North Pacific Fisheries Commission

# 9th Meeting of the NPFC Commission
# FINAL REPORT

**24-27 March 2025**

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# North Pacific Fisheries Commission
# 9th Commission Meeting

**24-27 March 2025**
**Osaka, Japan (hybrid)**

# FINAL REPORT

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. The 9th Meeting of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) was held in a hybrid format, with participants attending in-person in Osaka, Japan, or online via WebEx, on 24-27 March 2025, and was attended by Members from Canada, China, the European Union (EU), Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, the United States of America (USA), and Vanuatu. Panama, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), the International Monitoring Control and Surveillance (IMCS) Network, the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS), the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC), the Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew), the Ocean Foundation, the Ocean Governance Institute (OGI), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and Greenpeace International attended as observers. The meeting was opened by Mr. Shingo Ota (Japan), who served as the Commission Chair.

*1a. Welcome Address*

2. The Chair welcomed the participants to Osaka and thanked the Secretariat for its dedicated efforts to organize the meeting. The Chair noted that this meeting marks the 10th anniversary of the NPFC. The Chair briefly reviewed the history of the Commission, noting that the NPFC Convention entered into force on 19 July 2015, following the ratification by Japan, Canada, China, and Korea. The Chair highlighted key achievements of the Commission over the past decade. The Chair noted that while the Commission has achieved significant progress, several challenges remain, including the low stock status of Pacific saury, the need to reduce fishing mortality for chub mackerel based on the latest stock assessment, the absence of completed stock assessments for several species, questions about VME protection, and the need for improvements in monitoring, control, and surveillance mechanisms. The Chair also emphasized the importance of making progress on a regional observer program for at-sea transshipment. The Chair's full statement is attached as Annex A.

*1b. Appointment of Rapporteur*

3. Mr. Jacques Chaumont was appointed as the Rapporteur.

*1c. Adoption of Agenda*

4. The Commission adopted its agenda (Annex B) with the understanding that Agenda Item 9 would be taken up earlier due to availability of the presenting scientific Co-Chair, and a session of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) would take place during the afternoon break to complete its remaining work. The List of Documents and List of Participants are attached (Annexes C, D).

*1d. Meeting Arrangements*

5. The Executive Secretary, Dr. Robert Day, outlined the meeting arrangements.

Agenda Item 2. Membership of the Commission

*2a. Status of the Membership*

6. The report on the status of the Convention by the Republic of Korea, the Depositary of the NPFC, was taken as read (NPFC-2025-COM09-IP01). Since the previous Commission meeting, the total number of Members remains at nine.

*2b. CNCP applications*

7. The TCC Chair, Ms. Alisha Falberg (USA), reported that TCC08 had extensively reviewed Panama's application to renew its CNCP status. Despite the late submission of the application, the TCC had agreed to consider it. Following discussion, the TCC was unable to endorse the application but recommended that the Commission further review Panama’s application for CNCP status for 2025-2027, noting that Panama was requested to provide more information in writing about their monitoring capabilities ahead of the Commission meeting.

8. Panama presented additional information (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP07 SuppDoc.1) to address the concerns raised by Members during the TCC meeting, reaffirming its commitment to sustainable fishing and conservation of marine resources in the NPFC Convention Area. Panama provided details on its institutional capacity to exercise effective control over its fishing fleet, including its Fisheries Monitoring Center, national observer program, and an electronic monitoring program that will become mandatory from 15 April 2025. Panama confirmed its willingness to participate in the NPFC Regional Observer Program once it enters into force on 1 April 2026, and requested approval of its application for CNCP status for the 2025-2027 period until the 2027 annual meeting.

9. Several Members expressed general support for Panama's application while raising concerns about: the late submission of their CNCP application; past incidents involving Panamanian-flagged vessels; and the potential commencement of fishing activities before the implementation of the NPFC Regional Observer Program in 2026.

10. Following further exchange of views, the Commission agreed to grant CNCP status to Panama for the period 2025-2027, with the condition that Panama's participatory rights in NPFC fisheries would begin on 1 April 2026, only when the Regional Observer Program for Transshipment is implemented. The Commission encouraged Panama to make a voluntary financial contribution commensurate with what would be assessed should it become a Contracting Party.

11. The EU stated that any new incident involving a Panama-flagged carrier vessel engaging in unauthorized transshipment within the NPFC area would lead the EU to object to the renewal of Panama's CNCP status at the following Annual Meeting.

12. Panama expressed its gratitude for being granted CNCP status and affirmed its commitment to the principles of cooperation, transparency, and compliance that underpin the work of the Commission, as well as its dedication to responsible fisheries management and strong stance against IUU fishing.

Agenda Item 3. Report from the Secretariat

13. The Executive Secretary presented a summary of the annual report on the Commission's activities for the intersessional period between the 8th Commission Meeting of April 2024 and this current Commission meeting (NPFC-2025-SR).

14. Some Members made suggestions for future improvement of the Secretariat Report, including clarification of the key outputs from meetings (to not imply the list was exhaustive) or omission of the list entirely (as they are well-described in the respective meeting reports), placing focus on implementation of the Secretariat's Work Plan, and inclusion of sections on challenges experienced by the Secretariat and options for addressing them. The Executive Secretary acknowledged the feedback and noted that future Secretariat Reports would reflect such feedback.

Agenda Item 4. Performance Review of the Commission – overview of progress

15. The Commission reviewed the Performance Review matrix update document (NPFC-2025-COM09-IP09), noting that some parts required updating based on the latest work of subsidiary bodies.

16. The USA recognized the substantial progress made by the Commission toward addressing a number of the Performance Review recommendations but highlighted that there had not been sufficient time to discuss the substance of these recommendations in the TCC or FAC. The USA recalled paragraph 94 from the COM08 Final Report, which outlined an intersessional process for updating the matrix and seeking Member input on priorities and timeframes, and requested that this process be implemented as tasked.

17. The EU agreed with the USA, and noted that improving data collection for both target and bycatch species and marine ecosystems should be considered as a key priority, as it was the cornerstone for robust scientific advice, effective monitoring of compliance, and science-based management decisions.

18. Russia highlighted recommendations 4.2.1 (related to data collection and harmonization of data collection formats), as well as 4.5.4 and 4.5.5 (related to climate change), as particularly important areas requiring further attention.

19. The Commission agreed to implement the process outlined in paragraph 94 of the COM08 Final Report for further reviewing the matrix and considering possible improvements to the process. The Chair indicated that he and the Secretariat would initiate this process following the annual meeting, in consultation with Members.

Agenda Item 5. Report of the 9th Scientific Committee meeting

*5a. Review of the SC09 Report and response to COM08 taskings*

20. The Chair of the SC, Dr. Janelle Curtis (Canada), summarized the outcomes of the 9$^{th}$ SC meeting and the meetings of its subsidiary bodies (NPFC-2025-SC09-Final Report & NPFC-2025-COM09-IP10) for discussion by the Commission.

21. Several Members expressed concern about the status of chub mackerel, with one Member noting the sharp decline in CPUE and catch levels and concerning changes in biological parameters.

22. The Chair of TWG-CMSA, Dr. Kazuhiro Oshima (Japan), explained that due to the drastically changing productivity of Chub mackerel in recent years, they did provide MSY-related and

SPR-related reference points, however, those vary over time and are uncertain, therefore they are potentially misleading with respect to stock status. He noted that future projections under current fishing mortality showed the stock would decline in future years, which formed the basis for the scientific advice.

23. Members discussed structural improvements to the SC's work, with suggestions for adopting management cycles for different stocks to optimize SC's capacity, and establishing a peer review system for stock assessment to address methodological challenges like scaling issues.

24. On the topic of domestic stock assessments, Members acknowledged their value while emphasizing the need for transparent, collaborative scientific processes. Several suggestions were made to improve stock assessment approaches, including developing a formal process for using domestic assessments as interim advice. For NPFC stock assessments, Members suggested considering less frequent benchmark assessments with regular updates between them, and standardizing how stock status is presented across species to enhance consistencies as much as possible.

25. Members expressed broad support for the VME protection measures proposed by SC09, particularly the closure of additional areas on Yuryaku Seamount and the incorporation of the translation table for VME indicator corals.

26. The SC Chair confirmed that the discussions at the SC on data needs and gaps that could be possibly addressed through a regional observer program for pelagic fisheries have not been finalized. The SC will continue to discuss data needs and data gaps that could be filled by a regional observer program and inform the TCC about progress in these discussions.

27. The biological characteristics of pelagic species were discussed, with emphasis on how these stocks reproduce in national waters before migrating to offshore feeding areas. Several Members noted that both reproduction and feeding areas are particularly vulnerable zones for the survival of these resources, which have implications for their conservation and management.

28. The USA gave a statement on high seas bottom fisheries. The USA's statement is attached as Annex F.

29. The Commission discussed the prioritization of species for stock assessment. Some Members suggested that Japanese sardine should be prioritized based on catch levels and effort, while

others suggested that neon flying squid should be given priority as it has widespread fishing activities across the Convention Area and is currently not assessed by any Member. The Commission agreed to task the SC to continue to work on stock assessments for both neon flying squid and Japanese sardine.

30. The Commission also requested the SC to consider the frequency of stock assessments, including the possibility of conducting benchmark assessments less frequently with updates in between, and to explore the potential benefits of a peer review system.

31. In response to SC's request for guidance on providing advice for priority species where collaborative work towards NPFC stock assessment is not being conducted, the Commission agreed that SC should continue to observe domestic stock assessments, report the results to the Commission without endorsing them, while working towards conducting NPFC stock assessments for priority species.

32. On the topic of bottom fisheries, Greenpeace International, DSCC, and Pew expressed concern that the proposed closures on Yuryaku Seamount did not reflect extensive peer-reviewed science identifying VMEs across many areas of the seamount chain. They urged broader protections in line with the UNGA resolutions and the NPFC Convention, and drew attention to their submitted observer paper (NPFC-2025-COM09-OP6).

*5b. Adoption of the SC09 Report and Recommendations*

33. The Commission discussed additional recommendations to the Scientific Committee based on the proposal submitted by the EU (NPFC-2025-COM09-WP11).

34. The SC Chair provided a written response to the EU's proposal (NPFC-2025-COM09-WP12), and several Members offered further revisions to the EU's recommendations. The Commission agreed to forward the recommendations (Annex G) as revised to the SC to consider incorporation into its work plan.

35. The Commission noted the importance of reporting bycatch data for all priority species. The Science Manager presented summaries of available bycatch information for Japanese sardine and Pacific saury, as well as the ratio of chub mackerel and blue mackerel catches reported by members. Several Members suggested that reporting requirements for bycatch should be clarified to ensure all catches are properly accounted for in stock assessments. The EU submitted a proposal to amend open CMMs (CMM 2024-07, CMM 2024-08 and

CMM 2024-11) to strengthen and clarify bycatch reporting requirements (NPFC-2025-COM09-WP10). The Commission agreed to the proposed changes under agenda item 8.

36. The Commission adopted the reports and the recommendations of the SC with the understanding that the proposed amendments to the two CMMs would be discussed under Agenda Item 8.

Agenda Item 6. Report of the 8th Technical and Compliance Committee meeting

*6a. Review of TCC08 Report and response to COM08 taskings*

37. The Chair of the TCC, Ms. Alisha Falberg (USA), summarized the outcomes of the 8th TCC meeting (NPFC-2025-TCC08-Final Report, Annex H) for discussion by the Commission.

38. The Commission discussed the Fisheries Overview paper presented during TCC, with some Members expressing concern about the process of making continual changes to a report document during the meeting without a clear understanding of the basis of such changes by Members and the need to maintain objectivity in reports prepared by the Secretariat.

39. The Compliance Manager explained the challenges in reconciling different counting methods used by the Secretariat and Members. The Compliance Manager noted the lack of clear guidelines on developing the Fisheries Overview.

40. Several Members expressed views on how to handle the Fisheries Overview and related matters, including suggestions to focus on other metrics that could be more effective for monitoring compliance, to base discussions on Members' self-reported vessel numbers rather than vessel registry data, and to change the document type from Information Paper to Working Paper in the future to align with the NPFC Document Policy.

41. Several Members noted the linkage to the discussion of historical existing level and the importance of progressing work on defining historical existing level with unified criteria.

42. The EU noted that these discussions were mainly focused on reconciling the historical number of authorized vessels which did not seem to be an effective measure for restricting fishing effort, or monitoring compliance. Noting the repeated and inconclusive discussions at TCC, the EU suggested that the Commission consider in the future other more appropriate metrics, such as the number of active f/v or number of fishing days, for the purpose of effort control in NPFC fisheries.

43. The Commission agreed to task the SWG Ops to continue its work on historical existing level and to review the information provided by the Secretariat and Members, as well as to work towards establishing specific criteria for calculating historical existing level based on the recommendation by TCC08.

*6b. Adoption of IUU Vessel List for 2025*

44. The Commission reviewed the Provisional IUU Vessel List provided to COM09 by TCC08, which contained one vessel proposed by Canada.

45. China informed the Commission that it had completed its sanction procedure against the vessel on 20 March, with the vessel owner making full payment of the sanction.

46. Following discussions, Canada and China provided additional information about the vessel, including the violation report, a summary of the inspection report from China's provincial enforcement agency, and supporting evidence regarding packaging practices.

47. Several Members expressed concerns about the possible recurring nature of these incidents, their potential negative impacts on Pacific saury stock status, and the need to prevent similar issues in the future. Concerns were also raised about inconsistencies between China's domestic laws and NPFC regulations, and about the process for providing official information on sanctions for consideration of Members.

48. China acknowledged the significant violations of NPFC CMMs by one Chinese-flagged vessel related to catch of Pacific saury during a closed season/without a quota, misreporting of catch and misreporting in a transshipment declaration, and apparent effort to conceal and misrepresent catch in logbooks and transshipment documentation. China noted the significant sanctions imposed and its view that this constituted adequate flag state action with sanctions imposed of appropriate severity, and updated the Commission to confirm the vessel owner had paid the fines.

49. The Commission requested China to further investigate new information and consider increasing the penalty imposed on the vessel company due to the overlapping potential violations and aggravating information. China committed to update its national legislation or regulations to ensure conformity with NPFC CMMs to ensure all vessels accurately record and report Pacific saury catch and other bycatch in catch records and transshipment declarations, regardless of the target species, to ensure compliance with catch limits adopted by the Commission. China also committed to follow up with its vessels to ensure they do not

fish for Pacific saury without quota. China indicated that if similar violations recur on its vessels, it will withdraw the vessel's authorization and high seas permit for a year while investigations occur.

50. China acknowledged that the issues uncovered during the high seas boarding and inspection should have been reported by the observer. Until the new transshipment ROP is implemented, the Commission requested China to take steps to improve implementation of its national observer program to identify violations. China also agreed to strengthen their landing inspections procedures, in cooperation with domestic customs officials. China committed to carefully examine boarding reports to confirm compliance with CMMs, regardless of whether a violation was identified by the authorized inspectors, as well as to conduct at-sea and strengthened port inspections on its vessels. To support effective HSBI, China will continue to conduct HSBI in 2025 and to provide transparent inspection details, to include types of violations by vessel type to the Commission. China Fisheries Authority committed to update their authorized inspectors with the outcomes of this meeting, any amendments to CMMs, and confirm implementation of bycatch provisions that will impact fishing vessels.

51. The Commission agreed to not list the vessel in the IUU Vessel List and adopted the NPFC IUU Vessel List for 2025 (Annex I).

*6c. Adoption of Final Compliance Monitoring Report*

52. The TCC Chair explained that this was the first implementation year of the CMS CMM 2024-13 adopted at COM08. TCC assessed compliance on seven areas of potential non-compliance identified by the Secretariat and six areas of potential non-compliance identified by members. All other areas were assumed compliant. The TCC developed a Provisional Compliance Report by consensus, which assessed each Member’s compliance with all obligations in Annex 2 of CMM 2024-13, and attached an executive summary that summarized outstanding issues, general feedback on the process, and identified data gaps.

53. The Commission adopted the Compliance Monitoring Report as forwarded by TCC08 (Annex J).

*6d. Adoption of the TCC08 Report and Recommendations*

54. The Commission adopted the report and the recommendations of the TCC with the understanding that the draft CMMs discussed at the TCC08 would be discussed under Agenda Item 8. (Annex H)

*6e. Consideration of other TCC issues identified during TCC08 or by COM09 meeting*

55. The TCC Chair noted that the TCC Work Plan had not been fully updated and reviewed at TCC08, and sought Commission guidance on the Work Plan. At the request of a Member, the Secretariat and TCC Chair updated the document and posted a revised version for consideration.

56. Some Members suggested minor amendments, and the Commission agreed to the revised TCC Work Plan (Annex K).

57. The Ocean Foundation, DSCC, WWF Japan, and Pew congratulated the Commission for adopting the NPFC Rules of Transparency for TCC, which they described as world-leading in including civil society organizations in discussions about implementation of agreed decisions.

58. The Commission reviewed the list of obligations to be assessed as part of the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) in Annex 2 of CMM 2024-13. The Commission agreed to add paragraph 16 of the Pacific Saury CMM, paragraph 31 of the HSBI CMM, paragraphs 5, 7, 9, and 11 of the Anadromous Species CMM, paragraph 3 of the Chub Mackerel CMM, and provisions related to bycatch reporting across CMMs, while noting that paragraph 2 of the Vessel Registry CMM did not have full agreement from Members (Annex L).

59. The TCC Chair noted that some conforming changes would be required to update paragraph numbers and language in existing obligations to align with amended CMMs.

60. Regarding the new VMS entry and exit reporting requirement (Annex M), the Commission agreed that this obligation would take effect from 1 April 2026 and would be added to the list of obligations to be assessed after that date (Annex L).

Agenda Item 7. Report of the 7th Finance and Administration Committee meeting

*7a. Review of FAC Report*

61. The Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC), Mr. Dan Hull (USA), was unable to attend the Commission meeting, so in his absence, Mr. Haruo Tominaga (Japan), who had served as the Interim FAC Chair for the final proceedings of the FAC meeting, summarized the outcomes of the 7$^{th}$ FAC meeting (NPFC-2025-FAC07-Final Report, Annex N) for discussion by the Commission.

62. The European Union announced it would provide a voluntary contribution of 50,000 (EUR) to support specific work of the TCC and the SC. The Commission thanked the EU for its generous contribution.

*7b. Adoption of the proposed budget for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026*

63. One Member emphasized its goal of having a zero-growth policy for the budget, acknowledging the need for future discussion and review of the budget in the following year.

64. The Commission adopted the proposed budgets for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 as submitted by the FAC07 (NPFC-2025-COM09-WP13, Annex O, Table 1) along with the associated assessed contributions (Annex O, Table 2), noting that the assessed contribution amounts for 2026/2027 would be updated based on GDP and catch history at that time. The Commission confirmed that the budget for 2026/2027 could be subject to review at the 2026 annual meeting.

*7c. Adoption of the FAC07 Report and Recommendations*

65. The Commission adopted the report and the recommendations of the FAC07 (Annex N).

*7d. Consideration of other FAC issues identified during FAC07 or by COM09 meeting*

66. The Commission discussed the financial implications of the proposed transshipment observer program. Several Members sought clarification on how the program would be funded and whether changes to the Financial Regulations would be necessary. The Interim FAC Chair noted that in other RFMOs, while costs are primarily paid by Members involved in transshipment, there are sometimes administrative costs incurred by the Secretariat.

67. China stated that the cost of the observer program should be borne by a special account funded by members participating in transshipment, noting that administrative costs for the Secretariat would be a relatively small amount that could be covered. China also indicated willingness to use its voluntary contributions to help cover the initial set-up costs of the program.

68. The Commission agreed that:
    (a) The cost of the observer program shall be borne by those involved in the at-sea transshipment observer program, on a prorated basis;
    (b) Initial costs (e.g., development of an observer report database) would be covered by the China Voluntary Contribution Fund;

(c) The Secretariat's work in detailed analysis of the program (e.g., aligning reports from the Transshipment Observer Program service provider with VMS and transshipment reporting) would be considered part of its compliance monitoring work;

(d) The program would be operated using a special fund set up under the auspices of paragraph 27 of the NPFC Financial Regulations and kept separate from the General and Working Capital Funds.

(e) The cost sharing method among Members involved in at-sea transshipment will be discussed intersessionally, and for this purpose, the Secretariat will produce a draft cost sharing scheme, taking into account the practice of other RFMOs, and submit it to Members involved in at-sea transshipment. China will lead intersessional discussion.

69. The Commission also agreed on the following approach to implement the Transshipment Observer Program:

(a) An ad-hoc SWG TOP (TSWG) will be established with leadership by China, with the support of the Secretariat, and participation open to all Members and CNCP. Participation from those active in transshipment is encouraged.

(b) The TSWG tasks will include:

(i) With support of the Secretariat, draft set of requirements for a contract (a statement of work) based on the Transshipment Observer Program CMM;

(ii) Based on the drafted contract requirements, report to the Commission on the contracting process;

(iii) With support of the Secretariat, develop pro-rated cost sharing formula;

(iv) With support of the Secretariat, develop a financial management approach to create a separate restricted account established under the NPFC Financial Regulation 27; and

(v) Any other issues that the TSWG deem appropriate.

(c) The Commission will ensure that Financial Regulation 29 is appropriately considered.

Agenda Item 8. Conservation and Management Measures

*8a. Review of the amendments to existing CMMs and any new CMMs*

*Review of CMM 2024-05 For Bottom Fisheries And Protection Of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems In The Northwestern Pacific Ocean*

70. The Commission reviewed the SC09 recommendation to revise CMM 2024-05 for Bottom Fisheries and Protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in the Northwestern Pacific Ocean (NPFC-2025-COM09-WP01). Canada sought clarification on paragraph 4(b) regarding the prohibition of bottom fisheries expansion into the western part of the Convention Area where no such fishing is currently occurring. The SC Chair confirmed that any bottom contact

fishing outside the existing fishing footprint would be subject to an assessment and the exploratory fishing protocol. The Commission adopted the proposed amendments to CMM 2024-05 (Annex P).

71. DSCC and Pew drew attention to a letter signed by 52 deep-sea scientists concerning the Northwest Hawaiian Ridge and Emperor Seamount Chain (NPFC-2025-COM09-OP6). The letter noted that VMEs occur or are likely to occur across most of the area, that significant adverse impacts have occurred and may continue, and that damaged coral ecosystems can recover if protected from bottom fishing. The scientists recommended a precautionary temporary closure of all fishing using gear that may contact the seafloor, to demonstrate NPFC's commitment to global biodiversity conservation objectives and good faith engagement with the BBNJ process.

72. Canada and Korea expressed support for the scientists' input and acknowledged the importance of advancing marine protections based on peer-reviewed science. They supported updating impact assessments for bottom fisheries and the area-based closure on Yuryaku Seamount as a first step. These Members noted the significance of the upcoming UN bottom fisheries review in 2026 and expressed a desire to continue working on marine ecosystem protection in coming years.

*Review of CMM 2024-06 For Bottom Fisheries And Protection Of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems In The Northeastern Pacific Ocean*

73. The Commission reviewed the SC09 recommendation to revise CMM 2024-06 for Bottom Fisheries and Protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in the Northeastern Pacific Ocean (NPFC-2025-COM09-WP02). The Commission adopted the proposed amendments to CMM 2024-06 (Annex Q).

*Review of CMM 2024-11 For Japanese Sardine, Neon Flying Squid, And Japanese Flying Squid*

74. Japan presented proposed amendments to CMM 2024-11 for Japanese Sardine, Neon Flying Squid, and Japanese Flying Squid (NPFC-2025-COM09-WP03). Japan explained that its proposal aims to split the current CMM into two separate measures and to establish a catch limit for Japanese sardine in the NPFC Convention Area. Japan noted that the stock shows concerning signs despite some recovery since 2021, with fishing mortality above $F_{MSY}$ level and recent recruitment indices indicating a sharp decline. Japan highlighted that it has reduced its domestic TAC for 2025 by approximately 30% and emphasized the need for compatible measures in the Convention Area under the UN Fish Stocks Agreement.

75. Several Members raised concerns and questions including about the rationale for the 30% reduction and whether the catch limit would apply to vessels targeting Japanese sardine or include bycatch. Some Members raised concern about discussions on this matter not going through the SC first.

76. Extensive discussions were carried out informally throughout the meeting on this proposal. The Commission was unable to reach a consensus, so Japan decided to defer consideration of the proposal and expressed its intent to submit a proposal to amend this CMM to COM10.

77. The Commission agreed to amend the CMM to clarify the bycatch reporting requirements (as outlined in NPFC-2025-COM09-WP10) and the Secretariat was tasked with making this amendment to the CMM for clarity purposes (Annex R).

*Review of CMM 2024-07 For Chub Mackerel*

78. Japan presented proposed amendments to CMM 2024-07 for Chub Mackerel (NPFC-2025-COM09-WP04). Japan explained that its proposal seeks to set a revised catch limit in the NPFC Convention Area based on the first stock assessment conducted by the Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment (TWG-CMSA) and endorsed by the SC. Japan highlighted that the assessment indicates that spawning stock biomass (SSB) has been declining sharply since 2018, along with drastic decreases in maturity at age and weight at age. Japan noted that the stock assessment advised reducing current fishing mortality, as projections showed it would lead to further decline in SSB. Japan's proposal suggests setting the TAC in the Convention Area well below 50,000 metric tons to ensure the annual catch level in the entire area stays below 150,000 metric tons. Japan mentioned that as a coastal state, it is planning to reduce its domestic TAC by approximately 70%.

79. WWF expressed support for Japan's proposals for Japanese sardine and chub mackerel, noting the importance of strengthening management in accordance with the best available science, and calling on NPFC to reduce catch for chub mackerel and to set catch limits for Japanese sardine while the stock is still relatively abundant, suggesting this would be better for the future of both the species and the fishing industry and communities.

80. The Ocean Foundation and Pew welcomed Japan's chub mackerel proposal, noting the concerning state of the stock. They encouraged the inclusion of a paragraph calling for the development of a management strategy evaluation (MSE) and adoption of a management procedure by 2028.

81. Japan provided an additional information paper (NPFC-2025-COM09-IP11) with projection scenarios for chub mackerel for consideration by Members. Extensive discussions were carried out throughout the meeting in a small working group formed to discuss this proposal.

82. Japan explained the revisions made during the small working group, and following further input from Members (including clarifying the bycatch reporting requirements, as outlined in NPFC-2025-COM09-WP10). The Commission adopted the proposed amendments (Annex S).

83. The Commission noted that, for 2025, "fishing activities for chub mackerel" in the amended CMM has the same meaning as "fishing activities targeting chub mackerel."

84. Several Members expressed concern about incidental catch not being counted towards catch limits, and thus creating a potential conservation risk, as well an unclear definition of "targeting" or "directed fishing" within NPFC. The Commission agreed to continue discussion on this issue for all NPFC species at future meetings.

85. The Commission agreed to task the TWGCMSA as outlined in Annex T.

*Review of CMM 2024-08 For Pacific Saury*

86. Japan presented proposed amendments to CMM 2024-08 for Pacific Saury (NPFC-2025-COM09-WP05). Japan explained that the proposal implements the interim harvest control rule (HCR) adopted last year, which calls for a 10% reduction in TAC. The proposed amendments include: setting the annual catch limit at 202,500 metric tons (paragraph 7); maintaining the current proportion for the Convention Area at 60% (paragraph 8); requiring Members to reduce their catch by a yet-to-be-determined percentage from their 2018 reported catch (paragraph 9); and requiring the Secretariat to inform all members when a member reaches its catch limit or decides to close its fishery (paragraph 12).

87. Members generally supported the 10% TAC reduction based on the interim HCR, but required further discussion on other issues concerning Japan's proposal.

88. Chinese Taipei presented proposed amendments to CMM 2024-08 for Pacific Saury (NPFC-2025-COM09-WP06). Chinese Taipei proposed reducing the TAC in the entire area to 202,500 metric tons and the TAC in the Convention Area to 121,500 metric tons, in accordance with the SC recommendation. Chinese Taipei further proposed reducing the catch limit of each member by 24%, which accounts for the 10% reduction that was not

implemented last year, plus the 10% reduction recommended for this year, plus 4% to address the historical discrepancy between the sum of individual Members' catch limits and the overall TAC.

89. Vanuatu submitted a proposal to amend CMM 2024-08 for Pacific Saury (NPFC-2025-COM09-WP07) after the deadline for document submission. The Commission discussed the procedural matter of considering late submissions and agreed that while Vanuatu would not present its proposal formally, the substantive points could be raised during the course of discussions on Pacific Saury. Vanuatu noted that its position regarding special consideration for Small Island Developing States has not been taken into account in previous CMMs.

90. Interested Members discussed bilaterally and in a small working group established to discuss the Pacific saury CMM proposals. Japan explained the revisions made during the small working group, and following further input from Members, (including clarifying the bycatch reporting requirements, as outlined in NPFC-2025-COM09-WP10). The Commission adopted the proposed amendments (Annex U).

*Review of CMM 2024-12 On The Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)*

91. The Commission reviewed the TCC08-endorsed amendments to CMM 2024-12 on the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP12 Rev.4). The Commission adopted the proposed amendments.

*New CMM 2025-17 On The Transshipment Observer Program*

92. The Commission considered a draft CMM on the Transshipment Observer Program (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP13 Rev.2). Several bracketed provisions remained unresolved from TCC08. The Commission convened an informal working group led by the TCC Chair to finalize the text. The TCC Chair reported that all substantive issues had been resolved. The Commission adopted the new CMM on the Transshipment Observer Program (Annex V).

93. Several Members, while not blocking consensus on adoption of the CMM, expressed their view that the definition of "Observer Service Provider" should not necessarily include the term "non-governmental" to exclude potential governmental candidates.

*Review of CMM 2024-03 On Transshipments*

94. The Commission reviewed the amendments to CMM 2024-03 on Transshipments (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP19 Rev.1). Following deliberations in the informal working group led by

the TCC Chair and adoption of the Transshipment Observer Program CMM, the Commission adopted the amendments to CMM 2024-03 on Transshipments (Annex W)

*New CMM On Port State Measures*

95. The Commission was informed that a joint proposal by Canada, EU, and Korea on Port State Measures was still under discussion. The proponents indicated they had received comments from most Members that were integrated into the draft, but more time was needed for consultations. One Member was not yet ready to join consensus on this proposal, so the Commission agreed to continue working intersessionally on this proposal through the SWG PD, with the aim of advancing it for consideration at the next Commission meeting.

*New CMM On Standardization For Data Collection*

96. Regarding the EU proposal on standardization for data collection (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP15), the Commission noted TCC08's recommendation to task the TCC and SC to continue working intersessionally on this proposal. The EU suggested that the new Small Working Group on Data established by the SC could take up this task. The Commission agreed to this approach.

Agenda Item 9. Report of the 6th Meeting of the joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS)

97. The Science Co-Chair of the joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS), Dr. Toshihide Kitakado (Japan), summarized the outcomes of the 6$^{th}$ SWG MSE PS meeting (NPFC-2025-MSE PS06 Final Report, Annex X).

98. Several Members expressed concern about the current stock levels and emphasized the importance of implementing the interim HCR as scheduled. Some Members noted the importance of considering climate change impacts in future work.

99. Some Members raised questions about discrepancies between the latest two assessments showing lower biomass despite conservation measures being in place, and about the apparent contradiction between scientific assessment showing poor resources and industry observations of good resources in the 2024 season. Dr. Kitakado explained that the assessment has a high level of uncertainty and that the 2024 fishery-dependent data had not yet been incorporated.

100. The Commission noted the TAC calculated for 2025, agreed that invited experts would continue to be invited to the next SWG MSE PS, endorsed holding the 7th SWG MSE PS between SC10 and COM10 in a virtual or hybrid format, and agreed on the importance of participation by scientists, managers, and stakeholders in future meetings.

Agenda Item 10. Cooperation with Other Organizations

*10a. PICES*

101. Dr. Sonia Batten (PICES) presented on the renewal of the NPFC-PICES collaborative framework for 2025-2029, which maintains priority areas of stock assessment support, vulnerable marine ecosystems, and ecosystem approaches to fisheries, while incorporating climate change impacts across all areas. Dr. Kathryn Berry (PICES) outlined the Basin-scale Events and Coastal Impacts (BECI) project, which aims to create a North Pacific Ocean Knowledge Network connecting diverse sources of information across jurisdictions, with a potential use case for integrating Pacific saury data across Member countries. (NPFC-2025-COM09-OP01)

102. Canada expressed strong support for the BECI project, noting that Canada had provided approximately 1 million (CAD) to support it, and encouraged other Members to consider further support for this important work.

*10b. NPAFC*

103. Mr. Kondo, Executive Director of NPAFC, thanked the NPFC for its adoption of CMM 2024-16 on anadromous fish at COM08, noting its alignment with the NPAFC Convention. He congratulated NPFC on its 10th anniversary and reported on cooperation between the organizations under their 2019 Memorandum of Cooperation and five-year work plan endorsed in 2023. He noted that several items in the work plan have been completed or are ongoing, including the International Year of the Salmon expedition completed with NPFC's contributions.

104. Mr. Kondo reported that the NPAFC Secretariat had prepared draft terms of reference for a secure SharePoint platform for information exchange. He explained that while NPAFC had previously proposed a joint workshop on transshipment management and Pacific salmon bycatch, after internal discussions, NPAFC would like to suspend joint workshop discussions and instead focus on organizing its own workshop in 2026 on interactions with anadromous species, with NPFC input welcomed. (NPFC-2025-COM09-OP11)

105. Japan expressed appreciation for the continued cooperation between the organizations, noting the value of their shared Convention Area. Japan welcomed the NPAFC workshop and indicated it would contribute to those discussions as a member of both NPFC and NPAFC.

*10c. FAO: Deep Sea Fisheries project and FIRMS*

106. Ms. Eszter Hidas (FAO) presented on the Common Oceans Deep Sea Fisheries Project, highlighting key achievements including an e-learning course on deep-sea fisheries management, a review of FAO Deep Sea Fisheries Guidelines implementation, workshops on precautionary approaches, and support for NPFC's work on climate change and deep water shark species. She noted upcoming activities on deep water sharks, data-limited stock assessment methodologies, and cross-sectoral interactions with deep sea fisheries, as well as FAO's involvement in two BBNJ-related projects. (NPFC-2025-COM09-OP07 & NPFC-2025-COM09-OP08)

107. The EU and Korea expressed support for continuing cooperation between NPFC and FAO, in particular in terms of identifying additional resources to support the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

*10d. WCPFC*

108. The Chair noted that NPFC and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) signed an MoU in the past year.

*10e. SPRFMO*

109. The Chair noted that NPFC and the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) signed an MoU in 2023.

*10f. ISC*

110. The Chair noted that NPFC and the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) signed an MoU in the past year.

*10g. IMCS Network*

111. The Commission noted that NPFC has been a Member of IMCS since 2023, and this has provided the Secretariat with various resources and opportunities to exchange information and receive guidance on compliance approaches and technology.

*10h. UN BBNJ*

112. Korea announced that, on March 19, 2025 (New York time), it deposited the instrument of ratification of the BBNJ Agreement with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, becoming the 21st country to ratify the Agreement and the first in the East Asian region. Korea urged other countries to join the growing list of ratifying nations to help ensure the timely implementation of the Agreement. Additionally, Korea took the opportunity to announce the hosting of the 10th Our Ocean Conference, which will be held from April 28 to 30, 2025, in Busan. The conference, themed "Our Ocean, Our Action," will feature a wide range of discussions and events aimed at fostering global cooperation to promote sustainable oceans and fisheries. Korea looks forward to welcoming delegates to the Our Ocean Conference.

113. Russia stated that the BBNJ issue is complicated and noted the need to better understand the benefits of the agreement. Russia emphasized that communication with BBNJ in the future should be based on priorities to use NPFC's own regulations as an RFMO.

114. The EU reported that it had completed its ratification process and expected to deposit, together with EU member states, their ratification instruments before the UN Ocean Conference in June 2025. The EU called on other NPFC Members to ratify the agreement so it could enter into force. The EU also noted that it had recently adopted an EU Global Ocean Programme for 40 million (EUR) over six years to help developing states implement the agreement.

115. Pew welcomed the progress in advancing the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity and encouraged RFMOs to begin considering how they might prepare to interact with the BBNJ agreement as it enters into force.

*10i. Other Organizations*

116. Pew drew Members' attention to their observer paper (NPFC-2025-COM09-OP04) on the role RFMOs have regarding the World Trade Organization's agreement on fishery subsidies.

117. The Commission endorsed the TCC08 recommendation to consider signing an MoU with IATTC and to task the Secretariat with drafting such an MoU and circulating the draft among Members for input prior to its submission to the IATTC annual meeting in August 2025.

Agenda Item 11. Other Matters

*11a. Selection of the Commission Chair and Vice Chair*

118. Mr. Shingo Ota (Japan) and Ms. Jung-re Riley Kim (Korea) were nominated to serve another term as Commission Chair and Commission Vice Chair, respectively.

119. The Commission selected Mr. Shingo Ota (Japan) to serve as Chair and Ms. Jung-re Riley Kim (Korea) to serve as Vice Chair for second two-year term.

*11b. Selection of Chairs and Co-Chairs of Subsidiary Bodies*

120. The Commission endorsed the recommendation of the TCC to select Ms. Alisha Falberg (USA) to serve as TCC Chair and Ms. Amber Lindstedt (Canada) to serve as TCC Vice Chair for a second two-year term.

121. The Commission endorsed the recommendation of the FAC to select Mr. Haruo Tominaga (Japan) to serve as FAC Chair and Mr. Bernard Blazkiewicz (EU) to serve as FAC Vice Chair for a two-year term.

122. The list of Chair and Vice Chair positions of bodies created under the auspices of the subsidiary bodies was also reviewed and the USA withdrew its Vice-Chair for the SSC-BF-ME, noting that the SSC-BF-ME had two Vice-Chairs at time of presentation (List of Chairs provided as Annex Y).

*11c. Secondment and Intern for 2025*

123. The Commission endorsed the FAC's recommendation and agreed to accept the secondment application for renewal from Mr. Jumpei Hinata (Japan) for a 12-month period commencing in June 2025.

124. The Commission noted that there were no candidates for internship positions this year.

*11d. Other business*

125. No other business was discussed.

*11e. Press Release*

126. The Commission endorsed the Press Release for publication on the NPFC website (Annex Z).

Agenda Item 12. Date and Place of next meeting of the Commission and its Committees

127. The Executive Secretary presented a document with information on hosting by the Secretariat if no Member accepts hosting COM10, TCC09 and FAC08, including timing and hosting costs if borne by the Secretariat (NPFC-2025-COM09-IP02). The proposed timing takes into account the Lunar New Year and fisheries operations.

128. The Commission confirmed that Secretariat would host the COM10, TCC09, and FAC08 meetings.

129. The Commission agreed to tentatively hold the next meetings of the TCC, the FAC, and the Commission in Japan, in a location besides Tokyo, on the following dates:
   (a) TCC09: 8-11April 2026
   (b) FAC08: 13 April 2026
   (c) COM10: 14-17 April 2026 (with the Heads of Delegation meeting to be held on the morning of 14 April)

130. The Commission agreed to tentatively hold the 2027 meetings of the TCC, the FAC, and the Commission on the following dates:
   (a) TCC10: 6-9 April 2027
   (b) FAC09: 10 April 2027
   (c) COM11: 12-15 April 2027 (with the Heads of Delegation meeting to be held on the morning of 12 April 2027)

Agenda Item 13. Adoption of the report

131. The report was adopted by consensus.

Agenda Item 14. Close of the Meeting

132. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for organizing and running the meeting and the participants for their cooperation and engagement. The Chair congratulated the Commission on a successful and productive meeting, and requested Members to continue their hard work in the intersessional period to ensure the success of COM10.

133. The Commission meeting closed at 18:20 on 27 March 2025, Osaka time.

List of Annexes to COM09 Report


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| Annex E | NPFC SC09 Final Report |
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| Annex G | Scientific Committee Tasking |
| Annex H | NPFC TCC08 Final Report |
| Annex I | NPFC 2025 IUU Vessel List |
| Annex J | 2025 Compliance Monitoring Report |
| Annex K | TCC 2025 Workplan |
| Annex L | CMM 2025-13 Compliance Monitoring Scheme |
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| Annex O | Budgets for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 with assessed contributions |
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| Annex T | Tasking for TWG CMSA and Scientific Committee |
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| Annex Y | List of Chairs for 2025 |
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Chair's opening remarks

Good morning, Ladies and gentlemen.

1. In opening the 9th annual meeting of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission, I would like to make some remarks.

2. Let me first express my sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for organizing a series of meetings. Let me also welcome all of you here in Osaka again. The meeting venue of the last year's annual meeting was a relatively sophisticated area in Osaka, but this place is the center of deep Osaka where you can find many even more interesting places.

3. As this year is NPFC's 10th anniversary, I would like to briefly review the history of the Commission.

4. The NPFC Convention entered into force on July 19, 2015, which was 180 days after the ratification of Japan, Canada, China and Korea. The first Commission meeting was held in Tokyo where the Commission adopted the information requirements for vessel registration as well as CMM for Pacific saury.

5. Since that time, the Commission has adopted many CMMs in order to achieve the objective of the Convention, namely, to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the Convention Area while protecting the marine ecosystems of the North Pacific Ocean in which these stocks occur.

6. Looking at conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources, the most notable progress has been made for Pacific saury. The Commission conducted the first stock assessment in 2020 and established a TAC in 2019. Harvest control rules were introduced in 2024 by which the current TAC was automatically calculated.

7. As to Chub mackerel, the Commission prohibited rapid expansion in the number of registered vessels operating in the high seas in 2015. In 2024, a TAC for high seas was set at 100,000 tons and the first stock assessment was completed after that.

8. Progress has also been made in conservation of bottom fish and protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems or VMEs, which was the main purpose of the initial draft Convention. The CMM for conservation and management of bottom fisheries and protection of VMEs have been agreed for the Northwestern Pacific and the Northeastern Pacific, respectively.

9. As to pelagic stocks, the Commission has prohibited expansion in the number of authorized vessels targeting sablefish, Japanese sardine, neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid.

10. Turning to compliance matters, the Commission first established an IUU vessel list in 2016 and agreed to the high seas boarding and inspection scheme in 2017. It further agreed to the vessel monitoring scheme and compliance monitoring scheme in 2019. These measures have been updated from time to time.

11. With respect to non-target species, the Commission has adopted CMM on shark、CMM on anadromous fish and CMM on marine pollution for the purpose of protecting marine ecosystems in the Convention area.

12. As such, the Commission has achieved many things in advancing the objective of the Convention. However, there are still many things to do.

13. For example, although the Commission has established the harvest control rules for Pacific saury, its stock status is still very low. The Commission should accelerate the current discussion on a management procedure, which is more robust to various uncertainties, including possible impacts of climate change.

14. The latest stock assessment on chub mackerel recommends that the fishing mortality should be reduced. This is one of the important agenda items for this annual meeting.

15. No stock assessment has been completed by the Scientific Committee for sablefish, Japanese sardine, Japanese flying squid and blue mackerel although data sharing is going on and a stock assessment by coastal Members is available.

16. Questions have been raised as to whether the Commission is really protecting VMEs although no specific proposal has been submitted to this meeting other than those submitted

by the Scientific Committee. As I said in my presentation on BBNJ last year, we must be proactive to avoid intervention of the BBNJ.

17. VMS, at-sea transhipment management, vessel registration and high seas boarding and inspection are key components of the monitoring, control and surveillance and further improvement is necessary for some parts. The Commission should make progress on a regional observer program for at-sea transhipment that is a standard for many other RFMOs. Data collection standards and port-state measures are expected to be agreed at this annual meeting.

18. We have only four days. I sincerely hope that with your cooperation, assistance and flexibility, the Commission will be able to achieve many things at this annual meeting.

Thank you very much.

North Pacific Fisheries Commission
9th Commission Meeting
24-27 March 2025
Osaka, Japan (hybrid)

# Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
    a. Welcome Address and recognition of NPFC at 10 years
    b. Appointment of Rapporteur
    c. Adoption of Agenda
    d. Meeting Arrangements

2. Membership of the Commission
    a. Status of the Membership
    b. CNCP applications

3. Report from the Secretariat

4. Performance Review of the Commission – overview of progress

5. Report of the 9th Scientific Committee meeting
    a. Review of SC09 Report and response to COM08 taskings
    b. Adoption of SC09 Report and Recommendations.

6. Report of the 8th Technical and Compliance Committee meeting
    a. Review of TCC08 Report and response to COM08 taskings
    b. Adoption of IUU Vessel List for 2025
    c. Adoption of Final Compliance Monitoring Report
    d. Adoption of TCC08 Report and Recommendations
    e. Consideration of other TCC issues identified during TCC08 or by COM09 meeting

7. Report of the 7th Finance and Administration Committee meeting
    a. Review of FAC Report
    b. Adoption of the proposed budget for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026
    c. Adoption of the FAC07 Report and Recommendations
    d. Consideration of other FAC issues identified during FAC07 or by COM09 meeting

8. Conservation and Management Measures
    a. Review of the amendments to existing CMM's and any new CMMs

9. Report of the 6th Meeting of the joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS)

10. Cooperation with Other Organizations
    a. PICES
    b. NPAFC
    c. FAO: Deep Sea Fisheries project and FIRMS
    d. WCPFC
    e. SPRFMO
    f. ISC
    g. IMCS Network
    h. UN BBNJ
    i. Other Organizations

11. Other matters
    a. Selection of the Commission Chair and Vice Chair
    b. Selection of Chairs and Co-Chairs of Subsidiary Bodies
    c. Secondment and Intern for 2025
    d. Other business
    e. Press Release

12. Date and Place of next meeting of the Commission and its Committees

13. Adoption of the report

14. Close of the Meeting

# LIST OF DOCUMENTS

## MEETING INFORMATION PAPERS

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-FAC07/TCC08/COM09-MIP01 Rev.1 | Meeting Information |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-MIP02 | Provisional Agenda |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-MIP03 | Annotated Indicative Provisional Agenda |

## WORKING PAPERS

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP01 | Revised CMM 2024-05 - Conservation and Management Measure for Bottom Fisheries and Protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in the Northwestern Pacific Ocean |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP02 | Revised CMM 2024-06 - Conservation and Management Measure for Bottom Fisheries and Protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in the Northeastern Pacific Ocean |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP03 | Proposal to Revise the CMM 2024-11 for Japanese Sardine, Neon Flying Squid, and Japanese Flying Squid |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP04 Rev.1 | Amendments to CMM 2024-07 for Chub Mackerel |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP05 | Amendments to CMM 2024-08 For Pacific Saury |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP06 | Proposal to Amend CMM 2024-08 for Pacific Saury |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP07 | WP07 Proposal to amend CMM 2024-08 for Pacific Saury |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP08 Rev.3 | TCC Work Plan 2025-2026 |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP09 | Press Release |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP10 Rev.1 | European Union Proposal for Comprehensive Catch Reporting in NPFC Fisheries |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP11 | European Union Proposal on the COM09 Tasks for the Scientific Committee |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP12 Rev.1 | Notes from SC Chair on the European Union Proposal on the COM09 tasks for the Scientific Committee |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP13 | Proposed budgets for 2025/2026 and 2027/2028 and related assessed contributions |

| | |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP14 | Additional considerations for the discussion on the revision of the chub mackerel CMM |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP15 | Consolidated Proposals to Amend CMM 2024-08 For Pacific Saury |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP16 | Amendments to CMM 2024-11 For Japanese Sardine, Neon Flying Squid and Japanese Flying Squid by Japan |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-WP17 | Chub mackerel CMM - Proposed Tasking for TWG_CMSA and SC by EU |

**WORKING PAPERS FROM TCC08**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| | |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP07 | Application for Cooperating Non-Contracting Party Status |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP07 SuppDoc.1 | TCC08-WP07 SuppDoc.1 Supporting Documents for Panama Application for CNCP status |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP10 | PROPOSAL FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR A CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE COLLECTION, REPORTING, VERIFICATION AND EXCHANGE OF DATA IN NPFC |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP12 Rev.4 | VMS Entry/Exit Notification Options |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP13 Rev.2 | Proposal for a new Transshipment Observer Program measure |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP13 Rev.3 | Proposal for a new Transshipment Observer Program measure |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP13 Rev.4 | Proposal for a new Transshipment Observer Program measure |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP19 Rev.1 | Consolidated Proposals to Amend CMM-2024-03 on Transshipments |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP19 Rev.1 | Consolidated Proposals to Amend CMM-2024-03 on Transshipments with Track Changes |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP19 Rev.2 | Consolidated Proposals to Amend CMM-2024-03 on Transshipments |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP20 | CA, EU, KR PROPOSAL FOR A CMM ON MINIMUM STADARDS FOR PORT STATE MEASURES IN NPFC |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP21 | NPFC 2025 Provisional IUU VESSEL LIST |

| | |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP21 Rev.1 | NPFC 2025 Provisional IUU VESSEL LIST |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP21 SuppDoc.1 | Additional Information on the Status of Canada's IUU Vessel Listing for the FU YUAN YU 8675 Prepared by Canada on March 26, 2025 |

**INFORMATION PAPERS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP01 | Status of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP02 Rev.1 | Timing and Location of the Commission and its Committees in 2026 and 2027 |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP03 | Japan Blue Mackerel Stock Assessment |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP04 | Japan Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP05 | Japan Japanese Flying Squid Stock Assessment |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP06 Rev.1 | Japan Japanese Sardine Stock Assessment |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP07 Rev.2 | NPFC 2025/2026 List of Chairs and appointment duration |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP08 | Cooperation with Other Organizations |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP09 | Performance Review Update |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP09 SuppDoc.1 | SC/TCC/FAC RELATED FROM PERFORMANCE REVIEW, Excel Table |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP10 (Rev. 1) | NPFC-2024-SC09-Final Report presentation |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-IP11 | Reference for Chub Mackerel CMM Discussion |

**OBSERVER PAPERS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP01 | Report on Joint NPFC-PICES activities for the 9th Commission meeting, March 2025 |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP02 Rev.1 | Observer paper submitted by The Pew Charitable Trusts & The Ocean Foundation Invitation to Lunchtime COM09 Side Event on Management Procedures & Independent Monitoring Programs |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP03 | Statement to the 8th Meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee and 9th Annual Session of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP04 | Observer paper submitted by The Pew Charitable Trusts |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP05 | Invitation to COM09 Celebratory Evening Reception on a |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Decade of Deep-Sea Protections |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP06 | Joint Scientists' Letter to NPFC Members Regarding the Emperor Seamount Chain |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP07 | FAO Deep-sea Fisheries Project (2022–2027) Update to the North Pacific Fisheries Commission |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP07 SuppDoc.1 | DSF Project Activities Presentation |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP08 | Workshop Report: Application of the precautionary approach to the management of deep-sea fisheries |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP09 | The Observer Paper of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC) to the 9th Annual Session of the NPFC meeting in Osaka, Japan |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP10 | Paper submitted by WWF |
| NPFC-2025-COM09-OP11 | Progress on the Five-year Work Plan to implement NPAFC/NPFC Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC), endorsed by NPFC and NPAFC in 2023 |

**REPORTS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-SR | Secretariat Report to COM09 |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-Final Report | 9th Scientific Committee Meeting Report |
| NPFC-2025-SWG MSE PS06-Final Report | 6th Meeting of the Joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS) Report |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-Final Report | TCC08 Final Report in Track Changes and Cleaned |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-2025 Provisional CR | NPFC 2025 Provisional Compliance Report |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-Provisional 2025 CR SuppDoc.2 | CMS CMM CMR Executive Summary |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-Provisional CR Excel Table | NPFC 2025 Provisional Compliance Report |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-Final Report | FAC07 Final Report in Track Changes |

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# 9th Scientific Committee Meeting
# REPORT

17-20 December 2024

February 2025

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NPFC-2024-SC09-Final Report

# North Pacific Fisheries Commission
# 9th Meeting of the Scientific Committee

**17–20 December 2024**
**Tokyo, Japan (Hybrid)**

## REPORT

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Meeting

*1.1 Welcome Address and Introductions*

1. The 9th Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC) was held in a hybrid format, with participants attending in-person in Tokyo, Japan, or online via WebEx, on 17–20 December 2024. The meeting was attended by Members from Canada, China, the European Union (EU), Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, the United States of America, and Vanuatu. The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), the Ocean Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew), the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) attended as observers.

2. The meeting was opened by Dr. Janelle Curtis (Canada), who served as the SC Chair. She noted that this operational year marks the 10th anniversary of the NPFC and shared her memories of participating in the NPFC, dating back to the third Preparatory Conference. The Chair highlighted the progress the NPFC's Scientific Committee has made, not only in terms of advancing its conservation and management work, but also in fostering collaboration and strong bonds.

3. The Executive Secretary, Dr. Robert Day, welcomed the participants to the meeting. He reflected on the contributions of past and present members of the Secretariat, including secondees, interns, and consultants, which he too has benefited from, previously as a delegate and now as the Executive Secretary. He noted that the work of the SC and the Commission has continued to expand and expressed the Secretariat's continued commitment to supporting that work.

4. The inaugural SC Chair, Dr. Joji Morishita, looked back on the history of science developments and progress since the 1st SC meeting in 2016. Dr. Morishita expressed his pride

to have chaired the inaugural SC meeting and his sincere gratitude for the contributions of all participants. He also offered particular thanks to the first Executive Secretary, Dr. Dae-Yeon Moon, and the Science Manager, Dr. Aleksandr Zavolokin, for their support. Dr. Morishita explained that, to support the NPFC, as a relatively young regional fisheries management organization (RFMO), he tried to introduce good practices and habits, which have been further enhanced and become well-established under the current SC Chair, and he also endeavored to ensure good communication, noting the importance of ensuring adequate information-sharing and preventing misunderstanding. Having served also as a panel member of the NPFC Performance Review, Dr. Morishita noted that the SC was found to be performing its function very well. At the same time, the work of the SC continues to grow due to the increased number of fish species to be assessed and challenges such as climate change. To navigate this, the SC must continue to set priorities, work efficiently, and review its direction and change course as necessary. More than that, however, the SC's success to date has been due to the presence of excellent scientists, as well as the good division of labor and collaboration among Members, and these will surely be vital for the SC's continued success going forward.

5. At the invitation of the Chair, participants shared their reflections and congratulations on the 10th anniversary of the NPFC's establishment.

*1.2 Appointment of Rapporteur*

6. Mr. Alex Meyer was selected as the rapporteur.

*1.3 Meeting Arrangements*

7. The Science Manager and the Data Coordinator, Mr. Sungkuk Kang, outlined the meeting procedures and logistics.

Agenda Item 2. Adoption of Agenda

8. The agenda was adopted without revision (Annex A). The List of Documents and List of Participants are attached (Annexes B, C).

Agenda Item 3. Key milestones to achieve for NPFC stock assessment of priority species and provision of management advice

*3.1 A process for reviewing and possibly endorsing domestic stock assessments for priority species*

9. The Co-Leads of the Small Working Group on Milestones (SWG Milestones), Dr. Chris Rooper (Canada) and Ms. Karolina Molla Gazi (EU), presented a report of the SWG Milestones' work in the intersessional period (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP08). The SWG Milestones has:
   (a) developed a general schematic of the current status of the assessment process for priority

fish stocks that are currently targeted in the Convention Area, including standardized milestones and indications of species for which a domestic stock assessment incorporating NPFC Convention Area data is in place.

(b) developed a flow chart of proposed pathways for stock assessment and provision of advice to the Commission on NPFC priority species.

(c) developed a flow chart of a proposed pathway for reviewing domestic stock assessments on NPFC priority species without an NPFC stock assessment being completed.

(d) developed a flow chart of current and proposed pathways for data processing, submission and compilation for NPFC stocks.

(e) drafted a Terms of Reference (TOR) for the establishment of a Small Working Group on Data Management (SWG Data).

10. The SC reviewed the recommendations of the SWG Milestones and endorsed the following recommendations:

(a) Endorse the prioritization of the development of stock assessment activity for stocks without domestic assessments.

(b) Endorse streamlined stock status reporting to the Commission from the SC consisting of the following:

i. statements of status for each species (e.g. saury text, NPA text)

ii. time series of catch, effort for all species (with figures)

iii. CPUE standardized or biomass (if model) where available

(c) Review the scientific data workflow proposed by SWG Milestones and prioritize future tasks.

(d) Consider collecting additional biological data from new surveys and the catch in the Convention Area for species with a stock assessment (both domestic and NPFC)

(e) Consider assessing the impacts of climate change on the ecosystem as well as stocks and fisheries in the species summary for each species.

11. The SC considered the recommendation that it share data using standardized data sharing templates to streamline the process for the Secretariat to compile and store data and held further discussions under agenda item 8.1.2.

12. The SC endorsed the SWG Milestones' recommendation to implement a stock assessment review cycle for species assessed by the NPFC. However, whereas the SWG Milestone suggested a 5–10-year cycle, one Member suggested a shorter cycle, such as 3–5 years, would be more appropriate, especially for shorter-lived pelagic species.

13. The SC endorsed the SWG Milestones' recommendation to share existing biological data from

the fisheries catch in the Convention Area and the adjacent exclusive economic zones (EEZs). However, noting the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol and one Member's concerns about sharing its domestic data with another Member for that Member's domestic stock assessment, the SC agreed that the data should be shared from all Members to the Secretariat and from the Secretariat to the relevant SC subsidiary body with the data-owning Member's permission based on the Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information.

14. The SC considered the SWG Milestones' recommendation for the establishment of an SWG Data and held further discussions, including reviewing the proposed terms of reference, under Agenda Item 8.1.5.

15. The SC considered the SWG Milestones' recommendation to endorse a process of using domestic assessments to monitor species for which such assessments exist. The SC agreed that for species for which there is no NPFC stock assessment, it would be useful to receive information from Members' domestic stock assessments for those species. Some Members suggested that the SC could consider the information in such domestic stock assessments, which represents the best available science, and share any relevant stock status information with the Commission, while taking care to make clear that the information is from a single Member's domestic stock assessment and does not represent the SC's endorsed view. Other Members expressed concern that even if precautions were taken when sharing the information with the Commission, it would be misleading and unduly influence the Commission's discussions. Based on the discussion, the SC requested the Commission's guidance on how the SC should provide advice for priority species for which work towards an NPFC stock assessment is not currently being conducted.

16. The EU emphasized that while domestic stock assessments currently represent the best available scientific information, it is essential for scientists from other Members to review these assessments as part of the proper scientific process. To support this work, additional information, as outlined in the SWG Milestones report, is required from the Members who present these domestic stock assessments. Considering the large number of priority species and the limited capacity to carry out stock assessments, which leads to delays in providing advice, it is essential to establish a formal process to integrate the domestic stock assessments into the workflow as an interim way forward.

17. The SC endorsed the meeting report provided by the SWG Milestones (Annex D).

18. The SC agreed that the SWG Milestones has achieved all of its tasks and could therefore be

disbanded.

Agenda Item 4. Review of reports and recommendations from the Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment (TWG CMSA) and the Small Scientific Committees (SSC BF-ME, SSC NFS, and SSC PS)

*4.1 Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment (TWG CMSA)*

19. The TWG CMSA Chair, Dr. Kazuhiro Oshima (Japan), summarized the outcomes and recommendations of the 8th and 9th TWG CMSA meetings (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA08-Final Report & NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-Final Report). The TWG CMSA Chair also presented the chub mackerel stock assessment report (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP20 (Rev. 1)), which was finalized in the intersessional period following TWG CMSA09.

20. The SC reviewed the recommendations of the TWG CMSA and endorsed the following recommendations:
    (a) adopt the Work Plan of the TWG CMSA (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-WP08 (Rev. 2)).
    (b) adopt the updated species summary for chub mackerel (Annex E).
    (c) consider the TWG CMSA's comments on the NPFC Performance Review recommendations that concern chub mackerel (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP01 (Rev. 1)).
    (d) continue to hire an invited expert to support the TWG CMSA in 2025.

21. Regarding the chub mackerel stock assessment, the TWG CMSA Chair explained that there were discrepancies between a subset of the input data and the footprint data, which were noticed on 6 December, and there was therefore no time for the TWG CMSA to address them. The effect of those input data on the output of the stock assessment is uncertain, and whether or not those sources of uncertainty are influential on the model outputs can only be confirmed when the TWG CMSA updates its stock assessment.

22. The SC endorsed the stock assessment executive summary and stock assessment report (Annex P), as the best available scientific information, while noting that there were discrepancies in the input data, whose impact on the output of the stock assessment is uncertain.

23. Based on the current stock assessment, the SC recommended that the Commission note the status of the chub mackerel stock and management advice in the chub mackerel stock assessment report (Annex P).

