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Position Statement to WCPFC22

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Submitted by Conservation International

Conservation International

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Conservation International appreciates the opportunity to participate in the 22nd Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) as an observer.

We are pleased to submit this position statement to WCPFC22, highlighting key priority areas that we believe warrant urgent attention and action during this session.

Harvest Strategies

In 2022, the Commission adopted a Management Procedure for skipjack tuna. In 2023, it translated this achievement into concrete catch-and-effort controls through the new tropical tuna measure (CMM 2023-01) and adopted a Management Procedure for North Pacific albacore. At WCPFC21, the Commission agreed that members will cooperate to develop a management procedure and implementing measure for south Pacific albacore in 2025, with a view to adopt both a management procedure and its implementing measure at WCPFC22, that will replace CMM 2015-02.

To maintain this momentum and uphold the Commission's commitment to sustainable fisheries management, it is imperative that WCPFC prioritize the timely adoption of a Management Procedure for South Pacific albacore at WCPFC22.

At WCPFC21, the Commission also agreed to advance the development of a Management Procedure for bigeye tuna (BET) using the established candidate target reference point (TRP). These candidate TRPs should be incorporated into the proposed BET Management Procedures, with their performance assessed through Management Strategy Evaluation.

Continued progress toward fully developed harvest strategies for all major tuna stocks will be critical to securing the long-term ecological, economic, and social resilience of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean's fisheries. This progress demonstrates the Commission's capacity for science-based and collaborative decision-making.

Recommendation

1. Conservation International supports adoption of a management procedure for **South Pacific albacore** tuna at WCPFC22.
2. Conservation International supports the adoption of the Target Reference Points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tuna and continue to develop management procedures for bigeye and yellowfin.

Electronic Reporting & Electronic Monitoring

At WCPFC21, the Commission adopted the interim Electronic Monitoring Minimum Standards, covering Technical Data and Reporting Requirements and the electronic reporting (ER) and electronic monitoring (EM) working group workplan. WCPFC21 had tasked the ER and EM IWG to develop advice on potential changes to the interim EM standards to improve harmonization across RFMOs, and recommended forwarding SC21-ST-WP-12, "Report of the Electronic Monitoring Minimum Standards Harmonization Workshop," to the ER and EM IWG for its consideration.

Recommendation

3. Develop potential changes to the interim EM standards to improve harmonization across RFMOs.
4. Conservation International supports increasing observer coverage whether human or electronic, in accordance with the adopted minimum Electronic Monitoring (EM) standard on large-scale longline vessels from 5% requirement and adopt a timeline for implementation of 100% coverage.

Transshipment Regulation (CMM 2009-06) & Port State Measures (CMM 2017-02)

At-sea transshipment remains a major global challenge, as it creates opportunities for Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and facilitates labour and human rights abuses, especially on the high seas where oversight is limited. By allowing catch to be transferred between vessels far from port, at-sea transshipment also enables illegally caught fish to be mixed with legally caught product, undermining the integrity of seafood supply chains and market access systems.

Strengthening real-time monitoring and reporting of transshipment activities within the WCPFC Convention Area is therefore critical, including the need for 100% observer coverage to ensure transparency and accountability.

While the Commission agreed at WCPFC15 to review the current transshipment measure through an intersessional working group, progress on developing and adopting amendments to CMM 2009-06 has been slow, leaving significant gaps in oversight and compliance.

Recommendation

5. 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.
6. Conservation International supports revisions to Conservation and Management Measure on the Port States Measures (CMM 2017-02) in alignment with the best practice standards.

For more information

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