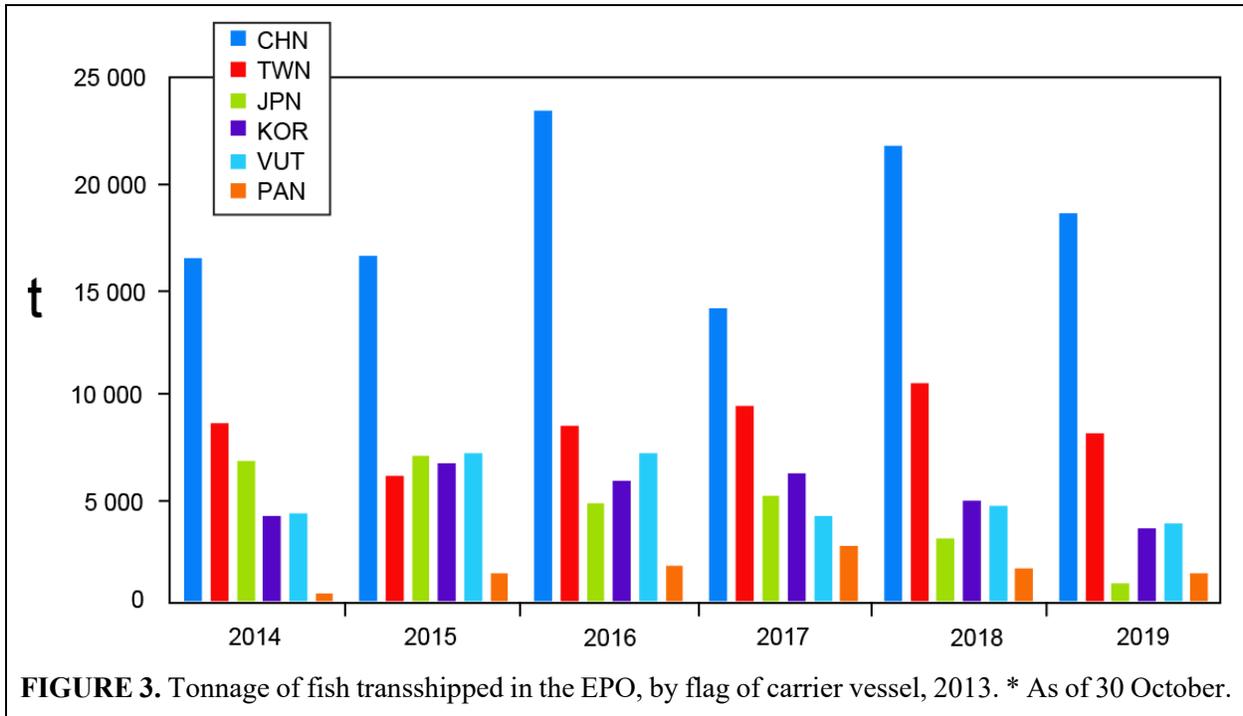
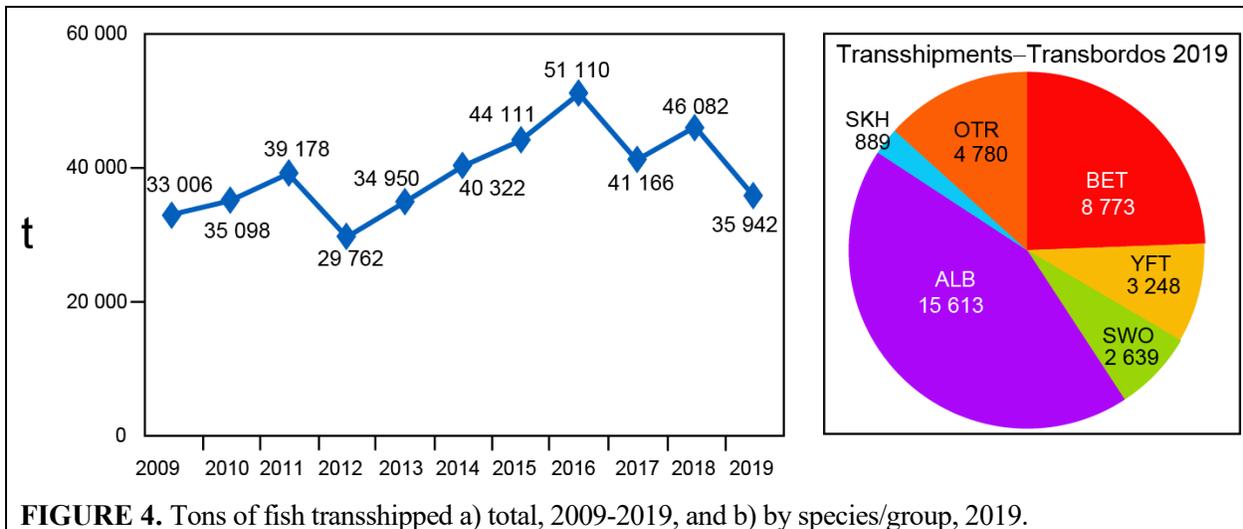


FIGURE 2. Transshipments at sea in the EPO. * As of 30 October.



