Commission for the Conservation of
Southern Bluefin Tuna

みなみまぐろ保存委員会

CCSBT–ESC/2603/07

Progress on the CCSBT Multi-Year Seabird Strategy (ERSWG Agenda Item 5.1.5)

1. Background

Development of the CCSBT Multi-Year Seabird Strategy (hereinafter "Seabird Strategy") began as part of ERSWG 12 in 2017. In 2022, ERSWG 14 presented a draft Seabird Strategy to the Extended Commission for adoption.

The Seabird Strategy was formally adopted at CCSBT 29 and is now publicly available on the CCSBT website.

The Seabird Strategy specifies that, "*the progress of the Seabird Strategy will be evaluated at intervals of no more than four years, with the plan revised as appropriate*".

This paper summarises the progress made so far to actions specified in the Seabird Strategy and provides suggested next steps for each action for the ERSWG 16's consideration.

2. Progress of each Action Item of the Seabird Strategy

The Seabird Strategy includes a table with specific actions to be undertaken against each of the objectives along with the timeframe to achieve the overall objectives of the Seabird Strategy.

An initial of progress against these actions was considered during ERSWG 15 (document CCSBT-ERS/2406/09). This assessment has been updated to reflect any progress made since ERSWG 15 and is shown in **Attachment A**.

3. Proposed actions by ERSWG 16 on the Seabird Strategy

The Secretariat would like to propose the ERSWG:

(1) To review the reported progress, next steps and suggested actions for each action in **Attachment A;**

(2) Where appropriate, reflect required actions into the ERSWG work program; and

(3) Where appropriate, refer actions to other CCSBT subsidiary bodies.

Prepared by the Secretariat

Attachment A

Current status and suggested Next Step to the Seabird Strategy Actions

(Additional new text from Secretariat in red)

Objective 1: To reduce the level of impact of seabird bycatch by SBT fishing operations on seabird populations.				*Current Status*	*Next Step*
No.	Action	Action by	Timeframe		
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.	ERSWG	ERSWG16	• Secretariat not aware of activities in this area other than those related to SEFRA update.	• To be discussed at ERSWG16, based on most recent SEFRA outputs
1B	That a minimum level of 10% observer coverage is achieved on a fleet-by-fleet basis for SBT fisheries or a comparable minimum level of review of video footage collected using electronic monitoring	CCSBT Members	Ongoing	• Assessed by CC every year • With the exception of Indonesia and New Zealand, all Members achieved the 10% observer coverage target across all areas in 2024. • Review rate reporting differs amongst EM Members.	Suggested Action: Members to develop agreed EM reporting standards.
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.	ERSWG	ERSWG 16 after that every 4 years	• Secretariat paper submitted to ERSWG 16 includes analysis from IMCS Network on Seabird Mitigation Measures reporting requirements across tuna RFMOs.	[Suggested Action: ERSWG 16 considers documents submitted related to this item.]
1D	Agree on the list of priority species and corresponding management targets, taking into account the status of seabird population, distributional	ERSWG, CCSBT	ERSWG 16	• SEFRA work currently focused on list of 27 priority species. • Japan and New Zealand submitted paper to ERSWG 16 on high-risk areas and priority	Suggested Action: Members to review papers presented to ERSWG 16.

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	overlaps with SBT fisheries, and significance of SBT fisheries in their mortality.			species.	
1E	Update SEFRA seabird risk assessment to evaluate the progress in seabird bycatch mitigation by SBT fisheries and their impacts on seabird populations from the previous assessment in 2019. The results to be communicated across tuna RFMOs.	ERSWG	Ongoing	• The ERS Tech 2025 completed SEFRA for seabirds. The report was adopted at CCSBT 32. • Extended Commission also approved release of code for use by other tuna RFMOs.	[Suggested Action: Members to share experience with SEFRA when taking part in other tuna RFMO meetings.]
1F	Establish a robust definition of *high risk* areas that takes into account the precautionary approach by: • Establishing a definition of *high-risk* areas. • Identifying areas that meet the definition. • Characterising the nature of the risk in each area. • Developing tailored measures aimed at reducing those risks.	ERSWG, CCSBT	ERSWG 16	• New Zealand to present updated paper on High Risk areas at ERSWG 16. • Japan to present paper on, based on SEFRA outputs, evaluating relationships between bycatch risk and SBT fishery.	[Suggested Action: ERSWG 16 considers the output from SEFRA and the information submitted to the meeting. If required, include actions into the ERSWG work program]

