



Authorized Vessel Lists

What Is the Authorized Vessel List?

An “authorized” vessel list creates a positive list of vessels that are authorized to *fish* in the respective RFMO area of competence. Some RFMOs also require that carrier and support vessels are also authorized to operate in the RFMO area of competence. Authorized vessels are flagged to a member, or cooperating non-member, of the RFMO and are therefore expected to be operating consistent with the decisions of that RFMO. It differs from the “Active” vessel list that exists in some RFMOs that provides verification or cross-referencing of those vessels authorized to fish and *those that conducted fishing activities* in a particular time period in the RFMO area of competence.

Benefits of Authorized Vessel Lists

Flagging vessels under a country’s flag is the primary mechanism under international law to identify who is responsible for controlling the activities of that vessel (LOSC, Article 94). Authorizing vessels to fish for specific species or within a defined area of competence (or both) is fundamental for flag State control and forms the primary basis for enforcement in fisheries. Depending on the type of data collected, the authorized vessel list may also provide critical information for scientists undertaking

fishery stock assessments. An active vessel list enables measurement of a flag States’ fishing effort/capacity against some pre-agreed or approved baseline capacity, and it could potentially be used to verify legal fishing vessels if it is used to cross-reference the authorized vessel list for a given time period.

How Do They Work?

The requirements of an RFMO authorized vessel list can be defined in the treaty itself, or through the adoption of a specific management measure. In adopting either the treaty or the management measure, flag States commit to the collection and reporting the required information for each vessel they’ve authorized to fish in the treaty’s area of competence. A component of this information is published on the RFMOs website to enable third parties to identify vessels authorized by their flag State to operate in the area, the number of specific vessel types and a range of other information. In contrast, active vessel lists have only been implemented through management measures and simply report whether the vessel was actively fishing over a prescribed time period (e.g. the previous 12 months).

For comprehensive review of the tuna RFMOs measures creating the **authorized vessel lists** and the suggested best practices please refer to [ISSF Technical Report 2023-07](#).



Assessment of Authorized Vessel List by RFMO

Recommended Best Practices

The following table shows the level of progress in each tuna RFMO in implementing the recommended best practices.

Color Coding Key

	Element(s) are consistent with the suggested best practices.		Some element(s) are present, but amendments or a change in procedure is needed to be consistent with best practices.		Element (s) are missing or inconsistent with best practices.
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RFMO	Definitions & Application			Data Fields & Minimum Data					Modification Procedures					Publication & Info Sharing
	Standard definitions of fishing, fishing vessels, fisheries support activities, transshipment	Covers all harvest, carrier, support and supply vessels, irrespective of size or geographic location	Clarify that vessels not on RFV not deemed authorized	ID mandatory minimum data fields that must be completed and data field format	Require start/end dates for authorization Empower Sect to remove if lapsed	ID non-compliance with minimum standards as a serious infraction	Include data on permits regarding species, spatial restrictions, at-sea trans-shipment or to function as a support vessels	IMO # required for both fishing and carrier vessels; all fishing vessels able to obtain IMO # must have one	New vessel and any changes sent minimum 45 days before fishing	Flag State must provide a reason for vessel's removal from RFV	Empower Sect to remove any vessel from RFV that on an IUU Vessel List	Allow updates to RFV vessel info from MCS activities	Maintain historical data (e.g., flag, ownership, charters), on RFV	Majority of data fields public
CCSBT														
	✓	✓	✓	✗	Sect not able to remove/ place on IUU list	✗	✗	IMO number (if available)	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓

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IATTC														
Related measure: C-24-07	✓	✓	✓	✗	Includes date of inclusion on Register and information on existence of a valid authorization by the flag CPC to fish/transship Sect not empowered to remove and place on draft IUU list, but there is a general provision that vessels not on the RFV are eligible to be considered for listing	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
ICCAT														
	✓	Does not apply to vessel less than 20 meters LOA	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓

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IOTC		Does not apply to vessel <24 meters in-zone			Sect not able to remove/ place on IUU list			IMO #s not required for carriers						Not port of Registration
WCPFC		Does not apply to vessels operating in their own EEZ												Not port of Registration

