



CCSBT-EC/1710/10

**Report from the Twelfth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group
and consideration of Joint Tuna RFMO Ecosystems Based Fisheries Management
Meetings**

(1) Purpose

To consider the Report of the Twelfth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG 12) and to consider the joint tuna RFMO (tRFMO) discussions on Ecosystems Based Fisheries Management (EBFM).

The Chair of the ERSWG will provide a presentation in relation to both of these matters.

This paper provides a summary of the recommendations/advice and requests from the ERSWG 12 meeting. It also notifies of a second joint tRFMO EBFM meeting planned for December 2017 or early 2018 and invites the Extended Commission (EC) to consider representatives for that meeting.

(2) Report of ERSWG 12

The ERSWG met from 21-24 March 2017. The full report of the ERSWG 12 meeting is provided to CCSBT 24 as CCSBT-EC/1710/Rep04. A summary of the recommendations/advice and requests from the ERSWG 12 meeting is provided below.

Recommendations and Advice to the Extended Commission from ERSWG 12

The ERSWG provided the following recommendations and advice for consideration by the Extended Commission:

Seabirds

- The ERSWG supported an offer from New Zealand to undertake a second iteration of its ecological risk assessment of the risk from commercial surface longline fisheries in the southern hemisphere to ACAP¹ seabird species (incorporating additional data for tRFMOs and including other fishing methods operating within the southern hemisphere).
- The ERSWG noted that the most recent scientific advice from ACAP on what constitutes best practice mitigation measures is the simultaneous use of weighted branch lines (see the updated weighting configurations noted in paragraph 62 of the ERSWG 12 report), night setting (i.e. setting after nautical twilight and before nautical dawn) and bird streamer lines. In addition, hook-shielding devices have been included in the list as stand-alone alternative best practice mitigation measures, where these devices encase the point and barb of baited hooks until they are beyond the diving range of most seabirds.

¹ Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels.

- CCSBT 23 directed the ERSWG to examine the topics shown in bold below. The ERSWG's response to the EC's requests are shown in italics.
 - **examine seabird bycatch mitigation measures currently in place in the 'spatially-based' RFMOs; and**
 - *The meeting NOTED that there is a degree of inconsistency among the current requirements of the 'spatially-based' tuna RFMOs. Branchline weighting and night setting currently substantially coincide, while there is variability in the specification of bird scaring lines. These tRFMOs are currently considering updated ACAP advice concerning line weighting and new information on hook shielding.*
 - *The meeting SUPPORTED the activity planned by Birdlife International under the Common Ocean (ABNJ) Tuna Project to conduct a joint assessment with national scientists of the effectiveness of seabird mitigation in tuna RFMOs.*
 - **the best available information on the distribution and population status of seabirds; and**
 - *The meeting NOTED that the status of ACAP listed species has changed little but will be updated this year. The meeting also NOTED that distribution maps are also to be revised but expect that overlap with fishing for SBT will still represent a large proportion of many species' distribution in both breeding and non-breeding periods.*
 - **provide advice to ESC22 and EC24 on whether these mitigation measures should be strengthened; and**
 - *The meeting NOTED the preliminary risk assessment for 26 ACAP listed species and its attribution of a large proportion of the estimated Annual Potential Fatalities of these seabird species to SBT fisheries. The meeting confirmed that the level of interaction between seabirds and SBT fisheries has remained at a high level and is still a significant level of concern.*
 - *This suggests that mitigation measures and their implementation should be further promoted.*
 - **if they should be strengthened, how they should be strengthened.**
 - *The meeting NOTED ACAP's updated advice on what constitutes best practice mitigation measures for seabirds. It provides a practical guide for examining new technology and future improvement of mitigation measures. The meeting also AGREED that suggested improvements could also be made to the implementation of current seabird mitigation requirements (such as through education and outreach, and verification that fishing vessels are applying the requirements according to specifications). The meeting ENCOURAGED the continued research by Members to develop and improve mitigation practices for seabirds.*
- As requested by CCSBT 23, methods to improve seabird identification were discussed including through the distribution and use of new ACAP identification guides (as described in CCSBT-ERS/1703/18), and through activities by various groups that provide on-board training of observers, train national scientists and support the collection and curation of samples and photographic material that can subsequently be used by land-based researchers.

