12TH MEETING OF THE SPRFMO COMMISSION

Manta, Ecuador, 29 January to 2 February 2024

COMM 12 – Prop 20

PROPOSAL TO:

☐ Amend ☒ Create	CMM XX-2024 to protect the Salas y Gomez and Nazca ridges area
Submitted by: Chile	
Summary of the proposal: The proposed CMM aims to protect the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges ecosystem in the southeastern portion of the Convention Area through a fishing closure. Considering that the proposed area is home to a unique and vulnerable ecosystem, whose preservation is critical for the sustainability of several fisheries resources, this measure is designed to restrict fishing activities in these areas by integrating a precautionary and ecosystem-based approach, in order to reduce the impacts of fishing and climate change on this crucial ecosystem, contributing to the long-term resilience and productivity of the South Pacific.	
Objective of the proposal: The objective of this CMM is, through the application of the precautionary approach and ecosystem approach to fisheries management, to adequately safeguard the fragile, vulnerable and ecologically relevant ecosystems of the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges in the southeastern portion of the Convention Area from the impacts of fishing and climate change, protect crucial nursery habitats for fishery resources thereby ensuring the viability and growth of their populations, and enhance the long-term resilience of the South Pacific to anthropogenic threats.	
Has the proposal financial impacts or influence on the Secretariat work?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Ref: **COMM12-PROP20**	Received on: 10 December 2023

The Commission of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation;

RECALLING the mandate to apply the precautionary approach and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management according to Article 3 of the Convention to ensure long-term conservation of fishery resources and safeguard the marine ecosystem where they occur;

RECALLING the need, as set out in Article 4 of the Convention, to ensure compatibility of Conservation and Management Measures established for the high seas and those adopted for areas under national jurisdiction, and the duty of Contracting Parties to cooperate to this end;

RECOGNISING that, under Articles 8 and 20 of the Convention, a primary function of the Commission is to adopt conservation and management measures to achieve the objective of the Convention, including, as appropriate, the general or specific locations and the periods in which fishing may or may not take place, and to protect the habitats and marine ecosystems in which fishery resources and non-target and associated or dependent species occur from the impacts of fishing, including measures to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems;

RECOGNISING the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges are global biodiversity hotspots, with one of the highest levels of marine biological endemism in the world, that connects people and marine wildlife from across the Pacific Ocean, and that its more than 110 seamounts host an exceptionally high diversity of unique, fragile and often endemic organisms, including many indicator species for Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems;

ACKNOWLEDGING the existing scientific evidence demonstrating the ridges' unique ecological value with at least 93 threatened or endangered species and their importance as a complex migratory corridor, refuge, feeding and nursery ground for protected and commercially relevant species, including a nursery zone for Chilean jack mackerel.

RECALLING decision XII/22 of 17 October 2014, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, recognised the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges as an ecologically or biologically significant marine area (EBSA), and that decision was communicated and received by SPRFMO and presented at the Third Scientific Committee Meeting held in Port Vila (Vanuatu) in 2015;

ACKNOWLEDGING that marine ecosystems of the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges face multiple threats, including climate change, harmful fishing practices and potential fisheries overexploitation, and deep seabed mining;

NOTING that Decision 13-2023 on Climate Change calls for the Commission to develop a comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing the impacts of climate change on fishery resources in the Convention Area;

RECOGNISING that one of the most effective approaches to address climate change issues in fisheries management and biodiversity conservation is through nature-based solutions, including protecting and restoring marine ecosystems, increase resilience to other threats, and strengthen adaptation, such as the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges;

WELCOMING the recent adoption, on 19 June 2023, of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) and its early signature by several members of the SPRFMO Commission;

NOTING that the BBNJ Agreement gives a mandate to its future Conference of the Parties to take decisions on the establishment of area-based management tools, including marine protected areas and related measures and to promote and strengthen cooperation, including with relevant frameworks and global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies in the achievement of the objective of such an Agreement.

NOTING that Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) under the Convention on Biological Diversity calls for the protection of at least 30% of marine and coastal areas by 2030 and that most SPRFMO member states, as parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, have endorsed this commitment.

