

Provisional Agenda
Sixteenth meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group
3–6 March 2026
Hybrid: online and Canberra, Australia

Discussion of blue highlighted agenda/sub-agenda items will commence by correspondence in advance of the meeting.

1. Opening

1.1 Adoption of the Agenda

1.2 Adoption of Document List

1.3 Appointment of Rapporteurs

Members will be asked to nominate rapporteurs for agenda items 4, 5, 7, and 10. In addition, presenters of papers will be asked to provide a brief paragraph for papers they have presented (excluding annual reports) for inclusion in the report of the meeting.

2. Annual reports

Members will prepare and provide annual reports to the ERSWG in accordance with the [agreed template](#). Reports are expected to contain all information specified in the template. It will be assumed that reports have been read by participants prior to the meeting, so this agenda item will be reserved for questions of clarification regarding the reports.

2.1 Members

Queries on Member reports will primarily be dealt with as part of the pre-meeting exchange however, additional time will also be allocated during the meeting for any additional follow-up. Additionally, Indonesia is asked to provide a response to an outstanding query from ERSWG 15 regarding data from non-observed fishing and Indonesia's compliance monitoring systems.

2.2 Secretariat report on the ERSWG Data Exchange

The Secretariat will provide summaries of the data from the annual ERSWG Data Exchange¹. This agenda item also provides an opportunity to consider changes in relation to the data exchange process and associated information.

3. Reports of meetings and/or outcomes of other organisations relevant to the ERS Working Group

All organisations with long terms observer status for CCSBT ERSWG meetings (see <https://www.ccsbt.org/en/content/attendance-meetings-observers>) will be invited to attend and to present a report to the meeting. Members and observers may also present relevant meeting reports from organisations not present at the ERSWG meeting. The ERSWG will consider relevant recommendations of these reports.

4. Review of progress with the work program from ERSWG 15

*The work program from ERSWG 15 as **Attachment A**. The ERSWG will review progress with the work program.*

¹ Members that wish to conduct their own analysis can obtain an amalgamated spreadsheet of these data from the "ERSWG Data Exchange" section of the "General Private Area" of the CCSBT website. A highly aggregated public version of the data is available at https://www.ccsbt.org/userfiles/file/data/ERSWG_Data.xlsx.

5. Information and advice on ERS

*This is the key agenda item to progress the assessment of the risks to ERS posed by fishing for SBT and the effects of ERS on the condition of the SBT stock, and to provide advice on any measures that might be needed for the mitigation of risks. **Members and observers are requested to develop and submit papers in advance of the meeting on the following agenda items.***

5.1 Seabirds

5.1.1 Information on stock status

In accordance with standing instructions, the Secretariat will request ACAP and Birdlife International to provide updated information on the seabirds likely to be caught by SBT fisheries, including population status summaries and reviews of mitigations measures.

5.1.2 Ecological risk assessment

The ERSWG will consider the outcome of the collaborative SEFRA work including the advice and SEFRA Technical Report developed following the Technical ERSWG hybrid meeting of 7–11 March 2025 and adopted by the EC32 on 9 October 2025. Members may also consider the SEFRA results from the subsequent global SEFRA Assessment (if available). Relevant considerations here are that the CCSBT's management mandate is limited to SBT fisheries but that the CCSBT's implementation of ERS measures is currently via those adopted by other tuna RFMOs.

5.1.3 Assessment and advice on management measures

It is a standing item on the ERSWG agenda for the ERSWG to review current measures and provide advice on any changes that might be needed.

Actions from the Multi-Year Seabird Strategy that are most relevant to developing management advice from the SEFRA are as follows (reproduced in full given their importance for ERSWG16):

***1A:** To agree on a SBT seabird bycatch target for reducing the level of impact of SBT fishing operations on seabird populations, including, but not limited to:*

- a. Targets based on nominal reported seabird bycatch rates.*
- b. Targets based on SEFRA outputs*

***1C:** Evaluate the effectiveness of the seabird CMMs introduced around 2005 by tuna RFMOs, in the context of reducing the overall seabird mortalities, taking into consideration fleet differences and seabird distributions and identify the areas for improvement. The outcomes from the evaluation will be communicated across tuna RFMOs and used as a basis for future evaluations.*

***1D:** Agree on the list of priority species and corresponding management targets, taking into account the status of seabird population, distributional overlaps with SBT fisheries, and significance of SBT fisheries in their mortality.*

***1F:** Establish a robust definition of high-risk areas that takes into account the precautionary approach by:*

- a. Establishing a definition of high-risk areas.*
- b. Identifying areas that meet the definition.*
- c. Characterising the nature of the risk in each area.*
- d. Developing tailored measures aimed at reducing those risks.*

5.1.4 Seabird species identification

Updates on any improvements in seabird identification practices or methodology.

Actions from the Multi-Year Seabird Strategy that are most relevant to the seabird identification are as follows: 2E and 2H. Australia is expected to provide a paper on the standard protocols for collecting feather samples and photographing dead bycaught seabirds.

5.1.5 Progress on the CCSBT Multi-year Seabird Strategy

EC 31 adopted the updated Multi-year Seabird Strategy recommended by ERSWG15 in 2024. Under this sub-agenda item, ERSWG is expected to review progress against each activity and make recommendations for appropriate actions that are not covered by the above sub-agenda item 5.1.1 -5.1.4.

5.2 Sharks

5.2.1 Information on stock status

Members should provide information on the stock status of shark species relevant to the CCSBT. The Secretariat will also provide any updated information relating to sharks from other relevant RFMOs.

