PHOTO MANUAL
FOR FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT

THE USE OF CAMERAS
IN FISHERIES OPERATIONS
The Photo Manual for Fisheries Enforcement has been produced by Stop Illegal Fishing and TMT as part of their support to the FISH-i Africa and West Africa Task Forces.

FISH-i Africa is an initiative by eight East African countries and Stop Illegal Fishing supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts and a Technical Team made up of Stop Illegal Fishing, NFDS and TMT.

The West Africa Task Force brings together the six member countries of the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) to tackle illegal fishing and fisheries crime. The Task Force is facilitated by the FCWC Secretariat and supported by a Technical Team that includes TMT, Stop Illegal Fishing and NFDS with funding from Norad.

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Photographs play a vital role in identifying vessels that are involved in illegal fishing and fisheries crime. By gathering information about the appearance, identity and operations of fishing vessels we are collecting evidence that may prove crucial for investigations – for example, documenting transhipment, recording which vessels operate together and establishing vessel identity fraud.

Access to good quality photographs of vessels can enable us to identify where this is happening, and will enable national authorities to verify that the vessels they are licensing are using the correct documentation.

The use of multiple identities by a fishing vessel or incidents where multiple vessels share one identity, in order to circumvent regulation and avoid paying access fees has become increasingly apparent over recent years. The ability to analyse different photographs in order to identify vessels is crucial, and can lead to vessel identification from photos even when markings are not clearly captured.

Photographs can also indicate compliance issues such as incorrect gear and transhipment activity.

The ability to take and analyse photographs are important skills and cameras are an essential tool for anyone involved in fisheries monitoring and enforcement including fisheries inspectors, observers, MCS staff, field staff, the Coastguard and community groups.
There are two main types of cameras available. Traditional film cameras capture light onto photographic film, which is processed with chemicals in order to produce photographs. Film cameras are challenging to use for fisheries work as they are difficult to store safely and it can be expensive to process the film. They are also becoming more and more difficult to have processed.

For fisheries operations, you should use a digital camera. Digital cameras use an electronic image sensor to capture images, which are stored on a digital memory card and can then be uploaded and saved on a computer hard drive.

A digital camera allows you to review a photograph as soon as you have taken it, so you can ensure you get good pictures while the opportunity is available. They also enable you to take many more pictures than a film camera (the actual number is dependent on the size of the memory card). Below are examples of digital cameras and a memory card.
Before you take any photographs, you must ensure that your camera is set up correctly. It is extremely important that camera settings are correct.

For example, if the date is set incorrectly then the wrong date will appear on your photographs and it will not be possible to use them as evidence in any legal proceedings.

All cameras are different – consult the instruction manual of your camera to find out how to adjust the settings. However, all digital cameras should include settings for time, date, time zone, and all of these need to be checked before you start to use the camera.

Image size can also be adjusted, and should be set at maximum to ensure quality of photos. The only exception to this is where you have limited storage space on the memory (SD) card on the camera, and you will not be able to upload the photos for some time. In these circumstances the image size can be adjusted downwards temporarily to save on memory space, but should still be at a level that the images are clear, particularly identification details such as name or call sign.

ISO value should be set to automatic – this will give good photos even in poor light conditions. If there is an auto function on your camera, this is selected automatically.

Remember...

All cameras are different – consult the instruction manual of your camera to find out how to adjust the settings.
All digital cameras have various settings that you can adjust for the different conditions that you encounter (for example, different levels of light) and for different types of photos (for example, regular format versus panoramic photos).

However, all cameras can also be set to Automatic, which means that they camera will automatically assess the conditions (light, focus, distance from subject) and choose the best settings for the photo. 95% of the time, using the Automatic setting will produce the photos that you need, so it is recommended that you use this function.