24. The SC requested that Members revise their data and submit the revised data to the TWG CMSA by 4 February and that the TWG CMSA re-run the stock assessment and update the model output, ideally before the next TWG CMSA meeting in February, or at least before the

Commission meeting in March, if possible. The SC further tasked the TWG CMSA to investigate the source of the discrepancies and to recommend quality assurance and quality control measures to prevent the recurrence of similar issues in the future.

25. The SC endorsed the meeting reports provided by the TWG CMSA.

26. The SC Chair explained that she would report the outcomes of SC09, including the SC's endorsement of the TWG CMSA's stock assessment report and other discussions related to the chub mackerel assessment, to the Commission in March. She noted that the draft meeting report for TWG CMSA10 would become available to Commission Members on 19 March (15 days after the conclusion of said meeting), ahead of the start of the Commission meeting on 24 March, and suggested that if any Members wished to comment on the outcomes of the TWG CMSA10 meeting, such as updated stock assessment outputs if they are available, they could do so upon the circulation of the TWG CMSA10 report.

27. The SC agreed that if the review of the updated stock assessment results were to proceed less smoothly than hoped and take up time set aside for other tasks, such as data preparation for the next stock assessment, that are to be completed during TWG CMSA10, the TWG CMSA would work virtually and intersessionally to complete any outstanding tasks.

*4.2 Small Scientific Committee on Bottom Fish and Marine Ecosystems*

28. The Chair of the SSC on Bottom Fish and Marine Ecosystems (SSC BF-ME), Dr. Chris Rooper (Canada), summarized the outcomes and recommendations of the 5$^{th}$ SSC BF-ME meeting (NPFC-2024-SSC BFME05-Final Report).

29. The SC reviewed the recommendations of the SSC BF-ME and endorsed the following recommendations:
    (a) Adopt the updated species summaries of North Pacific armorhead (NPA) (Annex F), splendid alfonsino (SA) (Annex G), sablefish (Annex H), blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes (Annex I), and skilfish (Annex J).
    (b) Continue to hire external experts to support the work of the Small Working Group on NPA and SA (SWG NPA-SA).
    (c) Request Members that conduct or seek to conduct bottom fishing in the Convention Area to provide updated assessments on bottom fishing activities' SAIs on VMEs (following CMM 2024-05 and CMM 2024-06 Annex 2) and submit them for review by the SC and its subsidiary bodies at or before SC11.
    (d) Endorse the revised CMM 2024-05 (Annex R), including the following updates:

i. Translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names of cold-water corals among the VME indicator taxa.

ii. Two new area closures: (1) Northwestern part of Yuryaku Seamount: 32–42.75'N, 172–12.90'E; 32–42.75'N, 172–13.65'E; 32–43.50'N, 172–13.65'E; 32–43.50'N, 172–12.90'E, and (2) Southeastern part of Yuryaku Seamount: 32–37.80'N, 172–18.00'E; 32–37.80'N, 172–18.60'E; 32–38.40'N, 172–18.60'E; 32–38.40'N, 172–18.00'E.

(e) Endorse the revised CMM 2024-06 (Annex S), including the following update:

i. Translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names of cold-water corals among the VME indicator taxa.

(f) Endorse the updated 2024-2028 SSC BF-ME 5-Year Rolling Work Plan (NPFC-2024-SSC BFME05-WP01 (Rev. 1)).

(g) Consider the SSC BF-ME's comments on the NPFC Performance Review recommendations that concern bottom fishing and marine ecosystems (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP01 (Rev. 5)).

30. The SC endorsed the report provided by the SSC BF-ME.

31. The United States made a statement regarding its ongoing call for closure of the bottom fisheries on the Emperor Seamount Chain and Northwestern Hawaiian Ridge. The United States reiterated concerns regarding protection of VMEs and stock status of target fish stocks. The statement included specific discussion of Yuryaku VMEs and highlighted the deleterious implications for the SA stock from new findings by SWG NPA-SA for the bottom trawl gear selection curve. The full US statement is attached as Annex T.

32. The DSCC stated that the US proposal is an opportunity for the NPFC to effectively align its science and management measures with the provisions of the UN General Assembly resolutions related to the management of bottom fisheries and protection of VMEs, as well as growing political commitments to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and enhance the resilience and recovery of deep-sea ecosystems as called for in Sustainable Development Goals, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and other instruments, and encouraged NPFC Members to support the US proposal.

33. The Deep-sea Fisheries (DSF) Project (FAO) informed the SC that it plans to work with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) to advance stock assessment work on data-limited species and suggested that it could collaborate with the NPFC to support stock assessments of NPA and SA.

*4.3 Small Scientific Committee on Neon Flying Squid*

34. The Chair of the SSC on Neon Flying Squid (SSC NFS), Dr. Luoliang Xu (China), summarized the outcomes and recommendations of the 1st SSC NFS meetings (NPFC-2024-SSC NFS01-Final Report).

35. The SC reviewed the recommendations of the SSC NFS and endorsed the following recommendations:
    (a) endorse the Terms of Reference for the Small Scientific Committee on Neon Flying Squid (Annex U).
    (b) endorse the CPUE Standardization Protocol for neon flying squid (Annex V).
    (c) endorse the Stock Assessment Protocol for neon flying squid (Annex W).
    (d) adopt the Work Plan of the SSC NFS (NPFC-2024-SSC NFS01-WP04 (Rev. 1)).
    (e) adopt the updated species summary for neon flying squid (Annex K).
    (f) consider the SSC NFS's comments on the NPFC Performance Review recommendations that concern neon flying squid (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP01 (Rev. 2)).
    (g) continue to hire an invited expert in 2025 to support the SSC NFS during its meetings and conduct other work to support the SSC NFS as appropriate.

36. The SC endorsed the report provided by the SSC NFS.

*4.4 Small Scientific Committee on Pacific Saury*

37. The Chair of the SSC on Pacific Saury (SSC PS), Dr. Toshihide Kitakado (Japan), summarized the outcomes and recommendations of the 13th and 14th SSC PS meetings (NPFC-2024-SSC PS13-Final Report, NPFC-2024-SSC PS14-Final Report).

38. The SC reviewed the recommendations of the SSC PS and endorsed the following recommendations:
    (a) Endorse the stock assessment report (Annex Q).
    (b) Endorse the SSC PS Work Plan (NPFC-2024-SSC PS14-WP01 (Rev. 1)).
    (c) Consider the SSC PS's comments on the NPFC Performance Review recommendations that concern Pacific saury (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP01 (Rev. 6)).
    (d) Allocate funds for the participation and technical support (e.g., development of a new stock assessment model (NSAM)) of an invited expert in the next SSC PS and Working Group on NSAM meetings.
    (e) Adopt the updated species summary of Pacific saury (Annex L).
    (f) Recommend that the SWG MSE PS explore options for beginning the MSE process prior to the completion of the age-structured model.

39. As recommended by the SSC PS, the SC considered the stock summary slide for Pacific saury suggested for inclusion in the SC Chair's report to the Commission. The SC agreed that a one-slide summary would be inadequate for conveying all the key stock status information and management advice for Pacific Saury.

40. The SC endorsed the reports provided by the SSC PS.

Agenda Item 5. Update from the Joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS)

41. The co-Chair of the joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific saury (SWG MSE PS), Dr. Toshihide Kitakado (Japan), informed participants about progress of the SWG MSE PS including the outcomes and recommendations of its 5th meeting (NPFC-2024-SWG MSE PS05-Final Report).

42. The SC Chair emphasized the SSC PS's and the SC's commitment to supporting the work of the SWG MSE PS.

Agenda Item 6. Other pelagic priority species

*6.1 Summary of progress on the remaining three priority species*

43. The Leads of the Small Working Groups (SWGs) on Japanese sardine (JS), Japanese flying squid (JFS), and blue mackerel (BM) reported on the SWGs' intersessional activities, including the relevant outcomes of the 1st and 2nd joint virtual meetings of these SWGs in 2024, in the respective sections below (6.1.1 – 6.1.3). Detailed summaries of the joint SWG meetings are available in NPFC-2024-SC09-RP01 (1st meeting) and NPFC-2024-SC09-RP02 (2nd meeting).

*6.1.1 Blue mackerel*

44. The SWG BM Lead, Dr. Kazunari Higashiguchi (Japan), reported on the SWG BM's intersessional activities (NPFC-2024-SC09-IP03). The SWG BM has met twice intersessionally (as part of the joint meetings of the SWGs on JFS, JS, and BM). It reviewed methods for distinguishing BM and chub mackerel, reviewed the feasibility of calculating the proportion of BM and chub mackerel catch by gear and sharing data to that end, updated Members' estimated catch and effort, updated the species summary, shared and reviewed data on BM fork length and age, updated the ratio of BM in the mackerel catch by China and Japan, and reviewed the catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) standardization for indices used in Japan's domestic stock assessment.

45. The SC noted the importance of having separate BM and chub mackerel catch information for

the stock assessments of the two species, which are conducted separately. The SC agreed to add review of Members' methodologies for calculating the ratio of BM and chub mackerel catch to the TWG CMSA's workplan. The SC recommended that the Commission request Members to provide data on BM biological data and the ratio of BM to chub mackerel catch to the Secretariat for analyses in accordance with the agreed work plan.

*6.1.2 Japanese flying squid*

46. The SWG JFS Lead, Dr. Hajime Matsui (Japan), reported on the SWG JFS' intersessional activities (NPFC-2024-SC09-IP07). The SWG JFS has met twice intersessionally (as part of the joint meetings of the SWGs on JFS, JS, and BM). It updated Members' catch and effort data, reviewed a report from China on the availability of more biological information from the nursery area for Japan's domestic stock assessment, reviewed a monitoring program of the oceanographic conditions in the JFS spawning grounds conducted by Japan, reviewed a study on the effect of fisheries management when the stock-recruitment (SR) relationship could change with a regime shift (regime-based fisheries management), considered whether there is a need for a regional observer program (ROP) in the Convention Area to collect data on JFS and/or bycatch species from squid jigging fisheries and concluded that there is not, reviewed the CPUE standardization for the winter spawning stock of JFS that is used in Japan's domestic stock assessment, and updated the species summary.

47. The SC recommended that the Commission request Members to provide JFS biological data to the Secretariat for analyses in accordance with the agreed work plan.

*6.1.3 Japanese sardine*

48. The SWG JS Lead, Dr. Chris Rooper (Canada), reported on the intersessional activities of the SWG JS (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP14). The SWG JS has met twice intersessionally (as part of the joint meetings of the SWGs on JFS, JS, and BM). It updated Members' catch and effort data, shared and reviewed Members' size frequency (age), length-weight relationships and other relevant data, incorporated data from China and Russia into the JS stock assessment conducted by Japan, shared code for the Virtual Population Analysis (VPA) assessment model used for JS via GitHub, reviewed Japan's CPUE standardization for the JS assessment and developed a workplan to conduct similar standardization for other Members fisheries for JS in 2025, and updated the species summary.

49. The SC recommended that the Commission request Members to provide JS biological data to the Secretariat for analyses in accordance with the agreed work plan.

*6.2 Review of species summaries*

50. The SC reviewed, further revised, and endorsed the updated species summary document for JFS (Annex M).

51. The SC reviewed, further revised, and endorsed the updated species summary document for JS (Annex N).

52. The SC reviewed, further revised and endorsed the updated species summary document for BM (Annex O).

*6.3 Domestic stock assessments of BM, JFS, and JS*

53. The SC invited Members to share the results of their domestic stock assessments for the purpose of information sharing. The SC observed, but did not formally review, domestic stock assessments of BM, JFS, and JS.

54. Japan presented its domestic stock assessment of BM (NPFC-2024-SC09-IP04 (Rev. 1)). The assessment is conducted using tuned VPA. The MSY-based reference points were estimated from the stochastic simulation from the Ricker stock-recruitment relationship. Biomass and SSB have been decreasing since 2011 and recruitment has been greatly lower than the expectation from the stock-recruitment relationship. The current status is that overfishing is occurring ($F > F_{MSY}$) and that the stock is overfished ($SSB < SSB_{MSY}$). As future work, it is necessary to reflect actual age composition outside the Japanese EEZ.

55. Japan presented its domestic stock assessment of JS (NPFC-2024-SC09-IP05 (Rev. 1)). The assessment is conducted using a tuned VPA with ridge penalty. The MSY-based reference points were estimated from the stochastic simulation from the normal-regime SR relationship of the hockey stick function. In 2023, estimated total biomass was 4.24 million mt and SSB was 2.79 million. SSB exceeded $SSB_{MSY}$. The current F (F2021–2023) exceeded $F_{MSY}$. As future work, it is necessary to reflect actual age composition outside the Japanese EEZ, and more consideration should be given to consider how to treat regimes for future projection and biological reference points.

56. Japan presented its domestic stock assessment of JFS (NPFC-2024-SC09-IP06). The estimated total biomass of the winter spawning stock decreased largely from 2015 to 2016 and has remained at a low level since then. The MSY-based reference points were estimated by a stochastic simulation with the Beverton-Holt stock-recruitment relationship. In 2023, the estimated total biomass was 101,000 mt and SSB was 41,000 mt. SSB was lower than $SSB_{MSY}$ and F was lower than $F_{MSY}$ in 2022. In terms of future issues, there are uncertainties such as using fixed q value in the current stock assessment method. State-space Assessment Model

Used for IKA (SAMUIKA) or Stochastic Surplus Production Model in Continuous Time (SPiCT) could be potential stock assessment models for future domestic JFS stock assessments.

57. The SC expressed its appreciation to Japan for conducting domestic stock assessments of BM, JFS, and JS and sharing them with the SC.

*6.4 Future roles and activities of SWG BM, SWG JFS, and SWG JS*

58. The SC developed a table of future tasks for the SWG BM, SWG JFS, and the SWG JS (Annex X).

Agenda Item 7. Climate change effects on NPFC's priority species and associated ecosystems

*7.1 Tools for incorporating climate change considerations into scientific advice*

59. Dr. Tom Carruthers (Ocean Foundation) presented the results of robustness trials for climate-ready management procedures (MPs) for multiple species of highly migratory tunas, sharks and billfish (NPFC-2024-SC09-OP02). The research on climate change impacts on pelagic fish species was reviewed and organized into the theoretical linkages between climatological processes, oceanographic properties affecting habitat, mechanisms of impact and relevant operating model dynamics. The most cited impacts on species biology, ecology and behavior relate to spatial distribution, larval survival, range contraction, adult survival and condition factor. Since few quantitative predictions of climate impacts have been made with regard to these aspects, expert judgement was used to specify proof-of-concept climate tests that included moderate and extreme cases of declining somatic growth, condition factor, adult survival and mean recruitment strength. A range of MP archetypes were tested for their robustness to the climate scenarios including empirical index-target and index-ratio MPs, and model-based stock assessment MPs with and without harvest control rules. MPs that specified effort controls or size limits provided more robust conservation performance for climate tests than their equivalents providing catch advice. Stock assessment model MPs providing catch advice were substantially more robust to declining survival and recruitment when also incorporating a harvest control rule. In general, the most challenging climate tests involved declining survival and recruitment with these leading to larger impacts on yield outcomes than biomass outcomes.

60. Dr. Carruthers presented performance metrics of climate robustness for Atlantic bigeye tuna (NPFC-2024-SC09-OP03). Operating models were developed from the 2021 stock assessment of bigeye tuna. Four types of projected climate impact were simulated: increasing natural mortality rate, and decreases in recruitment strength, somatic growth and condition factor. Defining a robustness threshold enabled the calculation of a performance metric of climate

robustness that was calculated for each type of climate impact for three MP archetypes and two MP derivatives. Shifting the focus away from establishing defensible climate forecasts and towards climate robustness performance metrics provided information that could support the selection of MPs accounting for climate impacts. It was not necessary to know the exact type of impact or the exact level of forecasted impact to identify an MP that clearly and consistently outperformed the rest in terms of climate robustness.

*7.2 Current knowledge*

61. Pew presented a review of recent literature on harvest strategies and climate change (NPFC-2024-SC09-OP04). In particular, Pew highlighted the following points. First, harvest strategies are an effective adaptation tool for managing stocks under changing climate conditions. Opportunities and limitations exist to incorporate explicit climate-related environmental factors into MPs and MSE. “Climate-informed” MPs can be designed to include extreme events as “Exceptional Circumstances.” “Climate-informed” MPs can account for shifts in geographic distribution across management regimes. There are management options available for data-rich and data-poor fisheries.

*7.2.1 FAO consultancy report on climate change in the North Pacific*

62. Dr. Joel Rice (DSF Project, FAO) presented a report on pathways for the incorporation of climate change into the work of the NPFC (NPFC-2024-SC09-OP01). The report provided an overview of the literature and data available to evaluate and address climate change related impacts on managed stocks, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) ocean climate change predictions, and potential strategies for the NPFC to integrate climate change into its fisheries management. Addressing the effects of climate change on a basin wide scale should include collaboration among the NPFC, other regional organizations, and NPFC Members’ management agencies; enhanced monitoring of fish stocks and bycatch species through an increase in fisheries independent surveys; development of a regional observer program; expansion of fisheries-independent surveys to older individuals for the NPFC priority species surveyed only in the pre-recruit to juvenile stage; and adoption of an iterative program of work that begins with a literature review, prioritization of research, and the creation of a workplan.

63. The SC Chair pointed out that besides understanding the impacts of climate change on fisheries resources and related ecosystems, the NPFC’s Resolution on Climate Change calls on Members to also consider climate change impacts on fishing activities and the associated socio-economics. She noted that the SC’s scientific activities are therefore likely to become much broader and expressed her hope that Members and observers will continue to work collaboratively on even more challenging issues in the future.

*7.3 Ongoing research activities*

*7.3.1 PICES' Basin-scale Events to Coastal Impacts (BECI) project*

64. The Science Director of the Basin-scale Events to Coastal Impacts (BECI) project, Dr. Kathryn Berry, provided an overview and an update on the project (NPFC-2024-SC09-OP10). BECI aims to unite knowledge from around the North Pacific to help NPFC and other organizations across the North Pacific use climate and ocean science in their decision-making. It plans to connect these organizations with environmental data they can use by linking existing monitoring networks and databases; providing tools to help make climate-informed decisions, such as by building and/or enhancing practical analysis tools and exploring artificial intelligence applications to support analysis and prediction; sharing best practices that work; and supporting collaboration across organizations. As next steps, BECI hopes to provide its Science Plan, scheduled for completion in April 2025, to the NPFC SC for broader distribution, establish a process to send a questionnaire to NPFC SC subsidiary bodies, and develop a plan for continued communication with the NPFC.

*7.4 Research priorities and potential scientific projects*

65. The SC discussed potential research activities to address climate change effects on NPFC's priority species and associated ecosystems, such as monitoring changes in the distribution or productivity of stocks, and how the health of one stock might affect the health of another associated stock.

Agenda Item 8. Data Collection and Management

66. The EU explained its proposal for the establishment of a Conservation and Management Measure on Standards for the Collection, Reporting, Verification and Exchange of Data (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP15), which is aimed at ensuring consistency, fostering collaboration, and supporting quality control and validation. The EU sought views and suggestions from the SC on its proposal.

67. The SC considered the EU's proposal. Members provided feedback and agreed to provide any additional feedback before COM09. The EU thanked Members for their input and expressed its intention to refine its proposal based on Members' comments.

*8.1 Data Management System*

68. The Data Coordinator reported on the progress in the development of the SC-related data management system (NPFC-2024-SC09-IP01). The Data Coordinator explained updates to the Members Home, Significant dates/Events, Pacific Saury Weekly Report, Chub Mackerel Monthly/Weekly Report, Collaboration, Annual reports sections, as well as updates to the

NPFC GIS Maps for Pacific saury catch and effort data, and for bottom fishing with combined, gear-specific footprints.

69. The SC expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for continuing to update and enhance the NPFC data management system.

70. The SC suggested that the Secretariat explore options for further enhancing the data management system as follows:
    (a) Enable Members to download annual reports in machine-readable formats.
    (b) Restore/improve Members' access to the NPFC GeoServer.

*8.1.1 Update on GitHub Plan for NPFC*

71. The Data Coordinator explained that the Secretariat has successfully applied for the GitHub Nonprofit Plan and is now coordinating with GitHub to complete the transition. Currently, 7 Members, an invited expert and the Secretariat are active within this group. The Data Coordinator has prepared a user manual in cooperation with Members outlining basic steps for utilizing the Git Repository (https://www.npfc.int/git-repository-user-manual). This manual can be continuously enhanced based on Members' feedback. Currently, the Repository supports the TWG CMSA and SSC BF-ME, with plans to expand support to other groups, such as SSC PS, upon Member request. The Secretariat will continue to enhance the data management systems to support efficient and secure data handling for NPFC Members. Members' feedback and comments are greatly appreciated and will guide future improvements.

*8.1.2 Evaluation of biological data provision templates*

72. The Science Manager explained that the SC's subsidiary bodies have not reported any specific issues with the use of the draft biological data provision templates.

73. The SC agreed to work intersessionally towards finalizing the biological data provision templates (NPFC-2023-SC08-IP13 (Rev. 1)) by SC10 and using the templates from the 2026 operational year.

*8.1.3 Data inventory*

74. The Science Manager and the Data Coordinator presented a data inventory policy, a data inventory table summarizing information about data submitted by Members, and suggestions for improving data management/organization (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP03).

75. The SC endorsed the data inventory policy and the data inventory table structure.

*8.1.4 Establishment of a new database to manage and archive scientific data*

76. The Science Manager presented a concept paper for the establishment of a database to manage and archive scientific data (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP06). He explained that the purpose of the database would be to efficiently and securely store, organize, and retrieve scientific data to facilitate data analyses and modeling, that it would house data for stock assessment (catch, effort, size, age, maturity, etc.), VME identification, assessment of significant adverse impact (SAI) on marine ecosystems, annual catch and effort statistics and other data which may be shared in future to fulfill the SC's functions, and that it would be maintained and developed by the Secretariat, with support from a contractor(s). The Science Manager invited the SC to provide feedback on the database's business requirements, the data flow, and next steps, and explained that the development of the database would be an iterative process with regular opportunities for Members to provide their input.

77. The SC endorsed the development of a database to manage and archive scientific data, noting that it would facilitate more efficient management and use of scientific data for scientific analyses.

*8.1.5 Potential establishment of a new Small Working Group on Data (SWG Data)*

78. The SC considered the proposal for the establishment of a new SWG Data. The SC noted the value of having a dedicated body addressing data matters that are common to all subsidiary groups, in particular the immediate need for such a body to provide guidance to the Secretariat on the planned development of a database to manage and archive scientific data. The SC also noted that further discussions are needed on various aspects of the proposed SWG Data, including the potential long-term scope of the SWG, its membership, and the roles of Members, Secretariat and a contractor(s).

79. The SC agreed to establish the SWG Data for 1 year, and to task it to focus primarily on assisting the Secretariat in creating a data management system, including data collection, verification, reporting, storing, and dissemination, and secondarily to identify the scope of the SWG Data, its membership and roles of Members, Secretariat and a contractor(s). The SC elected Ms. Karolina Molla Gazi (EU) to serve as the Lead of the SWG Data. The SC agreed that the SWG Data will meet virtually.

80. The SC revised the draft TOR accordingly and endorsed the TOR for the SWG Data (Annex Y).

81. The SC agreed to initially appoint Chris Rooper (Canada), Qiuyun Ma (China), Karolina Molla Gazi (EU), Kazuhiro Oshima (Japan), Hyejin Song (Korea), Vladimir Kulik (Russia),

Wen-Bin Huang (Chinese Taipei), Don Kobayashi (United States), and Mei-Chin Juan (Vanuatu) as members and/or contact persons of the SWG Data. The SC requested the Chairs of the SSCs and the TWG CMSA to nominate members of the SWG Data from their respective groups.

82. The SC agreed to discuss the potential continued need for, and long-term role of, the SWG Data at SC10.

*8.1.6 Review of need of GIS maps with catch and effort data for NFS and JS*

83. The consultant, Dr. Jihwan Kim, presented an updated prototype Neon Flying Squid map (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP13). The proposed map will resemble the Pacific Saury Catch and Effort Map, incorporating detailed data on catch volume, fishing effort, and spatial distribution. It will also include datasets on Extended Reconstructed Sea Surface Temperature (ERSST) sourced from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Key features of the map will enable users to filter data by Member, year, and month, and to view catch or effort data alongside sea surface temperature (SST) and SST anomalies. Additionally, the "All Members Catch" feature will allow access to aggregated catch data from all Members contributing to catch, namely China, Japan, Korea, Chinese Taipei, and Vanuatu.

84. The SC noted the value of the Neon Flying Squid map for visualizing the distribution of NFS catch and effort and recommended that the Commission consider making the maps available on the NPFC website, at a spatial resolution of $1^{o}$ x $1^{o}$ and a monthly temporal resolution, with access restricted to NPFC Members only.

85. The SC noted that Dr. Kim's term as a consultant to the NPFC Secretariat will end in March and expressed their appreciation for his contributions to the NPFC.

*8.2 NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol*

*8.2.1 Revision of Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information*

86. The Science Manager presented proposed revisions to the Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information to align it with the revisions to the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol that were adopted by the Commission at its $8^{th}$ meeting (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP07).

87. The SC made further revisions to the Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information to reflect the need to seek the formal approval of data providers prior to conducting analyses outside the activities outlined in the work plans of the SC's subsidiary bodies or prior to publishing data in an external publication (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP07

(Rev. 2)).

88. The SC endorsed the proposed revisions (Annex Z).

*8.3 Data needs, data gaps, and strategies to fill gaps*

*8.3.1 Information about species belonging to same ecosystem or dependent/associated with target stocks*

89. The Chair reminded the SC that, in accordance with Article 10, paragraph 4(d) of the NPFC Convention, one of the functions of the SC shall be to assess the impacts of fishing activities on fisheries resources and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with the target stocks. She further pointed out that the NPFC Performance Review Panel has recommended that the SC and Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) should coordinate formal efforts to collect standardized data and validate bycatch of associated and dependent species, and that the SC develop strategies that address the lack of information needed to take ecosystem considerations into account for NPFC pelagic fisheries in the Convention Area, and include these in the SC's Research Plan, data collection procedures and obligations. The Chair also reminded the SC that SC06 agreed that the establishment of an observer program in the NPFC Convention Area would facilitate the collection of more data for such non-targeted species, as well as for NPFC priority species.

90. China presented an overview of 2024 Chinese survey by its fishery research vessel "Song Hang" in the NPFC Convention Area (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP21). In 2024, the Chinese fishery research vessel Song Hang embarked on its fourth year of scientific surveys by Shanghai Ocean University in the Northwest Pacific Ocean. The improved survey program in 2024 continues to cover fisheries resources, larval and juvenile stages of marine species, plankton, and environmental surveys, consistent with previous years. Research included studies of distribution by acoustic surveys, biodiversity by environmental-DNA, feeding ecology, ecosystem modelling, and plastic analysis. The data collected will continue to contribute to a deeper understanding of the marine ecosystem within the NPFC Convention Area.

91. The SC expressed its appreciation for the valuable survey conducted by China and encouraged it to continue conducting such surveys.

92. China informed the SC that it will conduct the survey again in 2025 and expressed its intention to share the detailed data from its surveys with the relevant SC subsidiary bodies.

93. China presented the results of a study on the ecosystem structure and trophodynamics in the Kuroshio-Oyashio Extension (KOE) area (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP22). China analyzed the

trophic structure and characteristics of this pelagic ecosystem using the Ecopath model and data collected in its 2023 KOE fishery resources survey. The overall ecosystem characteristics suggested that the KOE pelagic ecosystem was at a low level of maturity and vulnerable to disturbance from external activities. Given the significance of the KOE pelagic ecosystem, China suggested conducting long-term and stable ecosystem-level surveys and assessments. It also recommended conducting collaborative work with more biological data to enhance the quality of the KOE pelagic ecosystem model.

*8.3.1.1 Historical information about species captured in surveys and/or discarded bycatch from fisheries in the Convention Area*

94. China presented a summary of the species in the Northwest Pacific ecosystem based on Chinese surveys and bycatch from Chinese fisheries (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP23). China operates four kinds of fleet in the Convention Area, i.e. stick-held dip net, squid-jigging fishery, pelagic trawl net and light purse seine. The first three gears are highly selective, with few bycatch. Pacific saury is the only catch species in the stick-held dip net fishery, with low bycatch of squid. Most of the catch from the squid-jigging fishery is neon flying squid, with a low incidental catch of Japanese flying squid catch. The catch of pelagic trawl fishery includes chub mackerel, Japanese sardine and blue mackerel, with low incidental catch of Pacific saury. In the light purse fishery, the main recorded catch species are chub mackerel, blue mackerel, and Japanese sardine. Other species, such as neon flying squid, Pacific saury, Japanese anchovy, lanternfish, tuna, sharks, marine mammals, were incidentally captured and in some cases released based on the CMMs of the NPFC or other RFMOs.

95. The SC requested that Members continue to share historical information about species captured in surveys and/or discarded bycatch from fisheries in the Convention Area and that the SSCs and the TWG CMSA continue to discuss such information.

*8.3.1.2 Potential impacts on species belonging to same ecosystem or dependent/associated with target stocks*

96. The SC noted that none of its subsidiary bodies reported assessments on potential impacts on species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent/associated with target stocks.

97. The DSF Project (FAO) informed the SC that it will hold a Symposium on Applying the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) on 11–13 March 2025 and that the Symposium will include discussion of ways in which information from research surveys and fisheries can answer questions about effects on associated/dependent species.

*8.3.1.3 Status of current non-target catch, definitions of bycatch applied in other RFMOs, and options for defining bycatch within NPFC*

98. The SC Chair explained that the Science Manager has held discussions with the Secretariats of other RFMOs and heard that other RFMOs have found it similarly challenging to develop a unified definition of bycatch for both scientific and compliance purposes.

99. The SC requested Members to consider potential definitions of bycatch for use within the SC and present their proposals to SC10.

100. The FAO suggested that for the SC, it may be more useful to consider catch as a whole and to subdivide that into retained or discarded catch, rather than trying to define and distinguish between targeted catch and bycatch.

*8.3.2 Potential roles of a regional observer program*

*8.3.2.1 Summary of scientific objectives of an observer program*

101. The SC agreed that, in accordance with Article 10, paragraph 4(d), one of the scientific objectives of an observer program could be to assess the impacts of fishing activities on fisheries resources and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with the target stocks.

*8.3.2.2 Summary of the kinds of data that would need to be collected and the level of observer coverage that would be needed on fishing vessels to achieve those scientific objectives by gear type*

102. The SC noted that it needs a more in-depth understanding of the characteristics of Members' fleets and the implications for feasible observer coverages and for appropriate coverage levels to ensure that reliable and representative data are collected. The SC agreed that it is too early for the SC to be able to provide scientifically defensible input on the kinds of data that would need to be collected from a regional observer program and the level of observer coverage that would be needed on fishing vessels by gear type. The SC agreed to continue to discuss this matter at the SC and its subsidiary bodies.

103. The WWF called for the need for observer data to ensure transparency in fishery and improve the accuracy of stock assessments, and also called for the need for the SC to discuss the appropriate level of observer coverage from a purely scientific perspective, rather than from a feasibility perspective.

*8.3.2.3 Review of template for collecting qualitative information about Members' sampling programs*

104. The Science Manager presented a report on the existing observer programs of NPFC Members and those of other RFMOs (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP02 (Rev. 4)). The report summarized Members' existing observer programs for pelagic and bottom fisheries in the Convention Area, including observer training programs and observer program design and coverage, observer data collected, and how collected data are reported and stored; the observer programs of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and other general RFMOs, namely Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO), Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA), South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO); and the FAO Guidelines for Developing an At-Sea Fishery Observer Programme.

*8.3.2.4 Summary of SC responses to six questions from the TCC Chair*

105. The SC reviewed and updated the responses by its subsidiary bodies to the following questions from the TCC Chair to the SC and its subsidiary bodies: 1. Are there different needs for the different fisheries regarding data collection? 2. What new data would the SC prioritize/need from a ROP? 3. What new data would be nice to have (i.e. not needed/priority)? 4. Whether this data could be collected through electronic monitoring (EM)? 5. Whether the observer needs to be a scientist, or can data be collected by a non-scientist? The SC requested that the SC Chair forward the responses (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP04 (Rev. 4)) to the TCC Chair.

106. The SC agreed to continue to discuss data needs and data gaps that could be filled by a regional observer program and inform the TCC about progress in these developments.

*8.3.3 Potential use of NPFC Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) data for scientific purposes*

107. The Science Manager presented a summary of the VMS data from NPFC Members and potential ways in which the SC could use these data (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP05). Members have provided data from January 2022 to the present at a temporal resolution of 1-hour interval for each vessel and a spatial resolution of 0.001° latitude and longitude. China, Korea, Russia, Chinese Taipei, and Vanuatu also optionally provide vessel heading and speed data. The Science Manager suggested that the SC could use VMS data for estimating distribution of fishing effort, examining tradeoffs, modelling fishing effort for use in stock assessment and fisheries management activities, estimating abundance indices or undertaking stock assessments, evaluating the impact of management changes, planning for and implementing scientific programs, and validating logbook data. VMS reporting could also be enhanced for more comprehensive analysis, including by classifying vessel activities into distinct types; integrating the catch data from logbooks, including identification of target species; and collecting sea surface temperature (SST) and salinity (SSS) data from vessel uptake, and

making these data available to the Global Ocean Observing System.

108. The SC noted that currently, NPFC does not have specific regulations for the use of VMS data for scientific purposes.

Agenda Item 9. Scientific projects for 2025 and 2026

*9.1 Report on capacity building project*

109. Ms. Jhen Hsu (Chinese Taipei) reported on her training supported by the SC capacity building project. Ms. Hsu attended a 5-day ICES training course, held in Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada, on advanced stock assessment with R Template Model Builder (RTMB). RTMB is a new package that provides a native R interface for a subset of TMB, which is particularly popular in fisheries science and ecological modeling because it can efficiently handle state-space models, mix-effects models, complex likelihood functions, and large datasets with multiple random effects. RTMB provides all necessary components for building complex spatio-temporal models and all materials from the RTMB training course have been made available on the NPFC collaboration website.

110. The SC thanked Ms. Hsu for providing the capacity building materials to the SC and wished her well on her PhD defense.

*9.2 Ongoing/planned projects*

*9.3 New projects*

*9.3.1 Potential project(s) for PS, CM, NPA, SA, and NFS*

*9.3.2 Independent review of stock assessments*

*9.3.3 Other potential projects*

*9.4 Review, prioritization and funding of projects*

111. The Science Manager presented a draft list of scientific projects that were discussed during the meetings of the SC and its subsidiary bodies (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP09).

112. The SC reviewed the list of proposed scientific projects, finalized the list, and endorsed it for consideration by the Commission (Annex AA).

113. The SC agreed to continue to discuss the development of an independent peer review process for its stock assessments and to discuss adjustments to its stock assessment and management cycles for individual species to accommodate such an independent peer review process.

Agenda Item 10. Cooperation with other organizations

*10.1 Reports on the joint NPFC-PICES activities since the SC08 meeting, including a report from*

*the PICES Secretariat*

114. The Executive Secretary of the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), Dr. Sonia Batten, reported on recent and upcoming planned joint activities between PICES and NPFC (NPFC-2024-SC09-OP07), highlighting the following:
    (a) Participation by NPFC and PICES representatives at each other's annual meetings
    (b) Renewal of the NPFC-PICES Collaborative Framework
    (c) NPFC representation to the joint PICES/ICES Working Group (WG) on Small Pelagic Fish (WG 43)
    (d) NPFC representation to the joint PICES/ICES Working Group on Sustainable Pelagic Forage Communities (WG 53)
    (e) Involvement by some NPFC scientists, including the Chair of the NPFC SC, in the Working Group on the Ecology of Seamounts (WG 47)
    (f) Potential for collaboration on the BECI project
    (g) PICES External Review Process

*10.2 SC representation at PICES meetings*

115. The SC Chair reported on her attendance of the PICES 2024 Annual Meeting (NPFC-2024-SC09-IP08). The SC Chair participated in the Seamount Science Summit – Ecological Insights Workshop, which was convened by the Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative (DOSI), participated in the Biological Oceanography Committee and Science Board meetings, co-chaired the Working Group on Ecology of Seamounts (WG47), and worked on renewal of the PICES-NPFC Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific Ocean for another 5 years, which has since been endorsed by PICES.

116. The SC Chair proposed revisions to the NPFC's method to evaluate and rank nominations for SC representatives to be financially supported to participate in relevant scientific meetings, including opportunities that build capacity to undertake scientific analyses (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP18).

117. The SC endorsed the proposed revisions (Annex BB).

*10.2.1 SC representation in the Joint ICES-PICES Working Group on Sustainable Pelagic Forage Communities (WG SPF) and SPF symposium in 2026*

118. Dr. Chris Rooper (Canada) provided an overview of the Joint ICES-PICES Working Group on Sustainable Pelagic Forage Communities (WG SPF) and its activities (NPFC-2024-SC09-IP09). The WG SPF aims to foster international and interdisciplinary collaboration; assess recent progress on understanding fluctuations of forage species; identify, prioritize, and recommend research to forecast ecosystem responses; recommend strategies to improve

ecosystem-based management; and describe how climate change and other anthropogenic factors impact forage species. It consists of two Task Forces, one on Ecological Process Knowledge and the other on Translating Process Knowledge. The WG SPF also plans to hold a Small Pelagic Fishes Symposium on May 4–8, 2026, in La Paz, Mexico. NPFC scientists can get involved by participating in planning, submit a session/workshop/abstract, join an activity group, or contribute to reviewing papers/analyses. The NPFC has also been invited to co-sponsor the Symposium.

119. The official invitation for NPFC to co-sponsor the PICES/ICES/FAO International Symposium, titled "Navigating Changes in Small Pelagic Fish and Forage Communities: Climate, Ecosystems, and Sustainable Fisheries," to be convened on May 4–8, 2026, in La Paz, Mexico is detailed in NPFC-2024-SC09-OP06.

*10.2.2 Report on renewal of the NPFC – PICES Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific*

120. The SC Chair presented a proposal for the renewal of the NPFC – PICES Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific for 2025–2029 (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP19), prepared by the SC Chair, the SC vice-Chair (Dr. Jie Cao), and the NPFC and PICES Secretariats. She explained that the updated framework updates the scientific interests and objectives of each organization; identifies potential areas and specific topics for scientific cooperation; identifies potential collaborative methods (such as representation at each other's meetings, holding of joint workshops or symposia, development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the organizations or other formal agreements, establishment of joint working groups); clarifies practical steps to advance the cooperative activities identified above; and provides advice on how information produced by PICES can be shared and applied in the NPFC.

121. The SC endorsed the proposal and recommended that the Commission adopt the renewed NPFC – PICES Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific for 2025–2029.

*10.3 Report on cooperation between NPFC and NPAFC*

122. The NPAFC Executive Director, Mr. Yoshikiyo Kondo, reported the updates in the implementation of the Five-year Work Plan. In the report, Mr. Kondo expressed NPAFC's appreciation for NPFC's contribution to the North Pacific high seas Expedition in 2022 and NPFC's adoption of its CMM on anadromous fish at COM08 in 2024. He explained NPAFC's proposal to co-host a joint workshop on interaction between fisheries and anadromous fish in the North Pacific high seas as a potential further collaboration between the NPFC and NPAFC,

and asked for the SC's support for holding such a joint workshop. He emphasized NPAFC's strong and continued willingness to cooperate with the NPFC.

123. The SC reviewed the concept paper on a Joint NPAFC/NPFC workshop on interactions between fisheries and anadromous fish in the North Pacific high seas. The SC endorsed the scientific elements of the paper, while noting that most of the workshop topics concern matters of compliance, and recommended that the NPAFC also present the concept paper to the TCC.

124. The SC reviewed and had no feedback on the Terms of Reference for an NPAFC/NPFC Data Sharing Platform.

*10.4 FAO ABNJ Deep-sea fisheries project*

125. Dr. Tony Thompson, the DSF Project (FAO), presented an update on its activities (NPFC-2024-SC09-OP12). In its current phase, the DSF Project's objective is to ensure deep-sea fisheries are managed under an ecosystems-based approach, focusing on data-limited stocks, deepwater sharks, and VMEs. The DSF Project has been working on the application of the precautionary approach to deep-sea fisheries, engagement with deep-sea fishing industry, assessing data-limited deep-sea stocks, assessing impacts of deep-sea fisheries on deepwater sharks, VME identification methods, support for observers, RFMO websites and outreach messaging, new technologies, and climate change work. The DSF Project will also hold a Symposium on Applying the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction on 11–13 March 2025.

126. The DSF Project (FAO) made a request for fishing effort data by position and gear for fisheries using bottom contact gears, at 1$^{o}$ latitude by 1$^{o}$ longitude resolution, for the last 5 years to develop a global map of spatial bottom fishing effort (NPFC-2024-SC09-OP08). The DSF Project explained that if there are restrictions on the release of data at the scales outlined above, it would welcome advice on alternative approaches to spatial and/or temporal aggregation that would facilitate data being available for this mapping exercise.

127. The SC requested Members to consult with data owners on whether the NPFC could share the requested data with the DSF Project in the aggregated form that was previously prepared by the SSC BF-ME. If the data owners give their approval for the sharing of the data, the SC requested Members to collaborate with the DSF Project on the data-sharing process intersessionally.

128. The SC Chair reminded the SC that CMM 2023-14 On Sharks requires all Members to annually report all shark catches, to the extent possible by species, and that at SC08, the DSF

Project (FAO) offered to help the NPFC to develop a key for shark identification.

129. The DSF Project (FAO) presented an overview of preliminary identification keys for deepwater sharks and a review of deepwater shark species known or likely to occur within the NPFC Convention Area (NPFC-2024-SC09-OP05). The DSF Project is also working on a new style of digital identification key with enhanced usability. FAO will produce a pelagic shark identification key in 2025.

130. The SC expressed its appreciation for the preliminary identification keys and expressed interest in collaborating with the FAO on working on a new style of digital identification key.

*10.5 Partnership with the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System of FAO (FIRMS)*

131. Mr. Aureliano Gentile (FAO) provided an update on FIRMS' support for the FAO SOFIA Status of Stocks Index (SoSI) biennial updates and the partnership between FIRMS and NPFC (NPFC-2024-SC09-OP11). Mr. Gentile provided an overview of the objectives and outcomes of the Ninth FIRMS Technical Working Group (TWG9) Meeting that was held on 10–13 December 2024. He also outlined the requirements and good practices for responding to the biennial FIRMS data call for the SoSI updates. Mr. Gentile also reported the status of progress in conducting the SoSI biennial updates, including the new SoSI methodology and data flow, and shared other news from FIRMS.

*10.6 Partnership with WCPFC and ISC*

132. The Executive Secretary informed the SC that, following the 8th meeting of the Commission, the NPFC has concluded Memoranda of Understanding with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC), which will facilitate consultation, cooperation, and collaboration between the NPFC and these two organizations.

*10.7 Partnership with SPRFMO*

133. The Science Manager presented the Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the NPFC and the SPRFMO in 2023 and outlined the objectives of the SPRFMO. He also reported on his recent attendance of the 12th meeting of the SPRFMO Scientific Committee, which was a valuable opportunity to learn more about SPRFMO and its good practices, as well as to identify areas of similarity and common interest between NPFC and SPRFMO.

*10.8 Cooperation with other organizations*

134. There was no discussion of cooperation with any other organizations.

Agenda Item 11. SC Terms of Reference (TOR) and 2024-2028 Research Plan and Work Plan

*11.1 Review of the Scientific Committee TOR*

135. The SC reviewed its TOR and determined that no revisions are currently needed.

*11.2 Five-year Research Plan*

*11.3 Five-year Work Plan*

136. The SC reviewed its 2024-2028 Five-Year Rolling Research Plan (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP16) and Work Plan (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP17). The Research Plan and the Work Plan of the SC and its subsidiary bodies are attached as Annex CC.

137. Members agreed to share data for scientific activities in accordance with the agreed SC Research Plan and SC Work Plan. The SC tasked the Secretariat to send an official call for data to Members.

*11.4 Progress on addressing NPFC PR recommendations for SC*

138. The SC's progress on addressing the NPFC Performance Review Panel's recommendations, as well as the SC's ongoing and future actions, are described in NPFC-2024-SC09-WP01 (Rev. 6).

Agenda Item 12. Other matters

*12.1 Coordination between SC and TCC*

139. The Compliance Manager, Ms. Judy Dwyer, provided an update on coordination between the TCC and the SC (NPFC-2024-SC09-IP11). The TCC has been developing a proposal for a regional transshipment observer program, clarifying language for CMM 2024-03 on Transshipment to ensure all transshipped fish products are recorded by species, addressing technical issues to establish a process for entry and exit notification in the Convention Area, addressing technical issues for incorporating aerial surveillance in high seas boarding and inspections (HSBIs) and updating HSBI support material on the NPFC website, and gathering data from Members to assist in the establishment of the "historic existing level" that is referenced in a number of CMMs.

140. Based on the discussions above, the SC identifies the following as matters for coordination between the SC and the TCC and requests the Secretariat to inform the TCC that:
    (a) The SC proposed revisions to CMM 2024-05 (Annex R) for two new bottom fishing area closures to protect VMEs on Yuryaku Seamount.
    (b) The SC responded to the questions from the TCC Chair (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP04 (Rev. 4)).
    (c) The SC will continue to discuss data needs and data gaps that could be filled by a regional

observer program and inform the TCC about progress in these developments.

*12.2 Other issues*

141. The SC discussed and agreed on a process for considering the extension of the contracts of invited experts as follows:
    (a) In advance of the completion of an invited expert's term, the Secretariat will circulate a survey among Members in which they will assess the performance of the invited expert and express any concerns they may have.
    (b) The Secretariat will compile Members' responses to the survey and share them with all Members.
    (c) At the meeting of the SC or relevant subsidiary body that is to consider the extension of the contract of the invited expert, the invited expert and observers will be asked to leave the room, and the SC or relevant subsidiary body will hold its deliberations and make its recommendation.

142. As the scope of the scientific activities of the NPFC continues and will continue to grow, as illustrated by the intensive schedule of scientific meetings and projects planned for 2025–2026, the SC recognized the potential need to provide greater support for the Secretariat in the future, for example through the enhanced capacity of the Secretariat itself, support from external suppliers, in-kind assistance from Members, or streamlining its workplan.

143. The FAO informed the SC that the Secretariats at other RFMOs have experienced similar challenges handling intensive meeting and project schedules. The FAO suggested it would be worthwhile for the NPFC Secretariat to discuss these common challenges with other RFMO Secretariats, for example through the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN).

144. The SC noted that occasionally documents submitted to the SC may require significant modification after being reviewed by the SC. In these rare cases, the SC requests the Commission to allow submission of revised documents which are to be approved intersessionally by the SC up to 14 days prior to Commission meetings.

Agenda Item 13. Advice and recommendations to the Commission

145. Based on the recommendations from its SSCs, the TWG CMSA, and its SWGs, the SC recommends that the Commission:
    (a) Endorse the SC's 5-Year Rolling Research and Work Plans (Annex CC).
    (b) Endorse the proposed scientific projects (Annex AA).
    (c) Consider the species summary documents and stock status summaries as reference information when taking decisions on the management of the NPFC priority species

(Annexes E–Q).

(d) Consider the scientific meetings schedule for 2025-2026 as described in paragraph 149.

**Stock Assessment Process**

(e) Endorse the prioritization of the development of stock assessment activity for stocks without domestic assessments.

(f) Endorse streamlined stock status reporting to the Commission from the SC consisting of the following:

i. statements of status for each species (e.g. saury text, NPA text)

ii. time series of catch, effort for all species (with pictures)

iii. CPUE standardized or biomass (if model) where available

(g) Provide guidance on how the SC should provide advice for priority species for which work towards an NPFC stock assessment is not currently being conducted.

(h) Allow submission of revised documents which are to be approved intersessionally by the SC up to 14 days prior to Commission meetings, as described in paragraph 144.

**Chub Mackerel**

(i) Endorse the stock assessment executive summary and stock assessment report (Annex P) as the best available scientific information, while noting that there were discrepancies in the input data, whose impact on the output of the stock assessment is uncertain.

(j) Note, based on the current stock assessment, the status of the chub mackerel stock and management advice in the chub mackerel stock assessment.

(k) Note that Members will revise their data and submit the revised data to the TWG CMSA by 4 February and that the TWG CMSA will re-run the stock assessment and update the model output, ideally before the next TWG CMSA meeting in February, or at least before the Commission meeting in March, if possible.

(l) Allocate funds for the participation of an invited expert in the TWG CMSA meetings to support the TWG CMSA (Scientific Projects, Annex AA).

**Bottom Fish and Marine Ecosystems**

(m) Allocate funds for the participation of invited experts in the SWG NPA-SA meetings to support the SA and NPA stock assessments (Scientific Projects, Annex AA).

(n) Request Members that conduct or seek to conduct bottom fishing in the Convention Area to provide updated assessments on bottom fishing activities' SAIs on VMEs (following CMM 2024-05 and CMM 2024-06 Annex 2) and submit them for review by the SC and its subsidiary bodies at or before SC11.

(o) Endorse proposed revisions to CMM 2024-05 (Annex R), including the following updates:

i. Translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names of cold-water corals among the VME indicator taxa

ii. Two new bottom fishing area closures: (1) Northwestern part of Yuryaku Seamount:

32–42.75’N, 172–12.90’E; 32–42.75’N, 172–13.65’E; 32–43.50’N, 172–13.65’E; 32–43.50’N, 172–12.90’E, and (2) Southeastern part of Yuryaku Seamount: 32–37.80’N, 172–18.00’E; 32–37.80’N, 172–18.60’E; 32–38.40’N, 172–18.60’E; 32–38.40’N, 172–18.00’E.

(p) Endorse proposed revisions to CMM 2024-06 (Annex S), including the following update:
   i. Translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names of cold-water corals among the VME indicator taxa

**Neon Flying Squid**

(q) Allocate funds for the participation of an invited expert in the SSC NFS meetings to support the SSC NFS (Scientific Projects, Annex AA).

(r) Task the Secretariat to make the maps available on the NPFC website, at a spatial resolution of $1^o$ x $1^o$ and a monthly temporal resolution for catch and effort, with access restricted to NPFC Members only.

**Pacific Saury**

(s) Endorse the stock assessment report (Annex Q).

(t) Allocate funds for the participation and technical support (e.g., development of a new stock assessment model) of an invited expert(s) in the next SSC PS and WG NSAM meetings (Scientific Projects, Annex AA)

**Other Priority Species**

(u) Request Members to provide JS biological data, JFS biological data, and BM biological data and the ratio of BM to chub mackerel catch to the Secretariat for analyses in accordance with the agreed work plan.

**Data Sharing**

(v) Adopt the revised Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information (Annex Z).

(w) Update the data shared by the SC, TWG CMSA, SSC BF-ME, SSC PS, SSC NFS in accordance with their work plans.

**Cooperation with Other Organizations**

(x) Adopt the renewed NPFC – PICES Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific for 2025–2029.

**Performance Review**

(y) Note that the SC reviewed the Performance Review recommendations and provided comments on SC-related recommendations (NPFC-2024-SC09-WP01 (Rev. 6)).

146. In relation to other tasks for the SC specified in CMMs and the Convention, the SC informs the Commission of the following:

(a) The SC agreed to disband the SWG Milestones as the SWG has achieved all of its tasks.

**Stock Assessment Process**

(b) The SC agreed to implement a stock assessment review cycle for species assessed by the NPFC.

**Chub Mackerel**

(c) The SC tasked the TWG CMSA to investigate the source of the discrepancies in the input data in the stock assessment and to recommend quality assurance and quality control measures to prevent the recurrence of similar issues in the future.

**Neon Flying Squid**

(d) The SC endorsed the Terms of Reference for the Small Scientific Committee on Neon Flying Squid (Annex U).

(e) The SC endorsed the CPUE Standardization Protocol for neon flying squid (Annex V).

(f) The SC endorsed the Stock assessment protocol for neon flying squid (Annex W).

**Pacific Saury**

(g) The SC noted the plans of the WG NSAM to continue developing Stock Synthesis model.

**Data Collection and Sharing**

(h) The SC endorsed the scientific data inventory policy and the data inventory table structure.

(i) The SC endorsed the development of a database to manage and archive scientific data.

(j) The SC agreed to share existing biological data from the fisheries catch in the Convention Area and the adjacent EEZs with the Secretariat.

(k) The SC endorsed Terms of Reference for an SWG Data (Annex Y), agreed to establish the SWG Data for 1 year, and agreed to elect Ms. Karolina Molla Gazi (EU) as the SWG Data Lead.

(l) The SC agreed that it is too early for the SC to be able to provide scientifically defensible input on the kinds of data that would need to be collected from a regional observer program and the level of observer coverage that would be needed on fishing vessels by gear type and agreed to continue to discuss this matter at the SC and its subsidiary bodies.

**Climate Change**

(m) The SC noted the analyses on climate change effects conducted by the SSC PS.

(n) The SC reviewed the report on potential climate change impacts on NPFC stocks funded by the FAO DSF project.

**Cooperation with Other Organizations**

(o) The SC re-affirmed its support for the development and implementation of the BECI project, which will provide valuable information for the SC's analyses, including those related to climate change.

(p) The SC continued to cooperate with the FAO DSF Project on the development of a shark ID guide.

(q) The SC revised its policy on evaluation and ranking of nominations for SC representatives to be financially supported to participate in relevant scientific meetings.

147. The SC recommends that the SWG MSE PS:
    (a) Explore options for beginning the MSE process prior to the completion of the age-structured model.

Agenda Item 14. Next meetings of SC and its subsidiary bodies

*14.1 Meeting Schedule for 2025/2026*

148. The Science Manager presented a proposed meeting schedule for 2025-2026 (NPFC-2024-SC09-IP02).

*14.2 Meeting format and location*

149. The SC suggested the following provisional meeting schedule for the 2025 operational year, subject to further update before COM09:
    (a) SSC NFS02: 8-10 July 2025 in China (3 days, hybrid)
    (b) WG NSAM: 12-14 July 2025 in China (3 days, hybrid)
    (c) TWG CMSA11: 16-19 July 2025 in China (4 days, hybrid)
    (d) SSC PS15: 1–5 September 2025 (5 days, virtual)
    (e) SSC BF-ME06: 8–9 or 8–10 December 2025 in Japan (2-3 days, hybrid)
    (f) SSC PS16: 10–13 or 11–13 and 15 December 2025 in Japan (4 days, hybrid)
    (g) SC10: 15–18 or 16–19 December 2025 in Japan (4 days, hybrid)
    (h) SSC NFS03: January 2026 (3 days, virtual)
    (i) TWG CMSA12: January/February 2026 (4 days, virtual)

150. The SC's subsidiary bodies will hold informal web meetings to check progress and plan intersessional work, when needed.

151. Members were invited to consider hosting scientific meetings in the 2026 operational year and inform the Secretariat preferably by summer 2025.

Agenda Item 15. Press release

152. The SC endorsed the press release for publication on the NPFC website after the meeting (NPFC-2024-SC09-IP10 (Rev. 1)).

Agenda Item 16. Adoption of the Report

153. The SC09 Report was adopted by consensus.

Agenda Item 17. Close of the Meeting

154. The SC expressed its sincere thanks to the SC Chair for leading the meeting, the Secretariat for its organization and preparations, and Japan for hosting the meeting.

155. The SC Chair thanked the participants for their hard work, the Secretariat for its support, the rapporteur for his assistance, and Japan for its hospitality.

