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WCPFC-IATTC OVERLAP AREA

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DISCUSSION PAPER FOR WCPFC

Noting the direction to the WCPFC Executive Director to meet with IATTC concerning the overlap area and also the informal joint WCPFC/IATTC discussions at La Jolla prior to Kobe 3 and the desire from those present to establish a small working group on the overlap area, the Executive Directors met in La Jolla on 1-2 November 2011 and discussed a range of issues concerning the overlap area but principally the options for managing the overlap area, implementing the MoU on the Cross Endorsement of Observers, and longer term collaboration between the agencies.

This paper concentrates on options for managing the overlap area and is prepared as a background brief to try to put the options into context to enable WCPFC to provide advice to the Chair and the Executive Director on the preferred direction any future discussions might take. Japan produced a discussion paper on the overlap area for the informal meeting of the parties prior to Kobe 3 and that paper has been used in preparing this brief.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Decisions taken by the parties to the WCPFC and IATTC have resulted in an overlap area bounded by 150 degrees longitude W, 130 degrees longitude W, 4 degrees latitude south and 50 degrees latitude south. IATTC was established in 1949 by the IATTC Convention which was updated by the Antigua Convention agreed in 2003 and brought into force in 2010. While the 1949 IATTC Convention did not have boundaries described, the Antigua Convention uses 150W as the western boundary of the IATTC fishery. IATTC scientists and managers first began to use 150W in 1972 (page 60 1972 IATTC Annual Report). The following quote from the 1978 IATTC Annual report “The corresponding values for the EPO (east of 150W) are 80 and 104,000 tons respectively” (page 57 1978 IATTC Annual Report) confirms the use of 150W. From that point on 150W can be seen regularly in scientific reports and by the

1980s it was in regular use by IATTC. The 1998 Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) is bounded by 150W.

The use of 150W by the Pacific island countries and the SPC can be seen in the reports of the Western Pacific Yellowfin Tuna Research group for 1995 and 1997 which both use 150W in their assessments and commentary. It is not until the negotiations for the WCPFC (entered in force on June 2004) commenced that the concept of the current WCPFC boundaries come into being. Without commenting further on history it is understood at that time that there were negotiations to try to resolve the issue but that these were unsuccessful. While the finalization of the WCPF Convention predates the Antigua Convention both Agreements were being negotiated with their members at the same time, noting that a number of members are members of both organizations.

Delving further into the issue will not resolve it but the use of 150W is raised here to demonstrate that it has been used by both parties for a number of years and is not the boundary of only one organization.

INTEREST IN THE AREA

The waters outside the Marquesas' islands part of French Polynesia EEZ have been fished historically by purse seine vessels from Mexico and US but in recent years the fleets have been from Ecuador, Spain, Korea and El Salvador. Longline fleets from a number of distant fishing nations, principally Japan, US, Chinese Taipei and Korea have operated in this area for many years and continue to do so. Table 1 below shows the purse seine catches by fleet in this area from 1995-2010 and Table 2 shows the longline catch by fleet for the same period.

South of French Polynesia there is no purse seining and the only activity is fishing for southern albacore and southern swordfish. This activity is undertaken mainly by longline vessels from the EU and Chinese Taipei.

Table 1 Annual purse seine catches in the WCPFC-IATTC overlap area (WCPFC data)

Year	Target tuna catch (metric tons)					
	Ecuador	Spain	FSM	Korea	El Salvador	USA
1995						42
1996						
1997						
1998		1,624				
1999		277				73
2000		398				
2001		1,860			109	
2002		1,110		0	724	
2003		2,031			0	
2004		1,290	4			
2005		437				0
2006		2,414				
2007	345	985			297	

2008	5,708	575			1,957	
2009	851	0			447	0
2010		53			715	

Table 2 Annual longline catches in the WCPFC-IATTC overlap area (WCPFC data)

Year	Target tuna catch (metric tons)						
	Belize	China	Japan	Korea	French Polynesia	Chinese Taipei	Vanuatu
1995			5,126	6,984	701	475	
1996			4,103	7,129	1,289	1,223	
1997			3,620	5,607	2,441	2,548	
1998	18		8,516	8,667	3,324	3,030	
1999	29		5,039	7,894	2,527	2,124	
2000	82	4	7,847	9,340	4,932	2,631	
2001	168	1	5,039	9,548	4,930	5,432	108
2002	692	194	4,185	5,158	4,373		235
2003	456	6,704	2,116	4,604	4,003	10,952	193
2004		163	3,316	4,169	3,154	7,423	1,469
2005		111	2,455	3,251	3,334	4,508	785
2006			2,867	1,732	3,274	3,237	1,522
2007			2,911	496	3,572	2,959	1,336
2008			1,661	1,410	3,072	1,471	1,068
2009		1,610	2,086	465	4,104	1,060	1,391
2010	29	1,870	1,732	1,785	3,207	2,513	1,783

A brief summary of this table shows that over time most, if not all, of the purse seine fishing in the area has been from IATTC vessels. Long lining has increased in recent times with fleets from Korea and Chinese Taipei joining the Japanese in the fishery and these vessels are related to the WCPFC more than to IATTC. As noted above there is a different fishery in the overlap waters north of French Polynesia than there is in the south of the overlap area.

