



Intersessional review of CMM 2017-04 on Marine Pollution

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

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Context

- CMM 2017-04 on marine pollution states the measure will be reviewed by the Commission every 3 years to consider expanding its scope with respect to the elimination of marine pollution caused by fishing vessels.
- 2024: Canada submitted a proposal to WCPFC21 to amend CMM 2017-04. In response, WCPFC21 requested CPCs to develop a proposal with a view to adopt a revised measure by WCPFC23.
- 2025: Canada initiated the review by seeking two rounds of written feedback. Key themes were identified to focus the review in 2026. WCPFC22 requested that work continue and that recommendations and any proposed amendments to CMM 2017-04 be submitted to SC22 and TCC22 in 2026, with a view to adopting a revised measure at WCPFC23.
- 2026: Canada circulated a new proposal to amend CMM 2017-04 which sought to address input received throughout 2025. Canada requested two additional rounds of written feedback on the new proposal in this year.

Issues for SC consideration

- Throughout the informal intersessional review process, SC review and advice were requested on issues related to the:
 - Inclusion of **underwater noise** within the scope of this measure;
 - Inclusion of **greenhouse gas emissions** within the scope of this measure;
 - Utility of Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (**ALDFG**) data, and how it may best be collected and transmitted to the SSP;
 - **Revision period** to ensure it aligns with the SC workplan; and,
 - Any other issue on which the SC may wish to provide advice.

Underwater noise

Proposed amendments to CMM 2017-04

[3. quater CCMs shall encourage their fishing vessels to assess and, where feasible, mitigate sources of underwater noise generated by fishing vessel operations, particularly through the adoption of quiet vessel technologies (e.g., quieter propellers, hull coatings, machinery insulation) and operational practices (e.g., speed reductions and route adjustments in sensitive areas).]

11. CCMs are encouraged to conduct training and awareness programs for the crew and master of fishing vessels flying their flag regarding the impacts of marine pollution [, including underwater noise,] and operational practices to [prevent and]eliminate marine pollution caused by fishing vessels.

[11. bis CCMs are encouraged to undertake research into marine pollution [, including underwater noise,] related to fisheries in the WCPFC Convention Area to further develop and refine measures to reduce marine pollution, and are encouraged to submit to SC and TCC any information derived from such efforts.]

Underwater noise

Summary of comments

- Many CCMs do not support incorporating underwater noise within the scope of this measure, as scientific discussions on the impacts of underwater noise on species covered by the Convention and the ecosystem have not yet been sufficiently developed or concluded.
- A CCM also noted the complexities associated with measuring underwater noise and ability to assess compliance with any relevant obligations.
- Some CCMs are willing to consider how underwater noise impacts can be addressed in the work program of the Commission.
- Some CCMs suggested that a recommendation from the SC would be necessary to consider underwater noise for inclusion in the revised measure.

Draft recommendation for consideration:

- SC recommends that the Commission consider encouraging the exchange of information on underwater noise.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Proposed amendments to CMM 2017-04

[Preamble paragraph: Recalling the [Advisory Opinion issued by the] International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) [Advisory Opinion Case No. 31] which affirmed that Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) have specific obligations to prevent, reduce, and control pollution of the marine environment from anthropogenic sources;]

3.ter CCMs [other than SIDSs] shall [take all necessary measures] [meet their obligations] to prevent, reduce and control pollution [from] [of the marine environment] anthropogenic GHG emissions from their fishing operations within the Convention Area.]

Greenhouse gas emissions

Summary of comments

- While there was some support to reference GHG emissions in the preamble, many CCMs did not support the inclusion of GHG emissions within the scope of the measure at this time.
- Some CCMs did not support treating GHG emissions as marine pollution within the scope of this measure, as scientific and policy discussions on their relevance to, and impacts on, species covered by the Convention and associated ecosystems have not yet been sufficiently developed or concluded.
- Some CCMs suggested that a recommendation from the SC would be necessary to consider including this preambular paragraph.

