

Implementation of a CCSBT Catch Documentation Scheme

Purpose

To propose that the Extended Commission agree to the development and implementation of a Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) for CCSBT (the Commission).

Introduction

In its SBT management recommendations for this year, the Extended Scientific Committee (ESC) called for “immediate action to restore confidence on total catch and CPUE series”. This “immediate action” is required to redress the serious doubts raised about the reliability of the catch and CPUE indicators arising from information in the Japanese SBT market and Australian SBT farming reports.

This call from the ESC complements increasing scrutiny of the efficacy and effectiveness of RFMOs by the international community. The catch anomaly issues within CCSBT have created a strong need for the Commission to take (and to be seen to take) immediate steps to strengthen its compliance efforts to ensure its global catch limits are being adhered to.

New Zealand believes that these dual influences from both within and outside the Commission mean it is a critical time for the Commission to make real progress on implementing a CDS for CCSBT.

The Joint Tuna’s RFMOs conference early next year will provide an opportune time to discuss details of a CDS that will both meet the Commission’s needs and complement initiatives in other tuna RFMOs. The development of a CDS for SBT that complements the systems in place for other tuna RFMOs will be a key to its success.

Background

Discussions about implementing a CDS are not new to the Commission.

At CCSBT 10, a working group on the Trade Information Scheme (TIS) noted deficiencies in the current TIS process in monitoring domestic consumption and trade of SBT amongst non-members. The group recommended that the Commission collaborate with relevant RFMOs to ensure that their respective trade and/or catch information schemes were complementary and contributing to the objectives of CCSBT.

The Commission then tasked the secretariat with preparing a paper on catch monitoring options for CCSBT11.

At CCSBT 11, the Secretariat presented its paper providing five options for a catch monitoring system. The options ranged from retaining the TIS in its current form with annual catch monitoring, through to replacing it with a comprehensive system akin to the system used for CCAMLR. Alternative proposals were retaining the TIS but increasing national catch reporting to a monthly basis, amending the TIS to also include domestic trade, and amending the TIS to include both domestic sales and monthly national catch reporting.

At CCSBT 12, the Commission agree to adopt monthly catch reporting. The principles for a CCSBT CDS were agreed in a technical group and adopted by the Commission. The principles were that a CDS:

- “Provides an accurate and timely record of the catch of member and cooperating non-member states consistent with Article 5 of the Convention;
- Provides for traceability of legitimate product flow to the point of first sale (including auction) for domestic markets or, alternatively, for product being exported;
- Provides validation of the catch reporting regime;
- Provides a means of identifying and quantifying the catches of non-cooperating states;
- Provides tools to restrict the trade of non-cooperating non-members;
- Is compatible with systems in place for other tuna RFMOs and takes into account the potential for a global catch monitoring regime;
- Is cost effective;
- Is tested for practicality with knowledgeable and acceptable industry representatives from each sector;
- Confidentiality of information is ensured;
- Has a performance measure that the CDS must be capable of accounting for at least 95% of all sources of fishing mortality of southern bluefin tuna;
- Must be a compatible part of monthly catch reporting;
- Would include port documentation and transfer/transhipping documentation capable of trace back to catching vessels; and
- Must be introduced to all fishery sectors in an equitable manner.”

Benefits of a CDS

The proposed objectives for a SBT CDS are:

- To provide a means of independently verifying and monitoring member catches
- To provide a deterrent to IUU catches of SBT

The current CCSBT trade monitoring system is intended as a measure to minimise non member IUU fishers gaining access to the Japanese market. It provides verification of some member catches. It is however not equivalent to a catch monitoring scheme because it does not incorporate domestic consumption of members. It therefore only tracks one-half to two-thirds of the global SBT catch.

Compilation of data from TIS documents is often more than 12 months after fish are caught making it of limited use scientifically.

A CDS would dramatically improve the Commission's ability to monitor catches of SBT fisheries. If fully implemented it would:

- improve the monitoring of catches of SBT
- limit market access for IUU SBT product
- identify origins of SBT exports and imports
- determine whether SBT catches have been made in accordance with the management objectives of CCSBT
- gather data for the scientific evaluation of the SBT fishery
- Provide the ability to use other compliance measures (eg VMS data) to verify catch data and improve effectiveness of a CDS system

A CDS can take many forms and could be designed to capture a range of information. It is noted that CCAMLR have an operational CDS which has been significantly modified since implementation in 2000. The requirements of a CCSBT CDS may differ from CCAMLR and the details of what could usefully be included in a CDS for the Commission will need to be evaluated and finalised intersessionally

A key component of any CDS is a 'certificate of origin' which identifies individual or consignments of fish according to their source. Japan has adopted a new domestic management regime which requires that all SBT are tagged and individual fish details recorded. Tags are to be retained on the fish until landing and potentially until they are marketed.

An integrated tagging programme of this nature, coordinated by the Secretariat, could have significant advantage. Tags, uniquely identifiable to each member or cooperating non-member and in turn to each fish, would act as a certificate of origin. Individual fish length and weight data could be collected and furnished to the Secretariat providing uniquely valuable information on the entire legitimate SBT catch. Trade documentation might still be required to identify market destinations for SBT which could in turn be asked to ensure that no SBT without a tag be allowed to be sold on their markets.

Budgetary implications

The development and design of a CCSBT CDS will require a significant commitment of time, travel and associated costs for same. The Secretariat will be in a position to advise on setup costs during 2006-07.

A comprehensive budget for its full implementation and operation should be prepared by the secretariat for consideration by members at CCSBT 14

Members will also incur costs with domestic implementation of an agreed scheme.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Extended Commission:

- i. agree to implement a CDS for SBT commencing 1 March 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter, with members reporting on its implementation at CCSBT15.
- ii. agree that the secretariat develop a draft proposal for a CDS by July 2007 taking into account:
 - the principles of a CDS agreed at CCSBT12
 - the need to coordinate with other tuna RFMOs
 - the practicality of tagging individual fish as a cornerstone of a CDS (certificate of origin)
- iii. agree that the Secretariat convene a workshop of members in Canberra during July 2007 to finalise recommendations for a CDS for decision at CCSBT 14.
- iv. incorporate the development of a CDS in the 2006-07 budget for the Secretariat.
- v. agree to take the necessary domestic action to implement the CDS scheme agreed at CCSBT 14.

Prepared by New Zealand