

Report from the CCSBT Observer to the Eighteenth Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) (Electronic Meeting, 1-7 December, 2021) - Republic of Korea

1. The 18th Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission took place from 1 to 7 December, 2021 as an electronic meeting. 31 Members & Participating Territories, Cooperating Non-Members (CNM) and NGOs participated in the meeting.
2. WCPFC18 discussed the Chair's consultative draft for new conservation and management measures for tropical tuna but agreed to retain most of the essential elements of the existing CMM noting the divergence of views among CCMs. CMM 2021-01 on the Conservation and Management Measure for Bigeye, Yellowfin and Skipjack tuna was adopted.
3. Increase of the TAC of Pacific Bluefin Tuna was discussed and a 15% increase in the catch limit of large(>30kg) fish was agreed. CMM 2021-02 on Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific Bluefin tuna was adopted.
4. WCPFC18 also discussed the issue of labour standards for crew on fishing vessels. It was agreed that the Commission would continue its discussion intersessionally.
5. WCPFC18 reviewed the temporary arrangements concerning COVID-19, i.e. temporary suspensions of 100% observer coverage for purse seine vessels, mandatory in-port transshipment by purse seine vessels and 100% observer coverage for at sea transshipment by longline vessels. WCPFC18 agreed to continue the temporary suspensions after 15 December 2021 until 15 March 2022.
6. WCPFC18 agreed to grant cooperating non-member status to Curaçao, El Salvador, Ecuador, Liberia, Nicaragua, Panama, Thailand and Vietnam for 2022.
7. No change was made to the WCPFC IUU Vessel List. Three existing vessels - the Neptune, Fu Lien No.1 and Yu Fong 168 - remained on the List.
8. There wasn't any discussion on CCSBT-related issues at WCPFC18.
9. It was agreed that WCPFC19 would be held in Vietnam in 2022.