SUMMARY

This area as noted in the Japanese paper and confirmed by data from the SPC and IATTC is not heavily fished. Each year the catch by purse seiners and long-liners by species from the above table shows between 18,000 and 20,000 tons of catch whilst the total combined catch from WCPFC and IATTC of about 3.5 million tons of tuna annually. The catch from the overlap area is therefore approximately 0.175% of the overall catch. Therefore the ongoing management of this area should not take up a lot of the resources in time or money from either organization. Clearly what is needed is simple and practical approaches to deal with the overlap area *Attachment 1* is a table showing membership of both Commission and *Attachment 2* a map of the overlap area.

OPTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE AREA

Taking into account the precedents and the situation described above, the best course of action seems to be to find a practical outcome we can all agree on. There appears to be a limited number of practical options for consideration for the ongoing management of the overlap area and these are outlined below in no particular order.

Option 1 Single Organization Management Of The Area

Under this regime the management of the area would be through a MoU with one or the other RFMO tasked to manage the area. Given the historical IATTC activities in the area and noting they have capacity limits for purse seining and long-line catch limits (IATTC-C-02-03 and C-11-01) along with FAD and Dolphin measures one option may be to have IATTC to manage the overlap area and report annually to WCPFC on activities in this area. The EEZ waters of French Polynesia and Kiribati could still be managed as part of the WCPFC.

One potential issue with this option is that IATTC only goes to 50S and not to the Antarctic Convergence zone so there is still a body of water not covered in this proposal albeit one not regularly subject to fishing activity.

Option 2 Management By Gear Type

This option is an extension of the concept mentioned above but takes into consideration the difference in the fisheries north and south of French Polynesia. Under this option is that IATTC would be tasked with managing the purse seine fishery where it occurs in the northern part of the overlap area drawing on their historical fishing in the area, noting the membership of both Kiribati and French Polynesia to IATTC and the capacity limits IATTC has in place.

WCPFC would manage long-lining in the area, noting its strong interest in southern swordfish and southern albacore management and that the WCPF Convention southern boundary abuts the Antarctic convergence zone boundary with CCAMLR. The IATTC southern boundary is limited to 50 south. Prior to the adoption of the management regime of one of the organizations, both will need to adopt similar measures with the purpose of jointly implementing these measures.

Option 3 Box The Area And Manage As A Special Management Area

This would involve agreeing to share the management of the area between the two Commissions. The boxed area would be managed by both Commissions as a Special Management Area and they would apply an agreed set of conservation and management measures and resolutions for stock management and conservation. While this might look like an attractive option it has the disadvantages of costs as the parties would need to work together to negotiate and develop a set of agreed Conservation and Management Measures (WCPFC) or Resolutions (IATTC) for the area and to meet and discuss conservation, management and compliance for a limited area and a small amount of catch a number of times throughout the year. Even if this was undertaken only at the Secretariat level it would add significantly to the costs of the Commissions and would be unwieldy in getting agreement on..

Option 4 Application of measures from both Commissions

Under this proposal the area would stay as it is as an overlap area and it would be managed by applying the rules of the Commissions as follows.

- Vessels from the WCPFC register would fish under WCPFC rules
- Vessels from IATTC would fish under IATTC rules
- Vessels flagged to parties that are members of both Commissions would need to select and advise under which Commission they wish to fish. The rules of that RFMO would then apply to those vessels on a permanent basis.

The advantage of this option is that RFMOs can decide to do this immediately. However, what this option does not do is limit and control fishing capacity and catch levels in the area as there is no decision on how much catch can be taken in the overlap area. IATTC has a capacity limit and catch limits for long liners but WCPFC does not restrict purse seine or longline catch in the area. Therefore before this option could be applied a decision would need to be reached among the parties as to the catch limits to be applied by gear type and species in the overlap area.

Option 5

Option 5 would involve both organizations taking a longer term view (10 years) of tuna management in the Pacific Ocean basin. This might involve a working group being established to consider in the longer term if there was potential for a joint authority to be established by both Commissions for species based tuna and billfish management for the entire Pacific basin. The starting point could be to accept Option 2 above as a building block for the future and put a priority on establishing joint scientific activity including data collection and stock assessment. Then over time activities such as vessel registries, VMS and MCS activities could be aligned.

The challenge to making this option work is that conservation and management measures are already adopted within the framework of each Commission and it is possible that the measures adopted for a single transpacific stock could be weakened or blocked by the lack of consensus among the Commissions' members. As in option 2 both organizations need to adopt similar measures.

CONCLUSION

WCPFC8 is invited to provide advice to the Chairman and the Executive Director on these and other potential options as a guide to any discussions that will take place if the establishment of a small working group between the Commissions is agreed.

Attachment 1

WCPFC and IATTC: Members and Cooperating non-Members

WCPFC	IATTC
Members	
Australia	Belize
China	Canada
Canada	China
Cook Islands	Colombia
European Union	Costa Rica
Federated States of Micronesia	Ecuador
Fiji	El Salvador
France	European Union
Japan	France
Kiribati	Guatemala
Korea	Japan
Republic of Marshall Islands	Kiribati
Nauru	Korea
Niue	Mexico
Palau	Nicaragua
Papua New Guinea	Panama
Philippines	Peru
Samoa	Chinese Taipei
Solomon Islands	United States of America
Chinese Taipei	Vanuatu
Tonga	Venezuela
Tuvalu	
United States of America	
Vanuatu	
Participating Territories	
American Samoa	
Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands	
French Polynesia	
Guam	
New Caledonia	
Tokelau	
Wallis and Fortuna	
Cooperating non-Members	
Belize	Cook Islands
Ecuador	
El Salvador	
Indonesia	
Mexico	
Panama	
Senegal	
Thailand	
Vietnam	

Map: Overlap of WPCFC and IATTC Convention Areas

