



20. ANNEXURES

COOK ISLANDS - Press April 8 2025

Cook Islands joins Pacific nations to enhance tuna Fisheries surveillance

Tuesday 8 April 2025 | Written by Supplied | Published in Local, National

Cook Islands was represented by Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) observer programme manager, Bermey Ariihee, and policy officer Epeli Maisema, along with Cook Islands Police Maritime Surveillance Division Senior Sergeant Tuariki Henry, captain of patrol boat Te Kukupa II.

“Our priorities this year are advancing the development of digital systems such as electronic licensing and bolstering the aerial surveillance programme which supports our patrol boat and boarding and inspection activities. This will enhance our capability to control fishing activities across our vast waters and beyond,” shared Ariihee.



Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) continues to play a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of our tuna fisheries, which was the basis of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) hosted MCS working group, held in Honiara, Solomon Islands from 24 March to 4 April.

Discussions included the implementation of the FFA Regional MCS Strategy that highlighted areas where the Cook Islands MCS programmes could be systematically strengthened, and where collaboration with Pacific neighbours and MCS partners could be augmented to enhance surveillance and enforcement activities.

MMR’s Secretary Pamela Maru stated: “Integrated information management systems enable us to share and access near-real time fisheries information and can automate analyses so that we are using more of the data we collect to inform where we target our efforts at sea, but also within our regulatory frameworks.”

“As our lens on MCS broadens, particularly with the human and social dimensions, it is important that we are able to use data to monitor who and how people are engaged in the fisheries sector, including where we need more closer collaboration with border and enforcement agencies that share a role in ensuring fair and safe working conditions.”

This annual Working Group provides the opportunity for regional MCS practitioners to identify and assess emerging issues, share experiences and coordinate resourcing and regional monitoring and surveillance operations. It serves as a platform to discuss operational and technical matters that can inform MCS and fisheries management policy and programme development at the national and regional levels.

The MCS working group follows on from the Regional Observer Coordinators Workshop (ROCW) hosted here in Rarotonga from 25 to 28 February, and chaired by Ariihee, where recommendations to the MCS Working Group were formulated from discussions on fisheries observer data collection, observer safety and training, biological sampling techniques, electronic reporting, development and use of emerging technology, and strategic planning for the future of observer programmes.