When choosing the subject and angle of your photograph, it is essential that the important information, or the story you want to tell, is all in frame. Photos of fishing vessels should show clearly any identifying markings (the name, call sign, home port). If possible, take photos from each angle (bow, stern, port, starboard) as this will give us a better chance to identify similarities and differences with other vessel photos, which is particularly important when it comes to understanding vessel identity fraud. Photos that show the configuration of fishing gear on deck can help to identify a vessel’s activities and whether it has recently been involved in fishing or may be used as a carrier vessel.
You can use the ‘rule of thirds’ to make photos that are appealing and easy to look at. The rule of thirds states that any picture can be divided into three segments vertically and three segments horizontally. Any major features in the background of the photo (for example the horizon, or a large building) should be located on or near one of the dividing lines between these segments, rather than in the middle of the photo. However, it is more important that your photo contains all the information you need – if this isn’t compatible with using the rule of thirds, don’t worry about it.

Most of the photographs you take will be outdoors and bright sunlight, clouds and rain can all make it difficult to take good photos. Getting the right amount and source of light is essential for taking good photos.

It can be particularly challenging to take clear photos of people and it helps to get as much natural light as possible on people’s faces before you take the photo.

Natural light works best but a flash can also be used where there isn’t enough natural light available – at night, in dark places or inside when lighting is not sufficient. Note that the automatic setting on a camera will often try to use flash when it isn’t necessary, which results in overly bright photos. You can override this by turning flash off on your camera, but don’t forget to manually switch it on again when you need to take a photo in low light.

**REMEMBER…**

Flash is normally only effective for photos where the object is 3-4 meters away. Using flash when taking a photo of a vessel 50 meters away will not work.
Metadata is the information that describes each photo that you take.

It includes key information such as the date the photo was taken, the size of the photo, the file type and in cameras with GPS, the location where the photo was taken. Metadata forms a key part of the evidence that is collected when you take a photo.

Once the photos have been uploaded to your computer, you can see a basic version of the metadata by holding the cursor over the image or file icon. This should show information such as image type, date, rating, dimensions and size. A complete summary of the metadata can be found by right clicking the image or icon and then clicking on properties.
The taking of photographs is only useful if they are stored and used appropriately. It is very easy to accidentally delete digital files, lose the camera they are stored on or file them somewhere and forget about them.

To make sure you get good use out of the photos that you take it is essential that you:

- Upload them from the camera to a computer hard drive as soon as possible after taking them
- Store them in a location and give them file names that will enable you to find them in the future
- Make a backup copy that is stored on a separate hard drive

You can upload pictures from your camera to a computer hard-drive in one of two ways:

- Digital cameras come with a USB cord that can be used to connect your camera to a computer. The first time you plug this in, the software needed to upload photos will automatically be uploaded to the computer. The files will be then be uploaded to the computer, can be opened and copied to the hard drive.
• Some laptops have an SD card reader built in to the computer. If this is the case, you the easiest way to upload photos is by removing the memory card from your camera and insert it into the laptop. This will open in the same way as a memory stick. Find the folder that contains images in the memory card and copy these to the hard drive. Don’t forget to replace the card in the camera!

Many of the photos that you take will not be useful or will lose their usefulness – because they are out of focus, don’t show the right information or are duplicates of other photos. Photos take up a lot of memory space on a hard drive, so it is important to delete any that are not of use.

Keeping a photo log

A photo log form should be used to record photos taken over the course of a single day or operation. For example, separate photo log forms could be used to keep a record of photos taken during the course of a single vessel or port inspection, or for each separate day of an at-sea patrol.

A basic photo log form should include space to record the date, name of photographer, location of the operation, the equipment used, if the camera is GPS enabled, and a short description of the operation. There should then be room to record information about each photograph taken – the filename and a very brief description of photo contents (for example ‘interior bridge of HUNG SHENG NO. 88’; fish-hold of HUNG SHENG NO. 88). One of the advantages of digital cameras is that multiple photos can be taken; if this is the case record the photo number range from first to last against a common description.

An example of a photo log template is available as an Annex on pages 42-43 of this manual. This provides the fields described above, and provides a simple Standard Operating Procedure checklist to guide the process. Recording this information in a standardised format as soon as the photos are taken ensures that you have an accurate record, in case any of your photographs are required as evidence in court.

