



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

REVISED PROPOSAL FOR VERIFYING CATCH AND EFFORT DATA THROUGH A CCSBT SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER PROGRAM

In recent years, the Extended Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) has re-iterated the importance of verifying catch and effort data to improve confidence in the key data sources for the stock assessment (Operating Model) and Management Procedure. Australia presented a scoping study on a regional observer program to CCSBT at its annual meetings in 2010 and 2011, and additionally to the special meeting of the Commission in August 2011. The broad objectives of this scoping study were:

1. Verify catch and effort data used as key data sources in the Operating Model and Management Procedure (particularly longline data)
2. Improve information on interactions with ecologically related species (ERS)

Members have provided feedback on Australia's scoping study, noting that while the objectives of the study were important, the cost estimate of the proposal was prohibitive, and that perhaps there were opportunities to verify CCSBT catch and effort data through the CCSBT catch documentation scheme (CDS) or the existing regional observer programs in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) or Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

While these are sensible suggestions, CCSBT would be somewhat limited in its ability to build on these schemes at present for several reasons, described below:

CDS

The current catch monitoring form provides aggregated data only (aggregated by net weight of product type, month, and CCSBT statistical area). Similarly, the catch tagging form provides aggregated temporal/spatial data only (aggregated by month/CCSBT statistical area) and does not apply to processed product. Neither effort data nor discards are recorded through the CDS. As such, the CDS provides no additional advantage over existing data provision requirements for the purpose of verifying catch and effort data for the Operating Model or Management Procedure.

WCPFC and IOTC regional observer programs

While many advantages are to be gained through utilising the regional observer programs established by WCPFC and IOTC, neither program was designed with the objectives of the CCSBT in mind. Notable shortcomings in a CCSBT context are:

- At present, neither program would meet the target observer coverage of 10% of the catch and effort, adopted by CCSBT7 in April 2001;
- IOTC Resolution 11-04 on a Regional Observer Scheme does not require observers to record information on the deployment of mitigation devices, including mandatory tori lines;
- Insufficient requirements for recording interactions with ERS, particularly seabirds, sharks and sea turtles.

Taking into account the feedback from other Members, Australia has drafted a workplan for implementing priority measures to improve the verification of catch and effort data through the CCSBT observer program in the most effective and practical manner.

The workplan separates issues into short-, medium- and long-term priority, where short-term elements are to be implemented in the 2013 fishing season. A draft resolution, for consideration by Members at the ERS Working Group meeting in March 2012 and to be considered for adoption by the Extended Commission at its 2012 annual meeting, provides a schedule of implementation for these elements (Attachment A).

Workplan

Short-term (2013 fishing season)

- Adopt binding measure on minimum observer coverage of 10 per cent of effort, to be in effect as of 1 January 2013.
- Revise the minimum data fields for CCSBT observer reporting and develop a CCSBT observer reporting template, to be in effect as of 1 January 2013 (avoiding duplication with existing WCPFC and IOTC reporting templates to the extent possible)
- Adopt a binding measure to submit fine-scale observer data (as specified in the CCSBT observer template) to the CCSBT Secretariat, for the purposes of making the data available to the Extended Scientific Committee, the Compliance Committee and the ERS Working Group, in accordance with the *Rules and procedures for the protection, access to, and dissemination of data compiled by the CCSBT*, to be in effect as of 1 January 2013.
- Adopt mandatory real-time monitoring on large-scale tuna longline vessels (as defined in CCSBT 2008 Resolution on Establishing a Program for Transshipment by Large-Scale Fishing Vessels), to be in effect as of 1 October 2013.

Medium-term (2014–16 fishing seasons)

- Review and update existing CCSBT training requirements for observers
- Develop on-board reference material, additional to the existing CCSBT ERS pamphlets
- Disseminate knowledge on the use of electronic monitoring and reporting technologies
- Develop performance measures for the CCSBT observer program

Longer-term (2017 and beyond)

- Accreditation of national observer programs against a CCSBT standard
- Develop a scheme for the statistical stratification and allocation of observers to attain 10% coverage of effort in all areas and at all times
- Implementation of electronic monitoring and reporting technologies
- Consider the appointment of a Regional Observer Program Data Analyst, responsible for statistical data analyses for quality control, data integrity and performance monitoring

Attachment A – Australia’s draft resolution:

Resolution on the Verification of Catch and Effort Data through the use of Observers

The Extended Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT),

Recognising the ongoing need for all Members and Cooperating Non-Members to continue to improve the accuracy and validity of their catch and effort data;

