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(ESC Agenda item 14)

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Research mortality allowance: Proposed allowance for 2024 and 2023 usage report



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Summary

This report notes Australia requested a research mortality allowance (RMA) of up to 3 tonnes (t) in 2023 for a project to trial the use stereo-video technology to determine the weight of catch taken in the tuna farm sector of Australia's Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery. The trial proceeded in January 2023, with the adopted methodology meaning that 683 kilograms of southern bluefin tuna (60 fish) was required for the trial. RMA is not required for the next stage of the trial in 2024.

Australia also received an RMA of 0.5 t for the e-tagging project in the Great Australia Bight. No RMA was used for this project in 2023, and Australia requests 0.5 t of RMA again in 2024.

Background

At the annual meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) in October 2020 (CCSBT27), Australia advised members it would undertake a trial of emerging stereo video (SV) technology to test whether any of the new generation of systems are fully automated and cost effective. Meeting these requirements has been a precondition for Australia adopting SV technology in our tuna farming operations.

In 2022 Australia sought and received up to 3 tonnes (t) research mortality allowance (RMA) for southern bluefin tuna (SBT) mortality associated with the SV trial (see CCSBT-ESC 2208/18). This mortality was expected in 2023.

Australia also requested RMA of 0.5 t in the event that a small number of popup satellite tags were released in 2022–23 to examine localised GAB movement and behaviour over the summer.

Report of RMA use in 2023

With the methodology adopted for the trial of SV as included in the report presented to CCSBT, 683 kilograms of SBT (60 fish) was required.

No RMA was used for the e-tagging program in 2023.

RMA request for 2024

No RMA is requested for the next stage of the SV trial.

Similar to 2022, Australia requests 0.5 t of RMA for the e-tagging project.

Trial of stereo-video technology

The aim of the project is for a service provider to demonstrate to the Australian Government and tuna farming industry fully automated, cost-effective SV technology in situ in Australia's SBT farms.

Australia's SBT fishing season commences on 1 December each year, with purse seining for SBT farms being concentrated over the first few months of the season. This provides only a limited window each year to conduct the trial.

Need for research mortality allowance

The request for RMA for the e-tagging project is required in the event of tagging related mortality from release of a small number of popup satellite tags in 2023–24 summer. This project is examining localised GAB movement and behaviours.