

Attachment 4

**Modified SMMTG Recommendations Agreed by ERSWG 11**

The modified SMMTG recommendations supported by the ERSWG are shown in bold below.

*Provide documents to January 2015 Kobe TWG-BYC Meeting*

**SMMTG requested that the CCSBT Secretariat submit current CCSBT documents on national reporting requirements and observer information standards to the January 2015 Kobe TWG-Bycatch meeting.** (The ERSWG noted that this was done.)

*Reviewing Content and Coverage of t-RFMO Seabird CMMs*

**It was suggested that ERSWG considers developing a work plan which has an increased use of collaborative analyses. These might include joint stock assessment style workshops in which participants bring data and undertake collaborative analyses, bilateral collaboration intersessionally or designating key scientists to undertake analyses of joint datasets. A draft workplan to begin this work with respect to cooperation across tRFMOs will be provided in an Appendix of the finalised scoping paper that will be submitted to ERSWG 11.** (The final scoping paper included in its Appendix 2, ideas for collaboration across tuna RFMOs on seabird bycatch analyses. These were further developed by ERSWG 11 as two linked preliminary project proposals which were to be finalised by Birdlife International prior to submission for funding as an additional components under Birdlife International's existing ABNJ Tuna Project. One proposal was aimed at capacity development for the analysis of seabird data. The other was aimed at using the skills developed to progress assessments across tuna RFMOs. The ERSWG 11 participants endorsed these proposals as a potentially very effective way to evaluate effectiveness of seabird conservation measures, facilitate the assessment of cumulative impacts, and improve skills that could be applied to a range of other bycatch species.)

*Methods for Reviewing Data on t-RFMO Longline Fleets*

**The workshop agreed that measures of both % longline observer coverage and spatial-temporal representativeness were important metrics of longline observer program data. Spatial and temporal representativeness are needed for developing reliable estimates of seabird capture rates and in particular for understanding and reducing uncertainty in estimates.** (ERSWG considered that metrics should be developed on a fleet by fleet basis as it noted that there was substantial variation in reported capture rates among fleets.)

**The group recommended that, for the purpose of evaluation, the % coverage of observations be calculated as number of hooks observed per stratum divided by total fishing effort per stratum, and that representativeness should be evaluated using the calculated proportion of strata which have met the relevant target level of observer coverage. (The ERSWG agreed that this metric would be a useful addition to be calculated and reported after the Data Exchange had been completed).**

**When discussing options for reviewing quality of observer data, it was agreed that the ERSWG currently undertakes such a review. An additional metric of data quality was therefore not considered necessary, but the group noted several activities could help improve the quality of observer data, including:**

- **The ACAP-Japan seabird species identification guide, which is planned to be translated into French, Spanish, Korean, Taiwanese, Indonesian and other key languages;**
- **Collecting whole specimens when practical and when not practical collecting biological samples and/or bycatch photos for confirmation of species ID;**
- **Debriefing observers after the trip to elicit more information about the occurrence of high bycatch events;**
- **More detailed guidance on priorities for seabird related tasks, including how to allocate observer time appropriately, recognising multiple demands made on observer time; and**
- **Development of mechanisms to facilitate the collection and analysis of DNA from bycaught birds including reference databases. (The ERSWG noted these points and incorporated them, where appropriate, into comments on the Observer Standard and its Workplan.)**

**The group recognised that it would be useful to have a central system by which seabird bycatch photos collected by observers could be validated. Alternatives could include accessing online volunteer networks (such as [www.ispotnature.org](http://www.ispotnature.org)) or seabird specialists.**

*Methods to monitor implementation of mitigation measure*

**CCSBT should share, and encourage other t-RFMOs to share, documents, formats and procedures for observer data collection through a dedicated web portal or through the WCPFC-hosted BMIS<sup>1</sup>. (WCPFC/ABNJ Tuna Project confirmed that BMIS is being developed in a way that will facilitate this kind of sharing).**

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<sup>1</sup> Bycatch Mitigation Information System.