ACKNOWLEDGING the value of proactively adopting measures to protect the marine ecosystems, migratory corridors and nursery habitats of the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges for the long-term health and resilience of fish stocks and biodiversity in the region, which may support the establishment of future area-based management tools in the Southeast Pacific;

NOTING that the SPRFMO Scientific Committee (11th Meeting Report) raised concerns over the stock status of lobsters (*Jasus caveorum)* in an area with similar characteristics to the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges, such as high biodiversity value and vulnerability, and that preliminary assessments suggest that fishing mortality is estimated to be high and that the resource biomass has declined substantially (paragraph 223 and 227).

AFFIRMING its commitment to ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources in the South Pacific and to safeguarding the marine ecosystems in the SPRFMO Convention Area where they occur;

ADOPTS the following CMM in accordance with Articles 8 and 20 of the Convention:

Definitions

For the purpose of this CMM, the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges are defined as the high seas areas of the underwater ridges depicted in Fig. 1, extending within the following coordinates:

- Salas y Gómez Ridge: between 23°42’ S and 29°12’ S, and between 111°30’ W and 86°30’ W.
- Nazca Ridge: between 15°00’ S and 26°09’ S, and between 86°30’ W and 76°06’ W.

Figure 1. Area of the proposed measurement in the Salas y Gomez and Nazca ridges, the adjacent exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and the whole EBSA region in the South Pacific.

A more detailed map and significant coordinates of the proposed CMM area is provided in Annex 2.

Application

This CMM applies to the area defined in this CMM above and within the coordinates so defined.

The Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges, as defined in this CMM- above and within the indicated boundaries, shall be closed to fishing. This closure applies to all existing commercial, new and

exploratory fishing concerning the fishery resources under the competence of the Commission, regardless of the types of fishing gear, fishing technology, or fishing practices that may be used.

While this CMM is in force, no Member or CNCP shall authorise vessels flying their flag to engage in any fishing in the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges.

Flag States shall provide the Secretariat entry and exit notifications to the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges and report vessel sightings where applicable, using the reporting template in Annex 1. The Secretariat will prepare a summary report based on these notifications, VMS tracks, and vessel sightings to be presented annually for consideration at the Compliance and Technical Committee and Commission meetings.

The Scientific Committee shall advise the Commission on the conditions and requirements for undertaking specific scientific research in the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges, as provided in Article 25(5) of the Convention, which shall be consistent with their status as ecologically significant areas and biodiversity hotspots, their high marine biological endemism, the extensive presence of seamounts and fragile and often endemic organisms, including many indicator species for Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems, and as nursery ground for protected and commercially relevant species.

Data collection, monitoring and review

The Commission will ensure appropriate data collection, monitoring and review of this CMM.

Scientific research undertaken under the conditions set by the Commission according to this CMM shall support appropriate data collection regarding Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges.

Monitoring compliance with this measure may include reports pursuant to this CMM and Annex 1, sighting of vessels operating within the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges, high seas boarding and inspection, observer reports and other suitable means.

Review

This CMM shall enter into force on 30 September 2024.

Once it enters into force, the Commission shall annually assess Members' and CNCPs' compliance with this CMM under the SPRFMO Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMM 10-2020).

A review of this CMM shall occur seven years after it entered into force. In doing so, the Commission will take appropriate action to meet the objectives of this CMM and the Convention in view of the advice and recommendations of the Scientific Committee.

Annex 1

Notification Template for Vessel Sightings and Entry/Exit of the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges Area

Reporting Vessel Details

Vessel Name:

IMO Number:

Call Sign:

Flag:

Date of notification (YYYY-MON-DD):

Contact details:

Entry Details (if applicable)

Date (YYYY-MON-DD):

Time (UTC, hh:mm):

Latitude:

Longitude:

Exit Details (if applicable)

Date (YYYY-MON-DD):

Time (UTC, hh:mm):

Latitude:

Longitude:

Vessel Sighting Details (if applicable)

Date (YYYY-MON-DD):

Time (UTC, hh:mm):

If possible, additional details of sighting (e.g. Flag, IMO Number, vessel activity):

