

REPORT



ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

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IRREGULARITIES IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF
VESSELS IN THE PORT OF MONTEVIDEO

2018



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The detection of numerous vessels that manipulate their identity transmitted by the AIS (Automatic Identification System), during their stay in the Port of Montevideo and their fishing operations, arouses the suspicion of covering illicit activities.

The AIS was created in order to improve the safety of navigation at sea, ensure traffic control and achieve rapid localization in the event of possible incidents. The vessels that intentionally manipulate their AIS transmission, either falsifying their identification data or modifying the positioning data, affect the entire system, since they pose a serious risk to the navigation safety of the rest of the vessels, and they make it very difficult for the authorities to control the activity in their ports and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)..

The AIS system is required by the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) of the International Maritime Organization, for all vessels of more than 300 tons gross tonnage¹ (in its Chapter V, the only one that applies to fishing vessels).

The AIS information is usually combined with that provided by another system, the VMS (Vessel Monitoring System), which is used specifically to monitor fishing operations in a given region.

The AIS consists of a VHF radio transmitter that, through a network of terrestrial antennas and other vessels, automatically transmits a series of vessel data, such as: name, type, GPS location, speed, registration MMSI (Maritime Mobile Service Identity), etc. The information transmitted by the AIS is understood as unique of each ship.

In cases in which the information transmitted by the AIS system is incorrect, it can be due to one of the following three reasons: a malfunction of the transmitter, an alteration of the information during its transmission, or an intentional modification for the purposes of transmitting false data².

The adulteration of the AIS information is not only used by vessels involved in illegal fishing, but also by those engaged in drug trafficking, arms trafficking, human trafficking, smuggling - or a combination of them. The statistics on the intentional manipulation of the AIS by fishing vessels are, among others, as follows³:

¹ <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/facilitation/documents/solas%20v%20on%20safety%20of%20navigation.pdf>

² <http://globalfishingwatch.org/data/when-vessels-report-false-locations/>
<http://globalfishingwatch.org/data/spoofing-one-identity-shared-by-multiple-vessels/>

³ <http://maritime-connector.com/news/general/ais-data-on-the-high-seas-an-analysis-of-the-magnitude-and-implications-of-growing-data-manipulation-at-sea/>



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- 1% of all vessels transmit a false identity.
- 44% of Chinese vessels manipulate the GPS position that the AIS transmits.
- 19% of the vessels that turn off the AIS do it to cover illicit acts.

In the case of fishing, hiding or falsifying the AIS information aims to not declare the catches, falsify the origin and/or the species caught, operate illegally in the EEZ of other countries or controlled by a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO), carry out illegal fishing within Marine Protected Areas, fish out of season or make transshipments on the high seas in a prohibited area, for example, within jurisdictional waters of Uruguay.

"44% of Chinese vessels manipulate the GPS position that the AIS transmits"

With the objective of detecting the presence of vessels possibly involved in illegal fishing and/or violations of Human Rights in the Port of Montevideo, and faced with the difficulties of face-to-face verification, Oceanosanos has resorted to identifying them through different AIS satellite location services, such as Marine Traffic, Big Ocean Data and Global Fishing Watch, as well as through the official site of the National Ports Administration (ANP), which belongs to the Uruguayan State

During the month analyzed, June 2018, irregularities were detected in the information transmitted by the ships in port.

La información relevada fue luego contrastada con los datos oficiales proporcionados a **Oceanosanos** por la ANP y la DINARA (Dirección Nacional de Recursos Acuáticos).

The information collected was then contrasted with the official data provided to Oceanosanos by the ANP and Uruguayan National Directorate of Aquatic Resources (DINARA).

During June, irregularities were detected in the information transmitted by the ships in port, so the study was limited to that specific month. Although in the past there have been irregular episodes, for example, that two vessels with the same name were present simultaneously at the port.

Among the different types of alterations and/or absence of identification of the foreign fishing vessels present in the Port of Montevideo in June 2018 we find:

- A. Different vessels moored or anchored in the port, simultaneously, and identified with the same name.



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- B. Different vessels moored or anchored in the port, simultaneously, and identified with the same MMSI identification name.
- C. Vessel moored or anchored in the port with the same name as another vessel located in another region of the world.
- E. Vessels that repeatedly change their identification name in the AIS during their stay in port.
- F. Vessel moored or anchored in the port with no name in its AIS, nor data that relates its registration with any origin or nationality.