However, once photos have been deleted from a hard drive they are gone forever so be 100% certain that you don’t need them before you hit delete.

Also, get into the habit of analysing photos as you take them and deleting those that you know are not good enough from the camera as you go. Keep any that you are not sure about to look at more closely on a computer screen.
PHOTOS OF FISHING VESSELS – WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Vessel Identity Markings

You will be taking photographs of many different types and sizes of fishing vessels, but some general guidelines apply in all cases and there are some key pieces of information that apply to most types of vessel:

- **The vessel name** – should be written on the side of the hull and the stern of the vessel
- **The home port** – usually written under the vessel name on the stern of the vessel, may also be on the side of the hull for vessels such as trawlers or purse seiners that use the stern for operations
- **The call-sign** – written on the hull of the vessel or on the side of the bridge
- **National registration number** – sometimes written on the hull of the vessel, occasionally on the bridge
- **IMO number** – this is the ultimate vessel identifier, as it remains the same throughout the lifetime of a vessel, though currently many fishing vessels do not carry one. Larger vessels, such as reefers and some purse seiners, often have their IMO number visible on the hull or bridge.

The following diagrams show where the name, call sign, home port and IMO number are typically visible on a fishing vessel; however the location of this information can vary significantly between vessels so you should always check to ensure that you are capturing this crucial information in any photographs that you take.
In the image below we can see vessel identity markings on all three vessels, circled in red.

- On the left hand vessel we can see the name and national registration number are marked on the hull near the bow.
- On the centre vessel is the name.
- On the right hand vessel we can see the vessel name on the hull near the stern.

For all three vessels however we would want to get closer images of these details to ensure they are captured clearly.

As well as trying to capture whatever identifying information you can see (names, numbers) it is also very useful to get pictures of a vessel from multiple angles (wherever possible). Comparison of photographs is one of the most important tools for understanding identity fraud (when one vessel uses multiple names or several vessels share one name). Having photos of a vessel from different angles increases the likelihood that you will be able to compare it with other vessel photos.

The following pages show examples of photographs of fishing vessels showing their vessel identity markings.
Starboard-side view of a purse seine vessel. The vessel name and home port are clearly visible on the hull.
Some vessels, particularly larger ones like reefers and some purse seiners, have their IMO number visible somewhere on the hull or bridge. The IMO number is the most important vessel identifier, as it remains the same throughout a vessel’s lifetime. If you can see one, it’s important that you capture it on camera. In this picture (a purse seiner) you can just see the IMO number on the side of the bridge, the second picture shows it closer up.
Previous markings

Sometimes a previous name, call-sign, home port or similar is legible underneath the most recent version. If you can capture these in a photograph it can be very useful for identifying vessels and investigating vessel histories.

Sometimes you can clearly see the former name and other details of a vessel under the most recent set of information. In this case, we can see that the vessel has had a name change from SHENG FU to SHEN FU. Further we can see behind both the Roman and Chinese characters that there are indications of even earlier names.

Look carefully for and photograph evidence of previous names and other identification markings on vessels.
Chinese characters

These are important for establishing the name of a vessel and can also be translated to aid with identification so should be clearly captured if possible.

A longliner viewed from the stern. Vessel name in Roman and Chinese characters are clearly visible. Chinese characters can also be translated to aid with identification so should be clearly captured if possible.
In this picture we can see the vessel names in Chinese and Roman letters and we can also see the vessel registration numbers (CT6...). It can be particularly difficult to identify Chinese and Taiwanese vessels by their names as there is huge variation in how the Chinese characters are written in Roman letters, so capturing any numbers visible on the hull is particularly important.
Fishing gear

Is there evidence of fishing gear or recent fishing activity on deck?

These former fishing vessels have been reconfigured to act as mini-reefer vessels - all fishing gear has been removed from the deck and the tires are used as fenders when fishing vessels come alongside to tranship their catch.

Fenders

Large numbers of fenders on deck or on the hull can be an indication that the vessel has engaged in transhipment.

