

	FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH MEETING
	<i>Virtual</i> 11 - 14 May 2021

Agenda Item:	8
Paper No:	FFC118-WP.06
Title:	Priorities for WCPFC

Summary:

The list of issues discussed at WCPFC and its preliminary meetings is extensive, and every year FFA members need to choose their priorities for driving forward. Despite the now-familiar impacts and restrictions of the COVID19 pandemic there remains considerable and significant work to progress this year, both internally and in relation to activities associated with the Commission's subsidiary bodies and annual meeting.

Recommendation:

FFC is invited to:

- i. **Consider** the key WCPFC priorities identified for attention by FFA Members during 2021.

Introduction

A significant influence on our planning this year has been the commitment by the Commission to an intersessional process to develop a new tropical tuna measure that includes two workshops, the first already having been convened virtually from the 26 to 30 April 2021. This contrasts with the usual annual schedule with the first Commission meeting usually that of the Scientific Committee in the month of August.

This means that, much like last year, we need to prioritise what we are hoping to progress in the Commission this year. This will include determining what realistically can be achieved on the virtual platform this year. FFA's 2021 priorities, once endorsed by FFC118, will be subject to further work and forwarded to FFC Ministers at FFCMIN18 with an approach proposed for advancing or achieving each.

In terms of advancing regional and subregional priorities set by Members, at WCPFC17 in December 2020 progress was made in several key areas, most notably:

- a. the rollover of the Tropical Tuna Measure;
- b. reinvigorating the process for managing the South Pacific albacore fishery;
- c. agreeing to an intersessional process co-led by Indonesia and NZ to initiate discussion on crewing standards.

There was also agreement to discuss obligations in relation to carriage of observers, before the expiry of the temporary suspension of these obligations in mid-February, with the primary objective the returning of observers safely to vessels.

Priorities for WCPFC18

Based on discussions at various meetings of Member countries in 2020, culminating at FFC116 in Honiara, and considering the outcomes of WCPFC17, the following priorities have emerged for taking forward in WCPFC this year:

1. Continue the work, through a dedicated series of online FFA workshops, to develop FFA positions on key elements of the new Tropical Tuna Measure, such as the management objectives and high seas limits for the tropical tuna stocks, to be used as the basis for an FFA proposed measure, no later than October 2021;
2. Continue laying the groundwork to ensure that **zone-based subregional longline management** arrangements are recognised in the WCPFC albacore and tropical tuna measures noting that this will require substantial progress by FFA members during the ongoing series of online workshops at national and sub-regional level in the setting of zone based limits for longline fisheries within their EEZs;
3. Reform of the **South Pacific Albacore** CMM, incorporating the TRP and FFA's preferred trajectory to recover the stock to the TRP, with FFA members supporting the work of SPA Roadmap IWG through online workshops.
4. Progressing the **Harvest Strategy Workplan** by:
 - o Maintaining the FFA position for agreement of interim TRPs for bigeye and yellowfin stocks and retention of our 2018 position for modest increase to the spawning biomass ratio for bigeye, and consider yellowfin after further work by SPC.

- o Consideration of new skipjack TRP which is consistent with the objectives of the interim skipjack TRP which was to maintain the stock relative to the condition of the fishery in 2012.
 - o Continuing the Harvest Strategy and MSE capacity building efforts, in particular CCM awareness workshops and maintaining the collaboration between SPC and FFA in delivering these.
5. Drive the review of the **Transshipment Measure**, with a view to improving transparency of longline fishing activity on the high seas. The Scope of Work for the analysis of transshipment information has been adopted in March 2021. The report from this work is envisaged to be available for TCC18 in 2022;
 6. The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the need for members to continue to drive improvements to **electronic reporting** and adoption of **electronic monitoring** through development and implementation of agreed standards, without necessarily waiting for decisions to be taken at the WCPFC level. The EREM WG considered the draft CMM for EM and minimum standards in October 2020 and this work is currently ongoing. A Request for Proposals (RFP) to develop EM standards as required by the Regional Longline Fisheries Electronic Monitoring Policy adopted in June 2020 is currently out. The aim is to develop these standards and once Members are comfortable with them, Members can take them forward to the Commission to help drive this work. In addition, the cost benefit analysis tasked by FFC114 is currently underway.
 7. Continue to push for **CMS future works** to be progressed. The results of the work related to the development of audit points and risk-based assessment framework is discussed in WP.23.
 8. Continue to work towards enabling **fisheries observers** to be returned to work at sea on fishing vessels as soon as it is practicable and safe for them to do so. This includes ongoing work on the development and review of the **FFA Covid-19 Protocols**, including to take account of vaccination roll-out, and efforts to have the Protocols recognised and implemented by other CCMs. This matter is discussed further under Agenda Item 5 and WP.XX.
 9. Progressing the work led by Australia on **south west Pacific swordfish**, including exploring options about how a new CMM would implement principles related to zone-based management, sovereign rights and the special requirements of SIDS and updating and progressing the bycatch management options paper;

