



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

PCA Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. 929-95-97 • 929-80-74

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE

ORDER NO. 254-1

Series of 2018

SUBJECT: REGULATION AND IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES ON GROUP HANDLINE FISHING OPERATIONS IN THE HIGH SEAS OF THE WCPFC CONVENTION AREA.

WHEREAS, the Philippines signed the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean and its Annexes on September 5, 2000, which was subsequently ratified by the Senate on 2005;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a member of the regional fisheries management organization, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC);

WHEREAS, in December 2017, the Commission adopted a new Conservation and Management Measure (CMM 2017-01) for Bigeye, Yellowfin and Skipjack Tuna in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean which aims to provide for a robust transitional management regime that ensures the sustainability of bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin tuna stocks;

WHEREAS, CMM 2017-01 will create a bridge to the adoption of a harvest strategy for bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin tuna in accordance with the work plan and indicative frames set out in the agreed work plan for adoption of harvest strategies under CMM 2014-06, which includes the development of management objectives and target reference points, and the Commission shall work towards achieving and sustaining the following;

1) Bigeye

Pending agreement on a target reference point the spawning biomass depletion ratio ($SB/SB_{F=0}$) is to be maintained at or above the average ($SB/SB_{F=0}$) for 2012-2015.

2) Skipjack

The spawning biomass of skipjack tuna is to be maintained on average at a level consistent with the interim target reference point of 50% of the spawning biomass in the absence of fishing, adopted in accordance with CMM 2015-06.

3) Yellowfin

Pending agreement on a target reference point the spawning biomass depletion ratio ($SB/SB_{F=0}$) is to be maintained at or above the average ($SB/SB_{F=0}$) for 2012-2015.

WHEREAS, Section 51 of CMM 2017-01 states that "CCM shall take necessary measures to ensure that the total catch of their respective other commercial tuna fisheries for bigeye, yellowfin or skipjack tuna, but excluding those fisheries taking less than 2,000 tonnes of bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack, shall not exceed either the average level for the period 2001-2004 or the level of 2004";

WHEREAS, this policy is designed as a conservation measure primarily to reduce effort in Philippine waters which is a spawning ground;

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Republic Act (RA) 9379, "An Act Defining Handline Fishing, Providing Effective Regulations Therefore and For Other Purposes", otherwise known as "The Handline Fishing Law of 2007";

WHEREAS, Section 2 of RA 9379 stresses the need to support the development of the handline fishing industry, promote its competitiveness, sustainability and social development;

WHEREFORE, in view of these premises, the Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) hereby promulgates the following regulations and implementing guidelines.

Section 1. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Order, the following terms as used herein shall mean and shall be construed as follows:

- 1) Automatic Location Communicator (ALC) or Mobile Tracking-Transceiver Unit — a two-way automatic tracking device WCPFC-approved device to be installed on fishing vessels that utilizes a satellite navigation and communication system for the purpose of transmitting information concerning the Philippine-flagged fishing vessels' positions, fishing activities, and any other activity of the vessels as may be required.
- 2) Bureau/BFAR — Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.
- 3) Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) — Refers to a system used to track and monitor the position, time, course and speed of commercial fishing vessels in the territorial waters, EEZ and the high seas for purposes of conservation and management of fisheries resources.
- 4) Commercial Fishing Vessel/Gear License (CFVGL) — authorization granted by BFAR to fishing vessel operators to fish within commercial waters (>15 km from the shoreline) of the Philippines pursuant to Sec. 26 of R.A. 8550.
- 5) Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) — an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea of a country as defined under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and their respective existing laws.
- 6) Fish Aggregating Devices (FAD) — devices that shall include drifting logs, other drifting objects and anchored FADs.

