

CCSBT Observer Report -WCPFC

The Republic of Korea

1. The 12th Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) was held from December 2-8, 2015 in Bali, Indonesia. 26 Contracting Members, Cooperating Non-members and NGOs participated in the meeting. The 12th Regular Session followed a series of subsidiary body meetings—the Scientific Committee, the Northern Committee and the Technical and Compliance Committee meetings.
2. The meeting discussions were focused on strengthening the current conservation measure for key tropical tuna species (skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tuna). While there was a general agreement on the need to improve the conservation and management of the tuna species, the participants could not reach a consensus on specific elements to be changed or improved (e.g. observer coverage for longline fleet, high seas transshipment ban, compatible measures to be applied to longline fleet against the purse seine FAD closure, etc.). The Chair was committed to working intersessionally with Members to bridge the gap to facilitate the next year's discussion.
3. On a brighter note, the Commission adopted a set of measures that aims at strengthening the basis for the science-based management of the key tuna species that include:
 - 3-year action plan for the establishment of Harvest Strategy for the species;
 - limit reference points for all key tuna species (20% of SSB_0); and
 - target reference point for skipjack tuna (50% of SSB_0);
4. Amid the increased concern over the safety of observers at sea, the Commission also agreed on the urgent need to introduce a binding measure to ensure the safety of on-board observers, and the US delegation offered to take on the drafting of an observer safety measure for consideration next year (2016).

5. The Commission adopted a revised Compliance Monitoring Scheme, based on which the Members' compliance with conservation and management measures is assessed. The revised Scheme includes the general principles to be applied to compliance assessment; specifics on compliance status and other relevant procedures.
6. Other proposals, such as shark conservation (fins naturally attached to carcass) and port state measures, were also tabled and discussed but the Commission decided to defer those items to the next year's meeting due to the lack of consensus.
7. The Commission noted the on-going discussion and work of intersessional working groups related to electronic monitoring, catch documentation scheme and FAD management.
8. The 13th Regular Session of the Commission is scheduled to take place from December 5-9, 2016 in Nadi, Fiji.