- In relation to sharks, CCSBT 23 asked the ERSWG to: Review progress of the porbeagle shark assessment; Review any risk assessment work undertaken by other RFMOs which might highlight priority shark species for which CCSBT fisheries may have an impact; and Consider approaches to reduce mortality on sharks, in particular unwanted shark catches. In response to these requests, the ERSWG:
 - Discussed a WCPFC paper that provided an update on the porbeagle shark stock status assessment. The ERSWG noted that this work was ongoing and requested that the final report be distributed to its members. The ERSWG also suggested that it would be useful if the impact of fishing for SBT on porbeagle stock abundance could be separately estimated. The draft final report on the southern hemisphere porbeagle shark stock status assessment was provided to ERSWG participants on 1 August 2017.
 - ERSWG members agreed to report on recent catches of the 12 shark species listed as “CCSBT relevant” by CMS-Sharks² based on the distribution of those species (see CCSBT-ERS/1703/Info15). This will help ERSWG to assess whether those shark species were correctly labelled as being “CCSBT relevant”. It was proposed that risk assessments undertaken by other RFMOs might also be useful to consider in developing criteria for determining “CCSBT relevant” species. The Secretariat will examine shark catches reported by Members in the ERSWG data exchange and provide ERSWG 13 with a summary of shark species that have been reported by Members as being caught.
 - The ERSWG considered a paper on minimising unwanted shark interactions and mortalities in CCSBT fisheries³ and agreed that there were currently no specific concerns about shark bycatch in SBT fisheries that warranted additional mitigation requirements at this stage.

Trophic interactions

- CCSBT 23 asked the ERSWG to review available data on SBT prey for both wild and farming SBT, and to discuss information on pelagic food webs. Three documents were submitted to the ERSWG meeting and discussed, other relevant studies were identified, and the benefits of future collaboration by members was noted.

Referral of ERS matters for consideration by CCSBT subsidiary bodies

The ERSWG referred the following requests for consideration by CCSBT subsidiary bodies:

- That the Extended Scientific Committee (ESC) perform a review of the Scientific Observer Program Standards. The review should consider the incorporation of electronic monitoring, and consider harmonising the life status codes used by observers with the codes used by scientific observers for other tRFMOs. The ERSWG noted that for these aspects to be considered by the ESC, a Member would need to provide a specific proposal to the ESC.
- That the Compliance Committee consider how to effectively monitor seabird mitigation measures through mechanisms such as port inspections and transshipment observers. This could include the examination of fishing gear for evidence of tori lines

² The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks.

³ CCSBT-ERS/1703/21.

and tori poles, the presence of line weights, and the inspection of log books for evidence of night setting.

Timing of the next ERSWG meeting

The ERSWG was not able to agree on the timing of the next full ERSWG meeting. Some Members preferred to have the next meeting in two years' time due to other meeting commitments and seabird work planned in association with the Common Oceans (ABNJ) Tuna Project. Others preferred a meeting in 2018.

Some Members suggested holding a smaller, technical meeting before the next full ERSWG meeting. This would enable technical work (such as risk assessments and methods for estimating total mortalities) to be conducted, which would allow the ERSWG to be more confident in the results presented to it. If a small technical meeting was held in 2018 then the next full ERSWG meeting could be held two years from ERSWG 12. This proposal was not agreed by all Members.

(3) Joint tRFMO discussions on EBFM

A Joint Meeting of tuna RFMOs on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management took place in Rome, Italy from 12-14 December 2016. The Chair of CCSBT's ERSWG, Mr Alexander (Sandy) Morison participated at the meeting for the CCSBT.

Mr Morison presented a report to the 2017 ERSWG meeting on his perspective of the outcome of the December 2016 joint tRFMO EBFM meeting. The final report of the December EBFM meeting was provided to CCSBT Members in CCSBT Circular #2017/017.