Objective 2: To ensure the collection of timely, reliable, representative data to support accurate regular estimations of total seabird mortality in SBT fisheries and its impact on seabird populations.				*Current Status*	*Next Steps*
No.	Action	Action by	Timeframe		
2A	Define improved protocols for reporting and analysing fishing effort data in the context of estimating seabird bycatch and its impacts on seabird populations, including concerning any implicit assumptions used when raising data.	ERSWG	ERSWG 17 (as required)	• The CCSBT's standard for the reporting of fishing effort was set in 2003. The requirements for Catch and Effort data for the 2004 Data Exchange notes "A template showing the required information was provided in Attachment B of CCSBT-ESC/0309/16". In that document for both Aggregated Catch and effort data and Shot by Shot data, it is noted that (item 1 of the notes) "This information should be recorded for all commercial fishing that targeted SBT, or that caught SBT while targeting other species".	No suggested actions.
2B	Report and disseminate annually numbers of incidentally caught seabirds by species according to agreed reporting standards, total and observed effort, and mitigation use, according to agreed formats and strata.	CCSBT Members, Secretariat	Annually	• All Members except Indonesia provided ERSWG Data Exchange in 2025. • Secretariat has submitted paper to ERSWG 16 summarising EDE.	Suggested Action: ERSWG 16 determines if any revision to the current ERSWG Data Exchange requirements is required. If required, include actions into the ERSWG work program]
2C	Explore options for the use of electronic monitoring systems by: a. Including seabirds (and other ERS) in discussions and the development of electronic monitoring systems. b. Considering electronic monitoring systems that contribute to, among other things, the effective monitoring of the implementation of seabird mitigation measures, and seabird interaction levels, throughout SBT fisheries.	ERSWG, CC, SC, ACAP, other tuna RFMOs	Ongoing	• EC 30 adopted the High Level EM/S Guiding Principles for CCSBT. • Two Members currently utilising EM. Other Members have engaged in workshops as part of the Seabird Project.	Suggested Action: Members to share information to enhance the availability of seabird information through the use of EM.

Objective 2: To ensure the collection of timely, reliable, representative data to support accurate regular estimations of total seabird mortality in SBT fisheries and its impact on seabird populations.				*Current Status*	*Next Steps*
No.	Action	Action by	Timeframe		
2D	Explore methodologies and techniques for estimating seabird mortalities in a timely and reliable manner, based on best available information and technologies, and not limited to observers and electronic monitoring.	CCSBT Members	Ongoing	• Secretariat not aware of activities in this area other than those related to EM.	Suggested Action: • ERSWG 16 determines if any revision and/or addition to the current ERSWG Data Exchange requirements is required. If required, include actions into the ERSWG work program • ERSWG to discuss alternative methods or techniques for estimating mortalities (if available)
2E	Agree on the CCSBT standard protocols for collecting feather samples and photographing dead bycaught seabirds, based on ACAP guidance.	ERSWG	ERSWG 16	• The development of genetic methods to identify bycaught seabirds using feather samples is complete and published. • Australia submitted paper CCSBT-ERS/2603/14 on Protocols for collecting feather samples from dead bycaught seabirds for genetic analysis and photographing dead bycaught seabirds	Suggested Action: ERSWG 16 to review documents submitted.
2F	Review observer coverage of each stratum and fishing fleet to identify gaps and where additional coverage is needed concerning seabird bycatch.	CCSBT Members	At each ERSWG	• Information on observer coverage and seabird bycatch presented to CC every year (latest: CCSBT-CC/2510/05(Rev.2)).	• Review diagnostics of spatial fit of the collaborative risk assessment at ERSWG 15 to assess whether these are suitable to identify gaps and where additional coverage is needed to more accurately estimate risk. • Increase observer coverage: At the current level of 10% coverage, it is not possible to do this action. [Suggested Action: ERSWG 15 reviews diagnostics of spatial fit of the collaborative risk assessment (SEFRA) to assess whether these are suitable to identify gaps and where additional coverage is needed to more accurately estimate risk]
2G	Update guidance for observers to include electronic monitoring seabird related task priorities including how to allocate time appropriately, recognising the multiple tasks undertaken, where applicable.	ERSWG	ERSWG 16	• SOPS was revised in 2022 to accommodate use of EM. Guidance for observers typically developed by a Member's relevant domestic agency. • ACAP has developed guidelines on EM based data collection.	No suggested actions.
2H	Review procedures and protocols to	ERSWG,	2024 and	• The CCSBT Seabird Project developed training	No suggested actions.

