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**Conservation International - Position Statement to WCPFC21**

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**WCPFC21-2024-OP07**  
**15 November 2024**

**Submitted by Conservation International (CI)**

# Conservation International

## Position Statement to WCPFC21

Conservation International appreciates the opportunity to participate in 21st regular session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) meeting as an observer.

Conservation International submits this position statement to WCPFC21 on some of priority areas that should be called to action in this Commission meeting.

### Conservation Management Measure (CMM) on Crew Labour Standards

States have a duty to protect the human rights of fishing crew under the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and Work in Fishing Convention (C188), and the legally binding The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Through these and other instruments, states have declared their commitment to the protection of human rights of domestic and migrant fish workers. The protection of these rights is not exclusive, and covers all activity at sea, just as it does on land.

*In alignment with the submission by the Co-Chairs of the Labour Standards Intersessional Working Group on the Development of a Crew Labour Standards Conservation and Management Measure, Conservation International supports the outstanding issues, namely: "the role of crew providers; remuneration standards; breach of contract by crew members; informing the Secretariat on the death of a crew member or an allegation from a crew member to a port CCM; notification of next of kin/designated contact if there is a missing crew member; the definition of "vicinity" for alerting other vessels for a search and rescue mission; the question of ceasing all fishing operations if a crew member dies or is missing; the grounds for a port State to take action on the allegation of a crew member; and entry into force of the CMM" (WCPFC21-2024-20) .*

## **Recommendation**

1. Conservation International supports the finalising of the draft text and adoption of CMM on crew labour standards at WCPFC21.

## **South Pacific Albacore Stock**

A new 2024 stock assessment of South Pacific albacore (South-Pacific wide) was conducted this year with a simplified 2 model regions spatial structure which indicated the recent high catches of South Pacific albacore in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. The second Science Management Dialogue (SMD02) agreed on a joint working group between WCPFC CCMs and IATTC for management of South Pacific albacore and similar outcome (WCPFC-IATTC cooperation) was also shared at WCPFC's SPA roadmap working group (SPA-RM-WG).

## **Recommendation**

2. Conservation International supports establishment of a joint working group between WCPFC and IATTC for South Pacific albacore and proposes this to be considered at the Commission meeting.

## **Harvest Strategies**

WCPFC's indicative workplan for the adoption of harvest strategies under CMM 2022-03 sets indicative timelines for advancing the management of key tuna species and a significant progress has been made such as at WCPFC20, the Commission agreed on an interim target reference point (ITRP) for South Pacific albacore specified as four percent below the estimated average spawning potential depletion of the stock over the period 2017-2019 ( $0.96 SB_{2017-2019}/SBF=0$ ), SC20 adopted the operating models and SMD02 considered potential harvest control rules. At WCPFC21, the Commission is due to adopt a management procedure for South Pacific albacore. TCC20 had recommended to the Commission on the adoption of the skipjack monitoring strategy.

## **Recommendation**

3. Conservation International supports consideration of interim management procedures for South Pacific albacore at WCPFC21.
4. Conservation International supports the adoption of the interim Target Reference Points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tuna.
5. Conservation International supports the adoption of the skipjack monitoring strategy.

## Electronic Monitoring & Electronic Reporting

At WCPFC20, the Commission tasked the ER&EM WG to develop a set of interim EM standards for adoption at WCPFC21 in 2024. Since then, the ER and EM working group has worked to advance the progress on interim EM standards. WCPFC20-2023-ERandEM IWG-02 had identified that harmonization of some key Standards, Specifications and Procedures (SSPs) across RFMOs and sub-regional arrangements will support a more effective WCPFC EM programme. TCC20 had also noted the importance of agreeing to the interim EM standards in meeting the CCMs obligations set out in CMM 2023-01.

### Recommendation

6. Conservation International supports adoption of the interim Electronic Monitoring (EM) standards at WCPFC21.
7. Conservation International also supports the adoption of the proposed work plan for the ER&EM-IWG at WCPFC21.

## Transshipment Regulation

Globally, at sea transshipment enables Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities as well as labour and human right abuses, particularly in high seas. At sea-transhipments also support the channels in maintaining the seafood market access, allowing illegally caught fish to be mixed with legally caught fish. Therefore, monitoring and reporting of at sea transshipment activities in WCPFC convention areas needs to be strengthened.

At WCPFC15, the Commission agreed to undertake review of the existing transshipment measure through an intersessional working group. To date, slow progress has been made on amending and agreeing to amended recommendations for CMM 2009-06.

### Recommendation

8. Conservation International supports adoption of revised Conservation and Management Measure on the regulation of transshipment (CMM 2009-06) in alignment with the best practice standards.

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### For more information

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