



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE  
NINETEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

Koror, Palau  
16 – 24 August 2023

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**PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA**

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WCPFC-SC19-2023/03 (Rev.04)

**AGENDA ITEM 1 OPENING OF THE MEETING**

The meeting will open at 08:30AM on Wednesday, 16 August 2023.

**1.1 Welcome address**

The Chair will welcome delegations of the WCPFC Members, Cooperating Non-members and Participating Territories (CCMs) and Observers to the Nineteenth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC19).

A senior official from Palau, the Commission Chair, the Executive Director, and the SC Chair will be invited to deliver an opening address.

**1.2 Meeting arrangements**

The Chair will outline procedural matters including the meeting schedule, administrative arrangements, and the list of theme conveners. In addition, SC19 will endorse the appointment of new conveners as required.

Chair	<i>TBD</i>
Vice Chair (Acting Chair)	Emily Crigler (1): <a href="mailto:emily.crigler@noaa.gov">emily.crigler@noaa.gov</a>
ST Theme	Valerie Post (6): <a href="mailto:valerie.post@noaa.gov">valerie.post@noaa.gov</a>
SA Theme	Hidetada Kiyofuji: <a href="mailto:kiyofuji_hidetada20@fra.go.jp">kiyofuji_hidetada20@fra.go.jp</a> Berry Miller (1): <a href="mailto:bmuller@mimra.com">bmuller@mimra.com</a> Michelle Sculley (1): <a href="mailto:michelle.sculley@noaa.gov">michelle.sculley@noaa.gov</a>
MI Theme	Robert Campbell (14): <a href="mailto:robert.campbell@csiro.au">robert.campbell@csiro.au</a> Laura Tremblay-Boyer: <a href="mailto:laura.tremblay-boyer@csiro.au">laura.tremblay-boyer@csiro.au</a>
EB Theme	Yonat Swimmer (6): <a href="mailto:yonat.swimmer@noaa.gov">yonat.swimmer@noaa.gov</a> Emily Crigler (1): <a href="mailto:emily.crigler@noaa.gov">emily.crigler@noaa.gov</a>

(x): number of years of convenership

Deadline for the submission of papers

According to the decision made at SC2 and supported suggestions at SC15 (Paras 680 and 682, SC15 Summary Report), earlier submission of all meeting documents in advance of the deadline below will be highly encouraged:

- 12 July 2023: Titles and preliminary abstracts;
- 17 July 2023: Submission of Annual Report Part 1; and
- 29 July 2023: submission of full papers including reporting summary under Agenda Item 2.4. All papers will be posted by 2 August, at least two weeks in advance of the SC19.

Authors who wish to submit any papers MUST refer to *Guidelines for submitting meeting papers* section in the SC19 Meeting Notice on SC19 website.

### **1.3 Issues arising from the Commission**

SC19 will be briefed on issues arising from the previous meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

### **1.4 Adoption of agenda**

The Provisional Agenda for SC19 was posted on 18 May 2023 in accordance with Rule 1 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure. Any Member of the Commission, the Chairman, or the Executive Director may, at least 30 days before the date for the opening of the Regular Session request the inclusion of supplementary items in the Provisional Agenda. A request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the Provisional Agenda shall be accompanied by a written explanation of the proposed supplementary item, which will be communicated to all CCMs and observers at least 20 days before the opening of the Session.

Other matters to be discussed under Agenda Item 12 may be proposed here.

### **1.5 Reporting arrangements**

SC19 will develop a DRAFT Summary Report which will be adopted intersessionally with an Executive Summary. The Executive Summary will include a synopsis of stock status and management advice and implications, research plans, findings or conclusions on the stock status, reports and recommendations as directed by the Commission or at the initiative of the SC (Paragraph 2, Article 12 of the Convention). In accordance with the Rule 33 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, the text of all decisions adopted by the SC19 will be distributed to all members, territories and observers within seven working days following the adoption of such decision.

The WCPFC Secretariat will hire a lead rapporteur to produce a DRAFT Summary Report, and the theme conveners will arrange their own support rapporteurs as needed.

### **1.6 Intersessional activities of the Scientific Committee**

The Chair, with support from the Secretariat, will report on intersessional activities of the SC.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2 REVIEW OF FISHERIES**

### **2.1 Overview of Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) fisheries**

The Pacific Community – Oceanic Fisheries Programme (SPC-OFP) and the Pacific Islands Forum

Fisheries Agency (FFA) will present an overview of the WCPO key fisheries, including billfish and trends in purse seine fishery capacity.

As recommended by SC14 (Para 119), analyses and projections of economic conditions in WCPO fisheries will be presented under this Agenda. SC19 will be invited to provide supplementary information, ask questions and provide comments.

## **2.2 Overview of Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) fisheries**

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) will present an overview of the fisheries for highly migratory species in the EPO region. SC19 will be invited to provide supplementary information, ask questions and provide comments.