156. The meeting closed at 16:40 on 20 December 2024, Tokyo time.

**Annexes:**

Annex A – Agenda
Annex B – List of Documents
Annex C – List of Participants
Annex D – SWG Milestones report
Annex E – Species summary for chub mackerel
Annex F – Species summary for North Pacific armorhead
Annex G – Species summary for splendid alfonsino
Annex H – Species summary for sablefish
Annex I – Species summary for blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes
Annex J – Species summary for skilfish
Annex K – Species summary for neon flying squid
Annex L – Species summary for Pacific saury
Annex M – Species summary for Japanese flying squid
Annex N – Species summary for Japanese sardine
Annex O – Species summary for blue mackerel
Annex P – Stock assessment report for chub mackerel
Annex Q – Stock assessment report for Pacific saury
Annex R – Revised CMM 2024-05 - Conservation and Management Measure for Bottom Fisheries and Protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in the Northwestern Pacific Ocean
Annex S – Revised CMM 2024-06 - Conservation and Management Measure for Bottom Fisheries and Protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in the Northeastern Pacific Ocean
Annex T – US statement on its ongoing call for closure of the bottom fisheries on the Emperor Seamount Chain and Northwestern Hawaiian Ridge
Annex U – Terms of Reference for the Small Scientific Committee on Neon Flying Squid
Annex V – CPUE Standardization Protocol for neon flying squid
Annex W – Stock Assessment Protocol for neon flying squid
Annex X – Table of tasks for the SWG JFS, the SWG JS, and the SWG BM in 2025
Annex Y – Terms of Reference for the Small Working Group on Data (SWG Data)
Annex Z – Revised Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information

Annex AA – Scientific projects

Annex BB – Evaluation and ranking of nominations for SC representatives to be financially supported to participate in relevant scientific meetings

Annex CC – Five-Year Research Plan and Work Plan of the Scientific Committee

**Annex A**

**Agenda**

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1.1 Welcome Address and Introductions

1.2 Appointment of Rapporteur

1.3 Meeting Arrangements

Agenda Item 2. Adoption of Agenda

Agenda Item 3. Key milestones to achieve for NPFC stock assessment of priority species and provision of management advice

3.1 A process for reviewing and possibly endorsing domestic stock assessments for priority species

Agenda Item 4. Review of reports and recommendations from the Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment (TWG CMSA) and the Small Scientific Committees (SSC BF-ME, SSC NFS, and SSC PS)

4.1 Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment

4.2 Small Scientific Committee on Bottom Fish and Marine Ecosystems

4.3 Small Scientific Committee on Neon Flying Squid

4.4 Small Scientific Committee on Pacific Saury

Agenda Item 5. Update from the Joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS)

Agenda Item 6. Other pelagic priority species

6.1 Summary of progress on the remaining three priority species

6.1.1 Blue mackerel (BM)

6.1.2 Japanese flying squid (JFS)

6.1.3 Japanese sardine (JS)

6.2 Review of species summaries

6.3 Domestic stock assessments of BM, JFS, and JS

6.4 Future roles and activities of SWG BM, SWG JFS, and SWG JS

Agenda Item 7. Climate change effects on NPFC's priority species and associated ecosystems

7.1 Tools for incorporating climate change considerations into scientific advice

7.2 Current knowledge

7.2.1 FAO consultancy report on climate change in the North Pacific
7.3 Ongoing research activities
7.3.1 PICES' Basin-scale Events to Coastal Impacts (BECI) project
7.4 Research priorities and potential scientific projects

Agenda Item 8. Data Collection and Management
8.1 Data Management System
8.1.1 Update on GitHub Plan for NPFC
8.1.2 Evaluation of biological data provision templates
8.1.3 Data inventory
8.1.4 Establishment of a new database to manage and archive scientific data
8.1.5 Potential establishment of a new Small Working Group on Data (SWG Data)
8.1.6 Review of need of GIS maps with catch and effort data for NFS and JS
8.2 NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol
8.2.1 Revision of Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information
8.3 Data needs, data gaps and strategies to fill gaps
8.3.1 Information about species belonging to same ecosystem or dependent/associated with target stocks
8.3.1.1 Historical information about species captured in surveys and/or discarded bycatch from fisheries in the Convention Area
8.3.1.2 Potential impacts on species belonging to same ecosystem or dependent/associated with target stocks
8.3.1.3 Status of current non-target catch, definitions of bycatch applied in other RFMOs, and options for defining bycatch within NPFC
8.3.2 Potential roles of a regional observer program
8.3.2.1 Summary of scientific objectives of an observer program
8.3.2.2 Summary of the kinds of data that would need to be collected and the level of observer coverage that would be needed on fishing vessels to achieve those scientific objectives by gear type
8.3.2.3 Review of template for collecting qualitative information about Members' sampling programs
8.3.2.4 Summary of SC responses to six questions from the TCC Chair
8.3.3 Potential use of NPFC Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) data for scientific purposes

Agenda Item 9. Scientific projects for 2025 and 2026
9.1 Report on capacity building project
9.2 Ongoing/planned projects

9.3 New projects
9.3.1 Potential project(s) for PS, CM, NPA, SA, and NFS
9.3.2 Independent review of stock assessments
9.3.3 Other potential projects
9.4 Review, prioritization and funding of projects

Agenda Item 10. Cooperation with other organizations
10.1 Reports on the joint NPFC-PICES activities since the SC08 meeting, including a report from the PICES Secretariat
10.2 SC representation at scientific meetings
10.2.1 SC representation in the joint ICES-PICES Working Group on Sustainable Pelagic Forage Communities (WG SPF) and SPF symposium in 2026
10.2.2 Report on renewal of the NPFC – PICES Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific
10.3 Report on cooperation between NPFC and NPAFC
10.4 FAO ABNJ Deep-sea fisheries project
10.5 Partnership with the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System of FAO (FIRMS)
10.6 Partnership with WCPFC and ISC
10.7 Partnership with SPRFMO
10.8 Cooperation with other organizations

Agenda Item 11. SC Terms of Reference (TOR) and 2024-2028 Research Plan and Work Plan
11.1 Review of the Scientific Committee TOR
11.2 Five-year Research Plan
11.3 Five-year Work Plan
11.4 Progress on addressing NPFC PR recommendations for SC

Agenda Item 12. Other matters
12.1 Coordination between SC and TCC
12.2 Other issues

Agenda Item 13. Advice and recommendations to the Commission

Agenda Item 14. Next meetings of SC and its subsidiary bodies
14.1 Meeting schedule for 2025/2026
14.2 Meeting format and location

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Agenda Item 16. Adoption of the Report

Agenda Item 17. Close of the Meeting

**Annex B**

**List of Documents**

**MEETING INFORMATION PAPERS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2024-SC09-MIP01 (Rev. 5) | Meeting Information |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-MIP02 | Provisional Agenda |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-MIP03 (Rev. 2) | Annotated Indicative Schedule |

**WORKING PAPERS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP01 (Rev. 6) | Performance Review Recommendations update |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP02 (Rev. 4) | Report on the existing observer programs of NPFC Members and those of other RFMOs |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP03 | Data inventory |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP04 (Rev. 4) | Request from the TCC Chair on the development of an ROP and responses from SC |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP05 | Potential use of NPFC Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) data for scientific purposes |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP06 | SC database: concept paper |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP07 (Rev. 2) | Revised Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP08 | SWG Milestones Report |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP09 (Rev. 2) | Scientific projects |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP10 (Rev. 2) | Blue Mackerel Species Summary |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP11 (Rev. 1) | Japanese Flying Squid Species Summary |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP12 (Rev. 2) | Japanese Sardine Species Summary |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP13 | Prototype of NPFC Neon Flying Squid map |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP14 | Summary of progress by the Japanese Sardine SSC in 2024 |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP15 | Exploring the opportunity for developing common standards for the collection, reporting, verification and exchange of data in NPFC |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP16 (Rev. 1) | SC 2024-2028 Research Plan |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP17 (Rev. 1) | Five-Year Work Plan of the Scientific Committee |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP18 | Evaluation and ranking of nominations for SC representatives to be financially supported to participate in relevant scientific meetings |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP19 | NPFC – PICES Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific |

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| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP20 (Rev. 1) | Stock Assessment of Chub Mackerel in the Northwest Pacific Ocean |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP21 | An overview of 2024 Chinese survey by fishery research vessel "Song Hang" in the NPFC convention area |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP22 | Study in the ecosystem structure and trophodynamics in the Kuroshio-Oyashio Extension area |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-WP23 | Species in the Northwest Pacific ecosystem from Chinese survey and bycatch in fishery |

**INFORMATION PAPERS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2024-SC09-IP01 | NPFC Data Management Systems: Progress and Operational Guidelines |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-IP02 (Rev. 4) | Meeting schedule 2025-2026 |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-IP03 | Summary of Progress on Blue Mackerel |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-IP04 (Rev.1) | Domestic Stock Assessment of Blue Mackerel in Japan in 2022 FY (July-June) |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-IP05 (Rev.1) | Domestic Stock Assessment of Japanese Sardine in Japan in 2023 FY (January-December) |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-IP06 | Domestic stock assessment of Japanese flying squid in Japan |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-IP07 | Summary of progress on Japanese flying squid |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-IP08 | Summary of NPFC’s SC representation at PICES 2024 Annual Meeting |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-IP09 | PICES-ICES WG53 (WGSPF) Sustainable Pelagic Forage Communities |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-IP10 (Rev.1) | Press Release |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-IP11 | TCC update to SC09 |
| NPFC-2023-SC08-IP13(Rev 1) | 2023 Biological Data Provision Templates |

**OBSERVER PAPERS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP01 | Pathways for the incorporation of climate change into the work of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP02 | Developing the climate test: robustness trials for climate-ready management procedures |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP03 | Developing the climate test: performance metrics of climate robustness |

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|---|---|
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP04 | Harvest Strategies and Climate Change - A Review of the Literature |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP05 | A review of deep-water shark species (superorder Selachimorpha) known or likely to occur within the North Pacific Fisheries Commission's Convention Area, including preliminary identification keys |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP06 | Invitation to the PICES/ICES/FAO International Symposium “Navigating Changes in Small Pelagic Fish and Forage Communities: Climate, Ecosystems, and Sustainable Fisheries |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP07 | Report on Joint NPFC-PICES activities for SC-09 |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP08 | Request for deep-sea fishing effort data by position and gear for fisheries using bottom contact gears |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP09 | Progress on the Five-year Work Plan to implement NPAFC/NPFC Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) (endorsed by NPFC and NPAFC in 2023) |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP10 | Basin-Scale Events & Coastal Impacts (BECI) Project: Making Climate and Ocean Science Work for You |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP11 | FIRMS at NPFC-SC09 |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-OP12 | Deep-sea fisheries project |

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2024-SC09-RP01 | Summary of the 1st joint meeting of the Small Working Groups on JFS, JS, and BM |
| NPFC-2024-SC09-RP02 | Summary of the 2nd joint meeting of the Small Working Groups on JFS, JS, and BM |
| NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA08-Final Report | TWG CMSA08 meeting report |
| NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-Final Report | TWG CMSA09 meeting report |
| NPFC-2024-SSC NFS01-Final Report | SSC NFS meeting report |
| NPFC-2024-SWG MSE PS05-Final Report | SWG MSE PS05 report |
| NPFC-2024-SSC BFME05-Final Report | SSC BFME05 report |
| | MOU between NPAFC and NPFC |
| | Partnership Arrangement between FIRMS and NPFC |
| | NPFC's MOUs with WCPFC and ISC |
| | MOU between SPRFMO and NPFC |
| | Materials from ICES RTMB training course |

**Annex C**

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**Annex D**

## SWG Milestones report

### Background and objectives

The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) is responsible for managing fisheries for fish and invertebrate species (not including tuna, tuna-like species and Pacific salmon) in international waters of the North Pacific. The NPFC has identified 10 priority species that are harvested in the Convention Area (CA) using a variety of gears. Four species of pelagic fish; Pacific saury, chub mackerel, blue mackerel and Japanese sardine, four species of bottom fish species; North Pacific armorhead, splendid alfonsino, skilfish, and sablefish and two species of squid; neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid constitute the priority species.

For each of these species the Scientific Committee (SC) of the NPFC is charged with determining the status of the stock and providing this information to the Commission. This will enable the Commission to make informed decisions on sustainable levels of harvest for each stock and/or implement harvest controls that meet other management or conservation objectives for each stock.

The Small Working Group on Milestones (SWG Milestones) was tasked by the Scientific Committee at SC08 to develop a set of common milestones for determining stock status for NPFC priority species. Additionally, the SWG Milestones was asked to develop a plan and timeline to achieve the assessment of stock status. One of the requested tasks was to develop and implement a common set of data sharing templates that would enable the NPFC to more efficiently manage and distribute data on each of the stocks. Finally, the SWG Milestones was asked to present the outcomes of their work at SC09 in December 2024.

### General framework for assessment milestones

Most modern single species stock assessments utilize three main data streams to determine the status of a fish stock. The catch and effort data from commercial fisheries is the most basic data collected on a stock. Biological data on the species, including length, weight, age and maturity data from the catch and other sources is the second piece of important data. Finally, an index of abundance generated from a non-fishery source (e.g. a fishery independent survey) is sometimes available and always useful in stock assessments. The available data is then integrated into a data-appropriate model that describes the dynamics of the population and from which reference points on the status of the stock can be generated. It is important to note that in some cases the data may limit the type of assessment model that can be used.

In general, once a stock assessment model has been developed, it can be simulation tested to determine its robustness to the data. A stock assessment model (or other model that describes the population dynamics) can also be used as an operating model in a management strategy evaluation

(MSE) to determine the performance of different harvest strategies against management and conservation objectives.

Depending on the data available, a more complex (full MSE based on age structured operating model) or a more simple (catch and effort data depicted over time) may be preferred or attainable for NPFC priority species. There is also a different pathway (at least currently) for NPFC priority species that are assessed domestically by Japan and Canada, in that these species are lower priorities for the NPFC SC to develop full stock assessments and MSE processes. A general diagram depicting this pathway from the most simple to most complex scenarios is shown in Figure 1 with NPFC priority species current location along that pathway.

**Pathways for priority species**

A depiction of the planned pathways for assessment within the NPFC are shown in the flow chart in Figures 2 and 3. Which priority stock is chosen for assessment can be determined by direct request of the Commission, or roughly determined by a set of indicators ranked by importance (e.g., stock nearing collapse based on auxiliary information like indices or domestic stock assessments, ecological importance, existing high harvest levels, effective managements with technical measures already in place etc.). In previous years, the stocks chosen for assessment were Pacific saury and chub mackerel and the choice was made by the Commission. At SC08 the Scientific Committee recommended that neon flying squid would be the next species to be assessed based on its importance and the absence of information on its status. The current logistics are that the SC establish a small scientific committee (or technical working group) with representatives from each Member to undertake assessment of a species.

The data available to the NPFC for each stock determines which model or method can be used to assess the stock (Figures 2 and 3). One way to divide the stocks are those that are data rich, data moderate and data poor. For data rich stocks there are two where the fishery occurs predominantly or extensively in the CA (Pacific saury and chub mackerel). There are also data rich stocks where the primary stock distribution is inside domestic waters and a domestic stock assessment is available (Japanese sardine, blue mackerel, Japanese flying squid, sablefish). The data moderate stocks in the NPFC priority species list are splendid alfonsino and neon flying squid, while the data limited stocks are skilfish and North Pacific armorhead.

A proposed set of pathways for assessment within the NPFC are shown in the flow chart in Figure 2. Requests from the Commission, in particular the request for an interim HCR for Pacific saury have led to a different pathway than is proposed in Figure 2 (for Pacific saury an HCR was simulation tested and adopted as an interim measure). The pathway in Figure 2 shows the more accepted practice of conducting MSE on management procedures prior to implementation (rather than implementing an HCR prior to full MSE). Figure 3 shows the proposed pathway for NPFC priority species that currently have a domestic assessment by a Member. We would propose the

pathways in Figures 2 and 3 be adopted for future work by the NPFC.

**Data rich stocks (Pacific saury, chub mackerel)**

Data available for Pacific saury include catch and effort data from multiple fishery components (different Members), a juvenile fishery independent survey conducted annually by Japan, and biological data from some fishery catch and the survey data. More complete biological data from the catch of most fishery sectors would be useful for this species. Pacific saury is currently assessed using a Bayesian state-space surplus production model. The model has been simulation tested against the data, reference points have been calculated and a harvest control rule has been implemented by the Commission based on the simulation output. The next steps for the Pacific saury are to implement an age-structured stock assessment model and use this as the operating model in a full MSE for the species.

The status of the Pacific saury stock is currently communicated to the Commission at its annual meeting.

Table 1. Pacific saury milestones, timeline and deliverables

| Deliverable | Anticipated timeline | Responsible group |
|---|---|---|
| Age structured assessment/operating model | SC10 (2025)? | SSC PS |
| Full MSE | SC10 (2025)? | SWG MSE, SSC PS |
| Assessment update | Annually | SSC PS |
| MSE update | 3-5 year cycle | SWG MSE, SSC PS |

Data available for chub mackerel include catch and effort data from multiple fishery components (both different gear types and different Members), two juvenile fishery independent surveys (summer and autumn) and egg survey conducted annually by Japan, and biological data from some fishery catch and the survey data. Additionally, recent data from fishery independent surveys conducted by China and Japan are potentially available. More complete biological data from the catch of most fishery sectors would be useful for this species. The chub mackerel stock assessment using a state-space assessment is currently being parameterized and estimated. The model has been tested and evaluated against simulated data. The next steps for the chub mackerel stock are to implement an age-structured stock assessment model, estimate reference points and report status of the stock.

The status of the chub mackerel stock is not currently communicated to the SC and the Commission.

Table 2. Chub mackerel milestones, timeline and deliverables

| Deliverable | Anticipated timeline | Responsible group |
|---|---|---|
| Age structured assessment | SC09 (2024) | TWG CMSA |
| Reference points estimated | SC09 (2024) | TWG CMSA |
| Stock status communicated to the SC and Commission | SC09 (2024)? | TWG CMSA, SC |
| Assessment update | Annually | TWG CMSA |

**Data rich stocks with domestic assessments (Japanese sardine, Japanese flying squid, blue mackerel, Sablefish)**

Data available for Japanese sardine include catch and effort data from fishery components (both domestic and in the CA by all Members), fishery independent surveys conducted annually by Japan and biological data from some fishery catch and the survey data. More complete biological data from the catch of the CA fishery sectors would be useful for this species. A domestic assessment of the population is conducted annually by Japan using a virtual population analysis and includes annual catch amount from the CA components of the fishery. The next steps for the Japanese sardine assessment would be to collect and incorporate catch-at-age and biological data from the CA fishery components and report status of the stock to the Commission for the CA fishery based on the Japanese domestic stock assessment.

The status of the Japanese sardine stock is not currently communicated to the Commission.

Table 3. Japanese sardine milestones, timeline and deliverables

| Deliverable | Anticipated timeline | Responsible group |
|---|---|---|
| Collect and share biological data from CA catch of Japanese sardine | SC09 (2024) | SWG JS |
| Stock status based on domestic assessment communicated to the SC and Commission | SC09 (2024) | SWG JS, SC |

Data available for Japanese flying squid include catch and effort data from fishery components (both domestic and in the CA by all Members), fishery independent surveys conducted annually by Japan (winter and spring) and historically by Russia, and biological data from some fishery catch and the survey data. More complete biological data from the catch of the CA fishery sectors would be useful for this species. A domestic assessment of the population is conducted annually by Japan based on abundance indices. The next steps for the Japanese flying squid assessment would be to collect and incorporate biological data from the CA fishery components and report status of the stock to the Commission for the CA fishery based on the Japanese domestic stock assessment.

The status of the Japanese flying squid stock is not currently communicated to the Commission.

Table 4. Japanese flying squid milestones, timeline and deliverables

| Deliverable | Anticipated timeline | Responsible group |
|---|---|---|
| Collect and share biological data from CA catch of Japanese flying squid | SC09 (2024) | SWG JFS |
| Stock status based on domestic assessment communicated to the SC and Commission | SC09 (2024) | SWG JFS, SC |

Data available for blue mackerel include catch and effort data from fishery components (both domestic and in the CA by all Members), fishery independent surveys conducted annually by Japan and biological data from some fishery catch and the survey data. More complete biological data from the catch of the CA fishery sectors would be useful for this species. A domestic assessment of the population is conducted annually by Japan using a virtual population analysis and includes catch and effort data from the CA components of the fishery. The next steps for the blue assessment would be to collect and incorporate catch-at-age and biological data from the CA fishery components and report status of the stock to the Commission for the CA fishery based on the Japanese domestic stock assessment.

The status of the blue mackerel stock is not currently communicated to the Commission.

Table 5. Blue mackerel milestones, timeline and deliverables

| Deliverable | Anticipated timeline | Responsible group |
|---|---|---|
| Collect and share biological data from CA catch of blue mackerel | SC09 (2024) | SWG BM |
| Stock status based on domestic assessment communicated to the SC and Commission | SC09 (2024) | SWG BM, SC |

Data available for sablefish include catch and effort data from fishery components (both domestic and in the CA), fishery independent surveys conducted annually by the USA and Canada and biological data from fishery catch and the survey data. A domestic assessment of the population is conducted annually by the USA for Alaska, and on a 3-5 year cycle for the USA West Coast using an age structured model. A full MSE is conducted on the Canadian portion of the stock on a 3-5 year cycle and a coastwide MSE was conducted in 2023 for sablefish. The next steps for the sablefish would be to report status of the stock to the Commission based on the Canadian MSE and USA stock assessments.

The status of the sablefish stock is not currently communicated to the Commission.

Table 6. Sablefish milestones, timeline and deliverables

| Deliverable | Anticipated timeline | Responsible group |
|---|---|---|
| Stock status based on Canadian MSE assessment communicated to the SC and Commission | SC09 (2024) | SSC BFME, SC |

**Data moderate stocks (splendid alfonsino, neon flying squid)**

Data available for splendid alfonsino are more limited. They include catch data from the bottom trawl fishery (Japan and Korea) and the bottom gillnet fishery (Japan) and biological data from the fisheries catch including length, weight, age and maturity. Importantly, there is no fishery independent survey conducted for this species and effort data is not split from effort for the North Pacific armorhead, which makes calculating CPUE problematic. Due to these issues with the data, a data limited-life history based approach to determining stock status is being undertaken. This analysis will focus on calculating yield per recruit and spawner per recruit indices of the stock and attempting to use length data to estimate selectivity by age. The next steps for the splendid alfonsino stock are to conduct the life-history based analyses, develop reference points and report the status of the stock to the SC and the Commission.
The status of the splendid alfonsino stock is not currently communicated to the Commission.

Table 7. Splendid alfonsino milestones, timeline and deliverables

| Deliverable | Anticipated timeline | Responsible group |
|---|---|---|
| Develop indicators of stock status using life-history based methods | SC09 (2024) | SSC BFME |
| Develop reference points and HCRs or suitable alternatives | SC10 (2025) | SSC BFME |
| Stock status reported to SC and Commission | SC09 (2024) | SSC BFME, SC |

Data available for neon flying squid include catch and effort data from fishery components (different Members), fishery independent surveys conducted annually by Japan (winter and spring) and historically by Russia, and biological data from some fishery catch and the survey data. Although neon flying squid has the potential to be considered as a data rich species, at the moment, only data on catch and effort has been shared among members, so we consider it data moderate at this time. More complete biological data from the catch of most fishery sectors would be useful for this species. The SSC NFS was recently formed by the Commission and has begun its work this year (2024). The next steps for the SSC NFS are to share Member data, select and assess a suitable population dynamics model, conduct the analytical stock assessment, estimate reference points and

report status of the stock.
The status of the neon flying squid stock is not currently communicated to the SC and the Commission.

Table 8. Neon flying squid milestones, timeline and deliverables [**this table will be updated with agreed upon timelines at the conclusion of the 1st SSC NFS in August**]

| Deliverable | Anticipated timeline | Responsible group |
|---|---|---|
| Share all neon flying squid data | SC09 (2024) | SSC NFS |
| Test/evaluate? and choose appropriate assessment model | SC10 (2025) | SSC NFS |
| Conduct stock assessment | SC11 (2026) | SSC NFS |
| Reference points estimated | SC11 (2026) | SSC NFS |
| Stock status communicated to the SC and Commission | SC11 (2026)? | SSC NFS, SC |

**Data limited stocks (north pacific armorhead, skilfish)**

Data available for North Pacific armorhead are also limited. They include catch data from the bottom trawl fishery (Japan and Korea) and the bottom gillnet fishery (Japan) and limited biological data from the fisheries catch including length, weight, and fatness index. There is no regular fishery independent survey conducted for this species, although there is a monitoring survey conducted since 2019 and consisting of a single tow conducted per month from March to June at a predesignated block. As with splendid alfonsino, the effort data is not easily resolved, which makes calculating CPUE problematic. Due to these issues with the data, a data limited approach is needed to assess the status of this stock. Two methods have been proposed, using a depletion method to determine an annual and historical biomass and an individual based modeling approach to attempt to indicate future recruitment. The next steps for the North Pacific armorhead stock are to explore the depletion estimate and individual based model to determine if one of these methods is sufficient to develop reference points. It may be that these methods will not prove suitable and robust, so the current species summary approach that documents the annual catch trends is the only information that is reported to the SC and the Commission.
The status of the North Pacific Armorhead stock is not currently communicated to the Commission.

Table 9. North Pacific armorhead milestones, timeline and deliverables

| Deliverable | Anticipated timeline | Responsible group |
|---|---|---|
| Trends in catch reported to SC and Commission | SC09 (2024) | SSC BFME, SC |
| Develop indicators of historical | SC10 (2025) | SSC BFME |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| and current biomass based on depletion method | | |
| Develop indicators of recruitment from individual based model | SC10 (2025) | SSC BFME |
| Stock status and/or trends in catch reported to SC and Commission | SC10 (2025) | SSC BFME, SC |

Table 10. Rougheye and blackspotted rockfish milestones, timeline and deliverables

| Deliverable | Anticipated timeline | Responsible group |
|---|---|---|
| Continue to report trends in catch and effort to SC and begin reporting to the Commission | SC09 (2024) | SSC BFME, SC |

There is very little data available for the longline fishery conducted by Russia for skilfish. The fishery is intermittent in occurrence, but there are catch and effort data reported. There is some biological data (length and weight) recorded by observers on the catch. There is no fishery independent survey conducted for this species or other biological data collected. Due to the lack of data, a data limited approach is needed to assess the status of this stock. Currently there is no plan to conduct an assessment for this species, so the next steps are to develop a species summary that documents the annual catch and effort trends is reported to the SC and the Commission.
The status of the skilfish stock is not currently communicated to the SC or the Commission.

Table 11. Skilfish milestones, timeline and deliverables

| Deliverable | Anticipated timeline | Responsible group |
|---|---|---|
| Develop species summary document for skilfish | SC09 (2024) | SSC BFME |
| Report trends in catch and effort to SC and Commission | SC09 (2024) | SSC BFME, SC |

**Data and data sharing templates**

Data from fisheries and research surveys are the backbone of stock assessment. Currently, the scientific data workflow in the NPFC involves the steps outlined in Figure 4. Data is collected by Members, cleaned and processed and then shared with SC's expert groups in accordance with the agreed data sharing templates. Data is stored on the Collaboration site managed by the Secretariat. Expert groups review data, compile/process them and use for stock assessment and other analyses. Efficient data workflow from data collection to management advice requires clearly defined responsibilities and agreed regulations for data collection, sharing and use. Table 12 summarizes

the status of this process and identifies missing elements and potential steps forward. Other RFMOs and international management bodies have standing working groups to deal with data and provide guidance on data related issues as they arise. It would be useful to establish a Small Working Group within NPFC to fill this gap in resolving data and data issues. A draft Terms of Reference for such a group are attached as Annex 1.

Table 12. Scientific data workflow status and potential future tasks

| Data workflow step | Responsibility | Regulations | Note |
|---|---|---|---|
| Collection | Members | Data requirements<br>Data collection templates | Status: data requirements for BF (CMMs 05 and 06),<br>Data Information Template for PS (link).<br><br>[Future tasks: Data requirements and Data collection templates for other species.] |
| Cleaning | Members | Data collection quality control<br>Data cleaning requirements | Status: conducted by M individually.<br><br>[Future tasks: Data collection quality control and Data cleaning requirements guidelines] |
| Submission | Members | Data sharing regulations<br>Data provision templates<br>Data provision deadlines | Status: Data sharing regulations in place (link).<br>Expert group-specific data provision templates.<br><br>[Future tasks: Common/standardized data submission templates and data submission process.<br>Data for domestic stock assessment.<br>Data provision deadlines on website.] |
| Storage | Secretariat / Members | Database management system | Status: data is stored in different locations and different formats. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | [Future tasks: Relational database. Online data submission tools] |
| Inventory | Secretariat | Data inventory policy | Status: Data inventory policy and template in preparation.<br><br>[Future tasks: final draft, review by SC] |
| Quality review and compilation | Expert groups | Agreed process for data quality check | Status: Data quality review at meetings.<br><br>[Future tasks: Data quality review for domestic stock assessments] |
| Analysis/modelling | Expert groups | CPUE Standardization Protocol<br>Stock Assessment Protocol | Status: CPUE Standardization Protocols and Stock Assessment Protocols for PS and CM are in place.<br><br>[Future tasks: Regular review/update for PS and CM. Protocols for other priority species.] |
| Scientific advice | Expert groups/SC | Scientific Advice Format | Status: Stock Assessment Report incl. Executive Summary for PS. In preparation for CM.<br><br>[Future tasks: Common Scientific Advice Format] |
| Workflow review | SWG Data/SC | Part of SWG Data TOR | [Future tasks: regular review] |

**Recommendations to the SC**

The following recommendations are made with regards to milestones for achieving stock assessment and status updates for NPFC priority species:

- Prioritize development of stock assessment activity for stocks without domestic assessments
- Use domestic assessments to monitor those species for which these exist

- Streamline reporting to Commission from the SC
    - Statements of status for each species (e.g. saury text, NPA text)
    - Time series of catch, effort for all species (with pictures)
    - CPUE standardized or biomass (if model) where available
- Review scientific data workflow (Table 12) and prioritize future tasks
- Establish [SWG] Data with the attached terms of reference (Annex 1)
- Share data using standardized data sharing templates to streamline process for Secretariat to compile and store data
- Implement a 5-10 year stock assessment review cycle for species assessed by the NPFC
- Share existing biological data from the fisheries catch in the CA and the adjacent EEZs with those conducting domestic stock assessments
- Consider collecting additional biological data from new surveys and the catch in the CA for species with a stock assessment (both domestic and NPFC)
- Consider assessing the impacts of climate change on the ecosystem as well as stocks and fisheries in the species summary for each species

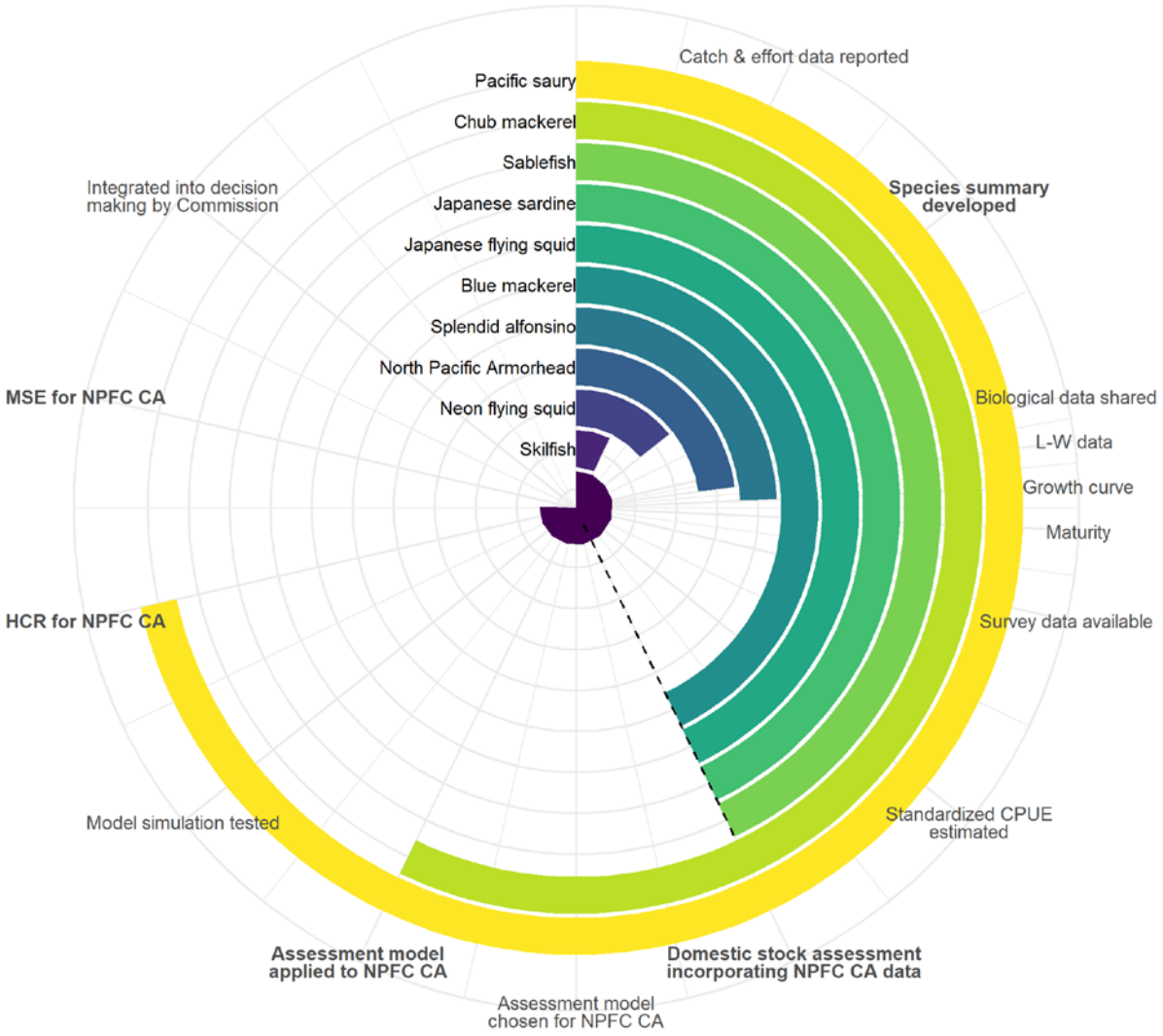


Figure 1. General schematic of current status of the assessment process for priority fish stocks that are currently targeted in the NPFC Convention Area. Milestones in bold demarcate products that can be provided to the Commission to inform about stock status. The dashed line indicates a domestic stock assessment is in place for the species that incorporates NPFC CA data and moving forward with a separate NPFC assessment may not be a priority.

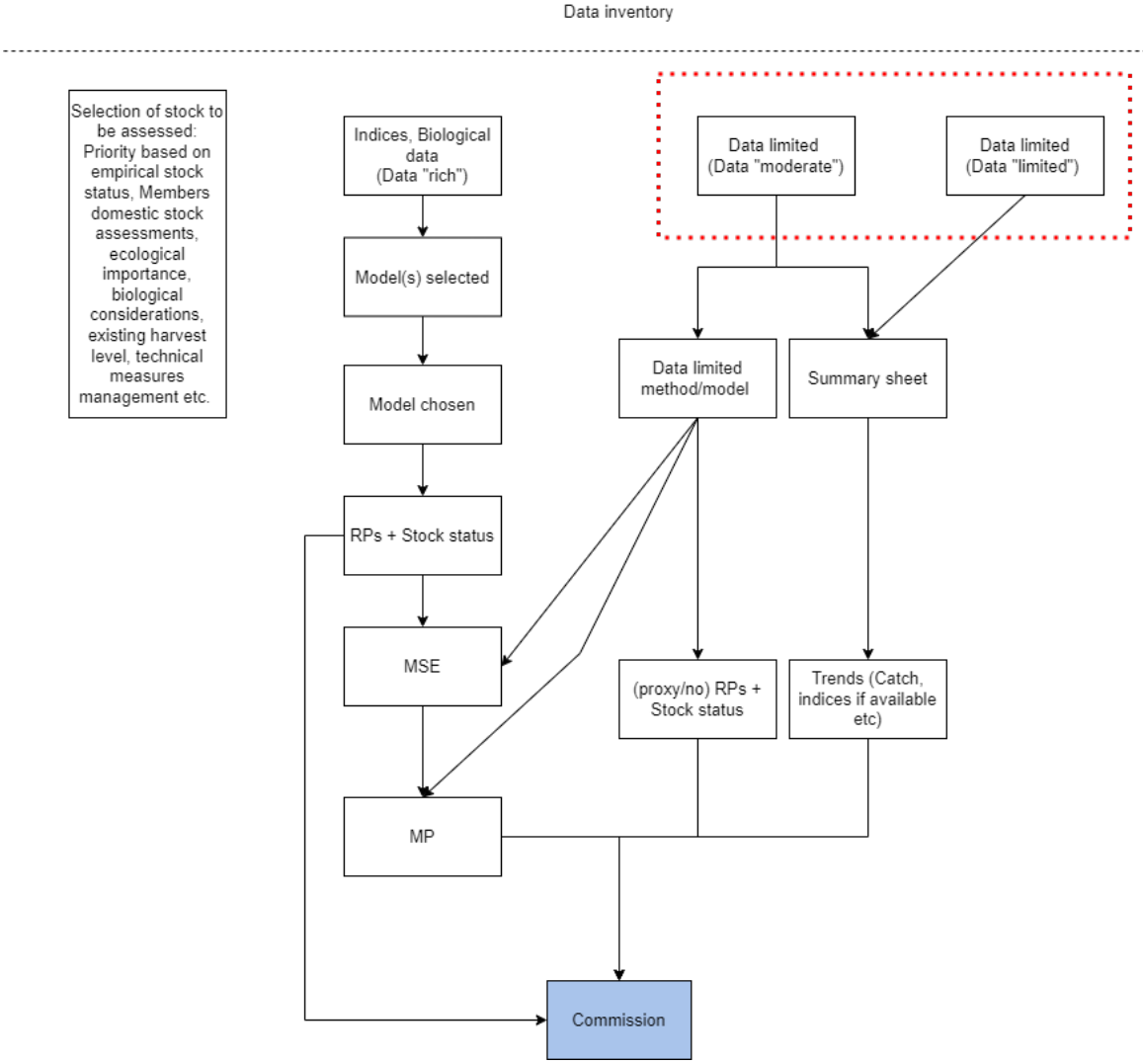


Figure 2. Flow chart of proposed pathways for stock assessment and provision of advice to the Commission on priority species for the NPFC.

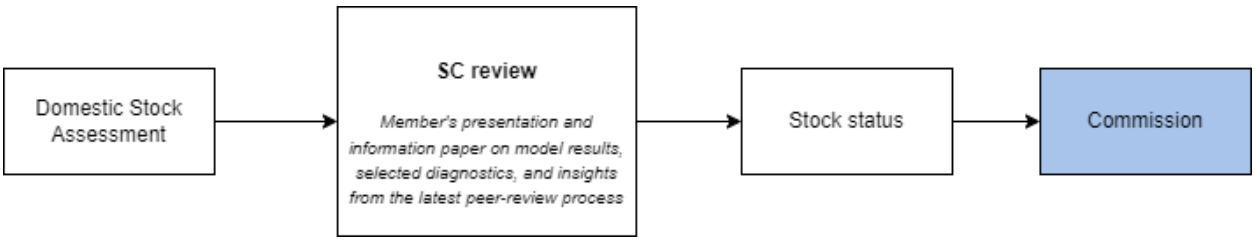


Figure 3. Flow chart of proposed pathway for reviewing domestic stock assessment on NPFC priority species without an NPFC stock assessment completed.

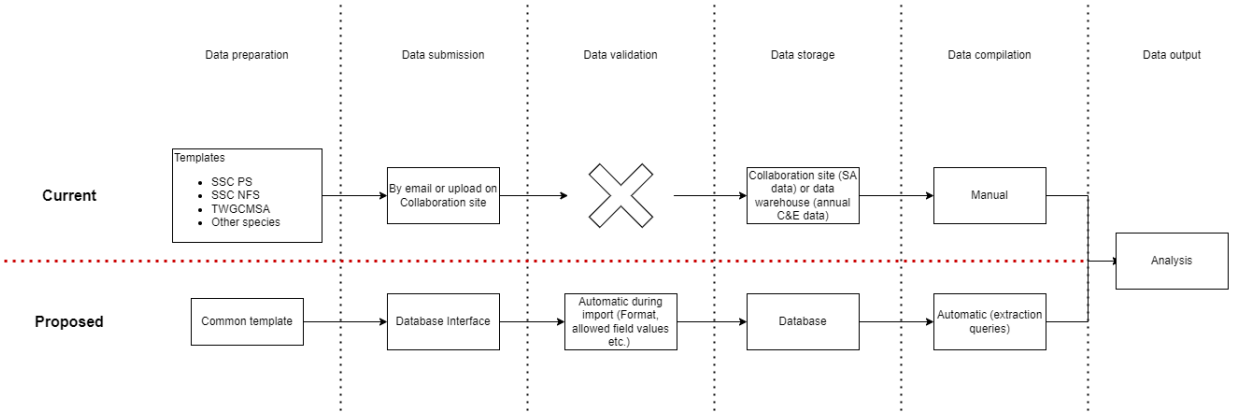


Figure 4. Flowchart of current and proposed pathways for data processing, submission and compilation for NPFC stocks.

## Annex 1. Draft Terms of reference for new small working group on data management ([SWG] Data)

1) Compile an inventory of Members' data collection programs
   a. Review existing observer programs of Members and other RFMOs
   b. Update the inventory when needed to reflect changes in Members' sampling schemes.
2) Assist the SC's subsidiary groups in collecting information on data needs
   a. Develop a template for the subsidiary groups to quickly report the required information
   b. Assist the subsidiary groups in filling data gaps where they exist
3) Assist the secretariat in creating a data management system, including data collection, verification, reporting, storing, and dissemination
   a. Discuss the creation of a relational database for data storage and what the necessary steps would be
   b. Continue developing data provision templates, incorporating feedback from the SC's subsidiary bodies.

**Annex E**

**Species summary for chub mackerel**

# Chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*)

**Common names:**

鮐鱼, Taiyu (China)

マサバ, Masaba (Japan)

고등어, Godeungeo (Korea)

Японская скумбрия, Yaponskaya skumbriya (Russia)

白腹鯖, Bai-Fu-Qing (Chinese Taipei)

# Management

**Active NPFC Management Measures**

The following NPFC conservation and management measure (CMM) pertains to this species:

- CMM 2024-07 For Chub Mackerel

Available from https://www.npfc.int/cmm-2024-07-chub-mackerel

**Management Summary**

The current conservation and management measure (CMM) for Chub mackerel specifies catch limits. The CMM states that Members and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties currently harvesting Chub mackerel should refrain from expansion of the number of fishing vessels authorized to fish Chub mackerel in the Convention Area.

Additionally, the Commission established the annual total allowable catch of chub mackerel in the Convention Area as a provisional measure until the Scientific Committee adopts NPFC stock assessment of chub mackerel and the Commission accordingly revises this CMM. The annual total allowable catch of chub mackerel in the Convention Area, excluding the amount in paragraph 11, shall be set at 94,000 tons for each of the 2024 and 2025 fishing seasons. Of this annual total allowable catch, the catch for trawlers shall not exceed 14,000 tons and the catch for purse seiners shall not exceed 80,000 tons for each of the 2024 and 2025 fishing seasons. China shall not authorize more than 3 trawlers and the EU shall not authorize more than 1 trawler to conduct fishing operations at the same time. In addition to the above fishing opportunities, the EU shall be entitled to fish an additional 6,000 tons of chub mackerel for each of the 2024 and 2025 fishing seasons.

To comply with this provisional measure, Members of the Commission shall report to the Executive Secretary, in electronic format, their monthly catches of chub mackerel in the Convention Area.

| Convention/Management Principle | Status | Comment/Consideration |
|---|---|---|
| Biological reference point(s) | 🔴 | The TWG CMSA agreed to base its future discussions on the following candidate biological reference points:<br>(a) F-based reference points<br>i. $F_{MSY}$<br>ii. $F_{\%SPR}$<br>iii. $F_{0.1}$, $F_{max}$<br>(b) Biomass-based reference points (including SSB, summary biomass, etc.)<br>i. $B_{MSY}$<br>ii. $\%B_0$<br>iii. Certain historical level of B |
| Stock status | ⚪ | Status determination criteria not established. |
| Catch limit | 🟡 | 100,000 mt for CA |
| Harvest control rule | 🔴 | Not established. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Other | | Encouragement to refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels. |

OK Intermediate Not accomplished Unknown

## Assessment

The Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment (TWG CMSA) completed the first stock assessment at its 9th meeting in July 2024. A State-space Stock Assessment Model (SAM) was used for the stock assessment. China, Japan and Russia submitted age-specific input data and abundance indices up to the 2022 fishing year (June 2023) for the base case scenario. The TWG agreed on the stock assessment results (see TWG CMSA09 report for details).

Japan annually conducts an assessment on the Pacific stock of Chub mackerel using tuned VPA (Yukami et al. 2024).

## Data

### Surveys

China has been conducting a five-year scientific survey program using its fishery research vessel "Song Hang" with mid-trawl as the main survey gear in the NPFC convention area from 2021 to 2025 (Ma et al. 2023).

Japan annually conducts two mid-water trawls surveys in summer (2001-2024) and autumn (1995-2023) that serve information on recruitment abundance indices of age-0 fish to the Japanese domestic stock assessment of the Pacific stock of Chub mackerel (Table 1) (Yukami et al. 2024). The autumn mid-water trawl survey also provides age-1 fish abundance indices for the stock assessment. Japan also conducts a year-round egg survey providing egg density as index of spawning stock biomass for the stock assessment. The survey protocol can be found at Oozeki et al. (2007).

Russia has conducted a summertime acoustic-trawl survey since 2010 that examines mid-water and upper epipelagic species including Chub mackerel.

### Fishery

China, Japan and Russia catch Chub mackerel (Figure 1). China harvests this species dominantly by light purse seine fishery in the NPFC Convention Area. A smaller component of the catch is taken by pelagic trawl. Chinese catch statistics on mackerels in the NPFC Convention Area are

available from 2015. The Chinese mackerel fisheries in the NPFC Convention Area initiated in 2014 mainly caught the three fish species such as Chub mackerel, blue mackerel, and Japanese sardine (Zhang et al. 2023). Blue mackerel catch accounts for 6% to 15.2%, about 10% on average, in the mackerels catch up to 2021. In 2022, the proportion increased to 22.5%.

Japan's fishery for Chub mackerel occurs inside their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and is mostly conducted by large purse seine vessels (≥50% of the catch). Additional components of the fishery include set nets, dip nets and other gears. Proportion of Chub mackerel catch in mackerels catch is obtained through extensive port sampling. The Chub mackerel catch accounts for 69% to 91%, 84% on average, of the mackerels catch in 2014-2023.

The Russian fisheries catching mackerels are operated in their EEZ and is prosecuted primarily by mid-water trawling (>90% of the catch), with a smaller component of the catch coming from purse seiners and bottom trawlers. The Russian mackerels catch, comprising approximately 100% of Chub mackerel, are available in the NPFC Annual Summary Footprint since 2014.

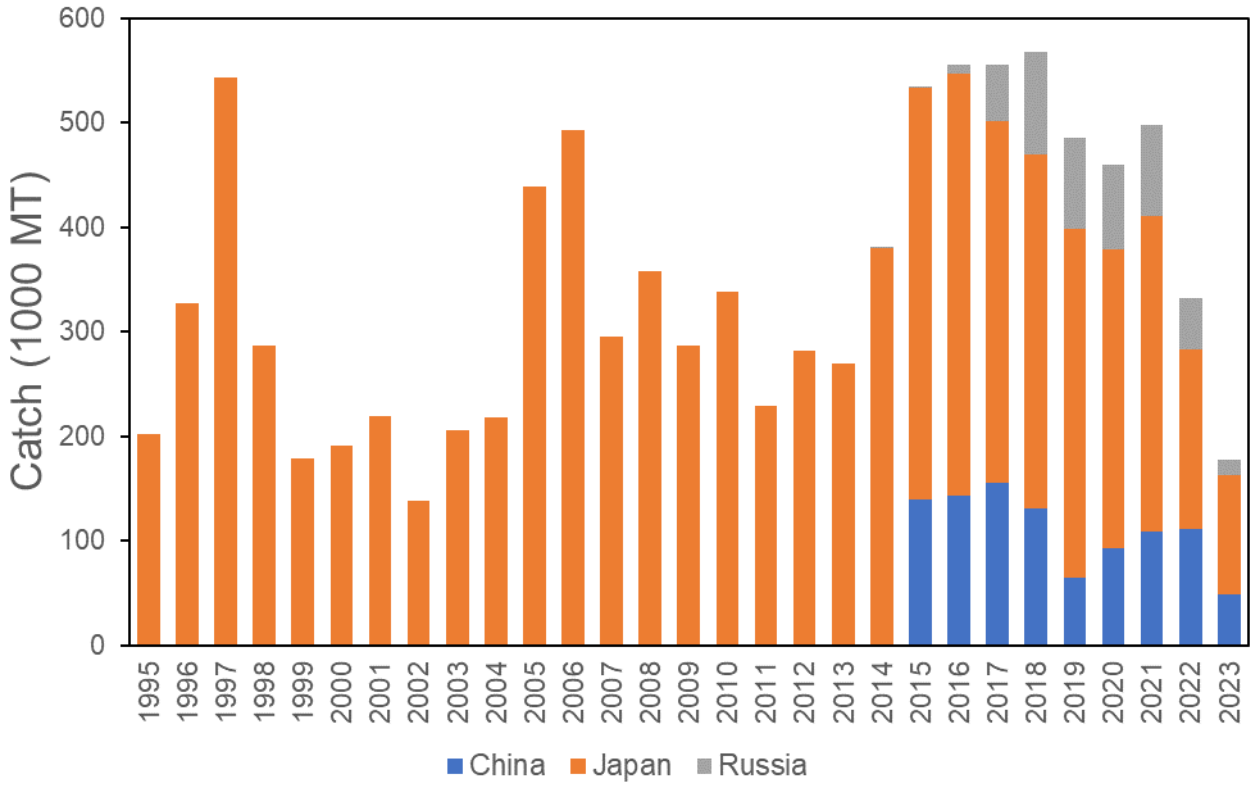


*Figure 1. Historical catch of mackerels obtained from annual summery footprint of Chub and Blue mackerels.*

Other NPFC Members (Canada, EU, Korea, Chinese Taipei, USA and Vanuatu) do not have Chub mackerel catch records in the NPFC Convention Area.

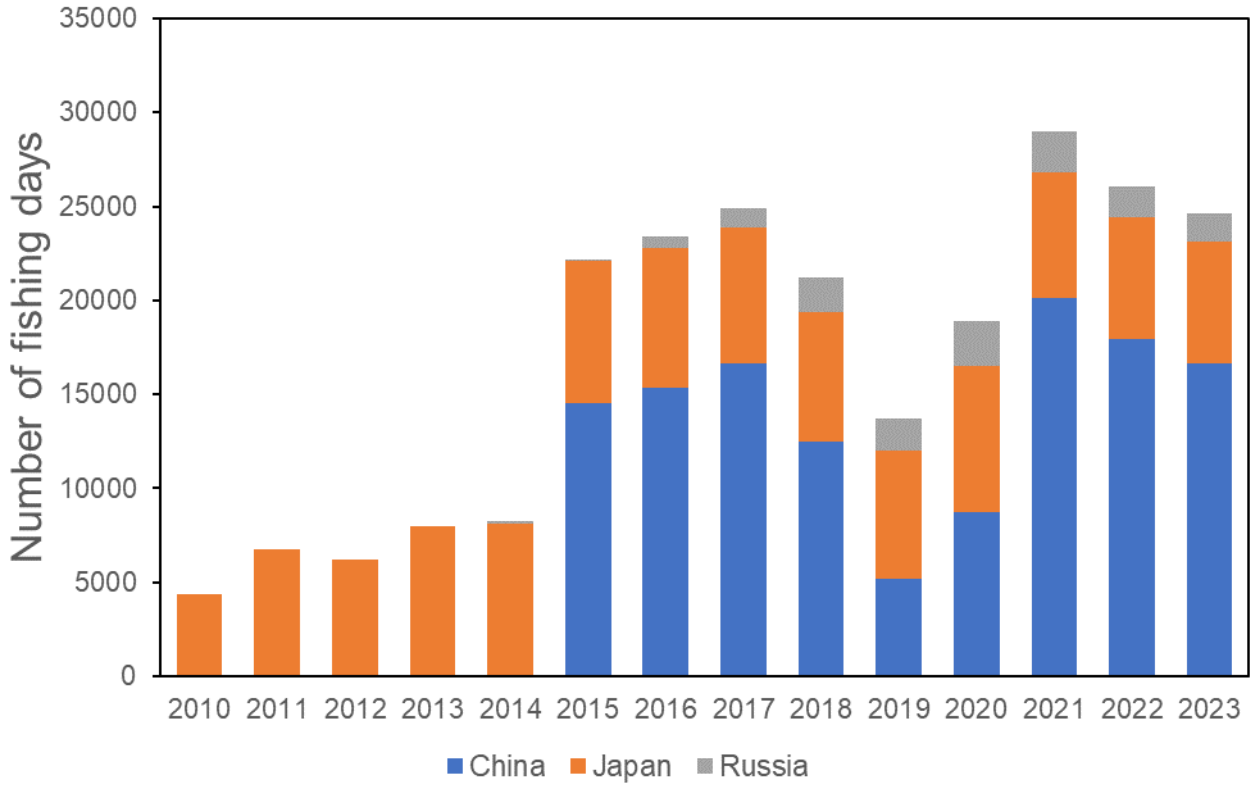


*Figure 2. Historical fishing effort for mackerels obtained from annual summary footprint of Chub and Blue mackerels.*

**Biological collections**

China has collected length frequency data of commercial catch through onboard and port samplings since 2016. Aging of the samples has been started since 2017.

Japan also collects length, weight, maturity and age data from the survey and fishery to support their stock assessment.

Russian length frequency and aging data of commercial catch are available since 2016. The length frequency data obtained through research surveys are available since 2010.

*Table 1: Data availability from Members regarding Chub mackerel.*

| Category and data sources | Description | Years with available data | Average sample size/year or data coverage | Potential issues to be reviewed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **JAPAN** | | | | |
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |
| Purse seine fishery | Official statistics, reports from fisheries associations and markets | Official statistics: 1950-2023, other reports: 1970-2023 | Coverage=100% | The Chub mackerel catches are estimated from Chub and blue mackerel catches based on port sampling data for purse seine and set net fisheries. No detailed information of the ratio is presented. |
| Dip net fishery | | | | |
| Set net | | | | |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length measurements | Port sampling by 17 local fishery institutes in 17 prefectures | 1970-2023 | 20,000-120,000 (average 40,000) fish/year (ca. 100 measurements per sampling) | Detailed information in NPFC-2020-TWG CMSA03-WP02. |
| Aging | Port sampling by 17 local fishery institutes in 17 prefectures | 1970-2023 | 500-1000 fish/year | Detailed information in NPFC-2020-TWG CMSA03-WP02. |
| Catch at age (CAA) | Estimate CAA from the above data | 1970-2023 | Age-length keys are created approximately by quarter and local regions | Evaluate uncertainty of catch at age; Changes of growth depending on recruitment abundance is reviewed in NPFC- |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 2022-TWG CMSA05-IP06 and published as Kamimura et al (2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsab191) |
| **Abundance indices (survey)** | | | | |
| Spring survey for recruitment | Mainly for sardine and Chub mackerel of pre-recruits. This research is conducted for biological research of early life history. Mid-water trawl | 1995-2023 | 30-60 stations/year | Too early for the use of abundance index |
| Summer survey for recruitment | Mainly for saury, mid-water trawl | 2001-2023 | 60-80 stations/year | Detailed information on data and standardization is in NPFC-2022-TWG CMSA06-WP11 (Rev.1). Detailed sampling design and method are shown in Hashimoto et al. (2020, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12562-020-01407-3). |
| Autumn survey for recruitment and age 1 fish | Mainly for sardine and Chub mackerel, mid-water trawl | 1995-2023 | 30-60 stations/year | Detailed information on data and standardization for recruitment is in NPFC-2022-TWG CMSA06-WP11 (Rev.1). That for age 1 has not been presented. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year-round for egg density | Almost all local fishery institutes join this survey program. NORPAC net. Not only for Chub mackerel. | 1978-2023 (2005-, species identification between Chub and blue mackerel) | ca. 6000 stations in total, 1000-4000 stations with Chub mackerel eggs/year | Detailed information on data and standardization is in NPFC-2022-TWG CMSA06-WP10 |
| **Abundance indices (commercial)** | | | | |
| Dip net fishery | Log book data are collected from fishermen in Kanagawa prefecture since 2003 and Shizuoka prefecture since 2013 (ca. 10 and 90% of total dip net catch in 2017, respectively) | 2003-2023 | 10-100/year | Detailed information on its data and standardization is in NPFC-2022-TWG CMSA06-WP09 |
| **RUSSIA** | | | | |
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |
| Purse seine fishery | Official statistics, reports from fisheries associations | Official statistics: 1980-1993, 2015-2023, 1994-2014 (no data available); publications: 1970-2023 | Coverage 1980-1993 ?%; Coverage 2015-2023 =100% | Data coverage details to be reviewed |
| Pelagic trawl fishery | | | | |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length measurements | Sampling from commercial fishing vessels.<br>Sampling during research surveys. | 2016-2023<br><br>2010-2023 | 1,000-10,000 fish/year (ca. 100 measurements per sampling) | Data coverage details to be reviewed |
| Aging | Sampling during research surveys and from commercial fishing vessels | 2016-2023 | 300-500 fish/year | Details to be reviewed |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Catch at age (CAA) | Estimate CAA from the above data | 2016-2023 | Age-length keys are to be developed | Evaluate uncertainty of catch at age, especially on changes of growth depending on recruitment abundance |
| **Abundance indices (survey)** | | | | |
| Summer trawl and acoustic (echointegration) surveys to assess pelagic fish abundance and recruitment | Mid-water upper epipelagic surveys | 2010-2023 (June-July)<br><br>2015-2023 (July-September) | 60-80 stations/year<br><br>60-80 stations/year | Changes in abundance and migration patterns; development survey protocol and conduct standardization |
| **Abundance indices (fishery)** | | | | |
| Daily reports of catch by each vessel | Target (>50%) Mid-water trawls | 2015-2023 May-December | | Test the effect of targeting |
| **CHINA** | | | | |
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |
| Purse seine fishery | Official statistics, reports from annual report | Official statistics：2014-2023 | Coverage=100% | The Chub mackerel catches are from the fishing catch provided by the fishery company |
| Trawl fishery | Official statistics, reports from annual report | Official statistics: 2014-2023 | Coverage=100% | Catches are from the fishing catch provided by the fishery company |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length measurements | Port sampling by Institute and technology group. | 2016-2022 | 550-800 fish/year | Details to be reviewed |
| Length measurements | Purse seine vessel sampling from | 2016-2022 | 530-1050 fish/year | Details to be reviewed |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | commercial vessel | | | |
| Aging | Sampling during research surveys and from commercial fishing vessels | 2017-2022 | 30-180 fish/year | Details to be reviewed |
| **Abundance indices (commercial)** | | | | |
| Purse seine fishery | Purse seine logbook (Technical group for Chub mackerel Fishery, Distant-water Fishery Society of China) | 2014-2022 April-December | 10-105/year | Review survey protocol and conduct standardization |

## Special Comments

None

## Biological Information

### Distribution

The Pacific stock of Chub mackerel is distributed from the southern coastal waters on the Pacific side of Japan to offshore area off the Kuril Islands (Figure 3). This stock corresponding to straddling one is harvested in both national waters of Japan and Russia and the NPFC Convention Area. Adult fish spawn in Izu Islands waters in spring and then engage northward feeding migration to waters of Sanriku to east Hokkaido from summer to autumn.

### Life history

Longevity of Chub mackerel is estimated to be 7 or 8 years old. There was the oldest record of 11 years old. It is known that growth of this stock could be changed according to recruitment abundance and oceanic environment (Watanabe and Yatsu 2004). Recent decrease in mean weight by age was highly likely induced by feeding competition in conjunction with intra-/inter-specific increase of density resulted from biomass increases of Chub mackerel and Japanese sardine (Kamimura et al. 2021). Adult female spawns more than once during a spawning season. Maturity at age was changed depending on changes in growth (Watanabe and Yatsu 2006).

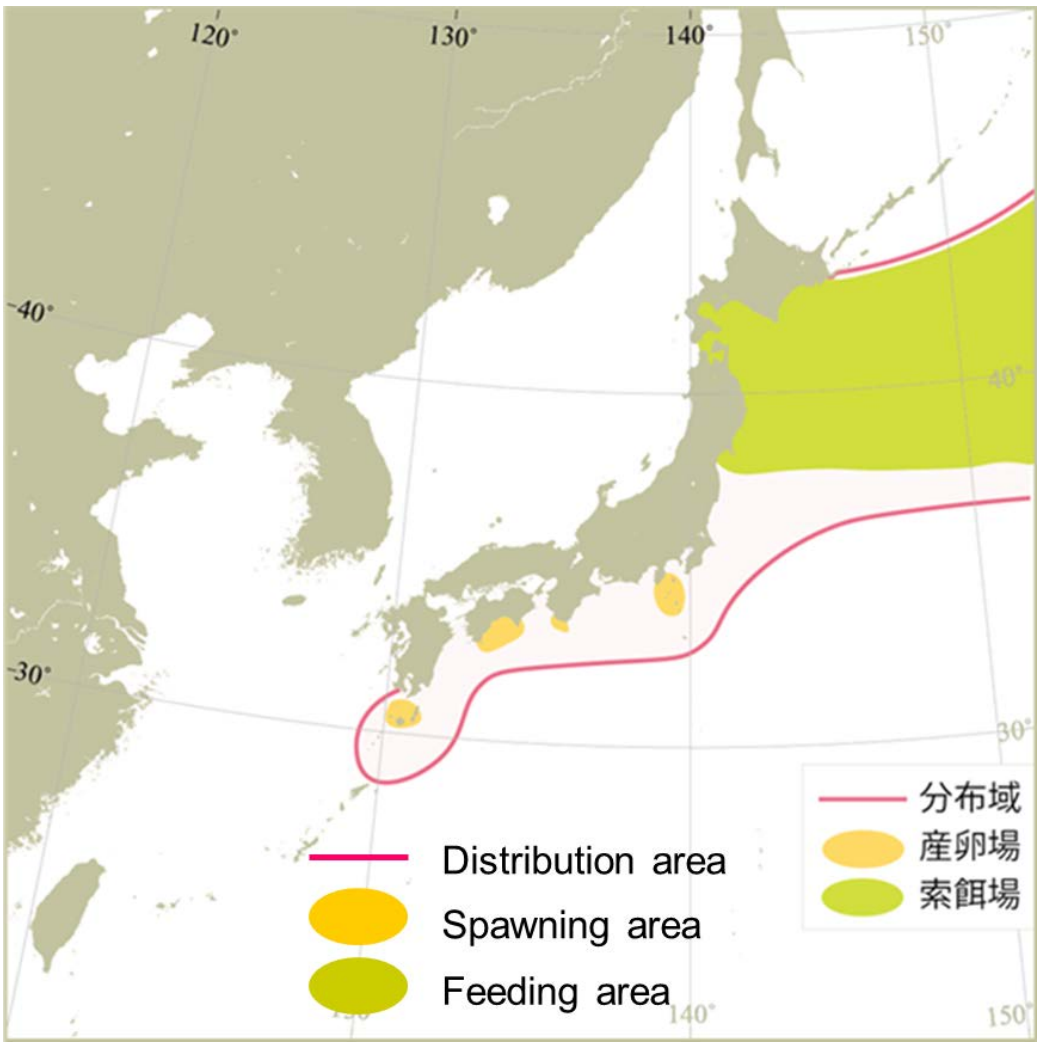


*Figure 3. Map of distribution of Chub mackerel in the North Pacific (Yukami et al. 2024).*

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Kamimura, Y., M. Taga, R. Yukami, C. Watanabe and S. Furuichi (2021) Intra- and inter specific density dependence of body condition, growth, and habitat temperature in chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*). ICES J. Mar. Sci., 78, 3254-3264.

Ma, Q., Liu, B. and Dai, L. (2023) Overview surveys from 2021 to 2023 by Chinese research vessel "Song Hang" in the NPFC convention area. NPFC-2023-SC08-WP12. 10pp. https://www.npfc.int/system/files/2023-12/NPFC-2023-SC08-WP12%20Chinese%20surveys%202021-2023%20by%20Song%20Hang%20in%20NWP.pdf

Oozeki, Y., A. Takasuka, H. Kubota and M. Barange (2007) Characterizing spawning habitats of Japanese sardine (*Sardinops melanostictus*), Japanese anchovy (*Engraulis japonicus*), and Pacific round herring (*Etrumeus teres*) in the northwestern Pacific. CalCOFI Reports, 48, 191-203.

Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment (TWG CMSA) (2023) Report of 7th Meeting of the Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment, NPFC-2023-TWG CMSA07-Final Report, 53pp. https://www.npfc.int/system/files/2023-10/TWG%20CMSA07%20Report.pdf

Watanabe, C. and A. Yatsu (2004) Effects of density-dependence and sea surface temperature on inter-annual variation in length-at-age of chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*) in the Kuroshio-Oyashio area during 1970–1997. Fish. Bull., 102, 196-206.