5.2.2 Estimates of ERS mortality and associated uncertainty

This agenda item provides an opportunity to consider methods for estimating total shark mortality and for reviewing any mortality estimates provided by Members.

5.2.3 Progress on the Ecologically Related Species Bycatch Strategy

The EC 32 adopted the CCSBT's Ecologically Related Species Bycatch Strategy, focusing on non-target species other than seabirds. Under this sub-agenda item, ERSWG is expected to review progress against each activity specified in the ERS Bycatch Strategy and make recommendations for appropriate actions that are not covered by the above sub-agenda item 5.2.1 and 5.2.2.

5.3 Other ERS

Members and observers are encouraged to present information concerning the impacts of fishing for SBT on other ERS such as sea turtles and marine mammals etc. Members are also encouraged to review progress against the ERS Bycatch Strategy on other ERS.

6. CCSBT Strategic Plan 2023–2028

The EC 30 adopted the revised CCSBT Strategic Plan 2023–2028, that takes account of recommendations from the 2021 CCSBT Performance Review. The Secretariat will review ERSWG related elements from the Strategic Plan. Discussions under this agenda item will inform the Secretariat's report back to the EC on progress against the actions of the Strategic Plan. Members will be asked to update the previously agreed reporting template and provide an assessment of progress against those activities assigned to the ERSWG.

6.1 Capacity Building Needs Assessment

CCSBT 31 in 2024 adopted the CCSBT's Capacity Building Workplan which aims at prioritising needs and delivering effective capacity building initiatives to improve performance in key areas, particularly for developing Members. ERSWG is expected to conduct a needs assessment, and the Secretariat will provide a paper to ERSWG 16 meeting with its preliminary assessment.

7. Electronic Monitoring

This is a standing agenda item to allow Members to discuss developments in EM in the context of ERS.

7.1 Consideration to incorporate EMS data into CCSBT data requirements

In 2024, New Zealand did not provide any human-observer data, nor data from audited video footage, and instead provided fisher data, which is non-compliant with the current CCSBT reporting requirements. At CC 20, New Zealand noted that work is needed to incorporate EMS data into CCSBT systems and plans to discuss this with the Secretariat and interested Members intersessionally.

8. Education and public relations activities

The FAO funded Seabird Project to Enhance the Implementation of Seabird Measures has been underway since February 2023, and the project is scheduled to conclude by the end of March 2026. The final progress for this project will be reported to the ERSWG.

9. Climate Change

The CCSBT's ERS Bycatch Strategy, adopted by the EC32 in 2025, specifies having a standing agenda item at future ERSWG meetings on Climate Change. Members are encouraged to provide papers to support ERSWG's discussion on this theme.

10. Agenda for the Technical ERSWG 2027

The ERSWG is asked to consider the necessity to hold ERS Tech 2027, and if so, consider the potential agenda, including the timing and format of the meeting.

12. Future work program

The ERSWG will develop an updated work program from matters raised during the previous agenda items together with any additional work items that need to be considered.

13. Other business

14. Referral of ERS matters for consideration by CCSBT subsidiary bodies

This agenda item is for matters that the ERSWG considers should be specifically referred to other subsidiary bodies of the CCSBT.

15. Recommendations and advice to the Extended Commission

The ERSWG will develop a list of recommendation and advice to the Extended Commission from matters raised during the previous agenda items.

16. Conclusion

16.1. Recommendation on timing and topic of next technical/in-person ERSWG meetings

16.2. Adoption of meeting report

16.3. Close of meeting

Attachment A

ERSWG 15 Workplan

(An additional column has been added to the workplan to indicate where each item will be discussed within the ERSWG 16 Agenda. The default agenda item for discussion of workplan activities is agenda item 4 unless there is a more appropriate agenda item for the specific content)

Activity	Approx. period	Resource	ERSWG 16 agenda
Share the result of the project investigating new tori line designs once it is completed.	When the work completed	Australia	Agenda item 2.1
Indonesia to provide answers to questions to Indonesia's national report by other Members.	As soon as possible	Indonesia	Agenda item 2.1
Progress collaborative SEFRA work in accordance with Attachment 5	As specified in Attachment 5	Members, ACAP, BLI, Secretariat	Completed, SEFRA adopted by EC32. Note results of "Global" SEFRA.
Safety guidance about HPAI H5N1 zoonotic affecting wild bird populations on how best to handle seabirds in a way that minimises the risk to both the seabird and the fishing crew would be publicly available once completed.	When the work completed	ACAP	Agenda item 5.1.4
Submit the Report from ERSWG on Progress Against Strategic Plan to EC.	EC31	Secretariat	Completed
Develop a list of non-target shark species to be covered by the ERS and Bycatch Action Plan.	ERS-Tech 2025	Members	Completed, ERS&BAP adopted by EC32
Add hook-shielding devices as one of the mitigation types captures as part of the EDE.	EC31	Secretariat	Completed
Progress Multi-Year Seabird Strategy Action items in accordance with Attachment 8 including by convening an intersessional working group	As specified in Attachment 8	Members, ACAP, BLI, Secretariat	Agenda item 5.1 Intersessional SEFRA Technical Group and ERS Tech 2025 finalised the CCSBT SEFRA model
Members utilise the FAO funded Seabird Project to Enhance the Implementation of Seabird Measures.	2024–2054	Members	Planned Element 1–3 activities completed. Element 4 is ongoing to conclude by March 2026