Objective 2: To ensure the collection of timely, reliable, representative data to support accurate regular estimations of total seabird mortality in SBT fisheries and its impact on seabird populations.				*Current Status*	*Next Steps*
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	facilitate improved reporting of seabird interactions to species level by: a. Consistent reporting of seabird interactions across SBT fishing fleets. b. Removing any ambiguity about species groupings.	CC, BirdLife International	2025, after that every 5 years	for observers and compliance officers, provided training for domestic trainers, and collaborated with Members to deliver those trainings	
2I	Consider options for the use of fishing vessel logbook records of seabird interactions by examining the potential for logbook records to supplement other seabird interaction information sources, where appropriate.	ERSWG, CC, ACAP, other tuna RFMOs	ERSWG 16	• CC 18 report para 26: ➢ The Australian data in CC18-05, Attachment 2, Table 1 reflect these obligations and based on logbook data, the proportion of sets deployed at night. ➢ Japan using logbook data to report ERS interactions significantly changes the current reporting system in CCSBT and would need to be further examined in CCSBT.	[Suggested Action: Revisit this point at ERSWG 16 taking account of developments in WCPFC, IOTC and/or ICCAT]

Objective 3: To develop and refine, in collaboration with industry and ACAP, practical, cost-effective and safe seabird bycatch mitigation technologies and techniques.				*Current Status*	*Next Steps*
No.	Action	Action by	Timeframe		
3A	Encourage CCSBT Members to undertake and support research and development to refine practical, cost-effective and safe seabird bycatch mitigation technologies and techniques.	CCSBT Members	Ongoing	• Members have been conducting independent research in this area and reporting progress to CCSBT when appropriate. • ACAP regularly updates its best practice advice for pelagic longlines. • ACAP also actively supporting bycatch mitigation development through their Small Grants programme • Australia may speak to research into line weighting (including health and safety issues) at ERSWG 16.	[Suggested Action: Members continue (or increase when necessary) their effort to this action]
3B	Advocate for strengthened seabird CMMs relevant to SBT fisheries within tuna RFMOs, where appropriate, taking account of, among other things, the best practice advice provided by ACAP.	CCSBT Members	Ongoing	• Secretariat not privy to advocacy of Members at other RFMOs. • Update to Seabird CMM at WCPFC. • United States leading work in 2026 to review WCPFC sea turtle measure. • Ongoing discussions at IOTC relating to the use of wire traces. • Representatives from IOTC and WCPFC to attend ERSWG 16.	[Suggested Action: Members continue (or increase when necessary) their effort to this action]
3C	Regularly monitor and identify changes in the spatial overlap of fishing effort for SBT and the distribution of seabird species, particularly threatened albatross and petrel species, and inform the relevant fisheries across tuna RFMOs.	ERSWG	At each ERSWG	• The SEFRA assessment acts as the baseline for identifying critical overlap regions between SBT fishery and protected seabird species. • ACAP and BirdLife species distribution maps updated.	[Suggested Action: To be discussed as part of SEFRA review during ERSWG 16. Members to also present output of SEFRA at other RFMOs]
3D	Assess the cumulative impacts of fishing for SBT on seabirds, particularly threatened albatross and petrel species, across tuna RFMOs including developing methods for extrapolating seabird bycatch levels and seabird bycatch rates to identify total mortalities and total mortality	ERSWG	At each ERSWG	• Secretariat not aware of any activities in this area, except for the ongoing SEFRA initiative. • New Zealand project on multiple threat impacts to the Antipodean Albatross	[Suggested Action: ERSWG 16 reviews next steps as part of discussion on SEFRA outputs and reflect required activities into the ERSWG work program, including a specific direction to Technical ERSWG.]

