



Executive Summary

WCPFC's main objective is to ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific Ocean. WCPFC also seeks to minimize the detrimental effects of commercial fishing on non-target species. WCPFC achieves this objective through the passage of conservation and management measures that rely on advice on the best available science. Additionally, WCPFC partners with other regional fisheries management organizations and agencies to consult, collaborate and co-operate on areas of common interest. This is achieved through actions such as data exchange, consultative meetings, and joint research efforts.

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) has been actively implementing measures that coincide with the goals of UN General Assembly Resolution 69/245. WCPFC has passed a measure that directs members, cooperating non-members and participating territories to contribute to the capacity of nationals of developing countries in fisheries and related disciplines. Additionally, commencing 1 January 2016 WCPFC has recently agreed to include the International Maritime Organization and Lloyd's Register numbering system for most vessels that are required to be included on the publically available WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels. In the area of marine environment and marine resources, WCPFC has banned the use of large-scale drift nets on the high seas of the convention area and has agreed to a range of measures to mitigate impacts of fishing on a range of non-target as well as biologically threatened species, which have serious detrimental effects on aquatic life and the marine environment.

WCPFC contribution to the second part of the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/245 of 29 December 2014, entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea."

The objective of the WCPFC, as stated in Article 2 of the WCPFC Convention is to ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific Ocean in accordance with the 1982 Convention and the Agreement. To accomplish this objective, the WCPFC has taken the following actions that are relevant the following provisions of resolution 69/245:

UNGA Resolution 69/245: Section II. Capacity-building

Relevant provisions:

11. *Emphasizes the need for international cooperation for capacity-building, including cross-sectoral cooperation, at national, regional and global levels, to address, in particular gaps including marine science;*

12. *Calls for capacity-building initiatives to take into account the needs of developing countries, and calls upon States, international organizations and donor agencies to make efforts to ensure the sustainability of such initiatives;*

**Kaselehlie Street
P. O. Box 2356
Kolonja, Pohnpei 96941
Federated States of Micronesia**

**Phone: +691 320 1992 or 320 1993
Facsimile: +691 320 1108
Email: wcpfc@wcpfc.int**

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15. Calls upon States and international institutions, including through bilateral, regional and global cooperation programmes, technical partnerships and fellowships, to continue to support and strengthen capacity-building activities, in particular in developing countries, in the field of marine scientific research by, inter alia, training personnel to develop and enhance relevant expertise, providing the necessary equipment, facilities and vessels and transferring environmentally sound technologies;

16. Also calls upon States and international institutions, including through bilateral, regional and global cooperation programmes, technical partnerships and fellowships, to support and strengthen capacity-building activities in developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States, to develop their maritime administration and appropriate legal frameworks to establish or enhance the necessary infrastructure, legislative and enforcement capabilities to promote effective compliance with and implementation and enforcement of their responsibilities under international law;

...

25. Acknowledges the importance of capacity-building for developing States, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as coastal African States, for the protection of the marine environment and the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources;

WCPFC's actions:

In the area of capacity building, and in implementing Article 30 of the WCPF Convention, the WCPFC has taken the step to pass a Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) that directly addresses the issue of capacity building for developing countries. The developed country members of the Commission are requested to further contribute to capacity building for developing countries in the areas listed. CMM 2013-07 states in relevant part:

4. CCMs shall cooperate directly or through the Commission, to support the capacity development of nationals of SIDS and territories within the Convention Area in any fisheries or related discipline, including the sponsorship of academic study and training programmes.
5. CCMs shall provide, directly or through the Commission, support and assistance to develop the capacity of nationals of SIDS and territories, including through:
 - a. individualized training, including internships;
 - b. institutional support to regional or sub-regional training programs for observers, including through providing financial and technical support to enhance existing programs;
 - c. technical training and assistance in data collection, scientific research, stock assessment, bycatch mitigation, fisheries science and management, fisheries administration and bioeconomic analysis, including through in country training, workshops, academic exchanges and secondments; and
 - d. training related to monitoring, control and surveillance activities, including through in-country training, workshops, secondments and other personnel exchanges.

UNGA Resolution 69/245: Section VIII. Maritime safety and security and flag State implementation

Relevant provisions:

90. Recognizes that the legal regimes governing maritime safety and maritime security may have common and mutually reinforcing objectives that may be interrelated and could benefit from synergies, and encourages States to take this into account in their implementation;

...

