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Annual WCPFC Report: Joint Tuna RFMO Bycatch Technical Working Group

WCPFC-SC12-2016/EB-IP-12

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Recommendations

1. SC12 is requested to note the progress made towards completing the work plan of the Joint Tuna-RFMO By-catch Technical Working Group as outlined in the report.
2. SC12 is requested to note the opportunity to contribute towards the development of the future work plan of the Joint Tuna-RFMO By-catch Technical Working Group.
3. SC12 is requested to identify its preferred two contact points for ongoing engagement in the Joint Tuna-RFMO By-catch Technical Working Group.

Background

The Joint Tuna-RFMO By-catch Technical Working Group (By-catch TWG) was established in 2009 and its work plan endorsed by the Kobe III meeting in July 2011 and the Scientific Committee of WCPFC in August 2011. Note that the original work plan of the TWG provided a priority for each tRFMO which they could then contribute towards independently (e.g. Convention area scale risk assessments) or collectively (e.g. the 2015 Keelung data harmonisation workshop) or by broadening existing work (e.g. expanding BMIS function).

This report documents the progress on the following elements of this work plan since the 2015 report (Nicol 2015) with an emphasis on tasks completed in the WCPFC area:

2. Harmonisation of identification guides;
3. Updating of by-catch research priorities and promotion of collaborative work;
4. Improved Information sharing through the BMIS;
5. Facilitation of Risk Assessments (sharks as the priority);
6. Identification of Funding Sources; and
7. Enhanced compliance with data reporting requirements.

Achievements over the 2015-2016 period

Since WCPFC-SC11 the following activities are reported for the WCPO:

2. Harmonisation of identification guides
 - Work is underway with BLI to improve the observer seabird identification guides for the WCPO, especially for the southern latitudes, to ensure improved quality of seabird identification.
3. Improved Information sharing through the BMIS
 - Through funding from ISSF, and ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna project (Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ, or Common Oceans) Tuna Project, a Global Environment Facility funded FAO-implemented programme of work), BMIS is progressing, with a project co-ordinator in place, references continuing to be updated, and work on a new website beginning this month.
4. Updating of by-catch research priorities and promotion of collaborative work
 - The turtle workshop in Hawaii was very successful especially as an example of collaborative analysis of bycatch data (funded via the ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna project). The workshop report is SC12-EB-WP-11 (Clarke et al. 2016).
 - The second turtle workshop planned for November 2016 in Hawaii will complete that turtle work for the WCPFC area.
5. Facilitation of Risk Assessments
 - All tRFMOs have completed qualitative risk assessments that include sharks.

- Via the ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna project the first assessment for southern hemisphere porbeagle shark involving a stock assessment model, which will address both stock status and exploitation rates, and a risk assessment model, which will address exploitation rates only, is underway. Scientists from Chile, New Zealand, Japan, Uruguay and Argentina are participating in the study. Results are due to be reported to CCSBT and WCPFC in 2017.
 - Via the ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna project an assessment for bigeye thresher shark is underway, with a spatially-explicit risk assessment methodology being designed to assess current fisheries impacts against a notional limit reference point. It includes data from the Eastern Pacific. An update on the study will be available to WCPFC-SC12 (SC12 SA-IP-17).
6. Identification of Funding Sources
- No new funding sources identified and this remains a significant barrier to collaborative all tRFMO work.
 - As a result little directed all tRFMO work has occurred, however the areas of progress covered in the items above and below involve more than one tRFMO and show progress against the existing By-catch TWG work plan.
7. Enhanced compliance with data reporting requirements.
- Via the ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna project report underway on implementation of WCPFC BDEP, which is based off the CCSBT approach
 - IOTC has also adopted BDEP as a trial, with the Secretariat filling it out and intending to present it at WPEB in Sept 2016.

2017 workplan

The Chair of the By-catch TWG intends developing a draft By-catch TWG work plan for 2017 and onwards, with the intent to distribute in early October 2016 for discussion in December 2016. The Chair is seeking to have a By-catch TWG either immediately prior to or immediately after the FAO EBAFM meeting in Rome in December to discuss the future work plan and modes of work.

Other Matters

The previous chair of the Joint Tuna-RFMO By-catch Technical Working Group (Simon Nicol) finished employment with the WCPFC Scientific Services Provider in November 2015. A new chair was subsequently appointed in March 2016 (Neville Smith). Coincidentally the new chair has been employed by the WCPFC Scientific Services Provider since late 2015.

Acknowledgements

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References

- Clarke, S., T. Peatman and S. Caillot. 2016. Results from the First Workshop on Joint Analysis of Sea Turtle Mitigation Effectiveness. SC12 EB-WP-11. Twelfth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee of the WCPFC. Bali, Indonesia. 3–11 August 2016.
- Nicol, S. 2015. Annual WCPFC Report: Joint Tuna RFMO Bycatch Technical Working Group. SC11 EB-IP-02. Eleventh Regular Session of the Scientific Committee of the WCPFC. Pohnpei, FSM. 5–13 August 2015.