



Proposal to revise monitoring requirements for identified high-risk areas for seabirds in the CCSBT convention area

Presented to the Extended Commission of the CCSBT

October 2024

Background

At the fourteenth meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG) of the CCSBT in 2022, New Zealand presented the results of a Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment (SEFRA) for seabirds which used New Zealand observer data and international effort data (in part from CCSBT Members) to extrapolate risk to seabirds from surface longline, bottom longline and trawl fishing across the Southern Hemisphere. It was noted at this meeting that *'collaboration should be continued with this [next] round of SEFRA, in the areas of data contribution, model development and examination of model robustness.'* It was agreed that a collaborative SEFRA would be undertaken by CCSBT Members looking at risk to seabirds from their respective surface longline fisheries.

New Zealand and Japan led extensive intersessional work, including a technical ERSWG meeting in 2023, to further develop the SEFRA model and coordinate data inputs from other Members. The model was successfully run in early 2024 and some results agreed at the fifteenth meeting of the ERSWG in June 2024. As a result of this work, the ERSWG updated their advice on seabirds to the Extended Commission of the CCSBT:

- *The level of interaction between seabirds and SBT fisheries remains a significant concern.*
- *The ERSWG noted that the most recent version of the Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment, SEFRA, indicates that Wandering and Royal Albatross species groups are at high risk. Species in these groups are of high conservation concern and ACAP indicated that some populations are in sharp decline.*
- *The SEFRA indicates areas with higher risk in some parts of the Tasman Sea (especially), Southern Atlantic, and Southern Indian Ocean. These areas account for a large proportion of the modelled risk to seabirds from SBT surface longline fisheries, but contain a very small proportion of SBT surface longline fishing effort.*
- *Based on the best scientific information available, the ERSWG recommends that CCSBT Members consider taking further actions that would ensure robust seabird mitigation measures and effective monitoring of implementation of the mitigation measures, whilst minimising impacts on SBT surface longline fisheries effort.*

This advice is presented to the Extended Commission of the CCSBT at this thirty-first annual meeting for consideration.

Proposal

Based on the ERSWG's updated advice to the Extended Commission on the risk of SBT fishing to seabirds, and noting the high-risk areas identified by the SEFRA model and recognised by Members in the ERSWG advice, New Zealand proposes to strengthen

monitoring requirements for longline vessels targeting SBT in these areas.¹ This entails phasing in coverage requirements over the next three fishing seasons, starting with a 50% requirement during the 2024/25 fishing season, 75% during the 2025/26 fishing season, and 100% in subsequent fishing season. Coverage requirements can be fulfilled by either placement of human observers on fishing vessels, or by electronic monitoring.

Conclusion

New Zealand considers additional measures are necessary to adequately protect seabirds from the impacts of SBT fishing. Noting another SEFRA model run is planned for early 2025 using additional Member data, New Zealand considers strengthening monitoring requirements in areas that are agreed to be 'high risk' by Members based on the existing SEFRA model is an appropriate intermittent action that should be considered by the Extended Commission.

¹ The areas identified correspond to Figure 1 in the Appendix of New Zealand's 'High risk areas discussion paper' presented to ERSWG 15 in June 2024 (ref CCSBT-ERS/2406/18 (Rev.1)) – see Appendix 2 for maps and descriptions. This was the smallest high-risk area out of all the eight options that were put forward to ERSWG.

APPENDIX 1 – Proposed revisions to CCSBT ERS Resolution.

**Resolution to Align CCSBT's Ecologically Related Species measures
with those of other tuna RFMOs**

(Updated at the Thirtieth Annual Meeting – 9-12 October 2023)

The Extended Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna,

Recalling the decision made at the 5th Strategy and Fisheries Management Working Group Meeting to develop a binding Ecological Related Species (ERS) measure for Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) Members without duplicating the effort of other tuna RFMOs by creating a CCSBT Resolution that requires CCSBT Members to follow the ERS measures of other relevant tuna RFMOs,

Noting the *Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks* and the need to cooperate and ensure consistency between conservation and management measures in the different tuna regional fisheries management organisations,

Concerned that some seabird species, notably some albatrosses and petrels, are threatened with global extinction,

Mindful that fishing for Southern Bluefin Tuna can also cause incidental harm to other species such as sea turtles, sharks and cetaceans,