Annex 2

Map of the area of the proposed measurement

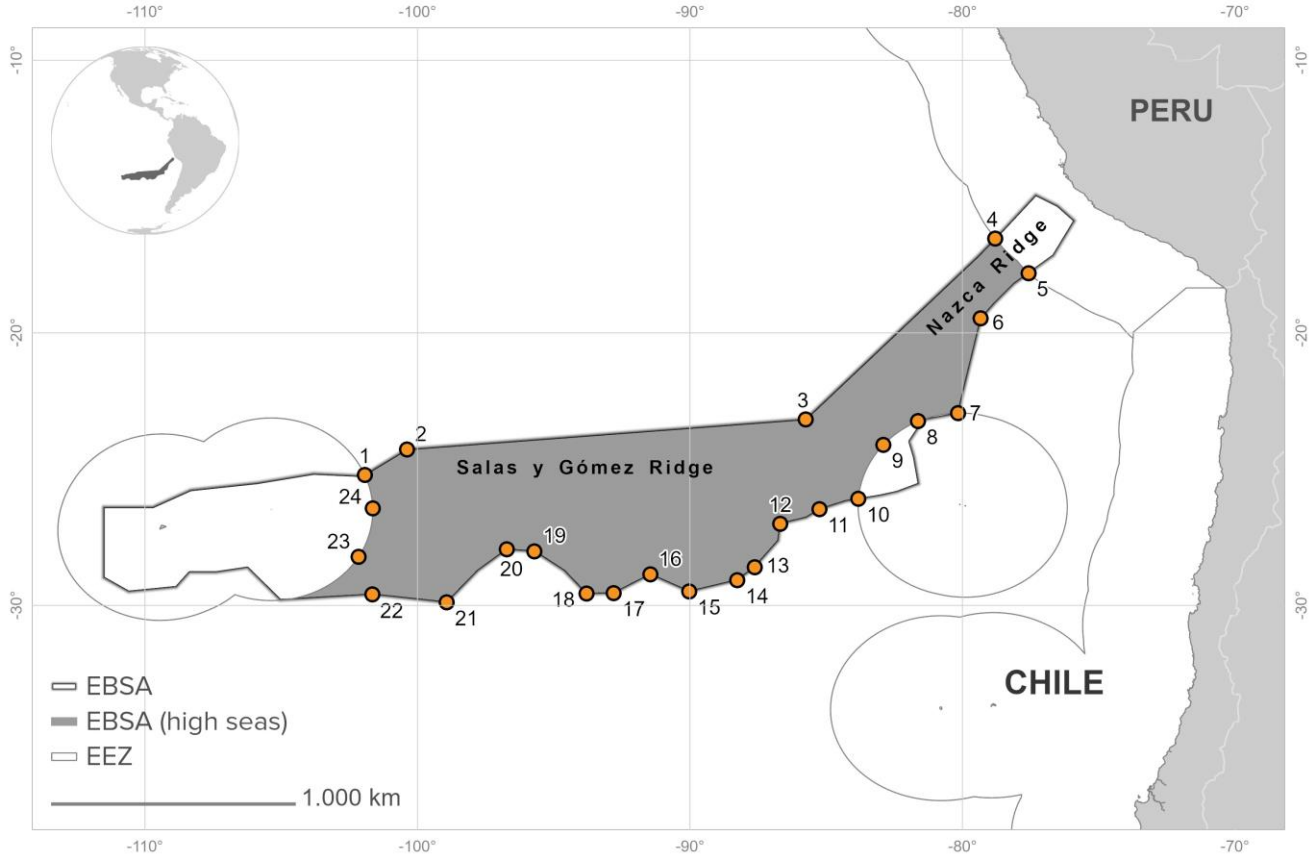

Table of significant coordinates of the area of the proposed measurement depicted in the map.

Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	-25.211512	-101.933915
2	-24.277359	-100.384911
3	-23.171855	-85.748889
4	-16.534979	-78.789679
5	-17.807870	-77.574806
6	-19.471695	-79.326597
7	-22.940783	-80.166460
8	-23.242129	-81.624576
9	-24.104733	-82.896111
10	-26.088117	-83.816938
11	-26.471023	-85.244218
12	-27.001524	-86.687409
13	-28.593028	-87.628621
14	-29.069173	-88.263112
15	-29.484802	-90.027482
16	-28.857328	-91.453560
17	-29.541845	-92.794074
18	-29.570367	-93.792329
19	-28.009486	-95.702721
20	-27.944638	-96.727198
21	-29.884104	-98.923359
22	-29.590651	-101.657308
23	-28.215516	-102.161216
24	-26.434649	-101.642708