



# STOP ILLEGAL FISHING GLOSSARY

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## Advanced request for entry to port

Acronym: AREP

Before a fishing vessel is permitted entry into port the following steps are required: a request for entry into port must be received; an assessment of the information submitted on the request form; and a decision whether to permit or deny entry into and use of port. The owner or operator of a foreign vessel must request entry to a port officially designated for use by foreign vessels. Notifying its intention to enter port is not sufficient, because a port State has absolute authority to decide whether and in which ports entry is allowed. An advance request to enter port (AREP) must be submitted before a specified time prior to entry e.g., 48 hours in advance. The AREP should contain all information required under the Port State Measures Agreement ([PSMA](#)), an RFMO and/or national law.

## Agent

The agent is the legally responsible person for a fishing vessel in the country in which it is licensed or where it is using the port. The agent is usually a local person who is appointed by the fishing vessel. These agents have to be formally registered in all fishing licences for foreign vessels. Any communication, information, document, direction, request or response to or from that agent shall be deemed to have been sent to or received from the flag State of the vessel.

## The Agreement on Port State Measures

Acronym: PSMA

The Agreement on Port State Measures (also known as the Port State Measures Agreement) is the first binding international agreement to specifically target IUU fishing. Its objective is to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing by preventing vessels engaged in IUU fishing from using ports and landing their catches. In this way, the PSMA reduces the incentive of such vessels to continue to operate while it also blocks fishery products derived from IUU fishing from reaching national and international markets. The effective implementation of the PSMA ultimately contributes to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources and marine ecosystems. The provisions of the PSMA apply to fishing vessels seeking entry into a designated port of a State which is different to their flag State. For more information go to: <https://www.fao.org/port-state-measures/background/en/>

## Authorization

Fishing vessels require authorizations for different aspects of their activity. The flag State authorizes fishing and fishing related activities, coastal States authorize fishing in their EEZs, RFMO's authorize fishing for species under their mandate as well as transshipment of fish.

## Automatic identification system

Acronym: AIS

AIS is a maritime navigation safety communications system standardized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). It provides vessel information, including the vessel's identity, type, position, course, speed, navigational status and other safety-related information automatically to appropriately equipped shore stations, other ships, and aircraft. It does so through satellite communications. Any ship, shore station and aircraft can receive

automatically such information from similarly fitted ships. AIS is also a useful tool to monitor the movements and activity of fishing vessels.

## Beneficial owner

A beneficial owner is the real person who ultimately owns, controls or benefits from a company and the income it generates. The beneficial owner may differ from the legal owner who might be registered the legal owners of an asset without actually possessing the right to enjoy its benefits or to pay penalties or be held responsible for fishing violations or for criminal activity. Complex and opaque corporate structures set up across different jurisdictions make it easy to hide the beneficial owner, especially when nominees are used in their place and part of the structure is in a secret jurisdiction. Knowing which companies and individuals ultimately own specific vessels and fleets is critical to effective regulation and enforcement in the fishing industry.

## Bycatch

The part of the catch that is unintentionally captured during a fishing operation in addition to the target species.

## Call sign

Acronym: CS

A call sign or sometimes known as maritime call sign is a unique alphanumeric identity that belongs to a vessel. Call signs are issued by appropriate authorities in the country that a vessel is registered. Call signs can always be referenced back to this authority and their database of information about the vessel and its owner. It begins with a prefix that indicates nationality. This prefix is then followed by 2 or 3 alphanumeric characters to distinguish the vessel. A call sign enables two vessels with the same vessel name to be identified separately. It is also useful when actual vessels names can be difficult to read or pronounce.

## Coastal State

Coastal States are States with a sea-coastline. A coastal States jurisdiction relates to its own maritime boundaries such as EEZ and encompasses all resources and activities within this zone, as well as any external impacts on them. Coastal states have duties to allow innocent passage and the right to deny passage to any vessel not in transit. Having authority over waters belonging to your own state is paramount in creating laws that govern how resources and activities are used/occur within your territory. International standards require coastal States to apply conservation and management measures to whoever fishes within their waters.

## Conservation and management measure

Acronym: CMM

CMMs are legally binding measures set up by different regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs). They are focused mainly as conservation management measures for fish stocks managed by the ruling RFMO body. They can sometimes be referred to resolutions or recommendations. CMMs matter because they are important legally binding measures employed by management bodies to ensure sustainable fishing of the stocks that they manage. Without them the fisheries would no longer be managed or sustainable.