Further recalling the requirement in Article 5(2) of the Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna that the Parties shall expeditiously provide to the CCSBT data on, *inter alia*, ecologically related species,

Determined to mitigate incidental harm to ecologically related species caused by fishing for Southern Bluefin Tuna,

Noting the importance of harmonising conservation and management measures with other organisations responsible for managing international fisheries, as agreed at the Kobe Meeting of Joint Tuna RFMOs on 26 January 2007,

Reaffirming the recommendation at the seventh meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG) held in Tokyo from 3 to 6 July 2007, that Members and Cooperating Non-Members will provide national reports on their interactions with ecologically related species in Southern Bluefin Tuna fisheries to the ERSWG,

Noting the revised advice from the fifteenth meeting of the ERSWG held in Tokyo from 4 to 7 June 2024, that CCSBT Members consider taking further actions that would ensure robust seabird mitigation measures and effective monitoring of implementation of mitigation measures,

Recalling areas of highest risk noted in the advice from the fifteenth meeting of the ERSWG to be areas of the Tasman Sea (especially), Southern Atlantic, and Southern Indian Oceans,

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

1. For the purposes of this CCSBT Resolution:
 - a) the ‘Area of Competence of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission’ is that described in Article 2 of the *Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission*;
 - b) the ‘Convention Area of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission’ is that described in Article 3 of the *Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean*;
 - c) the ‘Convention Area of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas’ is that described in Article 1 of the *International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas*;
 - d) An Area defined in paragraphs a) – c) above is an “Area of Competence” and are collectively the “Areas of Competence”;
 - e) ‘ERS Measures’ mean all measures relating to ecologically related species in force in *the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)*, *the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)*, *the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)*, as adopted and amended from time to time, as contained in Annex I;
 - f) Member or Cooperating Non-Member means a Member or Cooperating Non-Member of the Extended Commission of the CCSBT.
2. This Resolution shall apply to all vessels on the ‘CCSBT Record of fishing vessels authorised to fish for Southern Bluefin Tuna’ in the Areas of Competence. Each Member and Cooperating Non-Member shall ensure that such vessels flying its flag and fishing for Southern Bluefin Tuna in an Area of Competence comply with all ERS Measures in force in that Area of Competence (whether or not the Member or Cooperating Non-Member is a member of the tuna RFMO in which the ERS Measures were adopted).
3. When fishing outside Areas of Competence, Members and Cooperating Non-Members shall use Tori lines in all long-line SBT fisheries below 30 degrees south.
4. For areas identified as highest risk, any Member or Cooperating Non-Member shall undertake systematic observer coverage of its vessels targeting SBT, either with human observers or with electronic monitoring as outlined in paragraph 5. For purposes of this Resolution:
 - a) Highest risk area of the Tasman Sea is an area commencing at point 45°00'S 150°00'E; then heading north along the 150°00'E line of longitude to 40°00'S 150°00'E; then heading east along the 40°00'S line of latitude to 40°00'S 155°00'E; then heading north along the 155°00'E line of longitude to 35°00'S 155°00'E; then heading east along the 35°00'S line of latitude to 35°00'S 160°00'E; then heading south along the 160°00'E line of longitude to 45°00'S 160°00'E; then heading west along the 45°00'S line of latitude to the point of commencement.
 - b) Highest risk area of the southern Atlantic Ocean is a box covering the area between 40°00'S and 45°00'S and 10°00'W and 5°00'E.
5. The systematic observer coverage scheme referred to in paragraph 4 above shall entail:

