

9th MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Held virtually, 27 September to 2 October 2021

SC9-Doc07

Secretariat's report on Scientific Committee related activities

Secretariat

1. Introduction

This paper informs SC9 about relevant activities conducted over the past year by the Secretariat. These activities include [external meetings](#), [project inputs](#) and [data releases](#). This current paper continues on from the previous papers on this topic (most recently [SC8-Doc07](#)).

- SC9 is requested to note the contents of this paper

2. External meetings/workshops

- **ABNJ** The Secretariat has been in communication with the Deep-sea Fishing project coordinators, including commenting on the Project Outputs and Activities document (November 2020), meeting with project coordinator (May 2021) and responding to a co-financing request (July 2021). More detail is given in SC9-Doc13, ABNJ update.

3. Internal project coordination

EU Grant – Support to Jack Mackerel Assessment and data validation in SPRFMO

This grant, being coordinated by the Secretariat with research performed by the Wageningen University, for the period July 2019 to December 2020 consisted of two parts: updating the Jack mackerel management targets and management plan (Management Strategy Evaluation) and defining the Jack mackerel habitat using statistical modelling. Final results were reported in the [final report](#) from Wageningen University, and are presented to SC9 as SC9-JM03.

EU Grant – Support for the Establishment of a Regional Observer Programme in SPRFMO

[CTC8-Doc10_Rev2](#) notes that in 2020 the Observer programmes of three Members, Australia, New Zealand and Chile engaged with the SPRFMO Observer Programme Evaluator for Assessment of their Observer Programmes for Accreditation. Paragraph 40 of [COMM9-Report](#) notes that the Commission approved accreditation of all three programmes.



Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this is a smaller number of Observer programmes than had been budgeted, so in letter DC111-2020 the Secretariat asked that the grant (which was due to expire 31 December 2020) be extended due to the effect of Covid19 and Member decisions to delay their accreditation processes. On 18th November 2020 the EU agreed to amend the duration of the implementation period, without any budgetary impact but extending the action out to the 31st December 2022.

In 2021 Ecuador, Korea and Chinese Taipei have engaged with the SPRFMO Observer Programme Evaluator for Assessment of their Observer Programmes for Accreditation. Their implementation reports will be included as an annex to the Observer Programme Implementation Report (Paragraph 32 [CMM 16-2020 \(Observer Programme\)](#)).

EU Grant – Support to the scientific process and data management in the SPRFMO

This grant, being coordinated by the Secretariat for the period July 2020 to December 2021 consists of three parts. The first part was intended to provide support for science in terms of logistics, material, travel, hotels etc for the organisation of two planned workshops – one in January 2021 to progress the development of a Management Strategy Evaluation for Jack mackerel by engaging with members of the Commission, and the second a Benchmark workshop planned for July 2021 for Jack mackerel to improve the scientific advice for Jack mackerel. Neither of these workshops have been able to be held due to the ongoing global pandemic.

The second part involves various database developments for the SPRFMO database. Work to redevelop and maximise the core functionality of the SPRFMO database to ensure longevity is complete, including the public facing SPRFMO Record of Vessels, and is available [online](#).

Other elements involve a spatial management module to be integrated with the SPRFMO database, alignment of the SPRFMO database with the new SPRFMO website and staff training in spatial data management. Due to unavailability of development resources, this work has not yet commenced.

4. External project inputs

December 2020 – data analysis for FAO questions about commercial and observer reporting of discards, particularly of deepwater shark species



5. Data releases

- September 2020 – Data extract about catches of sharks and rays for a multiyear project to assess the global shark meat trade
- January 2021 – data extract about catches of squid in the Eastern South Pacific for a study of prey availability for Sperm whales
- March 2021 – Enquiry about all VME encounters notified by SPRFMO Members
- April 2021 – repeat request for Australian catch history for Fishery Status Reports
- May 2021 – request from NGO for information about New Zealand flagged vessels that New Zealand is still considering authorising for 2021-22
- May 2021 – Enquiry about SPRFMO approach to VMEs and associated move on rules for the Marine Stewardship Council
- June 2021 EU – Complete set of annual catch data for the European Union to look at catch histories for preparation of a Fisheries Operation Plan
- August 2021 EU – offshore fleet Jack mackerel fishing activity data for input into CPUE analysis for Jack mackerel stock assessment