The vessel on the left is a former longliner which has been reconfigured to act as a mini-reefer vessel. Instead of longline gear with buoys, the stern is used to store fenders that are used when other vessels come alongside to tranship their catch.

The vessel below has markings on the side which indicates that the vessel has been involved in transhipment activity.
Storage materials

Some types of fish (like tuna) are generally stored directly in the hull or transferred off the vessel in nets. But other types of fish (such as demersal species, small pelagics, crustaceans and cephalopods) are stored or transported off the vessel in sacks or boxes which may have identifying markings on them (for example the vessel or company name). If it’s possible to record this in a photograph, this can prove very useful to understanding a vessel’s ownership and company connections.

Some catch may be stored or transported in packaging (crates, sacks, boxes) that can have useful identifying information, like company names or logos.
Company logos or the ‘livery’ (the design on the vessel’s funnel or bow)

These can be distinctive and unique to a particular fishing company.

Look for company logos that might be useful to identify the ownership of a vessel, like this one seen on a purse seiner.

Notice the distinctive livery on the funnels of these longliners. Some companies use a particular livery to identify their ships. Capturing this can be important to help understand ownership of vessels.
Structural features of the vessel

A longliner viewed from the stern. You can clearly see the call-sign on the hull and also another number (FC883) that could be useful for identification purposes. Notice how the shape of the ‘window’ in the stern varies between this and the adjacent vessel – this part of the vessel can vary significantly in design and is one of the key areas to identify similarities and differences between longliners.
Bottom trawlers, particularly those that fish inshore in Inshore Exclusions Zones, will frequently try to hide their identity markings with nets or similar, such as in the image below where the name has been hidden. These types of cases highlight why a complete set of photos and capturing images of the structural features of every vessel is crucial in order to be able to identify those that have hidden or mixed identity markings.
PHOTOS OF FISHING VESSELS – WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Vessels operating together

A photograph of transhipment that records the identity of the vessel that is transhipping fish and the identity of the receiving vessel can be a crucial piece of evidence to help understand who ultimately received a catch of fish and the business relationships between different fishing companies. In this photograph of a purse seiner transhipping to a reefer vessel we can see the name and home port of both vessels.
Photos can also be useful to document equipment, documents, catch and other items found on board fishing vessels that are of interest to records, or could be used as evidence in an investigation and prosecution of a vessel involved in illegal activities.

**Equipment**

This could include instruments on the bridge, laptops and other electronics, safety equipment, and similar. Screens of equipment can be captured with relevant information as well.

**Bridge checklist:**

- All documents relevant to vessel registration and ownership, both current and historical
- All relevant pages of the fishing log, navigation log and/or freezer log books
- Licenses and authorisations
- Any other paperwork of relevance to fishing operations and landings
- Crew list and senior officer’s passports
- All relevant navigational equipment – AIS, VMS Mobile Transceiver Unit, GPS, radar, FAD monitoring equipment etc.
- Any other equipment of interest, for example Captain’s laptop
- Paper charts if they show operational areas
Vessel checklist:

- All fishing gear
- Navigational equipment
- Fish species
- Fish packaging
- Fish Hold
- Any other subject of interest or that can be used as evidence of operations

Documents

A camera can be used to take ‘copies’ of documents and log books. It can be difficult to focus on individual documents, but it is crucial to ensure that all photos are in focus so that they can be clearly read later. Take multiple photos of each document to ensure that this is achieved. You may have to switch the flash on or off to achieve this, depending on the light conditions.
Catch

It is useful to take photos of the individual species found on board vessels, particularly if there is some question about whether they are labelled incorrectly or if they are not a legal target species. Wider angle photos of fish in cartons, or loose fish in a hold, can also provide a picture to back up estimates of total catch on a vessel.

PLEASE NOTE

If a vessel is suspected of illegal activity, the Captain and other senior officers cabin should be inspected.

Take photos of individual species, especially those that may have been caught in violation of management measures, to be used as evidence.
Labelling

Where possible it is good practise to place a marker in a photo that provides a physical reference point. INTERPOL have developed a useful tool that can be used for this purpose (see photo). This provides not only a handy scale to give scale perspective in the photo, but also allows the date and other information to be written in by hand to provide a reference point. This reduces the ability for there to be any legal challenge to the information contained in the photo.

