

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION

*(Covers the period March 2019-March 2020)*

*Secretariat*

Paragraph 1 of Article 29 of the **Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean** provides that “*The Commission shall publish an annual report, which shall include details of decisions taken by the Commission to achieve the objective of this Convention. The report shall also provide information on actions taken by the Commission in response to any recommendations from the General Assembly of the United Nations or the FAO.*”

### 1. Membership

In March 2020, the SPRFMO Commission had fifteen Members: Australia, Republic of Chile, People's Republic of China, Cook Islands, Republic of Cuba, Republic of Ecuador, European Union, Kingdom of Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Republic of Peru, Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, United States of America, and the Republic of Vanuatu.

In addition, four countries held the status of Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CNCPs): Republic of Colombia, Curaçao, Republic of Liberia and the Republic of Panama. Colombia did not apply for CNCP status renewal in 2020/21.

### 2. Outcomes from the 2020 Commission Meeting

The 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Commission (COMM8) of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation took place from 14 to 18 February 2020, in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Nearly 100 participants (from the 15 SPRFMO Members, 1 CNCP, 2 IGOs, and 3 NGOs) reviewed and made recommendations concerning the preceding meetings of the subsidiary bodies, including the 7<sup>th</sup> Scientific Committee (SC7, held in October 2019), the 7<sup>th</sup> Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC7, held in February 2020) and the concurrent 7<sup>th</sup> Finance and Administration Committee (FAC7), as well as 25 proposals put forward, and considered and developed plans for addressing the recommendations contained in the 1<sup>st</sup> SPRFMO Performance Review Report.

#### 2.1. Subsidiary Bodies

The report<sup>1</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> Scientific Committee was presented, and the SC Chairperson reviewed progress made on the 2019 Workplan on assessments and requirements for future data collection for jack mackerel, deepwater and squid fisheries, ecosystem approaches on marine management and exploratory fishing, as well as progress on the Observer Programme, and summarised the various SC recommendations for the Commission.

Many Members commended the SC for the report, and the Commission endorsed the SC recommendations and adopted the SC Multiannual Workplan.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sprfmo.int/assets/2019-SC7/Reports/SPRFMO-SC7-Report-2019-V2.pdf>



The report<sup>2</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> Compliance and Technical Committee was presented by the CTC Chairperson, noting an overall improvement among Members in compliance issues, as well as a decrease in priority non-compliance; the provisional compliance report was also presented. The CTC Chairperson provided a summary of the CTC discussions and recommendations regarding the provisional IUU Vessel list. The CTC also recommended that applications for CNCP status submitted by Curaçao, Panama and Liberia be accepted and expressed its regret that Colombia had decided not to renew their CNCP status. The Commission adopted the CTC recommendation to remove the vessels VLADIVOSTOK 2000 and NAKHODKA from the IUU Vessel List. However, the Commission did not reach consensus on delisting the BELLATOR. The Commission agreed to take up all the recommendations provided by the CTC including the selection of MRAG as the SPRFMO Observer Programme Accreditation Provider.

The Chairperson of the 7<sup>th</sup> Finance and Administration Committee presented the FAC7 report<sup>3</sup> including recommendations to accept the Annual Financial Statements as well as the associated Auditors Report, and the selection of a new Auditor for the next three financial years. The 2020/21 budget of NZ\$ 1,365,075 (~ USD\$ 775,000) was adopted along with the associated Member contributions. The Commission acknowledged recent voluntary contributions from the United States of America and CALAMASUR. China also provided a voluntary contribution of USD\$ 20,000 to support stock structure and genetic studies regarding jumbo flying squid. Finally, the FAC recommended that the Commission accept the offer of the Russian Federation to host the 2021 Annual meeting in St Petersburg, and Peru's prospective offer to host the 2022 Commission meeting. The meeting also confirmed that New Zealand will host the 2020 Scientific Committee meeting (SC8), and accepted the offers of Panama to host the 2021 SC meeting and of Korea to host the 2022 SC meeting.