Recalling that, at its sixteenth annual meeting, the Extended Commission Members and Cooperating Non-Members agreed to measures to systematically verify catch data of southern bluefin tuna and ecologically related species by fishers (the *Resolution on action plans to ensure compliance with Conservation and Management Measures*);

Mindful of the 2008 Report of the Performance Review Working Group, which highlighted the development of effective measures relating to a regional observer program as an area in which CCSBT could improve its performance;

Acknowledging the recommendations of the 2010 Joint Tuna RFMO ‘*International Workshop on Improvement, Harmonization and Compatibility of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance measures, including monitoring catches from catching vessels to markets*’ on observers;

Recalling that, at its seventh annual meeting, Commission Members and Cooperating Non-Members adopted the CCSBT Scientific Observer Program Standards, including a target observer coverage of 10% catch and effort monitoring;

Agrees, in accordance with paragraph 3(b) of Article 8 of the CCSBT Convention, that:

Observer coverage

1. By 1 January 2013, in accordance with the CCSBT Scientific Observer Program Standards, Members and Cooperating Non-Members shall implement a minimum observer coverage of 10% of the catch and effort taken in the exclusive economic zone or fishery areas through which southern bluefin tuna migrates.
2. Each Member and Cooperating Non-Member of the Extended Commission shall be responsible for meeting the level of observer coverage as agreed by the Extended Commission.

Functions of observers

3. The functions of observers operating under this Resolution shall include:
 - a) collecting catch and effort data and other scientific data;
 - b) collecting data in relation to ecologically related species;
 - c) verifying the position of the vessel;
 - d) monitoring the implementation of conservation and management measures adopted by the Extended Commission,
 - i. including mandatory deployment of tori lines on longline vessels south of 30°S;
 - ii. any future measures adopted by the Extended Commission;
 - e) collecting data as specified in any template agreed by the Extended Commission;

- f) collecting any other information as agreed by the Extended Commission.
4. The Extended Commission shall develop a template for the collection of observer data for implementation by 1 January 2013.

Observer data to be submitted to the Secretariat

5. At least 60 days before the meeting of the Extended Scientific Committee, unless otherwise agreed, through the Data Exchange, Members and Cooperating Non-Members shall submit to the Secretariat all observer data as collected under paragraph 3.
6. Data collected in accordance with this Resolution shall be considered Extended Commission data.

Secretariat to make observer data available

7. From 1 January 2014, data submitted to the Secretariat in accordance with this Resolution shall be made available to the Extended Scientific Committee, Compliance Committee and the Ecologically Related Species Working Group in accordance with the *CCSBT rules and procedures for the protection, access to, and dissemination of data*.

Review of observer data

8. At the 2014 sessions of the Extended Scientific Committee and Compliance Committee, the data generated by the observer requirements established under this Resolution shall be reviewed and those subsidiary bodies shall make appropriate recommendations to the Extended Commission on further improvements to the observer requirements established under this Resolution.

General principles and obligations of observers

9. Observers operating under this Resolution shall be independent, impartial and qualified in accordance with any future criteria determined by the Extended Commission.
- a) Independence and impartiality in this context means that an observer operating under this Resolution shall not permit the observer's nationality or any other allegiance to influence their role as an observer but instead carry out those duties for the sole purpose of fulfilling the functions listed under clause 3 of this Resolution.
10. Observers shall not unduly interfere with the lawful operations of the vessel and in carrying out their duties shall give due consideration to the operational requirements of the vessel and to the extent practicable minimise disruption to the operation of vessels fishing under the Convention.

Resolution on Real-Time Monitoring on Large-Scale Longline Vessels

The Extended Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT),

Recognising the ongoing need for all Members and Cooperating Non-Members to continue to improve the accuracy and validity of their catch and effort data,

Agrees, in accordance with paragraph 3(b) of Article 8 of the CCSBT Convention, that:

1. After 1 January 2013, all tuna longline vessels with freezer capacity (hereafter referred to as “LSTLVs”), shall use real-time monitoring equipment while operating in the exclusive economic or fishery zones through which southern bluefin tuna migrates.
2. Members and Cooperating Non-Members shall require their LSTLVs to report daily to the Member or Cooperating Non-Member with the following information:
 - a) Name and vessel call sign of the vessel;
 - b) Date of catch;
 - c) Vessel’s position (latitude and longitude) at the start and end of each set;
 - d) Number of hooks used;
 - e) Time at start and end of gear set;
 - f) Time at state and end of gear retrieval;
 - g) Length, weight, product type and tag number of the individual southern bluefin tuna retained on the vessel; and
 - h) Number of southern bluefin tuna released or discarded.