These incidents have occurred simultaneously during the same month, as described in the following table, and in Figures 1-8:

SHIP NAME	IMO	MMSI	COMMENTS
200000666		200000666	It is believed to be Lu Rong Yuan Yu 828, ANP and DINARA have not provided IMO or MMSI registration to identify it.
HHH		900028533	Unnamed or unflagged ship. It is not registered in port by the ANP or by DINARA.
HHH		900028639	Unnamed or unflagged ship. It is not registered in port by the ANP or by DINARA.
LU RONG YUAN YU 828		412331017	Its AIS transmits the MMSI 200000666 that belongs to Lu Rong Yuan Yu 818.
LU RONG YUAN YU 976		412329434	The ANP and DINARA have not provided the IMO or MMSI registration to identify it.
LU RONG YUAN YU 977		412329435	The ANP and DINARA have not provided the IMO or MMSI registration to identify it.
LU RONG YUAN YU 978		412329436	Duplicated name. The ANP and DINARA have not provided the IMO or MMSI registration to identify it.
LU RONG YUAN YU 978		412329442	The same MMSI as 989, and duplicated name. The ANP and DINARA have not provided the IMO or MMSI registration to identify it.
LU RONG YUAN YU 989		412329442	The same MMSI as 978. The ANP and DINARA have not provided the IMO or MMSI registration to identify it.
ZHOUYU6		900028873	There is another one with the same name in another region of the world.

The Lu Rong Yuan Yu fleet has a history of irregularities. Between April 2017 and July 2018, four of the vessels of the group landed at the Port of Montevideo with two dead crew members, one crew member in a serious condition and two more with what they called “health conditions”. In February 2017, the Lu Rong Yuan Yu 988 was detained because of illegal fishing in Liberia; this same vessel, or a “twin” one, with exactly the same name and length, but different flag and identification entered the Port of Montevideo in July of 2018⁴.

⁴ <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/fishing-vessels-detained-in-covert-operation>



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Another seven Lu Rong Yuan Yu boats are listed as illegal fishing vessels by international organizations⁵.

In the case of the Fu Yuan Yu, in April 2016, six vessels entered the Port of Montevideo. Two were identified simultaneously with the same name, Fu Yuan Yu F86. There are no records on the ANP online site of the entry of any vessel under that denomination that year. Currently the existence of three vessels with the same or similar name can be identified: Fu Yuan Yu F86, Fu Yuan Yu F86, and Fu Yian Yu F86, two of them share the same MMSI and use a strangely similar calling code: BZLUR and BZ1UR.

On the other hand, numerous vessels were detected that only activate their AIS during their stay in port, while they deactivate it during their operations, behavior also associated with the covering of illicit activities.

When a vessel uses the registration identification of another one of the same shipowners, the same name of another boat or with almost imperceptible modifications, (for example, a switching between some upper- and lower-case letters, separating or joining different words), or modifies data of its AIS on innumerable occasions during the stay in port, any technical anomaly is immediately dismissed, since it is understood as a deliberate alteration.

When vessels of the same shipowner, operating for the same local logistics agent, falsify their AIS explicitly and repetitively, they show intentional systematic behavior, which implies the responsibility of the ship's captain, the shipowner and the local agent, in that the information transmitted differs from the information provided to the national authorities, and this data has the value of an affidavit.

Numerous vessels were detected that only activated their AIS during their stay in port, while they deactivated it during their operations, a behavior also associated with the covering of illicit activities.

Uruguay as a signatory to the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA)⁶ to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing has undertaken to comply with certain regulations and controls on the foreign fishing fleet entering the Port of Montevideo. The fact that the identity of the vessels is forged, as well as their presence or location, prevents compliance with the international commitment assumed.

The vessels that during their fishing operations intentionally disable the AIS so as not to

⁵ <https://www.npfc.int/npfc-iuu-vessel-list-0>
⁶ <http://www.fao.org/port-state-measures/es/>



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reveal their position, should not be accepted to operate in port, since it is not possible to verify that their cargo is not illegal fishing. The PSMA requires authorities to “Review the information provided by the vessel” including its true “Identity”.

Making use of the right to public information, in accordance with Law No. 18381 and Regulatory Decree No. 232, the data of foreign fishing vessels entering and leaving the Port of Montevideo must be public access, and should be published electronically by the national fisheries authority in charge of its authorization, since it is the body in charge of granting and not granting permission to enter the port, as well as inspecting them.

As a prior step to comply with this measure, authorities must ensure that vessels provide accurate information, and sanction, as required by the regulation, those who transmit adulterated information.

