



TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE
Eleventh Regular Session
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Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

**EXPLANATORY NOTE – AMENDMENTS TO “SCIENTIFIC DATA TO BE
PROVIDED TO THE COMMISSION”**

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Explanatory Note –

New Zealand proposal to amend ‘Scientific Data To Be Provided To The Commission’

Background

New Zealand has recently undertaken a program of boarding and inspection on the high seas in the WCPFC Convention Area. The main objective of the program was to check vessel compliance with the in-force WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures.

A secondary objective of these patrols was to assess how well the WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures are functioning as tools to support effective fisheries management.

An overall trend we found when undertaking these activities was that many vessels were not recording fish caught as bycatch such as opah, mahimahi, sunfish, sailfish, spearfish, oil fish and wahoo. This wasn't assessed as a compliance issue as vessels are not required to record quantities of these species according to “Scientific Data To Be Provided To The Commission”.

It is also noted that these bycatch species are not strictly considered as High Migratory, therefore there is no specific WCPFC Conservation and Management Measure that attempt to manage these species.

However, one of the key objectives of the Commission is to maintain the integrity of marine ecosystems and to minimise the risk of long-term or irreversible effects of fishing operations. To this end, New Zealand is concerned that data on bycatch species, an integral element of the marine ecosystem, is not being collected as well as it could be.

For the above reasons New Zealand is proposing to amend the WCPFC data collections requirements contained in Attachment K, Annex 1 (para 1.3-1.6) - Scientific Data To Be Provided To The Commission, specifically include common by-catch species which are caught and landed in the Western Central Pacific tuna fisheries.

We are proposing that catch data on species such as opah, mahimahi, sunfish, sailfish, spearfish, oil fish and wahoo be subject to mandatory collection as outlined in Attachment K, Annex 1 (Standards for the Provision of Operational Level Catch and Effort Data).

We are very mindful that changes to these standards require significant changes in practice at both the vessel level and at the flag state level. In this vein, we appreciate that a significant period of implementation will be required if these changes are to be accepted.

We look forward to working constructively with other members on this important piece of work both at TCC 2015 and WCPFC 2015.