

LIBERIA ANNUAL REPORT (2018)

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION (IATTC)

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



August 14, 2019

1. Abstract/Summary

The Republic of Liberia is situated within the east central Atlantic region of the Gulf of Guinea. With an Atlantic coastline of about 570km and a continental shelf averaging 34km in width, the marine fishing grounds of Liberia cover about 186 322.2km² within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).¹ In 2017, Liberia's Inshore Exclusion Zone (IEZ) was reduced from six to three nautical miles, and is reserved for artisanal and semi-industrial fishing activities.² The fishing area extends from the shrimp-rich Shebro grounds bordering Sierra Leone in the west, to the Cavalla River Basin bordering the Ivory Coast in the east, and the tuna pelagic fishing grounds extending out into the Atlantic Ocean.

Liberia's continental shelf area has considerable marine fish species. The main oceanic pelagic resources are tuna and tuna-like species such as yellowfin tuna, bonito and marlin. Demersal fish species are also found in marine waters and are harvested on a commercial basis.³ Crustaceans such as shrimp, crab and lobster are less abundant, but are of much higher value than finfish species, and are targeted for Liberia's export market.⁴ Liberia's fisheries sector contributes approximately 12% of agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 3% of the overall GDP.

Liberia's fisheries has three main subcomponents: 1) Marine fisheries (comprise of industrial and artisanal activities); 2) Inland fisheries (mainly artisanal, providing food and livelihood to coastal communities); and 3) Aquaculture (through subsistence fish farming). There are roughly 3,300 canoes and more than 11,000 fishers operating actively from 114 fish landing sites along the coastline. The artisanal fleet comprises the indigenous Kru canoe, operated by Kru fishermen using paddles or sail. The marine industrial fishery is divided into a trawl fishery for shrimp and demersal finfish, which provides frozen whole fish, and shrimp for the local market and an offshore large pelagic fishery. The inland fisheries are based on rivers, lakes and wetlands such as swamps and coastal lagoons. The aquaculture sub-sector, which includes mariculture, is underdeveloped and largely subsistence, with about 300 fish farmers engaged in some form of fish culture generally on a part-time basis. About 1,704 ponds (113.9 hectares) of various sizes are distributed in about 160 rural communities of which 1,125 (73.3 hectares) are used for farming tilapia and catfish.

2. Tabular Annual (2018) Fisheries Information

Liberia is a Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) of the IATTC. In 2018, there were approximately twenty-four (24) carrier (non-fishing) vessels authorized to operate in the IATTC Convention Area; only three (3) actively carried out transshipment operations during the January-December 2018 period in the IATTC Convention Area and IATTC-WCPFC Overlap Area. Below you will find the total quantities transshipped for each vessel of those three vessels: SHOTA MARU, TAIHO MARU and TENHO MARU.

¹ See FAO Fishery Country Profile (Republic of Liberia): <http://www.fao.org/fi/oldsite/FCP/en/LBR/profile.htm>

² Executive Order No. 84 Pertaining to the Management of Liberia's Fishery Resources (Apr. 22, 2017): <http://www.emansion.gov.lr/doc/scan00.pdf>

³ Liberia Fisheries, Bureau of National Fisheries - Marine Division: www.liberiafisheries.net/aboutus/marine

⁴ *Id.*

SHOTA MARU

Species	Total Quantity Transshipped (KG)
BET	1,182,559
YFT	280,715
SWO	264,425
MLS	54,920
BUM	609
ALB	259,907
OTH	147,971
TOTAL	2,191,106

TAIHO MARU

Species	Total Quantity Transshipped (KG)
BET	1,158,213
YFT	283,313
SWO	126,488
MLS	21,392
BUM	23,800
ALB	122,127
OTH	349,290
TOTAL	2,084,623

TENHO MARU

Species	Total Quantity Transshipped (KG)
BET	1,027,763
YFT	143,343
SWO	110,840
MLS	22,019
ALB	12,848
TOTAL	1,316,813

3. Comments on Possible Non-Compliance Notified by Observers onboard Carrier Vessels.

SHOTA MARU

The Observer noted in his report that during Trip 307 (Sept. 26 – Dec. 4, 2018), his “only problem encountered onboard was that the transshipment schedules were not always issued to the Observer” in accordance with Res. C-12-07, Annex III p.9e.