Draft recommendation for consideration:

- SC recommends that the Commission consider encouraging the exchange of information on GHG emissions.

Abandoned, Lost or Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) data

Proposed amendments to CMM 2017-04

[8. ter CCMs shall ensure their fishing vessels annually report all ALDFG. The Secretariat shall create and present an annual summary report to the Commission [and relevant subsidiary bodies] on ALDFG related data using the information provided in CCM annual reports.

8. quater CCMs shall [ensure their fishing vessels][encourage their fishing vessels to] notify their competent authority [within 24 hours] of the following information when vessels cannot retrieve ALDFG [linked to that vessel] [deemed to pose of significant risk of ghost fishing and/or navigational safety (e.g., nets and more than X meters of longline)]:

a. through g. CCMs shall [promptly] transmit this information to the Secretariat [within 48-72 hours] for its dissemination to all CCMs, as appropriate, so that every attempt can be made to retrieve the lost gear.

8. quinquies CCMs shall [ensure their fishing vessels][encourage their fishing vessels to] report the following information to its competent authority [within 24 hours of returning to port] regarding any retrieved ALDFG: a. through g.]

ALDFG data

Summary of comments

- Several CCMs did not support mandatory annual ALDFG reporting, noting that such requirements would be administratively burdensome and the scientific justification has not yet been well demonstrated.
- A CCM noted that extensive reporting systems for FAD-related data already exist and the proposed requirements could duplicate current processes, add manual burdens, and may not be feasible given that much deactivated gear cannot be verified at the time of loss. It was suggested that automated reporting and existing scientific data channels are better suited for compiling annual summaries.
- It was proposed that advice from SC be sought on the utility of ALDFG data, recognizing monitoring limitations, and how it may best be collected and transmitted to the SSP. If there is a scientific purpose for this data, it was suggested that it could be provided in logsheet form as Scientific Data or be collected by observers in a form that enables analysis associated with ALDFG.

Draft recommendation for consideration

- **Utility of ALDFG data:** SC recommends that the Commission consider enhancing ALDFG reporting requirements to expand our understanding of ALDFG.
- **ALDFG data flow:** SC recommends that [process to be discussed with SSP and CCMs] to streamline data flows and reduce administrative burden.
- **Significant risk of ghost fishing and/or navigational safety:** SC recommends that...

Revision period

Proposed amendments to para 12 of CMM 2017-04

12. This measure will be reviewed by the Commission every 3 years [starting in 20XX] to consider expanding the scope of measure with respect to the elimination of marine pollution caused by fishing vessels. [The Commission is invited to consider, inter alia, [issues that have yet to be addressed].]

Summary of comments

- Canada recommended the review clause reference all issues flagged by this review that were not addressed. These may include how biodegradable fishing gear should be treated, and considering underwater noise and GHG emissions, for example.
- Some CCMs suggested that the revision period be discussed by SC and TCC, to ensure it aligns with workplans of Subsidiary Bodies and the Commission.

Draft recommendation for consideration

- SC recommends that the Commission consider starting the next review in [20XX], which aligns with the SC's workplan.

Review CMM 2017-04 Marine Pollution

SC22 is invited to:

- Consider recommendations relevant to the review of the Marine Pollution measure

Possible draft recommendation text for consideration:

- Underwater noise: SC recommends that the Commission consider encouraging the exchange of information on underwater noise.
- GHG emissions: SC recommends that the Commission consider encouraging the exchange of information on GHG emissions.
- Utility of ALDFG data: SC recommends that the Commission consider enhancing ALDFG reporting requirements to expand our understanding of ALDFG.
- ALDFG data flow: SC recommends that [process to be discussed with SSP and CCMs] to streamline data flows and reduce administrative burden.
- Significant risk of ghost fishing and/or navigational safety: SC recommends that...
- Review period: SC recommends that the Commission consider starting the next review in [20XX], which aligns with the SC's workplan.