## **2.3 Annual Report – Part 1 from Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories**

All CCMs shall submit Part 1 of the Annual Report (the amended template is available at <https://www.wcpfc.int/doc/sc-01/annual-report-commission-part-1-information-fisheries-research-and-statistics-revised>) to the Secretariat (BOTH [sungkwon.soh@wcpfc.int](mailto:sungkwon.soh@wcpfc.int) and [contact.ar@wcpfc.int](mailto:contact.ar@wcpfc.int)) by 17 July 2023.

Submitted Part 1 reports are posted at SC19 website. It is assumed that all annual reports will have been read prior to the meeting. This agenda item is an opportunity for questions and clarifications ONLY concerning these reports.

## **2.4 Reports from regional fisheries bodies and other organizations**

The deadline is 29 July 2023 for the submission of meeting documents from regional fisheries bodies and other intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations to the Secretariat ([sungkwon.soh@wcpfc.int](mailto:sungkwon.soh@wcpfc.int)). Regional fisheries bodies and other intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations observing SC19 may make a brief presentation (3 minutes) on key issues relevant to the work of the SC. Such presentations need to be arranged with the Chair and the Secretariat by sending 1-2 paragraphs summary of presentation to the Secretariat **by 29 July 2023**.

## **AGENDA ITEM 3 DATA AND STATISTICS THEME**

### **3.1 Data gaps**

#### **3.1.1 Data gaps of the Commission**

##### **3.1.1.1 Data gaps**

SC19 will consider the data gaps paper including the status of observer data management, and where relevant, recommend actions on how to address any identified data gaps.

##### **3.1.1.2 Updates on data-related projects**

SC19 will briefly review the progress of the following projects:

- Project 60 – Species composition of purse-seine catches

- Project 90 – Better data on fish weights and lengths for scientific analyses
- Project 114 – Improved coverage of cannery receipt data

### 3.1.1.3 Minimum data reporting requirements

SC19 will also consider SSP's paper on the review of the minimum data reporting requirements (Para 33, SC18 Summary Report):

*33. Noting the inconsistency in the data reporting requirements between the Scientific Data to be Provided by the Commission (SciData), and other WCPFC reporting obligations (e.g., in CMMs), and the need to improve the data available for stock assessments, SC18 recommended that the Scientific Services Provider undertake a review of the minimum data reporting requirements and report to SC19 in 2023. SC18 requested CCMs to submit proposals for additional or amended data field, with associated justification, before 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023. For example, the proposal for including FAD minimum data fields recorded by vessel operators in the SciData which was presented to SC18 (PNA paper) should be forwarded to SC19 for consideration.*

SC19 may consider a SWG to present any proposals and discuss any matters regarding these proposals, with the aim of having ST-Theme recommendations as the outcome.

### 3.1.1.4 Frequent submission of operational catch and effort data

SC19 will consider any guidance to improve frequency of CCM's provision of operational catch and effort data to the Commission (Para 460, WCPFC19 Summary Report):

*460. WCPFC19 tasked SC19 and TCC19 to provide guidance to the Commission on how CCMs can provide operational catch and effort data to the Commission more frequently during the year. In particular, this guidance will consider CCMs' implementation of data provision:*

- a. within 30 days of the end of a trip and, where applicable, at the end of every transshipment at sea; and/or*
- b. by 1 July and 31 December with available information for that calendar year.*

## 3.1.2 Bycatch estimates of longline fishery

SC19 will review a summary of longline fishery bycatch estimates at a regional scale, and provide recommendations on further work as needed.

## 3.2 Regional Observer Programme

### 3.2.1 Review of observer training project for elasmobranch biological sampling (Project 109)

SC19 will review the report of Project 109 and provide advice or recommendations to the Commission.

### 3.2.2 ROP Data Issues

SC19 will take note of the development in minimum data fields for observer transshipment monitoring (*Paragraph 466 (i), WCPFC19 Summary Report*), and where relevant may provide advice or recommendations to the Commission.

466.i. WCPFC19 adopted the Minimum data fields for Observer transshipment monitoring as listed in Attachment X as data fields to be collected by transshipment observers during transshipment events, as of 1 April 2023.

SC19 will also receive an update of the work of the IWG-ROP related to the improvements that are being considered to ROP Minimum Data Fields, and provide advice or recommendations to the Commission as needed.

### **3.3 Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring (ER and EM)**

SC19 will consider any updates on ER and EM, including recent work on EM for transshipments and any recent developments on ER and EM at country level or sub-regional level.

### **3.4 Economic data**

WCPFC16 provided the following recommendation:

*181. The Commission considered that it was important to consider economic indicators as performance indicators (PIs) and encouraged CCMs to assist the Scientific Services Provider by providing economic and other data to assist in development of PIs, including in relation to the disproportionate burden on SIDS, particularly with respect to multi-species fisheries.*

SC19 may further consider provision of economic data by CCMs to the Commission.

