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**Review of Non-Target and Associated or Dependent Species (NTADS) in the WCPO:  
An Overview**

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**WCPFC22-2025-28**  
**29 October 2025**

**Submitted by the Secretariat**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide summary information (Attachment A) to support the Commission’s review of the performance of its current Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) relating to non-target and associated or dependent species (NTADS) in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO). Relevant recommendations from the 2025 meetings of the Scientific Committee (SC21) and the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC21) are included in this paper, along with corresponding supplementary papers for individual NTADS contained in WCPFC22-2025-28a (seabirds), 28b (sea turtles), 28c (sharks), and 28e (cetaceans).
2. The corresponding supplementary papers provide a brief, consolidated overview of the stock status and scientific research, management framework, monitoring and data collection efforts, compliance history, and recommendations or next steps for each NTADS, for the Commission’s consideration at WCPFC22.
3. Three discussions in 2025 are relevant to all NTADS:
  - a. The ROP-IWG is currently reviewing the scope of ROP observer Minimum Standard Data Fields. This includes considering changes required to reflect the updated CMMs for seabirds, sea turtles, sharks, mobulids, and cetaceans, including improving the data captured that could indicate possible non-compliance.
  - b. SC21 reviewed the availability of data for all bycatch species and noted that, while progress has been made in updating CMMs and refining data fields, there remain continuing data and reporting gaps across NTADS, particularly for longline fisheries. The Committee made several recommendations to improve data quality, including updating SciData fields (paras. 9–10), reviewing sea turtle reporting (para. 7), enhancing observer data for sharks (para. 105) and promoting training to improve reporting accuracy (para. 11). (see referenced paragraphs in the [SC21 Outcomes Document](#))
  - c. TCC21 reviewed the ongoing challenge with the lack of available information to independently verify compliance with bycatch mitigation obligations and the implications for the Commission’s compliance review. Information and evaluations of compliance remain based on self-reported information by CCMs.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [WCPFC-TCC21-2025-15](#) Available data for verifying compliance in the Compliance Monitoring Scheme, Part 2.

NTADS	Management Framework	SC21 and TCC21 Outcomes and Recommendations	Requested Commission's Action
<p><b>Seabirds</b></p> <p>Refer to <a href="#">WCPFC22-2025-28a</a> for more details on the stock status, management status, monitoring and data collection efforts, and compliance history.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">CMM 2018-03</a><sup>2</sup>,</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">suppl. CMM 2018-03</a><sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>SC21 Recommendations:</b></p> <p><b>Review of CMM for Seabirds (CMM 2018-03)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SC21 requested that TCC21 consider further any practicality issues related to the use of combined mitigation measures south of 25° South. (<i>para. 194, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>)</li> <li>▪ SC21 endorsed the approach to develop a two-tiered structure that separates minimum, compliance-based standards from adaptable technical guidelines in relation to the specification of tori lines for large vessels in the Southern Hemisphere (Paragraph 1a of CMM 2018-03 Annex 1). Such guidelines would enable the improvement of this seabird bycatch mitigation practice and enhance operational flexibility. (<i>para. 195, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>)</li> <li>▪ SC21 requested interested CCMs and Observers to work interessionally to present an updated draft to TCC21 based on a draft set of technical guidelines discussed during ISG-04 (<b>Attachment Y</b>). (<i>para. 196, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>TCC21 Recommendations</b> (<i>paragraphs 85-87, TCC21 Outcomes Document</i>):</p> <p><b>Review information and provide technical advice and recommendations related to CMMs to mitigate impacts of fishing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ TCC21 thanked New Zealand for continuing to lead the review of the seabird measure (CMM 201803) as tasked by WCPFC21 (para 552 (a)) and for the delegation paper (TCC21-2025-DP09_Rev01).</li> </ul>	<p>To be discussed under WCPFC22 Agenda Item 12.1</p> <p><i>The Commission may wish to note the SC21 and TCC21 outcomes and consider improvements to the seabird measure CMM 2018-03.</i></p>

