

SOUTH AFRICA

## Action Plan to Ensure Compliance with CCSBT Conservation and Management Measures

March 2010

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### Introduction

South Africa has a developing longline fishery that mainly targets yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna and swordfish in the Southern Atlantic and Indian Oceans. However, as southern bluefin tuna is also found in South Africa's EEZ, increasing quantities have been landed by this fishery in recent years. In addition, South Africa is also an important Port State for southern bluefin by virtue of its close proximity to one of the most important longline fishing grounds. This report has been drafted to summarize Flag State and Port State measures that have been implemented pertaining to southern bluefin tuna. In addition this report also serves to indicate further measures that are to be implemented in 2010 in accordance with the Resolution: "Resolution on action plans to ensure compliance with Conservation and Management Measures", as adopted at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the CCSBT. No market action plans have been identified for South Africa as southern bluefin tuna is not imported.

### Flag State Measures

#### *Southern Bluefin Management Plan*

The swordfish-directed longline vessels have not been allocated a southern bluefin tuna quota from MCM. However, they will be allowed to land any southern bluefin caught as by-catch to their swordfish fishing activities, provided that the fishing activities occur within the South African EEZ and north of 36° S. Furthermore, the by-catch of southern bluefin shall not exceed 10% by weight of the targeted species by trip. All southern bluefin caught on the high seas or south of 36° S is required to be released.

The 40 t of southern bluefin tuna allocated to South Africa by CCSBT will be equally apportioned to all active tuna-directed longline vessels. Initially all southern bluefin caught will be deducted from the respective vessel's quota. Once the vessel's quota is reached the vessel may not land any southern bluefin if the vessel is fishing south of 36° S or on the high seas. If the vessel's southern bluefin quota is reached and the vessel is fishing north of 36° S but still within the South African EEZ the vessel may retain the southern bluefin as by-catch to bigeye and yellowfin tuna.

All southern bluefin tuna caught by both fleets will be required to be tagged at sea. The tag information (including fish length and weight etc) is required to be recorded at sea on the tagging form. Tagging forms are required to be submitted to MCM prior to the vessel landing together with applications for the catch monitoring form (CMF). All landings shall be monitored by a Fishery Control Officer. All exports of southern bluefin shall be accompanied by the CMF. All data pertaining to catches and exports shall be reported to CCSBT. In terms of provisions made by CCSBT any overages/ underages of quota may be used to adjust the following year's quota.

MCM has already tested tags and confirms that it has found a suitable tag that meets all the requirements of the Catch Document Scheme for southern bluefin. The tags are currently in process of being procured. In terms of South Africa's action plan these tags would have to be distributed to all the vessels and the information pertaining to the type of tag to be utilized shall be forwarded to the secretariat of CCSBT. The southern bluefin management plan as outlined above has been included in the permit conditions for the fishery and all that is required is to implement the conditions with the start of the southern bluefin fishing season in May.

### ***Fleet Capacity Limitations***

*South Africa has unilaterally imposed a longline fleet limit of 50 vessels through a long-term rights allocation process in 2005. In this process 44 South African companies were allocated long-term fishing rights with a further 6 rights to be allocated in 2010.*

No action plan identified under fleet capacity limitations.

### ***VMS***

Marine and Coastal Management (MCM), which is the South African Fisheries Authority responsible for managing fisheries, has its own VMS base station. All fishing vessels, including tuna longline vessels, are required to have a functional VMS on board which reports directly to MCM. The current system used for the tuna longline vessels is INMARSAT-C, which was implemented in 1998 with the start of the South African longline fishery.

No further improvement of VMS coverage is required under the action plan.

### ***Observer Coverage***

South Africa has implemented its own national on board scientific observer programme for the tuna/swordfish fleet since 1998. Observer coverage is aimed at 20% of all domestic trips conducted, with actual annual coverage ranging from 10-20%. South Africa also allows South African fishing companies to engage in charter agreements with foreign vessel owners in the tuna longline fishery. For vessels operating under charter agreement the observer coverage is 100% of all trips undertaken.

