



## **TWELFTH REGULAR SESSION**

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### **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

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**WCPFC12-2015-06**

**20 October 2015**

#### **Paper by the WCPFC Secretariat**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1. This report is provided pursuant to Rule 13 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure. It highlights the main work and activities of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) for 2015.

2. The start of 2015 saw the change in leadership of the Commission with the new Commission Chair, Madam Rhea Moss-Christian, assuming the Chair at the end of WCPFC11 in December 2014; and the new Executive Director, Mr Feleti Penitala Teo, OBE, took charge of the Secretariat in March of 2015.

3. In the absence of an Executive Director from October 2014 to March 2015, the roles of the Executive Director were shared on a rotational basis by the three senior managers, the Science Manager, Dr SungKwon Soh, the Compliance Manager, Dr Lara Manarangi-Trott and the Finance and Administration Manager, Mr Aaron Nighswander. The three senior managers discharged the roles of the Executive Director exceptionally well; this is on top of their own responsibilities and they are to be highly commended for their efforts.

4. The Executive Director has prioritized the need to lift the profile of the Commission and its Secretariat through deeper engagement and effective and regular communication with members and stakeholders. With that objective, a new Communication Plan for the Secretariat was launched to make the Secretariat more connected and communicate more effectively with its members and stakeholders.

5. The Commission Chair and the Executive Director have reached out to the membership and observers through direct consultations to gauge and ascertain the potential priorities and expectations of the members for the annual WCPFC12 meeting in December 2015 in Bali, Indonesia. The objective of the consultations is to assist in the Commission Chair and the Secretariat better prepare for the Bali meeting to ensure that the Commission is able to move forward on meaningful measures required to sustainably manage the fisheries and fish stocks of the WCPO.

6. To date, the work of the Commission in 2015 has been intensive as evident by the increased volume of intersessional tasks undertaken since WCPFC11. Generally, the work undertaken in the report period was delivered on time with intended objectives and outputs accomplished. Some of the key highlights include:

- i) the successful convening of the Eleventh Regular Sessions of the Commission's subsidiary bodies, namely the Scientific Committee (SC), the Northern Committee (NC), and the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC);
- ii) the annual Ninth Session of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) for this year is to be convened in conjunction with WCPFC12;
- iii) the successful convening of the Intersessional Working Groups on the Regional Observer Programme (IWG-ROP4), Electronic Monitoring and Electronic Reporting (IWG-EM and ER), and Catch Documentation Scheme (IWG-CDS);
- iv) the Intersessional Working Group on FAD Management Options (IWG-FADMgmtOptions) and the Harvest Strategy Workshop (MOW4) will be held immediately prior to WCPFC12;
- v) the successful and timely completion of the draft Compliance Monitoring Reports;
- vi) the continuing development and enhancement of the Commission's IMS system and associated IT infrastructure in support of the Compliance Monitoring Scheme; and
- vii) good progress on implementation of major projects managed by the Secretariat, including the ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna Project – Bycatch Component; and the West Pacific East Asia (WPEA) project that deal with tuna catch data collection and capacity building on compliance in Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam.

## **2. THE SECRETARIAT COMMUNICATION PLAN**

7. The Executive Director has made it a priority to lift the profile of the Commission and its Secretariat through deeper engagement with, between and amongst members and stakeholders of the Commission. A Communication consultant was engaged to assist the Secretariat draw up a communication plan to guide the Secretariat, better engage and communicate more effectively with its membership and the broader stakeholders including the observers, non-government organizations and civil society, industry, the media, and the local community in Pohnpei, FSM where the Secretariat is headquartered.

8. As an output of the consultancy, a Communication Plan for the Secretariat was launched in August, 2015. The plan's core strategies are designed for delivery over two years. The first 12 months prioritizes the development of an external and internal communications framework and the second year focuses on consolidation of the communication practices developed in year one. Underpinning the plan is a tripartite strategy of "*engage, inform, and influence*" to extend Secretariat relationships with stakeholders and consolidate the Commission's profile and reputation.

9. The plan recommends strategies and tactics that are low budget to implement and not particularly resource intensive. Some of the early deliverables of the plan include the publication of the inaugural Secretariat's Quarterly e-Newsletter in August 2015; and standardizing and improving the appearance of business cards, e-signature and the website to project a more contemporary image of the Secretariat and to more actively let people know what is happening in the WCPFC. The plan also includes interactions and knowledge sharing with the host local community, including 'Open Days' where school children and the public can visit the Secretariat headquarters and presentations on the work of the Commission made to the public and local policy and decision makers.

10. Consistent with the objectives of the Communication Plan, direct consultation with the membership and observers of the Commission were held enroute to and on return from the meeting of the NC11 and at the margins of TCC11. The dialogues have provided the

Commission Chair and Executive Director with insights as to the expectations and priorities of members for the WCPFC12, which have been reflected in the WCPFC12 provisional agenda.