### **3.5 Baseline period or limit of the Indonesian Large Fish Handline Fishery**

SC18 noted the information provided by Indonesia related to options for a baseline of the “large-fish” handline fishery fishing in Indonesia’s EEZ. SC18 recognized that decision on this fishery’s baseline is a policy decision, and that it did not believe it would be appropriate to provide any recommendations on a baseline, but recommended the Commission to consider the information provided in the relevant SC18 papers and the comments in the SC18 Online Discussion Forum (ODF)<sup>1</sup> on the topic in its decisions making (*Para 43, SC18 Summary Report*).

WCPFC19 noted the delegation paper submitted by Indonesia and the Scientific Services Provider on the Indonesian large fish handline fishery (WCPFC19-2022-DP11). There was no agreement to adopt the recommendation in the paper and WCPFC19 noted that it would appreciate receiving further information from Indonesia in response to questions raised at WCPFC19. (*Para 192, WCPFC19 Summary Report*)

SC19 may consider any additional information related to this topic and forward it to the Commission for its consideration.

## **AGENDA ITEM 4 STOCK ASSESSMENT THEME**

### **4.1 Independent review of recent WCPO Yellowfin tuna assessment**

SC18 agreed that the results of the peer review Project 65 would be initially considered through the submission of a draft review paper to the [SC19 Online Discussion Forum](#) later in 2022 ([SC19-SA-](#)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://forum.wcpfc.int/c/sc-18/23>

[WP-01 Independent review of recent WCPO yellowfin tuna assessment](#)) and the results of the peer review would subsequently be discussed at the 2023 Pre-assessment Workshop, either by SPC or a peer review panel member, and the final peer review outcomes would be presented in a working paper at SC19 either by SPC or, if possible, a peer review panel member. (*Para 193, SC18 Summary Report*)

SC19 will review the final outcomes of the peer review and provide comments, suggestions or recommendations for future stock assessment work.

## **4.2 Improvement of MULTIFAN-CL software**

Work to improve the MULTIFAN-CL software is ongoing. SC19 may review any updates of the software and provide advice or recommendations as needed.

## **4.3 WCPO tunas**

### **4.3.1 WCPO yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*)**

#### 4.3.1.1 Research and information

##### a. Review of 2023 yellowfin tuna stock assessment

The last yellowfin tuna stock assessment was conducted in 2020. SC19 will review the results of the 2023 yellowfin tuna stock assessment, including data inputs, CPUE analysis, stepwise (bridging) analyses, methodology, and other related aspects.

SC19 will consider new findings, suggestions, and any future research needs including budget implications, and provide management recommendations to the Commission.

#### 4.3.1.2 Provision of scientific information

SC19 will provide agreed text for the following:

- a. Status and trends
- b. Management advice and implications

### **4.3.2 WCPO bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*)**

#### 4.3.2.1 Research and information

##### a. Review of 2023 bigeye tuna stock assessment

The last stock assessment for bigeye tuna was conducted in 2020. SC19 will review the results of the 2023 bigeye tuna stock assessment, including data inputs, CPUE analysis, stepwise (bridging) analyses, methodology, and other related aspects.

SC19 will consider new findings, suggestions, and any future research needs including budget implications, and provide management recommendations to the Commission.

#### 4.3.2.2 Provision of scientific information

SC19 will provide agreed text for the following:

- a. Stock status and trends
- b. Management advice and implications

### **4.3.3 WCPO skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*)**

#### **4.3.3.1 Research and information**

- a. Indicator analysis

An indicator paper provides empirical information on recent patterns in fisheries for all 'key' target tuna species (skipjack, bigeye, yellowfin and South Pacific albacore tuna) for those years when a stock assessment is not conducted, with explanatory details for the figures and a brief interpretation of the trends. The SC19 participants will review the paper and provide comments or questions.

- b. Update of skipjack tuna stock assessment information

The last skipjack tuna stock assessment was conducted in 2022. SC19 will review information on indicators for WCPO skipjack tuna stock status including SSP's initial work following up on skipjack assessment recommendations from SC18 (e.g., model diagnostics).

### **4.3.4 South Pacific albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*)**

#### **4.3.4.1 Research and information**

- a. Indicator analysis

An indicator paper provides empirical information on recent patterns in fisheries for all 'key' target tuna species (skipjack, bigeye, yellowfin and South Pacific albacore tuna) for those years when a stock assessment is not conducted, with explanatory details for the figures and a brief interpretation of the trends. This indicator paper also includes the recent status and trends in the South Pacific albacore fishery. SC19 will review the paper and provide comments/questions or recommendations to the Commission as needed.

## **4.4 Northern stocks**

Annex I of the Commission's Rules of Procedure defines 'northern stocks' to be 'stocks which occur mostly in the area north of 20° north parallel' and currently are 'northern Pacific bluefin<sup>2</sup>, northern albacore<sup>3</sup> and the northern stock of swordfish<sup>4</sup>'. According to the MOU between WCPFC and ISC, the ISC's scientific information and advice will be presented at the annual meetings of the Scientific Committee.