6. Specific Requests to Secretariat

| Document | Request | Status |
|---------------------|---|---|
| SC7-Report Para 193 | (Jack Mackerel) The SC recommends that for future years, the haul-by-haul data will continue to be made available by the Members of the offshore fleet, via the SPRFMO Secretariat, for the analysis of standardised CPUE. | Haul-by-haul data extract done and incorporated into SC9-JM02 |
| SC7-Report Para 237 | (Squid) The Secretariat presented SC7-SQ01 “Jumbo flying squid datasets held by the Secretariat”. It was requested that the tables of catch currently available on the SPRFMO website are made available as downloadable excel files. | Available as a file on Teams site and also in SC9-SQ01 |
| SC8-Report Para 18 | The SC also requested that the Secretariat coordinate a small intersessional working group to develop the work plan prior to COMM9. | Work plan developed and presented to COMM9 as COMM9-Doc06 |
| SC8-Report Para 36 | The SC agreed that an assessment of how ID guides could be developed should be added to the work plan and if funds are needed, they could come from the SC budget. The SC also requested that the Secretariat investigate if this type of work could be coordinated through the ABNJ project. | “VME ID Guides and data collection” included as a SPRFMO Partner Activity (in-kind) in second phase of the ABNJ Deep-sea Fisheries (DSF) Project |
| SC8-Report Para 64 | Noted that a geodatabase of standardised and approved GIS layers has been developed and will be deposited with the Secretariat including habitat suitability predictions for the 10 modelled VME indicator taxa at a 1 km spatial resolution, including corresponding naturalness and uncertainty layers; | Layers provided to the Secretariat 17/02/2021 and stored locally |
| SC8-Report Para 67 | It was suggested that periodic exchanges of information held in SPRFMO databases with Members who submitted the data would assist in the maintenance of an accurate database. | Confirmation Emails sent to Members with new reported catches of Seabirds, Marine Mammals, Reptiles and other Species of Concern in preparation of SC9-Doc11. |
| SC8-Report Para 135 | The SC requested that the Secretariat update the Japan and Ecuador catch figures prior to 2014 using the information contained in the FAO database so that SPRFMO has a more complete historical record for Jumbo flying squid captures. | Updated catch figures presented to SC9 in SC9-SQ01 |
| SC8-Report Para 140 | The SC requested that the number of vessels (and gross tonnage) for vessels that fished in the squid fishery in the SPRFMO area by flag State and Year continue to be documented and presented to the SC. These data are already provided to the Secretariat. | Updated catch figures presented to SC9 in SC9-SQ01 |
| SC8-Report Para 147 | After consideration of SC8-SQ02, the SC: recommended that the maturity schedule be finalised via email and requested that the Secretariat make the form for classification schemes for Jumbo flying squid available for Member use. | Finalised maturity schedule for squid available on Science page of the website |
| SC8-Report Para 165 | The SC accepted the Squid Jigging Observer Data Template with the understanding that the Secretariat would make the updates referred to in Paragraph 162 and also remove the transshipment tab pending a possible future CTC discussion on the merits of its inclusion into this specific template. | Observer Jigging template available on data submission page of website |
| SC8-Report Para 169 | The SC agreed that provision should be made for sampling location (i.e. port) and requested that the Secretariat investigate the possibility of using the original observer template, in part to avoid the need for extra funds and due to the minor suggested differences. | Observer Jigging template available on data submission page of website |



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| SC8-Report Para 212 | The SC suggested that this discussion had highlighted a potential need to develop a template for Fisheries Operation Plans to assist proponents to meet the requirements of CMM 13-2020 (Exploratory Fisheries) and requested the Secretariat to work with Members intersessionally to develop such a template. | Draft template discussed at Deepwater Working group Web meeting 07/08 September |
| SC8-Report Para 257 | The SC requested that the SPRFMO Secretariat assist and coordinate activities relevant to supporting the work of the SC during the planning phase of the DSF Project. This would include aspects relating to data-poor stocks, significant adverse impacts on VMEs, and deepwater sharks, and coordination with relevant experts from Members to ensure that the best guidance is provided to the DSF Project. This would be an in-kind contribution at this stage. | Secretariat has been in communication with DSF project coordinators, including commenting on Project Outputs and Activities document (November 2020), meeting with project coordinator (May 2021), co-financing request (July 2021). |
| SC8-Report Para 267 | The presenter responded that if SPRFMO wish to define some research objectives, the FAO would be happy to connect further and develop a paper for a Commission meeting. The Secretariat offered its support and the SC agreed this would help to determine required resources and clearer development of the aims of the project. | Secretariat provided support to FAO, resulting in paper COMM9-Obs01 |
| SC8-Report Para 282 | The SC also requested that the Secretariat coordinate a small intersessional working group to develop the work plan prior to COMM9. | Work plan developed and presented to COMM9 as COMM9-Doc06 |
| SC8-Report Section 9.5 | Future meeting plans are discussed in SC8-Doc10. Panama had offered to host in 2021 and considering current conditions the Secretariat was requested to re-confirm Panama's offer. | Paragraph 182 of COMM9-Report notes Panama's offer to host SC9, but the continuation of the global pandemic led to a decision at the first 2021 SC web meeting that a virtual meeting was the only practical option (letter G96-2021). |
| Workplan – Jack Mackerel assessment | SC Chair and Secretariat to coordinate SC and other funds to support experts | Dr Maite Pons engaged to support the Jack Mackerel Data Workshop, Lee Qi engaged to support the Jack mackerel stock assessment at SC-9. |
| Workplan – Squid workshop | SQWG Chair/Secretariat to support a Squid Workshop prior to SC9 | Due to the ongoing global pandemic instead of a workshop this has been run as a series of Squid Working Group Web Meetings (see G87-2021, G103-2021) |
| Workplan – Exploratory fishing | Secretariat to work with Members intersessionally to develop a Fisheries Operation Plan template. | Template discussed at 1 st Deepwater WG Web meeting 07/08 September |
| Workplan - FAO ABNJ Deep Sea Fisheries Project | Secretariat to assist on planning phase for the FAO ABNJ Deep Sea Fisheries Project | Secretariat has been in communication with DSF project coordinators, including commenting on Project Outputs and Activities document (November 2020), meeting with project coordinator (May 2021), co-financing request (July 2021). |