Objective 3: To develop and refine, in collaboration with industry and ACAP, practical, cost-effective and safe seabird bycatch mitigation technologies and techniques.				*Current Status*	*Next Steps*
No.	Action	Action by	Timeframe		
	rates.				
3E	Consider the development of protocols on potential management responses to high seabird bycatch events.	ERSWG, BirdLife International, ACAP	ERSWG 16	• Secretariat not aware of any activities in this area.	[Suggested Action: ERSWG 16 reviews papers submitted by Japan and New Zealand and, if required, reflect specific activity (including a leading Member) into the ERSWG work program for further development]

Objective 4: To develop and refine compliance approaches to ensure fleet-wide compliance with seabird bycatch mitigation measures required while conducting fishing for SBT.				*Current Status*	*Next Steps*
No.	Action	Action by	Timeframe		
4A	Collate information from compliance programs of CCSBT Members on implementation of seabird bycatch mitigation measures in SBT fisheries on a fleet-by-fleet basis.	CCSBT Members, Secretariat	Annually	• Reported to CC every year	[Suggested Action: Continue ERSWG Data Exchange regime and reporting to CC by the Secretariat. Clearly note requests from ERSWG to CC in the meeting report, if required]
4B	Review procedures and methods to improve compliance by SBT fishing operators with seabird CMMs and reporting requirements concerning seabird interactions by: a. Reviewing existing procedures and methods, including for in-port and transhipment at-sea inspections, and when other monitoring and surveillance technologies and techniques are used. b. Considering implementation, where appropriate, of additional monitoring and surveillance technologies and techniques. c. Considering options for management responses concerning non-compliance. d. Considering the development of options to enable, particularly for high seas SBT fishing fleets, the timely	Members for a and b. CC for c and d based on specific requests by ERSWG 15	2024 and 2025 for a and b. CC 19 for c and d	• Compliance of Measures is assessed by CC every year • Implementation of ERS related measures reported to CC every year • The revised CCSBT Compliance Plan and CPG3 (Corrective Action Policy) were considered at CC19 and EC31 in 2024 • The Seabird Project is of relevance to points a and b.	[Suggested Action: Members to review the Secretariat's paper CCSBT-ERS/2603/08 and discuss how to improve compliance with measures including through the use of targeted activities undertaken as part of the Capacity Building Workplan.

Objective 4: To develop and refine compliance approaches to ensure fleet-wide compliance with seabird bycatch mitigation measures required while conducting fishing for SBT.				*Current Status*	*Next Steps*
No.	Action	Action by	Timeframe		
	reporting of non-compliance events.				
4C	Review data collection forms and procedures across tuna RFMOs regarding compliance with seabird CMMs by longline fishing operators and develop harmonised format to communicate and advocate across tuna RFMOs.	CC	ERSWG 17 (if required), after that every 4 years	• Secretariat's paper CCSBT-ERS/2603/08 includes analysis by IMCS Network on Seabird Mitigation Measures reporting requirements across tuna RFMOs.	[Suggested Action: ERSWG 16 review the Secretariat's paper and discuss whether any actions should be included into the ERSWG work program.]

Objective 5: To enhance education and outreach programs highlighting the importance of mitigating seabird interactions while fishing, and advocating effective implementation of mitigation measures.				*Current Status*	*Next Steps*
No.	Action	Action by	Timeframe		
5A	Share documents, formats and procedures for observer and electronic monitoring, seabird bycatch data collection through a centralised portal, e.g. the Bycatch Mitigation Information System hosted by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.	Secretariat, BMIS	Ongoing	• Done after ERSWG 15.	No suggested actions.
5B	Pursue collaboration across tuna RFMOs in capacity building in seabird bycatch monitoring and analyses.	CCSBT Members, Secretariat	Ongoing	• No specific actions undertaken as joint capacity building with other tuna RFMOs.	[Suggested Action: ERSWG 16 reviews next steps as part of discussion on SEFRA outputs and reflect required activities into the ERSWG work program]
5C	Explore options (if data are available) for the establishment of a reference DNA database for seabird species bycaught during fishing for SBT across tuna RFMOs.	CCSBT Members, ACAP, Seabird Experts	At Technical ERSWG in 2025 (if required)	• Secretariat not aware of any activities in this area.	No suggested action.
5D	Support the establishment of a reference photographic database through a centralised portal, e.g. the Bycatch Mitigation Information System (BMIS) hosted by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, for seabird species bycaught during fishing for SBT across tuna RFMOs. This may include involving volunteer networks and seabird specialists.	CCSBT Members, BMIS, Seabird Experts	Within 2 years	• Members agreed at ERSWG 15 that this option would not be further pursued.	No suggested action.
5E	Translate ACAP's seabird species identification guide into key languages (e.g. French, Indonesian, Korean, Spanish, and Taiwanese) and disseminate together with the other languages (e.g. English Japanese).	Common Ocean Project II, ACAP	ERSWG 15	• Done by ACAP	No suggested action.