<sup>2</sup> Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds

<sup>3</sup> Safe Handling and release Guidelines for Seabirds

NTADS	Management Framework	SC21 and TCC21 Outcomes and Recommendations	Requested Commission's Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ TCC21 noted a range of views on these recommendations and noted that New Zealand will engage further with CCMs on the strengthening of seabird mitigations, with a view to WCPFC22 considering improvements to the seabird measure.</li> <li>▪ TCC21 thanked Japan for its delegation paper on revised tori-line specifications for large longline vessels in the South Pacific under CMM 2018-03 (TCC21-2025-DP04_Rev01) and encouraged CCMs to continue discussions with Japan on its proposal prior to WCPFC22 for consideration at WCPFC22.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Sea turtles</b></p> <p>Refer to <a href="#">WCPFC22-2025-28b</a> for more details on the stock status, management status, monitoring and data collection efforts, and compliance history.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">CMM 2018-04</a><sup>4</sup></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">suppl CMM 2018-04-2</a><sup>5</sup>,</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">suppl CMM 2018-04-1</a><sup>6</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>SC21 Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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. (<i>para. 7, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>TCC21 Recommendations</b> (<i>paragraphs 88-89, TCC21 Outcomes Document</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ TCC21 thanked the United States for its delegation paper on a proposed process to review current reporting requirements and mitigation measures contained in CMM 2018-04 (Sea Turtles) (TCC212025-DP07).</li> <li>▪ 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</li> </ul>	<p>To be discussed under WCPFC22 Agenda Item 12.2</p> <p><i>The Commission may wish to endorse the formation of the informal intersessional working group on sea turtles and reports to SC22 and TCC22 on the outputs of its discussions.</i></p>

<sup>4</sup> Conservation and Management of Sea Turtles,

<sup>5</sup> WCPFC Guidelines for the Handling of Sea Turtles (Graphics)

<sup>6</sup> WCPFC Guidelines for the Handling of Sea Turtles

NTADS	Management Framework	SC21 and TCC21 Outcomes and Recommendations	Requested Commission's Action
		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.	
<p><b>Sharks</b></p> <p>Refer to <a href="#">WCPFC22-2025-28c</a> for more details on the stock status, management status, monitoring and data collection efforts, and compliance history.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">CMM 2024-05</a><sup>7</sup></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">suppl CMM 2024-05-2</a><sup>8</sup></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">suppl CMM 2024-05-1</a><sup>9</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>SC21 Recommendations:</b></p> <p><b>Stock Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SC21 additionally recommended continuing multi-model assessments for shark species, where possible, to address persistent concerns with data quality and structural assumptions. <i>(para. 103, SC21 Outcomes Document)</i></li> <li>▪ SC21 noted the need for improved observer data collection to inform monitoring of shark abundance trends and shark post-release survival. SC21 also noted this would be expected to inform the review of implementation of CMM 2024-05 paragraphs 21 and 22. <i>(para. 104, SC21 Outcomes Document)</i></li> <li>▪ SC21 recommended that the IWG-ROP assess and identify specific data gaps for enhancements needed in order to improve the accuracy and consistency of shark species identification and reporting, noting lower reporting rates of oceanic whitetip sharks by observers relative to logbooks in some regions and diminishing levels of length records since the implementation of CMM 2011-04. <i>(para. 105, SC21 Outcomes Document)</i></li> <li>▪ Given persistent uncertainties about stock structure and life-history parameters, SC21 recommended that tagging, genetic, and life-history studies be conducted to improve the biological baseline for future stock assessments of the oceanic whitetip shark. <i>(para. 106, SC21 Outcomes Document)</i></li> </ul>	<p>To be discussed under WCPFC22 Agenda Item 12.3</p> <p><i>The Commission may wish to endorse the SC21 and TCC21 recommendations and request SC22/TCC22 to report on progress with shark assessments, data collection, and CMM 2024-05 review, if any.</i></p>

<sup>7</sup> Conservation and Management Measure for Sharks

<sup>8</sup> Best handling practices for the safe release of Sharks (other than Whale Sharks and Mantas/Mobulids)

<sup>9</sup> Guidelines for the safe release of encircled whale sharks

NTADS	Management Framework	SC21 and TCC21 Outcomes and Recommendations	Requested Commission's Action
		<p><b>Developing sampling strategy for sharks (Project 126)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SC21 agreed to a no-cost extension to continue work on this project based upon the sampling plans developed in Project 117. (<i>para. 112, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>)</li> <li>▪ SC21 agreed to adopt the recommendations put forward by ISG-03 (<b>Attachment X</b>). (<i>para. 125, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Review of CMM for sharks (CMM 2024-05)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SC21 agreed that the content of the IATTC shark handling release guidelines will be a useful reference to SC23, and recommended that the information be considered by the SC as a reference during the 2027 review of CMM 2024-05. (<i>para. 200, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>TCC21 Recommendations</b> (<i>paragraphs 81 – 84, TCC21 Outcomes Document</i>):</p> <p><b>Review information and provide technical advice and recommendations related to CMM 2024-05 on Sharks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pending receipt of a complete CMM 2013-06 assessment, TCC21 recommended that WCPFC22 consider the following addition to Annex 2 of CMM 2024-05 to support CCMs in determining the effectiveness of the alternative measures set out in paragraph 9: "CCMs describe any instances of non-compliance observed with respect to paragraphs 7, 8 and 9; and describe the quantity of sharks caught where the CCM applied the alternative measures and the total quantity of sharks taken."</li> <li>▪ Per paragraph 12 of CMM 2024-05, TCC21 recommended that the Commission direct the Secretariat to compile the information</li> </ul>	