Watanabe, C. and A. Yatsu (2006) Long-term changes in maturity at age of chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*) in relation to population declines in the waters off northeastern Japan. Fish. Res., 78, 323-332.

Yukami, R., Nishijima, S., Kamimura, Y., Isu, S., Furuichi, S., Watanabe, R., Higashiguchi, K., Saito, R. and Ishikawa, K. (2024). Stock assessment and evaluation for Chub Mackerel Pacific stock (fiscal year 2023). In Marine Fisheries Stock Assessment and Evaluation for Japanese Waters (fiscal year 2023/2024). Japan Fisheries Agency and Fisheries Research and Education Agency of Japan. Tokyo, 71pp. https://abchan.fra.go.jp/wpt/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/details_2023_05.pdf

Zhang, H., Han, H., Sun, Y., Xiang, X., Li, Y. and Shi, Y. (2023) Data description on fisheries bycatch in the chub mackerel fisheries in China. NPFC-2023-TWG CMSA07-WP12 (Rev. 1). 3pp. https://www.npfc.int/system/files/2023-09/NPFC-2023-TWG%20CMSA07-WP12%28Rev%201%29%20Data%20description%20on%20fisheries%20bycatch%20in%20CM%20fisheries%20in%20China.pdf

**Annex F**

**Species summary for North Pacific armorhead**

## North Pacific armorhead (*Pentaceros wheeleri*)

**Common names:** Pelagic armorhead, Slender armorhead (English); 五棘鲷 (Chinese); クサカリツボダイ (Japanese); 북방돗돔 (Korean); кабан-рыба (Russian)

*Biological Information*

North Pacific armorhead has a unique life history consisting of a pelagic larva phase and a demersal adult stage on the seamounts (Kiyota et al. 2016). Distribution of the larva includes Gulf of Alaska to North Pacific Ocean off central California and south of Japan, with center of abundance at the Emperor Seamounts. Following their settlements in the seamounts, adults make morphological changes from the “fat” type to the “lean” type concurrent with their dietary shifts. Vertical distribution of the adults ranges from 300-500 m. Juveniles at the epipelagic stage mainly feeds on copepods, shifting the targets towards fish and large crustaceans with growth.

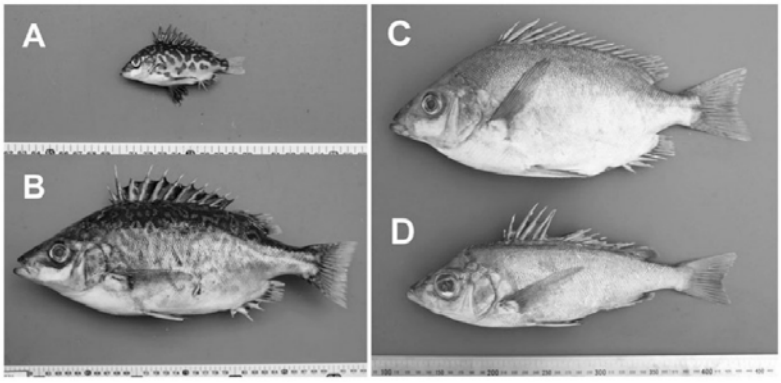


***Figure 1: Photographs of Pentaceros wheeleri.*** *A) Pelagic juvenile, B) pelagic subadult, C) demersal adult (fat type), D) demersal adult (lean type) (from Kiyota et al. 2016)*

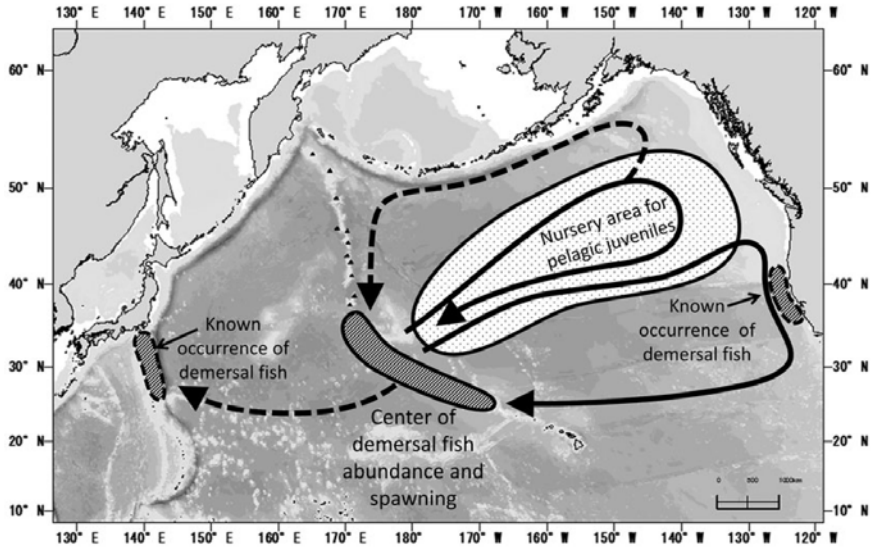


***Figure 2: Known demersal habitats and hypothesized pelagic migration routes of Pentaceros wheeleri*** *(Kiyota et al. 2016 Figure 4, modified from Boehlert and Sasaki 1988).*

*Fishery*

Historical catches by Russia and Japan from the combined Emperor Seamounts were high and reached 100 thousand tons in 1970s, followed by a crash (Figure 3). Currently North Pacific armorhead is caught by Japan and Korea on the Emperor Seamounts using bottom trawls and gillnets. This fishery is a potential source of significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems due to bottom contact gear.

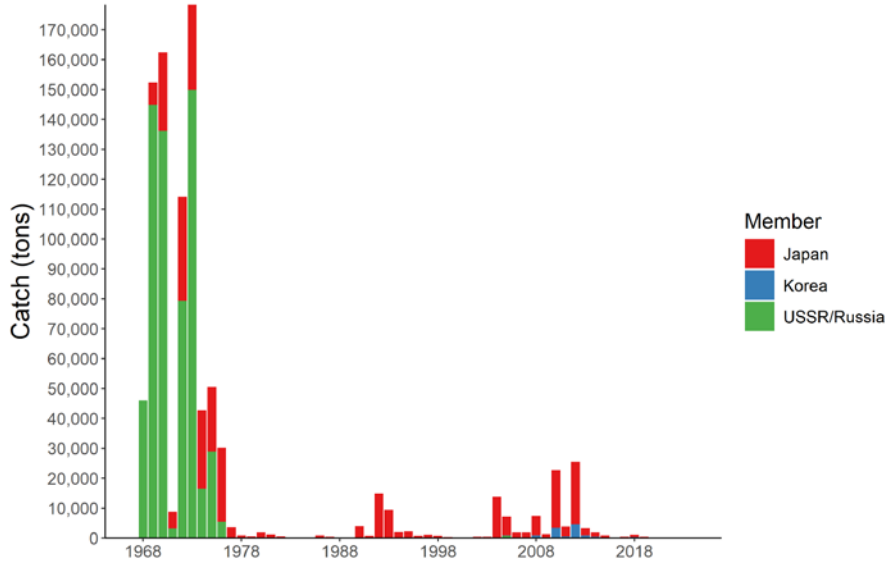


***Figure 3: Historical trends of North Pacific armorhead catches in NPFC waters.*** *The annual amounts of catch by each Member and gear are shown by the bar plot.*

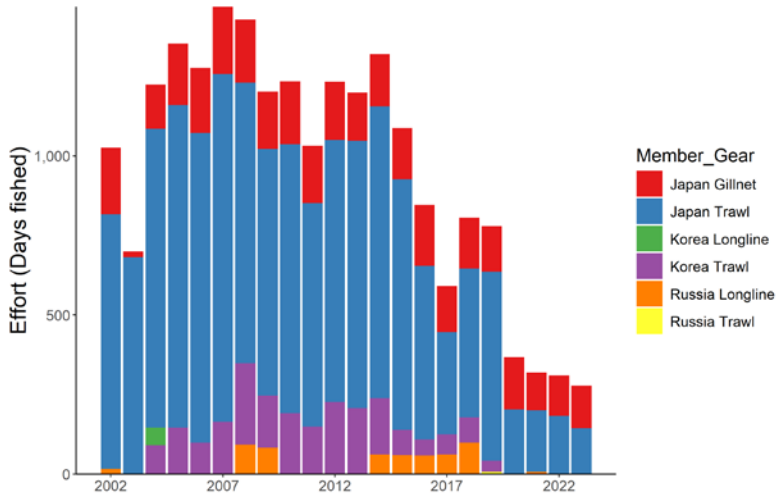


***Figure 4. Historical fishing effort for North Pacific armorhead.*** *The annual fishing efforts by each country are shown by barplot. The efforts are calculated by the total fishing days operated during the year*

*Assessment*

There is no current or accepted assessment for North Pacific armorhead.

There are no biomass estimates available for this species in NPFC waters. An age- or length-structured stock assessment is unlikely to be feasible given the life history of North Pacific armorhead. Data limited approaches may be examined in the future.

*Management*

**Active Management Measures**

The following NPFC conservation and management measures pertain to this species:

- CMM 2024-05 For Bottom Fisheries and Protection of VMEs in the NW Pacific Ocean

Available from https://www.npfc.int/active-conservation-and-management-measures

*Table 1: Current status of management measures*

| Item | Status | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Biological reference point | Not accomplished | Not established |
| Stock status | Unknown | Status determination criteria not established |
| Catch limit | Intermediate | Upper limit: 15,000 tons (only for Japan), No operation from November to December, Restriction of trawl mesh size |

| Item | Status | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Harvest control rule | Not accomplished | Catch limit depending on the recruitment strength |
| Other | Intermediate | No expansion of fishing beyond established areas, No operation in the designated areas, No more increase in the fishing vessels |

In 2019, an adaptive management plan was implemented for North Pacific armorhead (NPFC-2019-SSC BF02-WP05, CMM 2019-05). This plan specifies data collection via an annual monitoring survey to be conducted in March-June each year on Koko, Yuryaki, Kammu and/or Colahan Seamounts. If the survey finds evidence of strong recruitment (see CMM 2021-05 and NPFC-2019-SSC BF02-IP01 for details) some areas in the Emperor Seamounts are closed and a 12,000 ton catch limit is encouraged. In low recruitment years, a 700 ton catch limit is encouraged.

*Data Availability*

*Table 2: Catch data*

| Data | Member | Fishery | Year | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual catch | Japan | Trawl | 1969-present | |
| | | Gillnet | 1990-present | |
| | Korea | Trawl | 2004-2019 | |
| | Russia | Trawl | 1970-1987; 1997; 2001-2002; 2005-2006; 2011; 2013 | |
| CPUE | Japan | Trawl | 1970-present | Logbook data availabe |
| | | Gillnet | 2008-present | Logbook data available |
| | Korea | Trawl | 2013-2019 | Logbook data available |
| | Russia | Trawl | 2001-2002; 2005-2006; 2011; 2013 | |

*Table 3: Biological data*

| Data | Member | Year | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Japan | | A preliminary daily ring analysis for ca. 300 fish |
| | Korea | 2013-2019 | |
| | Russia | | |
| Length | Japan | 2009-present | Protocol revised (see NPFC-2018-SSC BF01-WP03) |
| | Korea | 2013-2019 | |
| | Russia | | |
| Maturity | Japan | 2013-present | |
| | Korea | 2013-2019 | |
| | Russia | 1970-1987; 1997; 2011; 2013 | |

*References*

Boehlert, G. W., and T. Sasaki. 1988. Pelagic biogeography of the armorhead, *Pseudopentaceros wheeleri*, and recruitment to isolated seamounts in the North Pacific Ocean. Fish. Bull. 86:453–465.

Kiyota M., Nishida K., Murakami C. and Yonezaki S. 2016. History, biology, and conservation of Pacific endemics 2. The North Pacific armorhead, *Pentaceros wheeleri* (Hardy, 1983) (Perciformes, Pentacerotidae). Pacific Science 70(1): 1-20.

**Annex G**

**Species summary for splendid alfonsino**

## Splendid alfonsino (*Beryx splendens*)

**Common names:** Splendid alfonsino (English); 红金眼鲷 (Chinese); キンメダイ (Japanese); 빛금눈돔 (Korean); Низкотелый берикс (Russian)

*Biological Information*

Global distribution ranges from tropical to temperate oceans. Historical catch records in the Emperor Seamount suggest the distribution from Nintoku (45 °N) to Hancock (30 °N). Settlement occurs following a certain period of the pelagic life stage. Adults show a vertical distribution from 200 to 800 m with diel vertical migration, feeding on crustaceans, cephalopods, and fish during the night. Limited information is available for recruitment and reproduction processes in the Emperor Seamounts, whereas the population in the Japanese coast shows 4–5 years to sexually mature and spawning occurs during summer (Shotton 2016).

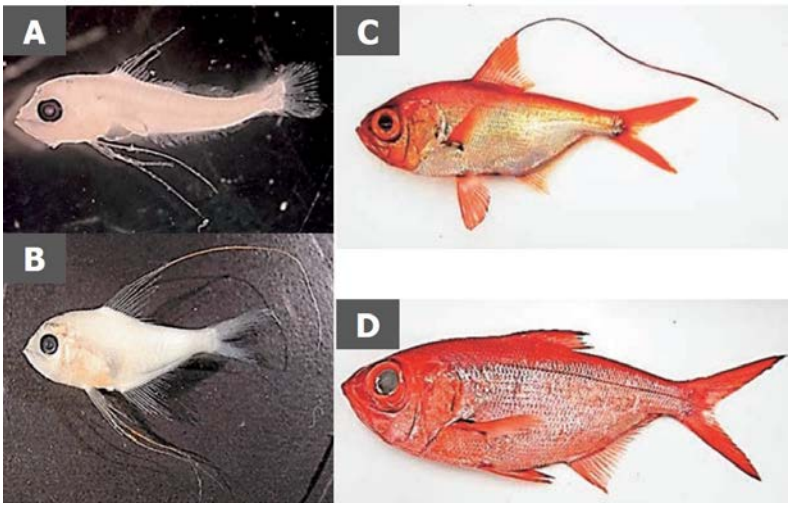


***Figure 1: Photographs of Beryx splendens on different developmental stages*** *A) postlarva, B) juvenile, C) young, D) adult (from Watari et al. 2017)*

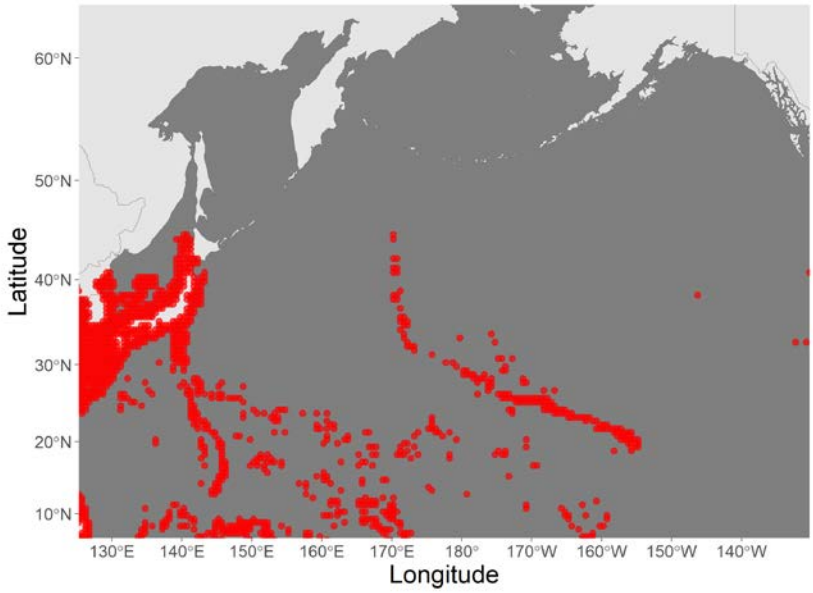


***Figure 2: Known distribution of Beryx splendens around NPFC waters.*** *Points indicate observation data from original sources (AquaMaps 2019, October)*

*Fishery*

Since the discovery of large populations of North Pacific armorhead in the Emperor Seamount in the late 1960s, Splendid alfonsino has been exploited as an alternative resource to the armorhead due to the large temporal fluctuation of the armorhead population. The main fishing methods are bottom trawls and gillnets.

Historical catch record (Figure 3) shows the highest catch proportion by Japan, followed by Korea and Russia. Russia terminated their fishery nearly a decade ago. Fishing pressure somewhat reflects the recruitment condition of North Pacific armorhead. In 2010 and 2012, when high recruitment of the armorhead occurred, the annual catch decreased below 1,000 tons, whereas it increased up to 4,000 tons ever since then.
Size composition analysis from the catch data by Japanese trawlers suggests the substantial decrease in size of fish in catches over the past decade, raising the concern about growth and recruitment overfishing (Sawada et al. 2018).

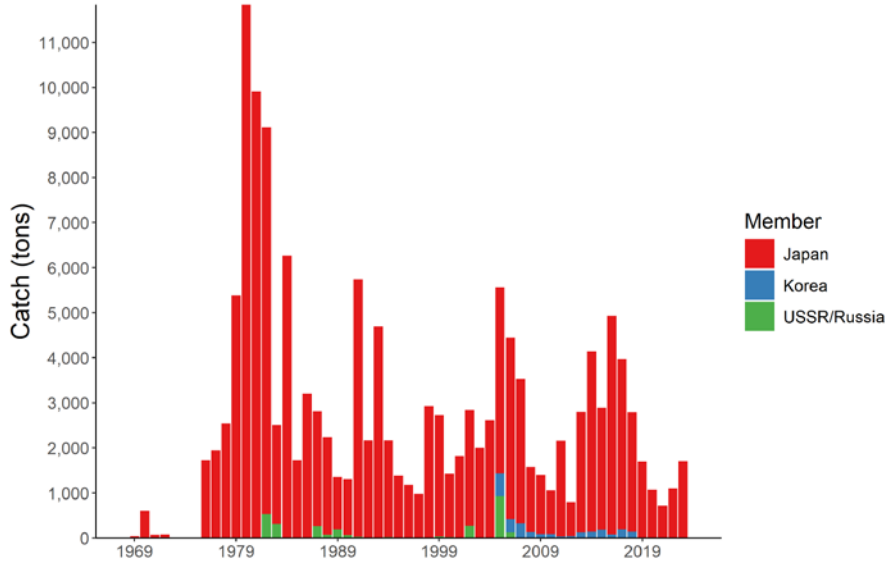


***Figure 3: Historical trends of Splendid alfonsino catches in NPFC waters.*** *The annual amounts of catch by each country are shown by the bar plot.*

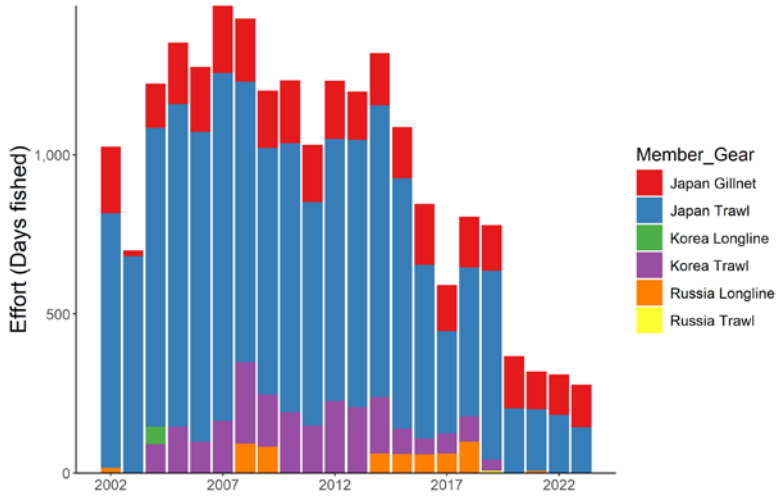


***Figure 4. Historical fishing efforts for Splendid alfonsino.*** *The annual fishing efforts by each country and each gear are shown by the bar plot. The efforts are calculated by the total fishing days operated during the year*

*Assessment*

There are no biomass estimates available for Splendid alfonsino in NPFC waters.

An age- or length-structured stock assessment may be feasible given the life history of this species. Surplus production models developed by Japan in 2008 showed that the average fishing mortality is 20–28 % higher than the MSY level (Nishimura and Yatsu 2008). This analysis, however, remains unreliable as the estimated CPUE is biased due to target shifts between North Pacific armorhead and Splendid alfonsino and the estimated intrinsic population growth rate

parameter was too high for long-lived deep-sea fish.
Data limited approaches, such as YPR or SPR analysis that do not require detailed resource parameters or fishing data, should be explored in the future.
*Management*

**Active Management Measures**

The following NPFC conservation and management measures pertain to this species:

- CMM 2024-05 For Bottom Fisheries and Protection of VMEs in the NW Pacific Ocean

Available from https://www.npfc.int/active-conservation-and-management-measures

*Table 1: Current status of management measures*

| Item | Status | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Biological reference point | Not accomplished | Not established |
| Stock status | Unknown | Status determination criteria not established |
| Catch limit | Intermediate | No operation from November to December, Restriction of trawl mesh size |
| Harvest control rule | Not accomplished | Not established |
| Other | Intermediate | No expansion of fishing beyond established areas, No operation in the designated areas, No more increase in the fishing vessels |

Currently, there is no accepted harvest control rule for this species.
In 2016, the management measures were implemented, which includes limiting the fishing effort to the 2007's level, prohibiting fisheries from November to December (which corresponds to the spawning season for North Pacific armorhead) and not allowing fisheries in C-H Seamount and the southeastern part of Koko Seamount (for the protection of VMEs)
In 2019, an additional measure was adopted, which includes the regulation of the mesh size (trawl: > 13 cm) to protect juvenile fish of this species. Effectiveness of this measure yet to be clearly demonstrated (Sawada and Ichii 2020).

*Data Availability*

*Table 2: Catch data*

| Data | Member | Fishery | Year | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual catch | Japan | Trawl | 1969-present | |
| | | Gillnet | 1990-present | |
| | Korea | Trawl | 2004-2019 | |
| | Russia | Trawl | 1969-1988; 2002; 2005; 2006; 2010; 2011; 2013; 2019 | |
| CPUE | Japan | Trawl | 1970-present | Logbook data availabe |
| | | Gillnet | 2008-present | Logbook data available |
| | Korea | Trawl | 2013-2019 | Logbook data available |
| | Russia | Trawl | 1969-1988; 2010; 2019 | |

*Table 3: Biological data*

| Data | Member | Year | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Japan | 2013-present | annual ring analysis |
| | Korea | 2013-2017, 2019 | |
| | Russia | | |
| Length | Japan | 2009-present | Protocol revised (see NPFC-2018-SSC BF01-WP03) |
| | Korea | 2013-2019 | |
| | Russia | | |
| Maturity | Japan | 2013-present | |

| Data | Member | Year | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Korea | 2013-2017, 2019 | |
| | Russia | 1969-1988; 2010; 2011; 2013; 2019 | |

*References*

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Kaschner, K., Kesner-Reyes, K., Garilao, C., Segschneider, J., Rius-Barile, J. Rees, T., & Froese, R. (2019, October). AquaMaps: Predicted range maps for aquatic species. Retrieved from https://www.aquamaps.org.

Shotton, R. (2016). Global review of alfonsino (*Beryx* spp.), their fisheries, biology and management. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular, (C1084), I.

Sawada, K., Nishida, K., Yonezaki, S. and Kiyota, M. (2018). Review of biology and fisheries of Splendid alfonsino *Beryx splendens*, especially in the Emperor seamounts area. NPFC-2018-SSC-BF01-WP03. 26 pp.

Sawada, K., and Ichii, T. (2020) Catch size composition of splendid alfonsino in the Emperor Seamounts area before and after the implementation of the mesh size regulation. NPFC-2020-SSC BFME01-WP05 (Rev. 1). 3 pp.

Nishimura, A., & Yatsu, A. (2008, October). Application of surplus-production models to splendid alfonsin stock in the Southern Emperor and Northern Hawaiian Ridge (SE-NHR). In Fifth Intergovernmental Meeting on Establishment of New Mechanism for Management of High Seas Bottom Trawl Fisheries in the North Western Pacific Ocean (NWPBT/SWG-05), Tokyo, 17-18 October 2008 (pp. 1-11).

**Annex H**

**Species summary for sablefish**

## Sablefish (Anoplopoma fimbria)

**Common names:**

Black cod (USA & Canada)
ギンダラ, Gindara (Japan)
은대구, Eun-Daegu (Korea)

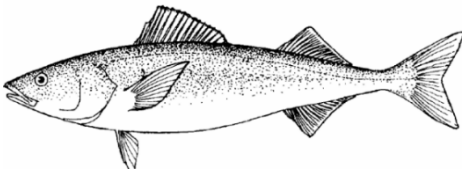

*Figure 1. Sablefish (Anaplopoma fimbria).*

*Management*
*Active NPFC Management Measures*

The following NPFC conservation and management measures (CMM) pertain to this species:

- CMM 2024-06 For Bottom Fisheries and Protection of VMEs in the NE Pacific Ocean
- CMM 2019-10 For Sablefish in the Northeastern Pacific Ocean

Available from https://www.npfc.int/active-conservation-and-management-measures

*Management Summary*

The current management measure for sablefish specifies both catch and effort limits. The allowable catch of sablefish in the eastern portion of the Convention Area is based on a long-term mean of historical catches from seamounts by Canada. It allows for 34 mt to be landed each month for the 6 months of the fishing season (April to September). The fishery is also managed through input controls by only allowing a single vessel to fish in each month. The 1-3 Canadian vessels licensed to fish in the NPFC Convention Area are submitted to the NPFC Secretariat annually.

*Current status of management measures*

| Convention.or.Management.Principle | Status | Comment.or.Consideration |
|---|---|---|
| Biological reference point(s) | Unknown | Established for USA and Canada assessments |

| Convention.or.Management.Principle | Status | Comment.or.Consideration |
|---|---|---|
| Stock status | Known | Healthy (in USA and Canada assessments) |
| Catch limit | Known | Allowable catch of 34 mt per month (6 month season) |
| Harvest control rule | Undefined | Established for USA and Canada assessments |
| Other | Known | Effort control (single vessel per month) |

*Assessment*

Although genetic and other evidence indicates there is a single stock of sablefish in the eastern North Pacific Ocean (including the NPFC Convention Area), three stock assessments are carried out in the three domestic jurisdictions Alaska (U.S.A.), British Columbia (Canada) and the U.S. West Coast (U.S.A.) where sablefish are harvested.

Canada uses a management strategy evaluation (MSE) process to generate recommended harvest each year. Underlying the MSE is a statistical catch-at-age structured operating model (stock assessment model) that gets updated on a 3 – 5 year cycle (DFO 2016, DFO 2020). A new revision of the operating model by Canada was completed in 2022 (DFO 2023). The USA conducts two stock assessments (one for Alaska and one for the US West Coast). Both are conducted using age-structured models and are routinely updated. The current Alaska assessment (Goethel et al. 2022) and most recent USA West Coast assessment (Kapur et al. 2021) are available online.
No stock assessment is conducted for the portion of the sablefish population found in the NPFC Convention area.
*Data*
*Surveys*

Canada has conducted two longline trap surveys in British Columbia waters. From 1990-2009 a standardized trap survey was conducted at set stations annually. From 2003 to the present DFO conducts a stratified random trap survey along the outer shelf and slope of the BC coast. Both of these surveys generate a fishery independent CPUE as well as biological data that is used in the assessment. In Alaska, three survey indices are available for use in assessing the status of the sablefish population. There is a longline survey conducted at standard survey stations that provides a relative index of abundance. It has been conducted at depths from 200-1000 m annually since 1978 (cooperatively with Japan from 1978-1994). Bottom trawl surveys are conducted annually or biennially in the three main ecosystems in Alaska since 1982. The U.S. West Coast primarily uses fishery independent survey data from the west coast groundfish bottom trawl survey conducted from 2003-present over depths of 55 to ~1300 m as an index of sablefish

abundance. The bottom trawl survey follows a random-stratified survey design with four vessels (in most years) conducting the survey annually. The trawl survey data is analyzed with the VAST model (Thorson 2019) to produce the index of abundance for sablefish.

There is currently no survey conducted in the eastern NPFC Convention Area that captures or monitors sablefish populations.

*Fishery*

The Canadian high seas Sablefish fishery typically operates at 1-4 seamounts in the commission area (Cobb, Eickleberg, Warwick and Brown Bear seamounts). Historically other seamounts have been fished for sablefish both inside and outside Canada's EEZ.

Fishing is conducted with longlined traps. Since 2014 a maximum of 3 vessels per year have been allowed to fish in NPFC waters. Historically the number of fishing vessels has averaged <3 per year (since 2008). The number of fishing days is the number of unique calendar days during which gear was set. The number of fishing days has averaged from about 25 to greater than 100, but in most years has averaged between 50 and 75 (Figure 2).

No Canadian vessels have chosen to fish for Sablefish in the Convention Area since 2020. This is likely due to a combination of economics (high fuel prices and the large distance to the seamounts), the availability of quota in the domestic fishery which is easier to access and hesitancy about the requirements under the implementation of the new NPFC AIS policy.

Both Canada and the U.S.A. have large domestic fisheries that target sablefish inside their EEZ's. Sablefish is also captured as bycatch in domestic trawl fisheries in Canada and the U.S.A.

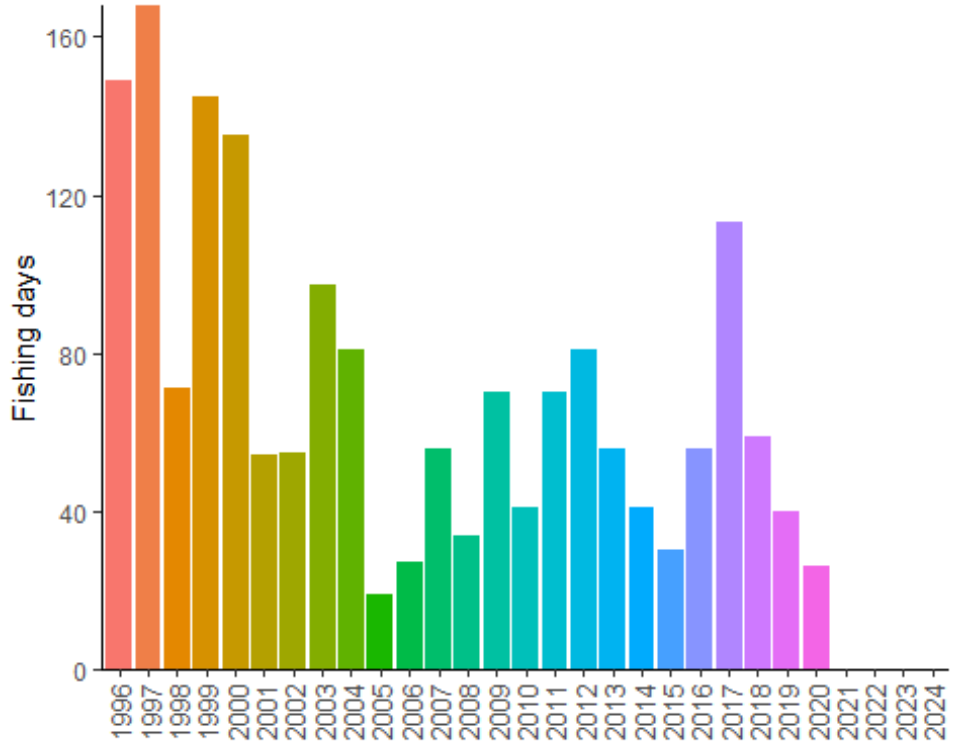


*Figure 2. Fishing effort (in number of fishing days) for the Sablefish longline trap fishery conducted in NPFC waters (1996-present). Data are averaged across 3 years to comply with data privacy restrictions.*

Output controls limit the amount of fish that can be landed during a trip. Authorized vessels are subject to monthly vessel limits of 34 mt of Sablefish, 2.3 mt of combined Rougheye and Blackspotted rockfish and 0.45 mt of other rockfish, sole and flounder (all in round weight). These measures have been in place since 2011.

Catches of Sablefish from NPFC region seamounts has ranged from an average of about 10 mt per year in 2005-2008 to about 67 mt in 2017 (Figure 3). Average annual catches were relatively low from 2002 to 2016 at NPFC seamounts and then increased in 2017-2018, with a decline to low levels in the last years. This increase in part probably reflects shifting effort due to closures of seamounts within Canada's EEZ. An examination of coastwide shifts in the spatial pattern of fishing effort showed that fishing effort has become concentrated on Cobb Seamount, with increasing effort in shallower waters relative to the past (Figure 4).

There has been no fishing effort at seamounts from 2021-2024 resulting in no catch.

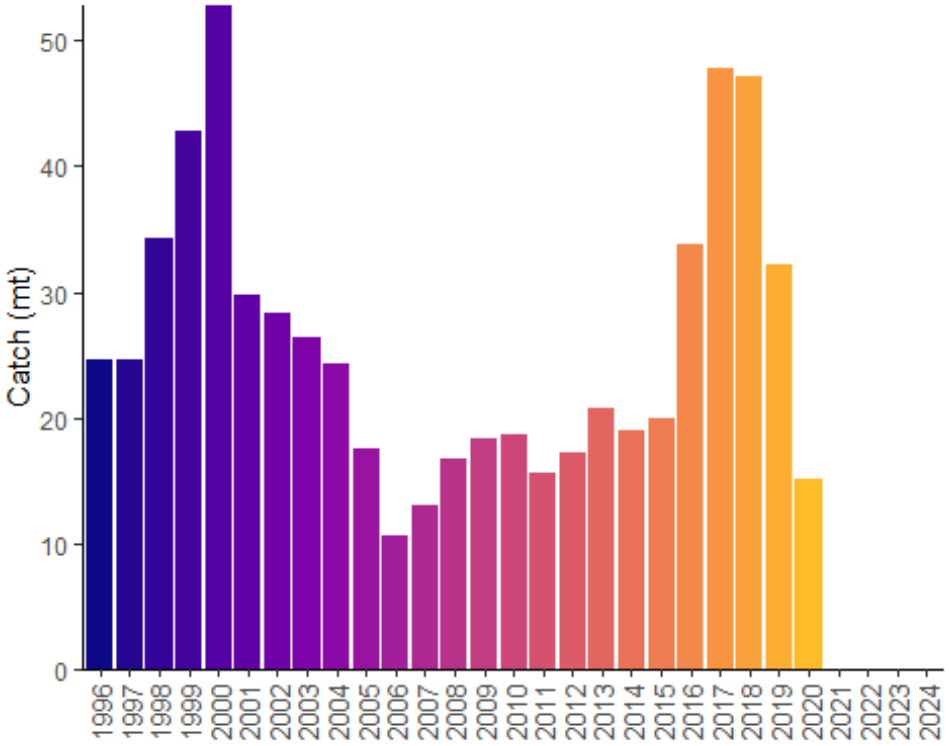


*Figure 3. Landings of sablefish in the Canadian Sablefish fishery in NPFC region (1996-present). Data are averaged across 3 years to comply with data privacy restrictions.*

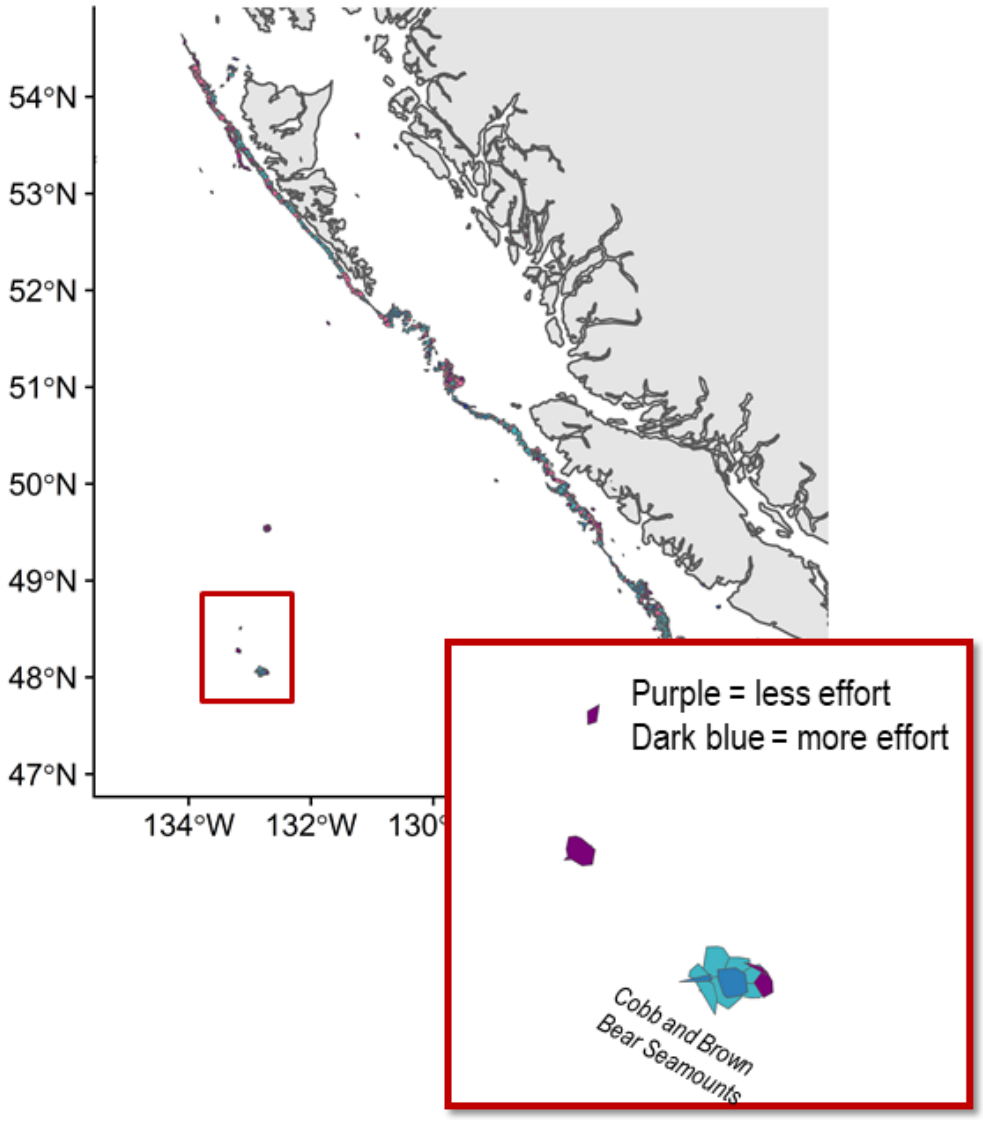


*Figure 4. Relative change in spatial distribution of effort for Sablefish trap fishery from 2010-2017 to 2018-2019. Inset shows seamounts in the NPFC Convention Area.*

Catch per unit of effort (mt/fishing days) for Sablefish has been increasing over the last 10 years (Figure 5), averaging 0.35 mt/fishing day (CV = 56%). CPUE was not calculated in 2024, but has generally been increasing from 2012 - 2020.

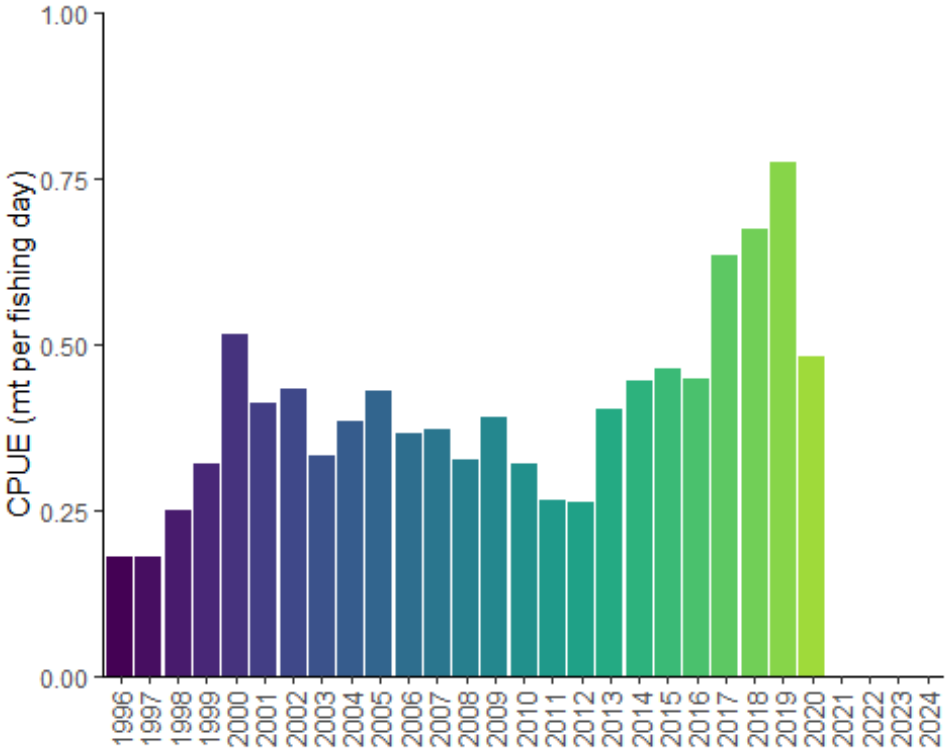


*Figure 5. Catch per unit of effort for Canadian Sablefish fishery in NPFC region. Data are averaged across 3 years to comply with data privacy restrictions.*

*Biological collections*

Under the seamount fishing protocol, 5 randomly selected fish per trip are saved by the vessel for sampling when it returns to port. These sablefish are sampled for length, weight and sex. Otoliths are collected for age estimation.

In 2020 due to COVID 19 restrictions, there were no biological samples collected from Sablefish captured in the Convention Area. Historical data will be provided to the NPFC Science Committee, when and as required, in conjunction with the NPFC's Interim Guidance for Management of Scientific Data Used in Stock Assessments.
Domestic fisheries in the U.S.A. and Canada also collect biological data. Data including length, weight and sex are collected from the scientific survey and by observers and dockside samplers from the commercial fisheries. Otoliths for estimating fish ages are also collected from both the surveys and the fisheries.

*Data availability from Members regarding blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes*

| Data | Source | Years | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Catch | Canada | 1965-present | Catches from national waters and convention area |

| Data | Source | Years | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| | USA | ~1960-present | Catches in national waters |
| CPUE | Canada | ~1988-present | |
| | USA | ~1988-present | |
| Survey | Canada | 1990-2009 | Longline trap standard survey |
| | Canada | 2003-present | Longline trap random survey |
| | USA | 1978-present | Alaska longline survey |
| | USA | 1982-present | Alaska bottom trawl surveys |
| | USA | 2003-present | West Coast bottom trawl survey |
| Age data | Canada | variable | Commercial and survey catches, including NPFC Convention Area |
| | USA | variable | Commercial and survey catches |
| Length data | Canada | variable | Commercial and survey catches, including NPFC Convention Area |
| | USA | variable | Commercial and survey catches |
| Maturity/fecundity | Canada | variable | Commercial and survey catches in national waters |
| | USA | variable | Research cruises in national waters |

*Special Comments*

The most recent stock assessments from the USA and Canada indicate the spawning stock biomass has been increasing since about 2018, supported by a large coastwide recruitment in ~2016 (data from Gothel et al. 2022, DFO 2023, Kapur et al 2021).

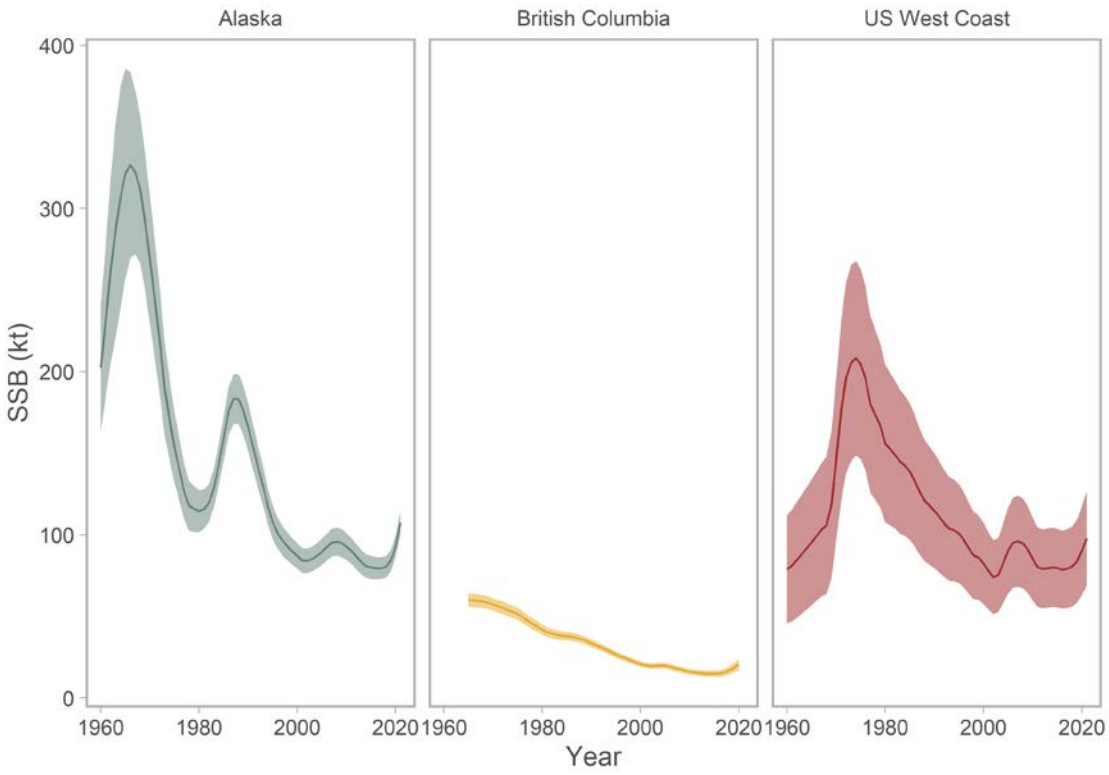


*Figure 6. Sablefish (Anaplopoma fimbria) biomass estimated from stock assessments in Alaska, Canada and the US West Coast.*

*Biological Information*

*Distribution*

Sablefish are widely distributed throughout the Pacific Ocean from northern Mexico to the Gulf of Alaska, westward to the Aleutian, and northward into the Bering Sea (Figure 7; Wolotira et al. 1993). They are also found along the western margin of the Pacific Ocean from southern Japan through the Kamchatka Peninsula and northward into the Bering Sea. Adult sablefish occur along the continental slope, shelf gullies, and in deep fjords, generally at depths greater than 200 m. Juvenile sablefish spend their first two to three years on the continental shelf at shallower depths. Spawning is generally in the winter and spring (October-April) and occurs near the shelf break. Spawning timing generally occurs earlier in the south (October-February in California) and later in the north (January – April in Alaska). Eggs are found at depth and larvae are found in surface waters (Shotwell et al. 2020).

*Life history*

Larval sablefish feed on zooplankton prey. Juveniles shift from pelagic to benthic prey including fishes and invertebrates. Adults consume mostly benthic fishes and invertebrates. Sablefish mature at 4 to 5 years. In the eastern Pacific, Sablefish have traditionally been thought to form two populations based on differences in growth rate, size at maturity, and tagging studies. The

northern population inhabits Alaska and northern British Columbia waters and the southern population inhabits southern British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California waters, with mixing of the two populations occurring off southwest Vancouver Island and northwest Washington. However, recent genetic work by Jasonowicz et al. (2017) found no population sub-structure throughout their range along the US West Coast to Alaska, and suggested that observed differences in growth and maturation rates may be due to phenotypic plasticity or are environmentally driven. Tagging evidence suggests that the sablefish inhabiting seamounts in the NPFC Convention Area are not distinct from the coast wide sablefish population.

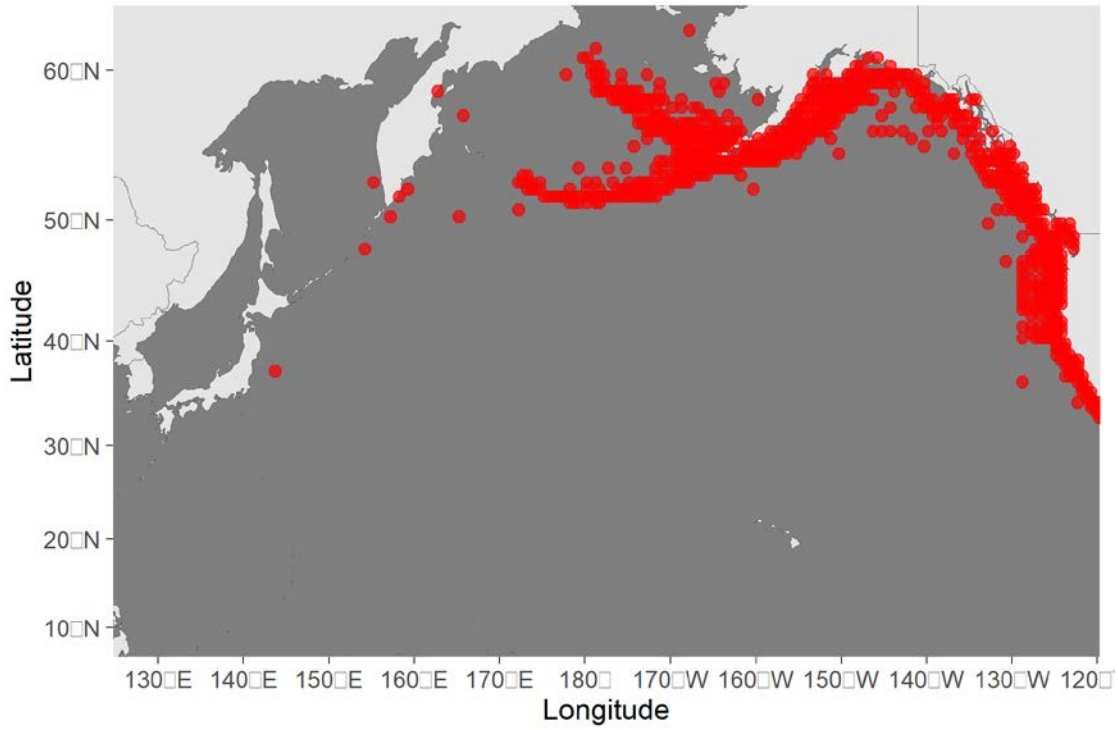


*Figure 7. Map of distribution of sablefish in the North Pacific.*

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Shotwell, K., Goethel, D.R., Deary, A., Echave, K., Fenske, K., Fissel, B., Hanselman, D., Lunsford, C., Siwicke, K., and Sullivan, J. 2020. Ecosystem and socioeconomic profile of the sablefish stock in Alaska. In “Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report for the Groundfish Resources of the GOA and BS/AI.” Anchorage, AK: North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

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Wolotira, R. J. J., T. M. Sample, S. F. Noel, and C. R. Iten. 1993. Geographic and bathymetric distributions for many commercially important fishes and shellfishes off the west coast of North America, based on research survey and commercial catch data, 1912-1984. NOAA Tech. Memo. NMFS-AFSC-6. 184 pp.

**Annex I**

**Species summary for blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes**

# Blackspotted and Rougheye Rockfishes (Sebastes melanostictus and Sebastes aleutianus)

**Common names:**

アラメヌケ, Aramenuke (Japan)
한볼락, Han Bollak (Korea)

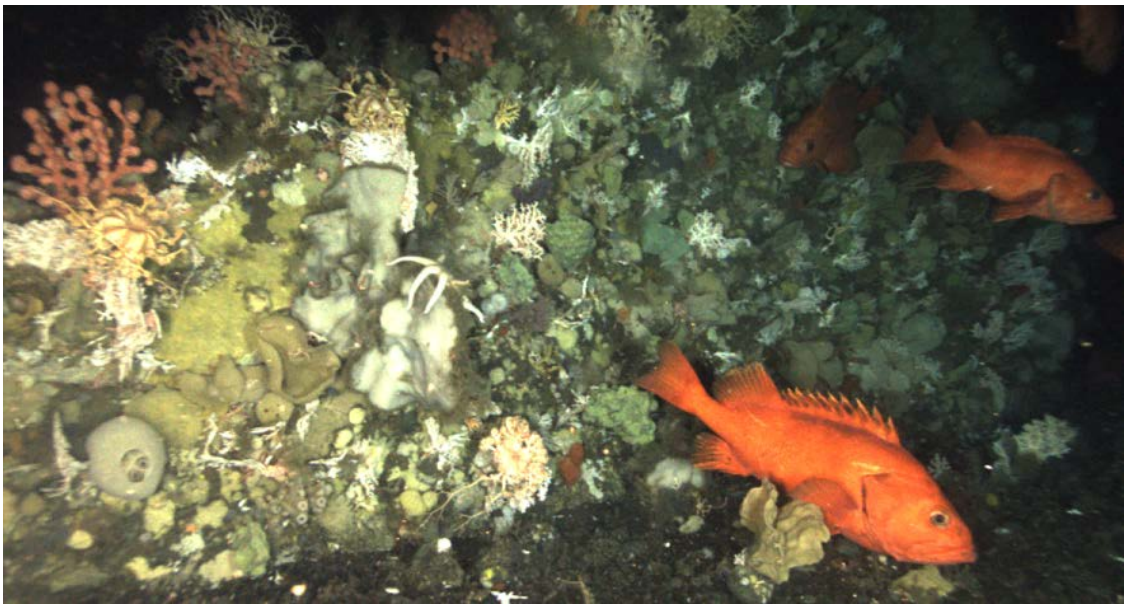

*Figure 1. Blackspotted rockfish (Sebastes melanostictus).*

*Management*
*Active NPFC Management Measures*

The following NPFC conservation and management measures (CMM) pertain to this species:

- CMM 2024-06 For Bottom Fisheries and Protection of VMEs in the NE Pacific Ocean
- CMM 2019-10 For Sablefish in the Northeastern Pacific Ocean

Available from https://www.npfc.int/active-conservation-and-management-measures

*Management Summary*

Blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes are captured in the longline trap fishery that targets sablefish (*Anaplopoma fimbria*) at seamounts in the eastern part of the NPFC Convention Area. The current management measure for blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes specifies both catch and effort limits. The allowable catch of blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes in the eastern portion of the Convention Area is based on a long-term mean of historical catches from

seamounts by Canada. It allows for 2.3 mt to be landed each month for the 6 months of the fishing season (April to September). The fishery is also managed through input controls by only allowing a single vessel to fish in each month. The 1-3 Canadian vessels licensed to fish in the NPFC Convention Area are submitted to the NPFC Secretariat annually.

*Current status of management measures*

| Convention.or.Management.Principle | Status | Comment.or.Consideration |
|---|---|---|
| Biological reference point(s) | Not accomplished | Not established |
| Stock status | Unknown | Status determination criteria not established |
| Catch limit | Known | Allowable catch of 2.3 mt per month (6 month season) |
| Harvest control rule | Not accomplished | Not established |
| Other | Known | Effort control (single vessel per month) |

*Assessment*

No stock assessment is conducted for blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes in the NPFC Convention area.

It is unclear if the blackspotted and rougheye rockfish population on seamounts in the NPFC Convention Area is distinct from the population on the continental shelf of Canada. There is evidence of population structure in other regions, such as Alaska, where population trends and genetics indicate some structure on the order of ~1000 km (Shotwell and Hanselman 2019, Gharrett et al. 2007, Shotwell et al. 2014). This is about twice the distance from the continental shelf to the fished seamounts in the NPFC Convention Area, however there is potentially a large barrier to dispersal of deepwater between the shelf and the seamounts. There is no available tagging data to indicate whether the blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes at seamounts are connected to populations in domestic waters on the continental shelf. It is likely that the seamount populations are distinct stocks with distinct population trajectories.
Domestic stock assessments for blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes conducted in Canada assume there are two populations in domestic waters. These are assessed using a statistical catch at age model (DFO 2020). Assessments are also carried out in Alaska (Sullivan 2022, Spencer et al. 2022).
*Data*

*Surveys*

There is currently no survey conducted in the eastern NPFC Convention Area that captures or monitors blackspotted and rougheye rockfish populations.

*Fishery*

The Canadian high seas sablefish fishery typically operates at 1-4 seamounts in the commission area (Cobb, Eickleberg, Warwick and Brown Bear seamounts). Historically other seamounts have been fished for blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes both inside and outside Canada's EEZ.

Fishing is conducted with longlined traps. Since 2014 a maximum of 3 vessels per year have been allowed to fish in NPFC waters. Historically the number of fishing vessels has averaged <3 per year (since 2008). The number of fishing days is the number of unique calendar days during which gear was set. The number of fishing days has averaged from about 25 to greater than 100, but in most years has averaged between 50 and 75 (Figure 2).
No Canadian vessels have chosen to fish for Sablefish in the Convention Area since 2020. This is likely due to a combination of economics (high fuel prices and the large distance to the seamounts), the availability of quota in the domestic fishery which is easier to access and hesitancy about the requirements under the implementation of the new NPFC AIS policy.
Both Canada and the U.S.A. have domestic fisheries that target blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes inside their EEZ's. Blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes is also targeted in domestic trawl fisheries in Canada and the U.S.A.

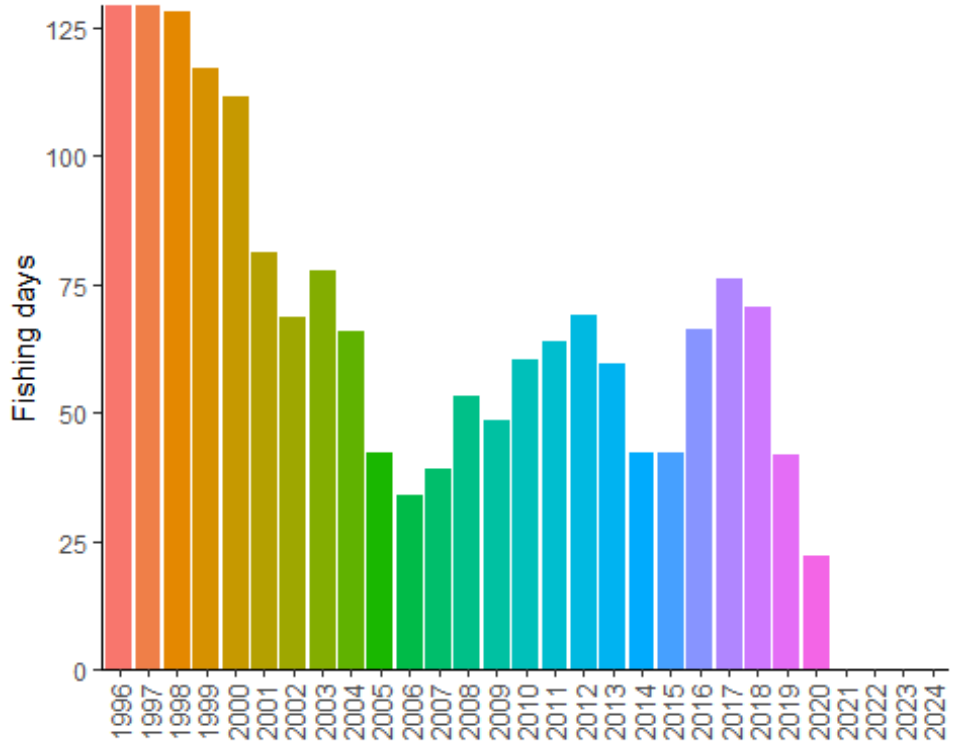


*Figure 2. Fishing effort (in number of fishing days) for the Sablefish longline trap fishery conducted in NPFC waters (1996-present). Data are averaged across 3 years to comply with data privacy restrictions.*

Output controls limit the landings of combined rougheye and blackspotted rockfish to 2.3 mt (in round weight). These measures have been in place since 2011.

Catches of blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes from NPFC region seamounts has ranged from an average of about 0.5 mt per year in 1996-2014 to about 4 mt in 2017 (Figure 3). Average annual catches were relatively low from 1996 to 2016 at NPFC seamounts and then increased in 2017-2018, with a decline to low levels in the last years. This increase in part probably reflects shifting sablefish effort due to closures of seamounts within Canada's EEZ. An examination of coastwide shifts in the spatial pattern of fishing effort showed that fishing effort has become concentrated on Cobb Seamount, with increasing effort in shallower waters perhaps reflecting increased targeting of blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes relative to the past (Figure 4). There has been no fishing effort at seamounts from 2021-2024 resulting in no catch.