The ISC Chair, or his designate, will be invited to brief SC19 on the activities of ISC since SC18, including the ISC's 2024 stock assessments and future plans.

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<sup>2</sup> Pacific bluefin tuna

<sup>3</sup> North Pacific albacore

<sup>4</sup> North Pacific swordfish

#### **4.4.1 North Pacific albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*)**

##### 4.4.1.1 Research and information

###### a. North Pacific albacore stock assessment

The last North Pacific albacore tuna stock assessment was conducted in 2020. SC19 will review the 2023 North Pacific albacore stock assessment, and provide comments/recommendations to the Commission, as required.

##### 4.4.1.2 Provision of scientific information

SC19 will provide agreed text for the following:

- a. Status and trends
- b. Management advice and implications

#### **4.4.2 Pacific bluefin tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*)**

##### 4.4.2.1 Research and information

###### a. Update of Pacific bluefin tuna stock assessment information

The ISC<sup>5</sup> has conducted the benchmark stock assessment every four years since 2012. In the middle of the consecutive benchmark assessments, ISC also conducts the updated assessment to track the current stock status using additional data observations. The last Pacific bluefin tuna stock assessment update was conducted in 2022. SC19 will review information on indicators for Pacific bluefin tuna stock if available and provide comments/recommendations to the Commission as needed.

#### **4.4.3 North Pacific swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*)**

##### 4.4.3.1 Research and information

###### a. North Pacific swordfish stock assessment

The last north Pacific swordfish stock assessment was conducted in 2018. SC19 will review the 2023 north Pacific swordfish stock assessment and provide comments/recommendations to the Commission. SC19 will review any proposals to strengthen CMM 2022-02 (CMM for NP Swordfish) to improve management of the north Pacific swordfish, if available.

##### 4.4.3.2 Provision of scientific information

SC19 will provide agreed text for the following:

- a. Status and trends
- b. Management advice and implications

#### **4.5 WCPO sharks**

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<sup>5</sup> International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean



#### **4.5.1 Silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*)**

##### 4.5.1.1 Research and information

- a. Silky shark stock assessment in the WCPO (Project 108)

WCPFC19 endorsed a 2-year Project 108 (*Silky Shark Stock Assessment in WCPO*). SC19 will review the progress of Project 108 and provide advice or recommendations as needed to complete the project by 2024.

#### **4.6 WCPO billfishes**

##### **4.6.1 North Pacific striped marlin (*Kajikia audax*)**

##### 4.6.1.1 Research and information

- a. North Pacific striped marlin stock assessment

ISC22 Plenary reviewed new modelling and data improvements for the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean striped marlin stock in 2022 and expected to conclude the assessment in 2023. SC19 will review the ISC's 2023 North Pacific striped marlin stock assessment, and provide comments/recommendations to the Commission, as required.

##### 4.6.1.2 Provision of scientific information

SC19 will provide agreed text for the following:

- a. Status and trends
- b. Management advice and implications

#### **4.7 Projects and Requests**

##### **4.7.1 Characterization of stock assessment uncertainty (Project 113)**

Recognising the importance of stock assessment uncertainty as the basis for assessing management risk, including evaluating management procedures for harvest strategies, plus the ongoing and evolving research in this area, the Commission in December 2022 endorsed funding support for Project 113 (*Further development of ensemble model approaches for presenting stock assessment uncertainty*). A review of the approaches used to characterise uncertainty in WCPFC tuna, billfish and shark stock assessments was initially noted at SC17, which recommended the development of Terms of Reference for further development of ensemble model approaches for presenting stock assessment uncertainty (SC18-SA-IP-09).

SC19 will review the report of Project 113 and provide specific recommendations for consideration by the Commission.

##### **4.7.2 Application of Close-Kin-Mark-Recapture Methods (Project 100c)**

SC19 will review any progress of Project 100c related to South Pacific albacore tuna and provide advice and recommendations as necessary.

### **4.7.3 Options to provide information to the Scientific Committee**

As general recommendations for WCPFC stock assessments, SC18 requested SSP as follows:

*103. SC18 noted the challenge of fully reviewing the key inputs into WCPFC stock assessments and providing feedback within the time available. SC recommended that approaches that may address this issue be discussed at SC19 and recommended that the Scientific Services Provider develop a discussion paper to inform those discussions.*

SC19 will review the discussion paper and provide advice or recommendations to the Commission for consideration.

### **4.7.4 Tuna Research Plan**

SC19 will review SSP's Tuna Research Plan and provide comments, advice and recommendations to the Commission as needed.

### **4.7.5 Billfish Research Plan (Project 112)**

SC19 will review SSP's Billfish Research Plan and provide comments, advice and recommendations to the Commission as needed.