Response: The vessel Operator investigated and reported that the Observer report is inaccurate; that transshipment schedules are readily available onboard and shared with the Observers in accordance with Res. C-12-07, Annex III p.9e.

The above response was provided to the IATTC Secretariat on June 13, 2019 (via email) and again discussed and clarified on July 18, 2019 (during the compliance and technical meeting in Bilbao, Spain).

TAIHO MARU

The Observer noted in his report that during Trip 327 (March 3 – May 2018), “the only health and safety issue worth mentioning here is that during the entire time (66 days) I was on board the vessel there was not one safety drill performed” in possible violation of Res. C-12-07, Annex III p. 9c.

Response: The vessel Operator refutes the allegation and provided logbook records indicating that safety drills were in fact carried out on March 10, 2018 and May 18, 2018.

The above responses were provided to the IATTC Secretariat on June 13, 2019 (via email) and again discussed and clarified on July 18, 2019 (during the compliance and technical meeting in Bilbao, Spain). Should you any further information, please feel free to email us at Transshipment@liscr.com.

**ANNUAL (2017) TRANSSHIPMENT REPORT TO THE INTER
AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION (IATTC)**

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



September 11, 2018

1. Abstract/Summary

The Republic of Liberia is situated within the east central Atlantic region of the Gulf of Guinea. With an Atlantic coastline of approximately 570km and a continental shelf averaging 34km in width, the marine fishing grounds of Liberia cover 186 322.2km² within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).¹ In 2017, Liberia's Inshore Exclusion Zone (IEZ) was reduced from six to three nautical miles by Executive Order No. 84, and is reserved for artisanal and semi-industrial fishing activities.² The fishing area extends from the shrimp-rich Shebro grounds bordering Sierra Leone in the west, to the Cavalla River Basin bordering Côte d'Ivoire in the east, and the tuna pelagic fishing grounds extending out into the Atlantic Ocean.

Liberia's continental shelf area has considerable marine fish species. The main oceanic pelagic resources are tuna and tuna-like species such as yellowfin tuna, bonito and marlin. Demersal fish species are also found in marine waters and are harvested on a commercial basis.³ Crustaceans such as shrimp, crab and lobster are less abundant, but are of much higher value than finfish species, and are targeted for Liberia's export market.⁴

Liberia's fisheries sector contributes approximately 10% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Revenue to the Government from licensing fees, vessel registration fees, inspection and observer fees, import/export charges, and fines totaled approximately \$400,000 in 2011 and increased precipitously to nearly \$6 million by mid-2013, due to penalties collected from the prosecutions of foreign vessels illegally fishing in domestic waters.⁵

Liberia has three (3) main fisheries subcomponents:

1. Marine: comprises of industrial and artisanal activities;
2. Inland fisheries: mainly artisanal; and
3. Aquaculture: through subsistence fish farming.

Artisanal fisheries are a key sector in Liberia, providing food and livelihood to coastal communities. There are roughly 3,300 canoes and more than 11,000 fishers operating actively from 114 fish landing sites along the coastline. The artisanal fleet comprises the indigenous Kru canoe, operated by Kru fishermen using paddles or sail.⁶ The marine industrial fishery is divided into a trawl fishery for shrimp and demersal finfish, which provides frozen whole fish, and shrimp for the local market and an offshore large pelagic fishery. The inland fisheries are based on rivers, lakes and wetlands such as swamps and coastal lagoons. The aquaculture sub-sector, which includes mariculture, is underdeveloped and largely subsistence, with about 300 fish farmers engaged in some form of fish culture generally on a part-time basis. About 1,704 ponds (113.9

¹ FAO Fishery Country Profile (Republic of Liberia): <http://www.fao.org/fi/oldsite/FCP/en/LBR/profile.htm>

² Executive Order No. 84 Pertaining to the Management of Liberia's Fishery Resources (Apr. 22, 2017): <http://www.emansion.gov.lr/doc/scan00.pdf>

³ Liberia Fisheries, Bureau of National Fisheries - Marine Division: www.liberiafisheries.net/aboutus/marine

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy & Strategy: Republic of Liberia (2014).