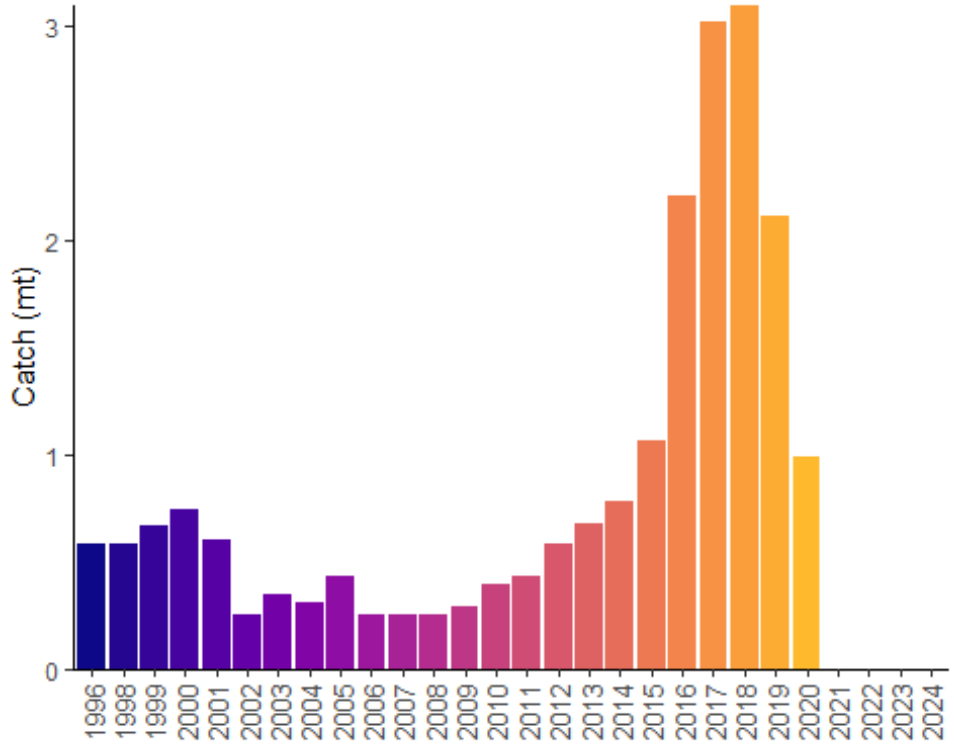


*Figure 3. Landings of blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes in the Canadian Sablefish fishery in NPFC region (1996-present). Data are averaged across 3 years to comply with data privacy restrictions.*

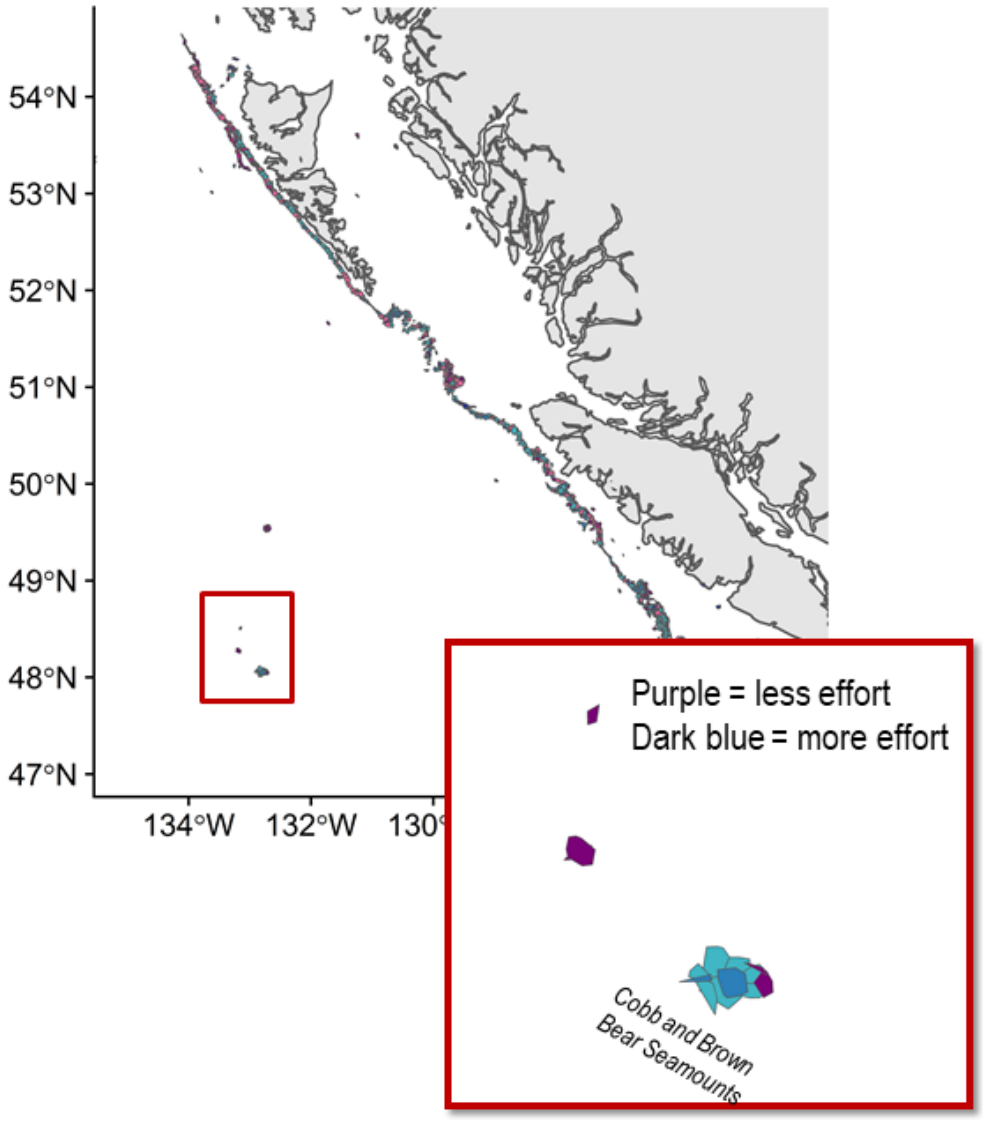


*Figure 4. Relative change in spatial distribution of effort for Sablefish trap fishery from 2010-2017 to 2018-2019. Inset shows seamounts in the NPFC Convention Area.*

Catch per unit of effort (mt/fishing days) for blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes has been increasing over the last 10 years (Figure 5), averaging 0.01 mt/fishing day (CV = 114%). CPUE was not calculated in 2024 due to the absence of fishing in the Convention Area, but has generally been increasing since 2012.

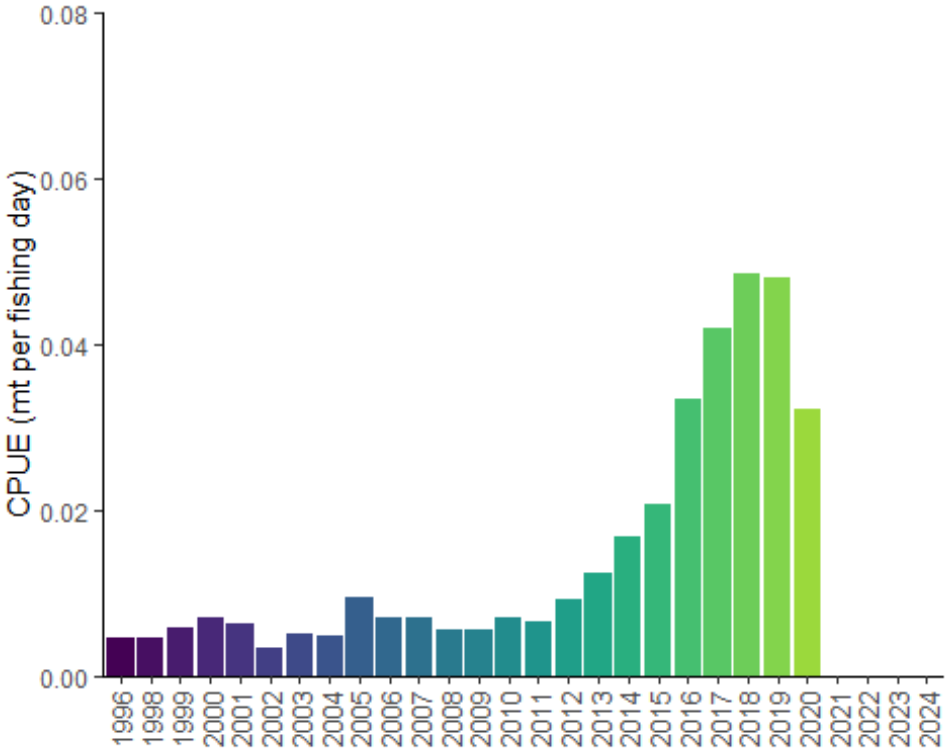


*Figure 5. Catch per unit of effort for blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes in the Canadian Sablefish fishery in NPFC region. Data are averaged across 3 years to comply with data privacy restrictions.*

*Biological collections*

No biological collections are taken from blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes captured in the NPFC Convention Area. Biological data are available from domestic fisheries and surveys in Canada.

*Data availability from Members regarding blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes*

| Data | Source | Years | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Catch | Canada | 1996-present | Catches from national waters and convention area |
| CPUE | Canada | 1996-present | |
| Survey | None | | Survey data are available from Canada and U.S.A. national waters |
| Age data | None | | Data available from Canada and U.S.A. domestic |

| Data | Source | Years | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | fisheries and surveys |
| Length data | None | | Data available from Canada and U.S.A. domestic fisheries and surveys |
| Maturity/fecundity | None | | Data available from Canada and U.S.A. domestic fisheries and surveys |

*Special Comments*

None

*Biological Information*
*Distribution*

Blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes are widely distributed throughout the Pacific Ocean from California to the Gulf of Alaska, westward to the Aleutian, and northward into the Bering Sea (Figure 6; Love et al. 2002). They are also found along the western margin of the Pacific Ocean from the Kuril Islands through the Kamchatka Peninsula and northward into the Bering Sea. Adult blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes occur in rocky habitat along the continental slope, shelf gullies, and in deep fjords, generally at depths from 150 to 450 m (Love et al. 2002). Juvenile blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes are found at shallower depths (250-300 m) at the continental shelf break. Until recently, these species were considered a single species (rougheye rockfish; Orr and Hawkins 2008).

*Life history*

Blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes are extremely long-lived, with maximum ages > 200 years. They mature late at about 20 years of age. These characteristics make them vulnerable to overfishing. The species are live-bearing, extruding larvae generally in the spring (February-June). Blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes are benthic feeders, consuming mostly shrimps, crabs and fishes (Yang and Nelson 2000).

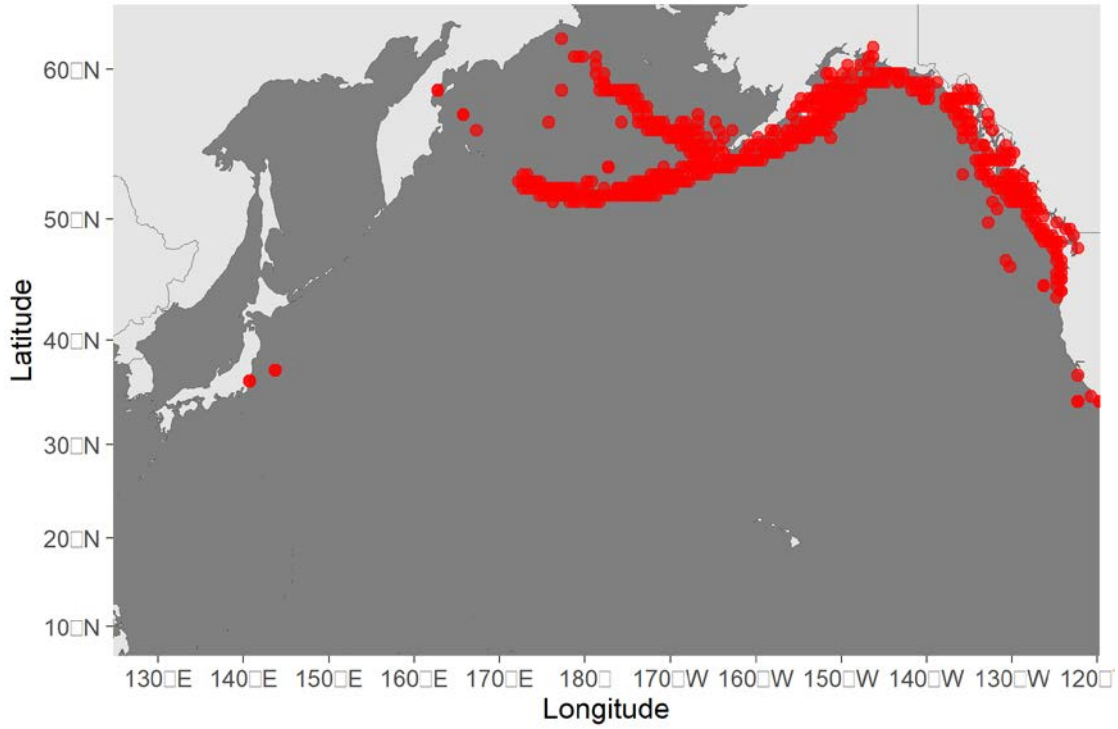


*Figure 6. Map of distribution of blackspotted and rougheye rockfishes in the North Pacific.*

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**Annex J**

**Species summary for skilfish**

## Skilfish (Erilepis zonifer)

**Common names:** Skilfish (English); 白斑裸盖鱼(Chinese); アブラボウズ (Japanese);

큰은대구 (Korean); эрилепис или морской монах (Russian)

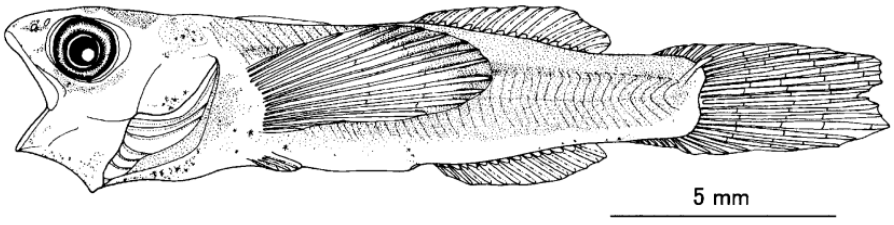
*Biological Information*

Skilfish *Erilepis zonifer* (Lockington, 1880) is one of the two species belonging to the family Anoplopomatidae, and the only species of the genus *Erilepis*. Published data suggest that juvenile fish are found in the surface water layer, among floating algae, and are distributed in the open ocean, where they live 4 - 6 years, reaching the length of about 50 cm, after which they switch to the bottom lifestyle. Adult fish inhabit deep rocky bottoms. Young fish have bright white spots on their bodies, but with age their color changes to dark gray, and bright markings become duller and less visible as the fish grows. Skilfish has a dark body, nearly black fins, and large blue eyes above a prominent, cavernous mouth like that of a rockfish (fig. 1). It also has a strong tail fin that is equal to or higher than the fish's head. The fish is a predator, and consumes different species of bony fish, cephalopod mollusks and crustaceans, and may also feed on jellyfish.

Global distribution ranges from the central Japan north to the Commander and Aleutian Islands; Gulf of Alaska south to Monterey Bay (California, U.S.A.). Skilfish were registered on all south Emperor Seamounts (south of 42° E). Skilfish were captured mainly on the seamounts T365+A and Koko using bottom longlines (fig. 2). Skilfish are also captured occasionally on longlines and in pots on seamounts in the Cobb Seamount chain in the eastern North Pacific.

This species lives at depth range from 340 to 1150 meters, according to research surveys, and were captured even at 1438 m depth during commercial fishing. The analysis of changes in the fish body length with depth (fig. 3) shows positive correlation in the research area^ larger fish tend to live deeper [Zolotov et al., 2014].

Skilfish size (body length) in commercial catches ranged from 55 to 201 cm, with an average length of 103.5 cm as recorded by Russian scientific observers in 2014-2018 (fig. 4). The body weight ranged from 4.0 kg to 102 kg, with an average weight of 20.8 kg. Published size composition differed on different seamounts (fig. 5).




A)

B)

***Figure 1: Erilepis zonifer at different developmental stages:*** *A) larva [Okamoto et al., 2010], B) adult (picture made by Igor Maltsev)*

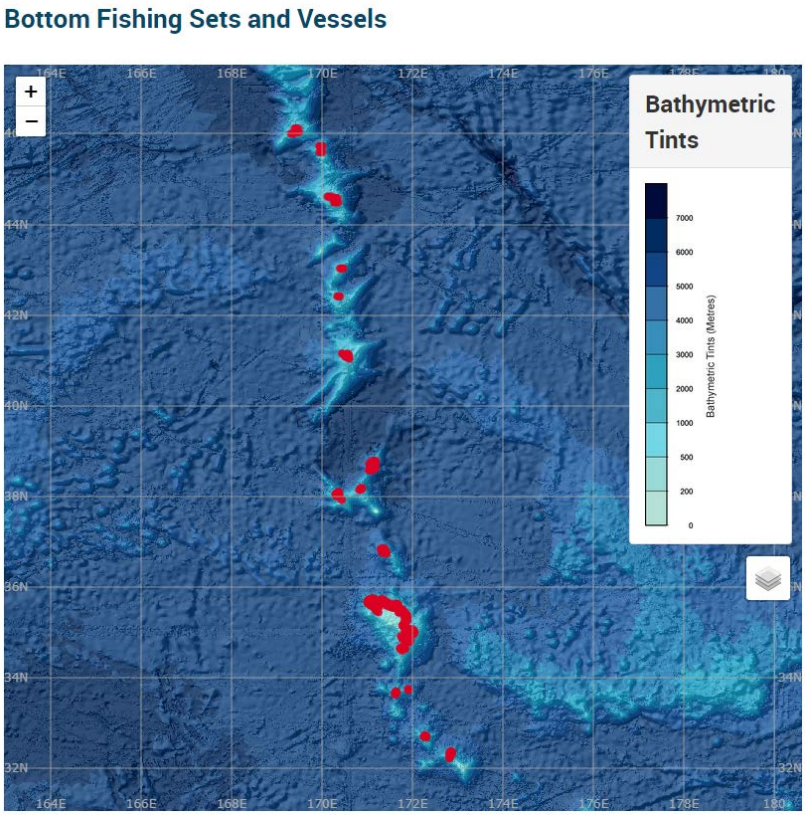



***Figure 2: Surveyed area by Russian Long-Liners [https://www.npfc.int/science/gis/bottom_fishing]***

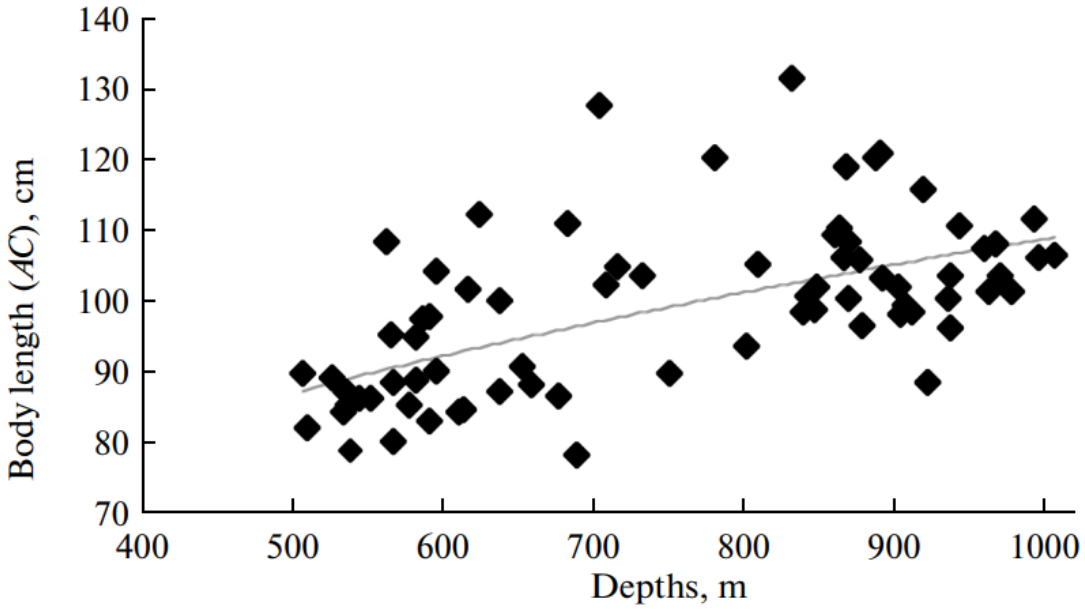



***Figure 3: Skilfish body length versus habitat depth at the Emperor Seamounts, June–July 2009: $y = 11.632x^{0.3239}$, $R^2 = 0.3692$ [Zolotov et al., 2014]***

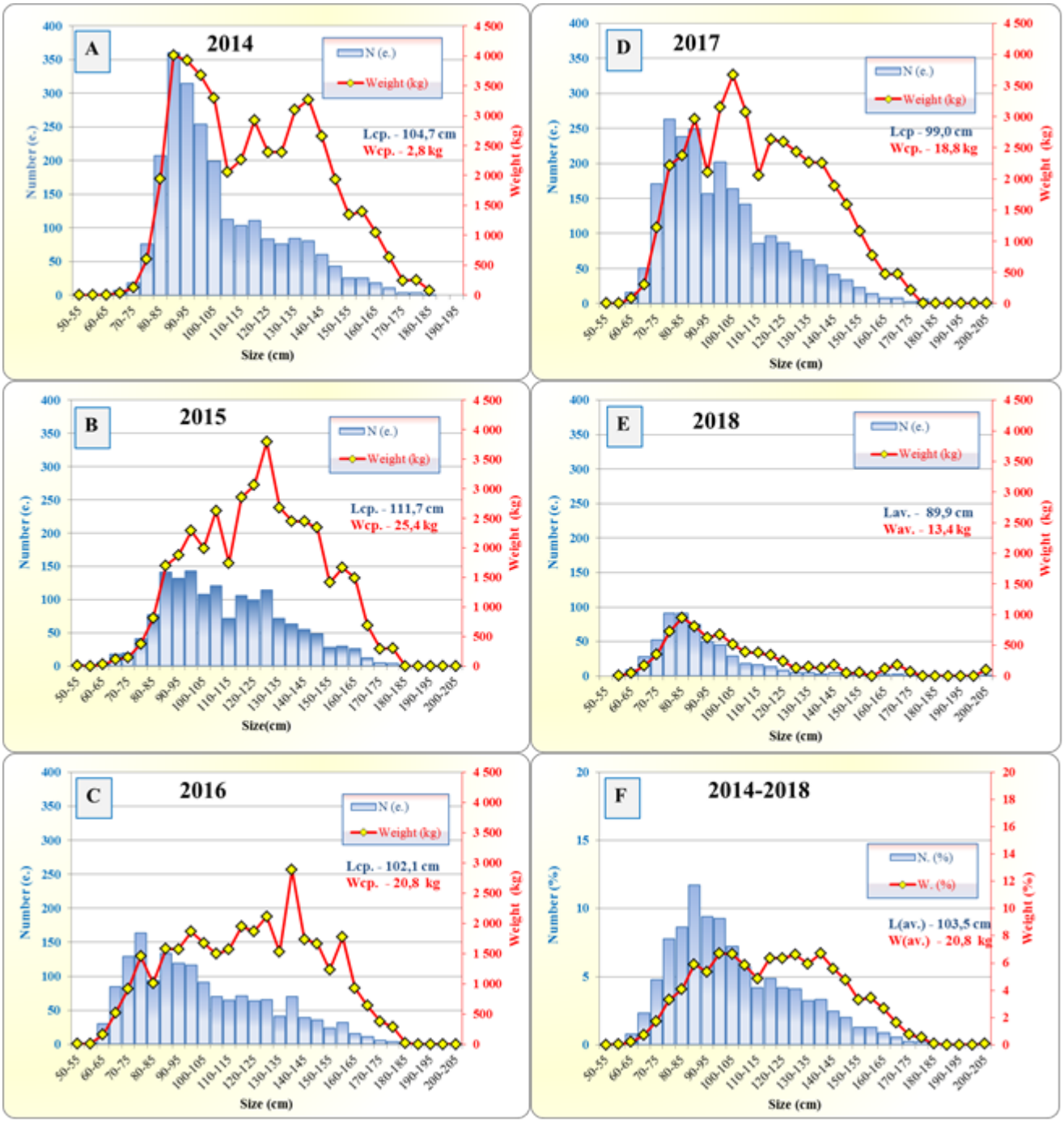



***Figure 4: Skilfish body length and weight at the Emperor Seamounts based on longline catches during 2014-2017 (fishing vessel "Palmer") and in 2018 (fishing vessel "Vostok-7"); F – average long-term data, %***

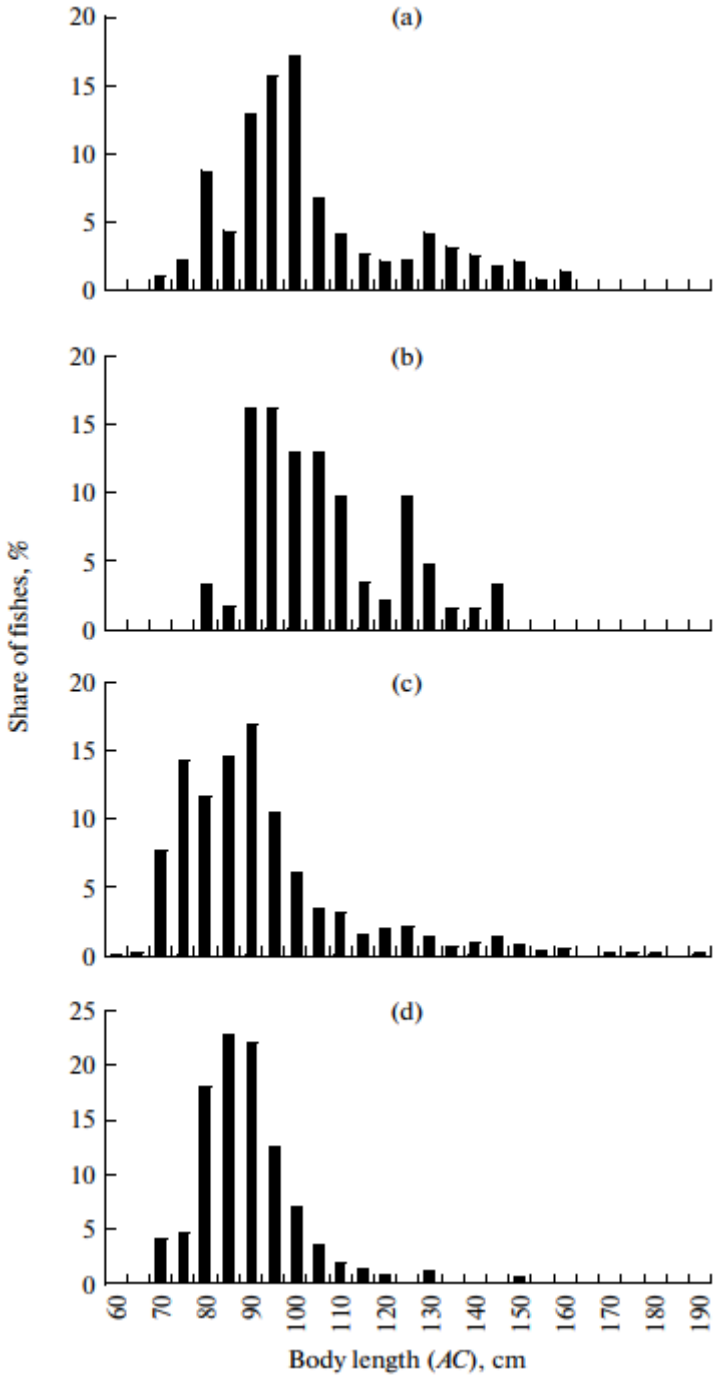



***Figure 5: Skilfish body length at the Emperor Seamounts, June–July of 2009: (a) Jingu (M = 103.28 cm, n = 762); (b) Ojin (M = 105.74 cm, n = 61); (c) Northern Koko (M = 92.40 cm, n = 573); (d) Koko (M = 89.07 cm, n = 199)***

*Fishery*

Skilfish was one of the priority species in the Japanese [Belyaev and Darnitskiy, 2005] long-line catches. The fish aggregations of commercial importance were found at several guyots [Baytalyuk et al., 2010; Monakhtina, 2010]. It is also caught by Japanese trawl and gillnet fisheries primarily

as bycatch. For several years (2001–2007) this fish was commercially fished by bottom long-lines on a number of Emperor Seamounts. On some markets, this fish was sold under the name “grouper”. In 2009, data on skilfish biology and distribution at the Emperor Seamounts were collected and analyzed by Kamchatka Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography (KamchatNIRO) observers on two long-liners [Zolotov et al., 2014]. Later, in 2014-2018, observations were conducted by observers from TINRO, now the Pacific branch of Russian Federal Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography (VNIRO). Catch data for skilfish in Korea is available for the period 2013–2019.

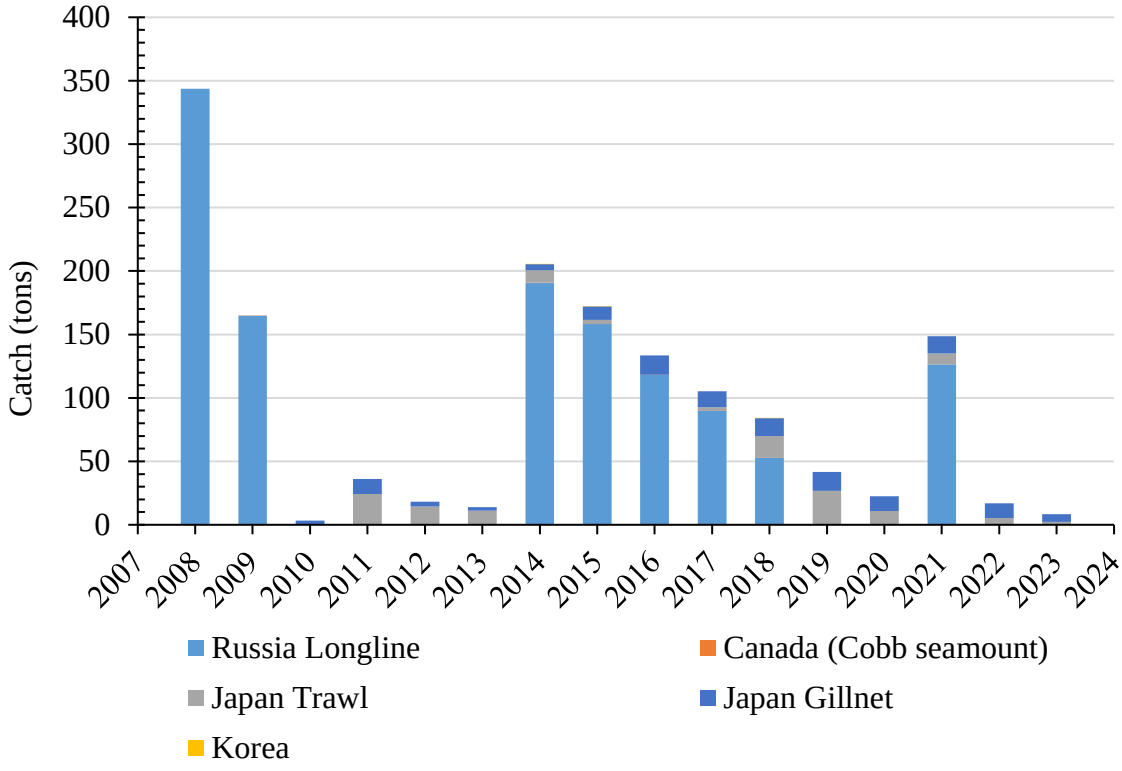



***Figure 6: Historical catches of Skilfish in NPFC waters (metric tons)***

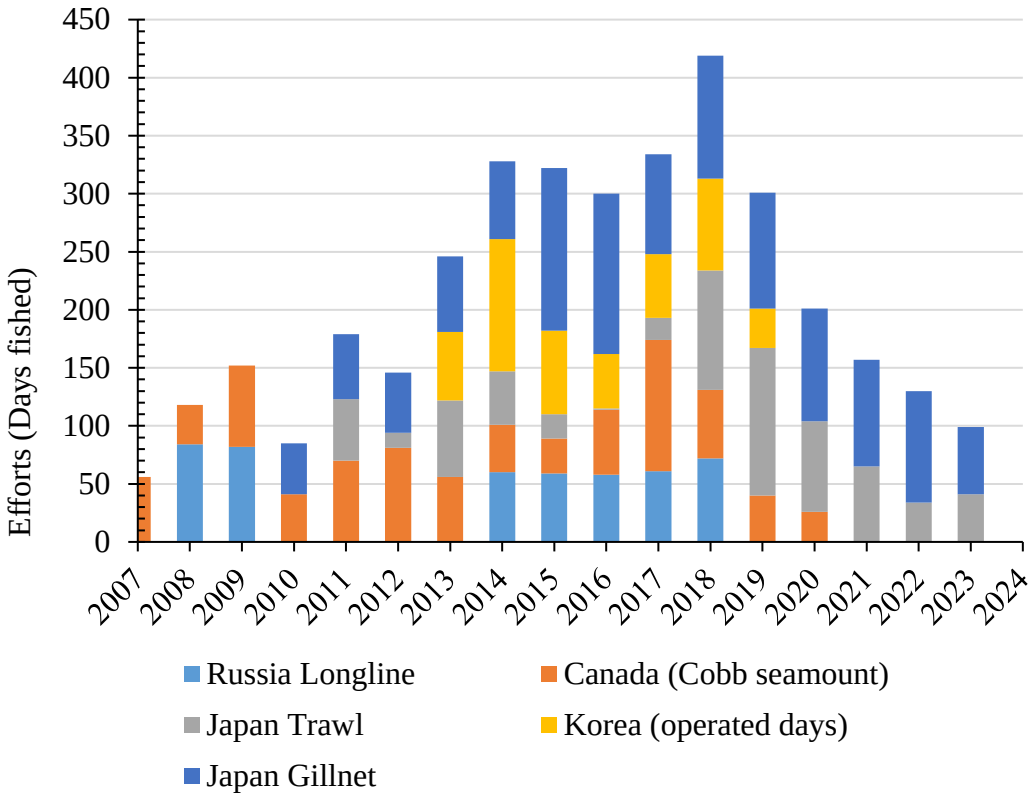



***Figure 7: Historical fishing efforts for Skilfish (days with catches)***

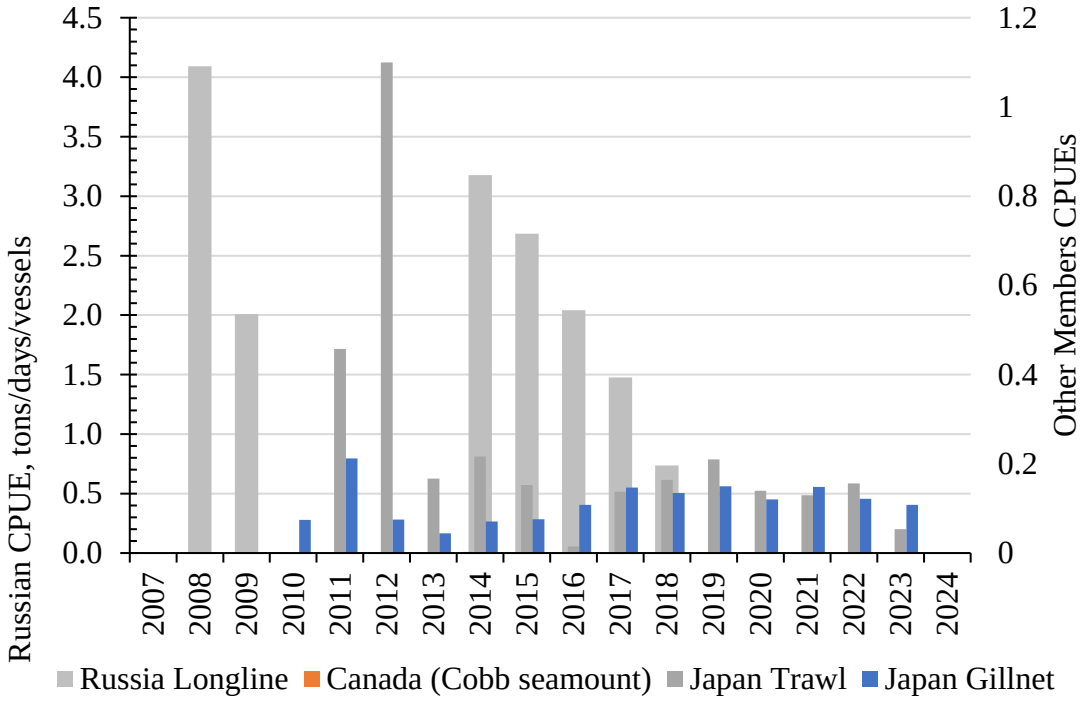



***Figure 8: Historical CPUE for Skilfish (Cath per day per vessel)***

*Assessment*

The initial biomass of skilfish at Nintoku, Jingu, Ojin, Koko, and Northern Koko seamounts calculated by the Leslie method was assessed at approximately 203.5 tons in 2009 [Zolotov et al., 2014].

An age- or length-structured stock assessment for Skilfish may be feasible considering life history of this species when more data on age-size structure are available (see fig. 4, 5 & 6). At present, given small amount of data, it is impossible to suggest reliable size-age keys for Skilfish. Available data yielded the following traditional von Bertalanffy equation: $L_t = 183.0\ [1 - e^{-0.0411(t + 4.1172)}]$, where $L$ is the fish body length ($AC$), cm, and $t$ is fish age, years. According to this equation, skilfish at the age of 10, 20, and 30 years reach body length of 105, 115, and 138 cm, respectively [Zolotov et al., 2014].

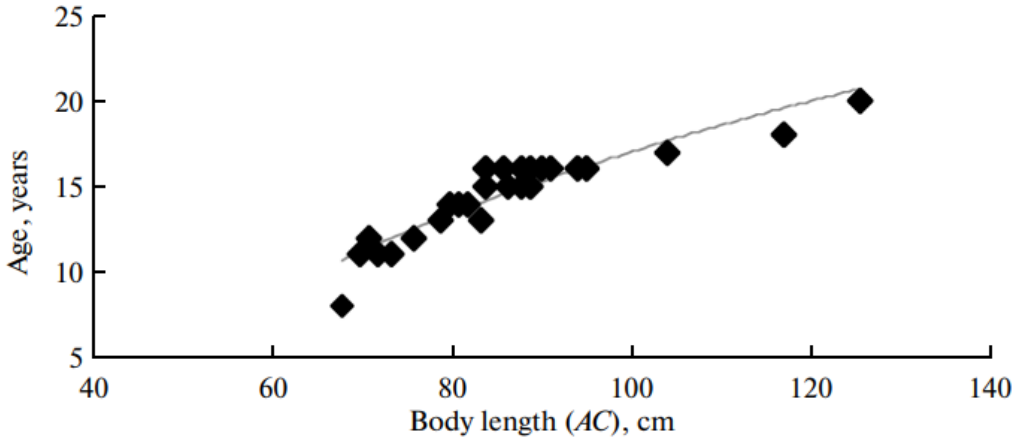



***Figure 9: Growth curve of skilfish Erilepis zonifer at the Emperor Seamounts: y = 16.337ln(x) – 58.222, $R^2$ = 0.8592 [Zolotov et al., 2014]***

*Management*

**Active Management Measures**

The following NPFC conservation and management measures pertain to this species:

- CMM 2024-05 For Bottom Fisheries and Protection of VMEs in the NW Pacific Ocean

Available from https://www.npfc.int/active-conservation-and-management-measures

*Table 1: Current status of management measures*

| Item | Status | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Biological reference point | Not accomplished | Not established |
| Stock status | Unknown | Status determination criteria not established |

| Item | Status | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Catch limit | Not accomplished | Not established |
| Harvest control rule | Not accomplished | Not established |
| Other | Intermediate | No expansion of fishing beyond 1500 m, No more increase in the fishing vessels |

Currently, there is no accepted harvest control rule for this species.

*Data Availability*

*Table 2: Catch data*

| Data | Member | Fishery | Year | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual catch | Japan | Trawl | 2010-present | |
| | | Gillnet | 2010-present | |
| | Korea | Trawl | 2013-2019 | Bycatch less than 1% of total catch |
| | Russia | Long-Line | 2000 | |
| CPUE | Japan | Trawl | 2010-present | |
| | | Gillnet | 2010-present | |
| | Korea | Trawl | 2013-2019 | Logbook data available |
| | Russia | Long-Line | 2014-2018 | |

*Table 3: Biological data*

| Data | Member | Year | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Japan | | |
| | Korea | | |
| | Russia | 2009 | annual ring analysis |
| Length | Japan | | |
| | Korea | | |
| | Russia | 2014-2018 | |
| Maturity | Japan | | |
| | Korea | | |
| | Russia | 2014-2018 | |

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**Annex K**

**Species summary for neon flying squid**

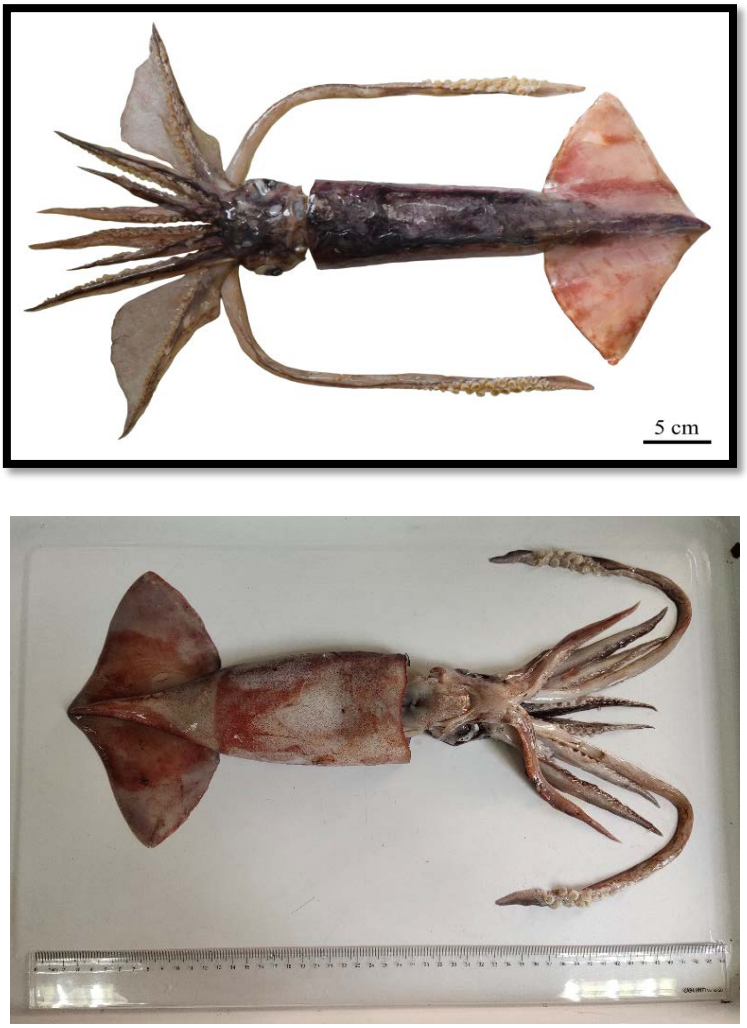


*Figure 1. The pictures of neon flying squid*

## Neon Flying Squid (*Ommastrephes bartramii*)

**Common names:**

柔鱼 [rou yu] (Chinese); neon flying squid (English); アカイカ [akaika] (Japanese); 빨강오징어 [ppalgangojingeo] (Korean); Кальмар Бартрама [kalmar bartrama] (Russian); 赤魷 [chi-you] (Chinese Taipei).

Other common names: Red flying squid; Webbed flying squid; Red ocean squid (https://www.sealifebase.ca/comnames/CommonNamesList.php?ID=58132&GenusName=Ommastrephes&SpeciesName=bartramii&StockCode=3971)

## Management

**Active management measures**

The following NPFC conservation and management measure (CMM) pertains to this species:
CMM 2024-11 For Japanese Sardine, Neon Flying Squid and Japanese Flying Squid
Available from https://www.npfc.int/active-conservation-and-management-measures.

**Management summary**
Does not specify catch limits.

Members of the Commission and CNCPs with substantial harvest of neon flying squid in the Convention Area shall refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels authorized to fish such species from the historical existing level.

Members of the Commission and CNCPs without substantial harvest of the neon flying squid in the Convention Area are encouraged to refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for such species from the historical existing level.

Members of the Commission participating in fishing for the neon flying squid in areas under their jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area are requested to take compatible measures.

*Table1. Management Summary*

| Convention/Management Principle | Status | Comment/Consideration |
|---|---|---|
| Biological reference point(s) | 🔴 | Not established. |
| Stock status | ○ | Status determination criteria not established. |
| Catch or effort limits | 🟡 | Recommended effort limits. |
| Harvest control rule | 🔴 | Not established. |
| Other | | |

🟢 OK 🟡 Intermediate 🔴 Not accomplished ○ Unknown

## Stock assessment

No unified stock assessment has been conducted by NPFC for the species.

Some members have conducted stock assessment or related studies for neon flying squid based on the information only from their own fisheries or surveys (Ichii et al. 2006; Chen, 2010; Cao et al. 2014).

## Data

**Survey**

Japan conducted drift net survey in summer from 1999-2020 and jigging survey in winter from 2018~2020. Russia conducted upper epipelagic surveys from 1984-1992 and from 1999-2019 (see details in Table 2).

**Fishery**

Neon flying squid was harvested by China, Japan, Korea, Russia, Chinese Taipei and Vanuatu. Fishing methods included jigging, drift net, dip net and set net.

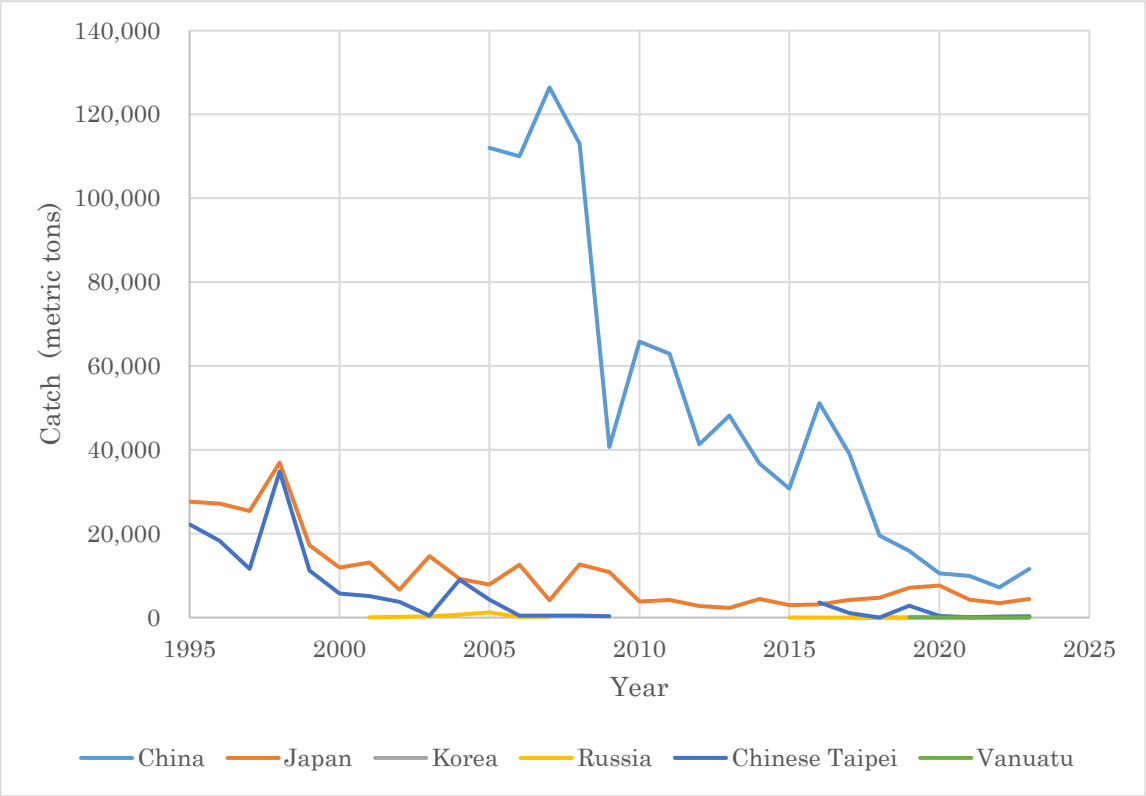


*Figure 2. The historical catch of neon flying squid reported by members.*

**Data availability**

*Table 2. Data availability from Members regarding neon flying squid*

| Category and data sources | Description | Years with available data | Average sample size/ year or data coverage | Potential issues to be reviewed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CHINA** | | | | |
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Squid-jigging fisheries | Official statistics, reports from annual report | Official statistics:<br>2005-2023<br>Fishery data before 2005 (need to be confirmed) | Coverage = 100% | The neon flying squid catches are obtained from the fisheries logbook data provided by the fisheries company |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length measurements | Sampling from commercial squid-jigging fishing vessels | 2010-2018<br>Data before 2005 (need to be confirmed) | 800-1000 fish/year | May lack representativeness |
| Aging | Sampling from commercial squid-jigging fishing vessels | 2010-2016<br>Data before 2005 (need to be confirmed) | 80-200 fish /year | May lack representativeness |
| **Abundance indices (commercial)** | | | | |
| Squid-jigging fisheries | Squid-jigging logbook | 1995-2022<br>Fishery data before 2005 (need to be confirmed) | Coverage= 100% | |

| Category and data sources | Description | Years with available data | Average sample size/ year or data coverage | Potential issues to be reviewed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **JAPAN** | | | | |
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jigging fishery | Logbook | 1995-2023 | Coverage=100% | |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length and weight measurements | Drift net survey (Summer) | 1999-2023 | 500-600 squid/year | |
| | Jigging survey (Winter) | 2018-2023 | 300-400 squid/year | |
| **Abundance indices (survey)** | | | | |
| Summer survey on abundance of the autumn and winter-spring cohorts | Drift net survey CPUE for each cohort (individuals/panel) | 1999-2023 | 20-30 stations/year | Small samples of male and matured female for the autumn cohort |
| Winter survey on abundance of the winter-spring cohort | Jigging survey CPUE (individuals/line) | 2018-2023 | 12-16 stations/year | |
| **Abundance indices (commercial)** | | | | |
| Jigging fishery | Logbook Standardized CPUE of the winter-spring cohort | 1995-2023 | Coverage=100% | Standardize CPUE for the autumn cohort |

| **Category and data sources** | **Description** | **Years with available data** | **Average sample size/ year or data coverage** | **Potential issues to be reviewed** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **KOREA** | | | | |
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |
| Jigging | Official statistics, reports from fisheries | 2017, 2019 and 2021-2023 | Coverage =100% | |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length measurements | Measured by observers while onboard | 2017, 2021, 2022 | 1000 squid/year | Measurement details to be reviewed |
| **Abundance indices (commercial)** | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jigging | Logbook data available | 2017, 2021, 2022 | 30-40 stations/year | Data coverage details to be reviewed |

| Category and data sources | Description | Years with available data | Average sample size/year or data coverage | Potential issues to be reviewed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **RUSSIA** | | | | |
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |
| Drift net fishery | Official statistics, reports from fisheries associations | Official statistics: 1982-1990, 1999-2007, 2011<br><br>1985-1998, 2008-2010 and 2012-2020 (no data available); publications: 1972-2012 | Coverage 1982-1984 ?%, 1999-2007, 2011 =100% | Data coverage details to be reviewed |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length measurements | Sampling from commercial fishing vessels. Sampling during research surveys. | 1999-2007, 2011<br><br>2012-2019 | 100-4,000 squids /year (ca. 50 measurements per sampling) | Data coverage details to be reviewed |
| **Abundance indices (survey)** | | | | |
| Summer-autumn surveys to assess pelagic squid abundance | Upper epipelagic surveys | 1984-1992, 1999-2019 (August-November) | 60-80 stations/year<br><br>60-80 stations/year | Changes in abundance and migration patterns; development survey protocol and conduct standardization |

| Category and data sources | Description | Years with available data | Average sample size/ year or data coverage | Potential issues to be reviewed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CHINESE TAIPEI** | | | | |
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |
| Dip net fishery<br>Set net | Fishing gear used in different periods:<br>1977-1979: jigging<br>1980-1983: jigging and gillnet<br>1984-1992: gillnet<br>1993 till now: jigging | Data from 1977-1996 was provided by Taiwan Squid Fishery Association, data from 1997-2017 was based on logbook, and data from 2018-2023 was the statistics on landings.<br>(No fishery: 2010, 2012-2015) | Coverage =100% | |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length measurements | Sampling from a research survey (1997).<br>Sampling from commercial fishing vessels. | 1997; 1998-2003 | 200-300 squids /year | Data coverage details to be reviewed |
| **Abundance indices (commercial)** | | | | |
| Squid-jigging fisheries | Squid-jigging logbook | 2001-2023<br>(No fishery: 2010, 2012-2015) | Data Coverage 2001-2016 = 87.3%<br><br>Data Coverage 2017-2023 =100% | Will conduct standardization |

| Category and data sources | Description | Years with available data | Average sample size/ year or data coverage | Potential issues to be reviewed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **VANUATU** | | | | |
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |
| Squid jigging fishery | from logbook | 2019 | logbook from 2013 to now, coverage 100% | Vanuatu has authorized 4 vessels to conduct Pacific saury and squid jigging fishery in NPFC Convention Area. These vessels can target both neon flying squid and Pacific saury, and mainly target Pacific saury. |

## Biological Information

### Distribution and migration

Neon flying squid is an oceanic squid distributed in temperate and subtropical waters of the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans. The North Pacific population occurs mainly between 20◦ and 50◦N, and comprises two cohorts: a fall cohort with a hatching period from September to February and a winter–spring cohort with a hatching period mainly from January to May, but extending to August. Neon flying squid makes an annual round-trip migration between its subtropical spawning grounds and its northern feeding grounds near the Subarctic Boundary.

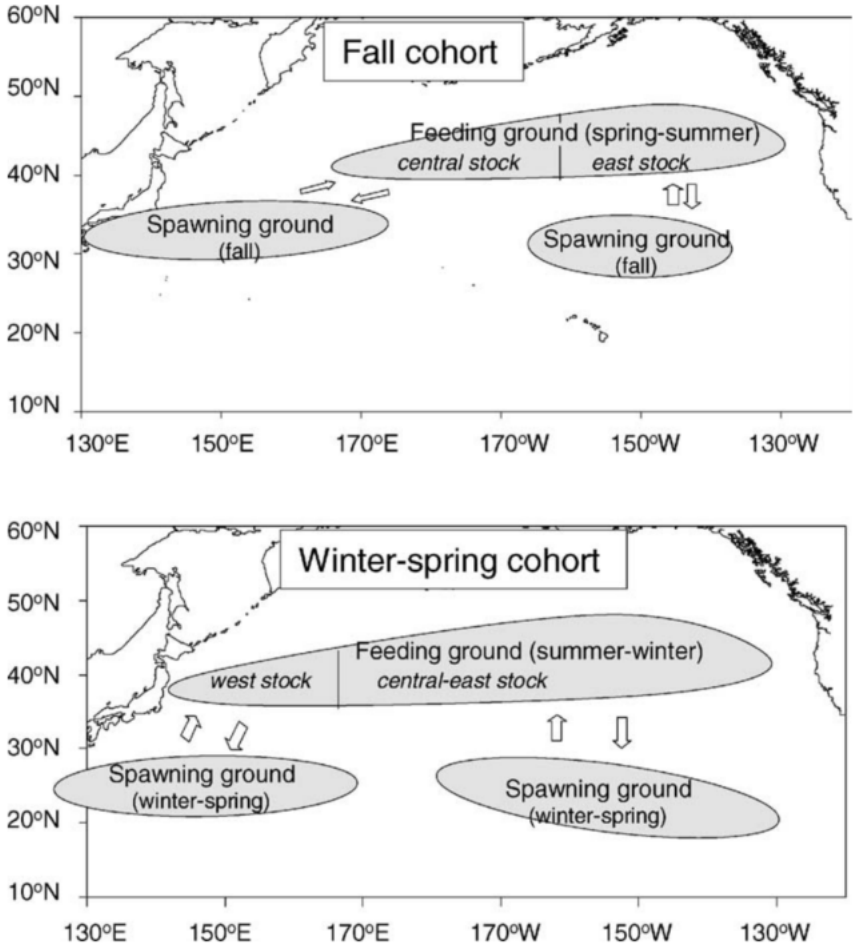


*Figure 3. Migration patterns of the fall and winter–spring cohorts of neon flying squid in the North Pacific.*

**Life history**

Growth is exponential during the first 30 days after hatching and then becomes more or less linear. It is suggested that this shift in growth accompanies a change in the feeding behavior that is thought to occur once the fused tentacles, which form a proboscis in the hatchlings, separate and become functional.

Neon flying squid at 7-10 months of age and has an estimated 1-year life span. Size at maturity is about 30–33 cm ML in males and 40–55 cm ML in females. The maximum ML is around 45 cm in males and 60 cm in females.

During its northward migration and at the feeding grounds in the central North Pacific, neon flying squid feeds mainly on fishes, squids and crustaceans. Many marine mammals feed on neon flying squid. It is an important prey of northern fur seals in the central North Pacific, and a minor prey of short-beaked common dolphins (Bower and Ichii 2005).

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**Annex L**

**Species summary for Pacific saury**

## Pacific saury (*Cololabis saira*)

**Common names:**

秋刀鱼, Qiū dāoyú (China)
サンマ, 秋刀魚, Sanma (Japan)
꽁치, kkongchi (Korea)
сайра, Saira (Russia)
秋刀魚, Chiu-dao-yu or 山瑪魚, San-ma-hi (Chinese Taipei)

*Figure 1. Pacific Saury (Cololabis saira).*

*Management*
*Active NPFC Management Measures*

The following NPFC conservation and management measure (CMM) pertains to this species:

- CMM 2024-08 For Pacific Saury

Available from https://www.npfc.int/active-conservation-and-management-measures

*Management Summary*

The current management measure for Pacific Saury specifies both catch and effort limits. Catch limits are guided by science advice based on the calculated annual catch level in the entire area of Pacific saury in accordance with the interim HCR. For 2024, Members of the Commission agree that the annual catches of Pacific saury in the Convention Area and the areas under their jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area should not exceed 225,000 metric tons. In this year, the annual total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific saury in the Convention Area shall be limited to 135,000 metric tons. Each Member of the Commission shall reduce the annual total catch of Pacific saury by the fishing vessels entitled to fly its flag in 2024 by 55% from its reported catch in 2018.

In the event that the total reported catch of all Members reaches 90% of the TAC for the Convention Area, the Executive Secretary shall notify all Members without delay. Those Members with more than 10,000 mt of catch limits shall close the fishery within 72 hours from

the receipt of the notification. Those Members with less than 10,000 mt of catch limits may continue operations, but their total catch shall not exceed 90% of their catch limits.

The current management measure also states that each Member of the Commission participating in Pacific saury fisheries shall implement either of the following measures:

(a) to reduce the number of fishing vessels flying its flag and fishing for Pacific saury in the Convention Area by 10% from the number of its fishing vessels that fished for Pacific saury in the Convention Area in 2018; or

(b) to prohibit fishing vessels flying its flag from engaging in fishing for Pacific saury in the Convention Area outside its designated fishing period of no longer than 180 consecutive days each year.

In order to protect juvenile fish, Members of the Commission shall take measures for fishing vessels flying their flags to refrain from fishing for Pacific saury in the areas east of 170°E from June to July.

*Table 1. Current status of NPFC management measures*

| **Convention or Management Principle** | **Status** | **Comment or Consideration** |
|---|---|---|
| Biological reference point(s) | Established | Updated annually in stock assessment |
| Stock status | Established | Updated annually in stock assessment |
| Catch limit | Established | Recommended catch limits updated routinely by Commission |
| Harvest control rule | Established | Interim HCR (in place until a management procedure is established by the Commission) |
| Other | Not accomplished | Management strategy evaluation in progress, age structured model development in progress |

*Assessment*

A stock assessment for Pacific Saury is conducted annually by the NPFC's Small Scientific Committee on Pacific Saury (SSC PS) available at: https://www.npfc.int/stock-assessment-reports. The assessment has been a collaborative effort among Members of SSC PS based on a Bayesian state-space production model (BSSPM) since 2019 (Figure 2).