### **4.7.6 Reproductive biology of yellowfin tuna**

The EU has provided an opportunity for funding to support work on the reproductive biology of yellowfin tuna, a recommendation from the 2020 stock assessment. However, to access the funding this year so that the work can be done in time for the 2026 yellowfin stock assessment, the EU requires 20% matching fund from the WCPFC.

SC19 will consider this project concept and provide advice to the Commission on whether to approve the co-funding contribution at WCPFC20 to allow the project start in early 202.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5 MANAGEMENT ISSUES THEME**

### **5.1 Development of harvest strategy framework for key tuna species**

SC19 will note the following updates made by WCPFC19 to the *Indicative Workplan for the Adoption of Harvest Strategies under CMM-2014-06* (Attachment M, WCPFC19 Summary Report):

- The indicative plan has been extended for an additional two years to 2026.
- A skipjack management procedure CMM was adopted in 2022 in accordance with the indicative work plan. The CMM contains a detailed, year-by-year schedule for the operation of the MP and is not repeated in the HSWP. However, there are a couple of items remaining in the HSWP forward years pertaining to multispecies considerations and finalising the monitoring strategy.
- A candidate South Pacific albacore management procedure was not ready for adoption in 2022 because further technical work was required. Consequently, adoption of a South Pacific albacore management procedure has been rescheduled to 2024. Further, a revised set of South

Pacific albacore management objectives and revised TRP are now scheduled for adoption in 2023.

- It is likely that the operating models for yellowfin and bigeye will require re-development following the 2022 yellowfin tuna stock assessment peer review and the incorporation of review findings into the 2023 assessments of these species. Development of the multispecies framework for evaluating these species is also ongoing. Adoption of TRPs for bigeye and yellowfin have been rescheduled to 2024. Further, the adoption of management procedures for these species has been tentatively scheduled for 2025.

### **5.1.1 Skipjack tuna**

#### **5.1.1.1 Implementation of management procedure for WCPO skipjack tuna**

WCPFC19 adopted CMM 2022-01 *Conservation and Management Measure on a Management Procedure for WCPO Skipjack Tuna*, which includes a repeating 3-year implementation schedule of the management procedure (MP) under Paragraph 8 of the CMM. In 2023, the Scientific Services Provider will run the skipjack MP and provide the results to SC19.

CMM 2022-01 specified the role of the Scientific Committee as follows:

*The Scientific Committee shall review the performance and outputs of the MP, including the indicators set out in Annex III, and provide advice to the Commission on:*

- a) the performance of the MP as a basis for pre-defined rules that manage skipjack tuna in order to achieve biological, ecological, economic and social objectives, including the robustness of the MP to changes in the fishery and any exceptional circumstances consistent with Annex IV; and*
- b) the application of the MP outputs to CMM 2021-01: CMM for Bigeye, Yellowfin and Skipjack Tuna in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean or any successor Measure (Tropical tuna CMM).*

SC19 will review the performance and outputs of the skipjack MP and provide advice or recommendations to the Commission.

#### **5.1.1.2 Monitoring strategy for WCPO skipjack tuna**

The 2023 HS Work Plan noted that:

*[SC consider multispecies aspects of WCPO harvest strategies and implications for the monitoring strategy]  
SC provide advice on relevant elements of the monitoring strategy.*

SC19 will review ANNEX III of the CMM 2022-01 and analyses provided by the SSP on the elements of the harvest strategy to be included in the monitoring strategy, and provide findings and advice to the Commission to evaluate the performance of the fishery or stock against the agreed operational management objectives.

### **5.1.2 South Pacific albacore tuna**

#### **5.1.2.1 Target reference point (TRP)**

WCPFC18 noted the advice of SC17 related to the recalibration of the interim TRP for the South Pacific albacore (*Para. 171, WCPFC18 Summary Report*). WCPFC18 further noted concerns

regarding the delayed process to implement an interim TRP adopted in 2018, and the need to take action to rebuild the stock to support the economic viability of fleets and achieve a long-term TRP (*Para. 195, WCPFC18 Summary Report*).

WCPFC19 noted with appreciation the analyses undertaken by the Scientific Services Provider to inform discussions on South Pacific albacore objectives and the target reference point (WCPFC19-2022-15) (*Para 212, WCPFC19 Summary Report*) but did not give specific recommendations related to the interim TRP for the South Pacific albacore.

According to the Harvest Strategy Work Plan in 2023, the Commission is scheduled to adopt a TRP for South Pacific albacore. SC19 will therefore review any updated analyses related to the recalibration of the South Pacific albacore TRP and provide advice to the Commission for further consideration at WCPFC20.

#### 5.1.2.2 SP Albacore operating models

According to the Harvest Strategy Work Plan, SC19 is scheduled to agree the set of operating models for South Pacific albacore. SC19 will therefore review the current grid of operating models (reference set and robustness set) that has been developed to reflect the important sources of uncertainty and plausible states of nature for South Pacific albacore, and aim to reach agreement on the grid of operating models to be used for the South Pacific albacore tuna management strategy evaluation (MSE).

