Commission for the Conservation of
Southern Bluefin Tuna

みなみまぐろ保存委員会

CCSBT-CC/2610/08

Report from
The Sixteenth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group
(CC Agenda item 2.2)

1. Background

The Sixteenth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG 16) was held from 3-6 March 2026 in Canberra as a hybrid meeting. The full report of the ERSWG 16 is provided to the Compliance Committee (CC) as **CCSBT-CC/2610/Rep02**.

ERSWG has the standing agenda item "Referral of ERS matters for consideration by CCSBT subsidiary bodies". CC is expected to consider ERS-related matters referred by the ERSWG.

2. Outcomes of ERSWG 16 directly related to the CC's discussion

2.1 Consideration on persistent non-compliance issue with seabird mitigation measures

Paragraph 128 of the ERSWG 16 report specifies:

"128. The working group noted the persistent non-compliance issue with seabird mitigation measures and referred that matter to the CC and the EC for further discussion in the context of the recommendations of the ERSWG regarding the need to reduce seabird bycatch."

This request from the ERSWG should be considered in conjunction with the CC's activities under the Compliance Action Plan (CAP) for 2025–2029, particularly the ERS-related risks and activities identified in the CAP. The relevant sections of the Five-Year Compliance Action Plan (for 2025 to 2029 inclusive) are provided in **Attachment A** to this paper.

Of most relevance to this request from ERSWG is action item 13 b):

> *Annually monitor and report on implementation and compliance with CCSBT CMMs including consideration of novel ways to track progress with resolving persistent non-compliance issues.*

The Twentieth Meeting of the Compliance Committee (CC20) discussed having an agreed definition of ongoing or persistent non-compliance. Whilst recognising the benefits of this, the meeting questioned whether the complexity involved in this exercise could outweigh those benefits. The meeting also noted that such a review would need to take into account underlying causes of non-compliance and the particular circumstances of developing States. Therefore, it remains the role of CC to identify what may constitute persistent non-compliance and the appropriate responses to this non-compliance.

2.2 Non-compliance with ERS measures in force in the Areas of Competence of the WCPFC, IOTC, or ICCAT when vessels flying a Member's flag operate in those areas, regardless of whether the CCSBT Member is a member of the relevant tRFMO (particularly the requirement to use two of the three mitigation measures, or a hook-shielding device, when operating south of 30°S or beyond)

This issue is particularly relevant to CAP action items 12(a) and 12(b), which are scheduled for 2026-2027 and 2025-2026 respectively.

The Secretariat suggests that the CCSBT Seabird Project has allowed for a significant focus on awareness raising and the development of information resources to support implementation of the CCSBT ERS measure. Members are encouraged to utilise the information and resources produced through the Seabird Project in their future domestic capacity-building activities for vessel crew.

With respect to the use of seabird mitigation measures, Members report information through the ERSWG Data Exchange and in their Annual Reports to the ERSWG. In addition, the CC reviews and discusses these compliance matters through the Secretariat's report to the CC (**CCSBT-CC/2610/05**), which is undertaken under CAP action item 13(b), and with relevance to action item 13(a).

3. New requirements on additional measures in identified high-risk areas and monitoring of Members' Seabird Bycatch reduction plan (subject to Members' agreement at CCSBT 33)

The ERSWG discussed seabird priority species and high-risk areas for seabird bycatch within CCSBT fisheries. This was based on the outcomes of the CCSBT Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment (SEFRA), as well as additional measures to address high-risk areas using the recommended toolbox. ERSWG 16 has recommended to CCSBT 33 to:

> *Add a standing Agenda Item for future CC and ERSWG meetings from 2027 on Members' seabird bycatch mitigation plan in high-risk areas.*

The ERSWG report notes that the seabird mitigation plan could be included in a new section of the annual report reviewed by ERSWG, and the CC as appropriate, and added as new agenda items in ERSWG and CC meetings. This matter therefore may impact the CC's future activities in 2027 and beyond.

Subject to the EC's decision, Members will be requested to develop their Seabird Bycatch Mitigation Plans, using single or combined measures from the toolbox, with an associated timeline, for inclusion in their national reports to the ERSWG and to the CC/EC. The CC will need to review these plans under the new standing agenda item at CC meetings from 2027 onwards.

