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Draft Outline for a South Pacific Albacore CMM that Implements the Management Procedure

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29 October 2024

Submitted by the South Pacific Group¹

¹ Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu

29 October 2024

Rhea Moss-Christian
Executive Director
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
PO Box 2356, Kolonia
Federated States of Micronesia

Dear Executive Director Rhea Moss-Christian,

Draft outline for a south Pacific albacore CMM that implements the Management Procedure¹

This proposal is made on behalf of the 6 members of the South Pacific Group (SPG)². The WCPFC South Pacific Albacore roadmap identifies the need for two conservation and management measure (CMM)s: One CMM defines the management procedure (MP; scheduled for 2024) and a second CMM defines the management arrangements to implement that MP (scheduled for 2025). A proposal for the management procedure has been provided for the consideration of WCPFC21 and the SPG would also like to offer some initial thoughts on what might be contained in the management arrangement for implementing that MP. This would be a new measure that replaces CMM 2015-02 that we consider to be ineffective and inappropriate as an implementing measure.

We assume that the MP will produce a total annual catch (TAC) for SPA for the forthcoming three-year period. The MP CMM will contain no details of how the TAC will be achieved (allocation, limits etc) but will acknowledge that the management arrangements may include catch, effort and other mechanisms of control.

The SPG offer up the following for consideration in the development of a new implementing CMM:

Guiding Principles

1. Applies in EEZs and high seas throughout the range of the stock in the WCPF-CA.
2. Reflects current best understanding of SPA science and its assessed status.
3. Prevents further decreases in vulnerable biomass in order to sustain/improve catch rates and support improving economic conditions for SIDS domestic fleets and national fisheries.
4. Accommodates subregional zone-based management approaches and limits and ensures compatible management and limits on the high seas.
5. Recognises the sovereign rights of coastal States to explore, exploit, conserve and manage highly migratory species within areas under their national jurisdiction.
6. Recognises the special requirements of, and avoids transferring a disproportionate burden of conservation upon, SIDS and Participating Territories.

Components of the implementing arrangement CMM

7. Applies to the WCPF-CA south of the equator and to both longline and troll fisheries.

¹ Prepared without prejudice to the positions of SPG Member CCMs individually or collectively

² Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu

8. Applies to catches within the overlap area until such time as IATTC establish compatible CMMs with those adopted by WCPFC.
9. The implementing arrangement CMM should be designed to achieve the required catch levels from the MP. This may be achieved through proportional allocations within the coastal state EEZs and an allocation for the high seas. Allocations for Cooperating Non-Members (CNMs) will be managed through participatory rights. Allocation in the high seas will be determined by another process within the WCPFC, but will contain specific monitoring and reporting requirements to ensure it stays within its portion of the TAC.
10. Within the coastal state EEZs, the required catch levels may be achieved using a variety of management approaches including catch control and/or PNA LL VDS controls as appropriate to the CCM or subregional body.
11. Noting this range of management approaches and the presence of interannual variability in SPA availability of CCM EEZs, the measure may contain some flexibility for achieving the required catch levels. This may include:
 - a. Reconciling catches over a three-year period, with an agreed maximum over catch rule in the first two years of the TAC period.
 - i. For example, an annual TAC of 100 t could be achieved as 100, 100, 100t or as 130, 120, 50 t across the three-year period all of which reconciles to 300 tonnes and complies with the maximum over catch rule.
 - b. The capacity for states and/or subregional bodies to jointly reconcile their catches against similarly joint/combined catch limits, from time-to-time and when necessary, with such arrangements notified to the Commission.
12. Provisions for how SPA in the EPO is managed and how this CMM will respond to changes in EPO management will be included.

Management measures

13. Provisions will be made in this CMM pertaining to catch retention. The suggestion is to retain catch onboard and then land or transship at port all south Pacific albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tuna. Discards to be allowed only if the hold on the last set is full with exemption applying for depredation (unfit for human consumption). Discarding must be undertaken with either observer or EM verification.
14. Sovereign rights of coastal States to determine how some of these management measures will be applied in their waters, or to apply additional or more stringent measures.

Monitoring requirements

All CCMs provided an SPA allocation implements the following:

15. Electronic reporting of operational catch and effort data (logsheets) to the Commission including discards reporting requirements.
16. 100% unloadings data to be (electronically) collected and reported to the Commission.
17. Minimum 5% observer coverage of fishing vessels in areas where allocation applies. Electronic Monitoring may be applied if/when appropriate.
18. Any vessels transshipping albacore must have 100% observer coverage on carrier vessels. This may include EM if required information for transshipment notification/declaration can be verified (e.g. volume of fish transferred and species can be effectively monitored).

Reporting

19. CCMs will report annually to the WCPFC Secretariat at SC, TCC, and the annual Commission meeting.

We welcome any interested CCM to get communicate with us at WCPFC21 or intersessionally to further progress this work, with the goal being to adopt an implementing CMM for the SPA MP at WCPFC22. Please direct any inquiries to myself (roseti.imo@maf.gov.ws) and the SPG Technical Adviser, Lars Olsen (olsenpacific@gmail.com).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Imo'.

Roseti Imo, Chair (Samoa)
South Pacific Group