



# ROP-IWG

21st REGULAR SESSION of the SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (SC21)

13<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025

Nuku'alofa, Tonga

*Agenda item 3.3.1.* Update on ROP-IWG Taskings and Proposals  
for Changes to ROP Minimum Standard Data fields

by ROP-IWG Chair

SC21-ST-WP10

SC21-ST-WP10\_suppl01



# Introduction

## □ Purpose

- Provide an update on WCPFC taskings to the ROP-IWG and proposes updates to ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDF) to:
  - Add or revise fields to better monitor newer or updated CMMs, clarify data reporting for scientific versus compliance purposes, and improve how ROP data feeds into the WCPFC Case File System (CCFS);
  - Remove fields that are no longer needed; and
  - Consider including new data fields for monitoring and reporting non-fish transfers (e.g. provisions, fuel, bait, personnel) as part of transshipment reporting.

# Role of the WCPFC's Regional Observer Programme (ROP)



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The ROP was established pursuant to Article 28 of the Convention

- *“to collect verified catch data, other scientific data and additional information related to the fishery from the Convention Area and to monitor the implementation of the conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission.”*



- The ROP has at its core, the collection of independent, verified catch and scientific data at-sea which can also be used for compliance purposes in monitoring CCMs' implementation of CMMs.

# Overview of ROP-IWG work to date

- ❑ The initial proposal to remove redundant MSDF were presented at SC20 (SC20-ST-WP-04) and TCC20 (WCPFC-TCC20-2024-19).
- ❑ WCPFC appointed a new ROP-IWG chair and endorse the approach set out in WCPFC21-2024-16 to advance this and other ROP-IWG tasks in 2025 (WCPFC21 Summary Report, para 581)
- ❑ In addition, Non-fish transfers to the MSDF for monitoring transshipment was tasked by the Commission to ROP-IWG (WCPFC21 Summary Report, para 513), a CCM proposal submitted to TS-IWG.

# Progressive Update

- ❑ ROP-IWG held 2 online intersessional meetings respectively,
  - ROP-IWG05 – 11 April
  - ROP-IWG06 – 20 June
- ❑ During these meetings feedbacks, comments received used to revise the proposed MSDF updates, now submitted to SC21 and TCC21 for further inputs
- ❑ Anticipated feedbacks from FFA/SPC Data Collection Committee (DCC) which met on the 7-8 July, will be considered as well.

# Approach Going Forward

- ❑ Next Meeting of ROP-IWG: ½ day Tuesday 23 September hybrid (prior to TCC21)
- ❑ Final recommendations to provide to WCPFC22 on these matters after considerations by SC21 and TCC21 inclusive of any further review required intersessionally
- ❑ The list of all ROP MSDF including those proposed for changed is in WCPFC-SC21-2025/ST-WP10\_suppl01, presented in,
  - Attachment 1 – new and amended ROP MSDF (supl i)
  - Attachment 2 – removals to ROP MSDF (supl ii)
  - Attachment 3 – present additional proposal relating to potential additional transshipment MSDF. Recommendations captured in each of these sessions

# Attachment 1:

- A list of the obligations in CMMs where observers could collect data that can be used to monitor implementation of CMMs, including potential infringements
- Notes on what scientific monitoring needs and potential compliance issues for data collection by observers might be

- List of topics presented :

- Observer Obstruction
- Driftnet Prohibition
- Fishing on data buoys prohibition
- Marine Pollution
- FAD Closure – Tropical Purse Seine
- Seabirds
- Sea Turtles
- Mobulid Rays and Sharks
- Whale Sharks and Cetaceans

Obligation	Description of scientific monitoring needs for data collection by observers	Description of potential compliance issues for data collection by observers	Notes on current MSDFs and/or proposed edits	ALTERNATIVE OR SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENT
SEA TURTLES				
<a href="#">CMM 2018-04 04</a> CCMs to ensure fishermen use proper mitigation and handling techniques and foster the recovery of any turtles that are incidentally captured - fishers on its flagged vessels to bring aboard, if practicable, any captured hard-shell sea turtle that is	Were there interactions with sea turtles and if so what sea turtles, nature of interaction and fate of sea turtle	Were mitigation measures used What mitigation measures were used Did mitigation measures meet the gear specification requirements	<b>Interactions</b> <b>Current MSDF</b> - species code (row 127) and Fate Code (row 127) indicating retained, condition when caught (row 105), fate (row 106), condition when released (row 107), type of interaction (row 154), data and time of interaction (row 155), latitude and <u>longitude</u> of interaction (row 156), species code of marine reptile, marine mammal, or seabird (row 158), vessels activity during	<b>Secretariat comment:</b> C <i>be a new <u>yes</u> no question</i> <i>Observer Trip Monitoring</i> <i>Summary as to whether</i> <i>vessel had any interaction</i> <i>with sea turtles that are</i> <i>documented. The MSD</i> <i>data fields should be</i> <i>reviewed to check that t</i> <i>will sufficiently documen</i> <i>observations related to</i> <i>specific mitigation meas</i> <i>use, and safe handling</i> <i>practices</i>