#### 5.1.2.3 SP Albacore management procedures

According to the Harvest Strategy Work Plan, SC19 is scheduled to provide advice to the Commission on the performance of candidate management procedures for South Pacific albacore. SC19 will therefore review an update on the progress of developing and testing MPs for South Pacific albacore, including estimation model options, HCR designs, and preliminary evaluations and consideration of performance indicator.

SC19 will recommend any candidate MPs or agreed approaches, if available, for Commission's consideration.

#### 5.1.3 Mixed fishery MSE framework

SC19 will review any updates on developing the mixed fishery modelling framework and future workplan subject to the outcome of the bigeye and yellowfin tuna assessments.

#### 5.1.4 Progress of the WCPFC Harvest Strategy Work Plan

WCPFC19 adopted CMM 2022-03<sup>6</sup> *Conservation and Management Measure on Establishing a Harvest Strategy for key fisheries and stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean* (Paragraph 270 and Attachment L, WCPFC19 Summary Report). In addition, WCPFC19 adopted the updated harvest strategy work plan, *Indicative Workplan for the Adoption of Harvest Strategies under CMM 2014-06* (Paragraph 277 and Attachment M, WCPFC19 Summary Report).

SC19 will review the updated indicative work plan and provide advice or recommendations to the Commission as needed.

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<sup>6</sup> Replaces CMM 2014-06

## 5.2 Implementation of CMM 2021-01

### 5.2.1 Review of effectiveness of CMM 2021-01

The Tropical Tuna Measure (CMM-2021-01) remains in effect until February 15, 2024, and outlines timeframes for the Commission's agreement on (1) purse seine hard effort or catch limits in the high seas of the Convention Area and an allocation framework (para 27) and (2) longline hard limits for bigeye and an allocation framework (para 41) amongst all Members and Participating Territories by 2023. The Measure requires that an allocation framework consider Articles 8, 10 (3), and 30 of the Convention.

WCPFC 19 agreed that the process to revise the tropical tuna measure (TTM) will be based on CMM 2021-01 without a complete overhaul, and at least two workshops will be needed to make progress towards the adoption of a revised TTM in 2023. (*Attachment H, WCPFC19 Summary Report*)

SC19 will review the paper of the SSP on the effectiveness of CMM 2021-01 and will provide recommendations to the Commission to improve the CMM particularly on PS catch or effort limits, and longline hard limits for bigeye and an allocation framework.

### ~~5.3 Review of CMM for Swordfish~~

~~WCPFC19 agreed that progress should be made in 2023 on ensuring Southwest Pacific swordfish management extends beyond south of 20°S, to the entire southwest Pacific swordfish stock in the WCPFC convention area, south of the equator.~~

~~SC19 will review any draft CMM prepared by Australia and provide advice to the Commission for its consideration.~~

## AGENDA ITEM 6 ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH MITIGATION THEME

### 6.1 Ecosystem and Climate Indicators

At WCPFC19, the Commission endorsed the following SC18 recommendations (Paragraph 342, WCPFC19 Summary Report):

- 1) *SC18 recommended making "Ecosystem and Climate Indicators" a standing agenda item of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Mitigation Theme session. This would provide a mechanism for the Scientific Committee to annually consider adopting candidate indicators presented to the Committee but also review and respond to existing trends/triggers identified in adopted indicators.*
- 2) *SC18 recommended the development and testing of "Ecosystem and Climate Indicators" as a project of the Scientific Committee. This would provide a mechanism for the Scientific Committee to easily track its progress towards evaluating and adopting candidate indicators.*
- 3) *SC18 recommended that available information and updates on the impacts of climate change be included or combined with status of stocks reporting.*

SC19 will review any updated information on ecosystem and climate indicators and review a project proposal for testing the indicators and provide advice or recommendations to the

Commission.

## **6.2 FAD impacts**

### **6.2.1 Research on non-entangling and biodegradable FADs (Project 110)**

SC19 will review the progress of Project 110 (*Non-entangling and biodegradable FAD trials in the WCPO*) funded EU, US and ISSF, and provide advice or recommendations to the Commission as needed.

#### 6.2.1.1 Extension to EU supported biodegradable FADs

Project 110 (*Non-entangling and biodegradable FAD trial in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean*) has been greatly impacted by COVID-19. The logistical challenges of materials sourcing, delivery times and in country training in bioFAD construction have all been exacerbated by COVID-19 and the project will require an extension until the end of 2025. While the first bioFADs were deployed early this year, a two phased deployment approach is planned to allow some review of the first deployments. Lessons learnt from recent bioFAD trials in other areas indicate that the number of bioFAD deployments planned in the current trial may be insufficient to guarantee statistical rigour. Further, the logistical requirements for bioFADs deployment have largely been based on Pohnpei, and exploration of other options for training, production, and sourcing of materials in the Pacific would be valuable. The additional funding opportunity from the EU will complement the current project to deploy a greater number of bioFADs and support exploration of alternative materials sources and locations for bioFADs production. This additional project needs to align with the current project extension timeline to make use of the expertise and industry partners engaged in the current trials. Therefore, any funding from the EU along with the associated WCPFC co-funding would need to be available by early 2024.