### **3. WORK OF THE COMMISSION SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

11. The Commission is supported by four principal subsidiary bodies established by the WCPFC Convention and the bulk of the work of the Commission is transacted through these bodies. They are the Scientific Committee, Northern Committee, Technical and Compliance Committee, and the Finance and Administration Committee. They make recommendations to the Commission for decision in their respective scope of competence in their reports to the WCPFC12. In addition to the work of the subsidiary bodies, WCPFC11 agreed to continue the work of other intersessional processes to continue to progress specific issues including the Regional Observer Programme, Catch Documentation Scheme and the Harvest Strategy Workshop (formerly the Management Objectives Workshop). WCPFC11 also established two intersessional working groups to address specific issues of Electronic Monitoring and Electronic Reporting and FAD Management Options.

12. A brief account of the activities of the Commission's subsidiary bodies and intersessional working groups and workshop meetings will be provided below.

#### ***Scientific Committee***

13. The Eleventh Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC11) took place at Pohnpei, FSM, during 5 – 13 August 2015. Mr Ludwig Kumoru (Papua New Guinea) chaired the meeting and over 140 participants representing CCMs and observers attended the meeting. The meeting agenda continued to be structured around the four themes and each thematic discussion was facilitated by a theme convener namely the Data and Statistics theme, L Kumoru (Papua New Guinea); Stock Assessment theme, J Brodziak (United States of America) and H Nishida (Japan); Management Issues theme, R Campbell (Australia); and Ecosystem and Bycatch Mitigation theme, J Annala (New Zealand) and A Batibasaga (Fiji).

14. The SC11 Summary Report is available on the SC11 website and the key outcomes and recommendations will be presented for consideration at WCPFC12.

15. The status and progress of the 2015 SC work programme and science-related projects undertaken during the reporting period are set out in *Annex 1* to this report.

#### ***Northern Committee***

16. The Eleventh Regular Session of the Northern Committee (NC11) took place at Sapporo, Japan, from 31 August to 3 September 2015. Mr Masanori Miyahara (Japan) chaired the meeting. In the absence of the requisite meeting quorum, the NC11 agreed to reconvene NC11 in conjunction with the WCPFC12 to adopt their meeting report. The key outcomes of the NC11 will be presented for consideration at WCPFC12.

#### ***Technical and Compliance Committee***

17. The Eleventh Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC11) was held at Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia from 23 to 29 September 2015. The meeting was chaired by Alexa Cole (United States of America) and over 160 participants representing CCMs and observers attended the meeting. The Vice Chair Joanna Anderson (New Zealand)

presided over the meeting proceedings on the last day due to the absence of the Chair due to health reasons. TCC11 established small working groups to progress discussions on the following issues: cooperating non-member applications; TCC work plan; data standards; Harvest Strategy work plan; CDS-IWG work plan; sharks CMMs; and seabirds.

18. A full record of the meeting is available on the website and the outcomes and recommendations will be discussed at WCPFC12. The Provisional CMR documentation is available to authorized CCM users through the WCPFC intranet and a copy has also been posted on the secure side of the WCPFC website. The recommendations will be discussed at WCPFC12.

19. The key TCC related activities in 2015 are set out in Annex 2 to this report.

#### ***Finance and Administration Committee***

20. The Ninth Finance and Administration Committee (FAC9), co-chaired by Paul Callaghan (United States of America) and Joyce Samuelu-Ah Leong (Samoa) will meet just prior to and throughout WCPFC12, as necessary. In addition to personnel, work programme and budget matters, the FAC also considers a range of administrative matters relating to the work of the Commission including issues associated with the headquarters office. The report and outcomes of FAC9 will be presented for discussion at WCPFC12.

#### ***Intersessional Working Group on the Regional Observer Programme***

21. WCPFC11 sanctioned the continuation of the IWG-ROP that held its fourth meeting in Nadi, Fiji from 6-8 July 2015. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues which had been forwarded by the TCC and the Commission. The report of the IWG-ROP4 was initially discussed by TCC11 and will also be presented to WCPFC12 by IWG-ROP Chair, Ray Clarke (United States of America).

#### ***Intersessional Working Group on Electronic Monitoring and Electronic Reporting***

22. The First E-reporting and E-monitoring Intersessional Working Group meeting was held in Nadi, Fiji from 8-10 July 2015, Chaired by Kerry Smith (Australia). Electronic reporting is recognized as providing ways to enhance data accuracy, data entry efficiency, reducing reporting burden and avoiding duplication for vessel operators and national fisheries agencies. The working group report was provided to SC11 and TCC11 and the key recommendations will be presented to WCPFC12 for discussion under TCC issues.