The CC is requested to consider the revised template for the national report to the CC/EC, which is included in Secretariat paper **CCSBT-EC/2610/08**[1]. Noting the proposed revisions to the national report template, the meeting may wish to consider the ERSWG 16 recommendation for this item to be added as a standing agenda item at future CC meetings and, if this is agreed, what additional reporting may be required to support CC. The CC is encouraged to provide any additional advice to CCSBT 33 on the requests made by ERSWG to support its consideration of these recommendations.

[1] The proposed additional reporting is shown in tracked changes as a new Section 2 d) of Annex 1.

4. Summary

It is recommended that CC21:

- Note the referral from ERSWG 16 for CC to further discuss the issue of persistent non-compliance with seabird mitigation measures in the context of ERSWG's recommendations regarding the need to reduce seabird bycatch;
- Review the revised template for the national report to the CC/EC, which is included in Secretariat paper **CCSBT-EC/2610/08**;
- Consider the proposal to add Members' seabird bycatch mitigation plan in high-risk areas as a standing agenda item for future CC meetings from 2027; and
- Consider if any additional reporting is required to support CC's ongoing assessment of mitigation plans if these are agreed at CCSBT 33.

Prepared by the Secretariat

Attachment A

Extract of CCSBT Compliance Plan: Appendix One: Five -Year Compliance Action Plan (for 2025 to 2029 inclusive)

Risk Item Ref. No.	Risk Item No. & Matrix Score (H/M/L)	Action Required to Address Risk/ Draft Strategic Plan/ Seabird Strategy	Responsibility (Members and/or the Secretariat)	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
9. Insufficient scientific observer data to manage target and non-target species.	**M/H**	a) Consider methods for enhancing the reliability of logbook information and scientific observer data through appropriate verification methods, including the use of EM, for target and non-target species.	Members (NZ and AU to lead)		*			
		b) Consider the costs and benefits of increasing scientific observer percent coverage levels and/or the EM review rate taking into account consideration by ESC regarding data collection through EM and report back to the CC.	Members and Secretariat			*	*	
		c) Support Members who are considering using EM as a source of scientific data observations where it may be difficult to employ human observers.	Members and Secretariat	Ongoing				
10. Incomplete or inaccurate reporting of non SBT bycatches, including seabirds.	**H**	a) Review procedures and methods to improve compliance by SBT fishing operators with seabird CMMs and reporting requirements concerning seabird interactions.	CC, Members and Secretariat	*				
		b) 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, Members and Secretariat			*		
		c) Provide an annual summary of any non-compliance detected with respect to the	Members and Secretariat	Ongoing				

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		collection and provision of non-SBT bycatch information.						
11. CCSBT Members not fully **implementing** specific Conservation and Management Measures (CMM's) as agreed, particularly the CCSBT ERS Measure.	**L**	a) Consider additional domestic monitoring and surveillance measures for further ensuring full implementation of the CCSBT ERS Measure.	Members	Ongoing				
		b) Ongoing sharing of information and best practice MCS to assist developing Members and Cooperating Non-Members to implement the CCSBT's CMMs, including a capacity building workplan if appropriate.	Members and Secretariat	Ongoing				
12. CCSBT Members not fully **complying with the obligations** of specific Conservation and Management Measures (CMM's) as agreed, particularly the CCSBT ERS Measure.	**H**	a) Capacity building for vessel crew of Members on binding ERS measures.	Members		*	*		
		b) Support developing State CCSBT Members to raise awareness of CCSBT obligations within their industry and to identify and introduce tools to support improved compliance with CCSBT measures.	Members and Secretariat	*	*			
		c) Consider additional domestic measures for further ensuring full compliance with the CCSBT ERS Measure.	Members	Ongoing				
		d) Ongoing sharing of information and best practice MCS to assist developing Members and Cooperating Non-Members to comply with the CCSBT's CMMs, including a capacity building workplan if appropriate.	Members and Secretariat	Ongoing				

Risk Item Ref. No.	Risk Item No. & Matrix Score (H/M/L)	Action Required to Address Risk/ Draft Strategic Plan/ Seabird Strategy	Responsibility (Members and/or the Secretariat)	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
13. Lack of systematic follow-up actions to address non-compliance leading to persistent non-compliance.	**M**	a) Consider opportunities to better support CC to discuss and recommend effective follow up action to address identified non-compliance, including through reporting from the Secretariat.	Members and Secretariat	*	*			
		b) Annually monitor and report on implementation and compliance with CCSBT CMMs including consideration of novel ways to track progress with resolving persistent non-compliance issues.	Members and Secretariat	Ongoing				