

Timing Considerations for Stock Assessments WCPFC22-2025-18

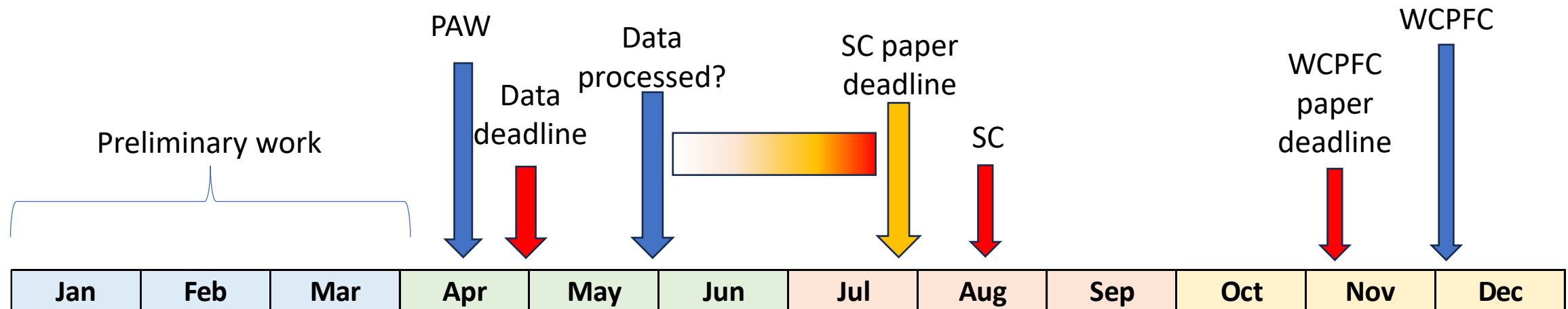
COMMISSION
Twenty Second Regular Session
Manila, Philippines

SPC-OFP
1 – 5 December 2025

- Challenge in the delivery and review of analyses and advice to SC due to:
 - Annual SC-agreed stock assessment schedule
 - 30th April scientific data provision deadline / verified data availability by end May
 - SC meeting dates and hence SC paper deadline, generally ~ 27 July
 - Increased level of analyses required for acceptable assessments
 - Expanding list of requests for additional regular reporting following data submission deadline

Broader WCPFC time constraints

- Key tension is the data delivery deadline (April 30) and delivery of assessment papers (SC minus 18 days, ~ late July)



- That 2 month window is vulnerable to unforeseen circumstances
 - SSP notes funding of additional assessment scientist by Commission
 - Remains a need for additional 'buffer' time to mitigate risks

- Discussions this year led to SC21 observations:
 - encouraged CCMs to make best efforts to submit their scientific data to the SSP earlier than the annual deadline of 30 April.
 - recommended the Commission consider the utility as well as feasibility of including data from the previous year in stock assessments, noting that the current April 30 data submission deadline and August scheduling of the SC meeting pose significant challenges when including data from the previous year.
 - recommended if the Commission considers it important to retain data from the previous year in the stock assessments, it should prioritize consideration of the following constraints and the implications of that decision:
 - 1) challenges for CCMs in providing annual scientific data submissions earlier than the current 30 April deadline;
 - 2) the current scheduling of SC meetings to be held annually in August

Secretariat/SSP approach



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

- Look at the broader WCPFC time constraints
 - See also WCPFC20-2023-28
- Look at the issue of including the most recent year of data in stock assessments

Potential mitigations



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

- Move deadline for scientific data delivery earlier
 - CCMs note challenging
 - Thanks to those DW CCMs that provide updated historical longline data in Dec
- Adopt mechanisms for more efficient data provision
 - Standardisation of data submission template proposal (WCPFC22-2025-38)
- Move date of SC meeting later/modify wider meeting schedule
 - Shift SC timing/swap SC & TCC/wider review
 - Challenges of TCC CMS process, global RFMO meeting schedule
- Reduce frequency of assessments
 - Timeliness of advice, interaction with HS process
- Adjust assessment complexity
 - Challenges of ensuring 'best scientific information'

Most recent year of data in assessments



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

- Stock assessment
 - Refers to SKJ only. Key data source (purse seine, 83%) most readily available; longline data not a key component; pole & line data submission a challenge (JP), as is timing of WPEA annual data meetings
 - Removing last year would allow SKJ analyses on 'full' data set to begin earlier (noting P&L)
 - Has implications for a stock where the fished lifespan is ~4yrs – would mean a 3 – year lag in information/management action
- Harvest strategies
 - Adopted SKJ MP is based upon using the most recent year of data
 - Exclusion could in effect constitute an exceptional circumstance, requiring review
- Additional scientific work
 - Most recent year of data would still be required for annual analytical products

Recommendations

- consider utility and feasibility of including data from the previous year in the skipjack stock assessment, noting the information provided here
- consider existing constraints, with a focus on:
 - CCM's challenges in providing annual scientific data submissions before 30 April;
 - current scheduling of SC meetings to be held annually in August;

Recommendations

- identify potential solutions for implementation/trial aimed at improving data timeliness and completeness, e.g.:
 - enhancing ER coverage across key fisheries, including provision of partial trip data where applicable, to accelerate the timeliness of verified operational data;
 - support the proposal for standardization of data submission templates;
 - consider the data delivery deadline, particularly whether national situations permit movement of the submission deadline earlier than 30 April; and
 - task Secretariat, Commission and Subsidiary Body Chairs, and SSP to evaluate options for adjusting meeting timetables for consideration by WCPFC23 and its subsidiary bodies in 2026