



**TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE  
NINTH REGULAR SESSION  
26<sup>th</sup> September – 1 October 2013  
Pohnpei,  
Federated States of Micronesia**

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**Pew Charitable Trusts Position Statement.**

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**WCPFC-TCC9-2013-OP05  
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**The Pew Charitable Trusts Position Statement  
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission  
9<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee  
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia  
26 September – 1 October, 2013**

The Pew Charitable Trusts would like to thank the participants of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) for the opportunity to observe the 9<sup>th</sup> regular session. The TCC performs an incredibly important function for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) by evaluating the implementation of current Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) and developing new CMMs for the Commission to consider.

This year, WCPFC faces a number of challenging issues, ranging from ending unsustainable levels of fishing to ensuring that the Commission has the adequate tools in place to effectively monitor the growing number of vessels in the Convention Area. Pew looks forward to working with all CCMs at the TCC meeting to help pave the way for sustainable and well-managed fisheries throughout the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO).

**Effectively ending Bigeye Overfishing**

Recent negotiations on a new tropical tuna Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) show that there is a willingness from many CCMs to finally end bigeye tuna overfishing. Many positive concepts have emerged, including caps on overall fishing capacity, reductions on FAD fishing, and further cuts in longline catches. **It is critical that whatever measure is negotiated be based on the scientific advice from the SPC, and results in real reductions to bigeye mortality.**

The next generation CMM should also build on past experience and modify management tools that have proven to be ineffective. For instance, FAD closures alone do not work to reduce catches of bigeye by purse seiners.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the advice from Scientific Committee for the last two years notes that FAD controls need to be strengthened, in particular the FAD activity outside the closures. **Agreeing to FAD set limits and other FAD controls would greatly improve the quality of management for the world's largest tuna fishery. TCC9 should take advantage of the technical expertise of meeting participants to develop an improved FAD management system that can be fully implemented and enforced.**

**Lastly, the new CMM should be structured so that future scientific advice on the status of tropical tunas can be automatically incorporated.** New assessments for bigeye and yellowfin will be completed in 2014, and given the high levels of recent catches, additional fishing mortality cuts may be required.

### **Strengthening Conservation and Management for Sharks**

The report of this year's Scientific Committee highlights continuing concerns over the effectiveness of, and compliance with, existing WCPFC shark CMM's. The report highlights the impacts of the continued use of wire leaders and shark lines to target sharks in longline fisheries, lack of observer coverage in those fisheries and the limited effectiveness of CMM 2010-07 in eliminating shark finning. The SC noted that *'Given the current growing public concern over global shark over-exploitation, most CCMs consider that there is a need for the WCPFC to adopt more robust and enforceable measures for sharks to reduce mortality in both the longline and purse-seine fisheries.'*

**Given this, the TCC should prioritize work on the better management of sharks in the WCPO, including through the development of a new or updated CMM that would prohibit the use of wire leaders and shark lines, and ban the removal of fins at sea.**

Across all of the work on assessing shark stock status in the WCPO, it is noted that data recording and reporting on the catch of shark species is still at a low level, and that this is hampering the provision of comprehensive scientific advice. To deal with this ongoing and significant issue we recommend that the WCPFC adopts a 'no data, no fish' measure for sharks. **Such a measure would prevent, at a minimum, any WCPFC Member from retaining or landing any of the 14 key shark species identified by WCPFC, if they had not submitted landing data on that species from the previous year.**

**Additionally, work should continue on developing precautionary, scientifically based management measures in line with this year's stock assessments of silky and blue sharks for adoption at WCPFC 10.**

### **Ending Illegal Fishing**

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) Number is an essential element of any system designed to ensure compliance with fisheries laws and safety and security at sea. In this regard, we welcome the proposal submitted by the United States on Implementation of a Unique Vessel Identifier. This proposal is a good basis for improving the transparency of fishing operations in the WCPFC Area, which should be aimed at *all* vessels 100 GT or greater, 24 meters or greater, or operating outside of the jurisdiction of the vessel's flag State.

**We call on the Commission to require that all such vessels authorized to fish in the WCPFC Area have an IMO number by 1 January 2015 and that this number be reported in all records and relevant communications involving these vessels, and be permanently marked in a visible place on the hull of the vessel.** Until 1 January 2015, the Commission should require members to submit the IMO number of any vessel authorized to fish in the WCPFC Area that already has such number, and mandate that the IMO number be included as a mandatory field in the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels.

Port State measures (PSMs) are cost-effective tools to prevent the entry of illegal fish onto markets. WCPFC's Performance Review recommended the adoption of PSMs, warning that WCPFC is lagging behind other RFMOs in doing so.<sup>ii</sup> WCPFC currently lacks a comprehensive inspection scheme, and other standards for port State control.

**The WCPFC should initiate the development of a regional scheme of PSMs. The first step should be adopting minimum standards for port inspections, and providing adequate support to developing States for implementation.**

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<sup>i</sup> Pilling et al 2013. Analysis of the implementation and effectiveness of key management measures for tropical tunas. Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Scientific Committee 9th Regular Session.

<sup>ii</sup> Performance Review Report, section 6.2, p. 44. The Performance review recommended that “in considering Port State Measures, the Commission should take into account minimum standards in the PSMA, measures and practices of other RFMOs in implementing such standards and developments in the broader system of Port controls”, *ibid*, section 3.2.5, p. 1.