



CCSBT-EC/1310/09

Report from the Tenth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group

Purpose

To consider the Report of the Tenth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG).

Recommendations from the ERSWG Report

The full report of the Tenth Meeting of the ERSWG is provided to this meeting as CCSBT-EC/1310/Rep03.

The ERSWG provided the following recommendations and advice for consideration by the Extended Commission:

- The ERSWG reiterated the advice from paragraph 139¹ of the ERSWG 9 report with respect to seabirds.
- The updated information on the critical status of some seabird populations reinforced previous statements from ERSWG 9 on the concerns about the effects of fishing for SBT on seabirds.
- The current Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) identified higher risk areas south west of Australia, east of South Africa and in the Tasman Sea.
- The key points in paper CCSBT-ERS/1308/16 reinforce the advice from ERSWG 9² as there have been no major changes to advice concerning best practice for seabird mitigation measures.
- The ERSWG reiterated its previous advice that implementation of effective seabird bycatch mitigation measures should not be delayed while ERAs are progressed.
- The following recommendations were made by the meeting:
 - Further improvement of risk assessments should be explored, in particular, those referred to in paragraph 39³ of its meeting report;
 - Species identification could be improved using DNA technology; and
 - The effectiveness of current mitigation measures needs to be measured and monitored.

¹ This paragraph is provided at Attachment A.

² ERSWG 9 concluded that, taking into consideration the importance of factors such as safety, practicality and the characteristics of the fishery, the emerging scientific consensus was that a combination of line weighting, night setting and bird scaring lines was considered best practice to reduce seabird bycatch to the lowest level.

³ This paragraph is provided at Attachment B.

- Recognising the importance of measuring and monitoring effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures in SBT longline fisheries, the ERSWG recommended that an “Effectiveness of Seabird Mitigation Measures Technical Group” be formed to provide advice to the ERSWG on feasible, practical, timely, and effective technical approaches for measuring and monitoring the effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures in SBT longline fisheries. The suggested Terms of Reference for this group is provided at Attachment C.
- The ERSWG recommended that a small intersessional working group be formed to progress the assessment of porbeagle sharks.
- The ERSWG requested that the Extended Commission consider actions to reinvigorate the Joint Technical Bycatch Working Group as its work may assist in the ERSWG’s work on sharks and other ERS.

The ERSWG also agreed that March 2015 appeared to be the most suitable time to hold ERSWG 11.

**Extract of paragraph 139 from the
Report of the Ninth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group**

139. The meeting made the following recommendations for consideration by the Extended Commission:
- That the format in **Attachment 4** be used for future Annual reports to the ERSWG (Agenda item 2.1).
 - That data reporting by Members and CNMs be standardised (as recommended at paragraphs 8 - 11) to allow better monitoring of the level of seabird bycatch and to allow approximate estimates of total seabird mortality in SBT fisheries to be made at future ERSWG meetings. The meeting further recommended that such reporting should be harmonised with other RFMOs to the extent possible (Agenda item 5.1.1).
 - That the ERA process identified in CCSBT-ERS/1203/09 be used by the ERSWG for seabirds in future (Agenda item 5.1.3)
 - That the Extended Commission note the considerable progress in recent years on mitigation research for pelagic longline fisheries when deciding future bycatch mitigation measures, especially with respect to new or improved mitigation measures, including line weighting and hybrid tori lines (Agenda item 5.1.5)
 - That the independent Chair be tasked with liaising with the Joint Tuna RFMO Bycatch Working Group on the issues identified in paragraphs 20,49,53,69 and 109.
 - On the basis of concerns about seabird populations, continued reports of widespread and substantial captures of seabirds in SBT fisheries and the results of recent research reflected in the ACAP advice on best practice, the meeting recommended to Extended Commission that implementation of more effective mitigation measures based on best practice is urgently required (Agenda item 6.4.2).

**Extract of paragraph 39 from the
Report of the Tenth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group**

39. The meeting discussed the ERA methodology and the assumptions that are made to determine the relative risk to each species in the analysis for SBT fisheries. The availability of good quality observer data is therefore critical to the risk analysis, otherwise assumptions must be made. The meeting discussed practical responses to potentially improve future ERA:
- For rarer species vulnerability estimates may be based on expert advice or other species may be used as proxies (species guilds may be assumed to have similar vulnerability);
 - Accounting for the presence of diving seabirds which may affect surface feeding seabird bycatch rates;
 - Species identification is an issue for many observers; the meeting considered that feather and other tissue samples should be collected for DNA analysis;
 - The scale of spatial data collection is a key determinant of the risk analysis; finer resolution in the data reported would allow more accurate estimates of relative risk;
 - Defining high risk areas was considered important; the ERA only provides relative risk values so some criteria need to be determined for what is high risk;
 - The assumption in the current ERA is that vulnerability values from New Zealand apply across all the SBT fisheries; however, the level of mitigation in each fishery and the observed bycatch levels should also be considered;
 - It was noted that it may take many decades to measure the population response to mitigation and long-term recovery of populations; and
 - The extent that mitigation measures are used needs to be recorded.

**Effectiveness of Seabird Mitigation Measures Technical Group
Terms of Reference**

Measuring and monitoring effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures in SBT longline fisheries

Purpose

To provide advice to CCSBT-ERSWG on feasible, practical, timely, and effective technical approaches for measuring and monitoring the effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures in SBT longline fisheries.

Composition

Participation is open to representatives of Members and CNMs, Birdlife International and ACAP with technical, and scientific and other expertise concerning approaches for measuring and monitoring the effectiveness of seabird bycatch mitigation measures.

Participation is also open to other invited experts whose particular expertise would make a beneficial contribution to the work being undertaken.

Activities

1. Preparation of a scoping paper that considers approaches for monitoring the effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures in SBT longline fisheries taking into account, among other things:
 - proposed elements for monitoring the effectiveness of seabird bycatch mitigation set out in CCSBT-ERS/1308/17(Rev.1)
 - need for both immediate and longer-term approaches for monitoring effectiveness
 - the feasibility, practicality, timeliness and effectiveness of any proposed approaches for monitoring effectiveness
 - ways of conducting retrospective analyses of existing data on seabird bycatch mitigation to test developed methods of measuring and monitoring
 - ways of extending monitoring across other tuna RFMOs and bodies with responsibility for seabird bycatch mitigation in longline fisheries
 - need to finalise the scoping paper to timelines for ERSWG-11.
2. Conduct of an intersessional workshop involving the participants to discuss ways to measure and monitor the effectiveness of seabird bycatch mitigation measures in longline fisheries and to inform the development of the scoping paper.
3. Participants will develop the scoping paper collaboratively.

Review

These terms of reference will be reviewed by the Ecologically Related Species Working Group and Extended Commission during their next ordinary sessions with a view to developing terms of reference for additional work towards implementing the approaches for monitoring the effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures in SBT longline fisheries set out in the scoping paper.

Resourcing

The workshop will be conducted in English without interpretation. The workshop will be supported by the host Member with minimal involvement of the CCSBT Secretariat.