Milko Schwartzman
Oceanosanos

Collection: IUU Fishing in the South Atlantic
www.oceanosanos.org/Informes
Twitter: @oceanosanos
2018

Note: This analysis was carried out checking the traffic of the port for 30 days, a total of 8.2% of a year, with an intermittent and random frequency, so it is estimated that these irregularities occur, at least, 10 times more than the fraction analyzed. Likewise, some vessels in port may be present, but with AIS disconnected or not available, so that the authorities do not have access in real time to information on the presence of them, either in port or at anchor.

ANNEX

Satellite images of manifest irregularities in the AIS information of foreign fishing vessels during their stay in the Port of Montevideo are attached:



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Figure 1: Two vessels with the same name can be seen



Figure 2: Three vessels without AIS identification and with the same generic name "HHH" can be seen.

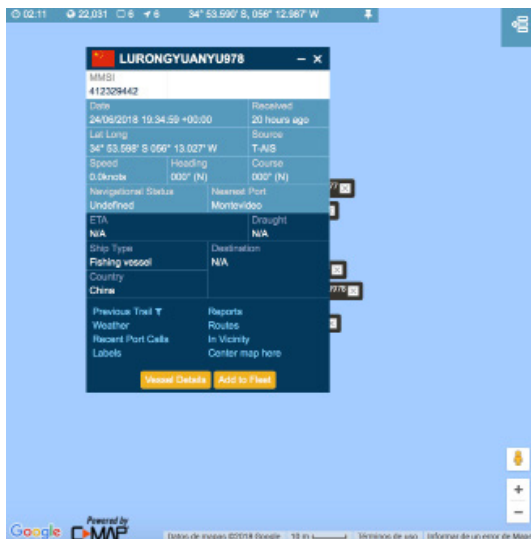


Figure 3

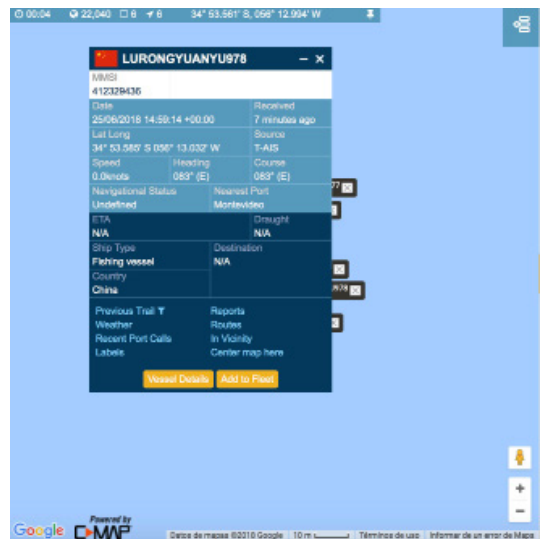


Figure 4: Two vessels with the same name can be seen. They differ in their MMSI code, that is, one of them transmits a false identity.



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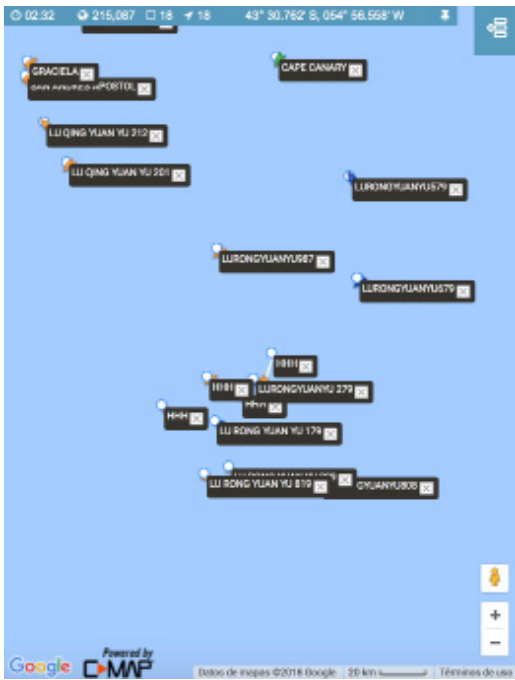


Figure 5: Four vessels without AIS identification can be seen, and with the same generic name "HHH".

