



TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

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Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (Hybrid)

**PROPOSED PROCESS TO REVIEW CURRENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND MITIGATION
MEASURES IN CMM 2018-04 (SEA TURTLES)**

WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP07

6 September 2025

Submitted by the United States of America

1. At WCPFC21, the Commission agreed to review and revise conservation and management measure (CMM, 2018-04) for Sea Turtles in 2026, to ensure that the reporting requirements are clearly defined and to consider expanding the scope of the measure to include mitigation measures for deep-set longline fisheries, for consideration by SC22, TCC22 and WCPFC23 ([WCPFC21 Summary Report, Para.204](#)).
2. The current WCPFC sea turtle mitigation measures are limited to vessels that fish in a shallow-set manner, which represents only a fraction of the total longline effort in the WCPFC convention area. The United States submitted an information paper to the SC20 in 2024 ([SC20-EB-IP-09](#)) highlighting its concern regarding the potential impact of leatherback sea turtle interactions in WCPFC deep-set longline fisheries. The West Pacific leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) population continues to decline at alarming rates and fishery bycatch is considered a primary threat, specifically in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO). The potential impact of deep-set fisheries on sea turtles is particularly concerning because a majority (~ 79%) of longline fisheries operating in the WCPO are deep-set fisheries that do not have sea-turtle specific required mitigation measures.
3. The United States is prepared to take the lead on the work agreed at WCPFC21; to review CMM 2018-04 to ensure that the reporting requirements are clearly defined and consistently implemented and to ensure that the current measure is based upon the best available science in its efforts to minimize the impacts of longline fishing on vulnerable sea turtle populations in the WCPO. Mirroring the recent process led by New Zealand in the review of CMM 2018-03 for seabirds, the United States proposes the establishment of an informal intersessional process to evaluate scientific research on sea turtle interactions and provide advice to SC22, TCC22 and WCPFC23 regarding potential revisions to CMM 2018-04. We propose the following purpose, process and scope for the review through this U.S.-led informal intersessional process.
4. **Review Purpose:** To consider expanding the scope of CMM 2018-04 to include mitigation measures for deep-set longline fisheries and to ensure that reporting requirements in CMM 2018-04 are clearly defined.
5. **Review Process:** An informal intersessional process led by the United States would review WCPFC CMM 2018-04 with the proposed purpose of reviewing scientific information specific to sea turtle bycatch and bycatch mitigation in longline fisheries. Interested CCMs and Commission Observers would be invited to nominate representatives to participate in the process. The United States would establish an online meeting in early 2026, to allow time for the group to gather feedback and advice in advance of SC22. The United States proposes that the group would meet online twice, with one meeting occurring in January or February of 2026 and a second meeting in April or May of 2026.
6. **Review Scope:** The informal intersessional process would review information to:
 1. Ensure reporting requirements in CMM 2018-04 are clearly defined;
 2. Provide an overview of sea turtle population ranges and status within the WCPO, including vertical and horizontal distributions, as well as reproductive behaviors, that render them vulnerable to various threats, including fisheries;
 3. Evaluate the scope of sea turtle bycatch in both deep-set and shallow-set fisheries, including relative proportion of effort within the WCPFC Convention Area, with assessments on impacts to sea turtle populations, specifically regarding deep-set fisheries;
 4. Consider the operational characteristics of current deep-set longline fisheries in the WCPFC and potential measures to mitigate the impacts of those fisheries on sea turtles

7. The outcomes from the informal intersessional process would be shared with SC22, TCC22, and WCPFC23 in support of further discussion in providing advice and recommendations regarding potential revisions to CMM 2018-04.
8. This proposed process was reviewed and endorsed by the Scientific Committee during its 21st Regular Session (SC21 Outcomes Document, paragraph 7):

7. SC21 endorsed the formation of an informal intersessional working group led by the United States to review CMM 2018-04 for sea turtles, noting that an examination of sea turtle data reporting requirements could be undertaken as part of this review. SC21 requested that this informal intersessional working group report back to SC22 and TCC22 on the outputs of its discussions.

Draft TCC Recommendation

9. *TCC21 endorsed the formation of an informal intersessional process led by the United States to review CMM 2018-04 for sea turtles, noting that an examination of sea turtle data reporting requirements could be undertaken as part of this review. TCC21 recommended WCPFC22 task this informal intersessional working group on sea turtles to report back to SC22 and TCC22 on the outputs of its discussions..*