

The third meeting of the SPRFMO Scientific Committee concluded on 3 October 2015 in Port Vila, Vanuatu



The SPRFMO Scientific Committee (SC) met for the third time in Port Vila, Vanuatu, from 28 September to 3 October 2015. It was attended by 43 participants from SPRFMO Members (Australia, Chile, People's Republic of China, Ecuador, European Union, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei and Vanuatu), CNCPs (Peru and USA), observers (FAO, Birdlife International, DSCC, ICFA, NZ High Seas Fisheries Group Inc. and OCEANA) and the SPRFMO Secretariat.

The meeting was chaired by James Ianelli from the USA, assisted by the SC Vice-Chairperson, Niels Hintzen (EU). Important topics discussed at the meeting were the stock assessment of Chilean Jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*), issues related to deep-sea fisheries, vulnerable marine ecosystems and the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, as well as, for the first time, an assessment of jumbo flying squid (*Dosidicus gigas*) stocks and fisheries in the SPRFMO Convention Area and adjacent EEZs. The meeting report can be accessed at

<https://www.sprfmo.int/meetings/scientific-committee/3rd-scientific-committee-2015/>.

Highlights

With regard to **Chilean jack mackerel**, the SC recommended that the Commission should set 2016 catches at or below 460 tonnes. The SC stated that fishing mortality in the next 10 years at or below current (2015) levels are continuing to have a reasonably good probability of increased spawning biomass from the current level of 2.71 million tonnes with projected increase to 3.2 million tonnes in 2016.

Deepwater fisheries in the SPRFMO Area have substantially decreased within the past decade due to significantly less effort with catches of orange roughy (*Hoplostethus atlanticus*) being about half of what they had been in the early 2000s. The SC noted that progress had been made on the development of stock assessment models for orange roughy stocks in the SPRFMO Area. Encouraging progress has also been made in the difficult task of predicting and mapping the distribution of VMEs and VME indicator taxa in the SPRFMO Area. The SC supports moving towards spatial management of bottom fishing, recognising that reaching this goal will likely take time.

Relative to the **jumbo flying squid** resources, the SC recommends the implementation of monitoring and reporting procedures in squid fisheries and the development of science and management tools for this species.

The SC also convened a **data workshop** which took place in Port Vila from 24-26 September, just before the SC meeting, and chaired by Niels Hintzen. The workshop evaluated data sampling procedure and data quality issues in particular related to Chilean Jack mackerel. It proposed the use of data templates and SC data coordinators among other recommendations to improve the current processes.