Appendix 1 contains the data from 2009-2019, broken down by species and flag of the fishing vessel. **Appendix 2** lists trips by carrier vessels and ports of boarding and disembarkation of observers in 2019.

The total tonnage of the catches transshipped under the program during 2009-2018 was 22% less in 2019 (35,942 t) than in 2018 (46,082 t) (**Figure 4**). Pursuant to Resolution C-12-07, since 2013 transshipments of sharks (889 t in 2019) are itemized separately.



Since 2013, observers record where the transshipped tuna originated: Western Pacific (WPO), EPO or IATTC-WCPFC overlap area. In 2019, 55% of the transshipped tuna was caught in the EPO, including the overlap area (**Table 2**), and 43% in the WPO.

TABLE 2. Catches transshipped in the Pacific Ocean in 2019, by fishing vessel flag and area of origin

Participant	Area of catch				Total
	EPO	Overlap area	WPO	Unknown	
China	11,947	6,768	8,979	488	27,732
Japan	579	1	248	0	828
Korea	3,177	1,081	8,549	673	13,481
Panama	1,402	0	0	0	1,402
Chinese Taipei	4,109	4,796	7,996	224	17,124
Vanuatu	1,850	1,395	2,733	46	6,025
Total	22,614	14,041	28,505	1,431	66,592

Table 3 shows the catch limits for bigeye tuna established for 2019 in Resolution [C-17-02](#) and the catches in the EPO recorded in the database of the transshipment program. In the case of China, the apparent excess is covered by the transfer of part of Japan's limit to China.

TABLE 3. Bigeye catch limits in Resolution [C-17-02](#), and catches in the EPO recorded by the transshipment program, in tonnes, 2019

CPC	Catch limit (C-17-02)	EPO catches transshipped in the EPO		
		OPO	Zona de traslapo	Total
China	2,507	1,077	1,630	2,707
Japan	32,732	1,751	0	1,751
Korea	11,947	2,043	43	2,086
Chinese Taipei	7,555	1,751	1,374	3,125
United States	750	Does not make transshipments		

The positions of transshipments made during 2015-2019 in the Pacific Ocean and in the EPO are shown in **Appendix 3**.

4. FINANCING

This section of the document provides information on the 2019 budget, expenses incurred in 2020 as of 30 October, and the expected budget for 2021.

4.1. 2019 Budget

Table 4 shows the status of the program budget during 2009-2019.

In 2019 the participants were asked for an additional contribution of US\$ 1,300,000 as was approved by the 93rd IATTC which added to a 2018 surplus of US \$ 115,269, represented for 2019 a total amount of US \$ 1,415,269. At the end of 2019, invoices were paid to MRAG for a total of US \$ 1,043,015.53, which allowed having a surplus at the end of 2019 of US \$ 372,117.18, after discounting US \$87 for payment of bank transfers.

	Contributions		Program costs	Surplus/ (deficit)	Accumulated surplus
	Participants	Others			
2009	741,346	-	698,801	42,545	42,545
2010	800,000	4,640 ¹	792,381	12,259	54,804
2011	946,971	6,060 ²	999,731	(46,700)	8,105
2012	1,006,060	6,060 ²	674,241	331,819	339,924
2013	1,000,000	-	771,083	228,917	568,841
2014	500,000	16,635 ³	760,950	(244,315)	324,526
2015	700,000	43,905 ⁴	867,175	(123,270)	201,254
2016	950,000	37,723 ⁴	1,056,479	(68,756)	132,498
2017	1,050,000 ⁵	----	1,159,644	(109,644)	22,854
2018	1,390,000 ⁶	----	1,297,585	92,415	115,269
2019	1,300,000	----	1,043,015.53	256,984.47	372,117.18

¹Peru; ² Belize; ³ Includes Belize (US\$ 6,060), Indonesia (US\$ 1,485) and Panama (US\$ 9,090);
⁴Panama.
⁵ Additional contributions totaling US\$ 100,000 was requested
⁶ Additional contributions totaling US\$ 290,000, agreed during 93rd IATTC meeting.

