**SC12 - MANAGEMENT ISSUES THEME**

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMISSON**

PLEASE RETURN COMMENTS BY 9PM ON MONDAY, BUT NO LATER THAN MORNING TEA (10AM) ON TUESDAY

**Agenda 5.1: Development of a Harvest Strategy Framework**

Item 5.1.1 Management Objectives

1. SC12 noted that Commission is scheduled to ‘record’ the management objectives for each fishery or stock (south-Pacific albacore, skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye) in 2016. Noting the direct relationship between management objectives and the need to identify performance indicators within the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) currently being developed, SC12 recommends that WCPFC13 provide additional clarity on the key management objectives for skipjack and south-Pacific albacore.

Item 5.1.2 South Pacific Albacore

1. SC12 reviewed information related to the biological and economic consequences of alternative trajectories to achieve a candidate south Pacific albacore target reference point (WCPFC-SC12-2016/MI-WP-01) and provided a number of suggestions to clarify aspects of the paper before a revised version is forwarded to WCPFC13. SC12 recommends that WCPFC13 note the biological and economic consequences of the various recovery options modelled in this paper in making a decision on an appropriate target reference point for south Pacific albacore. In particular, SC12 draws the attention of WCPFC13 to the importance of assumptions on key bycatch species catch levels for economic estimates; and any additional economic losses due to the exit of vessels from the fishery.

Item 5.1.2 Bigeye Tuna

1. SC12 reviewed information related to biologically reasonable rebuilding timeframes for bigeye tuna (WCPFC-SC12-2016/MI-WP-02) and provided a number of suggestions to clarify aspects of the paper before a revised version is forwarded to WCPFC13. SC12 recommends that WCPFC13 note the various options modelled in this paper in making a decision on an appropriate rebuilding timeframe for bigeye tuna. In particular, SC12 draws the attention of WCPFC13 to i) the estimated bigeye generation time of 4 years, and minimum rebuilding time in the absence of fishing of 2-4 years, ii) that consideration of acceptable risk for the bigeye stock falling below the limit reference point will influence the findings, and iii) it will be important to examine not only the timeframe but also the stock trajectory of rebuilding.

Item 5.1.3 Implications of alternative levels of acceptable risk

1. SC12 reviewed a proposal for adopting interim acceptable levels of risk for breaching limit reference points in the WCPO (WCPFC-SC12-2016/MI-WP-03) and provided a number of suggestions to clarify aspects of the paper before a revised version is forwarded to WCPFC13. Noting that WCPFC13 is scheduled to agree levels of risk for the four key tuna species, that an adopted risk level is required for identifying a rebuilding target for bigeye tuna, and risk levels are also required for measuring performance for candidate harvest strategies, SC12 recommends that WCPFC13 take into consideration the rationale outlined in this paper for identifying appropriate levels of risk and again notes that the UN Fish Stocks Agreement states that the risk of exceeding LRPs should be very low. SC12 also recommends that adopted risk levels be seen as interim and be reviewed in light of the outcomes of the Harvest Strategy / MSE work-plan.

Item 5.1.4 & 5.1.5 Performance Indicators and Monitoring Strategy

1. SC12 reviewed candidate performance indicators and monitoring strategies for skipjack and South Pacific albacore commensurate with candidate management objectives for the tropical purse seine and southern longline fisheries (WCPFC-SC12-2016/MI-WP-04) and provided a number of suggestions to clarify aspects of the paper and expand on the list of performance indicators before a revised version is forwarded to WCPFC13. SC12 recommends that WCPFC13 that note of the candidate performance indicators and monitoring strategies listed in this paper, and noting that the number of key performance indicators should be kept to a tractable level, provide advice on what performance indicators and monitoring strategies should be included in the harvest strategies to be evaluated within the work-plan for the adoption of harvest strategies under CMM 2014-06.

Item 5.1.6 Harvest Control Rules and Management Strategy Evaluation

1. SC12 reviewed the report of the expert consultation held at SPC in June 2016 on the development of a management strategy evaluation framework for WCPFC tuna stocks (WCPFC-SC12-2016/MI-WP-05). SC12 endorsed the scope of the work to be undertaken as outlined in this report and recommends that WCPFC13 note i) the concern of the workshop on the future availability of data for skipjack and to consider how these data can continue to be provided to support the assessment and MSE, ii) that both empirical and model-based management strategies could be tested for South Pacific albacore but that CPUE based methods may be dependent on access to operational longline logbook data, and iii) the recommendations of the workshop for the continued involvement of experts to provide technical advice on the MSE work and a process to facilitate stakeholder involvement on a number of inputs to the MSE such as the development of harvest control rules.