## 2.2. Decisions taken by the Commission to achieve the objectives of the SPRFMO Convention

COMM8 amended 10 Conservation and Management Measures including:

- CMM 01-2020 (*Trachurus murphyi*): where catches of *Trachurus murphyi* in 2020 throughout the range of the stock should not exceed 680,000 tonnes as per advice of the SPRFMO Scientific Committee. Ecuador's percentage of quota was increased to 1.2638% but reference to this being only for the High Seas was removed;
- CMM 02-2020 (Data Standards): where updates were introduced to reflect changes in other CMMs in recent years and clarify data collection and reporting requirements;
- CMM 03-2020 (Bottom Fishing): where the weight thresholds for triggering the Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VME) encounter protocol were amended to make the bottom fishing framework more precautionary for the protection of VMEs;
- CMM 03a-2020 (Deepwater species): where the orange roughy catch limits were revised based on recommendations from the SC and to enable improved implementation and management of these catch limits, including a carry-forward provision;
- CMM 04-2020 (IUU Vessel List): where amendments were introduced to broaden the information that requires updating on the IUU vessel list in the event of changes;
- CMM 06-2020 (VMS): which provides for a template for the request of VMS data for scientific purposes;
- CMM 10-2020 (CMS): where editorial changes were made to the CMM and the review date was changed to 2023;
- CMM 12-2020 (Transshipment): which clarifies reporting requirements for transshipments, particularly in the jumbo flying squid fisheries;
- CMM 13-2020 (Exploratory Fisheries): where editorial changes were made to the CMM and the review date was changed to 2021;
- CMM 14b-2020 (Exploratory Potting CK): which amended the measure for exploratory fishing for lobster and crab in line with the Fisheries Operation Plan reviewed by the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Scientific Committee.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sprfmo.int/assets/0-2020-Annual-Meeting/Reports/CTC7-Meeting-Report-10Mar2020.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sprfmo.int/assets/0-2020-Annual-Meeting/Reports/FAC7-Report-10Mar2020.pdf>



In addition, COMM8 adopted two new CMMs being:

- CMM 14d-2020 (Exploratory Fishing CL): which allows for exploratory fishing for toothfish by Chilean-flagged vessels in the Convention Area;
- CMM 18-2020 (Squid): which applies to vessels engaged in fishing for jumbo flying squid in the Convention Area.

The report also noted that:

- The Commission agreed that it requires information sufficient to identify bycatch issues related to seabirds and other species of concern in each of the major SPRFMO fisheries in the short to medium term and provide quantitative estimates in the medium term for all species of seabirds combined and some of the more common bycatch species and instructed the SC to advise by no later than the Commission's meeting in 2022 the observer coverage or other observations needed in each major fishery to deliver this information;
- Members agreed that the SC shall review the minimum scientific observer coverage for the jumbo flying squid fishery including in relation to the specificities of different fleet segments up to 15 metres in length, at the latest at its 2023 meeting, and provide advice to the Commission;
- Progress was made on 9 of the 18 recommendations from the first Performance Review and further discussions were deferred to the next Commission meeting;
- The Commission agreed that participation in Regional processes relevant for SPRFMO will be decided on a case by case basis, with processes where SPRFMO has a voice being prioritised, and relevant proposals being included in the next year's budget;
- The Commission approved Memoranda of Understanding with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and agreed to a process working towards a Memorandum of Understanding with the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC);
- Andrew Wright (New Zealand) was reappointed as Chairperson of the CTC for a second term.

The full report of the Commission and all related documents are available on the SPRFMO website at [www.sprfmo.int](http://www.sprfmo.int).

### 3. Actions taken by the Commission in response to any recommendations from the General Assembly of the United Nations or the FAO

In 2019-2020, the Commission addressed the following areas in response to UN or FAO recommendations. This work builds upon existing initiatives such as CMM development, in which amendments to align or better implement UN or FAO recommendations are adopted, as well as through the participation of SPRFMO representatives in projects and/or international meetings to provide feedback both to the Commission on the UN and FAO developments while at the same time reassuring the international community that decisions taken by the Commission addressed the objectives of the SPRFMO Convention.

#### 3.1. FAO themes:

- Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;
- Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development";
- PSMA, Global Record, Transshipment activities & IUU estimation;
- Cooperation with RFMOs, RFBs and RSN;
- Climate change;
- Fishing gear;
- Bycatch (including marine mammal);



- Evidence-based decision-making.

### 3.2. UNGA themes:

- Marine debris, plastics and microplastics;
- Impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems;
- Long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks.

### 3.3. UNEP themes

- Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Deep-sea Living Marine Resources and Ecosystems in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ project);
- Regional Seas Programme and Action Plans;
- Sustainable Ocean Initiative.

### 3.4. UNFCCC themes

- Climate change.

In particular decisions made by the Commission in 2020, target 14.2 of SDG 14 was supported by the amendment to CMM 03 (Bottom fishing) where the weight thresholds for triggering the Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VME) encounter protocol were amended to make the bottom fishing framework more precautionary for the protection of VMEs, and target 14.1 was supported by the introduction of CMM 18 (Squid) on the management of the jumbo flying squid fishery.