- a) a target coverage rate of no less than 50% during the 2024/25 fishing season; no less than 75% during the 2025/26 and 2026/27 fishing seasons; and 100% coverage in subsequent fishing seasons;
 - b) all vessels being observed at least once every two fishing seasons until 100% coverage is in force.
6. Where Areas of Competence overlap, Members and Cooperating Non-Members shall elect which applicable RFMO's ERS Measures to apply.
7. Each Member and Cooperating Non-Member shall ensure that effective action is taken in response to a vessel flying its flag that fails to comply with the obligations contained in the ERS Measures when fishing for Southern Bluefin Tuna in an Area of Competence. If a Member or Cooperating Non-Member of the Extended Commission undertakes fishing for Southern Bluefin Tuna in an Area of Competence of a Convention of which it is not a Member, that Member or Cooperating Non-Member shall report, if any, such actions relating to the relevant ERS Measures to the Compliance Committee of the CCSBT, unless the compliance of that Member or Cooperating Non-Member with such ERS measures is assessed in the appropriate body of that Convention.
8. The CCSBT secretariat will annually update the list of ERS Measures contained in Annex I before the CCSBT Extended Commission Meeting according to any decisions taken on ecologically related species at the Annual Meetings of the IOTC, WCPFC, and ICCAT.
9. Except in the case of WCPFC, Members and Cooperating Non-Members that have formally objected to an ERS Measure in the relevant tuna RFMO, and who, by reason of that formal objection and the operation of the tuna RFMO's decision-making rules, are not bound by that ERS Measure, are exempted from applying that ERS Measure when fishing for Southern Bluefin Tuna in the applicable Area of Competence. In the case of WCPFC, Members and Cooperating Members that have sought a review of a decision on an ERS measure in accordance with Article 20, paragraph 6 of the *Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean* are exempted from applying that ERS Measure when fishing for Southern Bluefin Tuna in the applicable Area of Competence until the Measure becomes binding.
10. The Secretariat shall annually present a report to the CCSBT Compliance Committee on the implementation of the ERS Measures, for the sole purpose of the provision of information for Members and Cooperating Non-Members.

Annex I: The ERS Measures

Area of Competence of the IOTC

- a) Resolution 12/04 On the conservation of marine turtles;
- b) Resolution 12/06 On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries (will be superseded by Resolution 23/07 on 1 July 2024);
- c) Resolution 12/09 On the conservation of thresher sharks (family Alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence;
- d) Resolution 13/05 On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*);
- e) Resolution 13/06 On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries;
- f) Resolution 17/05 On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC;
- g) Resolution 18/02 On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries;
- h) Resolution 19/03 On the conservation of mobulid rays caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence);
- i) Resolution 23/06 On the conservation of cetaceans;
- j) Resolution 23/07 On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries (will enter into force on 1 July 2024 and supersede Resolution 12/06)

Convention Area of the WCPFC

- k) Resolution 2018/03 - Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds;
- l) Resolution 2018/04 - Conservation and Management Measure of Sea Turtles;
- m) Resolution 2019/05 - Conservation and Management Measure on Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with Fisheries in the WCPFC Convention Area;
- n) Resolution 2022/04 – Conservation and Management Measure for Sharks;

Convention Area of the ICCAT

- o) Resolution 95-02 on cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with regard to study on the status of stocks and by-catches of shark species;
- p) Resolution 03-10 on the shark fishery;
- q) Recommendation 04-10 concerning the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT;
- r) Resolution 05-08 on circle hooks;
- s) Supplemental Recommendation 07-06 Concerning Sharks;
- t) Recommendation 07-07 on Reducing Incidental By-Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries;
- u) Recommendation 09-07 on the Conservation of Thresher Sharks Caught in Association with Fisheries in the ICCAT Convention Area;

- v) Recommendation 10-06 on Atlantic Shortfin Mako Sharks Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries;
- w) Recommendation 10-07 by ICCAT on the Conservation of Oceanic Whitetip Sharks caught in Association with fisheries in the ICCAT Convention Area;
- x) Recommendation 10-08 on Hammerhead Sharks (family Sphyrnidae) caught in Association with Fisheries Managed by ICCAT;
- y) Recommendation 11-08 on the Conservation of Silky Sharks Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries;
- z) Supplemental Recommendation 11-09 on Reducing Incidental By-Catch of Seabirds in ICCAT Longline Fisheries;
- aa) Recommendation 11-10 on Information Collection and Harmonization of Data on By-catch and Discards in ICCAT Fisheries;
- bb) Recommendation 13-10 on Biological Sampling of Prohibited Shark Species by Scientific Observers;
- cc) Recommendation 14-06 on Shortfin Mako Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries;
- dd) Recommendation 15-06 on Porbeagle Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries;
- ee) Recommendation 22-12 on the bycatch of sea turtles caught in association with ICCAT fisheries

APPENDIX 2 – Maps showing cumulative relative mortality with ‘high risk’ area defined as the three species with highest relative mortality and the respective three grid cells which contribute the most to their relative mortality (top figure). The bottom figure shows CSBT Member countries’ surface longline fisheries effort in 2019. Blue borders illustrate ‘the high-risk’ area for both figures.

