

Report on the Trial of the Longline Logbook

Printed in June 2006 in New Zealand at an approx cost of 25 USD per logbook. Distributed to Fiji, PNG and Tonga October 2006 and subsequently distributed to the Cook Islands in August 2007.

Results

➤ Daily form

Tonga	Number of Trips	Setting Parameters	By-product	By-catch	Depredation	Comments
Captain 1	5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Captain 2	4	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Captain 3	7	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Captain 4	3	Y	Y	Y	N (DSD,DTS)	Y

Cooks

Captain 1	1	Y	Y	N	N	N
Captain 2	1	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Captain 3	1	N	Y	Y	N(DTS, DDL)	Y(minor)
Captain 4	1	X (only one set)	N	Y	N	N

Fiji

Captain 1	3	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Captain 2	2	Y	Y	N	N	N
Captain 3*	2	Y	Y	N	N	N
Captain 4	1	Y	Y	N	N	N
Captain 5	1	Y	Y	N	Y(comment)	N
Captain 6	1	Y	Y	N	N	N

*Observer on-board for one trip.

➤ Vessel Characteristics

The vessel characteristic form was properly filled in by all captains. The form was not filled in by the Fijian captains (see comments below). No edits or changes were requested and none are proposed.

Observations

- In Tonga the logbook was trailed on one vessel only, but by four different captains. The general reaction to the logbook was negative with most captains finding it tedious. This includes one captain who had previously welcomed the logbook during the 2002 trial. Captains found the daily header repetitive, they thought filling in a page for days not fished was a waste of paper and they also showed a reluctance to use the data fields which were provided for their benefit. The only 'fisher friendly' data field that was continuously filled in was the 'trip number / year'
- The Cook Islands took on the trial of the logbook at very short notice. Their findings were positive. All captains preferred using it and Fisheries would also prefer to use it. In fact, Fisheries have sent a strong request to continue using the logbook.
- Technically the logbook trial was not carried out in Fiji. An effort was made, but apparently the captain found it cumbersome and the trial was abandoned. By default the logbook was used over ten trips when Fisheries ran out of logsheets and distributed the logbook instead. There were no comments on the logbook retrieved from the fishers, but the general standard of data reporting was poor, and mostly limited to the information that is normally recorded on a logsheet.

Catch records

1. All vessels record their retained target catch using the provided weight categories.
2. Some target catch discards were noted (marlin – DDL, skj – DUS, tun – DWD) but it is no known if this reporting was comprehensive or not.
3. Logbook shark records are clearly an improvement over the standard logsheet records as fishers were 'forced' to record sharks under species names. The reason for discarding sharks was generally well recorded by fishers.
4. By-product records seem to be similar to the logsheet records and it is unlikely that the logbook has improved such information.
5. Some vessels did recorded bycatch, which are not generally recorded on logsheets. However it is unlikely that these records are complete for any trip.
6. The logbook captured one leatherback turtle. It was recorded as having been discarded, but the reason or alive / dead status was not recorded. This compares quite positively with the one other turtle that is on the longline logsheet database.

Form set up

1. The header details could be simplified and a fishing activity log placed on the first page to record days not fishing.
2. The ship's date may benefit from have a separate day and month data field. The date records were often 'messy'.
3. The species codes could be added, although space may be a problem.
4. The comments / wind speed / current / SST area could probably be removed or moved down to the comments area at the bottom of the form.
5. The only 'fisher friendly' data field that was continuously filled in was the 'trip number / year'.
6. It may be sufficient to capture the captain's signature and leave out the request to print their name on every daily form.
7. The 'line setting speed' data field was rarely recorded, possibly because domestic longline fleets are more likely to record their line speed in r.p.m. However, the 'distance between branchlines' data field also got a weak response.

8. The page numbering was found to be extremely useful when compiling and managing the daily forms.
9. The design of the logbook would ultimately depend on the target users. While the logbook was designed for possible use by all fleets some of the recommended form changes consider the domestic longline fleet only.

Conclusion

The introduction of the longline logbook across all longline fleets would place too high a burden on data collection and management services. However, there would still seem to be a limited role for the logbook especially where the data manager and fishers have shown a preference for its use. Some pacific fisheries divisions were vocal about the need to improve by-product and bycatch recording. The LL logbook was found to be useful tool in certain research projects (the LL depredation study in Fiji are considering using the logbook during their two year research project).

The trail of the LL logbook did show that it is possible to improve the information collected on target and by-product discards as well as offering an opportunity to capture bycatch records. It is likely that with proper guidance and debriefing data recording by fishers on the LL logbook could be improved.