



A unique group of leaders who are fast-tracking solutions to the most pressing challenges facing the ocean



Ending IUU fishing in the Pacific by 2020

Context

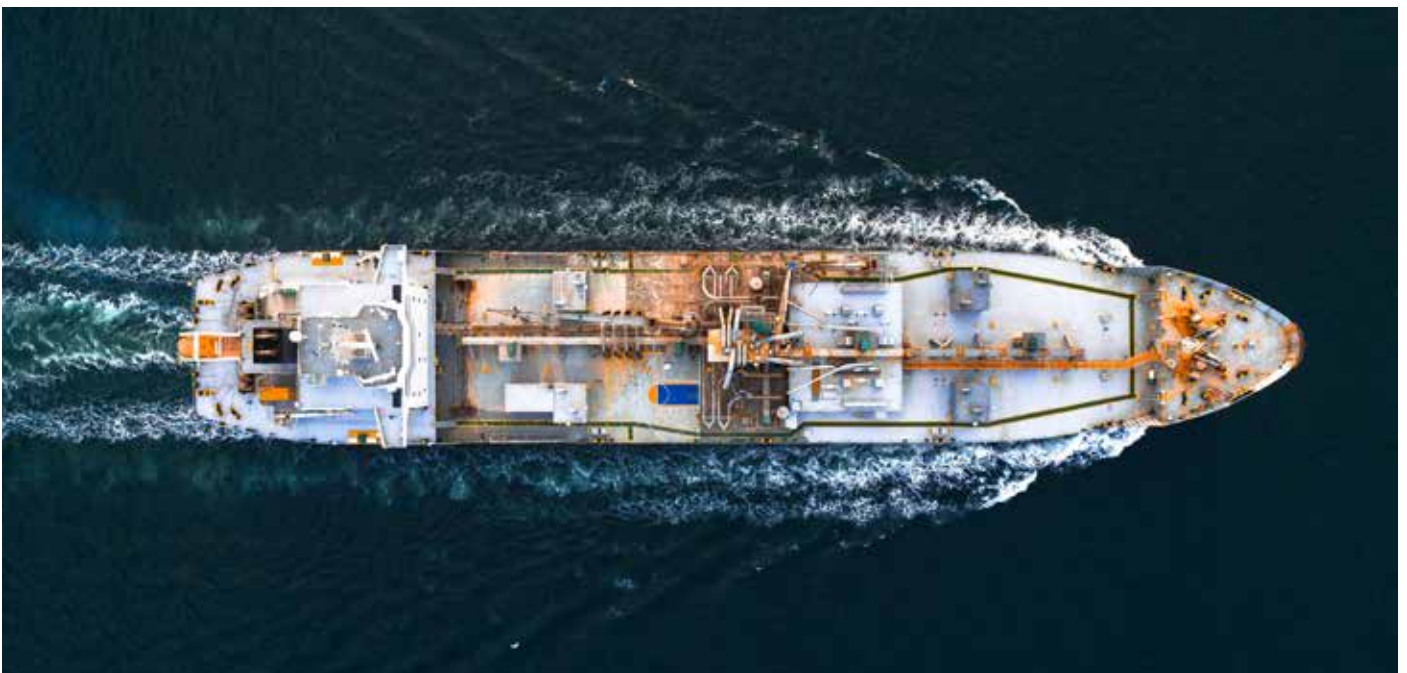
Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a scourge, particularly in the Pacific where the loss in revenue to the formal economy is USD 4.3-8.3 billion. Another USD 17-35 billion is lost every year across the value chain, undermining fisheries management and cheating legal fishers and Pacific economies. Under Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water or 'the ocean goal') governments committed to end IUU fishing by 2020. It is often challenging or impossible to apprehend IUU vessels on the open ocean but governments, acting together, can make it far more difficult and costlier for them to sell their catch by systematically preventing vessels from landing or trans-shipping their illegal catch at port. That is the purpose of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The PSMA is a powerful tool, but its effectiveness in reducing IUU fishing will depend on broad participation and cooperation so that IUU vessels are blocked not just from some ports but from all. Pacific countries can use the PSMA

to crack the challenge of the IUU fishing by joining together in coordinated implementation of the agreement: Working towards ratification of the Agreement by key port and flag states across the region; sharing key data on both fishing and fishing support vessels and their activities; developing tools that provide information in a timely and responsive manner; and establishing efficient communication among port authorities to coordinate enforcement. These government actions will support and be reinforced by a growing number of private sector initiatives to require traceability, by RFMO's aligning their Conservation and Management Measures (CMM's) with the PSMA and, ultimately, sustainability in their supply chains, and by new technologies that enable lower costs and more efficient monitoring and enforcement.

Ratification

A growing number of countries across the Pacific region – Australia, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Palau, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Thailand, United States, Vanuatu, Viet Nam – have ratified the PSMA. To control IUU fishing, it will be important for every key port and flag state of the Pacific region to ratify and implement the PSMA. Further priority ratifications include: China, Malaysia, Mexico, Russia, Singapore, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Both China and the Marshall Islands have expressed their intention to ratify in 2020.



Fishing vessel from above. © Carl Michelle/Alamy

Implementation

The success of the PSMA depends on cooperation among the port states in a region and the flag states whose vessels operate there. New and emerging technologies have the potential to provide robust information on each vessel's activities. For these systems to be effective, however, countries must share data and create systems for timely and responsive communication with each other. The APEC Roadmap for Combatting IUU Fishing (endorsed in August 2019 by the Fifth APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security) provides a set of objectives and lines of action to combat IUU fishing across the Pacific region. Key components include:

- Implementation of Port State Measures (based on the principles of implementing the PSMA),
- Exchange of information regarding traceability and monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing,
- Collaboration with relevant regional and international fisheries bodies,
- Strengthened public-private engagement, and
- Capacity-building in developing countries in the Pacific that are important port or flag states.

In addition, countries are encouraged to publish their Designated Ports and Contacts Points on the FAO Designated Ports App, and their ship registry, ownership, licences and permits, and Unique Vessel Identifiers (such as International Maritime Organisation numbers) for flagged vessels through the Global Record.

Work to end IUU fishing will run in parallel with Friends of Ocean Action efforts on supply chain traceability in the

commercial sector, together with the emerging Global Tuna Alliance, the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, and SeaBOS (the top 10 global companies for seafood sustainability). Coordinating these efforts will ensure that efforts by commercial retailers and seafood companies reinforce PSMA implementation and that data collected for PSMA enforcement can be used as the basis for traceability throughout the supply chain.

Pilot

A grouping of Pacific region port and flag states are being encouraged to join a project that will pursue joint implementation of key elements of the PSMA. Their collaboration looks to demonstrate the benefits of coordinated implementation of Port State Measures through the introduction of a shared system for risk assessments and information sharing at the time that foreign vessels seek entry into port.

The June 2020 UN Ocean Conference provides an important opportunity to shine a spotlight on PSMA ratification and implementation, and progress towards closing the Pacific to IUU fishing. The FAO, the World Economic Forum's Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, The Nature Conservancy, the Pew Environment Group, WWF and Global Fishing Watch are providing support. Friends of Ocean Action and the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy are helping to mobilize the political will that it will require.

For more information, please contact:
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Petty Officer 2nd Class Chris Parmenter, an aviation maintenance technician from Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point, looks for IUU fishing vessels in the water using the Casper camera on a C-130 Hercules airplane over the southern Pacific Ocean 16 May 2017. © Ted Small/Alamy