98. Welcomes ongoing cooperation between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization and the International Labour Organization relating to the safety of fishers and fishing vessels, and underlines the urgent need for continued work in that area;

161. Encourages flag States to take appropriate measures sufficient to achieve or maintain recognition by intergovernmental arrangements that recognize satisfactory flag State performance, including, as appropriate, satisfactory port State control examination results on a sustained basis, with a view to improving quality shipping and furthering flag State implementation of relevant instruments under the International Maritime Organization as well as relevant goals and objectives of the present resolution;

WCPFC actions:

Part V of the Convention sets out the flag state duties and responsibilities in terms of compliance and enforcement. To complement these duties, the Commission has agreed to implement the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels which provides a list of vessels that flag State members and cooperating non-members have authorized to fish in the Convention Area; the Commission VMS which provides a mechanism for the Commission Secretariat and under approved arrangements for coastal CCMs to monitor the activities of other CCMs flagged vessels in the Convention Area; and the Regional Observer Programme which provides for independent scientific and compliance observers to monitor the implementation by vessels of WCPFC CMMs; and the Commission has implemented Article 21 and 22 of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement through CMM 2006-08 which enables inspection vessels of Members to board and inspect vessels of another flag CCM in the high seas to check their implementation of CMMs. A range of proposals for the implementation of Port State inspection procedures in the region have been considered by the Commission in recent years, but a measure is yet to be agreed.

UNGA Resolution 69/245: Section IX. Marine environment and marine resources

Relevant provisions:

162. Emphasizes once again the importance of the implementation of Part XII of the Convention in order to protect and preserve the marine environment and its living marine resources against pollution and physical degradation, and calls upon all States to cooperate and take measures consistent with the Convention, directly or through competent international organizations, for the protection and preservation of the marine environment;

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181. *Also notes with concern that the health of the oceans and marine biodiversity are negatively affected by marine debris, especially plastic, from land-based and marine sources, and thus recognizes the need for better understanding of the sources, amounts, pathways, distribution trends, nature and impacts of marine debris, and in this regard invites States to implement resolution 1/6 on marine plastics debris and microplastics, adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme at its first session in June 2014;*

WCPFC actions:

The Commission has a broad mandate in the areas of marine environmental protection and marine biodiversity. Two of the functions of the Commission included in Article 10 are:

“assess the impacts of fishing, other human activities and environmental factors on target stocks, non-target species, and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with the target stocks;

(e) adopt measures to minimize waste, discards, catch by lost or abandoned gear, pollution originating from fishing vessels, catch of non-target species, both fish and non-fish species, (hereinafter referred to as non-target species) and impacts on associated or dependent species, in particular endangered species and promote the development and use of selective, environmentally safe and cost-effective fishing gear and techniques;”

The efforts of the Commission to date over the past 12 years has been focused on the development and implementation of measures addressing impacts of fishing on target tuna and billfish stocks, and in mitigating impacts of fishing on sharks, sea turtles, seabirds and cetaceans. Through the observers in the Regional Observer Programme data on marine debris and pollution have been collected over the past seven years. In addition the Commission has specifically passed CMM 2008-04, which prohibits the use of large-scale driftnets on the high seas of the Convention area. The CMM specifically states: “Noting with concern that recent information indicates that such vessels are interacting more frequently with highly migratory species, such as tunas, swordfish, sharks, and other species covered by the Convention; and that associated “ghost fishing” by lost or discarded driftnets have serious detrimental effects on these species of concern and the marine environment.”

UNGA Resolution 69/245: Section X. Marine biodiversity

Relevant provisions:

217. *Recognizes the abundance and diversity of marine genetic resources and their value in terms of the benefits, goods and services they can provide;*

218. *Also recognizes the importance of research on marine genetic resources for the purpose of enhancing the scientific understanding, potential use and application, and enhanced management of marine ecosystems;*

219. *Encourages States and international organizations, including through bilateral, regional and global cooperation programmes and partnerships, to continue in a sustainable and comprehensive way to support, promote and strengthen capacity-building activities, in particular in developing countries, in the field of marine scientific research, taking into account, in particular, the need to create greater taxonomic capabilities;*

...

222. *Calls upon States and international organizations to urgently take further action to address, in accordance with international law, destructive practices that have adverse impacts on marine biodiversity and ecosystems, including seamounts, hydrothermal vents and cold water corals;*

...