4.2. 2020 budget

Based on 2019 expenses, during the 94th IATTC meeting in July 2019 a budget of US\$ 1,305,000 was agreed to finance the program in 2020.

The new costs of the program pursuant to a three-year contract that was signed with the MRAG Consortium and that was approved by the Commission during its 94th meeting are as follows (**Table 5**):

Period	Cost by day		
	At the sea	Travel	Training
2017-2019	340	350	453
2020-2022	≤ 2500 days	371	630
	> 2500 days		
	380	350	

Table 6 shows the contributions payable by each participant in 2020.

Participant	Total contribution	First instalment (50%); due 15 January	Paid	Second instalment (50%); due 15 June	Paid
China	582,766	291,383	✓	291,383	✓
Japan	70,117	156,615	✓	156,615	✓
Korea	101,540	35,058	✓	35,058	✓
Panama	86,542	50,770	✓	50,770	✓
Chinese Taipei	313,229	43,271	✓	43,271	✓
Vanuatu	150,806	75,403	✓	75,403	✓
TOTAL	1,305,000	652,500	✓	652,500	✓

Table 7 shows the program costs, FY 2018, and FY 2019 to 30 October, in US\$.

TABLE 7. Program costs, 2019, and 2020 as of 30 October, in US\$						
Item	2019			2020 (30 October)		
	Unit cost	Units paid	Cost	Unit cost	Units paid	Cost
Days at sea	340	2,627	893,180	380	2,583	981,540
Travel days	350	187	65,450	371	125,027	125,027
Training	453	0	00	630	00	0
Equipment, materials, travel	--	--	84,385.53	-	-	50,732.32
Total (US\$)			1,043,015.5			1,157,270.32

Table 8 summarizes the financial status of the program as of 30 October 2020.

TABLE 8. Financial situation of the program, in US\$, 2020	
Item	Amount
1 January – 30 October	
First-semester contributions received	652,500
Second-semester contributions received	652,500
Surplus from previous years	372,117.18
Subtotal	1,385,734.18
Program expenditures, as of 30 October	1,157,270.32
Balance as of 30 October	519,846
Expected invoices for November and December 2020	283,000
Balance as of October 30 less expected expenses for 2 remaining months	236,846

Experience shows that, in the last four months of the year, the number of observer requests is usually higher than in the earlier months, so the estimate of the needs for the rest of 2020 is based on the average monthly costs during September-October 2019, around US\$ 141,500. On that basis, the available funds do not seem sufficient to cover all costs for 2019 even with all contributions having been paid because of the cost overruns incurred as the result of the COVID 19 pandemic, which lead to project a certain deficit that should be covered by the extraordinary provision of additional resources.

4.3. 2021 budget

Based on MRAG estimates, the projected budget for 2021 is US\$ 1,335,200, very near to 2019. However, historically demand for observers has exceeded projections, so this may be an underestimate.

Table 9 summarizes MRAG estimates of program needs in 2021.

TABLE 10. Estimated costs, 2021, in US\$			
Item	Unit cost	Total of unities (US\$)	Total cost (US\$)
Days at sea by the observers	380	3,000	1,125,000
Travel days by the observers (per-diem)	371	300	111,300
Observer training	630	30	18,900
Equipment, airplane tickets, other expenses	-	-	100,000
Total costs			1,335,200

However, this budget has been calculated without anticipating that circumstances caused by the COVID 19 pandemic that have substantially impacted the costs of the Program in 2020 may persist.

For all these reasons and in order to ensure that the Program could continue to operate and interrupted and

without any hindrance, it was proposed that the participants in the Program approve the following (no objection has been received as of the date of preparation and publication of this document):

- Adopt a precautionary budget for 2021 in the amount of US\$ 1,440,000 (equal to the total estimated expenses in 2020) with the understanding that any surplus will be used in the following year or years.

Appendix 1. Fish transshipped in the eastern Pacific Ocean, 2009-2019, by species and flag of fishing vessel, in metric tons.

