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**CCSBT-ESC/2608/33 (Rev.1)**
**(ESC Agenda item 14)**

# Electronic Monitoring and Scientific Observer Program Standards

## Background

In 2023, a virtual meeting was held to discuss Electronic Monitoring/Systems (EM/S) in the context of high-level principles to guide how EM/S is used within CCSBT. The meeting participants recognised that additional work was necessary to assess the potential impact of EM/S use on individual data requirements but that these discussions required a level of technical expertise that was better suited to the Extended Scientific Committee (ESC).

The group recommended that the ESC review the data elements of the CCSBT Scientific Observer Program Standards (SOPS) with respect to EM/S, noting that the purpose of SOPS is 'to provide a minimum set of standards for collection of bycatch data' and are not themselves data submission requirements. Accordingly, the Secretariat asked Members to take part in a review of existing data requirements found as part of the SOPS and how these may be impacted by the use of EM.

Feedback was received from Korea, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and Taiwan. This information was collated by the Secretariat in paper CCSBT-ESC/2409/07 and provided to Members for discussion at the ESC. It should be noted that Japan, New Zealand and Korea elected to abstain from submitting on those sections which relate to the purse seine fishery since they do not engage in this fishery. Responses received from the five Member submissions indicated that there are differing views amongst those Members as to the limitations of EM/S as an alternative to physical observers while the area of greatest congruence was in relation to the question of whether the current information should continue to be collected where respondents generally favoured retaining the existing data.

The ESC noted the different views across Members and requested Members with operational EM programs work together intersessionally and present to ESC 30 on how information is collected by EM and how this meets the requirements of the SOPS.

At ESC 30, New Zealand noted that *'intersessional work in coordination with Australia had occurred but that as part of this exercise it was determined that additional work would need to be undertaken.'* Additionally, Australia noted *'its continued support for the use of EM and noted the potential benefits of its broader application within CCSBT fisheries.'* Discussion on EM was therefore deferred to ESC 31.

## Conclusions from the intersessional work

New Zealand worked together with Australia intersessionally in 2025 to identify how their respective EM programs can collect the various elements of the SOPS, and New Zealand has finalized this work for submission to ESC in 2026. For the sake of this exercise, 'EM systems' include the combination of cameras onboard fishing vessels, electronic reporting/logbooks, and

geospatial position reporting.

EM systems are capable of collecting all essential data elements of the SOPS. Introduction of EM has led to improvements in the collection of independent fisheries data including:

- EM has shown to improve logbook reporting at the vessel and fleet level.
- The review rate can be adjusted, including retrospectively, at the vessel or fleet level, to suit management needs.
- EM audit data and congruence analyses may enable scientists to filter unreliable logbook data out of scientific data analyses (where appropriate), strengthening such analyses.
- EM footage/data can be held and reviewed/verified as required by fishery managers.
- EM supports individual vessel-based accountability to specific management issues including seabird mitigation and logbook reporting standards.

While generally found to be suitable for fisheries independent data collection and logbook validation, EM/S does include some limitations in terms of data collection including:

- While species group level reporting may be improved by EM/S, species reporting to the lowest taxonomic level may be reduced.
- Collection of biological information (e.g. sex, life status) or samples (e.g. otoliths gonads etc.) may require supplementary data collection methods.

**Recommended Action for the ESC**

The ESC is asked to note the discussions to date and intersessional work on Electronic Monitoring and Scientific Observer Program Standards