A second joint tRFMO EBFM meeting is planned for December 2017 or early 2018. **Attachment A** provides a summary, prepared by ICCAT, which describes the background behind the joint tRFMO EBFM meetings and the plans for a second meeting. It is proposed that the second meeting will involve both scientists and Commissioners and funding has been sought to cover the travel expenses of two individuals from each RFMO and five external experts.

The EC is invited to consider the CCSBT's participation at the second joint tRFMO EBFM meeting. It is assumed that the two participants from the CCSBT would include a scientist and a Commissioner/manager.

Prepared by the Secretariat

**ACTIVITIES PROPOSED BY ICCAT FOR THE WORK PLAN AND BUDGET FOR PROJECT YEAR FOUR
COMMON OCEANS ABNJ TUNA PROJECT 2017/18
(prepared by ICCAT)**

Ecosystem Component: Common oceans ABNJ tuna project

At the 2016 ICCAT Subcommittee on Ecosystems meeting, substantial discussions were had, building on the work initiated in 2013 and continuing through into the workplan for 2017, regarding the implementation of Ecosystem based fisheries management (EBFM). ICCAT is moving along a line to increase the understanding of the concept amongst its members, and how the work being conducted by the various Scientific Committee species groups can feed into and compliment the process. Although “ecosystem-based management” can have very different meanings to different people, the Sub Committee is endeavoring to provide operational steps to facilitate a common understanding of the concept. Additionally, the subcommittee discussed the level of detail that would be necessary for practical implementation of an EBFM. It was acknowledged that ICCAT, and in fact most RFMOs are conducting activities that could be considered part of EBFM, the process has yet to be formalized or clearly defined.

In 2016, noting that the FAO Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project, funded by the Global Environmental Facility, was promoting and supporting the preparation of long-term plans for operationalizing the ecosystem approach in fisheries in each of the t-RFMOs, encouraging consideration of the impacts of fishing activities, the Subcommittee agreed to develop an ICCAT led proposal for this component of the project. It was agreed that the ABNJ Project could provide support for joint meetings of the t-RFMOs led by ICCAT to discuss experiences and proposed approaches to implement the EBFM. The first of these meetings was realized in December of 2016 at the FAO headquarters in Rome, with the financial support of the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project. The objective of the first of these meetings was to establish dialogue between other RFMOs on the issue of EBFM and its implementation, while inviting several external experts on EBFM to provide input and guidance on this process. The meeting was considered a success by the participants and representation was achieved from all the tRFMOs.

It was noted, however, that the process is ongoing and substantial additional work is required. At that stage, The Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project pledged its support for an additional meeting, tentatively in Mid December 2017 or beginning of 2018. This meeting would need to be different in terms of participants, engaging commissioners. Participants proposed a three day meeting (including one or two days with commissioners and one additional day for scientist to process and elaborate. Thus a mix between scientists and managers is required to continue to advance the process, much like what has been done for Management Strategy Evaluation.

The chair of the previous meeting has elaborated a very preliminary agenda that may be used to guide the discussions at this second meeting:

- 1. Introduction to EAFM/EBFM** (*terminology, how the framework relates management objectives to operational level monitoring and decision making*)
- 2. Responses to first Joint Meeting** (*feedback from tRFMOs on presenting the outcomes from the first meeting*)
- 3. Overview of the outcomes of the first Joint Meeting of t-RFMOs** (*generic component tree, potential objectives, issues limiting implementation*)
- 4. Dialogue with managers** (*discuss relevance of component tree to management and identify potential objectives for the elements*)
- 5. Next steps** (*discuss the role/relationship of ecosystem assessments and ecosystem report cards to the overall framework*)
- 6. Discussion and conclusions** (*on dialogue with managers and future objectives*)

This agenda will need to be revised and modified as additional input is received from the participating RFMOs, however it may serve as a general guideline as to what the meeting in 2016 considered important to take forward.

The proposed budget for this second workshop is **US\$100 000** in order to cover the travel expenses (including flights and per diems) of 15 individuals (2 from each of CCSBT, IATTC, ICCAT, IOTC and WCPFC Secretariats and 5 external experts), the time and expenses of the workshop coordinator, meeting preparation and hosting costs, as well as associated consumables required during the meeting. Future workshop budgets will be determined based on identified needs and participations.