



The Aura Building,
4.5 Philip Goldson Highway,
Belize City, Belize
+501 223 4918
+501 223 7421

<https://www.bhsfu.gov.bz/>

Belize's Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Progress Report

IATTC Resolution C-23-11 14th May 2026

1. Background and Transition Overview

On October 22nd, 2025, the Belize High Seas Fishing Unit established a new Vessel Monitoring Agreement with Woods Hole Group, Inc. for the provisioning of all monitoring services and the supply of satellite-based equipment. Woods Hole Group, Inc. is a subsidiary of Collecte Localisation Satellites (CLS) and provides monitoring services utilizing the Themis fisheries online platform.

To ensure continuity of monitoring services and a seamless transition of the fishing fleet, both systems operated concurrently during the transitional period. In April 2026, following the successful migration of the fleet, Belize formally terminated its contract with Pole Star Space Applications Ltd.

2. Overview of CLS Themis Platform

CLS Themis is a comprehensive fisheries monitoring platform designed to support the monitoring of fisheries activities, manage quotas, collect catch data, and combat illegal fishing. The platform integrates multiple data sources including VMS, AIS, INMARSAT, IRIDIUM, LRIT, radar, satellite imagery, catch reporting, and oceanography, allowing our administration to monitor fishing vessels in near real-time across large ocean areas.

2.1 Compliance with International Regulations

CLS Themis assists countries in complying with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and other international fisheries reporting and monitoring requirements. The platform is equipped with standardized electronic reporting systems such as FLUX and e-logbooks 2.0, facilitating information sharing between countries, enforcement agencies, and RFMOs.

2.2 Detection of IUU Fishing

The platform detects suspicious vessel behaviour and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities. A key enhancement over the previous monitoring platform is the system's ability to cross-check AIS and VMS data and identify dark vessels using satellite technologies.

2.3 Vessel and Catch Data Management

CLS Themis stores complete vessel information including licenses, ownership, vessel identification and characteristics, and catch history. It links vessel tracks directly with catch reports and fishing effort data for easier analysis and enforcement. The platform will also include a Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) application to collect and manage FAD deployments and retrievals by Purse Seiners and support vessels.

2.4 Quota and Catch Analytics

The platform provides statistics by vessel, fleet, fishing zone, and species, supporting quota monitoring and near real-time catch analysis for more effective fisheries management.

2.5 Automated Monitoring and Alerts

The system generates automated notifications for vessels entering restricted zones, blacklisted vessels, reporting failures, and suspicious movements. It also provides the ability to create geo-zones and points of interest for targeted surveillance.


2.6 Technical Specifications

In accordance with the requirements of IATTC Resolution C-23-11, the system records:

- The vessel's geographical position (latitude and longitude) with a margin of error of less than 100 meters at a confidence level of 98%.
- The date and time (UTC) of the vessel's position, along with speed and course.

3. Implementation Status

The migration of Belize's fishing fleet to the CLS Themis platform is currently in its final phase, with full completion anticipated before the end of June 2026. Throughout the transition, all vessels have remained under continuous monitoring, ensuring no interruption to Belize's surveillance obligations under IATTC Resolution C-23-11. The finalization of a customized electronic catch reporting application, to be integrated into the CLS Themis system for use by vessel operators, is also nearing completion.



The system defaults to hourly position reporting, which meets and exceeds the minimum positional reporting requirements stipulated under IATTC Resolution C-23-11. Should suspicious activities be identified, changes to the reporting frequency may be requested accordingly. Belize also utilizes complementary monitoring tools including Global Fishing Watch (GFW), Marine Traffic, and S&P Global to further enhance its surveillance capabilities.

4. Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Procedures

Pursuant to Belize's Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Regulations, the following procedures are in place to ensure the integrity of Belize's monitoring obligations:

- In the event of a unit malfunction or technical issue while a vessel is at sea, the operator is required to provide hourly manual position reports to the Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC) while the issue is being addressed.
- If a unit remains faulty for a period exceeding 48 hours, the vessel will receive instructions to terminate all fishing operations, secure its fishing gear, and return to port until the issue is resolved.
- No vessel is permitted to depart port or engage in fishing activities without fully operational vessel monitoring equipment installed.
- All VMS units are structurally designed to be tamper-proof with security seals, and annual inspection and maintenance are required to ensure that units remain in optimal condition.

All Belize-registered fishing vessels and those involved in fishing-related activities are mandated to obtain and install the unit provided by Woods Hole Group, Inc. While IATTC Resolution C-23-11 applies to vessels above a specified length threshold, Belize has adopted a more comprehensive approach by mandating VMS installation on all registered fishing vessels regardless of size, thereby exceeding the minimum international requirements.

5. Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC)

Since its establishment in January 2014, Belize's Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) has maintained consistent monitoring operation for all registered vessels. All data retrieved from VMS units adheres to the standards and regulations stipulated under IATTC Resolution C-23-11.



6. Conclusion

Belize remains committed to strengthening its monitoring, control, and surveillance capabilities and to fulfilling its obligations under IATTC Resolution C-23-11. We look forward to completing the full fleet migration and finalizing the customized electronic catch reporting application by the end of May 2026 and will continue to engage constructively with the Commission on all VMS-related matters.