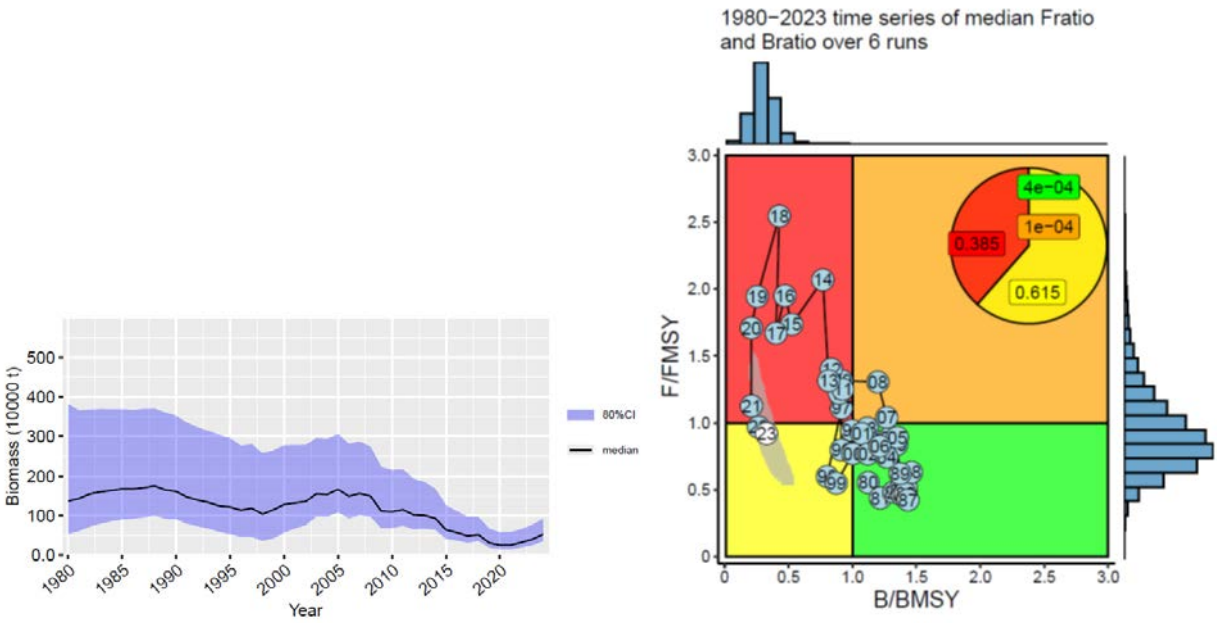


*Figure 2. Time series of biomass (left panel) and Kobe plot (right panel) for Pacific Saury stock assessment.*

The total catch of Pacific saury has been in decline since approximately 2010 (Figure 3). Similarly, the biomass estimated by the BSSPM stock assessment has also generally declined from its peak during the past two decades.

*Data*

*Surveys*

Since 2003, Japan has been conducting a biomass survey covering a wide area of the NPFC Convention area with several research vessels before its main fishing season (Hashimoto et al., 2020). The main purpose of the surveys is to understand the distribution and abundance of Pacific saury and to develop abundance indices for use in stock assessments. Fish sampling also contributes to the understanding of length composition and its inter-annual change.

*Fishery*

The fishing grounds are west of 180$^{o}$ E but differ among Members who fish for Pacific saury: China, Japan, Korea, Russia, Chinese Taipei, and Vanuatu. The stick-held dip net gear has become the dominant fishing technique to catch Pacific saury in the northwest Pacific Ocean. Near the coast Japan also catches Pacific Saury with setnet gear. The fishing is mainly carried out from June-November with peaks typically in the late summer or fall. Other NPFC Members (Canada and USA) do not target Pacific saury.

Standardized catch per unit effort (CPUE) is calculated by all Members participating in the Pacific saury fishery and a joint standardized CPUE is calculated across all Member each year and utilized in the assessment (Hsu et al. 2023).

Updated data on Pacific saury catches in the northwestern Pacific Ocean from 1995 are available on the NPFC website: https://www.npfc.int/pacific-saury-catches. Prior years fishery catch data was downloaded from FAO data collections at https://www.openfisheries.org using rfisheries package (Karthik Ram, Carl Boettiger, and Dyck 2013).

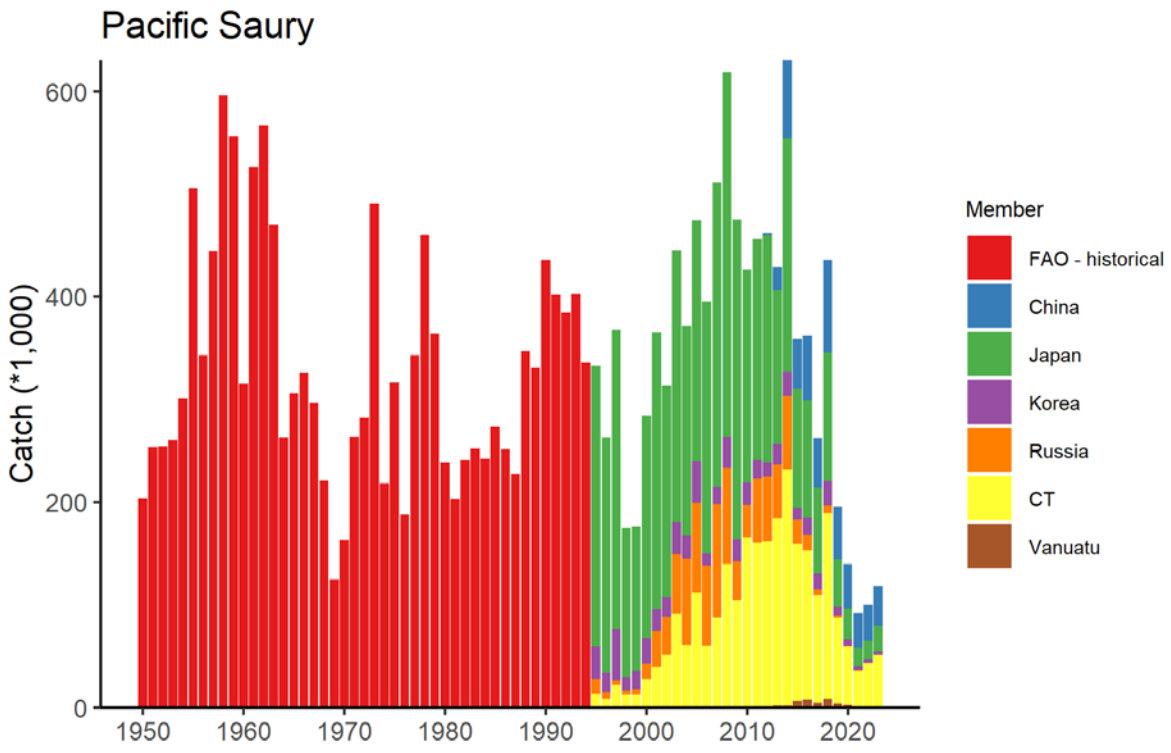


*Figure 3. Historical catch of Pacific Saury.*

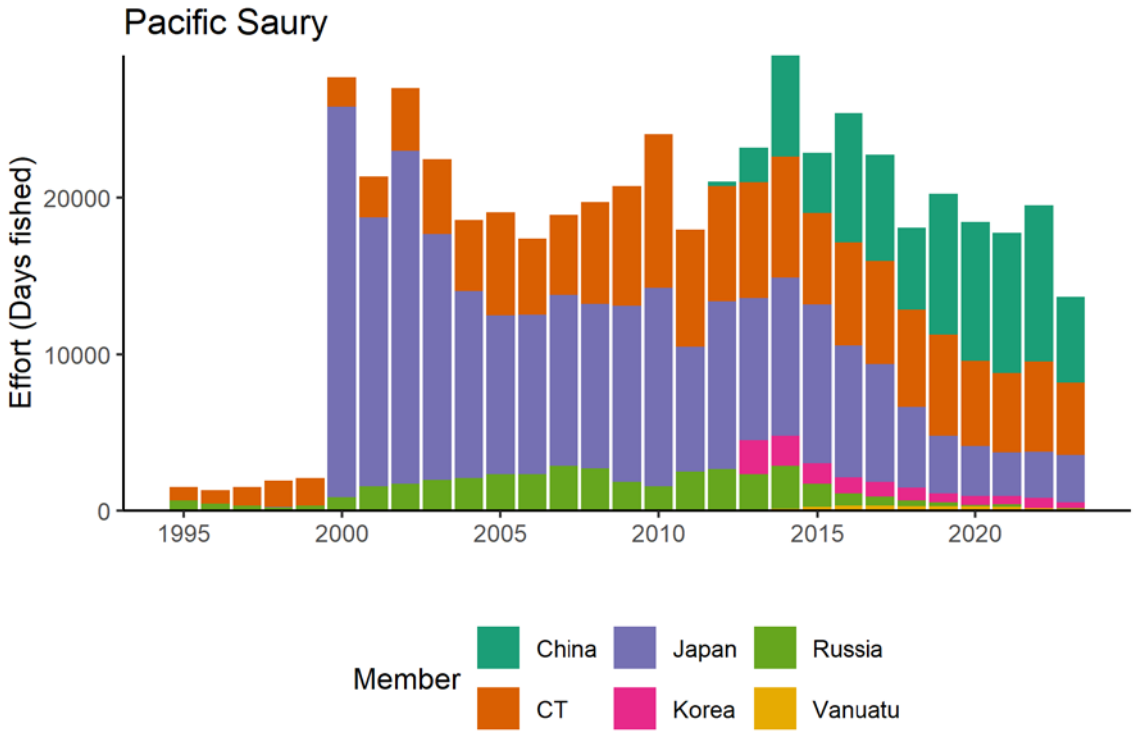


*Figure 4. Historical fishing effort for Pacific saury.*

*Biological collections*

All Members collect some size data from fishery catches of Pacific saury. These collections included length data as well as maturity and age structures from some Members.

Japan also collects length, weight, maturity and age data from the survey to support the stock assessment.

*Data availability from Members regarding Pacific Saury*

| Data | Source | Years | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Catch | China | 2013-present | Catches from convention area |
| | Japan | 1950-present | Japan<92>s time series of catch data are broken into Early (1980-1993) and Late (1994-2021) CPUE because of time-varying q in the early part of the time series |
| | Korea | 2001-present | |
| | Russia | 1994- | |

| Data | Source | Years | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | present | |
| | Chinese Taipei | 2001-present | |
| | Vanuatu | 2011-present | |
| CPUE | | | CPUE calculated individually by China, Japan, Korea, Russian, Chinese Taipei, and Vanuatu and as a joint CPUE |
| Survey | Japan | | Fishery-independent biomass survey |
| Length data | All Members | | Fishery-independent biomass survey (Japan), fishery data |
| | Japan | | Commercial catch |
| Maturity/fecundity | Japan | | Fishery-independent biomass survey |
| Age | Japan | | Fishery-independent biomass survey |

*Special Comments*

None

*Biological Information*
*Distribution*

Pacific saury (*Cololabis saira* Brevoort, 1856) has a wide distribution extending in the subarctic and subtropical North Pacific Ocean from inshore waters of Japan and the Kuril Islands to eastward to the Gulf of Alaska and southward to Mexico. Pacific saury is a commercially important fish in the western North Pacific Ocean (Parin 1968; Hubbs and Wisner 1980). In recent years, the age-0 fish have mainly been distributed in the eastern region east of 170°E in June and July.

*Life history*

Pacific saury are short-lived and fast growing. Based on analysis of daily otolith increments, Pacific saury reaches approximately 20 cm in knob length (distance from the tip of lower jaw to the posterior end of the muscular knob at the base of a caudal peduncle; hereafter called body length) in 6 or 7 months after hatching (Watanabe et al. 1988; Suyama et al. 1992). There is some variation in growth rate depending on the hatching month during this long spawning season (Kurita et al. 2004) and geographical differences (Suyama et al. 2012b). The maximum lifespan is 2 years (Suyama et al. 2006). The age 1 fish grow to over 27 cm in body length in June and July when

Japanese research surveys are conducted and reach over 29 cm in the fishing season between August and December (Suyama et al. 2006). The spawning season of Pacific saury is relatively long, beginning in September and ending in June of the following year (Watanabe and Lo 1989). Pacific saury spawns over a vast area from the Japanese coastal waters to eastern offshore waters (Baitaliuk et al. 2013). The main spawning grounds are considered to be located in the Kuroshio-Oyashio transition region in fall and spring and in the Kuroshio waters and the Kuroshio Extension waters in winter (Watanabe and Lo 1989). The minimum size of maturity of Pacific saury has been estimated at about 25 cm in the field (Hatanaka 1956) or rearing experiments (Nakaya et al. 2010). In rare cases, saury have been found to mature at 22 cm (Sugama 1957; Hotta 1960). Under rearing experiments, Pacific saury begins spawning 8 months after hatching, and spawning activity continues for about 3 months (Suyama et al. 2016). Batch fecundity is about 1,000 to 3,000 eggs (Kosaka 2000). Pacific saury is a highly migratory species that migrates extensively between the northern feeding grounds in the Oyashio waters around Hokkaido and the Kuril Islands in summer and the spawning areas in the Kuroshio waters off southern Japan in winter (Fukushima 1979; Kosaka 2000). Pacific saury in offshore regions (east of 160°E) also migrate westward toward the coast of Japan after October every year (Suyama et al. 2012a). Genetic evidence suggests there are no distinct stocks in the Pacific saury population based on 141 individuals collected from five distant locales (East China Sea, Sea of Okhotsk, northwest Pacific Ocean, central North Pacific Ocean, and northeast Pacific Ocean) (Chow et al. 2009). The Pacific saury larvae prey on the nauplii of copepods and other small-sized zooplankton. As they grow, they begin to prey on larger zooplankton such as krill (Odate 1977). The Pacific saury is preyed on by large fish ranked higher in the food chain, such as *Thunnus alalunga* (Nihira 1988) and coho salmon, *Oncorhynchus kisutsh* (Sato and Hirakawa 1976) as well as by animals such as minke whales *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* (Konishi et al. 2009) and sea birds (Ogi 1984).

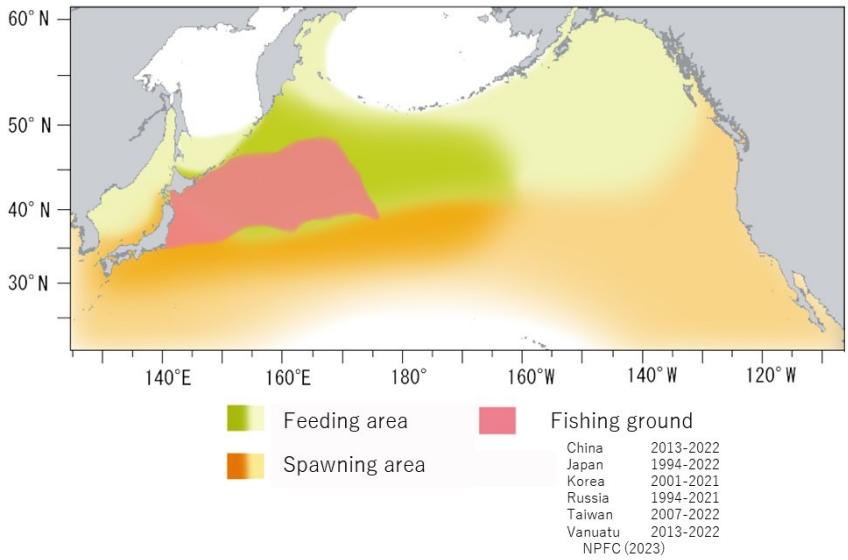


*Figure 5. Map of distribution of Pacific saury in the North Pacific.*

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**Annex M**

**Species summary for Japanese flying squid**

## Japanese Flying Squid (*Todarodes pacificus*)

**Common names:**

太平洋褶柔鱼 [tai ping yang zhe rou yu] (Chinese); Japanese flying squid (English); スルメイカ [surume-ika] (Japanese); 살오징어 [sal-o-jing-eo] (Korean); тихоокеанский кальмар [tihookeanskiy Kalmar] (Russian); 日本魷 [ri-ben-you] (Chinese Taipei).

Other common names: Japanese common squid, Pacific flying squid.

## Management

**Active NPFC Management Measures**

The following NPFC conservation and management measure pertains to this species:

CMM 2024-11 For Japanese Sardine, Neon Flying Squid and Japanese Flying Squid

Available from https://www.npfc.int/active-conservation-and-management-measures.

**Management Summary**

The current management measure for Japanese flying squid (JFS) does not specify catch or effort limits. The CMM states that Members and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties currently harvesting JFS should refrain from expansion of the number of fishing vessels authorized to fish JFS in the Convention Area. New harvest capacity should also be avoided until as stock assessment has been completed.

Japan has been conducted stock assessment annually for two stocks of JFS such as the autumn- and winter-spawning stocks since 1997. Japanese domestic total allowable catch (TAC) has been annually set for JFS based on acceptable biological catch (ABC) determined based on the stock assessment results.

Table 1. Management Summary

| Convention/Management Principle | Status | Comment/Consideration |
|---|---|---|
| Biological reference point(s) | 🔴 | Not established for NPFC CA (Established in Japan EEZ). |
| Stock status | ○ | Status determination criteria not established for NPFC CA (Established in Japan EEZ). |
| Catch limit | 🔴 | Not established for NPFC CA (Established in Japan EEZ). |
| Harvest control rule | 🔴 | Not established for NPFC CA (Established in Japan EEZ). |
| Other | | |

🟢 OK 🟡 Intermediate 🔴 Not accomplished ○ Unknown

## Stock Assessment

No stock assessment has been conducted by NPFC for the Convention Area.

Japan conducts annual stock assessments for the autumn-spawning stock and winter-spawning stock of JFS (Figure 1, Miyahara et al. 2024, Okamoto et al. 2024). The latest stock assessment for the winter-spawning stock in Japan included overseas catch from Russia, China and Korea (Fig. 1a). Estimated biomass and spawning stock biomass (SSB) have decreased drastically since 2015 (Fig. 1b). Japan uses a Beverton–Holt stock-recruitment relationship (Fig. 1c). In 2022, SSB was estimated lower than SSBmsy and F was lower than Fmsy (Fig. 1d).

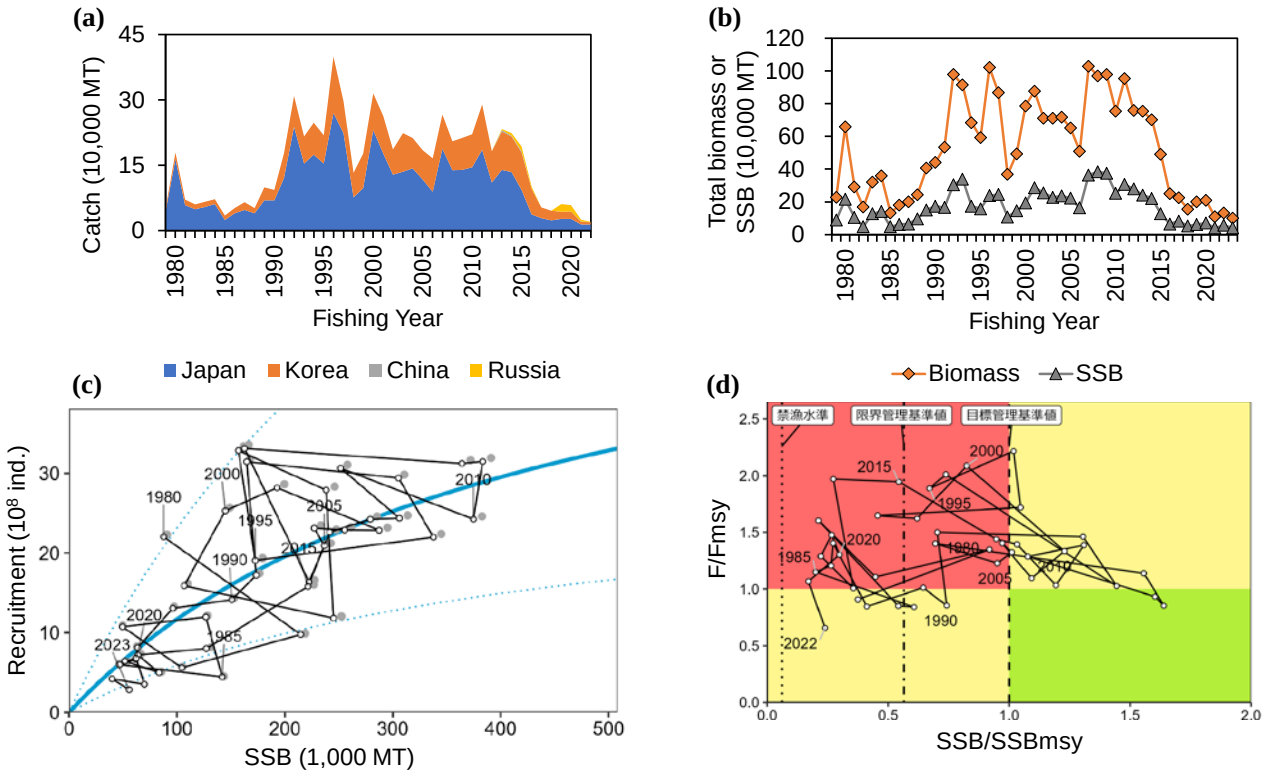


Figure 1. Summary of the stock assessment for the winter-spawning stock Japanese flying squid by Japan (Okamoto et al. 2024). (a) Time series of catch of each Member from fishing year 1979 to 2022. (b)Estimated biomass and SSB. (c) Stock-recruitment relationship. (d) Kobe plot.

## Data

### Survey

JFS are encountered in several surveys conducted by Japan and Russia. Japanese surveys encounter multiple life history stages of one or more seasonal stocks, including paralarvae (winter survey), recruits (May-June), and adults (July-September). Russia conducts a survey of JFS during their feeding migration into Krill Islands waters, this results in number and biomass estimated by area swept method for Krill Islands waters (annual, for winter stock only). While this survey captures only a portion of the stock so not fully representing stock biomass, it may help identify environmental impact on migration patterns, timing, etc.

### Fishery

The winter-spawning stock of JFS is harvested in the NPFC Convention Area (see Biological Information).

JFS are caught by Members in both the Convention Area and National Waters. Catch tables are available at the NPFC website (https://www.npfc.int/system/files/2023-04/NPFC-2023-AR-Annual%20Summary%20Footprint%20-%20Squids%20%28Rev.%201%29_0.xlsx). Catches of JFS in the Convention Area are low, less than 3% of total catches in each year, as the majority of

catches comes from Japanese and Russian national waters (Fig. 2). JFS are caught using a variety of gears, most commonly squid jigging and trawl, but purse seine and set net are also used. They are predominantly caught as a targeted species, not as bycatch in other fisheries. However, in some seasons, they can be caught as bycatch in the Japanese sardine fishery. Chinese fishing fleets do not target JFS but encounter them in low quantities as bycatch in other fisheries.

There is no fishery CPUE index developed for this species in the Convention Area. Japan has already developed fishery-dependent abundance indices of the winter spawning stock of JFS to use in the domestic stock assessment (Okamoto et al. 2016, 2024).

Age data are collected by port samplers from a subset of Japanese fishing ports and for several Japanese prefectural research bodies. The squid's statolith is used for counting daily ages and estimating hatching dates (Nakamura and Sakurai 1991).

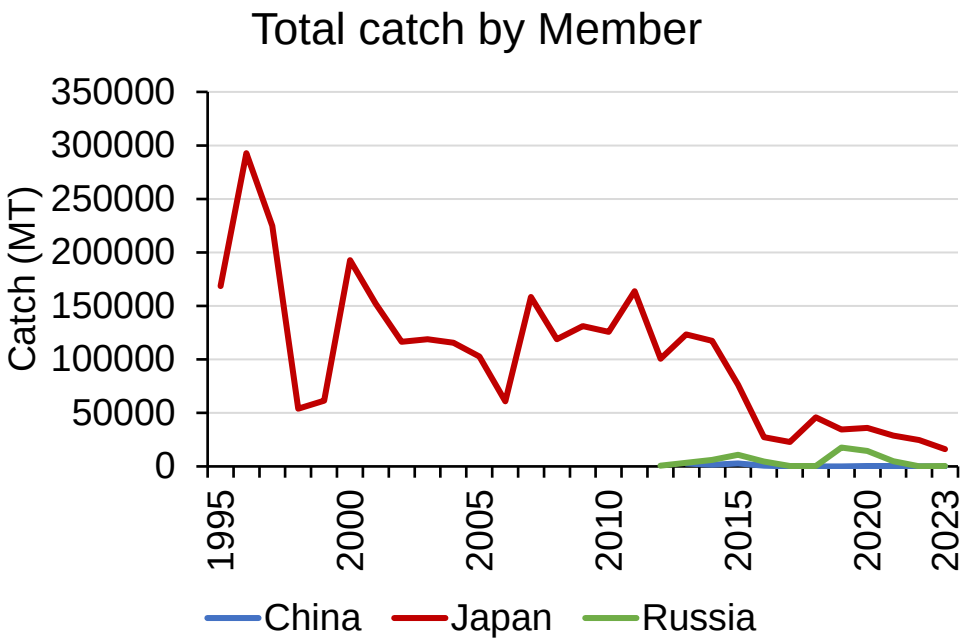


Figure 2. Total catch (MT) for each Member reporting Japanese flying squid catches during 1995-present.

**Data table**

Table 2. Data availability from Members regarding Japanese flying squid

Japanese flying squid: China*, Japan, Russia.

* No fishery targets Japanese flying squid. No relevant data.

| Category and data sources | Description | Years with available data | Average sample size/ year or data | Potential issues to be reviewed |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **coverage** | |
| **JAPAN** | | | | |
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |
| Coastal jigging fishery | Official statistics; Reports from fisheries associations and markets | 1979-2023 (only after 1995 at some ports) | Coverage = 100% | |
| Offshore jigging fishery | Logbook | 1979-2023 | Coverage = 100% | |
| Trawl fishery | Logbook | 1980-2023 | Coverage = 100% | |
| Purse seine fishery | Official statistics; Reports from fisheries associations and markets (only at Hachinohe and Mie); | 1995-2023 | Coverage = 100% | |
| Set net | Official statistics; Reports from fisheries association | 1995-2023 | Coverage = 100% | |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length measurements | Port sampling by eight local fisheries research bodies at major ports on the Pacific side | 1979-2023 | 3000-15000 fish/year (about 50 individuals measured per a single size sampling) | Data coverage in the eastern Hokkaido (Nemuro Strait) |
| Aging | Port sampling by three local fisheries associations and nine fisheries research bodies | 2012-2023 | 500-1200 fish/year | Data coverage in the eastern Hokkaido (Nemuro Strait) |
| **Abundance indices (survey)** | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Winter survey for larvae | BONGO net | 2001-2023 | 65-204 stations/year | Review survey protocol and conduct standardization |
| Survey for recruitment from May to June | Midwater trawl | 1996-2023 | 24-63 stations/year | Review survey protocol and conduct standardization |
| Survey for recruitment in June | Jigging | 1972-2023 | 25-83 stations/year | Review survey protocol and conduct standardization |
| Survey for recruitment from June to July | Midwater trawl mainly targeting saury | 2001-2023 | 33-136 stations/year | Review survey protocol and conduct standardization |
| Survey for recruitment in July | Midwater trawl | 2019-2023 | 20-40 stations/year | Short time series (five years) and ended in 2023 |
| Survey for recruitment in August | Jigging | 1979-2023 | 28-66 stations/year | Review survey protocol and conduct standardization |
| **Abundance indices (commercial)** | | | | |
| Coastal jigging fishery | Monthly catch and effort data reported by fisheries associations and markets in the seven major regions during fishing season from July to December;<br>Standardized CPUE for domestic stock assessment | 1979-2023 | 25-37 observations/year | |

| Category and data sources | Description | Years with available data | Average sample size/year or data coverage | Potential issues to be reviewed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **RUSSIA** | | | | |
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |
| Jigging fishery | Official statistics, reports from fisheries associations | Official statistics: 1964-1970, 2013-2023, 1971-2012 (no data available); publications: 1967-2018 | Coverage 1964-1970 ?%; Coverage 2013-2023 =100% | Data coverage details to be reviewed |
| Midwater trawl fishery | | | | |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length measurements | Sampling from commercial fishing vessels.<br>Sampling during research surveys. | 1966-1975<br>1992-2023 | 500-3,000 squids /year (ca. 50 measurements per sampling) | Data coverage details to be reviewed |
| Aging | - | - | - | - |
| **Abundance indices (survey)** | | | | |
| Summer trawl and acoustic (echo integration) surveys to assess pelagic squids abundance | Mid-water upper epipelagic surveys | 1992-2023 (June-July)<br>1992-2023 (July-August) | 60-80 stations/year<br>60-80 stations/year | Changes in abundance and migration patterns; development survey protocol and conduct standardization |

# Biological Information

## Distribution and migration

JFS are distributed mainly in the northwest Pacific (Figs 3 and 4) and their northward/southward shifts in distribution range occur in response to changes in water temperature (Murata 1990, Sakurai et al. 2013). JFS extent their distribution up to 50° N in September. There are northmost (eastmost) and southmost occurrences recorded in Canada and Hong Kong, respectively (Jereb and Roper 2010,

Okutani 2015).

The autumn- and winter-spawning stocks have spatially different nursery areas and migration patterns (Fig. 4). The winter-spawning stock has the nursery area east of Hokkaido and Tohoku regions of Japan, of which a part overlaps the NPFC Convention Area. Both stocks conduct southward migration towards each spawning ground. The main spawning grounds of the autumn-spawning stock are off the northwestern Honshu Island to north of the East China Sea (Fig. 3, Goto 2002, Yamamoto et al. 2002), while those of the winter-spawning stock are in the East China Sea (Okutani and Watanabe 1983, Bower et al. 1999).

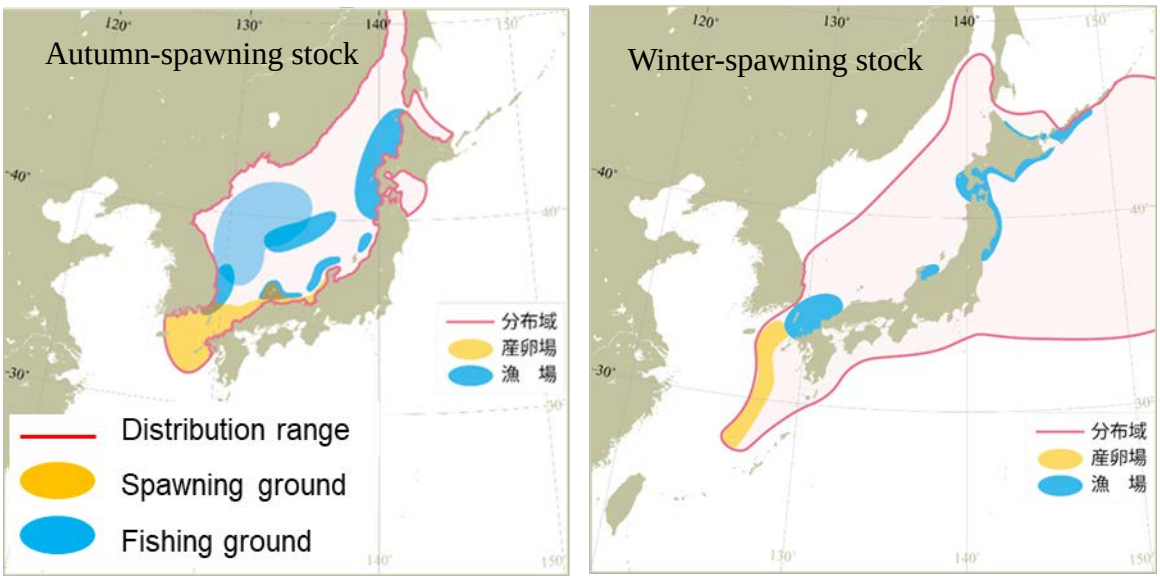


Figure 3. Distribution ranges, spawning grounds, and fishing grounds of the autumn- and winter-spawning stocks. These figures were modified based on Miyahara et al. (2024) and Okamoto et al. (2024).

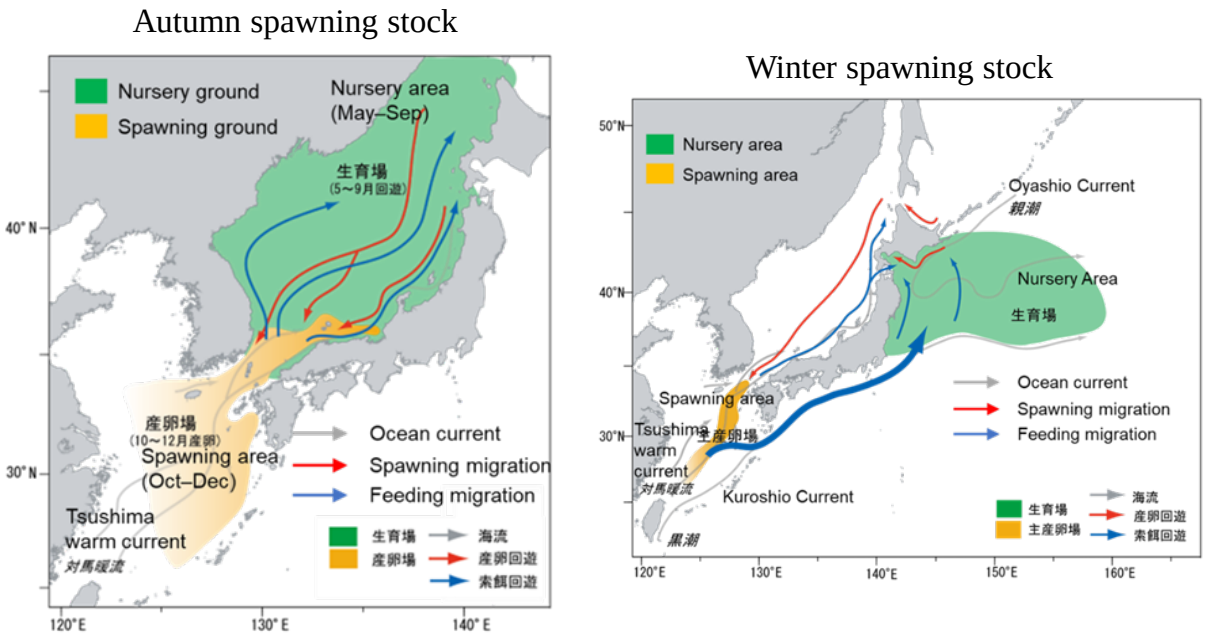


Figure 4. Seasonal migration of the autumn- and winter-spawning stocks. These figures were modified based on Miyahara et al. (2024) and Okamoto et al. (2024).

**Stock Structure**

There are distinct sub-populations (stocks) which spawn during different seasons (Murata 1990, Sakurai et al. 2013). The autumn-spawning stock is most abundance, followed by the winter-spawning stock which is distributed in the waters off eastern Japan Oyashio region (Sakurai et al. 2013, Miyahara et al. 2024, Okamoto et al. 2024). There is, in addition, minor stock of spring/summer spawned squid.

**Life history**

Maximum size thought to be 50 cm (mantle length) for females, smaller for males (Jereb and Roper 2010), but both are generally less than 30 cm (Murata 1990, Sakurai et al. 2013). Females are thought to mature around 20-25 cm (mantle length). The JFS lifespan is approximately one year (Murata 1990, Sugawara et al. 2013). Mature female JFS spawns a large egg mass at a time which contains up to 200,000 eggs and is considered to float above the thermocline (Bower et al. 1996, Sakurai et al. 2000, Puneeta et al. 2015). After the paralarvae hatches from the egg, they will swim to the sea surface and are transported to their nursery areas by ocean currents (Fig. 4, Kon et al. 2006, Sakurai et al. 2013). JFS prey on myctophids, anchovies, crustaceans, gastropod larvae, and chaetognaths, and are preyed upon by rays and several marine mammals (Jereb and Roper 2010, Uchikawa and Kidokoro 2013).

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**Annex N**

**Species summary for Japanese sardine**

# Japanese sardine (*Sardinops melanostictus*)

**Common names:**

拟沙丁鱼, Ni Sha Ding Yu (China)

マイワシ, Maiwashi (Japan)

정어리, Jeong-eoli (Korea)

Дальневосточная сардина (Russia)
遠東擬沙丁魚, Yuan-Dong-Ni-Sha-Ding-Yu (Chinese Taipei)

*Figure 1. Japanese Sardine (Sardinops melanostictus).*

**Management**

**Active NPFC Management Measures**

The following NPFC conservation and management measure (CMM) pertains to this species:

- CMM 2024-11 For Japanese Sardine, Neon Flying Squid and Japanese Flying Squid

Available from https://www.npfc.int/active-conservation-and-management-measures

**Management Summary**

The current management measure for Japanese Sardine does not specify catch or effort limits. The CMM states that Members and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties currently harvesting Japanese Sardine should refrain from expansion of the number of fishing vessels authorized to fish Japanese Sardine in the Convention Area. New harvest capacity should also be avoided until as stock assessment has been completed.

A stock assessment for Japanese Sardine is conducted by Japan within their EEZ and used for management of the domestic fishery.

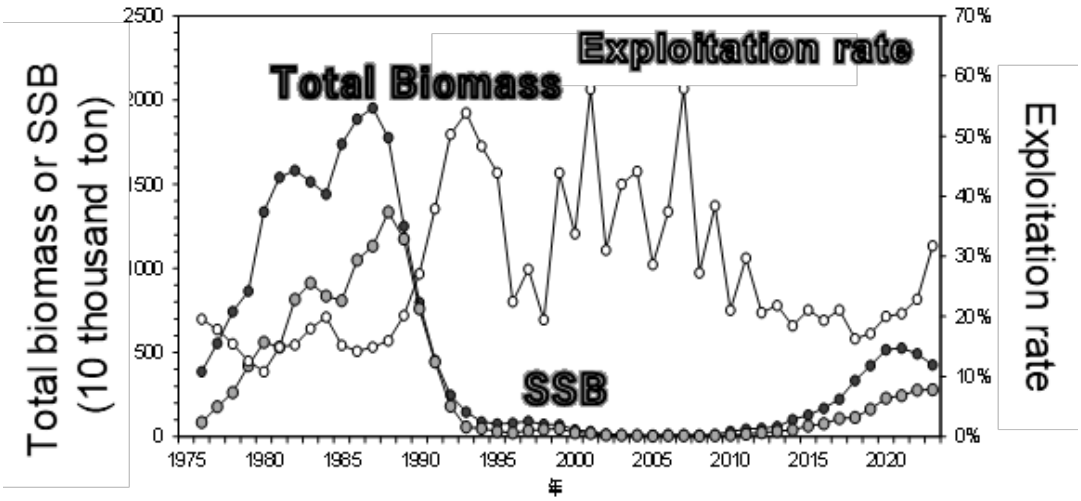
*Table 1. Current status of NPFC management measures*

| Convention or Management Principle | Status | Comment or Consideration |
|---|---|---|
| Biological reference point(s) | Not accomplished | Not established for NPFC CA (Established in Japan EEZ) |
| Stock status | Unknown | Status determination criteria not established for NPFC CA (Established in Japan EEZ) |
| Catch limit | Intermediate | Not established for NPFC CA (Recommended catch, effort limits in Japan EEZ) |
| Harvest control rule | Not accomplished | Not established for NPFC CA (Established in Japan EEZ) |
| Other | Intermediate | No expansion of fishing beyond currently fished areas |

**Assessment**

There is currently no stock assessment for Japanese Sardine conducted by NPFC for the Convention Area.

Japan conducts an assessment of the Japanese Sardine stock using ridge VPA and a number of data sources described below (Hiroshi and Nishida 2005). The catch and biomass estimated by Japan's stock assessment have both been increasing since 2010 (Figure 3). The spawning stock biomass is currently estimated to be higher than $SSB_{msy}$, but fishing mortality is higher than $F_{msy}$ indicating overfishing in the most recent 3 years (Figure 3). Japan's stock domestic assessment includes catch data from the NPFC CA by China and Russia. Information on the size, weight and age of the catch from the NPFC CA would be useful if it were made available for Japan's stock assessment.



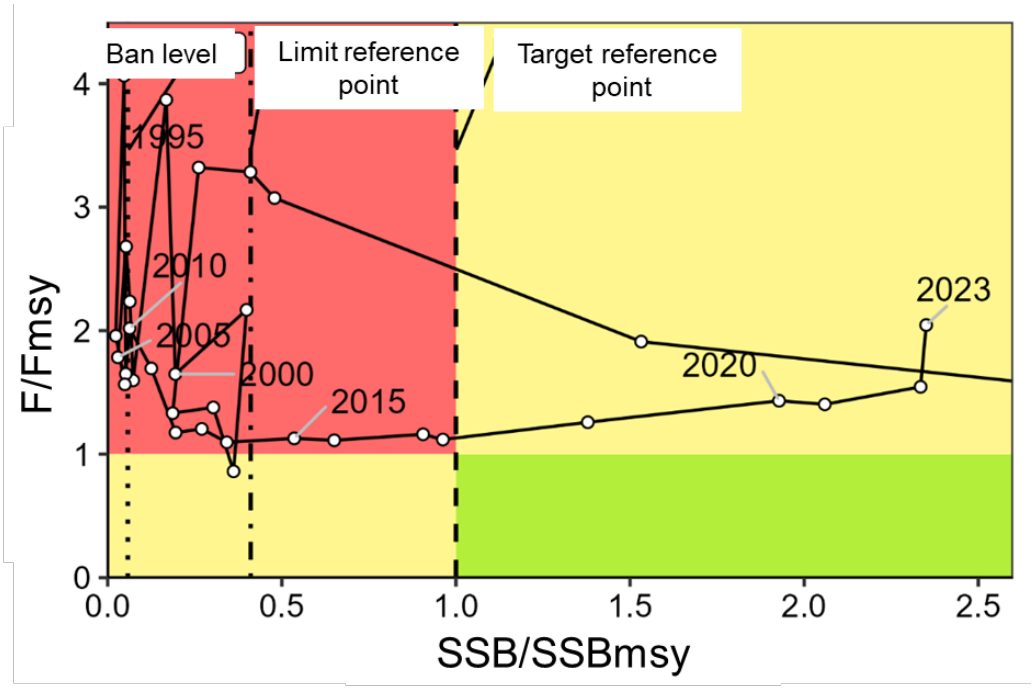



*Figure 3. Time series of catch by age in the Japanese Sardine fishery and time series of spawning stock biomass, total biomass and exploitation rate from the domestic Japanese Sardine stock assessment (top panels). Kobe plot indicating historical and current status of Japanese sardine in relation to MSY-based reference points (reprinted from Japan's domestic stock assessment of Japanese Sardine (bottom panel).*

**Data**

**Surveys**

Japan conducts three surveys that estimate recruitment for a number of pelagic species, including Japanese Sardine (Table 2). The surveys target pre-recruits and juveniles to determine an index of recruitment. Japan also conducts a monthly egg and larval survey that is used to estimate spawning stock biomass. Surveys are conducted in spring (1995-2024), summer (2001-2024) and fall (2005-2024) at 30-80 stations per year. The survey protocol can be found at (Oozeki et al. 2007). Russia has conducted a summertime acoustic-trawl survey since 2010 that examines mid-water and upper epipelagic species including Japanese Sardine. China has been conducting a scientific survey using its fishery research vessel Song Hang in the convention area of NPFC since 2021. The survey is conducted during June-August, with methods of mid-trawling, acoustic and squid jigging, covering about 70 stations per year.

**Fishery**

China, Japan and Russia catch Japanese sardine. China does not target the species, but it is captured as bycatch in other fisheries (e.g. chub mackerel). Catches are primarily by purse seine, with a smaller component of the catch taken by pelagic trawl. China's catch of Japanese Sardine is taken exclusively from the Convention Area from April to December. China's existing catch records are from 2016 to 2024 and show increasing catches during that time period as the stock

may have been increasing. The historical catches (prior to 2016) are unknown, thought to be low and likely need to be confirmed.

Japan's fishery for Japanese Sardine occurs inside their EEZ and is mostly conducted by large purse seine vessels (>90% of the catch). Additional components of the fishery include set nets, dip nets and other gears. The fishery experienced very high catches in the 1980's and early 1990's, a decline to very low catches from 1995 to ~2010 and has been recovering since then. The fishery is conducted year round, but mainly during the summer season.

The Russian fishery occurs inside their EEZ and is prosecuted primarily by pelagic trawling (>90% of the catch), with a smaller component of the catch coming from purse seines. The success of Russian fishery depends on the migration patterns and overall abundance of Japanese Sardine, as the sardine move into Russian waters when their abundance is high. For this reason, there was no catch from 1994-2011 when the stock abundance was low, but in recent years (since 2016) as the stock has recovered and water temperatures have been warm there have been increasing catches in Russia. The Russian fishery occurs primarily from June to November.

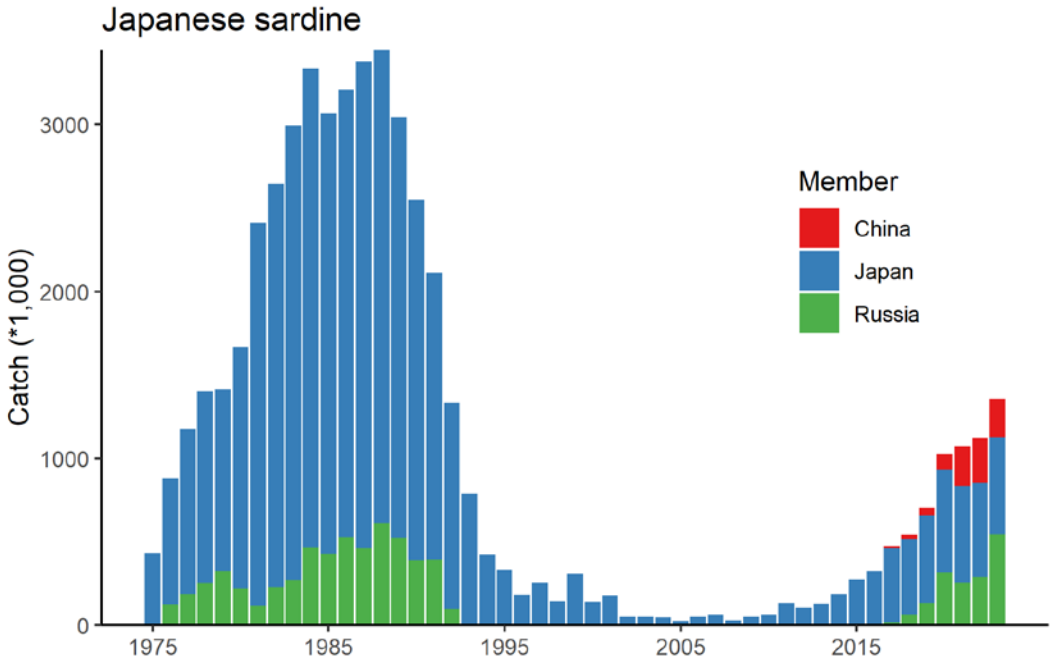



*Figure 4. Historical catch of Japanese Sardine by Members in both the CA and inside Members EEZs.*

Other NPFC Members (Canada, EU, Korea, Chinese Taipei, USA and Vanuatu) do not target Japanese Sardine. Chinese Taipei has some historical records of Japanese Sardine bycatch in the Pacific Saury fishery (~100 mt) and Korea has a small amount of historical bycatch data from the bottom trawl fishery. Vanuatu, USA, EU and Canada have no record of Japanese Sardine catches. However, there have been recent (since 2022) occurrences of Japanese Sardine along the USA west coast.

Fishery catch data is available for Members from the NPFC website (https://www.npfc.int/system/files/2024-04/NPFC-2024-AR-Annual%20Summary%20Footprint%20-%20Japanese%20Sardine.xlsx) since 2001. Prior years fishery catch data was downloaded from FAO data collections at https://www.openfisheries.org using rfisheries package (Karthik Ram, Carl Boettiger, and Dyck 2013).

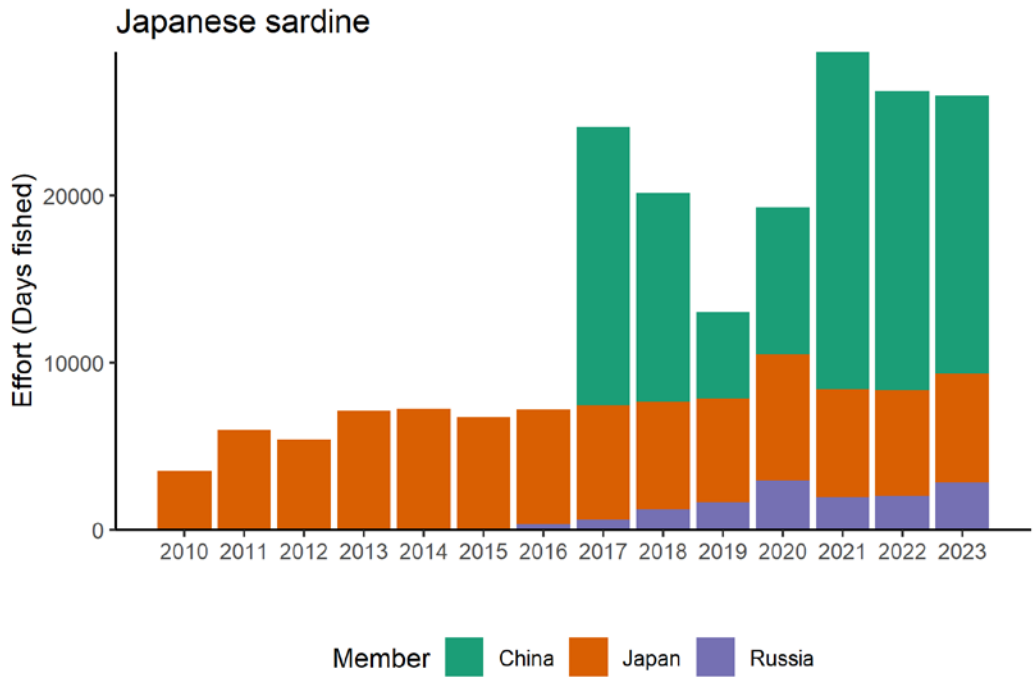



*Figure 5. Historical fishing effort for Japanese Sardine.*

**Biological collections**

China has collected biological data from fishery catches of Japanese Sardine since 2020. These collections included length data as well as maturity and age structures.

Russia collects length and weight data, age structures (scales) and maturity data from both commercial catches and surveys.

Japan also collects length, weight, maturity and age data from the survey and fishery to support their stock assessment.

*Data availability from Members regarding Japanese sardine*

| Data | Source | Years | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Catch | China | 2015-present | Catches from convention area |
| | Japan | 1995-present | Historical catch data from 1968 available, catches in national waters |
| | Korea | | Minor bycatch in bottom trawl fishery |
| | Russia | 2016-present | Catches primarily in national waters, not convention area |
| | Chinese | | Minor bycatch in Pacific saury fishery |

| Data | Source | Years | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Taipei | | |
| CPUE | | | not developed |
| Survey | Japan | | Pre-recruit survey |
| | Japan | | Juvenile survey |
| | Japan | | Monthly egg and larval survey |
| | Russia | 2010-present | Acoustic-trawl survey |
| | China | 2021-present | Midwater trawling and acoustics |
| Age data | China | 2020-present | Commercial catch |
| | Japan | | Commercial and survey catches |
| | Russia | | Commercial and survey catches |
| Length data | China | 2020-present | Commercial catch |
| | Japan | | Commercial and survey catches |
| | Russia | | Commercial and survey catches |
| Maturity/fecundity | China | 2020-present | Commercial catch |
| | Japan | | Commercial and survey catches |
| | Russia | | Commercial and survey catches |

**Special Comments**

None

**Biological Information**

**Distribution**

Japanese sardine (*Sardinops melanostichtus*; Figure 1) are a pelagic species that occurs in large migratory schools in the coastal waters of China, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea and Russia (Figure 4, (Kaschner et al. 2019)). They generally migrate from the south to the north during summer, returning to inshore areas in the south to spawn in the winter. Japanese sardine feed mainly on zooplankton and phytoplankton.

**Life history**

Japanese sardine are short-lived and fast growing, maturing early at 2-years old. Their maximum length is ~24 cm (Whitehead 1985) and their maximum age is 7 years (Furuichi et al, 2024). Their growth rates and spawning patterns are highly influenced by the environment (Niino et al. 2021) Taxonomically, the Japanese sardine are closely related to other species around the globe including Sardinops from southern Africa, Australia, South America and California.

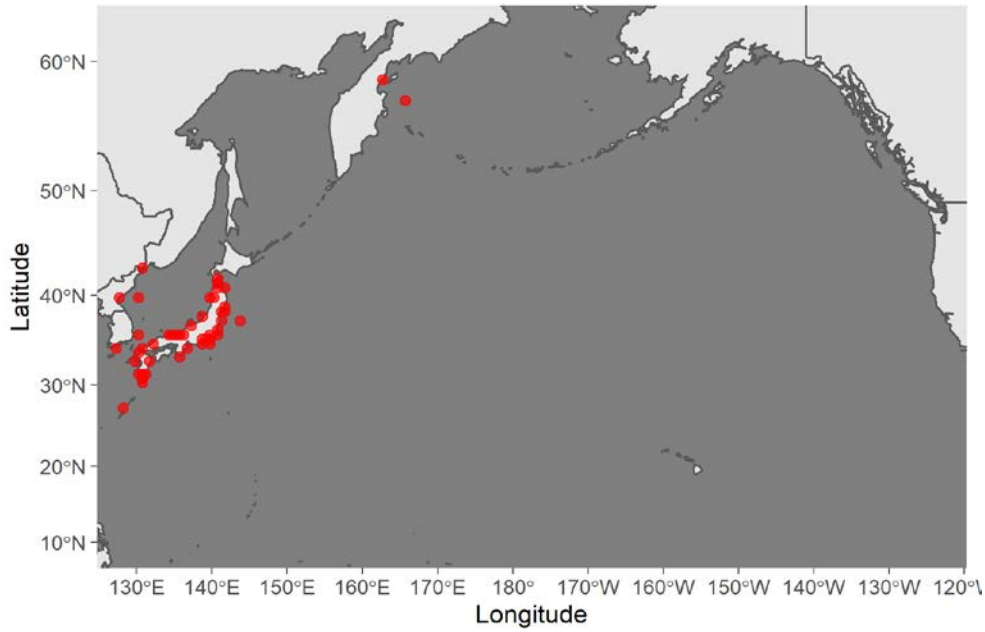



*Figure 4. Map of distribution of Sardine species in the North Pacific.*

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## Appendix: Sardine and the environment

*Studies examining the relationship between Japanese sardine and the environment*

| Reference | Year | Type | Country | Ocean | Region | Species | Life stage | Parameter | Environmental variables | Effect | Method |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kodama, T, Wagawa T, Ohshimo S, Morimoto H, Iguchi N, Fukudome KI, Goto T, Takahashi T, Yasuda T. 2018. Improvement in Recruitment of Japanese Sardine with Delays of the Spring Phytoplankton Bloom in the Sea of Japan. Fisheries Oceanography 27 (4): 289–301. https://doi.org/10.1111/fog.12252. | 2018 | journal paper | Japan | Pacific | Sea of Japan | Japanese sardine | Larvae | Recruitment | Sea surface chlorophyl a | delay in start and end dates of spring bloom were positively correlated with recruitment | Correlation, empirical orthoganal function |
| Yasuda, Tohya, Satoshi Kitajima, Akira Hayashi, Motomitsu Takahashi, and Masaaki Fukuwaka. 2021. “Cold Offshore Area Provides a Favorable Feeding Ground with Lipid-Rich Foods for Juvenile Japanese Sardine.” Fisheries Oceanography, no. January: 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1111/fog.12530. | 2021 | journal paper | Japan | Pacific | Sea of Japan | Japanese sardine | juvenile | Body condition | Prey species and temperature | higher condition in offshore distributed fish due to lower temperature and higher lipid content prey | correlation |
| Nishikawa, Haruka. 2019. “Relationship between Recruitment of Japanese Sardine (Sardinops Melanostictus) and Environment of Larval Habitat in the Low-Stock Period (1995–2010).” Fisheries Oceanography 28 (2): 131–42. https://doi.org/10.1111/fog.12397. | 2019 | journal paper | Japan | Pacific | Kuoshio current | Japanese sardine | Larvae | Recruitment | water temperature and larval drift | warmer temperature related to lower recruitment | correlation |
| Niino, Yohei, Sho Furuichi, Yasuhiro Kamimura, and Ryuji Yukami. 2021. “Spatiotemporal Spawning Patterns and Early Growth of Japanese Sardine in the Western North Pacific during the Recent Stock Increase.” Fisheries Oceanography, no. April: 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1111/fog.12542. | 2021 | journal paper | Japan | Pacific | Kuoshio current | Japanese sardine | Larvae | growth | spawning distribution and timing (temperature) | early spawning in eastern area contributed to higher recruitment during time of increasing | correlation |

| Reference | Year | Type | Country | Ocean | Region | Species | Life stage | Parameter | Environmental variables | Effect | Method |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | sardine biomass | |
| Muko, Soyoka, Seiji Ohshimo, Hiroyuki Kurota, Tohya Yasuda, and Masa Aki Fukuwaka. 2018. "Long-Term Change in the Distribution of Japanese Sardine in the Sea of Japan during Population Fluctuations." Marine Ecology Progress Series 593: 141–54. https://doi.org/10.3354/meps12491. | 2018 | journal paper | Japan | Pacific | Sea of Japan | Japanese sardine | Adult | Distribution (SDM) | sea surface temperature | dome shaped relationship between sea surface temperature and the probability of presence, with peak between 10-20 C | generalized additive models |
| Sogawa, Sayaka, Kiyotaka Hidaka, Yasuhiro Kamimura, Masanori Takahashi, Hiroaki Saito, Yuji Okazaki, Yugo Shimizu, and Takashi Setou. 2019. "Environmental Characteristics of Spawning and Nursery Grounds of Japanese Sardine and Mackerels in the Kuroshio and Kuroshio Extension Area." Fisheries Oceanography 28 (4): 454–67. https://doi.org/10.1111/fog.12423. | 2019 | journal paper | Japan | Pacific | Kuoshio current | Japanese sardine | Egg | Distribution | water temperature, larval drift, zooplankton | little variability in environment where eggs were found, copepod community structure was important | correlation |
| Kuroda, Hiroshi, Toshihiko Saito, Toshiki Kaga, Akinori Takasuka, Yasuhiro Kamimura, Sho Furuichi, and Takuya Nakanowatari. 2020. "Unconventional Sea Surface Temperature Regime Around Japan in the 2000s–2010s: Potential Influences on Major Fisheries Resources." Frontiers in Marine Science 7 (October): 1–21. https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2020.574904. | 2020 | journal paper | Japan | Pacific | Pacific | Japanese sardine | Adult | Recruitment | PDO, SST | spawning was earlier during SST increases | correlation |
| Ma, Shuyang, Yongjun Tian, Caihong Fu, Haiqing Yu, Jianchao Li, Yang Liu, | 2020 | journal | China | Pacific | Kuoshio | Japanese | Adult | Abundance/Catch | Basin scale climate | Climate variability | time series analyses |

| Reference | Year | Type | Country | Ocean | Region | Species | Life stage | Parameter | Environmental variables | Effect | Method |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jiahua Cheng, Rong Wan, and Yoshiro Watanabe. 2021. “Climate-Induced Nonlinearity in Pelagic Communities and Non-Stationary Relationships with Physical Drivers in the Kuroshio Ecosystem.” Fish and Fisheries 22 (1): 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1111/faf.12502. | | paper | | | current | sardine | | | (ALPI, SST, Current patterns) | introduced nonlinearity and nonstationarity to pelagic fish | |
| Kurota, Hiroyuki, Cody S. Szuwalski, and Momoko Ichinokawa. 2020. “Drivers of Recruitment Dynamics in Japanese Major Fisheries Resources: Effects of Environmental Conditions and Spawner Abundance.” Fisheries Research 221 (September 2019): 105353. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2019.105353. | 2020 | journal paper | Japan | Pacific | Pacific | Japanese sardine | Adult | Recruitment | "Environment" other than SSB | Regime shifts were detected in pelagic species | time series analyses, change point analysis |
| Furuichi, Sho, Tohya Yasuda, Hiroyuki Kurota, Mari Yoda, Kei Suzuki, Motomitsu Takahashi, and Masa Aki Fukuwaka. 2020. “Disentangling the Effects of Climate and Density-Dependent Factors on Spatiotemporal Dynamics of Japanese Sardine Spawning.” Marine Ecology Progress Series 633: 157–68. https://doi.org/10.3354/meps13169. | 2020 | journal paper | Japan | Pacific | Sea of Japan | Japanese sardine | Egg | Abundance and distribution | SST | Cold water led to decreased egg abundance over larger area, warm temperatures led to earlier spawning | correlation |
| Okazaki, Yuji, Kazuaki Tadokoro, Hiroshi Kubota, Yasuhiro Kamimura, and Kiyotaka Hidaka. 2019. “Dietary Overlap and Optimal Prey Environments of Larval and Juvenile Sardine and Anchovy in the Mixed Water Region of the Western North Pacific.” Marine Ecology Progress Series 630: 149–60. https://doi.org/10.3354/meps13124. | 2019 | journal paper | Japan | Pacific | Kuoshio current | | larvae and juvenile | prey habits | SST | Temperature influences abundance of prey with effect on recruitment | correlation |

**Annex O**

**Species summary for blue mackerel**

## Blue mackerel (*Scomber australasicus*)

澳洲鮐 [ao-zhou-tai] (Chinese), ゴマサバ [gomasaba] (Japanese), 망치고등어 [Mang-chi-go-deung-eo] (Korean), пятнистая скумбрия [pyatnistaya skumbriya] (Russian), 花腹鯖 [Hua-Fu-Ching] (Chinese Taipei)
Other common names: Spotted mackerel

*Management*
*Active NPFC Management Measures*
None

*Management Summary*

- ✓ Conservation and Management Measure has not been set for blue mackerel in the NPFC.
- ✓ In Japan, total allowable catch (TAC) has been introduced to management of mackerels (blue mackerel and chub mackerel) since 1997.

| Convention/Management Principle | Status | Comment/Consideration |
|---|---|---|
| Biological reference point(s) | 🔴 | Not established. |
| Stock status | ○ | Status determination criteria not established. |
| Catch limit | 🟡 | Not established for NPFC CA (Established in Japan EEZ) |
| Harvest control rule | 🔴 | Not established. |
| Other | 🟡 | No expansion of fishing beyond established areas. |

🟢 OK 🟡 Intermediate 🔴 Not accomplished ○ Unknown

*Stock Assessment*

No stock assessment has been conducted by NPFC.