		Tunas			SWO	SKH	OTR	Total
		BET	YFT	ALB				
2009	CHN	6,392	1,281	433	978		502	9,586
	JPN	4,736	1,218	767	627		657	8,004
	KOR	2,460	324	79	323		553	3,739
	PHL	72	34	-	-		-	106
	TWN	2,564	586	1,655	320		363	5,487
	VUT	964	237	3,828	108		1,053	6,190
	Total	17,186	3,679	6,762	2,356		3,128	33,112
2010	BLZ	81	13	10	3		2	110
	CHN	3,674	748	429	583		470	5,902
	JPN	6,623	1,942	819	1,049		1,502	11,935
	KOR	2,957	459	102	372		891	4,781
	PER	80	15	3	7		3	108
	TWN	4,561	992	1,434	541		730	8,258
	VUT	1,321	259	1,963	131		330	4,005
	Total	19,297	4,428	4,759	2,685		3,928	35,098
2011	BLZ	90	9	76	19		17	212
	CHN	5,363	1,157	436	815		755	8,526
	JPN	5,198	1,111	1,819	1,247		1,622	10,997
	KOR	4,263	574	253	486		1,015	6,591
	TWN	2,246	413	3,269	271		1,123	7,323
	VUT	1,160	228	3,609	166		366	5,529
	Total	18,319	3,492	9,463	3,004		4,899	39,178
2012	CHN	3,690	840	389	772		429	6,121
	JPN	5,894	1,359	1,340	1,185		1,162	10,938
	KOR	1,257	130	55	166		257	1,866
	TWN	2,476	395	2,015	398		664	5,949
	VUT	1,226	160	2,996	157		348	4,888
	Total	14,543	2,884	6,796	2,678		2,860	29,762
2013	BLZ	246	40	20	52	16	30	404
	CHN	3,635	798	3,400	583	114	758	9,289
	IDN	102	16	2	16	0	2	138
	JPN	5,756	1,126	735	1,162	9	784	9,571
	KOR	3,947	519	199	487	294	579	6,026
	TWN	1,771	386	1,463	245	335	676	4,876
	VUT	763	160	2,853	161	34	316	4,285
	Total	16,221	3,045	8,672	2,706	801	3,144	34,590
2014	BLZ	38	1	1	5	0	0	45
	CHN	4,624	1,169	8,069	943	115	1,480	16,402
	IDN	18	7	3	1	6	28	62
	JPN	3,868	922	337	859	0	755	6,741
	KOR	2,585	481	118	287	170	391	4,032
	PAN	172	76	13	37	34	56	388
	TWN	2,975	645	3,238	560	258	782	8,458
	VUT	818	269	2,593	142	118	256	4,195
Total:	15,098	3,569	14,373	2,833	701	3,748	40,322	

		Tunas			SWO	SKH	OTR	Total
		BET	YFT	ALB				
2015	CHN	5,690	1,897	6,631	888	130	1,323	16,558
	JPN	4,201	766	367	829	0	761	6,925
	KOR	4,347	525	154	545	252	813	6,636
	PAN	522	116	447	17	56	163	1,321
	TWN	2,414	649	1,379	546	215	393	5,595
	VUT	1,381	429	4,249	194	202	620	7,075
	Total	18,553	4,383	13,228	3,020	855	4,073	44,111
2016	CHN	4,572	1,898	14,064	1,169	157	1,559	23,419
	JPN	2,395	581	285	685	61	671	4,678
	KOR	3,661	672	246	524	0	711	5,815
	PAN	463	85	346	320	164	309	1,687
	TWN	2,983	679	2,315	844	445	1,118	8,385
	VUT	1,815	357	3,756	353	334	512	7,126
	Total	15,889	4,272	21,012	3,895	1,160	4,881	51,110
2017	CHN	3,428	899	7,462	693	18	1,481	13,981
	JPN	2,812	546	358	790	0	488	4,993
	KOR	4,073	710	286	517	0	591	6,177
	PAN	640	129	921	109	381	444	2,623
	TWN	4,394	587	1,410	1,168	419	1,343	9,320
	VUT	1,801	429	725	311	322	484	4,072
	Total	17,149	3,300	11,161	3,587	1,140	4,830	41,169
2018	CHN	3,647	1,162	966	13,247	397	2,299	21,717
	JPN	1,531	260	477	313	29	360	2,971
	KOR	2,964	679	310	228	0	567	4,748
	PAN	251	55	133	924	70	157	1,590
	TWN	3,454	780	1,289	3,173	455	1,295	10,448
	VUT	2,237	516	547	575	237	496	4,608
	Total	14,084	3,452	3,722	18,461	1,189	5,175	46,082
2019	CHN	2,327	1,118	11,984	566	160	2,357	18,512
	JPN	518	62	113	38	0	97	828
	KOR	1,941	710	325	158	0	319	3,453
	PAN	191	115	160	725	82	129	1,402
	TWN	2,555	873	2,250	591	395	1,331	7,995
	VUT	1,241	369	782	561	253	548	3,752
	Total	8,773	3,248	15,613	2,639	889	4,780	35,942

Appendix 2. Trips by carrier vessels that transhipped in the eastern Pacific Ocean, 2019.