However even if you do not have a tool such as this, it is still useful to use a reference point in the photo. For example, you can use the same pen in a series of photos, which will provide a common scale reference.
Photographs of fishing vessels often form an important part of investigations into illegal fishing and can become crucial evidence at trial, if a case results in prosecution. Investigations often hinge on comparison of photographs of the offending vessel with pre-existing photographs of known vessels to try to determine the identity of the vessel involved in the case.
CASE STUDY

The PANOFI DISCOVERER

A purse seiner was photographed fishing in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Liberia during a period when no purse seiners were licensed to operate. In this case, the only photographs available (which were taken from a patrol aircraft) did not clearly show the vessel’s name, call sign or any other obvious identifying features. However, comparison with photographs of purse seiners known to be operating in the region enabled analysts to identify the vessel on the basis of physical characteristics.

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There are a number of key features to look for when comparing photographs of fishing vessels, however you should bear in mind that some of these are likely to be fixed (for example the shape of the hull and the number of windows on the bridge) and others can change (for example the colour of the hull and the placement of gear and life rafts). Features that can be useful to identify vessels (other than the obvious name, call sign, IMO etc.) include:

- Number and placement of windows in the hull, on the bridge and on the watchtower.
- The shape of the hull and particularly configuration of the stern – longliners can vary significantly in the configuration of the stern gangway and purse seiners can show variation in the design of the stern area where support vessels are launched.
- Look for features that can vary in shape and number between vessels, for example count the number of uprights on a railing or compare the number and position of any cleats, spotlights or other features that are visible.
- As well as comparing the colour and any livery patterns painted on the hull or funnel of a vessel, you should also look for any distinctive markings caused by rust or general wear and tear.
- Look for the placement and type of radio antennas and other visible external equipment, but keep in mind that these may be replaced and change in style. This is particularly the case if you are comparing recent with old photographs.
In a case that occurred in the Western Indian Ocean in 2014, fisheries authorities in Mauritius were able to use photographs to determine that a vessel was using a fraudulent identity during a port call in Port Louis.

This shows the importance of regularly taking, and saving, photographs of vessels that visit port – because inspectors in Mauritius were diligent and had photos from previous inspections, they were able to do a comparison and determine that the longliner looked significantly different to a vessel using the same name (the ‘real’ vessel) that had called into port several days previously, and was in fact using a fraudulent identity. The Technical Team was then able to compare photographs of the second fraudulent vessel with photographs of other longliners known to be operating in the region and identify a likely candidate.

Analysis of AIS signals was used to verify the photo evidence and suggested that the ‘match’ was correct. The following photos show the vessel that called in to Port Louis (photos A and C) and photos of the same vessel using a different identity that were taken several months previously (photos B and D), with key similarities highlighted.
In these pictures of the stern of the vessel in question, we can see that there are distinctive markings on the hull caused presumably either by rust or effluent. We can also see that the number and placement of lights in the gangway is the same, and the stern railing has the same number of uprights (5 on each side of the central divide). More generally, you can see that the shape of the stern is quite different from that of the second longliner alongside in photo B. This is a very obvious feature that can vary significantly in longliners.
In these pictures of the bow of the vessel in question, we can see that the number of windows on the wheelhouse is the same (seven). We can also see that the design of the stairway is the same, with a distinctive upright post at the top of the stairs.
This analysis was made possible by the fact that fisheries authorities had not only taken photographs of vessels in port but were also willing to share them to assist with the investigation.

This shows the importance of not only taking good photographs but also logging, saving and ideally sharing them, to ensure the best outcome for investigations of illegal fishing.
The NAHAM-4

An in port inspection of an Omani tuna longliner with the name NAHAM-4 conducted by South African authorities revealed inconsistencies between the amount of fish held on-board and the supporting documentation. Whilst trying to confirm the identity of the vessel, investigations exposed at least four different vessels that had been operating with the name NAHAM-4 between 2010 and 2013.