**The ERSWG requests the Compliance Committee to collate information from Members on the types of information collected on bycatch mitigation measures under compliance programs for SBT vessels (e.g. port inspections and other monitoring and surveillance programs). This information should be provided to the ERSWG for scientific purposes associated with assessing total seabird mortality and for feedback to the Compliance Committee on the collection of better data for scientific purposes. The group suggested that CCSBT Members be encouraged to assist in the development of electronic monitoring technologies through participating in trials and reporting back on their experiences.**

*Methods to measure and monitor the level and impact of seabird bycatch*

**There should be a tiered approach to measuring and monitoring seabird bycatch and the efficacy of mitigation measures, as per the following:**

- **The first tier would entail monitoring based on the agreed annual reporting template. This would include estimates of seabird bycatch per unit fishing effort and total number of seabirds caught.**
- **The annual monitoring should be complemented by periodic (once every three to five years) assessments, using fine-scale information, preferably at a set level and across multiple t-RFMOs if possible, taking into account data confidentiality. This could take the form of a data assessment workshop, at which countries and relevant experts collaboratively undertake the data analyses, or alternatively could involve Members conducting their own analyses according to agreed protocols and contributing the results of these analyses to the assessment process.**

**As far as possible assessment methods and efforts should be harmonised across tuna RFMOs so that the cumulative impacts of fishing activities on seabirds can be determined.** (ERSWG11 noted that although cross t-RFMO assessments would be valuable, and that it endorsed the newly developed proposals for such assessments to be submitted by Birdlife International noted above, the ERSWG has a responsibility to undertake assessments and provide advice to the EC.)

Development and Testing of Assessment Methods

**The planned revisions to the CCSBT seabird risk assessment will identify absolute levels of spatial and temporal risk of seabird bycatch within the CCSBT area. There is currently no definition of what are “high risk” areas. ERSWG11 agreed to address the definition of ‘high risk areas’ through discussion of papers presented at ERSWG12 and at any joint meetings of the tuna RFMOs. This was considered to be a useful complement to the results of forthcoming New Zealand seabird risk assessment and may facilitate the analysis of seabird bycatch data.**

**CCSBT should prepare a brief description of the availability and resolution of fishing effort data, including an explicit statement of the assumptions used in raising that data. Options for improving effort data should also be outlined. CCSBT should request that the other t-RFMO Secretariats provide similar summaries. Under the ABNJ Tuna Project, the WCPFC-based BMIS can provide a portal for storing this information and maintaining it in an updated form. The group highlighted the need to understand the degree of overlap in reporting seabird bycatch and associated data to multiple tuna RFMOs. (The ABNJ Tuna Project/WCPFC confirmed that this request can be accommodated by BMIS).**

**The group agreed that more work is required on potential methods for calculating bycatch rates and extrapolating to total number of birds killed. New Zealand will progress this work in 2015 and an ACAP subgroup will discuss the topic in 2016. CCSBT Members were encouraged to contribute expertise to these ongoing efforts. (New Zealand indicated that it had initiated this work and had begun drafting a paper describing potential methods but sought input from other participants in this process. This activity has been added to the ERSWG's workplan.).**

#### Ways of extending monitoring across other tuna RFMOs

**The ERSWG Work Plan shall include the development of estimates of background bycatch rates (pre bycatch mitigation) using retrospective analyses, in order to compare these to current seabird bycatch rates and assess effectiveness of tuna RFMO seabird CMMs. It was noted that these may only be possible for certain regions, and that phased implementation meant there would seldom be a knife-edge transition pre and post implementation. Such an analysis would need to:**

- **Identify suitable datasets which have a long enough time series and sufficient levels of observer coverage;**
- **Identify what the seabird CMMs required and when they were implemented; and**
- **Take care not to confound comparisons with changes in fishing gear configurations, areas fished or seasons fished.** (Members expressed varying levels of optimism and assigned different levels of priority to this task. While the outcome will depend on the data available it was noted that high variability between fleets might hamper the combination of fleets for estimation of an area-wide baseline. In such cases, the pre- and post-comparisons would be within specific fleets only).

**It was agreed that it would be useful to submit to the June 2015 ICCAT Subcommittee on Ecosystems meeting a proposal for tuna RFMO collaboration on seabird bycatch analyses.**

Annual Report Data Exchange Template

**ERSWG recommended that the proportion of effort associated with the use of various mitigation measures be added to the Data Exchange Format of the Template for the Annual Report to the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG). This would assist in interpreting any trends in the unstandardised catch rate data it contains and in measuring the effectiveness of seabird CMMs. (An amended template was adopted)**

**The group recommends that the ERSWG review the data included in the annual report template to support improved evaluation of seabird CMMs. (This was accomplished under Agenda Item 3 and the review of CCSBT-ERS/1503/06).**

A small working group was convened to discuss the SMMTG's proposal for t-RFMO collaboration on seabird bycatch analyses, including ideas for national capacity building activities.