



Proposed use of CCSBT Research Mortality Allowance to facilitate electronic tagging of juvenile and adult SBT as part of Australia's contributions to the CCSBT SRP in 2005-06

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Summary

As part of the CCSBT Scientific Research Program, Australia is proposing to continue two significant tagging initiatives in 2005-06 aimed at the examining spatial dynamics (movements, mixing, residency, regional fidelity and frequency of spawning migrations) of both juvenile and adult Southern Bluefin Tuna.

The first, a **Global Spatial Dynamics project** (see CCSBT-ESC/0509/30, CCSBT-ESC/0409/46 and CCSBT-ESC/0308/Info4 for full descriptions of the project and progress to date), involves archival tagging of juvenile (3-4 year old) SBT throughout their range (ie from South Africa to New Zealand) with the objective of determining movement and mixing rates, and periods of residency in different parts of this range. The project has been developed as a collaboration between New Zealand, Taiwan and Australia, and it is our hope that the collaborative efforts will be expanded to include collaborations with other CCSBT members (CCSBT-ESC/0509/30).

In 2005-06, it is planned to extend archival tagging operations to the western Indian Ocean and possibly off the east coast of Australia depending upon the availability of suitable tagging platforms and availability of juvenile fish. This will likely see a doubling of the number of fish tagged. With this being the objective, the **CCSBT is requested to provide 12 tonnes of research mortality allowance for the project.**

The second, a **Tasman Sea Pop-Up and Conventional tagging project**, involves tagging of adult SBT off the east coast of Australia. The results of the 2003-04 project are provided in CCSBT-ESC/0509/29 and provide the first records of inter-oceanic migration and spawning in adult SBT. The success of the project in tagging significant numbers of large SBT, and reductions in mortalities associated with tagging, suggest that ongoing tag releases of large SBT in the Tasman Sea are feasible and cost effective. Thus, Australia proposes to continue the tagging program, and the **CCSBT is requested to allocate 15 tonnes of Research Mortality Allowance (RMA) in 2005 to cover mortalities associated with this program.**

Figure 2 – Comparison of size distribution of SBT tagged in the Tasman Sea 2002-04.

As in previous years, the two projects would use RMA in accordance with the protocols agreed by CCSBT.