



## **TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Third Regular Session**

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Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

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### **MITIGATION MEASURES FOR JUVENILE BIGEYE TUNA AND YELLOWFIN TUNA TAKEN AROUND FADs**

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**WCPFC-TCC3-2007/25**  
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**Paper prepared by the Secretariat**

#### **Introduction**

1. Paragraph 16 of Conservation and Management Measure-2005-01 (CMM-2005-01) states, “Beginning in 2006, the Scientific Committee, and the Technical and Compliance Committee shall undertake to explore and evaluate mitigation measures for juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna taken around FADs, in cooperation with other RFMOs, and present the results annually to the Commission. This work shall continue on an annual basis.” The Third Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC3) is required to present the results of its investigations on this issue to the Fourth Regular Session of the WCPFC (WCPFC4) in December 2007.

2. The Committee will recall that Paragraph 6 of CMM-2006-01 states: “recognizing the urgent need to reduce fishing mortality on juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna from fishing on FADs, the Commission will adopt a measure at its next session to reduce juvenile bigeye and yellowfin mortalities from fishing effort on FADs, taking into account existing measures”.

#### **SC3 consideration of mitigation measures for juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna taken around FADs**

3. The Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC3) considered issues associated with juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna taken around FADs during discussion of papers presented to the Fishing Technology Specialist Working Group (FT-SWG) and in a summary of the outcomes of Small Discussion Group 3 that examined small tuna issues through inter-sessional e-mail correspondence. It was noted that high levels of fishing mortality from three categories of small tuna captured on floating objects are of management concern in the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO):

- a. undersize tuna that are often sorted out and discarded, and have little commercial value;
- b. very small skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye that enter the surface catch of the Philippines and Indonesia; and
- c. all bigeye and “small-sized” yellowfin taken by purse seine and ringnet fisheries operating on floating objects.

4. It was suggested that these categories of small tuna be referred to as “Small Tuna on Floating Objects” (STFO), replacing the terminology of “juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna”. Discussion on this suggestion and determination of the size of concern for “small sized” yellowfin is included in Attachment M of the SC3 Summary Report.

5. Also reported to SC3 was industry-associated and FAD-related research examining acoustic selectivity, targeting and technical influences on STFO catch rates. It was noted that analyses of this type are often data-limited, supporting the importance of observer data collection of FAD-related gear and fishing strategies. Other studies highlighted the value of working in close collaboration with professional fishermen to benefit from their accumulated experience and knowledge of tuna behaviour, and their ability to estimate school size, species composition and fish size prior to setting on FADs and other drifting objects.

6. SC3 adopted several recommendations relating to research and analyses of STFO, and industry-associated research.

#### **Possible mechanisms and tools to mitigate the catch of STFO in the WCPFC Convention Area**

7. Taking into account SC3’s discussions on this issue and in consideration of the advice on this issue that TCC3 is required to provide to WCPFC4, possible mechanisms to mitigate the catch of STFO in the WCPO may, *inter alia*, include:

- a. provision to the WCPFC Secretariat by CCMs of management plans for the use of FADs (anchored and drifting) in areas beyond national jurisdiction to the Commission Secretariat pursuant to CMM-2006-01; and
- b. provision to the WCPFC Secretariat by CCMs with purse seine vessels fishing in the Convention Area of Catch Retention Plans, pursuant to CMM-2006-01.

8. Taking into account SC3 discussion on this issue, and the experience of other RFMOs, TCC3 may wish to consider the utility of the following tools in the implementation of any FAD Measure:

- a. an appropriate level of observer coverage on fishing vessels operating in the Convention Area; and
- b. the functionality of an operational VMS in the Convention Area pursuant to CMM-2006-06.

#### **Conclusion**

9. TCC3 is invited to consider:

- a. exploration and evaluation of possible mechanisms to mitigate the catch of STFO in the WCPO, including calling on the FADs management and FAD closures experience in other RFMOs; and
- b. the provision of advice to the Commission on implementation considerations to inform its deliberations to give effect to paragraph 6 of CMM-2006-01 at WCPFC4 in December 2007.