## Contracting party

A contracting party or 'Party' refers to a State that has consented to be bound by the treaty, and for which the treaty is in force.

## Corruption

Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for political, monetary or personal gain either for oneself or others than intended benefactors.

## Denial of port entry

The PSMA requires denial of entry into port where there is 'sufficient proof' that the vessel seeking entry has engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing or related activities, particularly if it is on an RFMO IUU vessels list. A country may also deny port entry to any vessel where they have suspicion of IUU fishing.

Read more: [https://stopillegalfishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HTSIF-Denial-of-Port-Entry\\_EN.pdf](https://stopillegalfishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HTSIF-Denial-of-Port-Entry_EN.pdf)

## Denial of port use

The use of port may be denied after entry is permitted without inspection where certain conditions exist or after inspection where there are clear grounds for believing that a vessel has engaged in IUU fishing or related activities. If a request for entry has not been received, or true and complete information as required has not been provided in the AREP, the vessel should not be permitted to enter port except for purposes of inspection and use of port services should be denied.

Denying the use of port services to a vessel, with or without inspection is another tool that port States can use to tackle IUU fishing.

## Designated port

The Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) requires that countries officially designate ports for use by foreign fishing vessels. These vessels should send prior notifications to enter designated ports and provide port authorities with information, including on the catches they have on board. Every designated port should have sufficient capacity and competence to deal with the approval and inspection of vessels in port.

Data on contact points and designated ports can be found here:

<http://www.fao.org/fishery/port-state-measures/psmaapp/?locale=en&action=qry>

## Document forgery

Documents carried on board a fishing vessel may provide information about the vessel's identity, registration, physical characteristics, what activities it is permitted to engage in and where, and whether it has been certified as compliant with required safety regulations. However, documents can be altered, replicated or obtained by illegal means, making them false, so it is essential that vessel documents are systematically verified as part of the fisheries MCS process.

Document forgery is used to hide illegal activities or to avoid obligations and costs. Forged documents of vessel registration certificates, fishing licences or catch certificates are an essential feature of illegal fishing as operators either alter existing documents or create false

documents. Fraudulent information such as details of vessel length or tonnage is often used to avoid reporting or monitoring obligations, and often varies in different documents which are supposedly for the same vessel.

## Due diligence

Due diligence is the actions that are considered reasonable and expected from States, owners and crew in order to keep themselves or other and their property safe and operating within legal frameworks.

## Exclusive economic zone

Acronym: EEZ

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) defines an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) as generally extending 200 nautical miles from shore, within which the coastal state has the right to explore and exploit, and the responsibility to conserve and manage, both living and non-living resources.

## Fish aggregation device

Acronym: FAD

Fish aggregation devices or FADs are floating objects / devices such as a buoy used to attract fish. These are strategically placed by the user to attract schools of pelagic fish who are attracted to them. FAD provide a certain risk to marine mammals and turtles who are also attracted by the devices. Ships who usually use FADs are pelagic purse seiners who cannot be selective in their catch. Therefore, these creatures may end up as bycatch without the proper precautions.

## Fisheries associated crime

Fisheries associated crime refers to crimes that are not directly linked to fishing but may take place on fishing vessels. Fishing vessels, due to their ability to move easily and relatively undetected from country to country make them an attractive option for transporting illicit cargo – while operating under the cover of fishing

## Fisheries crime

Fisheries crime is a relatively new legal concept still in the process of being defined, it refers to a range of illegal activities in the fisheries sector. These activities - frequently transnational and organized in nature - include illegal fishing, document fraud, drug trafficking, and money laundering. Criminal activities in the fisheries sector are often regarded as synonymous with illegal fishing, which many States do not view or prosecute as criminal offences, but rather as a fisheries management concern, attracting low and usually administrative penalties. Organized criminal organizations thus engage in fisheries crime with relative impunity due both to low risk and high profits and uncoordinated ineffective domestic and cross-border law enforcement efforts. Fisheries crime is different from illegal fishing in that illegal fishing is seen as a fisheries management concern while fisheries crime is seen as organized crime in the eyes of the law and thus grants heavier punishments

## Fisheries related illegality

Fisheries related illegality goes beyond non-compliance to fisheries laws and regulations to include related offences. Evidence shows that even though the actual fishing activity may be compliant, activities such as forgery of documents or misuse of vessel identity render the fishing unlawful, as access to the fishery was made under false pretences. These illegalities are often systematic, such as avoidance of import and export taxes, white washing of illegal fish into the legitimate value chain, fraud and corruption. These related crimes conducted within the fisheries sector, are often transnational and organised.