⁶ *Id.*

hectares) of various sizes are distributed in about 160 rural communities of which 1,125 (73.3 hectares) are in use for farming tilapia and catfish.⁷

The office responsible for fishing is the National Fisheries & Aquaculture Authority (NAFAA), formerly the Bureau of National Fisheries. Major functions of NAFAA include: registration of artisanal fishing canoes, inspection of fishing canoes and fishing gears, granting of fishing licenses, record of catch data, and deployment of fisheries enumerators at landing sites. In 2010, the new Fisheries Regulations were enacted to ensure that the sectors are well managed and regulated. Liberia's fisheries sector received a major boost in 2017 with the commissioning of the Mesurado Industries Fisheries Terminal, which is equipped with a monitoring system to manage the country's agreements with the European Union licensed fishing vessels in Liberia's territorial waters.⁸ The Fisheries Terminal or Fish Monitoring Center (FMC) works closely in collaboration with the Liberia Maritime Authority (LMA) and the Liberian Registry to monitor Liberian flagged reefer vessels transshipping in regional fishing areas to effectively combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities.

Executive Order No. 84 (April 2017) granted complete supervisory and fiscal authority over BNF (now NAFAA) to LMA, pending enactment of the National Fisheries Act. LMA was established in 1948 with launch of its Registry during the post-World War II period.⁹ It is an autonomous agency, which has the responsibility of administering the Liberian Maritime Program. Under Liberian Maritime Law, the Commissioner of LMA administers all matters pertaining to domestic and foreign waterborne commerce of the Republic of Liberia, by and through the Liberia Maritime Authority. The administrative duties of the Commissioner may be performed by persons appointed as Deputy Commissioners of Maritime Affairs.

The Liberian International Ship & Corporate Registry (LISCR, LLC) has been designated and appointed by the Liberian Government as its agent for the purpose of aiding the Commissioner in the effective administration of the provisions of Maritime Law relating to flag State administration. The Liberian Registry is the second largest in the world, with approximately 4,170 vessels, aggregating more than 150 million gross tons, which represents 12% of the world's ocean going fleet¹⁰ and provides the day-to-day management for Liberia's ship and corporate registry under the provisions of Liberia Maritime Law and Regulations. Liberia Maritime Law and Regulations include requirements for vessel registration, crew licensing, certification of vessels for safety, marine investigation and inspection, and promulgated by the office of the Commissioner of the LMA.

Liberia's registered fleet of seagoing vessels consists of bulk and non-bulk carriers, chemical/oil tankers, and refrigerated/reefer vessels. Currently, there are twenty-six (26) vessels (carrier/receiving and support vessels) authorized to engage in transshipment activities in the IATTC Area. Liberia has also registered four (4) Bottom Trawlers licensed by NAFAA to operate solely within Liberia's EEZ.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ New Fishing Site, Terminal in Liberia Brings Better Fish and More Jobs: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/06/08/new-fishing-site-terminal-in-liberia-brings-better-fish-and-more-jobs>

⁹ The Liberia Maritime Authority: <http://maritimeliberia.com/?about/history.html>

¹⁰ The Liberian Registry: <http://www.liscr.com/about-liberian-registry>

2. Tabular Annual (2017) Fisheries Information

In 2017, there were approximately twenty-six (26) vessels authorized to operate in the IATTC Convention Area; only FOUR (4) actively engaged in transshipment operations during the January-December 2017 period. Below you will find the total number (**4,148,206**) of various species transshipped by those vessels:

SHOTA MARU

Species	Total Quantity Transshipped (KG)
BET	726,192
YFT	113,599
SWO	16,976
BUM	4,831
STR	11,734
ALB	10,123
OPA	5,046
OIL	11,392
OTH	4,647
TOTAL	904,540

TAIHO MARU

Species	Total Quantity Transshipped (KG)
BET	1,779,773
YFT	233,176
SWO	431,386
BUM	27,547
STR	13,790
ALB	20,422
OTH	137,618
TOTAL	2,643,712

TENHO MARU

Species	Total Quantity Transshipped (KG)
BET	476,583
YFT	40,667
SWO	40,524
STR	2,941
ALB	4,461
TOTAL	565,176

VICTORIA II

Species	Total Quantity Transshipped (KG)
YFT	5,000
STR	200
BUM	2,000
ALB	1,800
OIL	24,205
OTH	1,573
TOTAL	34,778

3. Background

Liberia is a Cooperating Non-member (CNM) of the IATTC and there are presently twenty-six (26) Liberian flagged vessels registered on the IATTC Record of Fishing Vessels.

