

12th Meeting of the Scientific Committee

Lima, Perú, 30 September - 05 October 2024

Ecosystems Working Group

INTRODUCTION

Following decisions of the SPRFMO Commission at the 6th meeting in January 2018, a workshop was organized with the objective of defining the terms of reference for a working group on "Habitat definition and monitoring". After that, the Habitat Monitoring Working Group was created and operated until 2024. Considering the additional tasks this WG was assigned, in consideration of Decision 13-2023 related to Climate Change, the terms of reference of the WG were updated during SC12 and an agreement to rename the group to Ecosystems Working Group was considered appropriate given the new terms of reference described in this document.

Main objective of the Working Group

The main objective of the Ecosystem Working Group is to plan and evaluate research to inform fisheries management in an ecosystem context, from the habitat analysis to ecosystem models, focusing in biological and ecological interactions.

Focus on pelagic species

1. Identify, prioritise, and provide environmental and ecosystem indicators associated to the habitat of the main commercial resources in the SPRFMO area to complement assessment and scientific advice for fisheries management.
2. Determination of habitat and habitat use of the main species in the South Pacific Ocean and the SPRFMO area.
3. Retrospective-continuous studies for: historical fisheries and research cruises data; acoustic monitoring of fishing companies; satellite data; historical meteorological data from coastal stations, etc.
4. Prepare inventories of technologies currently available on each fishing vessel, including the information on the presence of VMS or AIS on board, on-board observers, existence of biometry data by fishing haul etc.
5. Determine and characterise the environmental variables and oceanographic mechanisms or processes associated with the spatial-temporal distribution of resources (area evolution, location and volume over time, distribution, fishing effort efficiency, abundance, availability, etc.).

6. Review protocols of data collection, processing and analysis used within the working group's main objective (i.e. data, acoustics, data quality, opportunity platforms, fishing boats, etc.).
7. Review, identify, develop and validate appropriate predictions model for the working group's objectives; to conduct modelling studies to understand changes in species distribution in response to ecosystem variability, with a focus on climate change scenarios in the South Pacific.
8. Review and promote the development of research projects in the topic of habitat monitoring and ecosystem research, to recommend specific lines of research in the SPRFMO framework.
9. Foster synergies with the other WG to identify how climate variability affects the current advice provided by the Scientific Committee and propose a framework to address these limitations.
10. To promote dissemination through publications and protocols.