## Fisheries support vessels

Fisheries support vessels, also known as supply vessels, are vessels that do not engage directly in fishing but assist fishing vessels by supplying them with fuel, ice, food etc. while also being able to receive fish storage and process fish products. Some fleets use supply vessels to plant and check FADs and to maintain them.

## Flag hopping

The practice of repeated and rapid changes of a vessel's flag for the purposes of circumventing conservation and management measures or provisions adopted at a national, regional or global level or of facilitating non-compliance with such measures or provisions. When vessels hop from flag to flag they can change names with ease, hiding a history of IUU fishing or escaping sanctions or investigations.

## Flag of convenience

The practice of commercial vessel owners registering their ship in a nation that the owner or ship does not have a connection to. Flags of convenience are part and parcel of the illegal operators' way of doing business, enabling costs to be kept to a minimum as standards for safety, hygiene, crew or paying of taxes are low or non-existent.

## Flag State

All fishing vessels operating internationally must be registered to a country, the flag State, and fly their flag. The ministry responsible for maritime affairs or transport will usually have the responsibility to register fishing vessels along with other commercial vessels. Countries may operate a national registry or an open registry or both and flag States enjoy almost exclusive jurisdiction over their vessels. Flag States are responsible under international law to regulate and monitor the management and operations of their fishing vessels, including support and supply vessels for the fishing industry, to ensure their fleets are compliant. States that are members of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMO) are also obliged to ensure that their fishing vessels comply to their conservation and management measures (CMMs).

Read more: <https://stopillegalfishing.com/publications/how-to-stop-illegal-fishing-flag-states/>

## Force majeure or distress

Claims of force majeure or distress generally indicate that the vessel was subject to natural and unavoidable catastrophes, such as damage from storms, mechanical problems or unanticipated serious injury or illness among crew members. French law applies three tests for force majeure – the event must be unforeseeable, external, and unavoidable.



Claims of force majeure or distress are sometimes made by foreign fishing vessels that seek entry into port to avoid submitting an AREP, a trick that has been used by known IUU vessels that have previously been denied entry.

## Forced labour

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Forced Labour Convention No. 29, forced or compulsory labour is all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily. It can occur where work is forced upon people by State authorities, by private enterprises or by individuals. Forced labour is a growing issue in fisheries with many workers being forced onto IUU vessels and forced to work against their will.

## Ghost gear

Ghost gear refers to any fishing gear that has been abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded, and is the most harmful form of marine debris. There are many reasons why fishing gear can be lost or abandoned, including severe weather, snags beneath the surface, conflict with other gear, interaction with other vessels and, sometimes, intentional discard when no other options are available. Discarded fishing gear continues to catch fish whilst in the water, and these trapped fish then attract more and more fish, acting as an aggregating device for marine species. Monofilament (plastic) nets are especially damaging as they do not degrade.

For more information go to: <https://www.ghostgear.org/>

## Global Record of Vessels

Acronym: GRV

The Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record) is a collaborative global initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization, to make certified data from State authorities about vessels and vessel-related activities available. The programme aims to provide a single access point for information on vessels used for fishing and fishing-related activities with the primary objective being to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing by enhancing transparency and traceability. For more information go to: <http://www.fao.org/global-record/en/>

## Gross registered tonnage

Acronym: GRT

A measure of a vessel's size and capacity. Gross (registered) tonnage (GT or GRT) forms the basis for manning regulations, safety rules, registration fees and is also used to calculate port dues and fees for the transit of canals. Gross tonnage is the measurement of total volume of all enclosed spaces in a ship.

## Illegal fishing

Illegal fishing activities occur when the legal framework related to fishing or a fishery is violated, including, for example, the law, regulations and licence conditions. This can apply to fisheries that are under the jurisdiction of a coastal State or to high seas fisheries regulated by RFMOs. Offences commonly include: fishing without authorisation (i.e. fishing

licence); fishing out of season or in closed areas; harvesting prohibited species; using banned fishing gear; and, catching more than the set quota.

## Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Acronym: IUU

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a broad term that captures a wide variety of fishing activity. IUU fishing is found in all types and dimensions of fisheries; it occurs both on the high seas and in areas within national jurisdiction. It concerns all aspects and stages of the capture and utilisation of fish, and it may sometimes be associated with organized crime.

IUU fishing is a broad term that covers three activities:

- Fishing that is illegal is fishing that occurs without permission in waters of a foreign state, fishing that is in contravention with CMMs (conservation management measures), and in violation of laws.
- Unreported fishing is fishing that hasn't been reported or misreported.
- Unregulated fishing is fishing that occurs by non-regulated fleets in management zones where they are not a party to and fishing in areas where no CMMs occur or regulation from an authority.