Japan conducts stock assessments on the Pacific stock and the East China Sea stock of blue mackerel (BM) using tuned virtual population analysis (VPA) and MSY-based reference points (Yukami et al. 2019a, Hayashi et al. 2019). Only the Pacific stock is distributed in the NPFC convention area. The latest stock assessment in Japan included overseas catch from China under a few assumptions on the compositions of mackerel species and ages (Fig. 1a). The Russian catch was excluded from the stock assessment, as there was no blue mackerel catch reported by Russia. Estimated recruitment, biomass, and spawning stock biomass (SSB) drastically decreased since the 2010s (Fig. 1b). A Ricker-type stock-recruitment curve was applied. In the most recent year (2022), spawning stock biomass (SSB) was estimated lower than SSBmsy and F was higher than Fmsy (Fig. 1d).

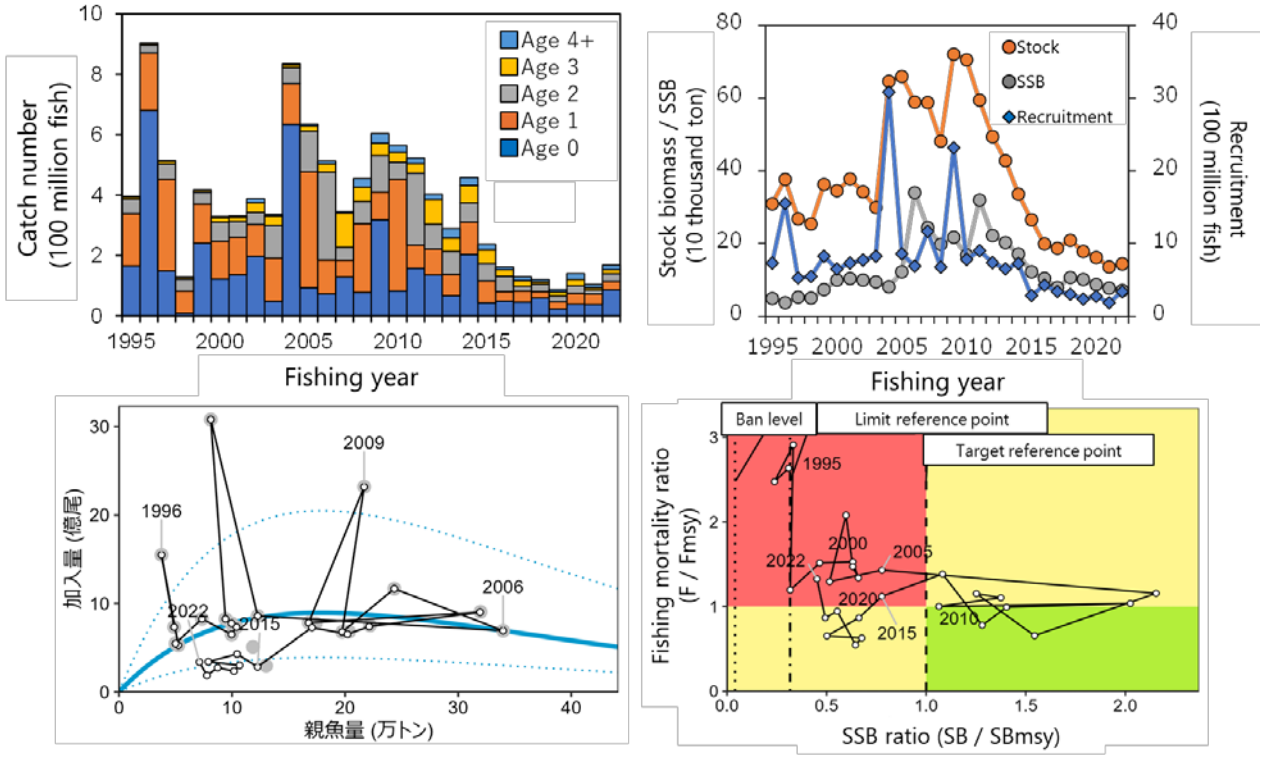


Figure 1: Summary of the stock assessment for the Pacific stock of BM in Japan (Kamimura et al. 2024). (a) Time series of catch number by age. (b) Estimated biomass, SSB, and recruitment. (c) Stock-recruitment relationship. (d) Kobe plot.

*Data*

*Survey*

Japan conducts three surveys: (1) egg and larval distribution survey (every month), (2) juvenile survey (May-Jul from 2001), and (3) pre-recruit fish survey (Aug-Oct from 2001). The egg survey has been used as an abundance index for SSB in the Japan's domestic stock assessment (Figs. 2,

3). Other members do not conduct any survey on blue mackerel.

China has been conducting scientific survey using its fishery research vessel Song Hang in the convention area of NPFC since 2021. The survey is conducted during June-August, with methods of mid-trawling, acoustic and squid jigging, covering about 70 stations per year.

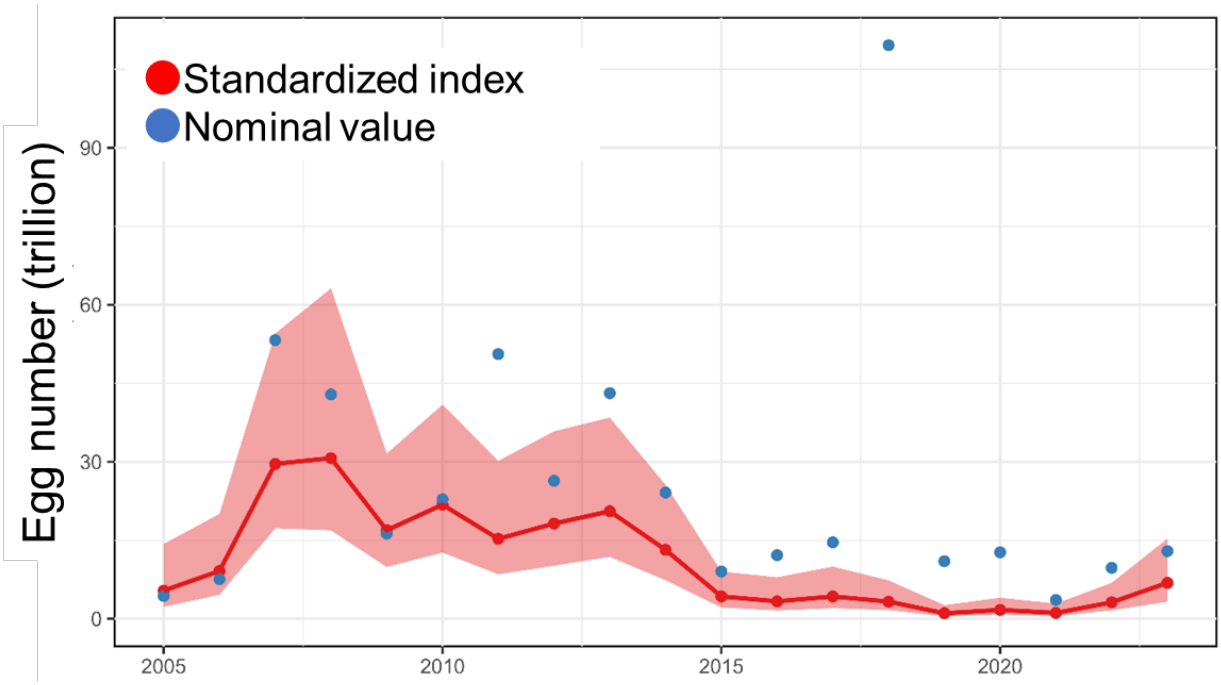


Figure 2: Time series of egg abundance indices. Nominal index and standardized index are shown. This standardization incorporates the effect of species misidentification of chub mackerel as blue mackerel, which is a reason why standardized values are lower than nominal values in most years typically 2018. See Kanamori et al. (2021) for details.

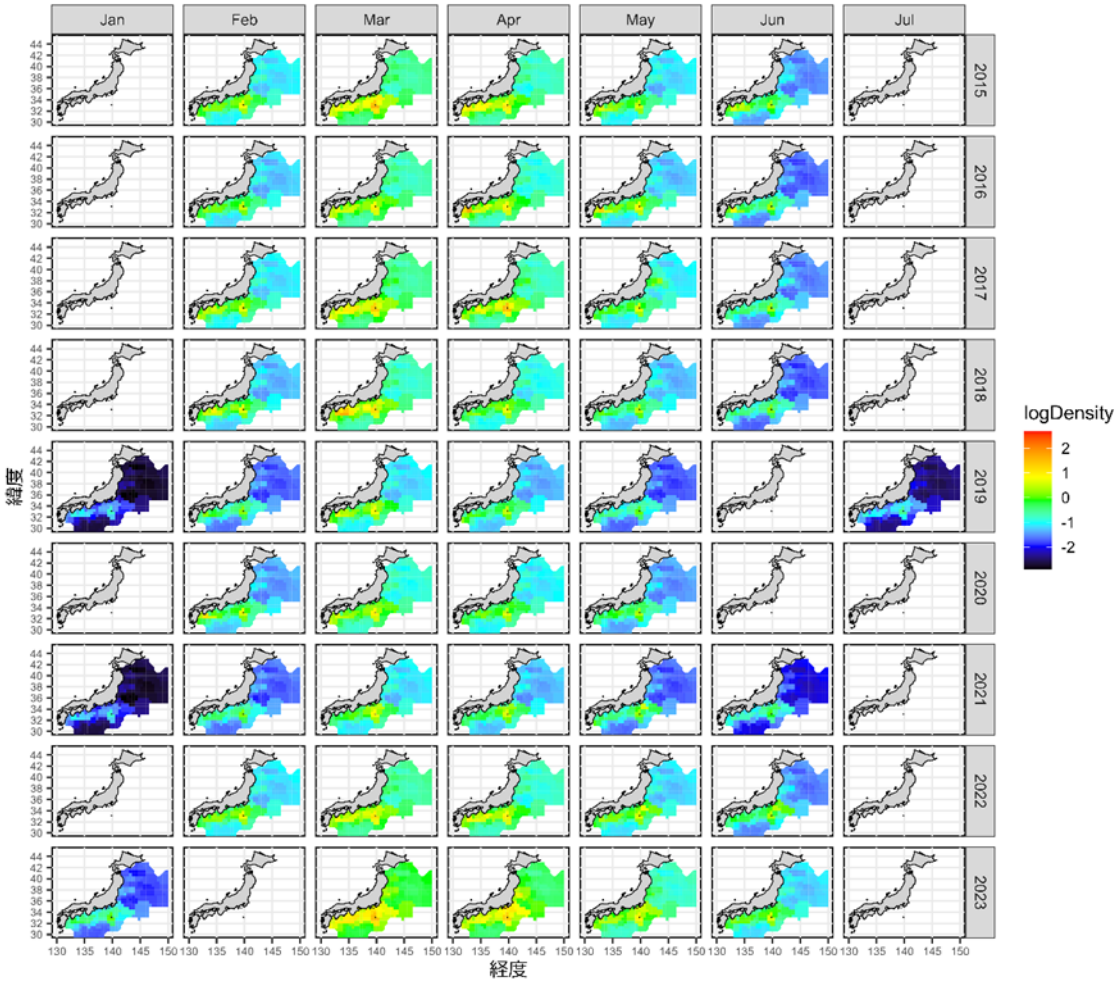


Figure 3: Spatial distributions of blue mackerel eggs on the Pacific coast of Japan by month (column) by year (row), estimated from the seasonal VAST model (Thorson et al. 2020) with the egg survey data. The sign of X in red represents the center of gravity.

*Fishery*

The fishing grounds of Japanese fisheries are located in the water on continental shelves and slopes, around water of Islands within Japan's EEZ. The primary fishing gears of Japan are purse-seine (large-scale >40GRT and small-scale <40GRT vessels), set net and dip net. In the 1980s, blue mackerel were caught mostly by dip net. From the 1990s, large- and small-scale purse-seine fisheries dominated the catch. The blue mackerel catch has decreased since the 2010s (Fig. 4). Chub and blue mackerels are caught together by the fisheries and summed together as "mackerels" in fishery statistics of Japan. The blue mackerel catch was estimated from the mixing ratio survey of landing. Japan conducts the identification of each species by external form; blue mackerel has clear black spots on both sides of body, and the interval between splines of first dorsal fin of blue mackerel is narrower than that of chub mackerel. The proportion of blue mackerel catch in the total mackerel catch was around 10% from 2016 to 2021, although the

proportion of blue mackerel was 26% in 2022.
China operates a blue mackerel fishery in the NPFC Convention Area only, on the same fishing grounds as for chub mackerel. China takes samples to determine the composition of mackerel species in the catch and collects biological information.
In Russia, there are no accurate catch statistics on the proportion of blue and chub mackerels. However, the portion of blue mackerel is very small and probably comprises less than 1% of the total mackerel catch by Russia.

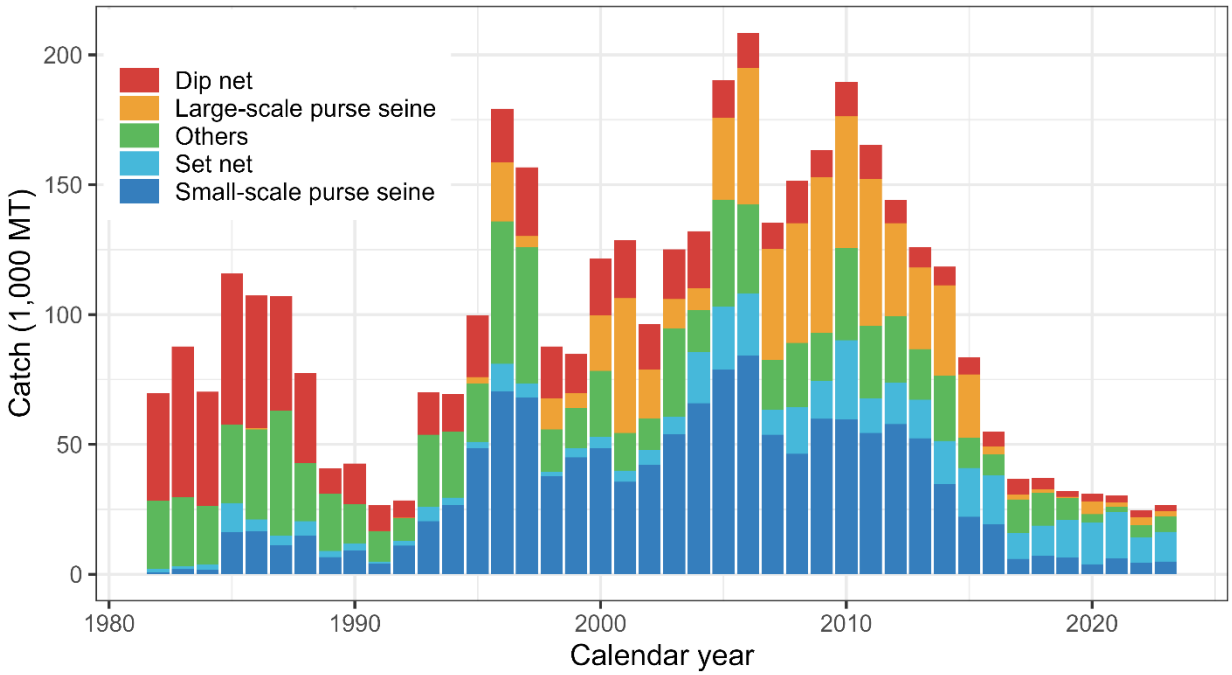


Figure 4: Time series of catch weight from 1982 to 2023 calendar year for the Pacific stock of BM. The colors represent different fisheries in Japan. Due to data accessibility issues, the Chinese catch is not included in the figure. It assumed that Russia caught no fish of BM.

*Data table*
Data availability tables which include information about catch, abundance indices and biological data from China and Japan are respectively shown below (Tables 1, 2). For Russia, no relevant data are available.

Table 1: Data availability table from China.

| **Category and data sources** | **Description** | **Years with available data** | **Average sample size/ year or data coverage** | **Potential issues to be reviewed** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CHINA** | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |
| Purse seine fishery<br>Trawl fishery | Official statistics, reports from annual report | Official statistics: 2015-2023 | Coverage=100 % | The blue mackerel and Japanese sardine catches are from the fishing catch provided by the fishery company |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length measurements | Port sampling by Institute and technology group. | 2018-2023 | 550-800 fish/year | Details to be reviewed |
| Aging | Sampling during research surveys and from commercial fishing vessels | 2020-2023 | 30-180 fish/year | Details to be reviewed |
| Catch at age (CAA) | Estimate CAA from the above data | 2020-2023 | Age-length keys are to be developed | Evaluate uncertainty of catch at age, especially on changes of growth depending on recruitment abundance |
| **Abundance indices (commercial)** | | | | |
| Purse seine fishery | Purse seine logbook | 2015-2023 | 10-60/year | Should separate blue mackerel and chub mackerel<br>Will conduct standardization |

Table 2: Data availability table from Japan.

| **Category and data sources** | **Description** | **Years with available data** | **Average sample size/ year or data coverage** | **Potential issues to be reviewed** |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| JAPAN | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Catch statistics** | | | | |
| Purse seine fishery<br>Dip net fishery<br>Set net | Official statistics; reports from fisheries associations and markets | Official statistics: 1950-2023, other reports: 1982-2023 | Coverage=100 % | The blue mackerel catches are estimated from chub and blue mackerel catches based on port sampling data |
| **Size composition data** | | | | |
| Length measurements | Port sampling by 17 local fishery institutes in 17 prefectures | 1995-2023 | 4,000-40,000 (average 10,000) fish/year (ca. 100 measurements per sampling) | Data coverage review |
| Aging | Port sampling by 17 local fishery institutes in 17 prefectures | 1995-2023 | 500-1000 fish/year | Data coverage review |
| Catch at age (CAA) | CAA is estimated with length measurement and aging data | 1995-2023 | Age-length keys are created approximately by quarter and local regions | Evaluation of uncertainty in catch at age, especially on changes in growth depending on recruitment abundance |
| **Abundance indices (survey)** | | | | |
| Year-round for egg density | Almost all local fisheries research bodies join this survey program. NORPAC net is sampling gear. This survey is conducted for small | 2005-2023 | ca. 6000 stations in total, 1000-4000 stations with blue mackerel eggs/year | Review survey protocol and conduct standardization |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | pelagic species. | | | |
| **Abundance indices (commercial)** | | | | |
| Stick-held dip net fishery | Logbook data are collected from fishermen in Shizuoka prefecture since 1995 | 1995-2023 | 100-500/year | Standardization |

*Special Comments*

Although the Small Working Group (SWG) previously used 'spotted mackerel' as the common name of this species, the SWG recommended to SC to change the common name to 'blue mackerel' for consistency with the FAO database of fish species.

Catch statistics specific to blue mackerel in the NPFC Convention Area are not available because combined catch of chub and blue mackerels have been reported to NPFC (https://www.npfc.int/summary-footprint-chub-mackerel-fisheries).

*Biological Information*

The below descriptions are mostly extracted from Yukami et al. (2019b).

*Distribution and migration*

Blue mackerel is distributed from Japan to Australia and New Zealand in the Indo-West Pacific (Frose and Pauly 2022). Blue mackerel around Japan is divided into two stocks by spatial distributions in Japanese stock assessments: Pacific stock and East China Sea stock (Hayashi et al. 2019, Yukami et al. 2019; Fig. 5). Below we describe biological information based on the Pacific stock of blue mackerel.

Blue mackerel tends to distribute in warm offshore waters. The main distribution area for adults is around water of the Kuroshio current. The larvae hatch around the Kuroshio current and are distributed from the coastal water of southern Honsyu to the transition water between Kuroshio and Oyashio currents located 165 to 170 East longitude, the same as the chub mackerel larvae. The juveniles sized at 5 to 15cm fork length (FL) transferred to transition water, migrate to north as they grow, feed at the area from coastal water of eastern Hokkaido and Kurill Islands to the subarctic water around 165 degree East longitude where the surface temperature around 13°C in summer to fall. They reach 20 to 25cm FL in fall to winter, and migrate south to the coastal waters of Joban and Boso to offshore water around Kuroshio current for wintering. A wintering ground in the water near Emperor Seamounts was observed for 2004 year class which had high recruitment. Age 1 fish did not appear in the water north of Sanriku district after wintering until 1980, but they have migrated to the water from Tohoku to Hokkaido with the increase of surface

temperature since 2001. They return south for wintering and migrate to the Izu Islands water for spawning in spring. Many schools distribute near Kuroshio current at the coastal water of southern Honshu all the year and are targeted by many fisheries. These are different from the schools that largely migrate from near the Kuroshio current at the Izu Island to Tohoku and Hokkaido waters. It is suggested that many fish above age 3 do not migrate north of Sanriku district and stay at the western water near the cape Ashizuri with small migrations or stay near the spawning grounds. Furthermore, it is considered that the observation of schools mainly consisting of age 8 fish at the Emperor seamounts area in 2008 to 2015 were due to the dominant recruitment spawned at the water south of Hachijo Island.

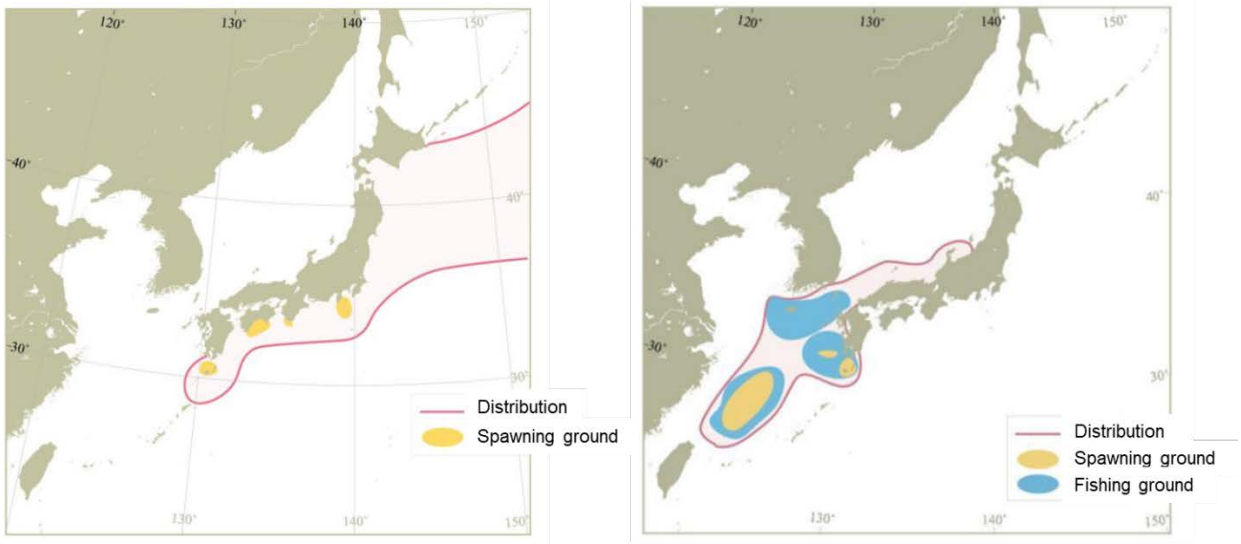


Figure 5: Distribution and spawning ground of the Pacific stock (left) and the East China Sea stock (right) of blue mackerel.

*Age and growth*

The larvae grow 1mm per day until 5cm FL after hatching observed by otolith reading, then it grows 15cm after 80days, and over 20cm of 120 days after hatching. The scale annuli reading is practical for the fish after subadult stage, it is used for the survey. Otolith annuli and daily ring readings are also effective for age determination. It is suggested that fish becoming 20-25cm FL at age 0 in fall, 28-31cm at age 1 in summer, 30-34cm at age 2, 33-36cm at age 3, around 37cm at age 4, and 45cm at the maximum. The longevity was estimated around age 6 from size composition of catch, but the oldest age 11 was reported. The growth at younger ages is different by area, and in the western area of offshore Kumano there is a tendency for faster growth than fish occur in the water north of Izu Islands. The average length (FL), weight (the averages in caught fish in 2017 to 2021) by age are shown in Fig. 6.

The length-weight (LW) relationships in Japan and China are shown in Fig. 7 (see also Furuichi et al. 2021). Although the estimated parameters from Chinese samples in 2021 and 2022 were

different from the others probably due to the small sample sizes and narrow sampling ranges of length (Table 3), their forms are almost identical. This suggests that the degrees of obesity for BM were little different between Chinese and Japanese fishing grounds.

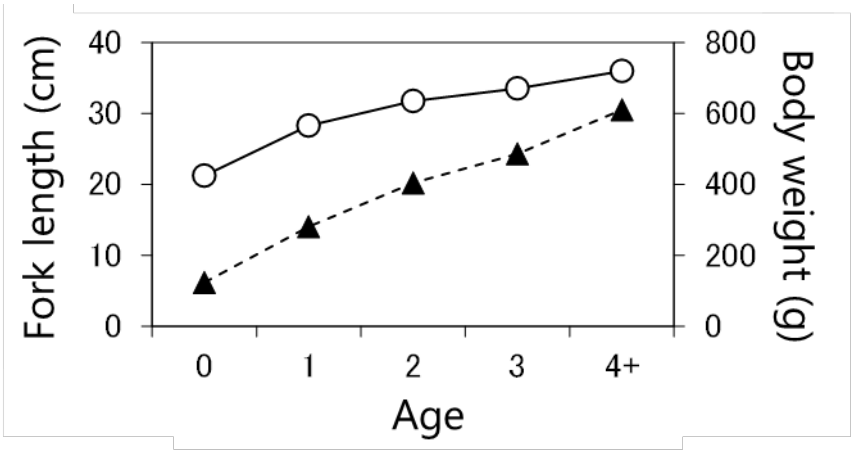


Figure 6: Relationship between age and fork length and relationship between age and body weight of BM (the averages of caught fish for the latest five years 2018-2022).

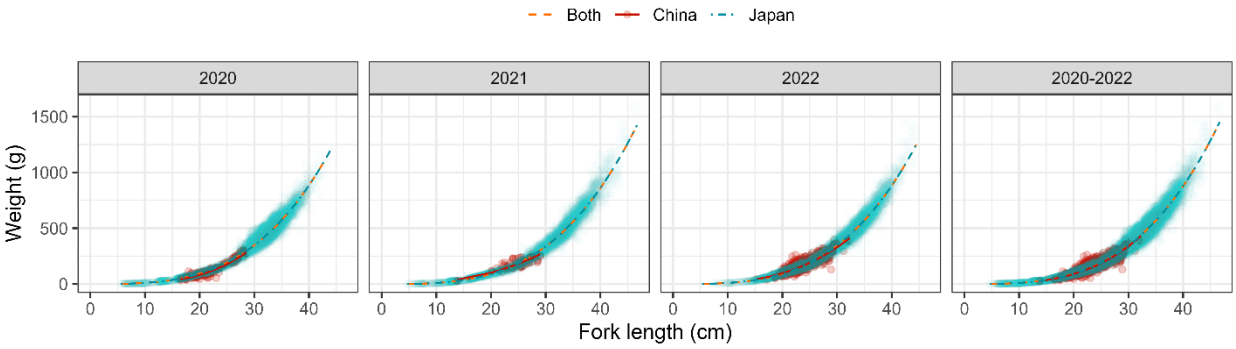


Figure 7: Relationships between fork length and weight from 2020 to 2022 of BM in Japan.

Table 3: Parameters of the relationship between fork length (cm) and weight (g) by Member from 2020 to 2022. The parameters are estimated by the least square method from the equation $W = aL^b$. 'Both' in the 'Member' column represents China + Japan and *N* represents sample size.

| Year | Member | *a* | *b* | *N* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2020 | Both | 0.0054 | 3.25 | 9818 |
| 2020 | China | 0.0024 | 3.49 | 218 |
| 2020 | Japan | 0.0056 | 3.25 | 9600 |
| 2021 | Both | 0.0053 | 3.25 | 7711 |
| 2021 | China | 0.0398 | 2.62 | 56 |
| 2021 | Japan | 0.0052 | 3.26 | 7655 |
| 2022 | Both | 0.0051 | 3.27 | 12405 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2022 | China | 0.0117 | 3.01 | 632 |
| 2022 | Japan | 0.0051 | 3.27 | 11773 |
| 2020-2022 | Both | 0.0053 | 3.26 | 29934 |
| 2020-2022 | China | 0.0049 | 3.28 | 906 |
| 2020-2022 | Japan | 0.0053 | 3.26 | 29028 |

*Reproduction*

The blue mackerel mature and spawn above 30cm FL from the observation of ovary tissue. The mature age was considered age 2 and above and it is assumed that all the fish age 2 and above are mature and spawn (Figs. 6. 8). The spawning grounds are found from the waters southern Kyusyu and cape Ashizuri to the Kuroshio current water near Izu Islands (Fig5). The recruitments hatched at the larger spawning ground in the East China sea supposed to migrate into the Pacific water. A spawning season are from December to June next year at the western waters of cape Ashizuri, January to March in the East China sea, and February to March near the water of cape Ashizur. The spawning season of main spawning ground of blue mackerel near Izu Island are March to June, but it considered that it is not suitable as spawning grounds by the short spawning season from the ovary tissue observation and small amount of spawning eggs sampled. However, it is supposed that larvae and juvenile occurring in the north of transition area consist of the fish hatched at the Izu Island spawning grounds in March to June, same as chub mackerel.

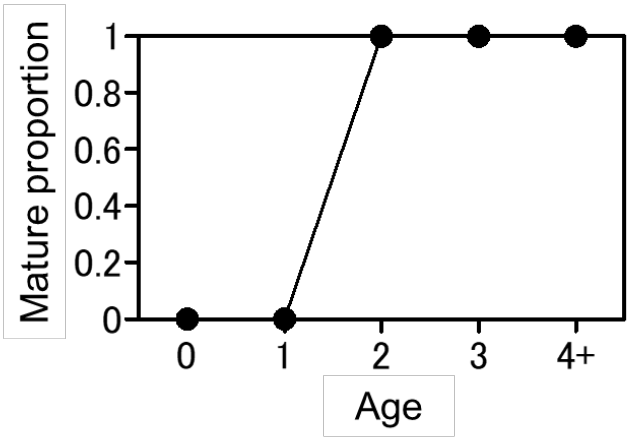


Figure 8: Mature proportion by age.

*Predator-prey relationship*

Larvae feed on planktonic crustaceans and larvae of anchovy or sardines. Juveniles feed on small teleost and cephalopods with preys mentioned above. It preys on fishes including anchovy, benttooth and lantern fishes, crustaceans like krill and cephalopods at the Kumano Nada fishing

ground, horned krill and anchovy at Sanriku fishing ground and copepod, krill, anchovy, lantern fishes, cephalopod like Enoploteuthidae and salpa in the transition area between Kuroshio and Oyashio where located offshore of Joban and Sanriku. Predation on blue mackerel by whales is observed during periods of high abundance.

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**Annex P**

**Stock assessment report for chub mackerel**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background information

Chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*) in the Northwest Pacific Ocean (NWPO) is distributed from the coast of southern Japan to offshore waters of Kuril Islands. It is considered that both adults and juveniles are distributed as far east as the 170-degree East longitude line. The feeding migration of adults has expanded to the northeast recently, and since 2018 the distribution of adults during summer and fall has reached 47-degree North, 166-degree East, east offshore of Kuril Island. The spawning ground is known to be located within the range of the Japanese Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), with the main spawning ground located in Izu Island waters.

Chub mackerel are harvested by China, Japan and Russia (Figure E-1). Chinese light purse seine and pelagic trawl fisheries are operated in the NPFC Convention Area. Japanese chub mackerel fisheries consist mainly of purse seine and set net fisheries within the Japanese national waters. Russian chub mackerel fisheries mainly operated in the Russian national waters consist of mid-water trawl, purse seine and bottom trawl gears with operations in the Japanese national waters. The historical total landings have largely fluctuated and recently decreased from approximately 516,000 mt in 2018 to 151,000 mt in the most recent calendar year (CY) 2023. The Conservation and Management Measure for chub mackerel (CMM 2024-07) includes a catch limit of 100,000 mt set in the Convention Area for each of the 2024 and 2025 fishing seasons.

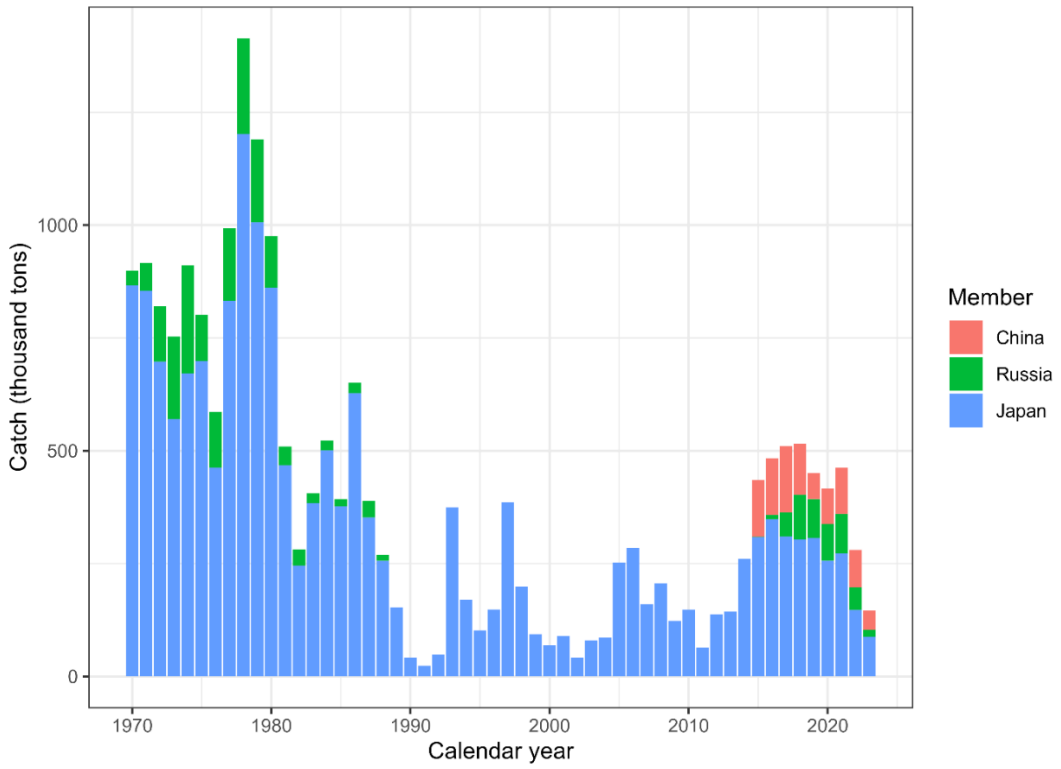


Figure E-1. Historical chub mackerel catch in weight by Member. The provisional Chinese catch for 2023 is estimated using the historical ratio for chub mackerel and blue mackerel.

**Stock assessment model**

A state-space stock assessment model (SAM) was agreed to be used for the chub mackerel stock assessment by the Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment (TWG CMSA). SAM accounts for observation errors in catch-at-age data and abundance indices. It uses age-specific data on catch numbers, stock weight, and maturity rate in each year. Recruitment was defined as numbers at age 0, and spawning stock biomass (SSB) was calculated through multiplication of numbers-at-age by maturity-at-age and weight-at-age. SAM consists of two subparts: a population dynamics model and an observation model.

Age-structured population dynamics for chub mackerel estimated by SAM are driven through survival processes such as natural and fishing mortalities, and reproduction is calculated by a Beverton-Holt stock recruitment relationship. Fishing mortality coefficients by year and age group are assumed to follow a multivariate random walk, consequently allowing estimation of time-varying selectivity.

In the observation model of SAM, the catch-at-age is estimated though the fitting of the Baranov equation to the observed catch-at-age under a lognormal error distribution. SAM also fits to abundance indices with a lognormal error assumption. Non-linear relationships to population abundance estimates were estimated for abundance indices specific to ages 0 and 1, linear relationships were applied to the other abundance indices.

**Data and biological parameters used in the assessment model**

Data are included from the NPFC Convention Area and Members' EEZs.

A fishing year (FY) starting from July and ending in June of the following year was applied in the stock assessment of chub mackerel. The TWG CMSA agreed for the stock assessment period to be FY1970 to FY2022. Seven age groups of ages 0 to 5 and 6+ were defined in the stock assessment. The historical catch-at-age, which was constructed from the quarterly data from each Member, is shown in Figure E-2. Time series of mean weight-at-age are illustrated in Figure E-3. Annual maturity-at-age with decadal time-varying changes is shown in Figure E-4. These data were available up to FY2022.

Although seven time series were available, only six time series of abundance indices were used during model development (Figure E-5): relative number of age 0 fish from the summer survey by Japan; relative number of age 0 fish from the autumn survey by Japan; relative number of age 1 fish from the autumn survey by Japan; relative SSB from the egg survey by Japan; relative SSB from the dip-net fishery by Japan; and relative vulnerable stock biomass from the light purse-seine fishery by China.

Russian CPUE data were not used for model development although the abundance indices from Japan and Russia were available until FY2023 and until FY2022 for China. While the FY2023 Japanese abundance indices were not used for the base case, as agreed in the TWG CMSA08, they were used for sensitivity runs.

An age-specific natural mortality (M), corresponding to 0.80 for age 0, 0.60 for age 1, 0.51 for age 2, 0.46 for age 3,0.43 for age 4, 0.41 for age 5, and 0.40 for age 6+, is applied for the stock assessment by the TWG CMSA.

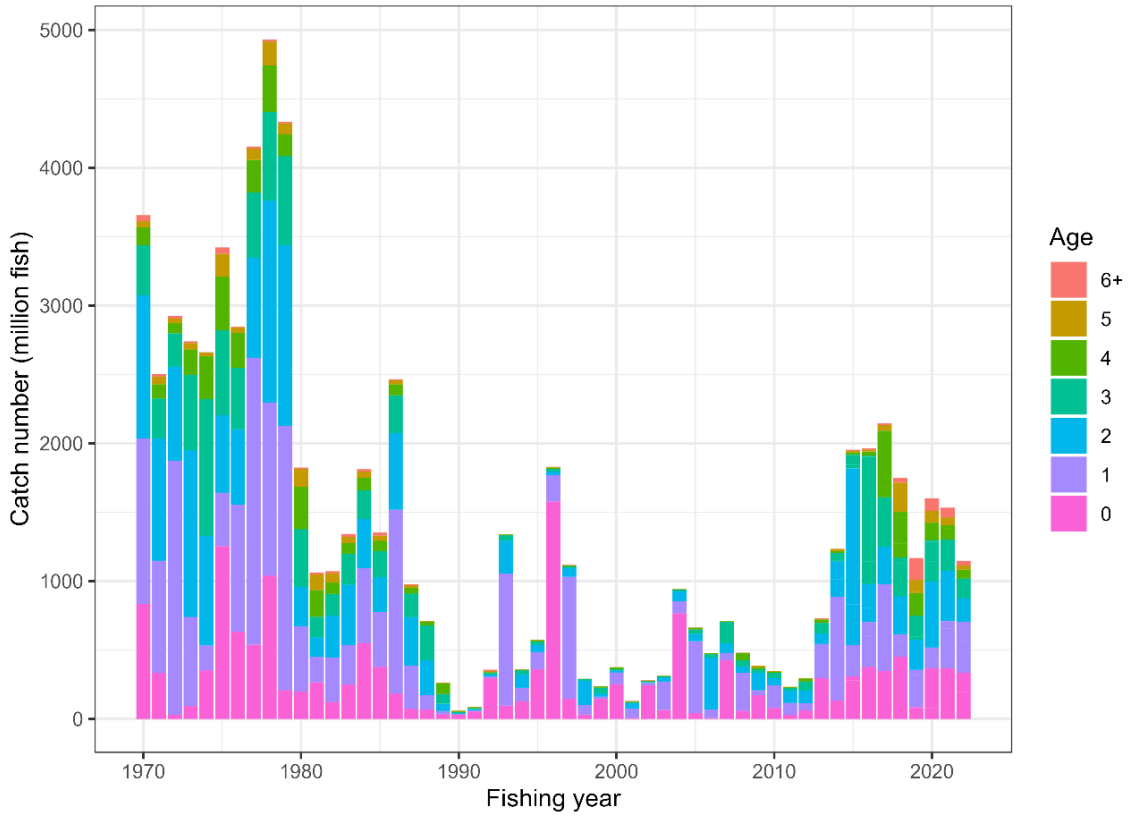


Figure E-2. Historical observed catch-at-age.

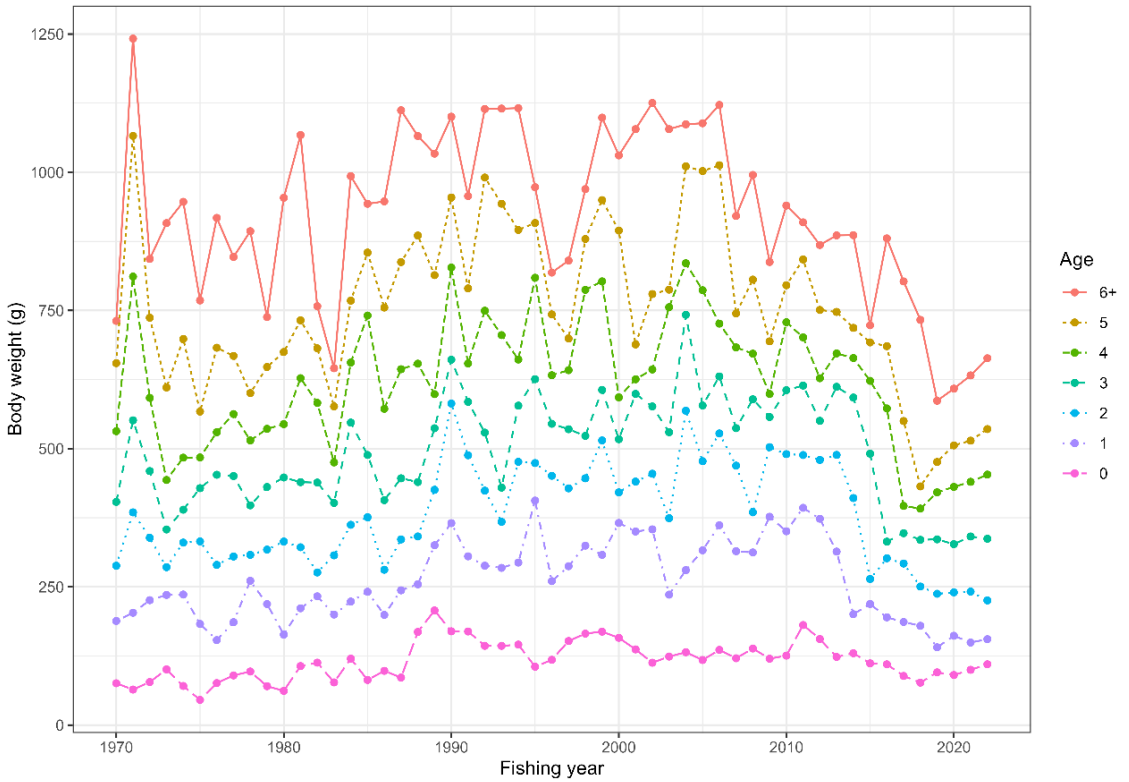


Figure E-3. Time series of weight-at-age.

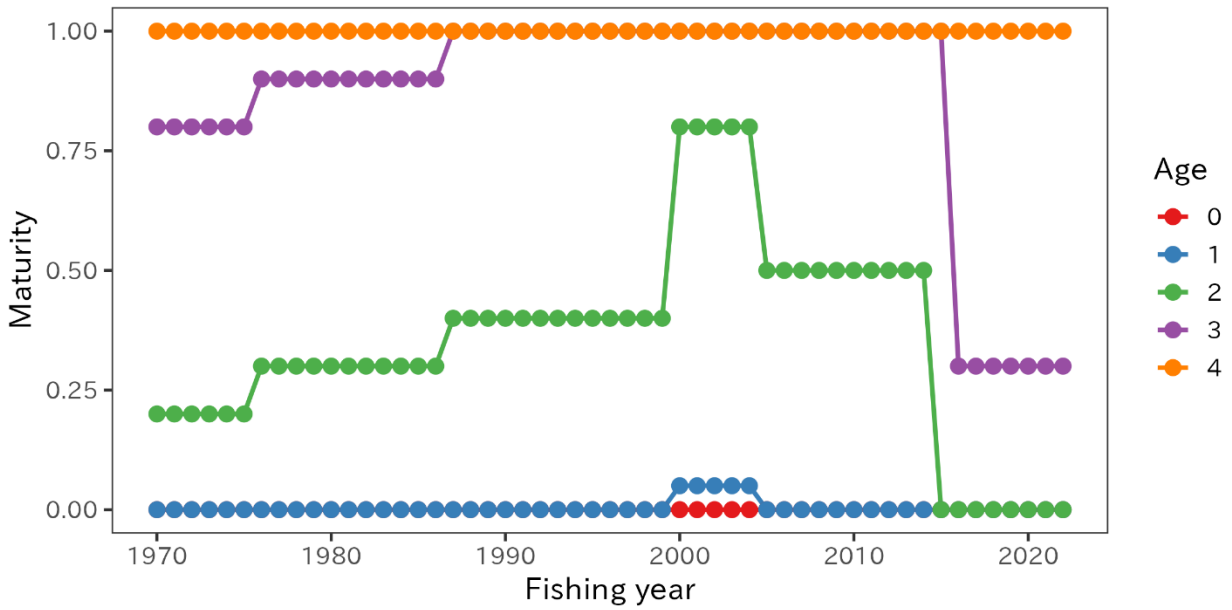


Figure E-4. Time series of maturity-at-age. Ages are simplified up to age 4 due to the similarity of maturity at age 4 and above.

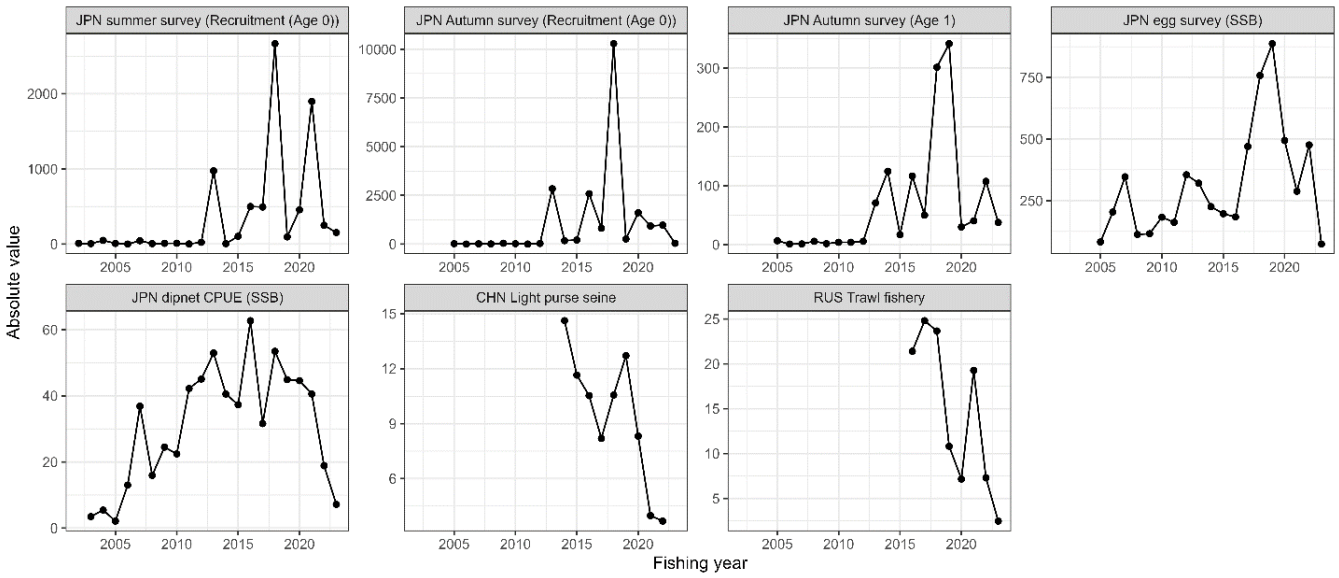


Figure E-5. Time series of abundance indices. The Russian CPUE data were not used in model estimation.

**Stock assessment scenarios**

In order to improve the SAM fit to abundance indices and retrospective patterns, the TWG CMSA recognized the necessity of introduction of estimation of process error in survival of age groups older than age 0. The TWG CMSA also considered inclusion of FY2023 from the Japanese abundance indices, which had a large impact on the stock status of the most recent years. As a result, the following four scenarios were employed as representative cases:

1) B2, Estimate process error for only age 0 (recruitment);
2) S28-ProcEst, Estimate process error for all age groups;
3) S32-JP23, Estimate process error for only age 0 and use Japanese indices up to FY2023; and
4) S34-ProcEst23, Estimate process error for all age groups and use Japanese indices up to FY2023

TWG CMSA agreed to select S28-ProcEst as a base case scenario because of the better diagnostics than the model only with recruitment process error and agreement of data usage up to FY2022. The other three scenarios were employed to show possible range of uncertainty.

**Reference points**

Using stock assessment results from the base case scenario, the TWG CMSA calculated commonly used biological reference points such as F%SPR (30%, 40%, 50%, 60% and 70%), F0.1, maximum sustainable yield (MSY)-based reference points, i.e. $F_{MSY}$ and $SSB_{MSY}$, with mean biological parameters and selectivity of current F (mean F in FY2020 to FY2022). In particular, the biological parameters such as weight-at-age and maturity-at-age used for calculation of biological reference points are assumed as the average values during the most recent 7 years (FY2016 to FY2022), which represents the recent change in biological parameters. As a control, the average of the biological parameters was calculated over the stock assessment period. Reference points for the base case scenario are listed in Table E-1.

**Description of specification of future projections**

The population dynamics model for stochastic future projections is the same as is used in SAM. The future harvesting scenario was predetermined as a total catch of 50, 100, 150, 200, 300 and 400 thousand tons after FY2023, compared with another future harvesting scenario under Fcur.

Future biological parameters are assumed to equal the average of the recent seven years. Mean biological parameters for the entire model time period (FY1970-FY2022) are used as a control.

**Stock status overview**

The chub mackerel stock in the NWPO has experienced large changes in biological parameters over the time period of the model. The main temporal changes are a recent decrease in maturity at age, along with a recent decrease in the weight at age, both of which were observed to change over the model time period to cause temporal changes of biological reference points. MSY-based reference points are highly variable over the timeseries of the assessment because the weight- and maturity-at age of chub mackerel has varied widely (Figures E-3 and E-4), which impacts the productivity of the stock. Unfished spawning biomass per recruit (SPR0) represents the theoretical equilibrium productivity per fish assuming no fishing. SPR0 has varied remarkably over time (Figure E-6).

In addition, as there is little recruitment compensation in the stock-recruitment relationship within the range of historically observed SSB and recruitment (Figure E-8), estimates of biomass-based

MSY reference points are extreme explorations that are highly sensitive to model configuration.

Because of the above reasons, commonly used reference points such as MSY-related or SPR-related reference points vary over time and are uncertain, and they are potentially misleading with respect to stock status. For example, the MSY-based reference points have varied by the assumption of biological parameters to be used (Table E-1). The exploitation rates corresponding to the MSY was 10% when assuming biological parameters during the whole historical period, but it dropped to 5% when using the most recent 7 years biological parameters.

As such, at this time, the TWG CMSA does not recommend the use of MSY-based reference points for management advice. Instead, the TWG CMSA provides information of current estimates of chub mackerel SSB and F (average FY2020-FY2022) relative to the minimum, 25th, 50th, 75th and maximum value of the SSB and F values over the entire time period (FY1970-FY2022; Table E-2). Values relating to the most recent time period (FY2016-FY2022) are also shown in order to describe the current stock relative to recent conditions.

The abundance estimated by the Japanese egg survey and the CPUEs from the Japanese dipnet and Russian trawl decreased over recent years, showing that they were simultaneously reduced to about half the level of recent years in FY2023. The sensitivity run of the stock assessment model including Japanese CPUE for FY2023 shows substantial decline in biomass and SSB in FY2022 and further in FY2023 and higher fishing mortality in the last few years (Figure E-7).

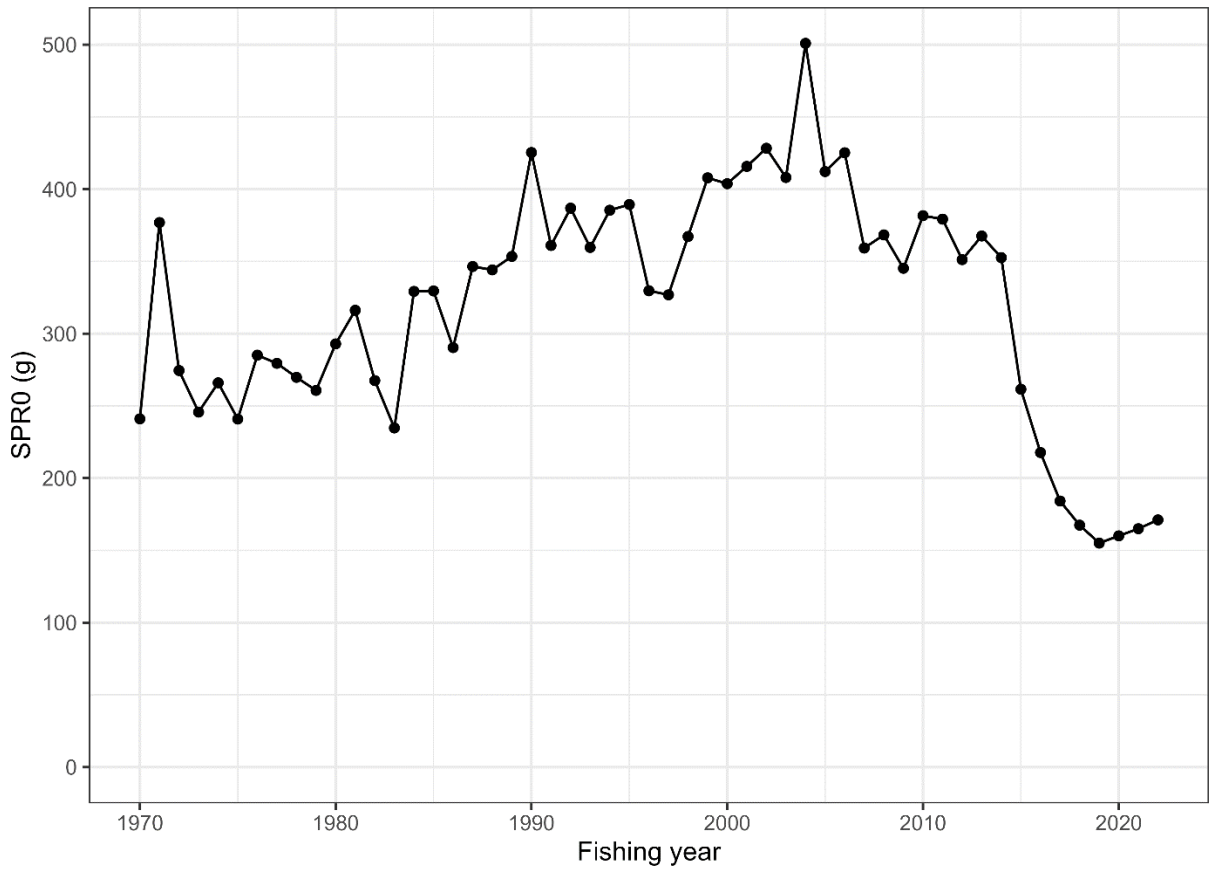


Figure E-6. Trajectories of spawners per recruit without fishing (SPR0).