#### ***Intersessional Working Group on Catch Documentation Scheme***

23. WCPFC11 sanctioned the continuation of the IWG-CDS that met in Pohnpei Federated States of Micronesia on 21 and 22 September 2015, chaired by Alois Kinol of Papua New Guinea. A consultant from the FAO Gilles Hosch was engaged to support the workshop and his costs were partly covered by the ABNJ project. The CDS-IWG Chair provided a report of progress and a proposed 2016 work plan to TCC11, and the key recommendations will be presented to WCPFC12 for discussion under TCC issues.

#### ***Intersessional Working Group on FAD Management Options***

24. The IWG- FAD Management Options has so far conducted its work in 2015 electronically. A meeting is scheduled to be held on 27 – 28 November 2015, and to be chaired by Mr Brian Kumasi (Papua New Guinea) and assisted by Mr Raymond Clarke (United States of America) as Vice-Chair. The Working Group is open to all CCMs and pursuant to its terms of reference shall include participation by representatives of PNAO, FFA, SPC, industry, and NGOs, and is also open to other interested WCPFC observers. The report and recommendations of the working group is expected to be presented for discussion at WCPFC12.

#### ***Harvest Strategy Workshop (formerly Management Objectives Workshop)***

25. WCPFC11 sanctioned the continuation of the series of workshop on management objectives and called for a fourth workshop. As previously arranged, the workshop will be held prior to the regular WCPFC12 session on 30 November and 1 December 2015. An agenda for the workshop has been developed and circulated. It focuses predominantly on the work associated with the Commission efforts in developing and implementing a harvest strategy approach for key fisheries and stocks of the WCPO pursuant to CMM 2014-06. With such a focus, it is being proposed that the workshop should be retitled as the Harvest Strategy Workshop. The workshop will be facilitated by Mr Ian Cartwright and its outcomes in the form of a Facilitators Report will be presented to WCPFC12.

#### **4. ADMINISTRATIVE, FINANCIAL AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

26. This section reports on the key administrative, financial and information technology activities of the Secretariat.

##### ***Staffing matters***

27. The number of Secretariat staff remain relatively stable with 23 staff positions comprising of 9 professional staff, including the Executive Director, and 14 support staff. The Secretariat also hosts the Technical Coordinator for the ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna Project Bycatch Component that is implemented by the WCPFC. Though the Technical Coordinator is not strictly a staff member of the Secretariat she is deemed for practical purposes as such. A new addition to the staff complement in 2015 is Ms Emma Nelson-Mori who was recruited for the local staff position of Project Management Assistant in August 2015.

28. The position of the Observer Programme Coordinator was advertised in late August, 2015. At date of report the selection process is ongoing and an update will be provided at WCPFC12.

29. As tasked by WCPFC12, a consultant from StrategicPay was engaged to conduct a job sizes and job evaluation for all Secretariat roles and review the current performance management system. The consultant's report is expected to be presented to FAC9 for consideration and ultimately to WCPFC12 for decision.

30. The Secretariat hosted 3 interns from South Korea and 2 interns from China in 2015. The internships were for capacity building related to the interns' academic studies. The interns reviewed the Commission's key documents such as Convention, Rules of Procedure, and Summary Reports of the Commission meetings, and had consultation meetings with relevant staff to assist with their areas of study. In addition, the Chinese interns had an opportunity to attend and assist at the SC meeting.

##### ***Annual accounts and contributions***

31. The 2014 financial statements were completed, audited and made available through the Commission's website within the specified time frames, together with the External Auditor's Reports. The Auditor reported that the statements and accounts complied with the required accounting standards as well as the Commission's Financial Regulations, and presented a fair view of the financial position. The Auditors report will be presented for the final consideration of WCPFC12.

32. Article 18 (3) of the Convention provides that if a member's contributions are in arrears for the preceding two full years it shall not participate in the taking of decisions by the Commission, subject to the Commission permitting such a member to vote. Currently there are no Members who are in arrears for the previous two (2) years.

### ***Financial and administrative arrangements***

33. Financial and administrative arrangements operated satisfactorily during the year with the continued use of QuickBooks Enterprise as the Commission's financial management system. Management of the headquarters building services and grounds continues to be a challenge; however, by implementing a regular maintenance schedule the buildings are now in good repair and the grounds landscaping completed. The weather in Pohnpei has been severe this year. A tropical depression hit the island in May causing some minor damage to the Headquarters' buildings.