IUU fishing undermines national and regional efforts to conserve and manage fish stocks and, as prevents progress towards achieving the goals of long-term sustainability and responsibility.

For more information go to: <https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/background/what-is-iuu-fishing/en/>

## IMO number

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) ship identification number is made of the three letters "IMO" followed by the seven-digit number assigned to all ships. This is a unique seven-digit number that is assigned to propelled, sea-going merchant ships of 100 GT and above upon keel laying. Having a unique number assigned that stays with the vessel through transfer of ownership makes identification of vessels easier. It also allows for better data management in relation to keeping track of IUU fishing vessels and tracking in AIS.

For more information go to: <https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/MSAS/Pages/IMO-identification-number-scheme.aspx>

## Innocent passage

Innocent passage is the navigation through the territorial sea without entering internal waters or calling to port. Innocent passage is innocent as long as it doesn't hamper the peace, good order and security of the coastal state and conform to the other laws of UNCLOS. Allowing ships to traverse through the coastal waters of a state is important for maritime ship traffic both merchant and fisheries alike. Without innocent passage shipping across the oceans would be extremely difficult and time consuming and almost impossible.

[https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/part2.htm](https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/part2.htm)

## Interagency cooperation

Interagency involves two or more agencies working together in partnership. Systematic cooperation between fisheries officers and officers in other agencies is vital for effective

implementation of port State measures, vessel inspection and investigation of illegalities and crimes in the fisheries sector.

## Logbook

Logbooks are a record of daily catch information from fishing boats. They are designed to provide a continuous record of fishing operations. They may be both digital as well as analog. They can contain information about when and where the fishing occurs, gear type, composition of catch, and encounters with endangered species. For management and MCS authorities a logbook provides a detailed and accurate data about the fishing vessel and its activities.

## Memorandum of understanding

Acronym: MoU

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) is a bilateral cooperation tool used in fisheries. A MoU is a non-binding agreement based on moral, political commitments. They provide key support to international fisheries cooperation, governance and management.

## Monitoring, control and surveillance

Acronym: MCS

Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) are the enforcement measures required to ensure effective enforcement of fishing activities. Monitoring is the continuous requirement for the measurement of fishing effort. Control is the regulatory conditions under which exploitation of marine resource can be conducted. Surveillance is the degree and types of observations required to maintain compliance with the regulatory controls imposed on fishing activities.

## Observer

A fisheries observer is independently hired, and professionally trained official deployed on fishing and transshipment vessels to collect scientific data or to check for compliance to conservation and management measures. Data collected may include information on catch composition, bycatch estimation and collection of biological data on target and bycatch species. The observer will be on deck collecting samples and recording number and weight of fish caught.

## Piracy

Piracy is an illegal act, broadly defined as robbery on the high seas (robbery occurring within the 12nm limit is treated as a crime of robbery under the laws of the coastal state). Acts of piracy threaten maritime security by endangering, in particular, the welfare of seafarers and the security of navigation and commerce. These criminal acts may result in the loss of life, physical harm or hostage-taking of seafarers, significant disruptions to commerce and navigation, financial losses to shipowners, increased insurance premiums and security costs, increased costs to consumers and producers, and damage to the marine environment.

## Port of convenience / port of non-compliance

Port of convenience much like flags of convenience do the same thing. They allow for the landing of IUU fish. By not following port regulation of the state and international treaties ports of non-compliance/convenience allow IUU vessels to unload their catch.

It allows for IUU fishing vessels to land their product and sell it moving IUU fish into the market. This enhances and propagates IUU fishing in the region as they have a safe port where they can unload goods.

## Port State Measures Agreement

Acronym: PSMA

See entry for The Agreement on Port State Measures

## Port States

Port States control whom they allow to use their port for offloading, transshipment and for servicing of the vessel and crew. Preventing illegal catches from being landed at the first point of landing is important to stop illegal fishing because it becomes more difficult to detect illegalities afterwards. International standards require Port States to control and monitor fishing vessels entering and using their ports and fish being moved through their ports.

For more information go to: <https://stopillegal fishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/HTSIF-01-Port-State-Leaflet-ENG-WEB.pdf>

## Regional fisheries body

Acronym: RFB

Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) are a mechanism through which States or organizations that are parties to an international fishery agreement or arrangement work together towards the conservation, management and/or development of fisheries. Key subjects and issues of importance to RFBs include management of fisheries, the application of the ecosystem approach, the minimization of bycatch and IUU fishing, science and research, institutional or organization matters, application of the precautionary approach, and transparency in decision-making processes.