SC19 will consider this project concept and provide advice to the Commission on whether to approve the co-funding contribution at WCPFC20 to allow the project start in early 2024.

### **6.2.2 FAD Management Options IWG Issues**

At WCPFC19, the Commission supported the SC18 and TCC18 recommendations for the IATTC definition of biodegradable, and categories of biodegradable FADs. The Commission also noted that the FADMO-IWG will further examine the categories of biodegradable FADs, timeline for the stepwise introduction of biodegradable FADs, potential gaps and other relevant information (*Para. 182, WCPFC19 Summary Report*).

The Commission also tasked the FADMO-IWG with assistance from the Secretariat and the Scientific Services Provider to review the effectiveness of paragraph 22 of CMM 2021-01 and other FAD related issues (*Para. 183, WCPFC19 Summary Report*).

SC19 will review the outcomes of the FADMO-IWG work related to biodegradable FADs and paragraphs 21 to 22 of CMM 2021-01. SC19 will provide suggestions, comments, and recommendations for Commission's consideration.

#### ~~6.2.35.1.1 Extension to EU supported biodegradable FADs~~

~~Project 110 (*Non-entangling and biodegradable FAD trial in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean*) has been greatly impacted by COVID-19. The logistical challenges of materials sourcing,~~

~~delivery times and in-country training in bioFAD construction have all been exacerbated by COVID-19 and the project will require an extension until the end of 2025. While the first bioFADs were deployed early this year, a two-phased deployment approach is planned to allow some review of the first deployments. Lessons learnt from recent bioFAD trials in other areas indicate that the number of bioFAD deployments planned in the current trial may be insufficient to guarantee statistical rigour. Further, the logistical requirements for bioFADs deployment have largely been based on Pohnpei, and exploration of other options for training, production, and sourcing of materials in the Pacific would be valuable. The additional funding opportunity from the EU will complement the current project to deploy a greater number of bioFADs and support exploration of alternative materials sources and locations for bioFADs production. This additional project needs to align with the current project extension timeline to make use of the expertise and industry partners engaged in the current trials. Therefore, any funding from the EU along with the associated WCPFC co-funding would need to be available by early 2024.~~

~~SC19 will consider this project concept and provide advice to the Commission on whether to approve the co-funding contribution at WCPFC20 to allow the project start in early 2024.~~

### **6.3 Sharks**

#### **6.3.1 Review of conservation and management measures for sharks**

The Commission adopted a revised shark measure, CMM 2022-04 (*Conservation and Management Measure for Sharks*). SC19 will review any research or the CMM and provide recommendations to the Commission for any revision as appropriate.

Provisions related to the work of the Scientific Committee in CMM 2022-04:

27. *The SC shall periodically provide advice on the stock status of key shark species for assessment and maintain a WCPFC Shark Research Plan for the assessment of the status of these stocks. If possible, this should be done in conjunction with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.*
28. *In 2024, and commencing periodically thereafter, the SC shall review the impact of fishing gear on sharks that are not retained, including oceanic whitetip shark and silky shark, inside and outside of the area between 20 N and 20 S, and provide advice on potential mitigation measures that would benefit such shark species.*
31. *On the basis of advice from the SC and/or the TCC, the Commission shall review the implementation and effectiveness of this CMM, including species specific measures, taking into account, inter alia, any recommendation from the SC or TCC, in 2024, and amend it as appropriate.*

#### **6.3.2 Mid-term Review of 2021-2025 Shark Research Plan (Project 97b)**

WCPFC19 has approved funding support for the mid-term review of the 2021 – 2025 Shark Research Plan (SRP). The project is expected to evaluate progress against the current 2021-2025 SRP and consider the future shark information needs of the WCPFC.

SC19 will review the report of Project 97b (*Mid-Term Review of 2021-2025 Shark Research Plan*) and provide advice and recommendations to the Commission as needed.

### **6.4 Seabirds**

#### **6.4.1 Review of seabird research**

SC14 reviewed preliminary results of Project 68 (*Estimation of seabird mortality across the WCPO Convention Area*) and funding for this project is currently deferred to 2024-2025.

SC19 will review any new information on seabird research as appropriate for recommendations to the Commission.

#### **6.4.2 Review of CMM on seabirds (CMM 2018-03)**

WCPFC19 noted a global decline in specific Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) seabird population trends, which are vulnerable to threats posed by longline fisheries in the WCPO and the importance of seabird bycatch mitigation measures (*Para 328, WCPFC19 Summary Report*), and provided the following decisions:

Paragraph 329, WCPFC19 Summary Report:

*329. WCPFC19 agreed to conduct review of the current seabird mitigation measure (CMM 2018-03 Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds) in 2023 or 2024 whereby new bycatch mitigation studies would be evaluated with respect to bycatch mitigation effectiveness and compared against current ACAP Best Practices.*

SC19 may review any new information on seabird mitigation research and provide recommendations to the Commission as needed.