APPENDIX 1

Background

Recap on 2020 priorities

Priorities endorsed by Ministers from FFCMIN16 (June 2019):

- Ensuring that WCPFC measures recognise zone-based management arrangements established by FFA members for fishing within EEZs;
- Progressing agreement of high seas limits at WCPFC that recognise the interests of FFA members in high seas fisheries;
- Maintaining FFA positions on tropical tuna Target Reference Points;
- Reviewing of the Transshipment Measure to increase transparency of longline fisheries operations on the high seas and tackling IUU fishing;
- Progressing work on the revised Compliance Monitoring Scheme including identification of audit points;
- Advancing towards agreement of WCPFC standards for Electronic Monitoring;
- Operationalising the SIDS Strategic Investment Plan;
- Advancing guidelines for the voluntary provision of economic data to the Commission.

Final priorities emerging from MOC (Nov 2020) and presented to WCPFC17 as a single FFA Delegation Paper:

- CMM 2018-01 (CMM For Bigeye, Yellowfin And Skipjack Tuna In The Western And Central Pacific Ocean
- Review of the Skipjack Target Reference Point
- South West Pacific Swordfish
- South Pacific Albacore Roadmap and Harvest Strategy
- Compliance Monitoring Scheme
- Electronic Monitoring and Electronic Reporting
- Safety of crew and observers
- IUU Listing of Oryong No. 721
- Intersessional decisions in response to COVID-19

Outcomes of WCPFC17

The agenda for WCPFC17 was significantly reduced due to constraints of virtual meetings and was primarily about agreeing processes for 2021 in order to make progress on some issues that were necessarily pushed out to 2021.

FFA Priority for WCPFC17	Outcome at WCPFC17	FFA Secretariat comment
CMM 2018-01 Tropical Tuna Measure		
Rollover of the CMM 2018-01, noting the constraints of negotiating via online platforms	AGREED Adopted CMM 2020-01 – simple rollover	Early work will be required in 2021 both internally between FFA Members, as well as with bilateral partners, ahead of the first WCPFC workshop in April.
Process for review of CMM 2018-01 in 2021	AGREED to WCPFC workshops in the lead-up to WCPFC18	

	Timing – first workshop in April and second workshop in June/July Scope – first workshop to focus on objectives and scope which will assist in determining the work required in the subsequent substantive workshops, including analyses required from SSP Chairing of workshops and post-workshop – to be chaired by the WCPFC Chair who will develop a draft CMM for the consideration of all CCMs	
SKJ TRP	WCPFC legal council advised that in CMM 2015-06 there is no indication that the measure should expire if agreement was not reached in 2019 on the interim TRP, therefore the interim TRP is still in effect. The Commission expressed the view that the issues surrounding the interim TRP needed to be resolved due to linkages with CMM2018-01 paragraph 13. The Commission was unable to reach agreement on these issues. The Commission requested the Scientific Service Provider to revise WCPFC 17-2020-11 adding candidate revised interim skipjack TRPs of 36%, 38% and 40%, of SB/SBF=0	Further discussions in bilateral meetings on this issue would be advantageous after SPC has undertaken the additional analysis requested by the Commission.
BE and YF TRPs	The Commission noted the SPC presentation and the commitment to work on developing candidate TRPs for future work.	
South Pacific albacore fisheries		
Support and leading work of Roadmap IWG and workplan including agreeing a pathway to achieving the TRP	The Commission noted the report of progress from the SPA Roadmap IWG.	Work on SP albacore within WCPFC context will be in parallel with significant internal work by FFA members to reach agreement on zone based limits for SP albacore and management arrangements to ensure that Members are able to manage the
Agreeing on limits to apply on the high seas and within EEZs	Progress at WCPFC18 may be limited to agreeing on the trajectory for achieving the TRP and the process	

