

8TH MEETING OF THE SPRFMO COMMISSION

Port Vila, Vanuatu, 14 to 18 February 2020

COMM 8 – Obs 04

Information paper from OCEANA to the SPRFMO Commission

Oceana

Santiago, February 3, 2020

Dear Secretary of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization:

Oceana, as an Observer Organization of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO), wants to bring attention, among all interested parties, on the importance of a coordinated management of straddling stocks fisheries, in order to ensure future and continued exploitation of such resource, and calls the Organization to create the needed means to ensure said coordinated management.

Fishery populations that straddle between different jurisdictions' waters cannot have a true future if interested parties do not handle them in a conscious manner, consistent with precautionary and ecosystemic principles.

According to the report of the scientific commission of the SPRFMO which took place in October 2019, declares that the *"Trachurus murphyi stock remains at very low levels*, and shows the concern of the Commission of the SPRFMO stating that *with the low levels of the current biomass, historically high fishing mortality, the need to maintain low fishing mortality, and the high degree of associated uncertainties"*.

In order to accomplish the objective of the SPRFMO of ensuring long-term conservation, the Commission agreed to establish the control of the annual catches by limiting both, the total allowable catches (TAC) in the area in what the Convention applies directly, and the catches for the entire population of CJM. Both limits were agreed among all States Parties based on the advice of the Scientific Committee, which is also formed by delegations of the same *concerned* states and are set in the paragraphs 5. and 10. of the CMM 01-2019.

As stated by the scientific committee in which states parties are represented by their own scientists *"In 2019 the total catch of Trachurus Murphyi in the area to which this CMM applies in accordance with*

*paragraph 1 shall be limited to **531,061 tonnes**. Members and CNCPs are to share in this total catch in the tonnages set out in Table 1 of this CMM”.*

*Members and CNCPs agree, having regard to the advice of the Scientific Committee, that **catches of Trachurus murphyi in 2019 throughout the range of the stock should not exceed 591,000 tonnes**.*

By the month of October total catches amounted **607,531 tonnes exceeding the quota by 3%**.
Overfishing is therefore a serious threat to the stock.

Coordinated Management

Besides the express duty shaped by the catch limits, there is the fundamental purpose of the SPRFMO of ensuring long-term conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources (Article 2 of the Convention) for securing future’s food, jobs and economy resulting from fishing. This purpose, defined in a coordinated effort, is the reason of being of the SPRFMO and therefore the reason of being of the Convention and the regulations arising, so every norm or policy must be construed accordingly.

A harmonic interpretation of the Convention and the CMM 01-2019 sets the categorical obligation - wisely self-imposed by Contracting Parties- of managing SPRFMO-related populations in cooperation and coordination among interested Parties (coastal States, flag States and the SPRFMO Organization). Moreover, the Convention reinforces the established principle of cooperation with the establishment of the precautionary and ecosystemic approach that must frame any decision taken in respect of the management of SPRFMO fisheries, especially those for which information available has not allowed an optimum level of knowledge. The effective application of these rules could have prevented the overfishing fishing in excess of the established quota that took place for the CJM stock in the year 2019.

Cooperation and coordination for making compatible the conservation and management measures issued by the Commission and the Contracting Parties is made a principle ruling the work of both, in

their way to accomplish the said goal of ensuring long-term conservation and use of fisheries, and it is therefore an intermediate objective which is developed in the fourth article. There is a declaration in the form of the recognition of the duty to cooperate which the Contracting Parties say to acknowledge, making it an own obligation with the signing of the Convention.

The fact that jack mackerel stock has been found historically in waters ranging, in the east Pacific Ocean, from equatorial waters to southern Pacific, makes it extremely important to exhaustively apply principles of cooperation and coordination, since the actions of the ones generate consequences on the others in the short term, and on all the interested parties in the long term.

As Oceana we have followed and supported the impeccable work of the SPRFMO during the past decade, which through an example of coordination and cooperation have recovered the jack mackerel stock to reach near sustainable levels. Continued lack of coordination and collaboration on ensuring that TACs are set and respected puts at risk the ability of the SPRFMO to meet its purpose of ensuring long-term sustainable use of the resource. Therefore, we ask the SPRFMO and all member nations to cooperate on ensuring that the total take of jack mackerel in the coming years be consistent with scientific advice provided yearly by the SPRFMO scientific Committee for maintaining and improving the vitality of the fish population.



Liesbeth van der Meer
Executive Director Oceana Chile