

# WCPFC22

Manila, Philippines | 1-5 December 2025

## Agenda 8.2. SC21 Report

21<sup>st</sup> Regular Session of the Scientific Committee

SC21: Nuku'alofa, Tonga | 13-21 August 2025

Chair: Emily Crigler

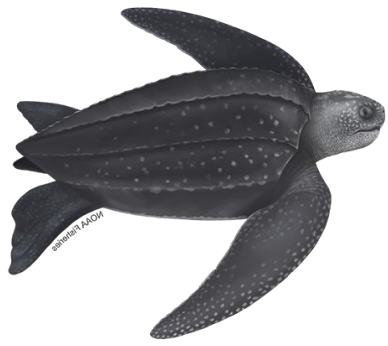




# Papers covered under this agenda item:

- **WCPFC-2025-08:** Outcomes and Action Items from SC21
  - **NOTING**
  - **ATTENTION**
  - **ACTION**
- **WCPFC-2025-18:** SC Timing Considerations for Stock Assessments
- **WCPFC-2025-38:** Data Standardization to Improve Efficiency of WCPFC Data Procedures





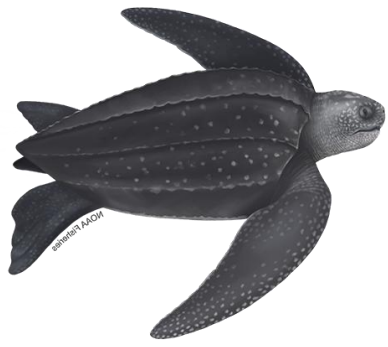
## *Data & Statistics*

### **3.1.6.1 Proposal on sea turtle data reporting requirements** **ATTENTION**

- SC21 endorsed the formation of an informal intersessional working group led by the United States to review CMM 2018-04 for sea turtles, and requested that this informal intersessional working group report back to SC22 and TCC22 on the outputs of its discussions (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 7**)

### **3.1.6.3 Reporting requirements for cetacean interaction** **ACTION**

- SC21 recommended revising Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the *Scientific Data to be Provided to the Commission (SciData)* guidelines to better align with requirements for reporting cetacean catches under CMM 2024-07 (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Paras. 9 & 10**)
- 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 (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 11**)



## ***Data & Statistics***



### **A3.1.7 Bycatch estimates of the longline fishery **ATTENTION****

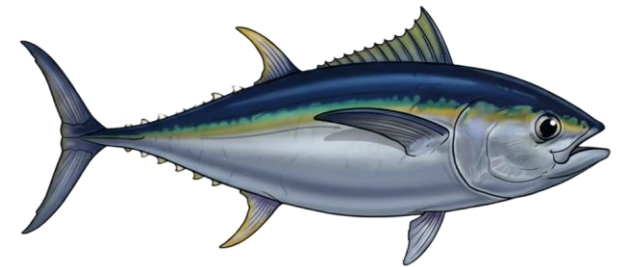
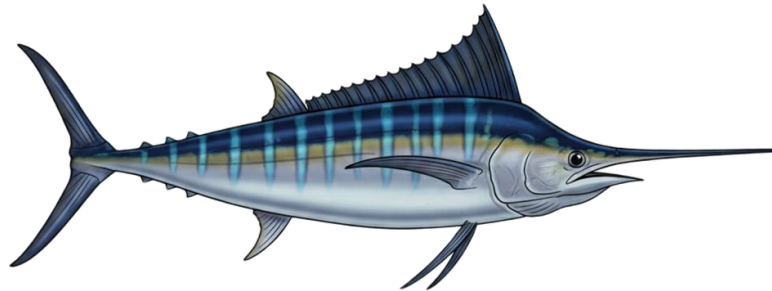
- SC21 noted the lack of sufficient data available to the SSP to provide reliable estimates of bycatch in longline fisheries, as a result of limited ROP observer coverage, noted that enhancing the level of coverage of through human observers and/or electronic monitoring may improve the accuracy of bycatch estimates, and urged the Commission to consider this issue (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 12**)

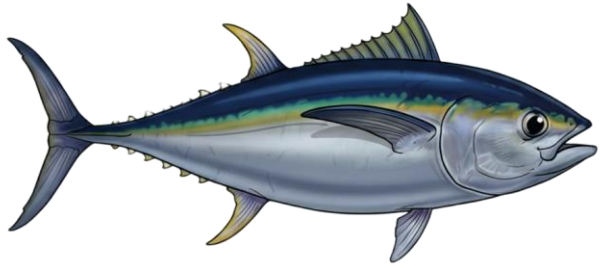
### **3.5 Fisheries and Resources Monitoring Systems (FIRMS) Partnership **NOTING****

- SC21 supported WCPFC progressing its engagement with the FIRMS partnership through a phased approach, consistent with FIRMS' partnership structure, if there is no submission of non-public domain data, no duplication of existing data reporting, and no need for additional resources (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 14**)

# *Stock Assessment & Management Issues*

- **Stock status and management advice** for all stocks covered under **Agenda 7: Status of the Stocks**
- **Harvest Strategy recommendations** covered under **Agenda 11: Conservation and Management of Tunas and Billfish, including Development of Harvest Strategies**





