



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE  
FIFTH REGULAR SESSION**

10-21 August 2009  
Port Vila, Vanuatu

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**METHODS-SWG**

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR SC5 TO ACCOMMODATE  
WORKSHOP ON REFERENCE POINTS**

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**WCPFC-SC5-2009/10**

**Background**

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the WFPFC held in December 2006 the Commission agreed that a consultancy should be undertaken to develop a discussion paper to investigate the role of Reference Points in the management of highly migratory species and the suitability of their application within the WCPFC. The report from this consultancy was presented to and discussed by the Scientific Committee at SC3 in 2007, while a follow-up report was presented and discussed at SC4 last year. As a means of progressing work on reference points, SC4 recommended that a technical inter-sessional workshop be held during 2009 to help clarify the numerical properties of candidate reference points which may be appropriate within the WCPO.

The recommendation from SC4 was considered by the Commission at WCPFC5 held in December last year. While there remains strong support for articulation of the Commission's fisheries management objectives and the development of reference points as tools for effective implementation of these objectives, a view was expressed for further capacity building and a more inclusive and collaborative approach to the development of WCPFC management objectives and reference points. It was acknowledged that it would take time for all parties to gain a detailed understanding of the issues. Towards this end, the Commission agreed that instead of holding the technical workshop (as recommended by SC4) that SC5 should convene a seminar under the Methods Specialist Working Group on reference points to assist with this capacity building process. The Commission also agreed that WCPFC6 should consider the possibility of holding a dedicated workshop on management objectives in 2010.

## **Workshop on Reference Points**

Following the decision of WCPFC5 it has been decided to devote the entire four hour session of the Methods-SWG at SC5 to a Workshop on Reference Points. It is proposed that the Workshop will be divided into two parts. The first part of the Workshop will be devoted to capacity building whilst the second part of the workshop will be devoted to examining some of the more technical issues on how to best identify candidate reference points appropriate within the WCPFC.

1) Capacity Building: This part of the Workshop will provide a broad review of what reference points are, what role they play within the management of a fishery and the achievement of management objectives, and how they are implemented within a fishery context (i.e. what information is required). A presentation will be used to assist explaining these concepts and facilitate discussion, while it is hoped to illustrate these concepts in some detail using some worked examples. It is anticipated that the presentation and discussion will happen together as we work our way through the subject.

2) Identifying Candidate Reference Points. The second part of the Workshop will be devoted to introducing and identifying the properties of a suite of reference points which may be appropriate for further consideration by the SC and Commission. This will hopefully include both MSY and non-MSY based reference points. The SPC is currently undertaking some work on this and would most likely be in the best position to make a presentation with others contributing to the general discussion.

It is anticipated that each part of the Workshop shall be allocated a time of around two hours each, with a tea-break being taken between the two sessions.

A main focus of the Workshop will be on capacity building to assist CCMs understand the issues involved in the adoption of reference points by the Commission. However it is also hoped that the Workshop will be able to make some recommendations on further capacity building initiatives and associated technical work, or projects, that will be required to help both the SC and the Commission identify appropriate reference points. Such projects may be able to be added to the SC Work Programme. There will be a session in the SC plenary that will follow up on the outcomes of the Workshop and where suitable recommendation to the Commission can be formulated and discussed.

## **Scope for Additional Working Papers**

Together with the two main presentations mentioned above which would introduce and facilitate discussion within each part of the Workshop there may be scope for the presentation and discussion of other Working Papers on reference points. As recommended by SC4 suitable topics of interest include.

- Consideration of the estimation properties of candidate reference points;
- Consideration of the stability in candidate reference points from one year's assessment to the next;
- Comparison of these with MSY-based reference points and consideration of their implications for SPR, SSB and B;

- Documentation of any major concerns about the use of MSY-based reference points and any major advantages of using a non-MSY based reference points;
- Identification of alternative means of operationalising candidate reference points.

Anyone wishing to present a Working Paper or Information Paper in relation to Reference Points is requested to contact the convenor of the Methods-SWG, Robert Campbell (Robert.Campbell@csiro.au).

### **Alternative Arrangements for Methods-SWG Working Papers**

In order to accommodate the above Workshop, scientists who were planning to contribute a Working Paper/Information Paper to the Methods-SWG at SC5 on a topic other than Reference Points should contact the convenors of the Stock Assessment-SWG (or another appropriate SWG) where it is hoped there may be space for their paper to be presented.