# Recommendations

❑ **Attachment 1;** new and amended ROP MSDF to support monitoring of CMM implementation

❑ SC21 is invited to:

- Review the Table in Attachment 1 to identify priority obligations and issues where data collection by ROP observers would most effectively support monitoring of CMM implementation;
- Recommend whether any listed items should be removed or added, the level of detail needed (e.g., trip-level vs. set-level), and whether refinements to the Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDFs) or Observer Trip Monitoring Summary are necessary; and
- Provide written feedback to the ROP-IWG Chair during SC21 and in the intersessional period prior to TCC21
- Recommend any proposed amendments to MSDF in the Table in Attachment 1, for further discussion at TCC21.







# Recommendations

## ☐ **Attachment 2: removals to ROP MSDF**

☐ These fields were identified through prior ROP-IWG discussions and intersessional feedback as having limited compliance or scientific utility, particularly considering increased use of electronic reporting.

## ☐ **SC21 is invited to:**

- Advise if any data fields that the ROP-IWG has recommended for removal, are necessary to maintain as ROP MSDFs for scientific analyses and research?
- Subject to any SC21 discussions, note and consider supporting ROP-IWGs preliminary agreement to recommend that the list of data fields in Attachment 2 of SC21-ST-WP10 be removed from the ROP MSDF.

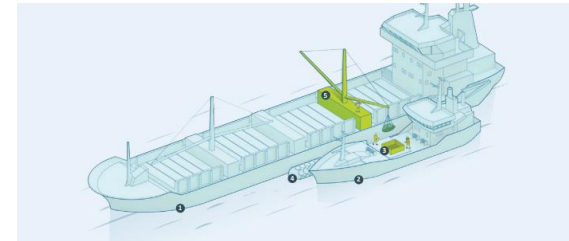


# Recommendations



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- ❑ **Attachment 3;** observer monitoring of transshipment activities and non-fish transfers
- ❑ SC21 is invited to:
  - Provide feedback as the basis for further consideration of proposals for changes to [observer minimum data fields for monitoring transshipment](#) and the formulation of other recommendations related to “non-fish transfers” or other supplies” for discussion at TCC21.



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# Potential Linkages of ROP-IWG work to other SC21 Agenda items



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## Data and Statistics Theme

- [3.1.6 Minimum data reporting requirements](#)

SC21 will review any proposals to improve data reporting requirements. SC20 and WCPFC21 requested SC21 to consider the following issues.

- Sea Turtle Reporting Requirements for fishing operations
- Development of a FAD Logbook
- Reporting requirements for Cetacean Interactions

- [3.4 Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring](#)

SC21 will provide its review outcomes to the Commission to support the implementation and progress of the ER&EM IWG workplan.

- Proposal for joint work through the ROP and ER&EM IWGs (WP11)

## Ecosystem and Bycatch Theme

- [6.4 Review of CMM for Seabirds \(CMM 2018-03\)](#)

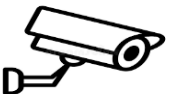
As requested by the Commission (para 552, WCPFC21 Summary Report), SC21 will provide advice to the Commission on the supporting material provided by CCMs and the SSP.

- [6.5.1 Review of CMM for sharks \(CMM 2024-05\)](#)

Paragraphs 29–30 of the CMM task the Scientific Committee (SC) with periodically assessing the stock status of key shark species and evaluating the impact of fishing gear on non-retained sharks, including oceanic whitetip and silky sharks, while providing advice on mitigation measures—preferably in collaboration with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

- [6.6 Cetaceans](#)

WCPFC21 adopted CMM 2024-07 (CMM for the protection of cetaceans from purse seine and longline fishing operations), which shall enter into force on July 1, 2025.





# Final notes

- The ROP-IWG Chair would welcome the opportunity to meet with the authors of relevant SC21 papers and SC21 participants to further discuss any recommendations or proposed tasks that may relate to:
  - potential amendments to the ROP minimum standard data fields (MSDFs), as outlined in Attachment 1, or
  - other elements of the ROP-IWG workplan.
- SC21 is kindly requested to acknowledge the importance and timeliness of the ROP-IWG workplan, and to encourage consideration of possible changes to the ROP MSDFs during plenary or small working group discussions on the relevant papers.





# Tank u tumas !!



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