NTADS	Management Framework	SC21 and TCC21 Outcomes and Recommendations	Requested Commission's Action
		<p>provided by CCMs separately for those CCMs implementing the alternative measures and those CCMs who are implementing a “fins naturally attached” policy with respect to paragraphs 10 and 11, including the information outlined in the previous paragraph.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ TCC21 encouraged CCMs to work with Canada in the lead up to WCPFC22 on the proposed amendments to Annex 2 of CMM 2024-05.</li> <li>▪ TCC21 tasked the TCC Chair in consultation with the Secretariat to provide a paper to the Commission on how the review of the AR Part 2 information related to CCMs implementation of alternative measures set out in paragraph 9 can be completed at future TCC meetings during plenary sessions. The paper would provide advice on the feasibility of different options, for the Commission's consideration.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Cetaceans</b> Refer to <a href="#">WCPFC22-2025-28e</a> for more details on the stock status, management status, monitoring and data collection efforts, and compliance history.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">CMM 2024-07</a><sup>10</sup></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">suppl CMM 2024-07-2</a><sup>11</sup></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">suppl CMM 2024-07-1</a><sup>12</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>SC21 recommended revising section 1.5 in Annex 1 of the SciData guidelines as follows (<i>para. 9, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>‘Weight of fish caught per set’ to be replaced by ‘Weight of catch per set’</b></li> <li>○ <b>Add ‘Number of discarded/released individuals per set’ to capture interactions with cetaceans.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>SC21 recommended revising the SciData guidelines in Annex 2 Table A2.2.4 to add footnotes to the text “and other species as determined by the Commission” in the SPECIES CODE reference text field and in the NOTES columns for the following field (<i>para. 10, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>DISCARDED/RELEASED NUMBER field to align with the requirements for reporting catches of cetaceans under CMM 2024-07 (Table A2.2.4).</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>To be discussed under WCPFC22 Agenda Item 12.4 and/or 8.2</p> <p><i>The Commission may wish to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Endorse</b> revisions to the SciData Guidelines (Annex 1 and Annex 2) as recommended by SC21.</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> Conservation and Management Measure for Protection of Cetaceans from Purse Seine and Longline Fishing Operations

<sup>11</sup> Best Practices for the Safe Handling and Release of Cetaceans (Graphics)

<sup>12</sup> Best Practices for the Safe Handling and Release of Cetaceans

NTADS	Management Framework	SC21 and TCC21 Outcomes and Recommendations	Requested Commission's Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SC21 encouraged CCMs to promote training for vessel operators and observers where data reporting gaps are identified to facilitate the complete and accurate reporting of cetacean interactions (<i>para. 11, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>).</li> <li>▪ <b>SC21 supported the development of a Cetacean Identification Guide for the Pacific Ocean to support the implementation of CMM 2024-07. SC21 supported the TORs provided by the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which recognised non-budgetary implications for the WCPFC, and recommended this to be produced in collaboration with the SSP, WCPFC Secretariat, and other WCPO stakeholders. (<i>para. 201, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>)</b></li> <li>▪ SC21 noted the research about cetacean bycatch in purse seine fisheries provided by <a href="#">SC21-EB-IP-07</a>. SC21 also encouraged CCMs to do further research about cetacean bycatch and, in particular, <b>recommended the continuation of the following research (<i>para. 202, SC21 Outcomes Document</i>)</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Extending population-level modelling to assess trends in rough-toothed dolphins and false killer whales using observer data from purse seine and longline fisheries across the Pacific.</li> <li>○ Developing a targeted research plan to investigate the causes of higher mortality rates in rough-toothed dolphins during purse seine operations.</li> <li>○ Considering the development of appropriate strategies to reduce mortality and improve mitigation of cetacean interactions in tuna fisheries.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Support and endorse</b> the development of the Cetacean Identification Guide, training initiatives, and ongoing research on cetacean interactions.</li> </ul>