226. *Reaffirms the need for States to continue and intensify their efforts, directly and through competent international organizations, to develop and facilitate the use of diverse approaches and tools for conserving and managing vulnerable marine ecosystems, including the possible establishment of marine protected areas, consistent with international law, as reflected in the Convention, and based on the best scientific information available;*

WCPFC actions:

As stated in the introduction of this contribution, the WCPFC's objective is to ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific Ocean. The Commission also has a broad function to protect biodiversity in the marine environment (Article 5f). This includes passing and updating CMMs relating to the sustainability of target species, which include certain tuna and billfish species, as well as bycatch. Additionally, the WCPFC has passed CMMs that seek to minimize the negative effects on non-target species of fish and other marine animals. Five of these measures have been enacted since the last reporting period (CMM 2013-08, CMM 2014-01, CMM 2014-04, CMM 2014-05 and CMM 2014-06)

The WCPFC CMMs relating to target and by catch species are:

- CMM 2005-03 Conservation and Management Measure for North Pacific Albacore
- CMM 2006-04 Conservation and Management Measure for Striped Marlin in the Southwest Pacific
- CMM 2009-03 Conservation and Management Measure for Swordfish
- CMM 2010-01 Conservation and Management Measure for North Pacific Striped Marlin
- CMM 2010-05 Conservation and Management Measure for South Pacific Albacore
- CMM 2014-01 Conservation and Management Measure for bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack tuna in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean
- CMM 2014-04 Conservation and Management Measure to establish a multi-annual rebuilding plan for Pacific bluefin tuna
- CMM 2014-06 Conservation and Management Measures to develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for key fisheries and stocks in the WCPO

The WCPFC resolutions and CMMs relating to non-target species of fish and other marine animals are:

- Res. 2005-03 Resolution on Non-Target Fish Species
- CMM 2008-03 Conservation And Management of Sea Turtles
- CMM 2010-07 Conservation and Management Measure for Sharks
- CMM 2011-03 Conservation and Management Measure to address impact of purse seine fishing activity on cetaceans
- CMM 2011-04 Conservation and Management Measure for Oceanic Whitetip Sharks

CMM 2012-04 Conservation and Management Measure on the protection of whale sharks from purse seine operations
CMM 2012-07 Conservation and Management Measure for Mitigating Impacts of Fishing on Seabirds
CMM 2013-08 Conservation and Management Measure for Silky Sharks
CMM 2014-05 Conservation and Management Measures for Sharks

UNGA Resolution 69/245: Section XI. Marine science

Relevant provisions:

239. Calls upon States, individually or in collaboration with each other or with competent international organizations and bodies, to continue to strive to improve understanding and knowledge of the oceans and the deep sea, including, in particular, the extent and vulnerability of deep sea biodiversity and ecosystems, by increasing their marine scientific research activities in accordance with the Convention;

...

242. Invites all relevant organizations, funds, programmes and bodies within the United Nations system, in consultation with interested States, to coordinate relevant activities with regional and national marine scientific and technological centres in small island developing States, as appropriate, to ensure the more effective achievement of their objectives in accordance with relevant United Nations small island developing States development programmes and strategies;

WCPFC actions:

The objectives of the WCPFC rely heavily on sound science. The WCPFC receives independent scientific advice from the Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC-OFP). Additionally, the WCPFC receives scientific advice regarding the northern fish stocks from the International Scientific Community for Tuna and Tuna-like species (ISC). Additionally, WCPFC passed Res. 2012-01 Resolution on Best Available Science, which includes such actions as encouraging scientific collaboration with other international organizations and regional fishing management organizations, strengthening peer review mechanisms, supporting efforts by the Scientific Committee, SPC-OFP and ISC to publish scientific findings in scientific peer-reviewed academic literature, and contributing to the scientific capacity building of the small island developing States and Territories and to enhance their effective participation in the work of the Scientific Committee.

UNGA Resolution 69/245: Section XIII. Regional cooperation

Relevant provisions:

282. Invites States and international organizations to enhance their cooperation to better protect the marine environment, and in this respect welcomes the memorandum of understanding for enhanced cooperation, concluded between the Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, the International Seabed Authority and the International Maritime Organization;

...

284. Welcomes regional cooperation, and in this regard notes the Pacific Oceanscape Framework as an initiative to enhance cooperation among coastal States in the Pacific island region to foster marine conservation and sustainable development;

WCPFC action:

The WCPFC has undertaken memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with multiple RFMOs and other agencies to consult, collaborate and co-operate on areas of common interest. These MOUs provide for actions such as exchange of data, consultative meetings, and joint research efforts. WCPFC has such MOUs with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in respect of the Oceanic Fisheries Programme (SPC-OFP), Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC), Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), Agreement for the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels (ACAP) and North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC).

WCPFC Secretariat is supportive of the Pacific Oceanscape Framework, and it does collaboratively with a range of regional agencies that are partners in the Framework. In 2015, WCPFC Secretariat was a participant in the Inaugural Meeting of the Pacific Ocean Alliance, which was hosted by the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, Dame Meg Taylor in Nadi, Fiji in May 2015.