## *Tunas*



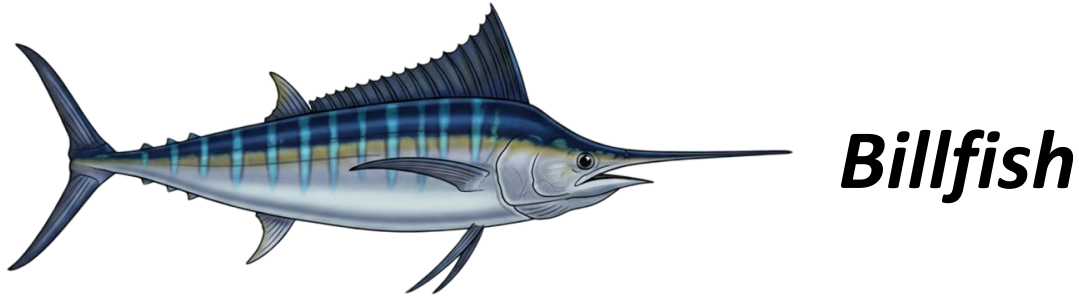
Western and  
Central Pacific  
Fisheries  
Commission

### **A4.3.1.1 Skipjack stock assessment NOTING**

- SC21 recognised the need for a regular peer review system for the WCPFC stock assessment, acknowledging the importance of conducting periodic, in-depth, independent reviews of stock assessments as an example of good global fisheries management practice, and recommended that this be considered at SC22 (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 27**)

### **A4.7.5 Stock connectivity scoping study (Project 128) NOTING**

- SC21 supported the ongoing stock connectivity scoping study (Project 128) and recommended an impact analysis for yellowfin connectivity across the Pacific basin. SC21 also recommend collection of bigeye samples to apply similar connectivity analysis (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 111 & 112**)



#### 4.7.3. & 4.7.4 Sampling plans for billfish (Project 125) and sharks (126) **ATTENTION**

- SC21 agreed that development of structured sampling plans for sharks and billfish is necessary to the improvement of the stock assessments and advice provided to the Commission (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 109**)

#### 5.4 North Pacific striped marlin projections **ATTENTION**

- ISC provided updated projection runs for WCNPO striped marlin rebuilding analysis to reflect the catch distribution by country from the CMM 2024-06. All scenarios indicate additional catch reductions will be needed by 2028 to meet the 2034 rebuilding target (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 159 & 160**)
- Next stock assessment scheduled for 2027



## ***Sharks***



Western and  
Central Pacific  
Fisheries  
Commission

### **A4.6.1.1 Oceanic whitetip shark stock assessment (Project 124) NOTING**

- SC21 noted the need for improved observer data collection to inform monitoring of shark abundance trends and shark post-release survival to inform the review of implementation of CMM 2024-05 paragraphs 21 and 22. SC21 also recommended that tagging, genetic, and life-history studies be conducted to improve the biological baseline for future stock assessments of the oceanic whitetip shark (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Paras. 102 & 104**)

### **A4.6.1.1 Oceanic whitetip shark stock assessment (Project 124) ACTION**

- 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 (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 103**)





## ***Ecosystem and Bycatch***



Western and  
Central Pacific  
Fisheries  
Commission

### **A6.2.1 Research on non-entangling and biodegradable FADs **NOTING****

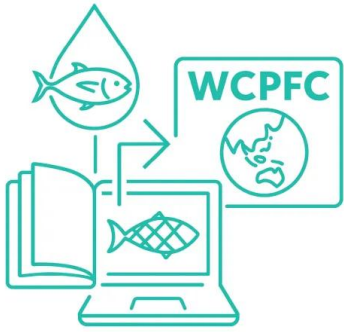
- SC21 requested additional work on definition and standards of biodegradable FAD materials and similar work for materials used in the construction of anchored FADs (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 174 & 175**)

### **A6.2.2 Research on dFAD loss and abandonments **NOTING****

- SC21 recommended additional work to better understand the impacts of stranded FADs and options to increase FAD recover (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 103**)

### **A6.6 Cetaceans **NOTING****

- SC21 supported the development of a Cetacean Identification Guide for the Pacific Ocean to support the implementation of CMM 2024-07 in collaboration with the SSP, WCPFC Secretariat, and other WCPO stakeholders (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 198**)



## *Operations of the SC*



### **A11.1.1 Guidelines and process improvements ACTION**

- SC21 recommended that the Commission consider the utility as well as the feasibility of including data from the previous year in stock assessments, and prioritize consideration of the following constraints and the implications of that decision: 1) challenges for CCMs in providing annual scientific data submissions earlier than the current 30 April deadline; and 2) the current scheduling of SC meetings to be held annually in August  
(**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 210**)

## **WCPFC-2025-18: Timing Considerations for Stock Assessments**



## *Operations of the SC*



### 3.1.3. Improving operational data evaluation and submission standards **ACTION?**

- SC21 supported the development of a standardized data reporting mechanism by the SSP to enhance the efficiency of processing required data submissions under the SciData guidelines (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 5**)

**WCPFC-2025-38: Data Standardization to Improve Efficiency of WCPFC Data Procedures**



## *Operations of the SC*



### 11.1.2. Policy of SC meeting duration **ACTION**

- SC21 recommended that the Commission agree to establish an 8-day meeting schedule as a default for regular meetings of the Scientific Committee (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 214**)
- SC21 noted the continued increasing workload of the Scientific Committee and the SSP, in particular, the added work related to harvest strategies in addition to traditional stock assessment work, and recommended that the Commission consider the resources necessary to undertake this workload and provide guidance to SC22 on potential prioritization of work (**WCPFC22-2025-08, Para. 213**)

## **The Commission is invited to:**

- 1. Endorse the formation of an informal intersessional working group (led by the U.S.) to review CMM 2018-04 in 2026**
- 2. Adopt the proposed modifications to the SciData to align with the requirements for reporting cetacean interactions under CMM 2024-07**
- 3. Task the ROP IWG to assess and identify potential enhancements needed in order to improve the accuracy and consistency of shark species ID and reporting**
- 4. Agree to establish an 8-day meeting schedule as a default for regular meetings of the Scientific Committee**
- 5. Provide advice on prioritization of scientific work of the Commission**

