

AQUATIC RESOURCES AUTHORITY OF PANAMA



TECHNICAL CIRCULAR USOROP N° 2025-001

TO: Shipowners, Operators, Captains and Resident Agents of the Panamanian fishing fleet engaged in International Service fishing-related activities

FROM: Unit for the Follow-Up of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations – USOROP

SUBJECT: Temporary suspension of activities in the NEAFC Convention area for the year 2026.

DATE: 24 November 2025

1. Background

During the 44th Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), held from 11 to 14 November 2025, the Members considered the renewal of Panama's status as a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNCP) for the year 2026. In the context of these discussions, some Members maintained divergent positions regarding the regulatory framework of the Commission itself applicable to transshipments at sea.

As a result of this process, it was not possible to reach consensus for the renewal of the status, and therefore Panama will not maintain the CNCP status during the year 2026, in accordance with the procedures established by the Commission.

2. Mandatory suspension of activities

As of the decision adopted by the Commission, all Panamanian vessels that have been operating in the area regulated by NEAFC must suspend all operations involving species or activities regulated by NEAFC before 23:59 hours UTC on 31 December 2025.

This operational cessation will be mandatory throughout the year 2026. The suspension will remain in effect until Panama submits a new application to recover the CNCP status and such application is formally approved by the Members. During this period, no Panamanian vessel may carry out regulated activities within the area of competence of NEAFC.

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3. Mandatory annual reporting

In order to consolidate the information corresponding to the 2025 operational year, Panamanian vessels that have conducted activities in the regulated area must submit their operation reports to the Fisheries Monitoring and Control Center (CCSP). This submission must be made through the official platforms enabled by ARAP.

These reports constitute an essential input to maintain traceability and ensure compliance with reporting and monitoring obligations that continue to apply, even during the period in which Panama does not hold CNCP status.

4. Confirmation of compliance

Vessels whose Commercial International Service Fishing License includes authorization to operate in the NEAFC area beyond 31 December 2025 must communicate in writing their agreement with the content of this circular. Each vessel must officially notify the cessation of activities in said area and request the Directorate-General for Planning and Integrated Management to modify its license in order to remove the reference to this RFMO.

These procedures must be sent using the established institutional channels: hsfs@arap.gob.pa, ordenacion@arap.gob.pa, ivc@arap.gob.pa and monitoreo@arap.gob.pa. The update will allow consistency to be maintained in the registry and prevent inconsistencies during the suspension period.

5. Warning regarding IUU activities

As of 1 January 2026, any Panamanian vessel detected carrying out activities regulated by NEAFC without authorization will be considered in violation for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

ARAP will apply the corresponding sanctions in accordance with current regulations and will follow up on any report derived from unauthorized activities.

For further information regarding this Technical Circular, please contact:

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