4. Comments on Possible Infractions Notified by the Observers for Carrier Vessels

a. TENHO MARU (Trip 292) - Resolution Affected: Res. C-12-07 (Annex III, p.9c)

The Observer's Report notes that "the food for the Observer was not the same quality or content as the other Officer's". According to the vessel's Operator, there were Filipino and Japanese crew onboard; the Master gave the Observer the option of selecting either Filipino or Japanese cuisine. There was no deliberate act on the Master's part to deny the Observer of similar quality of food as vessel's crew.

The Flag Administration has reminded the Master and crew to provide Observers with adequate accommodations, including food and suitable sanitary facilities, equivalent to those of officers onboard pursuant to Res. C-12-07, Annex III. Moreover, the vessel has a valid Maritime

Labor Convention Certificate, issued by the Classification Society, which inspected the vessel to ensure the vessel's compliance with Regulation 3.2 (*Food and Catering*) of MLC 2006.

b. SHOTA MARU (Trip 307) - Resolution Affected: Res. C-12-07 (Annex III, p.9e)

The Report notes that “the only problem encountered onboard was that the transshipment schedules were not always issued to the Observer.” The Master of the vessel provided a statement which controverts that Observer's claim. The Master maintains that the schedules and declarations were provided to the Observer and vessel's Superintendent (who was onboard during said trip).

The Flag Administration has reiterated to all vessel Masters that Observers shall be allowed access to vessels' personnel, equipment, and transshipment related documents, pursuant to the Res. C-12-07, Annex III.

c. TAIHO MARU (Trip 311) - Resolution Affected: Res. C-04-05 (Para 4.d.ii)

The Report notes that “on 12/02/18, a crewmember threw a large bundle of plastic sheeting over the ship's rail into the ocean.” The Company thoroughly investigated the incident and found wrongdoing. The responsible crew member was reprimanded and the Company carried out training in order to familiarize the crew with garbage management, including, but not limited to methods of handling garbage onboard, recycling arrangements, posting of placards, and recording of entries into the log books.

The Liberian Administration is a Party to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and takes pollution of the marine environment very seriously. The Administration works diligently to ensure that their flagged vessels comply with MARPOL regulations.

5. Onshore Developments

On December 9, 2015, Liberia and the European Union (EU) signed a 5-year Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) and associated protocol, which set out fishing opportunities for EU vessels in Liberian territorial waters. The SFPA further expands the EU's network of tuna fisheries agreements in West Africa. The related protocol offers opportunities to 28 purse seiners and 6 surface longline vessels to fish for tuna and tuna-like species in waters under Liberia's jurisdiction, based on a reference tonnage of 6,500 tons. In return, the EU will pay Liberia an average annual compensation of 650,000 Euros, out of which 50% is earmarked to support the fisheries policy of Liberia, including but not limited to reinforcing its fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance capacity.¹¹

Currently, Liberia is collaborating with Sierra Leone to implement a sub-project created by the EAF-Nansen project to develop a sector specific management plan for the artisanal fisheries

¹¹ Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Liberia (Dec. 12, 2015): [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22015A1212\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22015A1212(01)&from=EN)

of the two countries.¹² The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) system covers issues related to target species, non-target species, other dependent species within the ecosystem, minimizing waste and pollution, endangered species biodiversity, optimum utilization, the welfare of various states involved including the interests of artisanal and subsistence fishers.

The EAF-Nansen Project is a partnership between the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD), the Norwegian Institute for Marine Research (IMR) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Through a tripartite agreement, these organizations are supporting Liberia and other developing countries in their efforts to fulfil their commitments and implement an ecosystems approach to fisheries.¹³

6. Future Prospect of Fishery

The future of Liberia's fishery looks promising. The Government and people of Liberia look forward to a sustainable managed fisheries sector, capable of:

- providing increased profitable fisheries employment opportunities while offering an enabling environment for upgrading technical skills for enhanced value added fisheries vocations;
- engaging participatory fisheries management institutions based on community and stakeholder structures for the creation of opportunities for socio-economic development;
- contributing to GDP, national food and nutritional security and improving living conditions, by upgrading and adopting appropriate, modern and efficient fisheries capabilities for increased fish production while reducing losses through illegal fishing; and
- deriving net benefits from a vibrant fish trade supported by, value addition systems and fisheries infrastructure for fish landing and export, as well as efficient fishing input supply and distribution systems.¹⁴

¹² See The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries at <https://www.liberiafisheries.net/programs/EAF>

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy & Strategy: Republic of Liberia (2014).