### ***Trust Funds***

34. There has been a substantial growth in the amount of funds received in the Voluntary Fund for 2014 and 2015. The Voluntary Fund received a number of contributions this fiscal year. The EU committed USD854,000 for the Long term tagging of Bigeye Tuna, the MOW process and Mitigation of bycatch in the WCPFO Purse Seine and Long Line fisheries with emphasis on Bigeye Tuna juveniles. This is in addition to the substantial funding committed by the EU in late 2014. ISSF contributed USD85,000 for FAD Management Workshop and for the MOW process. The United States of America provided USD85,000 for FAD analysis, electronic monitoring/electronic reporting implementation and to support expansion of the whale shark tagging effort and other shark programs. Korea provided USD170,560 for the Tuna Tagging Project. The FAO is providing USD93,673 to assist with the MOW process. Australia provided USD15,545 for Chair's travel to meetings. FSM provided USD5,000 for the co-hosting of receptions for SC11 and TCC11.

35. The Special Requirements Fund (SRF) was heavily used this year and no longer has funding available. Multiple requests have been sent out for additional funding but to date no additional funds have been received.

36. The Japan Trust Fund (JTF) was used to implement a number of projects. USD151,950 was received and provided for Capacity Building in Fisheries Statistics, Regulation and Enforcement this fiscal year.

37. At the moment, the Secretariat is working with Chinese Taipei to establish the Chinese Taipei Trust Fund that was announced at last year's annual meeting. An update on the progress of this fund will be provided at the WCPFC12.

38. For additional information on the specific projects funded under the SRF and JTF, please refer to the FAC paper Report on the Status of Other Funds for 2015 (WCPFC12-2015-FAC9-07).

### ***Information Technology Systems***

39. In 2015, the corporate network at Pohnpei again logged a full year of operational stability with all operational systems maintaining more than 99% systems availability. The network virtualization improvements which were installed in 2013, have effectively supported the CCM online reporting of Annual Report Part 2, generation by the Secretariat of draft Compliance Monitoring Reports and CCM online replies to the draft and provisional Compliance Monitoring Reports. Since 2014, the online systems have also supported the implementation of an upgraded Record of Fishing Vessels system, including a publicly accessible database with photographs, as well as online systems for CCMs to submit updates to their vessel records.

40. The annual VMS and IMS security review is an annual report based on the Commission Information Security Policy adopted in 2007. At that time, the WCPFC Secretariat hadn't moved into its new headquarters. Since 2012, Deloitte Guam, as the appointed security auditor has prepared a yearly report to TCC and the WCPFC. The 2015 security review of the Commission VMS and IMS recognized the continuing improvements to corporate systems and applications, noting that the IT platforms and adopted technologies have changed significantly since 2012. The most recent report became available shortly prior to TCC11, and presently an internal review is underway of the recommendations in the report and a work plan with associated resource implications is presently being developed by the Secretariat.

41. In 2015, more datasets were incorporated into the Commission data warehouse (DWH) facility. The VMS daily reports and FFA Good Standing are now fully integrated into the DWH and used in in-house analytical tools. Preliminary work on an internal Secretariat mapping facility has been completed. Additional enhancement work has been completed for the Commission website, such as with the EHSP, HSBI and RFV displays of information. Of particular importance is the lead role of the Compliance group in guiding the integrated IMS and data management work, and the results were apparent in supporting the CMR process. As reported to WCPFC11, it is clear that the commitments made by the Commission since 2012 to support the Secretariat IMS developments and associated IT infrastructure continue to improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of the MCS and compliance monitoring work, the Science group and the Secretariat support to all CCMs.

42. The Secretariat has projects in-progress for 2015 and TCC11 supported maintaining funding commitments for its online systems and IMS work plans for 2016. The Secretariat is proposing a holistic approach in response to the specific security issues and concerns raised in the Deloitte 2015 report, and particularly, for the implementation of best-practice and cost-effective disaster recovery strategy for the WCPFC systems, IMS and online-applications and Commission data holdings. Any specific additional resourcing requirements will be presented during FAC9.

## **5. SERVICES PROVIDERS OF THE COMMISSION**

### ***The Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the SPC***

43. The SPC-OFP continued in the role of conducting data management, statistical analysis, stock assessment and related analytical services, management analyses and CMM performance monitoring, and other advisory and technical services. In 2015, the SPC-OFP produced over 30 papers and reports for SC11 and provided *ad hoc* advice and support throughout the year. In addition, SPC-OFP assisted the following specific activities:

- participated in E-reporting and E-monitoring Intersessional Working Group, TCC11, Harvest Strategy Workshop, FAD Management Options Intersessional Working Group and WCPFC11, producing key papers and presentations for each meeting;
- participated in the WPEA Project related workshops, including the East Asian Seas stock assessment workshop, tuna data review and annual tuna catch estimates workshops with participating countries (Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam); and
- Conducted the Pacific Tuna Tagging Program (PTTP) and coordinated PTTP Steering Committee Meeting.