Note: An ISG is scheduled for Lunchtime Monday to discuss possible options for supporting the ongoing MSE work being undertaken by the Scientific Service Provider

1. SC12 reviewed an evaluation of candidate harvest control rules for the tropical skipjack purse seine fishery (WCPFC-SC12-2016/MI-WP-06). SC12 recommends that WCPC13 note i) the utility of the approach taken for evaluating harvest control rules, ii) the associated need to develop appropriate performance indicators to adequately track effort creep in this and other fisheries in the WCPO, and iii) the need to identify an appropriate time-frame for evaluating the effectiveness of a harvest control rule. SC12 also recommends that WCPFC13 note the need for a broad based consultation on identifying candidate harvest control rules.
2. SC12 was informed about the work undertaken by the Northern Committee and the ISC on the development of harvest control rules and Management Strategy Evaluation for Northern Stocks (WCPFC-SC12-2016/MI-WP-07). SC12 recommends that WCPFC13 note these developments and consider the need to facilitate discussion on Management Strategy Evaluation between those groups undertaking such work within the WCPO (i.e. the Scientific Service Provider and ISC) and across all t-RFMOs.

**Agenda 5.2 Limit Reference Points (LRPs) for the WCPFC**

1. To be identified by ISG-3 (scheduled for the morning tea-break on Monday)

**Agenda 5.3 Implementation of CMM-2015-01**

Item 5.3.1 Yellowfin tuna catch limit

1. SC12 discussed the request from WCPFC12 to provide comments and/or recommendations to the Commission on how to further develop catch limit options for yellowfin tuna as specified in paragraphs 28, 29 and 43 of CMM-2015-01. SC12 reiterated it advice from SC11 that yellowfin tuna stock status in the WCPO is relatively insensitive to whether purse seine effort is comprised of mainly associated sets or unassociated sets. SC12 also noted that the latest catch estimates for 2015 suggest that catch of yellowfin in the longline and purse seine fisheries appears relatively stable and as such several CCMs do not consider yellowfin catch limits in the longline and purse seine fisheries immediately necessary. Nevertheless, some concern was expressed with the increase in yellowfin catch reported in the “other” fisheries category, particularly in the Indonesian and Philippines handline fisheries, though it was noted that these catches are presently provisional and increases may be attributed to changes in data collection in recent years. SC12 therefore recommends WCPFC13 consider the need for continued improvements for data collection in these fisheries and the need for CCMs to provide information to the Commission on the management tools they have available to them to bring these catches under control. SC12 also recommends that WCPFP13 consider incorporating additional measures, such as a zone-based management of yellowfin catch across the whole stock, within the bridging tropical tuna CMM to be developed.

Item 5.3.2 Other Issues Related to CMM-2015-01

1. SC12 reviewed a management option to limit bigeye catches on purse seine vessels to assist the recovery of the bigeye tuna stock in the WCPO (WCPFC-SC12-2016/MI-WP-09) and also noted additional options such as the introduction of FAD charges to manage FAD usage in PNA waters to achieve this same objective. SC12 recommends that WCPFC13 note these options when considering additional management measures for rebuilding the bigeye tuna stock within the WCPO.
2. SC12 discussed the request from WCPFC12 to provide comments and/or recommendations to the Commission on proposals from CCMs that wish to claim exemption from the 2017 high seas FAD closure on the basis of footnote 5 of CMM 2015-01. SC12 noted that it was unaware of any specific proposals from CCMs to request such an exemption. Nevertheless, SC12 noted that the present CMM is unclear as to how this exemption is to be applied as it does not specify a time period over which the drop in bigeye bycatch to the 55% level of 2010-12 needs to be sustained. SC12 noted comments that the exemption should only apply where there has been a sustained drop in bigeye bycatch (e.g. the exemption should apply in 2017 only to those purse seine fleets with an average bigeye catch for 2014 and 2015 that is reduced to 55% of their average for 2010 to 2012) and a fleet should not continue to be exempted if its bigeye bycatch is not maintained at the 55% level. SC12 recommends that WCPFC13 take note of these comments.
3. SC12 reviewed candidate indicators of effort creep in the WCPO purse seine fishery (WCPFC-SC12-2016/MI-WP-08) noting that SPC had undertaken the work for the PNA to inform consideration of adjusting the Vessel Day Scheme TAE for effort creep. SC12 strongly supported this work, noting that this work was also directly relevant to the development of a harvest control rule for skipjack. SC12 also identified effort creep as an important issue related to all fleets operating in the WCPO and recommends that WCPF13 that note of these comments and support continue research on this important issue.