For more information go to: <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/rfb>

## Regional fisheries management organization

Acronym: RFMO

The regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) are the international organizations regulating regional fishing activities in the high seas. These bodies can manage specific species such as tuna as well as stocks in a geographical areas or advisory positions.

## Risk assessment

Risk assessment is a key process as part of MCS activity and informs decisions on which vessels to inspect, licence, flag or allow port access to, are based on the likelihood of noncompliance from available information.

## Shark finning

Shark finning is simply the practice of removing a shark's fins from the body for separate sale, the rest of the body is discarded at sea. Shark finning is one of the biggest dangers facing stocks of sharks worldwide. With shark stocks being heavily exploited shark finning is a wasteful and unnecessary practice.

## Shell company

A shell company provides anonymity for the ultimate beneficial owner. It is a company that is part of an interconnecting chain of other shell companies often in multiple jurisdictions and its main purpose to hide the identity of the owner. It is often used in tax evasion, criminal activity and money laundering. Not knowing who the beneficial owner of a company reduces the effectiveness of fisheries and criminal controls.

## Stateless vessel

Stateless vessels – including fishing vessels and carrier vessels – commonly feature in cases of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and related crimes. They sail without a flag – i.e., are not registered in any country – or with two or more flags, using them according to convenience. Vessels are legally required to have nationality to operate anywhere. They acquire the nationality of a State by being registered only in that State. This is essential because the flag State is responsible for effective control over its nationals and vessels, including on the high seas.

For more information go to: <https://stopillegalfishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/HTSIF-STATELESS-VESSELS-English.pdf>

## Traceability

A system able to follow the movement of fish and fishery products through specified stages of capture, processing, and distribution. Traceability is a mechanical process documenting all the stages of production and distribution that food products go through.

## Transshipment

Transshipment (or transshipment) is the transfer of catch from one fishing vessel to either another fishing vessel or to a vessel used solely for the carriage of cargo. The point when catch moves from the fishing vessel and enters the supply chain provides a critical point to monitor and check that it has been caught legally and in compliance with national and regional regulations.

## Unique vessel identifier

Acronym: UVI

Numbering system so that each vessel can be individually identified through a unique number that is retained by the vessel forever, regardless of flag, ownership or vessel status changes. A UVI, once assigned, remains with the vessel for ever and is the basis for its identification.



## Vessel identity fraud

Vessel identity fraud is used to hide fishing and operational history and activity; reduce costs; misinform and confuse licensing, flagging and inspection authorities; cover up history of IUU fishing and evade sanctions when caught violating regulations or breaking laws. It may involve document forgery and changing the markings and identifiers on the fishing vessel.

## Vessel monitoring system

Acronym: VMS

VMS is a satellite surveillance system primarily used to monitor the location and movement of commercial fishing vessels within a countries jurisdiction and treaty areas. The system uses satellite and cellular based communications from onboard transceiver units, which certain vessels are required to carry. The transceiver units send position reports that include vessel identification, time, date, and location, and are mapped and displayed on the end user's computer screen.

# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AIS</b>	Automatic identification system
<b>AREP</b>	Advanced request for entry to port
<b>BMZ</b>	The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>CMM</b>	Conservation and management measure
<b>CS</b>	Call sign
<b>EEZ</b>	Exclusive economic zone
<b>FAD</b>	Fish aggregation device
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>GRT</b>	Gross registered tonnage
<b>GRV</b>	Global Record of Vessels
<b>GT</b>	Gross tonnage
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMO</b>	International Maritime Organization
<b>ITU</b>	International Telecommunication Union
<b>IUU</b>	Illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)
<b>MCS</b>	Monitoring, control and surveillance
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of understanding
<b>PSMA</b>	Agreement on Port State Measures
<b>PSM-SIF</b>	Port State Measures to Stop Illegal Fishing
<b>RFB</b>	Regional fisheries body
<b>RFMO</b>	Regional fisheries management organization
<b>UNCLOS</b>	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
<b>UVI</b>	Unique vessel identifier
<b>VMS</b>	Vessel monitoring system



Stop Illegal Fishing online courses provide practical support to fisheries officials.

This glossary has been developed with support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), through the Port State Measures to Stop Illegal Fishing (PSM-SIF) project.

For more information go to:  
[www.stopillegalfishing.com](http://www.stopillegalfishing.com)