### ***The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency***

44. In 2014/15, the Commission continued its association with the FFA through its Service Level Agreement, and its delivery of VMS services that is based on a system supported by Polestar (ex-Absolute) and hosted in the Macquarie data Centre in Sydney. The Pacific VMS system operates as two separate and distinct entities to protect the integrity of the Commission VMS data and FFA VMS data. Currently there are almost 3,500 vessels reporting to the Commission VMS, and nearly 45% report through the FFA VMS system with position transfer to the WCPFC (the Commission separately maintains VMS contracts for airtime services for positions from the WCPFC-VMS direct reporting vessels and support to VMS redundancy provision). The Commission VMS system under the SLA provided continued and ongoing support to routine VMS services, “flick the switch” implementation (WCPFC9 decision on application of the WCPFC VMS to WCPFC members’ waters) and members’ high seas MCS operations.

## **6. RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

45. It is critical that the WCPFC maintains regular dialogue and communication with other relevant organisations, in particular, the tuna regional fisheries management organisations, namely, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) to share information and exchange views on areas of common interest. Representatives of these organizations had occasion to meet in Rome. The discussion with the other t-RFMOs revolved around the need for further meetings on best practices between the t-RFMOs and the GEF-ABNJ process.

46. The IATTC remains one of the key relationships and the GEF-ABNJ project has provided greater opportunities for closer work between the WCPFC and IATTC, as well as with FAO and other tuna RFMOs. The Executive Director attended the annual meeting of the IATTC in Guayaquil, Ecuador, during 29 – 3 July 2015 and held discussion with his counterpart at IATTC on areas of collaboration including the Pan Pacific bigeye stock assessment and cross-accreditation of observers on vessels that operate within the convention areas of both organizations. During the meeting, the IATTC agreed to exhort the WCPFC to consider, at its next regular meeting, the adoption of conservation and management measures consistent and harmonized with those already adopted by IATTC. It also agreed to exhort the WCPFC to accelerate the mechanisms for cooperation and coordination between the two organizations to

assess comprehensively the status of all stocks of tuna and tuna-like species of the Pacific Ocean covered by their respective conventions. These decisions were formally conveyed to the Executive Director by a letter dated 25 September 2015 from the IATTC Director which was forwarded to members, cooperating non-members and participating territories.

47. There were also discussions with CCSBT to clarify rules for transshipment reporting and the transshipment observer programme requirements, as well as data exchange. On the latter a draft data exchange agreement will be proposed for consideration at WCPFC12.

48. The WCPFC continues to support sharing of data with the Consolidated List of Authorised Fishing Vessels (CLAV), which operates between the five tRFMOs through an automatic update facility from WCPFC offices to the CLAV databases. The WCPFC is also keeping abreast of the international developments and technical work related to the Global Record of Vessels, being led by FAO.

49. The Secretariat has also maintained close liaison with other regional organizations and have participated actively in their meetings and workshops. The meetings and workshops attended are set out in *Annex 3*.

## **7. ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna Project Bycatch Component**

50. The Bycatch Component of the ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna Project is implemented by the WCPFC by virtue of an Execution Agreement signed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and WCPFC on 25 October, 2014 for a 3.2 million USD package of work designed to mitigate the adverse impact of bycatch in global tuna fisheries. The key achievements of the project in 2015 include:

- The Technical Coordinator-Sharks and Bycatch (TCSB) and WCPFC Regional Observer Coordinator attended an experts meeting convened under the Joint Tuna RFMO Technical Working Group-Bycatch experts on longline observer data harmonization in Keelung, Taiwan in January 2015;
- WCPFC and SPC signed an MOU for joint work on the ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna Project Bycatch Components in January 2015;
- The TCSB chaired the WCPFC/ABNJ Pacific Shark Life History Expert Panel at James Cook University in Cairns, Australia in April 2015;
- WCPFC, with assistance from the ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna Project, accepted a request from CCSBT to lead a southern hemisphere porbeagle stock status assessment including hiring a consultant and coordinating amongst the five Tuna RFMOs in June 2015;
- The TCSB contributed eight papers for WCPFC SC11 in August 2015:
  - *EB-IP-06*: Clarke, S. and S. Nicol. Update on the ABNJ (Common Oceans) tuna project's shark and bycatch components.
  - *EB-WP-08*: Clarke, S., L. Manarangi-Trott and P. Williams. Changes to Shark Reporting and Data Gaps Assessment Processes
  - *EB-WP-03*: Clarke, S. Understanding and mitigating impacts to whale sharks in purse seine fisheries of the western and central Pacific Ocean.
  - *EB-IP-13*: Clarke, S., R. Coelho, M. Francis, M. Kai, S. Kohin, K.M. Liu, C. Simpfendorfer, J. Tovar-Avila, C. Rigby and J. Smart. Report of the Pacific shark life history expert panel workshop, 28-30 April 2015.