	and timeframes for follow-up agreements on limits and allocations.	fishery within agreed collective limits for this stock.
Development of a new CMM	The Commission noted that the review of the CMM 2015-02 is part of the work of the SPA IWG.	
Compliance Monitoring Scheme		
Final CMR	The 2020 final CMR covering 2019 activities was adopted. No consensus on the issue of high seas purse effort limit (CMM 2018-01 26) for the United States. The final CMR was adopted with compromised language regarding this issue and WCPFC17 noted the majority(PNC) / minority(Compliant) view. TCC Chair to lead work intersessionally prior to TCC17, with a view to providing guidance on how TCC17 would consider the aggregate tables alongside the draft CMR	We can expect that the US will use the same argument at TCC17 and in the negotiation of the new CMM 2021-01. FFA members continue rejecting the US's interpretation and application of the high seas purse seine effort limit. The dedicated workshop on CMS future work anticipated for the first half of next year will provide an opportunity for FFA members to consider this issue too.
Obligations to be assessed	List of obligations to be assessed under the CMS in 2021 was adopted containing 70 obligations Annual Report Part 2 due date for 2021 is now 15 June 2021 (instead of 1 July)	The list for 2021 is a slight increase from 2020 but largely included what FFA members tabled in DP01
Future tasks	Leads for audit point (Rhea Moss-Christian) and risk based assessment framework (RFAB) (Heather Ward) confirmed.	As Members indicated at the pre-TCC meeting, FFA dedicated work is needed to progress the audit points and RBAF in 2021. Specific to the RBAF, TOR for a consultant to assist were discussed at MOC and the pre-WCPFC17 and has been circulated twice to Members for comments. As of 17 December, no comments were received and so these ToR will be used for the recruitment of a consultant to assist with this work and a dedicated workshop in the first half of 2021. The audit point work will pick up where it left off in 2019, using a similar arrangement used then.
Electronic Monitoring and Electronic Reporting		
Brief points on FFA position	ERandEMWG report noted and the work of the WG to continue in 2021	Members to continue to actively participate in the working group in 2021 Secretariat to continue to support Members, and work is expected to

		commence next year on developing standards which is anticipated to go to consultants. This work will help inform the work at the Commission to develop the CMM on EM and the draft minimum standards.
Safety of crew and observers		
Building on the adoption of the WCPFC Resolution for crewing standards pushed by FFA Members, support Indonesia's Proposed CMM on Labour Standards for crew on fishing vessels. FFA Members' proposal to establish an IWG to progress this work.	AGREED to an inter-sessional process to be co-led by Indonesia and a FFA Member (New Zealand), which could include sharing of information on crewing standards	This was an important outcome for FFA Members, especially noting the differing view from a few CCMs on the mandate of the Commission. Secretariat to provide support to FFA Members participating in the inter-sessional process. As a first step, prepare a brief affirming the role of the Commission with respect to labour standards and setting out the current status of work on labour standards in the WCPO. Brief to be completed by the end of January.
Intersessional decisions in response to COVID-19 relating to observers		
	A draft COVID-related Intersessional decision will be circulated at the end January/early February 2021 for decision by the Commission under the 7-day expedited decision making process for COVID19 Decisions.	Secretariat will assist members' response to the anticipated draft decision in January/early February 2021 noting members' view is to ensure observers can safely return to fishing vessels after 15 February 2021. To do this: - continue to promote the FFA COVID-19 Operating Protocols as best practice voluntary guidelines; - raise member awareness of the Protocols through dedicated regional and national workshop and incorporate the Protocols in all member training workshops; - work with SPC to deliver online training of observers and others supporting this role such as coordinators, placement officers, debriefers; - consider issuing members with appropriate COVID-19 toolkits to support placement; and - will develop a standardised regional medical checklist for national programme. Implementation of the

		recommendations in the Observer livelihood and safety study will also contribute towards redeploying observers
IUU listing		
Retain the three fishing vessels (NEPTUNE, FU LIEN No.1 and YU FONG 168) on the WCPFC IUU Vessel List for 2021.	WCPFC17 agreed to maintain the three vessels currently on the WCPFC IUU Vessel List, and adopted the 2021 WCPFC IUU Vessel List.	Maintain listing of the three fishing vessels (NEPTUNE, FU LIEN No.1 and YU FONG 168) on the WCPFC IUU Vessel List. Secretariat to continue to assist Members with any potential IUU listings on the Draft WCPFC IUU Vessel List for consideration at TCC17.
Affirm the tasks for the Executive Director set out in paragraph 60 of the TCC16 Report.	WCPFC17 tasked the Executive Director to: i. seek the former flag States' cooperation to provide any information on these vessels, including their respective masters' names and nationalities; ii. write to all CCMs requesting them to provide information to the Commission if the vessels are located, or if there are any known changes to name, flag or registered owner, including any action that port States have taken such as denial of port entry 14 and services to those vessels or any information from cannery States of any landings made by these vessels; iii. write a letter to other RFMOs conveying this same message for cooperation to locate these vessels; and iv. that any information received by the Executive Director is reported promptly to CCMs.	Members to follow up with the Executive Director at TCC17 (and WCPFC18) on any information received pursuant to the tasks.
	WCPFC17 encouraged the EU and other interested CCMs to engage intersessionally on the issue of cross-listing of other RFMOs IUU vessel lists.	At WCPFC17, Members sought an explanation from the EU (in response to their Discussion Paper) on, among other things, the number of vessels envisaged, the administrative and legal implications of cross-listing, and the need for a comprehensive CMM 2013-06 assessment. Members to follow up with the EU on the concerns raised at TCC17 when the matter is tabled.