IATTC trip	Vessel	Flag	Departure		Arrival	
			Date	Port	Date	Port
368	Lady Tuna	KIR	21-Jan-2019	Kaohsiung, Taiwan	6-Apr-2019	Kaohsiung, Taiwan
369	Tenho Maru	VUT	31-Jan-2019	Kaohsiung, Taiwan	8-Apr-2019	Kaohsiung, Taiwan
370	Shun Tian Fa 168	KIR	21-Feb-2019	Kaohsiung, Taiwan	6-May-2019	Kaohsiung, Taiwan
371	Seiwa	TWN	27-Feb-2019	Kaohsiung, Taiwan	11-May-2019	Kaohsiung, Taiwan
372	Ping Tai Rong Leng 1	VUT	2-Apr-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea	9-Jun-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea
373	Lung Yuin	VUT	1-Apr-2019	Samoa, United States	10-May-2019	Samoa, United States
374	Ryoma	PAN	5-Apr-2019	Kaohsiung	20-Jun-2019	Kaohsiung
375	Full Kuo Shin	PAN	3-Apr-2019	Kaohsiung	28-Jun-2019	Kaohsiung
376	Yun Run 3	PAN	24-Apr-2019	Zhoushan, China	31-Jul-2019	Zhoushan, China
377	Rising Star	PAN	9-Apr-2019	Vacamonte, Panama	29-Apr-2019	Vacamonte, Panama
378	Seiho	KOR	17-Apr-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea	4-Jul-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea
379	SL Bogo	KOR	18-Apr-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea	2-Jun-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea
380	Rising Star	PAN	10-May-2019	Vacamonte, Panama	18-Jun-2019	Vacamonte, Panama
381	Shun Tian Fa 168	TWN	31-May-2019	Kaohsiung	15-Aug-2019	Kaohsiung
382	Taiho Maru	LIB	22-Jun-2019	Kaohsiung	23-Aug-2019	Kaohsiung
383	Rising Star	PAN	26-Jun-2019	Vacamonte, Panama	14-Jul-2019	Vacamonte, Panama
384	Ping Tai Rong Leng 2	CHN	11-Jul-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea	10-Oct-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea
385	Seibu	KOR	16-Jul-2019	Kaohsiung	15-Sep-2019	Kaohsiung
386	SL Bogo	KOR	23-Jul-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea	19-Sep-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea
387	Rising Star	PAN	27-Jul-2019	Vacamonte, Panama	12-Aug-2019	Vacamonte, Panama
388	Tenho Maru	LIB	6-Aug-2019	Kaohsiung	2-Oct-2019	Kaohsiung
389	Yun Run 3	PAN	28-Aug-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea	25-Nov-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea
390	Rising Star	PAN	28-Aug-2019	Vacamonte, Panama	20-Sep-2019	Vacamonte, Panama
391	Ping Tai Rong Leng 1	CHN	23-Aug-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea	1-Dec-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea
392	Sheng Hong	TWN	22-Sep-2019	Kaohsiung	10-Dec-2019	Kaohsiung
393	Meita Maru	LIB	18-Sep-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea	13-Nov-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea
394	Shin Ho Chun 102	PAN	19-Oct-2019	Suva, Fiji	14-Dec-2019	Suva, Fiji
395	Rising Star	PAN	28-Sep-2019	Papeete, French Polynesia	21-Oct-2019	Vacamonte, Panama
396	Lung Yuin	VUT	4-Oct-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea	22-Nov-2019	Papeete, French Polynesia
397	SL Bogo	KOR	19-Oct-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea	6-Jan-2020	Busan, Republic of Korea
398	Seiyu	KOR	24-Oct-2019	Kaohsiung	5-Jan-2020	Busan, Republic of Korea
399	Full Kuo Shin	PAN	24-Oct-2019	Vacamonte, Panama	22-Jan-2020	Kaohsiung
401	Ping Tai Rong Leng 2	CHN	7-Dec-2019	Busan, Republic of Korea	15-Mar-2020	Busan, Republic of Korea
402	Taiho Maru	LIB	6-Dec-2019	Kaohsiung	31-Jan-2020	Kaohsiung
403	Shun Tian Fa 168	TWN	9-Dec-2019	Kaohsiung	14-Feb-2020	Kaohsiung
404	Yong Man Shun	TWN	13-Dec-2019	Kaohsiung	9-Mar-2020	Kaohsiung

Appendix 3. Transshipments in the Pacific Ocean (top) and in the EPO (bottom), 2016-2019.

