



CCSBT-EC/0910/12

REPORT FROM THE ECOLOGICALLY RELATED SPECIES WORKING GROUP

Purpose

To consider the report of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG).

Discussion

The Report of the Eighth Meeting of the ERSWG is presented to this meeting as CCSBT-EC/0910/Rep02.

The Chair of the ERSWG will present the report of the ERSWG's meeting in September 2009. The Extended Commission will consider the advice from the ERSWG meeting which made the following recommendations in no specific order of priority:

- The ERSWG welcomed New Zealand's offer to undertake a preliminary ecological risk assessment for seabirds and sea turtles and that ERSWG members may liaise with New Zealand in order to complete the analysis. Members of the ERSWG are encouraged to examine methodologies for ecological risk assessments, conduct risk assessment individually and/or collaboratively and provide their findings to the next ERSWG. The ERSWG will continue to assess the risks to shark species as appropriate in the future.
- Members and Cooperating Non-Members should include the information shown in Attachment 4 [of the ERSWG report], in future national reports to the ERSWG and including both interaction with ERS and mortalities of ERS. This information should also be provided by species (including the scientific name) wherever possible in either the national report or other reports submitted to the ERSWG.
- To obtain improved data, information on species identification should be provided to fishers and observers on an ongoing basis.
- The CCSBT should revise and reprint its seabird and shark pamphlets and develop a pamphlet on sea turtles. Versions of all three should be printed in the language of all Members.
- The ERSWG reminds Members and Cooperating Non-Members of the CCSBT's adoption of a Scientific Research Program incorporating a Scientific Observer Program. The ERSWG further recalls that the Observer Program endorsed by the CCSBT included an observer coverage target of 10% for catch and effort; and that observer coverage shall be representative¹. The ERSWG recommends that the CCSBT ensures all members and cooperating non-members make strenuous efforts to achieve these minimum targets, improve the quality of data and meet the other requirements outlined in the Observer Program Standards.
- The Secretariat should brief Indonesia on the outcomes of the ERSWG meeting and provide copies of the report to Cooperating Non-Members together with a reminder on the requirements to provide national reports to the ERSWG in the agreed format.

¹ In accordance with the CCSBT Scientific Observer Program Standards.

- Members should assess current mitigation methods to determine their relative effectiveness, and other methods such as line weighting and tori line, where appropriate. Members should decide on which measures to assess depending on the circumstances of their particular fishery.
- In order to also improve the methods of estimating total ERS captures, the ERSWG recommends that members clearly describe the methods of estimation they have used to scale up the estimates from the observed data. The ERSWG recommends that over time these methods are improved, taking into account of internationally accepted best practice in ERS estimation and providing support to other Members in estimation if required.

The ERSWG meeting also agreed to ask the Extended Commission to consider options for future meetings including delaying a meeting of the ERSWG until the first half of 2012. This was not a reflection of the lack of importance placed on ERS issues by Members, some of whom reiterated the need to minimise the impacts of SBT fishing on ERS, but was more an issue of logistics, timing and data availability. In the meantime and to continue the work of the ERSWG, it was recommended that progress towards the recommendations should be monitored at annual meetings of the Extended Commission and/or subsidiary bodies including the ESC.