- *EB-WP-05*: Clarke, S., S. Nicol and Y. Swimmer. Analysis of sea turtle mitigation measure effectiveness in tuna longline fisheries.
- *EB-WP-06*: Clarke, S., S. Nicol and P. Williams. Proposal for a Bycatch Data Exchange Protocol (BDEP) amongst the t-RFMOs.
- *EB-IP-05*: Gilman, E. and S. Clarke. Changes to WCPFC longline observer bycatch data: Proposals in response to a minimum suite of harmonized fields for tuna RFMOs.
- *EB-IP-07*: Fitzsimmons, L., S. Clarke, S. Caillot and S. Nicol. Redevelopment of the Bycatch Information Management System (BMIS).
- From these SC11 papers two proposals were forwarded from SC and TCC for the Commission's consideration in December 2015: safe release guidelines for whale sharks and changes to WCPFC longline observer minimum standard data fields.
- WCPFC planned for and announced in October 2015 a workshop on sea turtle mitigation in longline fisheries to be held in Honolulu early next year.

## **8. Future Work of the Commission**

51. The WCPFC12 will consider and determine the various work plans for future work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and that of the Secretariat. They include the work plans for the Scientific Committee, Technical Compliance Committee, Northern Committee and the Intersessional Working Groups on Electronic Monitoring and Electronic Reporting Workshop, Catch Documentation Scheme, FAD Management Options, and the Regional Observer Programme.

52. The Provisional Agenda for WCPFC12 focused on some key priorities with the focus on tightening and strengthening some species conservation and management measures in particular, the tropical tunas and the South Pacific albacore CMMs. Without preempting the discussions at WCPFC12, there may be a body of work emanating from the discussion of these CMMs on ways and means of strengthening them.

53. As was the case in recent years, there is expected to be a focus on the Compliance Monitoring Scheme, continued development of the supporting WCPFC integrated-Information Management System (IMS) and agreement on programs of work on Regional Observer Programme, VMS, electronic reporting standards development and catch documentation scheme development.

54. The Secretariat has also identified five priority work areas for future IMS development within the Secretariat to:

- i) improve the collection of accurate and timely data, including through electronic reporting and electronic monitoring;
- ii) continue to expand the analytical capability and business intelligence of the WCPFC IMS, including adding a GIS/map for displaying and integrating various WCPFC data;
- iii) improve the access and capability of the Secretariat to review ROP observer data, and ensure that the Secretariat's internal MCS operating procedures and IMS systems adequately cater for record-keeping, handling of evidence and notices to CCMs of possible violations;
- iv) review procedures and propose tools, including through the website, so that the Secretariat is better equipped to provide timely access to MCS-relevant information in support of member MCS activities and to share MCS data with CCMs, in accordance with the WCPFC data rules and procedure; and

- v) integrate WCPFC Catch and Effort data held and maintained by SPC-OFP into the WCPFC IMS datasets.

55. There are six areas that the science programme is highlighting for future work programme, which include:

- i) Mitigation of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna from purse seine fishery;
- ii) Establish mechanism to collaborate with the IATTC to conduct Pacific-wide stock assessments for key tuna and tuna-like species;
- iii) Maintain WCPFC Tuna Tissue Bank, with particular emphasis on WCPO bigeye, yellowfin, and skipjack tunas;
- iv) Conduct stock assessments as agreed in the 'Shark Research Plan and Stock Assessment Schedule' (Attachment H, SC11 Summary Report)
- v) Development of limit reference points for elasmobranchs, and tools to mitigate shark bycatch; and
- vi) Continuous support of the WPEA project to improve data collection and to build national capacity of compliance with WCPFC requirements.

56. The Executive Director is expected to present a proposal to WCPFC12 on a proposed process to develop a new Strategic Plan for the WCPFC. The proposed process will be highly consultative, transparent and member driven and to be facilitated by experts in strategic planning and facilitation. The strategic plan will provide high level and long term strategic objectives and goals to guide the work of the Commission and the Secretariat. It is also expected that the strategic plan will demarcate clearly the objectives and outputs for the Commission and those for the Secretariat. The proposal will carry budgetary implications and if supported by the Commission will entail a new stream of work for the Secretariat in 2016.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION**