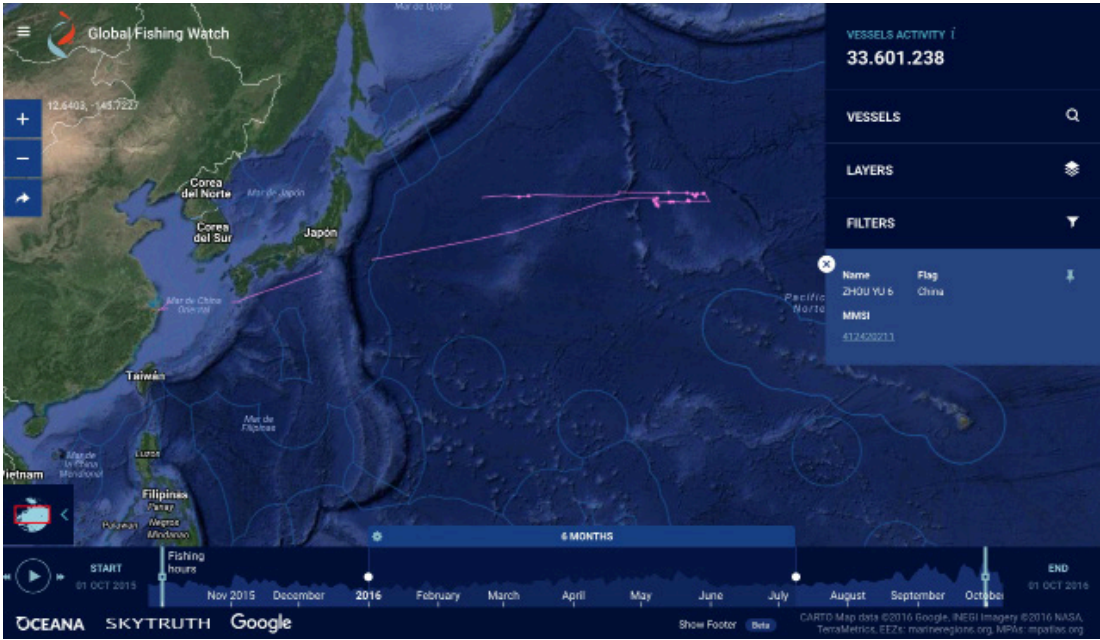


Figure 6

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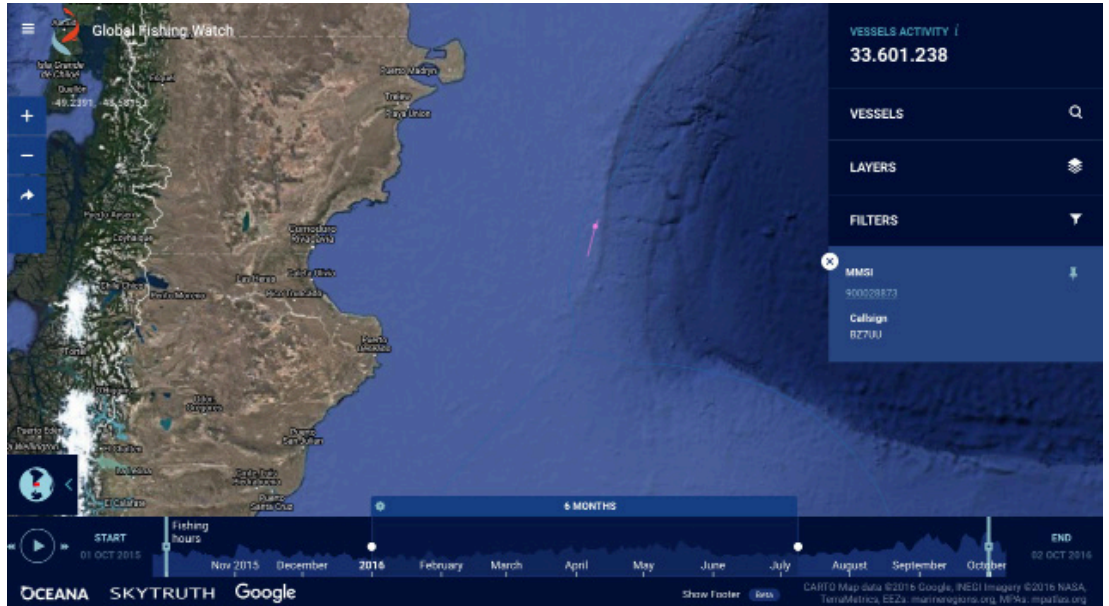


Figure 7



Figure 8:
A ZhouYu6 vessel that replicates the name of another one, which is located in another region of the word at the same time can be seen. Likewise, this vessel regularly disconnects its AIS during its fishing operations on the High Seas.