### **6.5 Sea turtles**

#### **6.5.1 Review of sea turtle research**

SC19 may review any new information from sea turtle mitigation research as appropriate for recommendations to the Commission.

#### **6.5.2 Review of Conservation and Management of Sea Turtles (CMM 2018-04)**

WCPFC15 adopted a revised CMM of Conservation and Management of Sea Turtles (CMM 2018-04), which took effect on 1 January 2020, and replaced CMM 2008-03.

SC19 will review any further scientific aspects of additional or new mitigation measures for sea turtles related to CMM 2018-04 and provide findings and recommendations as appropriate to the Commission.

### **6.6 Cetaceans**

SC19 will review research on the cetacean diversity status and threats in the Pacific Islands Region and provide recommendations to the Commission as appropriate.

### **6.7 Bycatch management**

SC19 will review any update related to bycatch management, including Bycatch Management Information System (BMIS), any feedback on the bycatch management site at [www.wcpfc.int/bycatch-management](http://www.wcpfc.int/bycatch-management) or [www.bmis-bycatch.org](http://www.bmis-bycatch.org) and Bycatch Data Exchange Protocol (BDEP) within the BMIS.



## **AGENDA ITEM 7 OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS**

### **7.1 Pacific Marine Specimen Bank (Project 35b)**

At SC14, the Scientific Committee agreed to run the process of the WCPFC Pacific Marine Specimen Bank (P35b) reporting in a similar manner to the PTTP (P42) at SC15. SC19 will review the outcomes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting and provide recommendations to the Commission for the continuity of the project.

### **7.2 Pacific Tuna Tagging Project (Project 42)**

SC19 will review the progress of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Project (Project 42) and the results of its 15<sup>th</sup> PTTP Steering Committee Meeting and provide recommendations to the Commission for the continuity of the project.

### **7.3 West Pacific East Asia Project**

SC19 will note the progress of the New Zealand funded *WPEA Improved Tuna Monitoring Project* (WPEA-ITM). SC18 acknowledge the need for the project continuation, and so it is essential to find a possible donor for the project well before the project ends. In this aspect, a consultancy for the *End of Project Gap Analysis of the Western Pacific East Asia – Improved Tuna Monitoring Activity* was conducted. SC19 will review the report and provide comments and recommendations for the continuity of the project.

### **7.4 Other Projects**

SC19 may consider any other projects funded through voluntary contributions of the WCPFC CCMs.

## **AGENDA ITEM 8 COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

SC19 will review the status of cooperation with other organizations and provide further recommendations if any for the Commission's consideration.

## **AGENDA ITEM 9 SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS OF DEVELOPING STATES AND PARTICIPATING TERRITORIES**

SC19 will consider intersessional activities for the capacity building in science of developing States and participating territories, including those supported by the Commission's Special Requirements Fund and Japan Trust Fund (JTF).

The results of JTF Steering Committee meeting will be briefed.

## **AGENDA ITEM 10 FUTURE WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET**

### **10.1 Development of the 2024 work programme and budget, and projection of 2025-2026**

## **provisional work programme and indicative budget**

SC19 will develop the 2024 SC work programme and budget and provisional work programme and indicative budget for 2025-2026 for the Commission's consideration and endorsement. To draft the 2024 work programme, all conveners and relevant agencies will submit proposals and SC Chair will coordinate an informal small group for discussion.

SC19 will note a recommendation from the Finance and Administration Committee to the Commission (Para 71, FAC9 Summary Report) that "*WCPFC12 task SC with carefully considering proposed scientific projects in the context of the indicative budget agreed for the coming year.*"

## **AGENDA ITEM 11 ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

### **11.1 Future operation of the Scientific Committee**

SC19 will consider proposals, if any, for the efficient operation of the Scientific Committee, including streamlining of the agenda, rapporteuring, process of theme sessions, and other related aspects.

### **11.2 Election of Officers of the Scientific Committee**

SC19 will recommend a new Scientific Committee Chair who shall hold office for a period of two years and shall be eligible for re-election. SC19 will also consider other officers of the Scientific Committee as needed, including theme convenors for SC20 meeting in 2024.

### **11.3 Next meeting**

Members are invited to confirm the dates and venue for SC20 in 2024, and to propose dates and venue for SC21 in 2025.

## **AGENDA ITEM 12 OTHER MATTERS**

SC19 will consider any other issues that are raised under Agenda Item 1.4.

## **AGENDA ITEM 13 ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT OF THE NINETEENTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

SC19 will adopt recommendations of the Nineteenth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee. The SC19 Summary Report will be adopted intersessionally after the meeting.

## **AGENDA ITEM 14 CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting will close at 17:00 on Thursday, 24 August 2023.