No further improvement in observer coverage is required under the action plan.

### ***Management of Transshipment***

South Africa does not permit transshipment of catches at sea. Transshipments are allowed in port under the authority of a transshipment permit.

No further improvement in managing transshipment is required under the action plan.

### ***Inspection of landings and transshipments in port***

All landings and transshipments of longline vessels in the South African fishery are required to be monitored by a Fishery Control Officer (FCO). Catch logbooks which are completed on a daily basis are required to be submitted to the FCO prior to the vessel offloading.

No further improvement in managing transshipment is required under the action plan.

### ***Management of Ecologically Related Species (ERS)***

South Africa i.t.o implementing an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries has made great strides in monitoring, managing, research and mitigating impacts on ERS. The onboard scientific observer programme has been established to, *inter alia*, collect independent data on catch composition including by-catch and incidentally caught species. Observers are also required to collect routine size frequencies of the catch. Observers also monitor whether various permit conditions are adhered to by the crew, such as the deployment of tori lines, no dumping of plastics, and no fishing with wire traces etc. South Africa has unilaterally imposed a shark by-catch limit of 10%, prohibited the use of wire traces, and has banned the landing of thresher sharks. These measures greatly reduces the impact of the longline fishery on sharks. South Africa published its NPOA-seabirds in 2008 and has unilaterally imposed stringent mitigation measures for seabirds, such as mandatory night setting and deployment of a tori line. The compliance with these mitigation measures are encouraged by maximum bird limits that have been introduced per vessel. South Africa is also actively involved in seabird mitigation research to improve tori line design and weighting of the longline. Vessels are required to have the necessary dehooking equipment on board for the releasing of seabirds, turtles and sharks. MCM in collaboration with WWF have hosted regularly workshops on responsible fishing practices for crew. These courses have been helpful to change the mindset of fishers to reduce the impacts of fishing on the environment. Data on sharks, turtles and seabirds are reported to ICCAT and IOTC.

Under the NPOA-seabirds South Africa is still required to reduce its seabird mortality to 0.05 seabirds.1000hooks<sup>-1</sup>.

### **Port State Measures**

Approximately 800 – 1 000 foreign fishing vessels visit South Africa ports per annum. South Africa has fully implemented port state measures to prevent and deter IUU fishing since 2007. Under the South African port state measures foreign fishing vessels have to make application for an EEZ and Gear permit at least seven days in advance. In applying for a permit the ships agents, acting on behalf of the foreign fishing vessels, have to furnish various information to MCM. The information includes vessel name, call sign, previous vessel name, vessel owner details, vessel type, fishing gear, permit from flag state, catch by species on board the vessel, last port visited, details of

transhipments at sea, areas fished, on board observer, and VMS. Only once all the information is confirmed and if the vessel is authorized on the relevant RFMO list is a permit issued for the vessel to enter port. Foreign fishing vessels can only apply to enter three South African ports, namely Cape Town Harbour, Port Elizabeth Harbour and Durban Harbour. Inspections, which includes full monitoring of landings/transhipments, are conducted on a random basis. In the case of a suspicious vessel it would be immediately identified for inspection. Inspection rates achieved are less than 5% of the vessels entering port. All serious contraventions of RFMO management and conservation measures are reported to the relevant RFMO and flag state.

In terms of the Action Plan: from 1 June 2010 all foreign fishing vessels with southern bluefin tuna onboard would have to provide MCM with a copy of the tagging form accounting for the fish on board. If southern bluefin is to be transshipped or landed then a copy of the Catch Monitoring Form (signed by the Flag State Fisheries Authority) should be submitted to MCM. Failure to provide the abovementioned forms would result in no authorisation provided for transshipment or landing. Furthermore, it is the intention of MCM to monitor all transhipments and landings of vessels that has southern bluefin on board.