



Report from the Extended Scientific Committee

Purpose

To consider the Report of the Twenty-second Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC22), incorporating the Extended Scientific Committee (ESC).

Introduction

The Report of the Twenty-second Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC21) is provided to this meeting as CCSBT-EC/1710/Rep02.

The ESC Chair will provide a presentation of the ESC's report at this agenda item with a detailed summary of the advice and recommendations from the ESC. A copy of the ESC Chair's presentation is provided as paper CCSBT-EC/1710/18.

Some of the key points arising from the ESC meeting include:

- The stock remains at a low state, estimated to be 13% of the initial spawning stock biomass, and below the level to produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY). There has been improvement since previous stock assessments which indicated the stock was at 5% of original biomass in 2011 and 9% in 2014. B10+¹ relative to initial is currently estimated to be 11%, which is an increase from the estimate of 5% in 2011 and 7% in 2014. The current fishing mortality rate is below the level associated with MSY.
- The review of indicators did not suggest any need for change to the conclusions drawn from the 2017 assessment. Overall there were signs of higher recruitment in recent years and there were some consistent positive trends in the age-based longline CPUE estimates. This suggests that there may be some relatively strong cohorts moving through the fishery, though they have yet to contribute to the spawning stock. The ESC noted that increased recruitment is of itself not necessarily indicative of increased spawning stock biomass. The ESC noted that it will take a few more years before there is sufficient data to confirm the recent apparent strong recruitments evident in the aerial survey.
- The ESC evaluated whether there were events, or observations, that were outside the range for which the management procedure was tested and the implications of this for TAC setting. The scope of this evaluation covered input data to the MP (CPUE and aerial survey data), the question of unaccounted mortality, reported catch, length and age of Indonesian catches on the spawning ground and the results of reconditioning of the CCSBT Operating Models. The ESC concluded there was no reason to take action to modify the 2018 TAC recommendation in relation to its review of exceptional circumstances.
- Based on the results of the MP operation for 2018-20 undertaken in 2016 and the outcome of the review of exceptional circumstances in 2017, the ESC recommended that there is no need to revise the Extended Commission's (EC's) 2016 TAC decision regarding the TAC for 2018-20. Therefore, the recommended TAC for 2018 and the 2018-20 quota block remains 17,647 t.

¹ The total biomass of SBT aged 10 and over.

- The ESC considered New Zealand’s request to evaluate the impact of changing the CCSBT’s carry-forward provisions to remove the clause that prohibits the accumulation of carry-forward across multiple years. Members agreed that the changes proposed by New Zealand were likely to have a limited impact on the MP. However, the ESC could not comment on the impact of any carry-forward provisions on the next MP that is currently being developed.
- In relation to development of the new MP:
 - Results of the most recent reconditioning of the CCSBT Operating Models indicate incremental improvement in the stock status since the last full stock assessment, and preliminary projections suggest substantially higher recent productivity (and associated rate of rebuilding) than previously estimated.
 - The current projections results indicate that the interim rebuilding target may be reached earlier than anticipated (in the next 1 or 2 TAC blocks). Consequently, the ESC considers that there is a need for consultation and advice from the EC on objectives beyond the interim rebuilding target, and desirable behaviour of candidate MPs pre- and post-rebuilding.
 - The ESC has agreed to include unaccounted mortality as part of the reference set for MP testing. This is the “MP approach” to dealing with unaccounted mortality that has been discussed in the previous two years.
 - A revised workplan for development of the MP was recommended to the EC for its consideration. The revised workplan allows for an extra year of MP work before the 2021-2023 TAC recommendation, previously scheduled for 2019, is made in 2020. The delay in providing TAC advice until 2020, is to allow time for adequate, iterative MP development work and consultation between the ESC and the EC, and for the separation of adoption of the MP and the first TAC recommendation. It also allows for an extra year of gene-tagging, and other MP input data, to be included in the MP TAC recommendation in 2020. This may provide more information on year classes that appear to be very strong in the current reconditioning. The delay in providing TAC advice has the consequence of dropping the 1 year lag (between TAC advice and implementation) for the initial TAC implementation of the new MP.
- The ESC has recommended that the maturity study identified in the Scientific Research Program be conducted from 2018 to 2019 and has developed a workplan for that study.
- The ESC has developed an updated overall workplan for 2018 to 2020, the budgetary implications of which have been included in paper CCSBT-EC/1710/06 on the Draft 2018 and Indicative 2019-2020 Budgets.