57. WCPFC12 is invited to consider and note the report.

### Key SC Work Programmes in 2015

- *(Project 15) West Pacific East Asia Project*  
The Secretariat continued to manage and implement the GEF-funded WPEA Project (Sustainable Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the West Pacific and East Asian Seas). WCPFC's co-finance is USD 25,000 per year.
- *(Project 35) Refinement of bigeye parameters Pacific-wide (A comprehensive review and study of bigeye tuna reproductive biology)*  
WCPFC had a three-year contract with SPC- OFP on this project (January 2013-December 2015). Allocated budgets for the three years were \$70K, \$75K and \$75K, respectively. At SC11, SPC-OFP presented a progress report on the Pacific-wide sampling and proposed to maintain a WCPFC Tuna Tissue Bank with an annual cost of USD 80,000.
- *(Project 42) Pacific-wide tagging project*  
A PTTP Steering Committee meeting was convened during SC11 and SPC-OFP presented a progress report on 2014-2015 tagging activities and the status of tag recovery. The Commission supports USD 10,000 to assist operations and activities related with the PTTP including tag recovery.
- *(Project 54) Bycatch mitigation study in longline fisheries (Monte Carlo simulation of mitigation options for longline shark bycatch)*  
SPC-OFP, through DMP Consulting, conducted a Monte Carlo analysis of measures to mitigate longline fishery impacts on silky and oceanic whitetip sharks, which is posted as SC11-EB-WP-02. Further research for purse seine fishery is proposed for consideration by WCPFC12.
- *(Project 57) Limit Reference Points (Expert panel work on the identification of appropriate life history parameters for use in developing shark LRPs)*  
The ABNJ Tuna Project Technical Coordinator coordinated the Pacific shark life history expert panel workshop during 28-30 April 2015. The workshop report is posted on the SC11 website as SC11-EB-WP-13.
- *(Project 60) Purse Seine Species Composition*  
SPC-OFP presented SC11-ST-WP-02 on annual estimates of purse seine catches by species based on alternative data sources and a review of current purse-seine catch estimation issues and future plans. Further paired sampling and unloading data comparisons were proposed with an annual budget of USD 50,000 for 2016 and 2017 to cover at-sea data collection by the 2<sup>nd</sup> observer and associated travel and some analytical support.
- *(Project 67) Range contraction of tropical tunas, sharks, and billfish (Review of impacts of recent high catches of skipjack tuna on fisheries on the margins of the WCPFC Convention Area)*  
SPC-OFP presented SC11-SA-WP-05 (Examination of trends in abundance of skipjack tuna with an emphasis on temperate waters) as the output of this project. SC11 recommended a research for further review of impacts of recent high catches of skipjack on fisheries on the margins of the WCPFC Convention Area for the Commission's consideration.
- *(Project 70) Improvement of stock assessments in line with recommendations from the report of the Peer Review for the 2011 Bigeye Tuna Stock Assessment*

This project is funded \$160,000 per year for three years (2013-2015) for SPC to hire an additional staff member to focus on this work. The project outcome is posted on SC11 website as SC11-SA-IP-08 (Implementing the recommendations from the bigeye tuna assessment review). SC12 will review a Secretariat proposal on a formal process and its cost implication to independently review stock assessments.

- *(Project 71) South Pacific Swordfish Biology*

Along with the SC9 recommendation for additional work to be undertaken on age, growth and age validation of SP swordfish, the Secretariat arranged a contract with the CSIRO to partly support their project (*Determination of Swordfish growth and maturity relevant to the southwest Pacific stock*) which includes the requests from SC9. CSIRO provided a progress report (SC11-SA-IP-12) which is posted on the SC11 website, and this project terminates in December 2016.

- *(Project 74) Pacific-wide bigeye tuna stock assessment*

This project was recommended by the SC10 for review by SC11 with a funding support by the European Union. SPC produced SC11-SA-WP-03 (Sensitivity of the WCPO bigeye tuna stock assessment results to the inclusion of EPO dynamics within a Pacific-wide model) which responds to the recommendation from the 2011 Bigeye Peer Review:

*The Panel therefore recommends that a Pacific-wide assessment be conducted soon to evaluate whether the past conclusion that the results from a WCPO-only assessment are consistent with expectations from a Pacific-wide assessment remains true. In addition, the Panel recommends that Pacific-wide assessments should be conducted regularly (~ every five years) to confirm the assumption that a WCPO-only assessment will provide robust estimates of stock status.*

- *(Project 75) MSE Related work in support of WCPFC Harvest Strategies.*

This project, currently EU supported, commenced 1<sup>st</sup> November 2015, and recruits a modeler to work in support of the WCPFC Harvest Strategy Framework, especially in relation to Management Strategy Evaluation. In association with this project, the Secretariat will contract external expertise to attend an MSE workshop and to provide ongoing advice to SPC.

