



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
TWENTY-SECOND REGULAR SESSION**
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Apia, Samoa (Hybrid)

**UPDATE ON THE ISA'S REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE
NORTHWEST PACIFIC OCEAN**

**WCPFC-SC22-2026-EB-IP17
30 July 2026**

Submitted by the Secretariat and the Pacific Community¹

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1. The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is an autonomous intergovernmental organization established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to organize and control mineral-resource-related activities in the Area, while ensuring effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects arising from those activities. The Area comprises the seabed, ocean floor, and subsoil beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and is designated under UNCLOS as the common heritage of humankind.
2. The WCPFC Secretariat became engaged in ISA and deep seabed mining issues following Commission direction to monitor international developments that may affect tuna fisheries in the WCPFC Convention Area. WCPFC21 approved seeking ISA observer status and requested the Secretariat to engage with stakeholders to improve understanding of the potential impacts of deep seabed mining on tuna fisheries. In August 2025, SC21 supported continued engagement with the ISA, encouraged coordination with other RFMOs, and recommended linking WCPFC scientific advice to ISA processes, including Regional Environmental Management Plans (REMPs) and related workshops. Following the ISA Assembly meeting in July 2025, WCPFC was granted ISA observer status. At WCPFC22, CCMs supported continued engagement while emphasizing that the Secretariat's involvement should remain within the Commission's mandate and focus on gathering and disseminating relevant information.
3. In February 2026, the ISA invited WCPFC to nominate a representative to participate in and contribute to a workshop on the development of the REMF for the Area of the Northwest Pacific Ocean, held in Busan from 18 to 21 May 2026. The workshop invited participants to provide relevant information, views and comments on the draft REMF, particularly on proposed area-based and other management measures, regional research and monitoring priorities, and implementation strategies. As the area covered by the draft REMF overlaps with the WCPFC Convention Area, the workshop provided an opportunity for the Secretariat to contribute WCPFC

¹ The Pacific Community was represented at the ISA NP REMF Workshop by its Geoscience, Energy, and Maritime Division.

scientific perspectives to the ISA process. This paper provides an update on the outcomes of the workshop and their relevance to the Commission.

II. REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

4. Regional Environmental Management Plans (REMPs) are strategic, area-based frameworks used by ISA to support environmental protection at the regional scale. They may include area-based management tools, such as Areas of Particular Environmental Interest (APEIs), together with regional objectives, management measures, monitoring arrangements and review processes. The first REMF was adopted for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in 2012. In July 2025, the ISA Council adopted a standardized procedure for the development, establishment and review of REMFs ([ISBA/30/C/21](#)). Development of the Northwest Pacific REMF, neighboring the EEZs of FSM, RMI, Guam, CNMI, Wake Island, and Japan, has been supported by a series of workshops held in China (2018), online (2020), Tokyo (2024), and Busan (2026).
5. A four-day ISA workshop on the development of the REMF for the Area of the Northwest Pacific Ocean was held in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 18 to 21 May 2026. Convened in partnership with the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology, the [Busan workshop](#) brought together 30 international participants nominated by ISA members, contractors, observers, and other stakeholders. Participants discussed the proposed regional objectives, management measures, and priorities for implementation and review in a region containing four exploration contracts for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts and one for polymetallic nodules. The workshop outcomes were documented for consideration by the ISA Legal and Technical Commission in advancing the draft REMF.

III. WCPFC CONTRIBUTION

6. The WCPFC Secretariat participated as an invited expert and presented information on WCPFC-managed fisheries and conservation and management measures relevant to the Northwest Pacific REMF area. The presentation summarized publicly available catch and effort information by species and gear and identified relevant WCPFC measures, including six species-specific measures, six ecosystem and bycatch-related measures, and eight monitoring, reporting, and compliance measures. ISA presented a spatial summary of WCPFC public-domain catch data for 2015-2024 (**Figure 1**). Workshop discussions highlighted the value of continued collaboration and data exchange between ISA and regional fisheries management organizations, including WCPFC, to support environmental understanding, cumulative impact assessment, monitoring, and adaptive management.

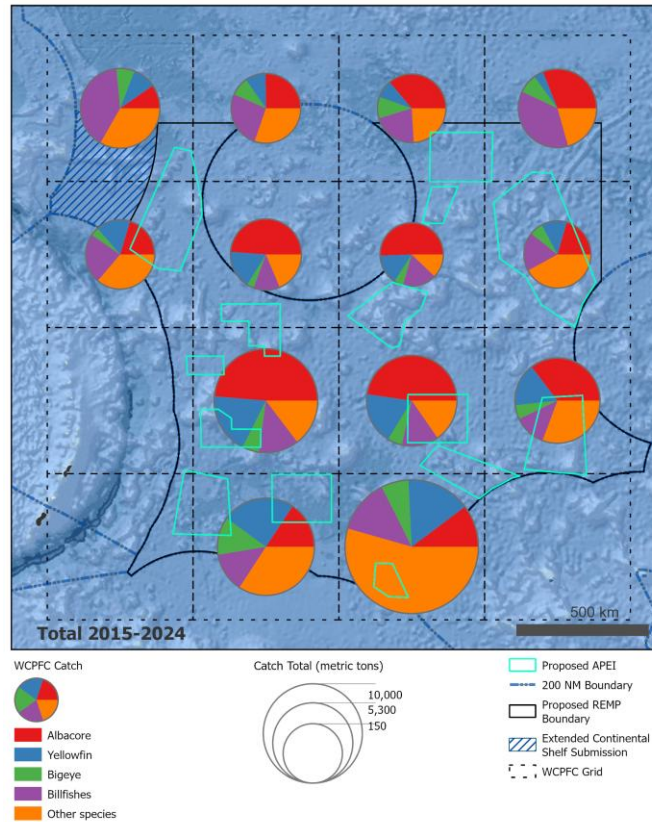


Figure 1. Total WCPFC public-domain catch by species in the Northwest Pacific REMP area, 2015-2024 (as presented by ISA at the workshop).

IV. FUTURE WORK

7. Following the standardized procedure, the Legal and Technical Commission prepared the draft REMP and approved its release for broad consultation and review during its meeting in July 2026. ISA advised that the consultation period would run from 5 August to 3 November 2026. The draft REMP, supporting scientific documentation, and official submission template will be made available on ISA's dedicated webpage for review in early August: [Northwest Pacific - International Seabed Authority](#)

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

8. SC22 is requested to:
 - a. note the Secretariat's participation in the ISA workshop on the development of the REMP for the Area of the Northwest Pacific Ocean.
 - b. take note of the upcoming consultation period from 5 August to 3 November 2026 and encourage WCPFC members to engage with this consultation.
 - c. encourage continued cooperation and information exchange with ISA in relation to the Northwest Pacific REMP process.