



18. Research Mortality Allowance and SRP Mortality Allowance

Purpose

- (i) To advise members of the mortalities associated with scientific surveys and the Scientific Research Program (SRP) in 2003 and 2004.
- (ii) For the Extended Commission to consider proposals for Research Mortality Allowance (RMA) and SRP mortalities in 2004-2005.
- (iii) To advise the Extended Commission on the manner in which SRP research mortality is managed in each component of the SRP.

Mortalities in 2003-2004.

At CCSBT10 the Extended Commission agreed to a RMA of 10.0 tonnes for planned research by Japan. The Extended Commission also agreed to a total of 40 tonnes for mortalities associated with the CCSBT surface fishery tagging program; the tagging program conducted in the western Indian Ocean by Japan; the archival tagging program being conducted in the Australian east coast fishery; a juvenile SBT global spatial dynamics tagging program; and a tagging exercise in the New Zealand SBT fishery.

The following mortalities have been reported (in tonnes) against these allowances in 2003-2004.

RMA

- Japanese spawning ground survey
 - Total mortalities 2.67 tonnes

SRP

- CCSBT surface fishery 3.58 tonnes
- Japanese high seas – Indian Ocean 5.31 tonnes
- Australian archival – East Coast 5.79 tonnes
- New Zealand fishery 0.00 tonnes
- Australian Global Spatial Dynamics N/A
- Total mortalities 14.68 tonnes

Total Research Mortalities

17.35 tonnes

Proposals for Mortalities in 2004-2005

The following mortality allowances have been endorsed by the Extended Scientific Commission for consideration by the Extended Commission.

RMA

Japan has proposed a mortality allowance of 1 tonne for an acoustic survey program.

SRP

The CCSBT tagging program in the surface fishery will continue in its fourth year at the same level of activity as in 2003-2004 and a mortality allowance of 8 tonnes is required.

Japan will conduct a fourth tagging pilot on the high seas and has estimated mortalities at 10 tonnes.

Australia will continue with archival tagging in the east coast fishery and the eastern Indian Ocean to gather data in relation to the spawning ground and has sought a mortality allowance of 15tonnes.

Australia will continue with its global spatial dynamics archival tagging program deploying 400-500 archival tags over three-year period. A mortality allowance of 12tonnes is sought for this project in 2005.

New Zealand proposes to conduct a second longline tagging program in the western Pacific Ocean during the 2005 fishing season and has indicated a mortality allowance of 5tonnes would be sufficient.

In total 50 tonnes in SRP research mortality is being sought for 2005.

The Extended Commission needs to consider and agree to the Japanese proposal for RMA in 2004-2005.

For the SRP, if the proposed programs are to proceed, the Extended Commission needs to agree to the specific mortalities proposed by members and endorsed by the Extended Scientific Committee.

Management of SRP Tagging Mortalities

Mortalities are managed differently in each of the components of the SRP. This reflects the different structures of the programs, the deployment arrangements and members' financial regulations. The following is a summary of the arrangements for each tagging program component.

CCSBT Surface Fishery Tagging program

The program targets juvenile fish, which are captured using pole and line. The tagging vessels are chartered and dedicated to the tagging program. The tags are applied by scientists contracted to the CCSBT Secretariat. All mortalities are discarded and weights are recorded. It is not practical to keep dead fish.

Australian East Coast Archival Tagging

Fish are captured using longlines with short soak times to minimise mortalities. The fishing vessel is chartered and dedicated to the tagging program. Tagging is undertaken by Australian scientists. Dead fish are weighed and retained with ownership vested in the CCSBT. The Secretariat sells the fish through agents into domestic and export markets. Net proceeds are retained by the Secretariat for use in defraying the costs of the CCSBT Scientific Research Program.

Japanese High Seas Tagging Program

Fish are captured using longlines from a chartered commercial fishing vessel dedicated to scientific research. The tags are applied by Japanese scientists. Dead fish are weighed and retained for sale. Proceeds from the sale of dead fish are paid to the Japanese Government in accordance with Japan's domestic financial regulations.

New Zealand Fishery Tagging

The New Zealand tagging program operates on domestic longliners during commercial fishing operations. The tagging is undertaken by official observers. Young SBT are targeted for the placement of archival and pop-up tags.

During the SBT fishing season, if a suitable fish is landed the fish is bought from the fisher at current market rates, tagged and released. There is no fishing mortality associated with the tagging program as all dead SBT are retained as commercial catch and counted against the New Zealand quota.

After the fishery is closed observers on commercial fishing vessels will still tag SBT on an opportunistic basis. Live SBT will be tagged. Dead SBT will be retained and counted against the SRP mortality allowance. Proceeds from the sale of the fish will be paid to the New Zealand Government and any profits from the tagging program transferred to the CCSBT.

Australian Global Spatial Dynamics Tagging Program

Archival tags are being released across the range of SBT habitats using the fishing arrangements in the various fisheries. In 2003 and 2004 archival tags were released in New Zealand in the Great Australian Bight and off the coast of Western Australia in association with the other tagging program programs being operated in these areas. Mortalities were accounted for against the SRP mortality allowance and RMA made available for these programs.

Archival tags were also deployed in the mid-Indian Ocean using official observers on Taiwanese commercial longliners. With the agreement of the vessel master, a specific shot is made for the purposes of tagging. Live fish are tagged and dead fish are retained by the fishing vessel and sold as part of the vessel's commercial catch. The dead fish are counted against the SRP mortality allowance.

As these arrangements have implications for the commercial operations of members' fleets, the financing of the SRP program and members' national allocations, the Extended Commission is invited to discuss the issue.

Prepared by the Secretariat