### **Key TCC Related Activities in 2015**

The activities of the WCPFC MCS programme are covered in detail in WCPFC-TCC11-2015-14 *Executive Directors Report on Operational Issues with the WCPFC MCS Programmes*. Some highlights include:

- The Commission has a SLA with the FFA for the provision of VMS services to the Commission through Absolute/Polestar; and maintains contracts with Satcomms/Vizada, Satcom/Iridium and CLS Argos for air time services for direct reporting vessels;
- The VMS data integrity audit was combined with a security audit of the IMS, RFV procedures (Deloitte);
- Continued delivery of a range of online reporting systems for CCMs and for the Secretariat (including online reporting systems for Annual Report Part 2, draft Compliance Monitoring Reports, MTU audit reporting, and Record of Fishing Vessels updates);
- Continued work to further integrate and develop IT tools to better support the Secretariat’s work for the development of draft Compliance Monitoring Reports as well as day-to-day monitoring of the implementation of WCPFC CMMs, including work on a mapping display for the Secretariat MCS staff;
- In-country and over email/skype assistance to CCMs and their authorized MCS entities with Annual Reporting requirements, compliance monitoring report-related queries, and near-real time MCS operations;
- Receiving, reviewing and processing WCPFC Data Access requests from CCMs and their authorized MCS entities;
- Delivery of updated displays on the WCPFC website MCS pages for the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels and including key statistics, High Seas Boarding and Inspection Register, Eastern High Seas Pocket VMS data and a display and update facility for CCM Official Contact lists (including Official contacts, HSBI, Authorised MCS Entities and Flag State Authorities);
- Receipt, maintenance into databases and summary reporting based on reporting by CCMs under CMMs – Fishery-specific CMMs, high seas transshipment reporting, VMS-related reporting, high seas pocket entry and exit reporting, WCPFC IUU list and Article 25(2) submissions; High Seas Boarding and Inspection reports; Record of Fishing Vessels updates.
- In the first quarter of 2015, the Secretariat completed the establishment of an in-house VMS to RFV “mapping table” which provides a formal link between vessels data in the RFV and the vessels data in the Commission VMS database. This is an important part of the Secretariat’s integrated MCS information management system development. With the completion of this task, the Secretariat now has the capability to utilize WCPFC VMS data in its routine monitoring of CMMs.
- Technical, policy and administrative support to the four intersessional WCPFC Working Group meetings held in 2015 and their intersessional discussions.

**Other Meetings and Workshop Attended by the Secretariat**

In addition to the meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Commission, the Secretariat participated in the following meetings and workshops during 2015.

- Longline Bycatch Data Collected by Tuna RFMOs Workshop (January 2015), Chinese Taipei
- Courtesy visit to New Caledonia Civil Maritime Operations Office (January 2015), Noumea, New Caledonia
- SPC's Longline Operational Data Workshop (4-10 February 2015), Noumea, New Caledonia
- Parties to the Nauru Agreement Observer Workshop (February 2015, Noumea, New Caledonia
- Regional Observer Coordinators Workshop (February 2015), Noumea, New Caledonia
- FFA MCS Working Group (March 2015), Honiara, Solomon Islands
- ISSF's Stock Assessment [HCR and MSE] Workshop (16-18 March 2015), Monterey, California, USA
- Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) Officials meeting (March 2015), Yap, Federated States of Micronesia;
- Tuna Data Workshop (April 2014), Noumea, New Caledonia;
- In-country visit to assist with AR Pt 2 and CMR potential issues, (Solomon Islands – March 2015, Kiribati – April 2015;
- In-country visit for discussions on electronic manual reporting format (April 2015), Philippines and Chinese Taipei;
- ISC's MSE Workshop (16-17 April 2015), Yokohama, Japan;
- Courtesy visits to US Coast Guard District 14 Offices and NOAA Offices (April 2015), Honolulu, Hawaii, USA;
- WPRFMC workshop on Bigeye Purse Seine Management Options (April 2015), Honolulu, USA;
- FFC Officials Meeting (May 2015), Funafuti, Tuvalu;
- Observer training (May 2015) Philippines;
- FFA CDS Workshop (May 2015), Nadi, Fiji;
- Inaugural meeting of Pacific Ocean Alliance (CROP) - High Hopes for the High Seas (May 2015), Suva, Fiji;
- PNA Ministerial Meeting (June 2015), Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia;
- FFC Ministerial Meeting (July 2015), Funafuti, Tuvalu;
- ISC15 (9-20 July 2015) Kona, Hawaii, USA;
- WPRFMC and MIMRA hosted workshop on Bigeye Management Options (August 2015), Majuro, Marshall Islands;
- ABNJ Project Steering Committee (August 2015);
- Tuna Congress (3-4 September 2015), General Santos, Philippines;
- Trilateral (France, Australia and New Zealand) Conference on Maritime Surveillance in the South Pacific (21 – 23 October 2015), Noumea, New Caledonia;
- UNDP-GEF EAS Congress (16-20 November 2015), Da Nang, Viet Nam;
- WPEA Project related meetings and workshops in Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam; and

- Observer programme Audits (FFA, Fiji, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Honolulu (USA)).