



Report from the Extended Scientific Committee

Purpose

To consider the Report of the Twenty-Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC23), incorporating the Extended Scientific Committee (ESC).

Introduction

The Report of the Twenty-Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee is provided to this meeting as CCSBT-EC/1810/Rep02.

The ESC Chair will provide a presentation of the ESC's report at this agenda item with a detailed summary of the advice and recommendations from the ESC.

Some of the key points arising from the ESC meeting include:

- Based on the stock assessment results presented to the ESC in 2017, the ESC advised that the stock remains at a low state estimated to be 13% (11-17 80% P.I.) of the initial spawning stock biomass (SSB), and below the level to produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY). There has been improvement since previous stock assessments which indicated the stock was at 5% (3-8%) of original biomass in 2011 and 9% (7- 12%) in 2014. There are positive estimates of earlier rebuilding of the stock than anticipated in 2011, because fishing mortality rate estimates are below the level associated with MSY.
- The review of indicators did not suggest a need to change conclusions from those drawn in 2017. Overall, there is a low trolling (piston-line) index of age 1 in 2018, mixed signals of higher recruitment in recent years, and there are some consistent positive trends in the age-based longline CPUE estimates. There may be several relatively strong cohorts moving through the fishery, although these have yet to contribute to the spawning stock. The ESC noted that increased recruitment is not necessarily indicative of increased spawning stock biomass. The ESC noted that it will take a few more years before there is sufficient data to confirm the recent apparent strong recruitments evident in the aerial survey.
- The ESC evaluated whether there are events, or observations, that are outside the range for which the management procedure was tested and the implications of this for TAC setting. The scope of this evaluation covered input data to the Management Procedure (CPUE and the absence of aerial survey data for 2018), the question of unaccounted mortality, reported catch and length and age of Indonesian catches on the spawning ground, the higher productivity of the stock noted in 2017, and the update to historical CPUE data in 2018. Following the meta-rule review of exceptional circumstances, the ESC concluded there was no reason to take action to modify the 2019 TAC recommendation.
- Based on the annual review of the exceptional circumstances and fishery indicators, the ESC recommended that there is no need to revise the Extended Commission's 2016 decision regarding the TAC for 2018-20. Therefore, the recommended TAC for 2019 and the 2018-20 quota block remains 17,647t.

- In relation to development of the new Management Procedure (MP):
 - The March 2018 Strategy and Fisheries Management Working Group Meeting (SFMWG 5) provided guidance to the ESC on specifications and the desired behaviour for the new MP, which amongst other things, included target levels of 0.25, 0.30, 0.35 and 0.40 of the unfished spawning biomass.
 - The review of preliminary results of Candidate Management Procedures (CMPs) by the June 2018 Meeting of the Operating Model and Management Procedure Working Group (OMMP 9) raised the issue of whether the behaviour exhibited by CMPs for the 0.25 and 0.40 target levels would be considered acceptable given the guidance from SFMWG 5 regarding the undesirability of large TAC decreases and a preference for relative stability beyond the rebuilding target year. Consequently, CMP developers have focused attention on the 0.30 and 0.35 target levels.
 - Most of the CMPs evaluated by the ESC that were able to be tuned to 0.30 SSB₀ by 2035 or 0.35 SSB₀ by 2040:
 - Were able to achieve the interim rebuilding target set by the EC (70% probability of SSB > 0.20 SSB₀ by 2035);
 - Have a high probability of staying above the interim target in the longer term; and
 - Were sufficiently reactive to the possibility of low future recruitments while maintaining relative stability in the catch trajectories.

Consequently, they were able to meet the performance criteria articulated by SFMWG 5.
 - The ESC agreed that further development of CMPs in the inter-sessional period prior to OMMP 10 would continue to focus on the two combinations of target level and tuning year: i) 0.30 by 2035 and ii) 0.35 by 2040. The availability of new data and the reconditioning of the Operating Models in 2019 may require further exploration of alternative tuning criteria.
- The ESC developed an updated workplan for 2019 to 2021. The ESC's workplan is similar to the ESC's 2018 to 2020 workplan. The major differences between the current and previous workplans are:
 - Addition of work to develop a methodology for analysis of farming and market data, which will require the appointment of two independent panels to develop the methodology for presentation to the ESC.
 - Removal of a proposed stakeholder consultation following the 2019 ESC. However, the ESC has provided for a possible web-based consultation to be held with Commissioners after the 2019 ESC to present the chosen set of CMPs if such consultation is requested by the Extended Commission. It was also noted that Member scientists would be expected to fully brief their Commissioners in relation to the CMPs.
- The budgetary implications of the ESC's workplan have been included in paper CCSBT-EC/1810/06 on the Draft 2019 and Indicative 2020-2021 Budgets.

Prepared by the Secretariat