Comparisons of photographs of a number of vessels showed significant differences in their structure and inconsistencies between the call signs painted on the vessels. Photo A shows a vessel photographed at sea in April 2012, the name NAHAM-4 was clearly marked alongside the call sign A4DK5, this call sign is officially recorded with IOTC as the call sign for the NAHAM-3.

The NAHAM-4 seized in Cape Town, Photo B, had the correct call sign painted on the side, but showed obvious structural differences to the vessel shown in Photo A - with differences in the number of windows on the bridge, masthead shapes and anchor holes.

Photographs were also compared from Oman in August 2010, at sea in April 2012, on the synchrolift in Cape Town in July 2012 and in Cape Town between October 2012 and July 2013 these showed that at least four different vessels had been operating with the name NAHAM-4. The vessel photographed in Oman appeared to be larger than the vessel seized in Cape Town and the original tonnage certificate was for a vessel even smaller than the seized vessel. This suggested that perhaps none of these vessels was in fact the ‘real’ NAHAM-4 - meaning there may be as many as five vessels bearing this name.
The RAY / YELE

In July 2016 a fishing vessel anchored off Lomé Port was identified as a potential IUU listed vessel. The vessel was suspected to be the RAY (IMO 6607666) and was IUU listed under several fisheries management organizations, due to unauthorized fishing in their respective management areas. These include the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO), and North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC).

The vessel had notoriously changed it’s name and flag frequently and historically the vessel targeted high value Patagonian toothfish illegally in the southern ocean.

As two vessels were broadcasting on AIS with the same MMSI, photo analysis was conducted by the West Africa Task Force (WATF) Technical Team to establish the true identity of the vessel in Lomé. A comparison of photos taken in Lomé in July 2016 and photos available from CCAMLR and Marine Traffic confirmed that the vessel in Lomé was the vessel formerly known as RAY and now re-named YELE.

As well as the points identified in the image comparison on the next page, the image comparison also identified:

• Hull identical configuration and features.
• Life ring on bridge in identical location.
• Forward mast placement same.
• Identical side cut and opening door.
• 4 hull ports in forward hull.
• Mast head identical. Similar instruments.
Two cranes in identical location

Funnel placement and shape the same

Three drainage cuts in upper deck, plus rust stain from draining aft of these

Same number of windows on bridge
Photographs of fishing vessels are an essential part of the fisheries management and enforcement toolbox. They can help us to confirm the identity of fishing vessels, avoid identity fraud, understand vessel operations, investigate vessel ownership and document illegal activities.

Photos can be used as key evidence in legal proceedings and form the backbone of investigations into illegal fishing.

In order to do all these things, photos need to:

- contain the right information
- be good quality and legible
- be saved somewhere safe and traceable
- be available to specialist investigators and analysts

Sharing photos of fishing vessels helps stop illegal fishing.

Task Force members are encouraged to share vessel images via their communication platforms.

Both Stop Illegal Fishing and TMT work to compile photos of the global fishing fleet. To assist this effort send your photos to:

_visible@stopillegalfishing.com_
_and_ info@tm-tracking.org_
Date: 

Photographer Name: 

Location: 

Camera Type: 

GPS enabled: Yes [ ] No [ ]

Short description of activity: 

Standard Operating Procedure Checklist:

[ ] Ensure camera settings for date, time and other relevant functions are correctly set

[ ] If GPS enabled, ensure that this function is turned on

[ ] Enter date, photographer name, camera type, if the camera is GPS enabled, and a short description of the operation in ink

[ ] Begin taking photographs

[ ] As photographs are taken, record photo number and provide a short description

[ ] If a series of photographs are taken of the same subject, then record the first and last photo number in this range and provide a common description

A photo log is necessary for photos that may be used as evidence. This type of log is not necessary when one is, for example, taking general photos of vessels.
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HELP STOP VESSEL IDENTITY FRAUD.

Send your photos of fishing vessels to:
visible@stopillegalfishing.com and info@tm-tracking.org