Table E-1. Reference points for the base case scenario (S28-ProcEst). Reference point values in this table are calculated by holding Fcur the same for all calculations, but by varying the time period (either FY2016-FY2022 or FY1970-FY2022) over which the biological parameters are estimated. Refer to Glossary in the stock assessment report for the definitions.

| **Biological parameters used** | **FY2016-FY2022** | FY1970-FY2022 |
|---|---|---|
| | **S28-ProcEst** | S28-ProcEst |
| current%SPR | **28.3** | 40.3 |
| Fmed/Fcur | **0.478** | 1.629 |
| F0.1/Fcur | **1.344** | 1.344 |
| FpSPR.30.SPR/Fcur | **0.942** | 1.498 |
| FpSPR.40.SPR/Fcur | **0.673** | 1.010 |
| FpSPR.50.SPR/Fcur | **0.484** | 0.696 |
| FpSPR.60.SPR/Fcur | **0.342** | 0.475 |
| FpSPR.70.SPR/Fcur | **0.230** | 0.311 |
| $F_{MSY}$/Fcur | **0.258** | 0.668 |
| $B_{MSY}$ | **9396.157** | 17179.502 |
| $SSB_{MSY}$ | **2904.704** | 6084.597 |
| h | **0.358** | 0.501 |
| SSB0 | **7123.476** | 17441.919 |
| $SSB_{MSY}$/SSB0 | **0.408** | 0.349 |
| $F_{MSY}$SPR | **0.673** | 0.511 |
| MSY | 436.8467 | 1713.406 |
| MSY/$B_{MSY}$ (exploitation rate at MSY) | 0.046 | 0.10 |

Table E-2. Stock status summary from the base case scenario.

| Stock Status Summary Table | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SSB (Thousand MT) | Total Biomass (Thousand MT) | Recruitment (Million Individuals) | F | Exploitation | SPR_0 |
| **2022 Estimate** | 447 | 2,825 | 9,839 | 0.23 | 0.089 | 171.1 |
| **Current (Average 2020-2022)** | 526 | 2,888 | 11,097 | 0.28 | 0.119 | 165.4 |
| **Values relative to the all years of the time series (i.e. 1970-2022)** | **SSB (Thousand MT)** | **Total Biomass (Thousand MT)** | **Recruitment (million individuals)** | **F** | **Exploitation** | **SPR_0** |
| **Historical Minimum (Min)** | 45 | 172 | 365 | 0.23 | 0.071 | 155 |
| **Historical 25 percentile (25%)** | 97 | 634 | 1,308 | 0.36 | 0.136 | 266 |
| **Historical Median (Med)** | 335 | 1,566 | 4,353 | 0.61 | 0.185 | 344 |
| **Historical 75 percentile (75%)** | 744 | 3,177 | 9,839 | 0.71 | 0.25 | 379 |
| **Historical Maximum (Max)** | 1,394 | 6,050 | 23,579 | 1.11 | 0.422 | 501 |
| **Ratios Relative to 1970-2022** | Stock Status Related to Biomass | | | Stock Status Related to Fishing Intensity | | |
| **Current /Historical Minimum** | 11.694 | 16.81 | 30.436 | 1.21 | 1.674 | 1.067 |
| **Current /25%_Historical** | 5.418 | 4.554 | 8.483 | 0.79 | 0.874 | 0.622 |
| **Current /Med_Historical** | 1.569 | 1.844 | 2.55 | 0.47 | 0.643 | 0.481 |
| **Current /75%_Historical** | 0.707 | 0.909 | 1.128 | 0.40 | 0.475 | 0.436 |
| **Current /Max_Historical** | 0.377 | 0.477 | 0.471 | 0.25 | 0.282 | 0.33 |
| **Values relative to 2016-2022** | **SSB (Thousand MT)** | **Total Biomass (Thousand MT)** | **Recruitment (million individuals)** | **F** | **Exploitation** | **SPR_0** |
| **Recent Minimum (Min)** | 447 | 2,825 | 6,043 | 0.23 | 0.089 | 155.0 |
| **Recent 25th percentile (25%)** | 486 | 2,919 | 10,154 | 0.26 | 0.112 | 162.5 |
| **Recent Median (Med)** | 620 | 3,018 | 11,077 | 0.29 | 0.123 | 167.5 |
| **Recent75 percentile (75%)** | 748 | 3,605 | 12,622 | 0.30 | 0.130 | 177.6 |
| **Recent Maximum (Max)** | 774 | 4,108 | 22,898 | 0.31 | 0.143 | 217.7 |
| **Ratios Relative to 2016-2022** | Stock Status Related to Biomass | | | Stock Status Related to Fishing Intensity | | |
| **Current / Recent Min** | 1.18 | 1.02 | 1.84 | 1.21 | 1.34 | 1.07 |
| **Current /25%_Recent** | 1.08 | 0.99 | 1.09 | 1.10 | 1.06 | 1.02 |
| **Current /Med_Recent** | 0.85 | 0.96 | 1.00 | 0.98 | 0.97 | 0.99 |
| **Current /75%_Recent** | 0.70 | 0.80 | 0.88 | 0.94 | 0.91 | 0.93 |
| **Current /Max_Recent** | 0.68 | 0.70 | 0.48 | 0.92 | 0.83 | 0.76 |

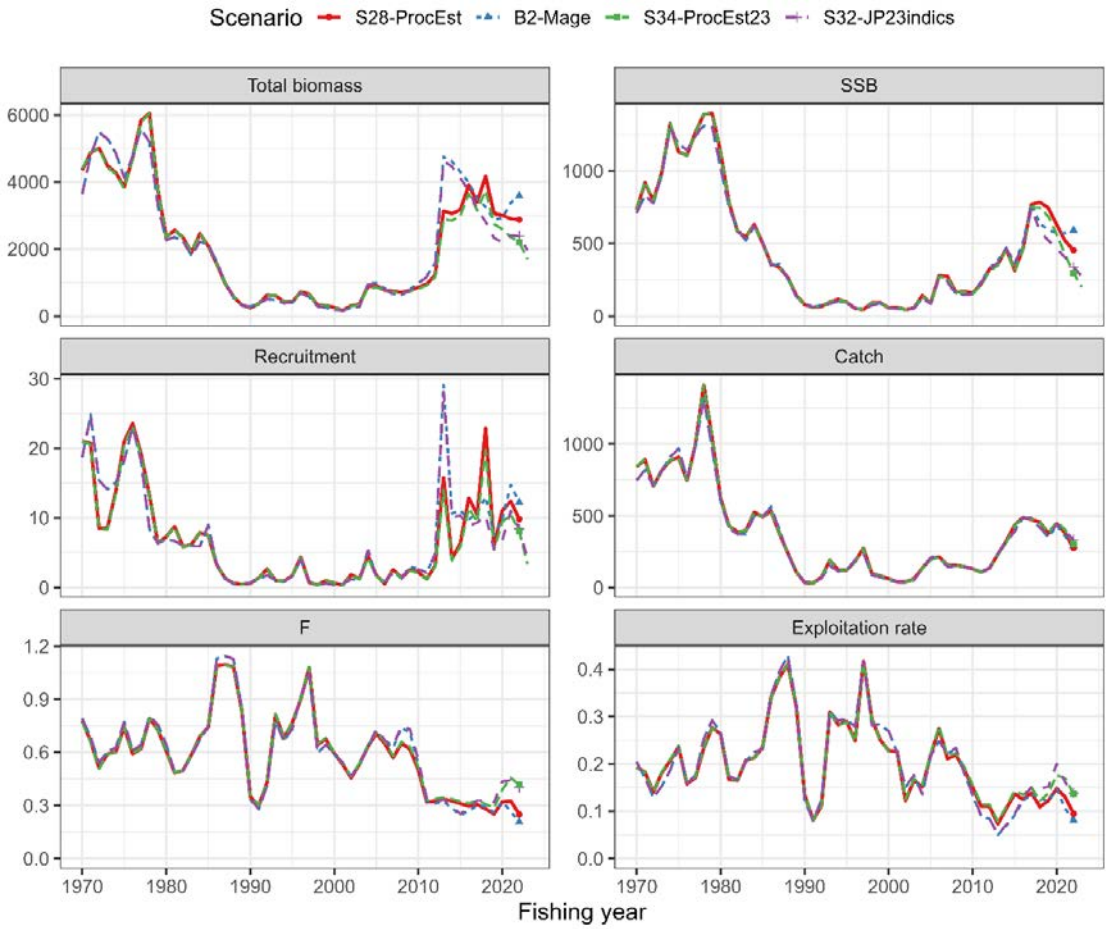


Figure E-7. Time series of estimates of total biomass (thousand mt), SSB (thousand mt), recruitment (billion fish), catch (thousand mt), mean fishing mortality (F) and exploitation rate (catch divided by total biomass) under the four representative scenarios. S28-ProcEst was selected as the base case scenario.

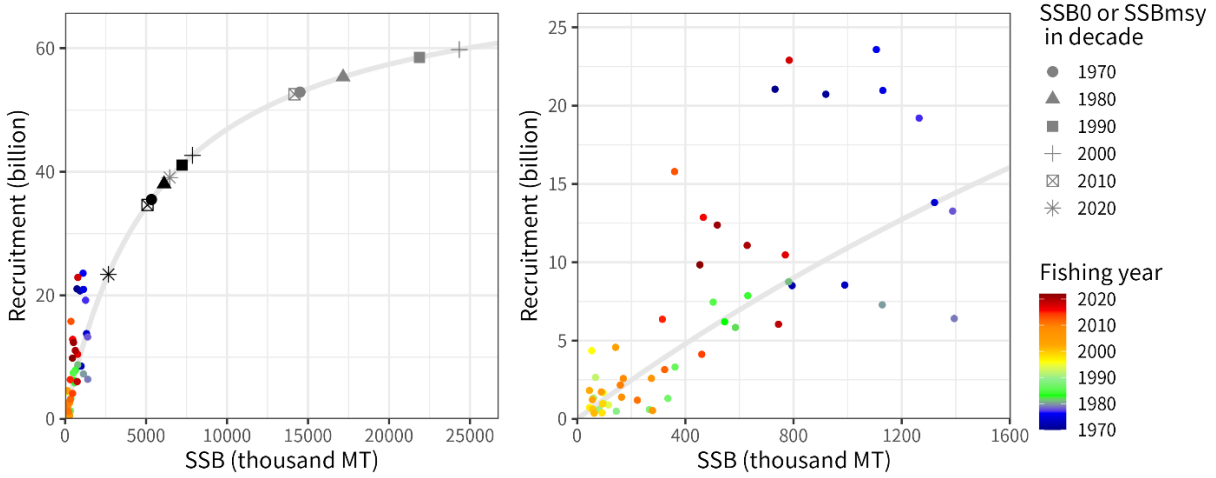


Figure E-8. Estimated stock-recruitment curve (gray lines) and estimated SSB and number of recruits (colored circles). Although both figures are same, in the left figure, estimated SSB0 (equilibrium spawning biomass without fishing, gray symbols) and $SSB_{MSY}$ (black symbols) by decade are overlapped. The reference points are calculated using biological parameters averaged during the decades. The right panel also shows estimated recruitment and SSB by year along with the estimated stock recruitment curve.

**Total biomass, Spawning Stock Biomass**

The time series of estimated chub mackerel total biomass and SSB from the base case model used to inform managers generally declined from the 1970s through the 1990s and the stock began to recover in the early 2000s, peaking in FY2018, after which it has generally declined over the last decade (total biomass and SSB are shown in Figure E-7 and Table E-2). The level of SSB in the 1970s was estimated to be approximately 1,104 thousand mt on average. SSB for FY2022 is estimated to be 450 thousand mt for the base case but varies from 300 thousand to 590 thousand mt among the sensitivity cases.

**Recruitment**

Time series of estimated recruitment (age-0, billions of fish) abundance is presented in Figure E-7 and summary values in Table E-2 for the base model. The level of recruitment in the 1970s was estimated to be high (~16 billion individuals on average) and that in the most recent decade (FY2013-FY2022) was also high (=11 billion on average).

**Stock-recruitment relationship**

Although the estimated stock recruitment relationship has not changed over time, the estimated average by decade of the SSB0 (equilibrium spawning biomass without fishing, blue symbols) and $SSB_{MSY}$ (red symbols) are varied and decreased to the lowest points of the time series owing to the changes of biological parameters (Figure E-8).

**Exploitation status**

Estimated rates of exploitation (fishing year catch/fishing year total biomass) time series generally fluctuated between 5 and 20% and followed the estimated Fs over time, with annual removal rates that ranged from roughly 10 to 30% over the modeled timeframe (Figure E-7), with some larger annual removals in excess of 40%.

**Harvest Recommendations**

Given the uncertainty in biological parameters in future, which have a large impact on the projection results, the TWG CMSA considers it is not appropriate to provide long-term harvesting recommendations at this time. A short-term (towards FY2028) projection was undertaken to assess the effects of varying catch levels, ranging from 50 to 400 thousand tons, based on the most recent seven years' biological data (Figure E-9) and the entire time series of biological data (Figure E-10) for management considerations. Projections based on the most recent seven years' biological data showed that Fcur leads to future constant decline of SSB and it is necessary to reduce current fishing mortality (Table E-3).

**Data and Research needs**

The assessment results, including projections, are dependent on biological parameters and processes which are uncertain. Therefore, future studies should be focused on collecting and analyzing biological information, e.g., maturity-at-age, weight-at-age, which would improve the assessment. Fisheries-dependent data, such as fleet-specific catch-at-age, are also critical to develop Member-specific fishing fleet and age-specific abundance indices.

A critically important recommendation that should be carried out in 2-3 years is to develop a harvest control rule (HCR) specific to this stock via a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process. This HCR should be dynamic and able to adjust annual total catches depending on the stock

abundance as well as the target and limit reference points. During the process of the development of MSE, uncertainties in parameter estimates, time-varying or density-dependent biological parameters, and stock-recruitment assumptions should be considered.
Timely collection of biological information and further research on biological parameters and processes, including the effect of environment and climate change, are critically important to facilitate the accurate estimation of reference points.

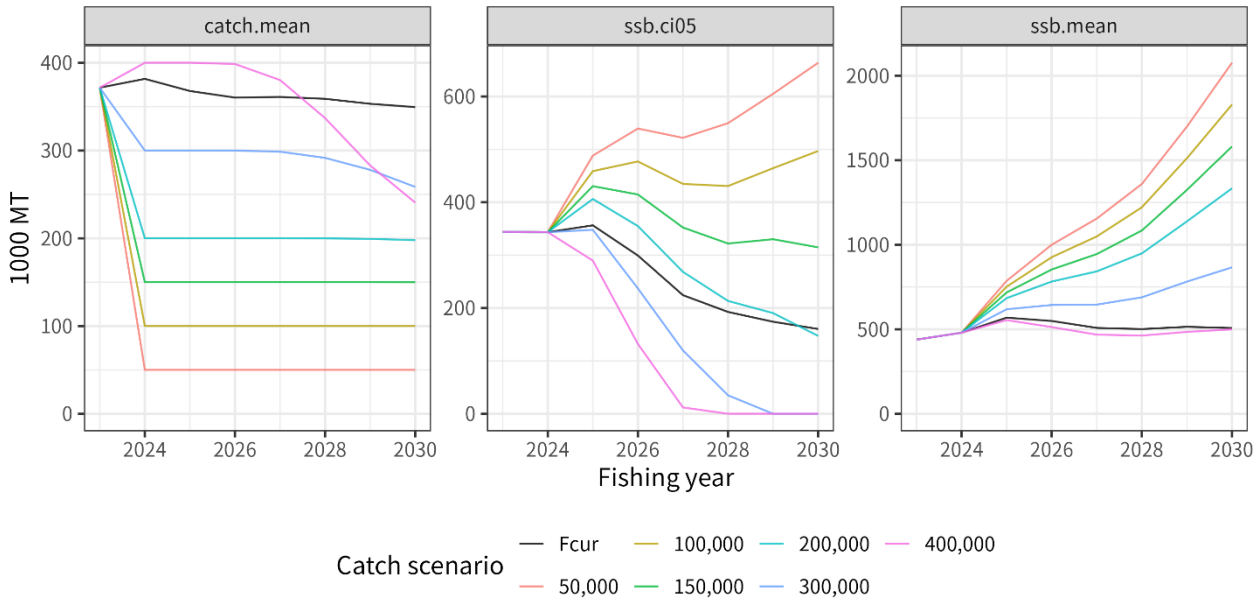


Figure E-9. Future trajectories of mean catch (left), 5% lower limit of predictive interval for SSB (middle) and mean SSB (right) with mean biological parameters in recent 7 years. Numbers and "Fcur" in "Catch scenarios" indicate total amount of catches (mt) in constant catch scenario and current fishing morality, respectively.

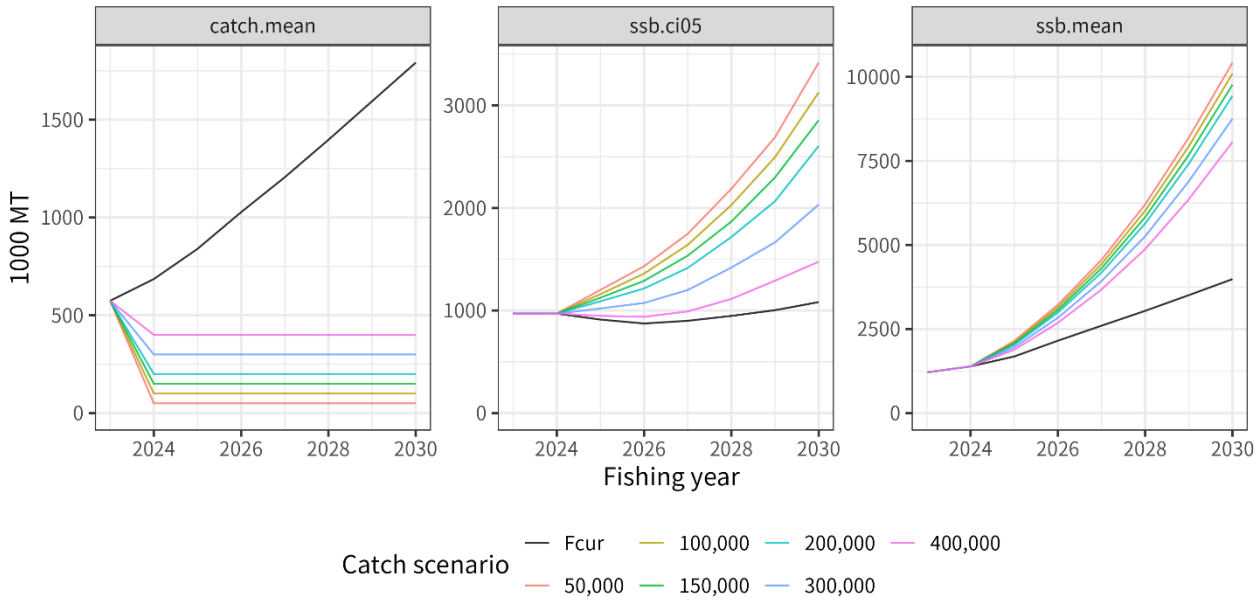


Figure E-10. Future trajectories of mean catch (left), 5% lower limit of predictive interval for SSB (middle) and mean SSB (right) with mean biological parameters for the entire time series. Numbers and "Fcur" in "Catch scenarios" indicate total amount of catches (mt) in constant catch scenario and current fishing morality, respectively.

Table E-3. Probability that future SSB on July 1, at the beginning of the fishing year, is above latest (FY2022) SSB under the base case scenario. The projection towards FY2028 is shown below.

| Catch level | FY2025 | FY2026 | FY2027 | FY2028 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fcur | 76 | 64 | 48 | 44 |
| 50 | 97 | 99 | 98 | 98 |
| 100 | 96 | 96 | 94 | 94 |
| 150 | 93 | 92 | 88 | 88 |
| 200 | 89 | 87 | 80 | 78 |
| 300 | 79 | 70 | 58 | 56 |
| 400 | 66 | 49 | 38 | 36 |

## INTRODUCTION

*1.1 Distribution and population structure*

Chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*) is widely distributed throughout in the northwest Pacific, including in the waters of Japan, Korea, China, and Russia. The species exhibits highly migratory behavior, with distinct spawning, feeding, and wintering grounds. Spawning occurs primarily from spring to early summer in the subtropical waters, and the larvae and juveniles are often carried by ocean currents to feeding grounds further north. This migration pattern leads to a dynamic population structure that varies seasonally and spatially, reflecting the species' adaptation to environmental conditions.

In the northwest Pacific, two stocks of chub mackerel are recognized. Although there are no clear genetic differences between the two stocks, they are treated as different stocks due to their biological differences, distribution and spawning grounds. The first is the Tsushima Warm Current stock, which is distributed in the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan, and the latter is the Pacific stock, which can be defined as a straddling stock and is harvested in both national waters of Japan and Russia and the NPFC Convention Area. The Pacific stock, hereafter called chub mackerel in this report, is distributed from the coast of southern Japan to offshore waters of Kuril Islands (Figure 1). It is considered that both adults and juveniles are distributed as far east as 170°E longitude in periods of high abundance. During the low abundance period of 1990s-2000s, juvenile distributes from Japan to around 170°E, but adults were only found to 150°E due to the possible contraction of the feeding ground. The feeding migration of adult extends northeast, with the recent (since 2010) increase of stock abundance, the distribution of adult during the summer to fall season has expanded to 47° N, 166° E, east offshore of Kuril Island, after 2018. Adult fish spawn in Izu Islands waters in spring and then engage northward feeding migration to waters of Sanriku to east Hokkaido from summer to autumn.

*1.2 Migration*

Adult move to north (March to June) after spawning at Izu Islands area, which is the main spawning ground, and migrate to offshore area of Northeast of Japan (Sanriku and Hokkaido) from summer to fall for feeding (Meguro et al., 2002) (Figures 1 and 2). Larvae distribute broadly from the Pacific side of southern Japan to Kuroshio extension and Kuroshio-Oyashio transition area in spring. Larvae occurred at Kuroshio-Oyashio transition area and move to offshore of Kuril Island in summer and subadults migrate down south in fall to offshore of Chiba and Ibaraki prefecture for wintering (Kawasaki, 1968; Iizuka, 1974; Nishida et al., 2001; Kawasaki et al., 2006). Portion of adult and subadult migrate to Kii strait, Bungo strait and Seto inland sea, while the main spawning adults migrate to waters around Izu Islands area. Because of the occurrence of larvae originated upstream of Kuroshio current at the spawning ground of Izu Islands (Koizumi, 1992), spawning ground extended from offshore of southern Japan to northern Japan (Kuroda, 1992).

*1.3 Reproduction*

Chub mackerel mature at about age 2 or 3 and all fish at age 4 and above are supposed to be fully matured (Watanabe and Yatsu, 2006). One functional matured female produces 30–90 thousand eggs several times during a spawning season (Murayama et al., 1995; Watanabe et al., 1999; Yamada et al., 1999). The main spawning grounds are in the Japanese Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), in waters around the Izu Islands but also in areas off the Pacific coast of southern Japan, including the Kinan area, Cape Muroto and Cape Ashizuri (Figure 1). The waters around the Izu Islands are considered the main spawning ground (Watanabe, 1970; Usami, 1973). Although spawning occurs from offshore of southern Japan to northern Japan (Kuroda, 1992) and it has also been observed in the Tohoku waters (Kanamori et al., 1999).

The spawning season for chub mackerel is from January to June. In the main spawning ground of Izu Islands, spawning occurs in March and April, which historically are the peak spawning months. In the 2000s, the peak spawning timing has shifted to May and June because of the high fraction of younger adults, which tend to spawn eggs at later season (Watanabe, 2010). Additionally, the spawning ground is reported to exhibit northward shifting with extended spawning period associated with climate change (Kanamori et al., 2019).

The growth of chub mackerel is density dependent, and changes according to the recent recruitment and ocean environment (Watanabe and Yatsu, 2006). Maturity at age has changed depending on changes in growth (Watanabe and Yatsu, 2006). The maturity at age for chub mackerel has changed over time, for example the maturity rate of age 3 fish has decreased from 100% to 30% since 2015 (Figure 5).

*1.4 Prey and predators*

Larvae feed on the eggs of copepods and nauplii, whereas juvenile prey on small zooplankton such as small copepods, noctilucines, cercariae, and salpae (Kato and Watanabe, 2002). The feeding behaviors of immature and adult fish differ depending on the waters and lifecycle, but they mainly prey on other fishes (e.g., anchovies and lantern fish), crustaceans (e.g., krill and copepods) and salpae. In the Sanriku waters, the main prey are mysid shrimp and anchovies.

Before the 1980s, when stock abundances were high, chub mackerel were often observed to be eaten by large fishes such as the mackerel shark, blue shark, pomfret, albacore, and skipjack tuna (Kawasaki, 1965; Nagasawa, 1999), as well as the minke whale (Kasamatsu and Tanaka, 1992). In the 1990s, the lower abundance period, predation of minke whales was not reported (Tamura et al., 1998). From the research report of baleen whale predations, composition of anchovy decreased in the stomach contents after 2012, but mackerels and sardine increased. Especially in the case of sei

whale, the main prey item shifted from anchovy in early 2000s to mackerel and sardine in late 2000s and after 2010 (Tamura et al., 2016; Konishi et al., 2016). When the abundance of mackerels is high, they appear to be main prey items for whales.

*1.5 Age and growth*

Longevity of chub mackerel is estimated to be approximately 8 years, based on age determination of sampled catch, and maximum age was recorded at 11year-old (Iizuka, 2002). Fish at age 6 and above are very rare in the catches in recent years. There is no significant difference in growth between sex. Growth of chub mackerel is density dependent, and the parameters of growth function are variable among the year classes. According to Kamimura et al. (2021), the asymptotic body length *Linf* and growth coefficient *k* of von Bertalanffy growth function varied between 339.9 to 440.5 mm and 0.25 to 0.55 (/year), respectively, for each year class of 2006-2016.

Average size (fork length) and weight of catch in 2018 are shown in Figure 3, with comparison of those at 2011-2014 which did not show any slow growth. Average weight of 2018 was low comparing with those of 2011-2014 and 1970s, especially for age 5 (extremely high recruitment in the 2013 year class). It is considered that density dependence may be the cause for this change. (Kamimura et al., 2021). However, slower growth has been observed at periods of high abundance, this may be due to poor environmental conditions (i.e. lower temperatures due to range expansion), or feeding competition with Japanese sardine, or other factors (Kamimura et al., 2021).

## FISHERIES AND SCIENTIFIC SURVEYS

*2.1 Overview of fisheries*

Chub mackerel are harvested by China, Japan and Russia (Figure 4). Chinese light purse seine and pelagic trawl fisheries are operated in the NPFC Convention Area. Japanese chub mackerel fisheries consist mainly of purse seine and set net fisheries within the Japanese national waters. Russian chub mackerel fisheries mainly operate in the Russian national waters, consist of mid-water trawl, purse seine and bottom trawl gears with operations in the Japanese national waters. The historical total landings have largely fluctuated. In last decade, the total catch was stable at higher level and subsequently decreased from approximately 498 thousand mt in 2021 to 151 thousand mt in the most recent calendar year (CY) 2023. The Conservation and Management Measure for chub mackerel (CMM 2024-07) includes a catch limit of 100,000 mt set in the Convention Area for each of the 2024 and 2025 fishing seasons (1 June to 31 May).

China harvests this species dominantly by light purse seine fishery in the NPFC Convention Area. A smaller component of the catch is taken by pelagic trawl. Chinese catch statistics on mackerels in the NPFC Convention Area are available from 2015. The Chinese mackerel fisheries in the NPFC Convention Area initiated in 2014 mainly caught the three fish species such as chub mackerel, blue

mackerel, and Japanese sardine (Zhang et al., 2023). The fishing seasons of Chinese fleet is from April to December.

The major Japanese fisheries for chub mackerel are purse seine, set net and dip-net fishing, and stick-held dip-net fishing. Large-scale purse seiners, accounting for more than 50% of total catch in Japan, operate all the year over during the main fishing season from September to February in the offshore waters off Joban and Sanriku coasts on the Pacific side of Japanese main island. Small-scale purse seiners operate year-round in the coastal waters south of Chiba Prefecture. Set net fisheries are deployed extensively along the Japanese coast and yield a large catch from Sanriku coast. Dip-net and stick-held dip-net fisheries which target adult fish in spawning season (age 2 to 4 fish) are mainly operated from January to June in the Izu Islands waters. Chub mackerel is also caught by angling all over Japan.

Russian fisheries targeting mackerel species and sardine operate in the NW area of the NPFC Convention area and operate both purse seine vessels and pelagic trawl vessels. Russian fisheries first exploited mackerel in the Far East in the early 1960s and harvested it until the late 1980s, when its stocks in areas accessible to the domestic fleet were completely depleted (Baryshko, 2009). Out of 26 years of mackerel fishery for 13 years more than 50 thousand tonnes per year was harvested, including 9 years when the catch was more than 100 thousand mt. Commercial fishing of mackerel in the North-West Pacific Ocean by vessels under the Russian (Soviet) flag began in 1968. Since the second half of the 1980s, due to a sharp decline in mackerel abundance, its commercial fishing for mackerel in the Russian EEZ has been rare. Until recently, there has been no target fishing for mackerel by Russia in the Northwest Pacific. Russian fisheries resumed fishing in 2015. In 2021, the chub mackerel catch by the Russian fleet totaled to 87 thousand mt.

*2.2 Overview of scientific surveys*

China has been conducting a scientific survey program using its fishery research vessel "Song Hang" in the NPFC convention area since 2021 (Ma et al., 2023). The survey is conducted during June-August, with methods of mid-trawling, acoustic and squid jigging, covering about 70 stations per year. The results indicated that Chub mackerel is one of the dominant species in the four years survey.

In Japan, monthly egg surveys have been intensively conducted off the Pacific coast of Japan in the western North Pacific since 1978 by a historical cooperative system among many national and regional fisheries research bodies (Nishijima et al., 2024a). The survey protocol can be found at Oozeki et al. (2007). The objective of this egg survey is to monitor egg abundance of major small pelagic fish species such as Japanese sardine, Japanese anchovy, chub mackerel, etc. The survey area roughly covered the major spawning grounds of small pelagic fish off the Pacific coast, mainly

inshore waters but also offshore waters related to the warm Kuroshio and cold Oyashio currents. In addition, Japan has conducted the surface trawl net surveys in summer (June to July) and autumn (September to October) to monitor abundance of ages 0 and 1 (Nishijima et al., 2024b; 2024c; Yukami et al., 2024). The summer survey has been initiated in 2001 and annually carried out, covering the waters approximately from 141.5º E to 170.0º W and from 32.0º to 45.0º N. It provides information on abundance of age 0 fish. The autumn survey was started in 2005 and has been conducted annually, covering the area approximately of 141.5º–175º E and 37.0º–50.0º N. This survey provides abundance information on ages 0 and 1.

Russia has conducted a summertime acoustic-trawl survey since 2010 that examines mid-water and upper epipelagic species including chub mackerel. This survey completes 60-80 stations per year and aims to assess changes in abundance and migration patterns. Data collected include catch and effort, catch at length, and data for ageing.

## DATA

*3.1 Data preparation for stock assessment model*

The Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment (TWG CMSA) agreed to apply a State-space Stock Assessment Model (SAM; Nielsen and Berg, 2014) for its stock assessment (TWG CMSA, 2023). It requires age-specific input data such as catch-at-age, maturity-at-age and weigh-at-age and abundance indices. A fishing year (FY) starting from July and ending in June of the following year was applied in the stock assessment of chub mackerel. The TWG CMSA agreed for the stock assessment period to be FY1970 (CY1970/quarter 3 (Q3)) to FY2022 (CY2023/Q2). Seven age groups of ages 0 to 5 and 6+ were defined in the stock assessment. The Members submitted their data on quarter basis and then, they were compiled for construction the input data based on the fishing year. Manabe et al., (2024a; 2024b) comprehended the age-specific input data.

China has collected length frequency data of commercial catch through onboard and port samplings since CY2016, and aging of the samples has been started since CY2017. Japan also collects length, weight, maturity and age data from the survey and fishery to support their stock assessment. Russian length frequency and aging data of commercial catch are available since CY2016. The length frequency data obtained through research surveys are available since CY2010.

*3.2 Catch-at-age*

The catch-at-age is prepared for each Member on quarterly-basis for China and Russia. Japanese catch-at-age is prepared for Eastern Japan and Western Japan due to its difference in catch, size, and season in which the border of two regions is located at Mie-Shizuoka prefectural border.

The Members provided their quarterly catch-at-length data on calendar year basis as follows:

1) China, CY2016 to CY2022/Q2 ;

2) Eastern and Western Japan, CY2014 to CY2023/Q2;
3) Russia, CY2016 to CY2022.

The Members provided their quarterly age-length key (ALK) on calendar year basis as follows:

1) China, CY2018 to CY2022;
2) Eastern and Western Japan, CY2014 to CY2023/Q2.

For the catch-at-age prior to CY2014, Japan provided fishing year-based catch-at-age data for FY1970-FY2013 from the Japanese domestic stock assessment (Yukami et al. 2024). The data contains Russian catch in FY1967-1988 however due to the difficulty of separation into two Members, the catch is incorporated as Japanese catch. For the period of CY2014-2023/Q2, the TWG CMSA has agreed to calculate catch-at-age based on the catch-at-length data and corresponding ALK data of each quarter and region, which the detailed procedures are described in Manabe et al. (2024b). The ALK of Russia is substituted by the Eastern Japanese ALK due to the similarity in the area of catch.

For the period with missing catch-at-length, the procedures to supplement the data are as follows:

1) For China CY2015, use mean catch-at-length of China of CY2016-2018 for equivalent quarter;
2) For Russia CY2014-2015, use mean catch-at-length of Russia of CY2016-2018 for equivalent quarter;
3) For Russia CY2022-2023/Q2, use Eastern Japanese catch-at-length of the equivalent quarter/year.

For the period with missing ALK, Eastern Japanese ALK of the equivalent quarter/year is applied to calculate catch-at-length. The calculated catch-at-length from each quarter is converted to fishing year basis by setting the data of age incrementation as July 1st. Ages are subtracted by 1 for the first and second quarters and early caught age 0 fish in those quarters, which are calculated as age -1, are incorporated into the third quarter as age 0. The detailed procedures are described in Manabe et al. (2024b).

Through the procedures described above, catch-at-age data had been prepared for the stock assessment (Figure 5a). Chub mackerel catch was historically composed mainly of fish younger than age 3. In the periods of FY1970s, FY1980s and late-FY2010s to beginning of FY2020s, the catch of fish older than age 3 was prominent. There were differences in age compositions in catch by year and by member from FY2014 to FY2022 (Figure 6). Catches of ages 1 to 3 were prominent in FY2014 to FY2016, respectively. In addition, dominant age classes of catch were different among China and Japan.

*3.3 Weight-at-age*

The Members provided their quarterly weight-at-age data on calendar year basis as follows:

1) China, CY2018 to CY2023/Q2;

2) Eastern and Western Japan, CY2014 to CY2023/Q2;
3) Russia, CY2016 to CY2022.

The TWG CMSA has agreed to calculate a single weight value for each age to convert stock number into biomass (NPFC, 2024). The single weight-at-age were calculated through the following procedure, as described in Manabe et al. (2024b). The proportion of catch number for each quarter is calculated for four regions: China, Eastern Japan, Western Japan, and Russia, using the following equation, where *P* is proportion of catch number, *Na,t,r* represents the catch number of age *a* at year *t*, and region *r*.

$$P_{a,t,r} = \frac{N_{a,t,r}}{\sum N_{a,t,r}}$$

The yearly catch number ratio for each region is then averaged between FY2014-2022 to calculate the constant ratio of catch number across the members.

$$P_{a,r} = \frac{\sum_{t=2014}^{2022} P_{a,t,r}}{9}$$

The weighted mean of weight *W* at age *a* at quarter *q* of year *t* is then calculated as:

$$W_{a,q,t} = \frac{P_{china}W_{a,q,t,china} + P_{japan}W_{a,q,t,japan} + P_{russia}W_{a,q,t,russia}}{3}$$

The quarterly weight-at-age within a single fishing year is taken an arithmetic mean to calculate the annual weight-at-age, which is used for the stock assessment.

$$W_{a,t} = \frac{\sum W_{a,q,t}}{4}$$

Through this procedure, annual weight-at-age were calculated for FY2014 to FY2022 (Figure 5b). Since the weight-at-age prior to FY2014 was not reported by other members, the weight-at-age of CM in FY1970 to FY2013 was sourced from the Japanese domestic stock assessment of the Pacific stock of chub mackerel. Historical weight-at-age showed time-varying attributes and decreased obviously in last decade in age groups older than age 0.

*3.4 Maturity-at-age*

The TWG CMSA has agreed to use the annual maturity-at-age data from Japanese domestic stock assessment (NPFC, 2024) (Figure 5c). The Japanese maturity-at-age data is derived from the observation of catch from the spawning area, and based on previous studies (Watanabe and Yatsu, 2006; Watanabe, 2010). Chinese maturity-at-age data submitted on a quarterly basis were not included in the base-case maturity-at-age however the alternative maturity-at-age data are prepared for the sensitivity analysis, which the data preparation and data are described in NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA9-WP02.

Annual maturity-at-age used for base case showed decadal time-varying changes from FY1970 to FY2022 (Figure 5c). The maturity rate of age 2 and 3 fish is expected to be lower after FY2015

than in the period before FY2014, due to the slow growth of the 2013-year class. In the recent years, maturity rate of age 2 is zero, and that of age 3 is 0.3 in the Japanese national waters.

*3.5 Natural mortality*

Initially the assessment investigated set two cases of natural mortality (TWG CMSA, 2024). One is M = 0.5 for all age classes while the other is age-specific M (0.80 for age 0, 0.60 for age 1, 0.51 for age 2, 0.46 for age 3,0.43 for age 4, 0.41 for age 5, and 0.40 for age 6+) (Figure 7). These natural mortality coefficients have been determined according to different natural mortality estimators with biological parameters from various samples (Ma et al., 2024; Nishijima et al., 2021). It is assumed that the natural mortalities are time-invariant throughout all years. The TWG CMSA agreed to use the age specific natural mortality estimates for all models at its 9th meeting.

*3.6 Abundance indices*

The inventory of abundance indices time series shown in Figure 6d was as follows.

1) Relative number of age 0 fish from the summer survey by Japan from FY2002 to FY2023 (Nishijima et al., 2024a (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA08-WP06 (Rev. 1)))
2) Relative number of age 0 fish from the autumn survey by Japan from FY2005 to FY 2023 (Nishijima et al., 2024c (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-WP06))
3) Relative number of age 1 fish from the autumn survey by Japan from FY2005 to FY 2023 (Nishijima et al., 2024c (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-WP06))
4) Relative spawning stock biomass (SSB) from the egg survey by Japan from FY2005 to FY2023 (Ishida et al., 2024 (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-WP07))
5) Relative SSB from the dip-net fishery by Japan from FY2003 to FY2023 (Nishijima et al. 2024b (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA08-WP03))
6) Relative vulnerable stock biomass from the light purse seine fishery by China from FY2014 to FY2022 (Shi et al., 2024 (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-WP13 (Rev. 1)))
7) Relative vulnerable stock biomass from the trawl fishery by Russia from FY2016 to FY2023 (Chernienko and Chernienko, 2024 (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-WP11))

Six time series except for the Russian abundance indices were used during model development and applied for the base case. The Russian ones were used for a sensitivity run. The abundance indices from Japan and Russia were available until FY2023 and until FY2022 for China. The FY2023 Japanese abundance indices were applied in two of the representative runs.

## SPECIFICATION OF STOCK ASSESSMENT

*4.1 State-space Stock Assessment Model (SAM)*

SAM is a statistical catch-at-age model that accounts for observation errors in catch at age, which was originally developed by Nielsen and Berg (2014). Furthermore, in order to match the nature of data of this stock, improvements have been made to allow more flexible settings (Nishijima and

Ichinokawa, 2023), and this assessment used the modified version. The detailed settings are described as follows. SAM consists of two subparts: population dynamics model and observation model.

*4.1.1 Population dynamics model*

The population dynamics of chub mackerel in SAM basically follows an age-structured model:

$$\log(N_{0,y}) = \log[f(SSB_y)] + \eta_{0,y}, \qquad a = 0 \qquad (1)$$

$$\log(N_{a,y}) = \log(N_{a-1,y-1}) - F_{a-1,y-1} - M_{a-1,y-1} + \eta_{a,y}, \qquad 1 \le a \le 5 \qquad (2)$$

$$\log(N_{6+,y}) = \log(N_{5,y-1}e^{-F_{5,y-1}-M_{5,y-1}} + N_{6+,y-1}e^{-F_{6+,y-1}-M_{6+,y-1}}) + \eta_{6+,y}, \qquad a = 6+ \qquad (3)$$

where $\eta_{a,y}$ is the process error at age $a$ in year $y$ following $\eta_{a,y} \sim N(0, \omega_a^2)$. The recruitment of chub mackerel occurs at age 0, described by a function of SSB and process errors (Eqn. 1). We use a Beverton-Holt stock-recruitment relationship (Beverton and Holt, 1957):

$$f(SSB_y) = \frac{\alpha \times SSB_y}{1 + \beta \times SSB_y}, \qquad (4)$$

where $SSB_y$ is the sum-product of number ($N$), weight ($w$), and maturity ($g$) at age:

$$SSB_y = \sum_{a=0}^{6+} g_{a,y} w_{a,y} N_{a,y}\,. \qquad (5)$$

For fish older than age 0, the number of each cohort decreases by fishing mortality coefficient ($F_{a,y}$) and natural mortality coefficient ($M_{a,y}$) from the previous year and also be affected by process errors $\eta_{a,y}$ (Eqn. 2). For the plus-age group (6+), the number is described as the sum of surviving numbers of age 5 and age 6+ from the previous year (Eqn. 3).

In SAM, fishing mortality coefficients are assumed to follow a multivariate random walk:

$$\log(\boldsymbol{F_y}) = \log(\boldsymbol{F_{y-1}}) + \boldsymbol{\xi}_y\,, \qquad (6)$$

where $\boldsymbol{F_y} = (F_{1,y}, \ldots, F_{A+,y})^T$, $\boldsymbol{\xi_y} \sim \mathrm{MVN}(0, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})$, and $\boldsymbol{\Sigma}$ is the variance-covariance matrix of multivariate normal distribution (MVN). The diagonal elements of matrix $\boldsymbol{\Sigma}$ were $\sigma_a^2$, while off-diagonal elements represent covariance of $F$ process errors between age classes. This assumption of $F$ random walk allows us to estimate time-varying selectivity (Nielsen and Berg 2014). For the covariance of MVN, we assume that the correlation coefficient of $F$ between ages $a$ and $a'$ decreases along with their age differences: $\rho^{|a-a'|}\sigma_a\sigma_{a'}$ $(a \neq a')$.

*4.1.2 Observation model*

SAM is fitted to the data of catch-at-age and abundance indices. SAM uses the Baranov equation for estimates in catch-at-age:

$$\hat{C}_{a,y} = \frac{F_{a,y}}{F_{a,y} + M_{a,y}}\left(1 - \exp\left(-F_{a,y} - M_{a,y}\right)\right)N_{a,y} . \quad (7)$$

In this equation, $F_{a,y}$ and $\underline{N_{a,y}}$ are estimated parameters by random effects, while $\underline{M_{a,y}}$ is the natural mortality coefficient. That is, the predicted catch at age in number ($\hat{C}_{a,y}$) is a derived parameter. SAM then fit to observed catch-at-age in a lognormal assumption:

$$\log\left(C_{a,y}\right) = \log\left(\hat{C}_{a,y}\right) + \varepsilon_{a,y} , \quad (8)$$

where $\varepsilon_{a,y} \sim \mathrm{N}(0, \tau_a^2)$.

We have agreed to use six abundance indices (Figure 5d) which represent, respectively,

1. Relative number of age 0 fish from the summer survey by Japan,
2. Relative number of age 0 fish from the autumn survey by Japan,
3. Relative number of age 1 fish from the autumn survey by Japan,
4. Relative spawning stock biomass (SSB) from the egg survey by Japan,
5. Relative SSB from the dip-net fishery by Japan, and
6. Relative vulnerable stock biomass to Chinese fleet from the light purse-seine fishery by China.

The predicted values of these abundance indices can be expressed in the following general equation:

$$\hat{I}_{k,y} = q_k \left[\sum_{a=0}^{6+}\left(\chi_{a,y,k}N_{a,y}\right)\right]^{b_k} . \quad (9)$$

The subscripts *k*, *y*, *a* represent index, year, and age, respectively. $q_k$ and $b_k$ are the proportionality constant and the nonlinear coefficient, respectively, for index *k*. Note that this equation does not mean that all the abundance indices are all nonlinear against abundance but includes a linear case ($b_k$ =1). The parameter $\chi_{a,y,k}$ is a multiplier on the number of fish in age $a$ and year $y$ ($N_{a,y}$) for index *k*. For the abundance indices for age 0 fish number (*k*=1,2),

$$\chi_{a,y,k} = \begin{cases} 1, & a = 0 \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} . \quad (10)$$

For the abundance index for age 1 fish number (*k*=3),

$$\chi_{a,y,k} = \begin{cases} 1, & a = 1 \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} . \quad (11)$$

For the abundance indices for SSB (*k*=4,5),

$$\chi_{a,y,k} = g_{a,y}w_{a,y} . \quad (12)$$

The abundance indices for vulnerable stock biomass to Chinese fleet (*k*=6) would represent a part of the stock for each fleet or each member's fishery. For the abundance indices for vulnerable stock biomass (*k*=6), therefore,

$$\chi_{a,y,k} = \hat{s}_{a,y,k} w_{a,y,k} , \quad (13)$$

where $\hat{s}_{a,y,k}$ is the estimated fishery selectivity in age *a* and year *y* for index (or fleet) *k*. We cannot estimate fleet-specific *F* in the current setting of SAM or, therefore, derive fleet-specific predicted catch at age (see Eqn. 1). Since the fleet-specific catch-at-age data is available (Figure 5a), however, we can approximate the fleet-specific *F* as follows:

$$F_{a,y,k} \fallingdotseq \frac{C_{a,y,k}}{\sum_f C_{a,y,f}} F_{a,y} , \quad (14)$$

where $C_{a,y,k}$ are the observed catch number in age *a* and year *y* for fleet *k*. This approximation assumes that the fleet-specific *F* is proportional to fleet-specific "observed" catch at age in number. We then obtain the fleet-specific selectivity:

$$\hat{s}_{a,y,k} = \frac{F_{a,y,k}}{\max[\boldsymbol{F}_{y,k}]} , \quad (15)$$

where $\boldsymbol{F}_{y,k} = (F_{0,y,k}, F_{1,y,k}, \ldots, F_{6+,y,k})^{T}$. It is important to note that $\chi_{k,a,y}$ for *k*=6 include the estimated parameters ($F_{a,y,k}$), whereas $\chi_{k,a,y}$ for *k*=1-5 are provided from input data. We used the ratios of catch numbers of China to the total catch numbers as input data to fit the CPUE of Chinese light purse seine fishery. In calculating the vulnerable biomass, fleet- and age- specific weight ($w_{a,y,k}$ in Eqn. 12) is needed. However, since there are no agreed data of fleet- and age- specific weights in fishing year by Chinese fishery, we took a simp approach to using the stock weights for biomass calculation: $w_{a,y,k} = w_{a,y}$ (Figure 5b).

The list of fixed-effect and random-effect parameters is shown in Table 1. The parameters are estimated to maximize the marginal likelihood of summing process-error components and observation error components. The marginal likelihood is computed by the numerical integration using the Laplace approximation via Template Model Builder (TMB: Kristensen et al., 2016). We applied a generic bias-correction estimator for derived quantities calculated as a nonlinear function of random effects (e.g., $N_{a,y}$ is a derived quantity calculated from the random effect of $\log(N_{a,y})$), which is implemented in TMB (Thorson and Kristensen, 2016). Estimation uncertainties including standard errors (SEs) and confidence intervals were computed from the delta method in TMB. In this stock of chub mackerel, the period from July to the following June is treated as a fishing year (Manabe et al., 2024a (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA08-WP15)), and the estimated abundance is that at the beginning of the fishing year (i.e., July).

*4.2 Model settings of process and observation errors and nonlinearity of abundance indices*

SAM estimates multiple fixed-effect parameters of process and observation errors (Table 1). Estimating these parameters by age may cause the failure to converge or over-parameterization. Furthermore, CPUE does not always respond linearly to the stock abundance, and the presence of these indices can lead to overestimation or underestimation of resources (Nishijima et al., 2019; Rose and Kulka, 1999). One way to solve this problem is to estimate nonlinearity parameters, which

may improve model performance such as the fit to the abundance index and retrospective analysis (Hashimoto et al., 2018). We therefore conduct model selection for process and observation errors and nonlinearity of abundance indices based on AIC (see Nishijima et al. 2024d for details).

The following model settings were chosen for the base case scenario:
(1) all the six abundance indices have difference standard deviations (SDs) for observation errors,
(2) the nonlinear coefficients are estimated for the age-0 index from the Japanese summer survey, the age-0 index from the Japanese autumn survey, and the age-1 index from the Japanese autumn survey, while they are fixed at 1 (i.e., linear) for the other indices,
(3) SDs of catch-at-age observation errors differ for ages 0-1, ages 2-3, ages 4-5, and ages 6+,
(4) SDs of F random walk process errors differ between ages 0-1 and ages 2-6+, and
(5) SDs of N process errors differ for age 0, age 1, ages 2-4, and ages 5-6+.
Regarding N process errors, we set two cases depending on whether the SDs for age 1 and older are fixed at
a very small value (0.01) or estimated. The former case means that process errors occur only for age 0 recruitment (i.e., recruitment variability, while the latter means that the population size in a cohort fluctuates after recruitment by unknown factors other than fishery and pre-determined natural mortality.

*4.3 Model diagnostics*
For the selected models, we applied several model diagnostics to check the reliability from a statistical view. Firstly, we performed a jitter analysis in which the initial values of the parameters were varied and re-estimated to confirm that the estimated parameters reach the global optimum. We checked whether the final gradients of the fixed effect parameters are close to zero, which is a necessary condition for model convergence.

We then plotted residuals in the catch number by age and in abundance indices to examine whether the residuals have temporal patterns. We also examined residuals in process errors for numbers by age ($\eta_{a,y}$ in Eqns. 1-3) and F by age (diagonal components of $\boldsymbol{\xi}_y$ in Eqn. 6). to show the stock abundance historically changed by these process errors.

A five-year retrospective analysis was performed to examine if the estimates had systematic bias for the removal (updating) of data. Mohn's rho was calculated for total biomass, SSB, recruitment, and mean F. We also performed a retrospective forecasting, which excludes the stock index values and catch number by age from the latest year and compares the results of a one-year-ahead forecasting from the terminal year of those data (in which age-specific weight and maturity rates were used) with estimates from the model using all data.

The leave-one-out (LOO) index analysis was next conducted by excluding the six abundance indices one by one and comparing the estimates with the results obtained when all indices were used This analysis allows us to examine the impact of each index on abundance estimates and check their robustness.

To evaluate systematic under or over fitting One Step Ahead (OSA, Trijoulet et al., 2023) residuals were used. OSA residuals can assess how well a model fits the data, while not relying on assumptions of normality in the underlying data. These residuals represent the difference between the observed value at a particular time step and the value predicted by the model based on all prior information. OSA residuals were calculated for the indices of abundance and age composition data.

*4.4 Agreed base case scenario*

In order to improve the SAM fit to abundance indices and retrospective patterns, the TWG CMSA recognized the necessity of introduction of estimation of process error in survival of age groups older than age 0. The TWG CMSA also considered inclusion of FY2023 from the Japanese abundance indices, which had a large impact on the stock status of the most recent years. As a result, the following four scenarios were employed as representative cases:

1) B2, Estimate process error for only age 0 (recruitment) ;
2) S28-ProcEst, Estimate process error for all age groups;
3) S32-JP23, Estimate process error for only age 0 and use Japanese indices up to FY2023; and
4) S34-ProcEst23, Estimate process error for all age groups and use Japanese indices up to FY2023

TWG CMSA agreed to select S28-ProcEst as a base case scenario because of the better diagnostics than the model only with recruitment process error and agreement of data usage up to FY2022. The other three scenarios were employed to show possible range of uncertainty.

*4.5 Setting and equations for future projection and biological reference points*

Projections were carried out using parameter estimates from the models of B2-Mage (B2), S28-ProcEst, S32-JP23, and S34-PRocEst23. The model S28-ProcEst was agreed to be used as the base case, while the settings of the other models are found to be the most other plausible representations of current stock status. Biological parameters such as weight-at-age and maturity-at-age used for calculation of biological reference points are assumed as the average values during the most recent 7 years (FY2016 to FY2022), which represents the recent change in biological parameters. As a control, the average of the biological parameters was calculated over the stock assessment period.

The future harvesting scenario was predetermined as a total catch (CC) of 50, 100, 150, 200, 300 and 400 thousand tons after FY2023, compared with another future harvesting scenario under $F_{CUR}$ (average of F values from FY2020-2022).

*4.5.1 Biological reference points and evaluation of spawning potential*

We calculated commonly used biological reference points such as F%SPR (20%, 30%, 40%, and 50%), F0.1, Fmsy, and $SSB_{MSY}$ with the biological parameters described above (bio2020 and bio2010) and selectivity of Fcur. As for the F-based reference points, relative values to Fcur are shown in the results (e.g. Fmsy/Fcur). The equations to derive these reference points are described in Annex D in the past report for developing an operating model for this stock (https://www.npfc.int/summary-2nd-meeting-small-working-group-operating-model-chub-mackerel-stock-assessment) and definitions of these performance measures are same as the working paper for the sensitivity analysis (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-WP04).

We also calculated annual spawner per recruit (SPR) with historically changing weight and maturity rate at age of this stock (Figures 5b and 5c) to evaluate the historically changing spawning potential of this species. SPR is the cumulative weight of equilibrium spawning biomass (g) along its life history (growth, maturity, and natural mortality) of a recruit of fish under a certain fishing mortality coefficient of F. Usually, SPR(F) is defined as

$$\mathrm{SPR(F)} = \sum_{a=0}^{\infty} \exp(-M_a - F_a)\, g_a w_a$$

where $M_a$, $g_a$ and $w_a$ is natural mortality rate, maturity rate, and weight at age $a$. With this equation, we defined annually changing SPR without fishing as $SPR0_y$ where $F_a = 0, g_a = g_{a,y}$, and $w_a = w_{a,y}$ ($y = \mathrm{FY1970}, \mathrm{FY1971}, \ldots, \mathrm{FY2022}$). Similarly, we also calculated MSY reference points under the selectivity of Fcur and $SSB0_y$ with biological parameters averaged during each decade (y=FY1970-1979, 1980-1989, etc.…) to evaluate the effect of the changes in biological parameters on MSY reference points.

*4.5.2 Equations for calculating and population dynamics in future projection*

The population dynamics model for future projections is the same as that used in SAM. The calculation was conducted by an R package named frasyr (https://github.com/ichimomo/frasyr), which has been developed for the stock assessment of Japanese domestic fisheries resources. In particular, we used the functions for future projection and the calculation of biological reference points in frasyr. The general equations of the forward calculation of the population dynamics are

$$N_{a,y}^i = \begin{cases} \dfrac{\hat{\alpha} SSB_y^i}{1+\hat{\beta} SSB_y^i} \exp\left(\eta_{0,y}^i\right) \ \ (a=0) \\ N_{a-1,y-1}^i \exp\left(-M_{a-1} - F_{a-1,y-1}^i\right) \exp\left(\eta_{a,y}^i\right) \ (0<a<6) \\ N_{a-1,y-1}^i \exp\left(-M_{a-1} - F_{a-1,y-1}^i\right) \exp\left(\eta_{a,y}^i\right) + N_{a,y}^i \exp\left(-M_a - F_{a,y}^i\right) \exp\left(\eta_{a,y}^i\right) \ \ (a=6+) \end{cases}$$

where $\hat{\alpha}$ and $\hat{\beta}$ are stock recruitment parameters estimated by SAM, $N_{a,y}^i$ is the number of fish in year $y$ and age $a$ at $i$th iteration, $F_{a,y}^i$ is fishing mortality coefficient in year $y$ and age $a$ at $i$ th iteration, $\eta_{a,y}^i \sim \mathrm{N}(0, \hat{\omega}^2)$ where $\hat{\omega}^2$ is the variance of process error at recruitment estimated by SAM, and $SSB_y^i$ is SSB defined as $\sum_{a=0}^{6} N_{a,y}^i w_{a,y} g_{a,y}$. The equations are generally applied from the end year of the stock assessment period with the initial conditions of $N_{a,2022}^i = \hat{N}_{a,2022}$ in B1 and B2 and $N_{a,2023}^i = \hat{N}_{a,2023}$ in S7 and S8, where $\hat{N}_{a,y}$ is the point estimates by SAM. The fishing mortality in the initial and future years is assumed as $F_{a,2022}^i = \hat{F}_{a,2022}$ ($\hat{F}_{a,y}$ is point estimates by SAM), $F_{a,2023}^i = \mathrm{Fcur}$, and $F_{a,y}$ $(y > \mathrm{FY2023})$ is determined by future harvesting scenarios. The future biological parameters of $w_{a,y}$ and $m_{a,y}$ are given according to the scenarios described above (bio2020 or bio2010) for $y \geq \mathrm{FY2023}$.

The future harvesting scenario was predetermined as a total catch (*CC*) ranging from 50 to 400 thousand tons (along with a CC=0 scenario, Table 5). When catch number at age $C_{a,y}^i$ in year *y* and age *a* is calculated with the Baranov catch equation as $C_{a,y}^i = \frac{F_{a,y}^i}{F_{a,y}^i + M_a}\left(1 - \exp\left(-F_{a,y}^i - M_a\right)\right) N_{a,y}^i$, $F_{a,y}^i$ is equal to be $x_y^i \mathrm{Fcur}$ with the same selectivity as Fcur and adjustment factor of $x_y^i$ that is determined to satisfy the equation of $\sum_{a=0}^{6+} w_a C_{a,y}^i = CC$. If we cannot find $x_y^i$ to satisfy the equation because of too small number of fishes, we took the smaller of the two numbers, $x_i = \exp(10)$ or fishing mortality corresponding to 99% of total catches when $x_i = \exp(100)$. The stochastic simulations were conducted 5,000 times for each model and scenario.

## STOCK ASSESSMENT RESUTS

### *5.1 Base case model results*

TWG CMSA agreed to select S28-ProcEst as a base case scenario because of the better diagnostics than the model only with recruitment process error and agreement of data usage up to FY2022. The chub mackerel stock in the NWPO has experienced large changes in biological parameters over the time period of the model. The main temporal changes are a recent decrease in maturity at age, along with a recent decrease in the weight at age, both of which were observed to change over the model time period to cause temporal changes of biological reference points. Fixed Effects parameter estimates are shown in Table 2, and the management related quantities are listed in Table 3.

#### *5.1.1 Parameter estimates*

The estimated fixed effects parameters are shown in Tables 2 for S28-ProcEst (the other representative runs B2-Mage (B2), S32-JP23, and S34-PRocEst23 are shown in Appendix 2.). For all parameters, the final gradient values were very close to 0 and the SE values were less than 3. Correlation coefficients from the covariance matrices of the fixed effects parameters showed that $q_k$ and $b_k$ for age-0 and age-1 fish in the Japanese trawl surveys were highly negatively correlated (Figure 8). In addition, the parameters $\alpha$ and $\beta$ of the Beverton-Holt stock-recruitment relationship were highly positively correlated, however since $\beta$ can affect the estimation of $\alpha$ and vice versa, this is to be expected (Beverton and Holt 1957). These strong correlations are explained by the scales of abundance and SSB (see Discussion for details), and there were no problems with model convergence, as indicated by the absolute values of the final gradients approaching zero and sufficiently small SEs for these parameters (Table 2 and Appendix 1). The nonlinear coefficients in the Japanese trawl survey indices were estimated in the range of 1.6-2.4 (Table 2), suggesting that they have a tendency toward hyperdepletion (Figure 9).

*5.1.2 Time-series estimates for abundances and fishing impacts*

Since 1970, total biomass, SSB, and recruitment of chub mackerel have fluctuated widely from high to low to high (Table 4 and Figure 10). Specifically, stock levels were high in the 1970s, but declined in the 1980s, and stock levels were maintained at fairly low levels from the 1990s to the early 2000s; stock levels gradually recovered in the late 2000s and increased rapidly after the occurrence of the strong year class in FY2013. However, total biomass and SSB during the most recent 10-year period (FY2013-2022) did not reach the same high level as in the 1970s. In SAM, the estimated catch (sum product of estimated age-specific catch and age-specific weight) and the observed catch (sum product of observed age-specific catch and age-specific weight) do not match because of the assumption of observational error in the age-specific catch numbers, but the difference between these values was small, except in some years. Exploitation rate (estimated catch biomass / total biomass) and mean F remained constant, with some fluctuations, until the 2000s, but decreased thereafter. The overall trajectory, scale and trend of the runs were quite similar across all representative scenarios. The inclusion of the FY2023 data in the scenarios S32-JP23, and S34-PRocEst23 led to lower estimated SSB in the terminal years and higher F and exploitation rate since approximately 2019. Recruitment was higher in these scenarios as well over the years of FY2013-2015. In recent years, SSB had been increasing since the beginning of the 2010s, but after peaking in FY2017 it declined, slightly for the B2-Mage scenario, and significantly for the other three scenarios.

*5.1.3 Stock-recruitment relationship*

The estimated Beverton-Holt stock-recruitment relationship is shown in Figure 11 In the final base case scenario (S28-PRocEst), recruitment tended to increase in proportion to the increase in SSB, suggesting that the density-dependent effect in the stock-recruitment relationship is little found in

the historical range of estimated SSB for chub mackerel. SD of recruitment variability was 0.8 S28-Proc-Est, 0.75 for B2-Mage (B2), 0.74 for S32-JP23, and 0.79 for S34-PRocEst23.

*5.2 Model diagnostics*

*5.2.1 Residual plots*

Observation errors in catch number by age were largest for young and old age groups and smallest for intermediate age group 3 fish (Figures 12 and 13, see also Table 2). The time-series trend of the residuals was weak.

For abundance index values, observation error was largest for the Japanese trawl survey indices and smallest for the spawning egg index (Figure 14). The summer and autumn age-0 indices tended to have positive residuals in recent years (Figure 15).

Process errors in log(*N*) for age-0 fish (deviation from the stock-recruitment relationship) were highly variable, but those for age-1 fish and older were reasonably variable (Figure 16, left). Since the occurrence of the strong year class in 2013, process errors for age-0 fish have been positive, except for 2014 and 2019. After the 2018 class, the process errors for age-1 fish and older were mostly negative.

Process errors for log(*F*) (deviation from random walk) were larger in ages 0 and 1 than in the other ages (Figure 16, right). The pattern of random walks for each age was very similar, as evidenced by the very high correlation coefficient of 0.97 between the closely adjacent ages (Table 2).

*5.2.2 Retrospective analysis*

In the retrospective analysis, recruitment was slightly positively biased for the 2018 and, and as a result, total biomass also tended to be overbiased (i.e., revised downward as the data were updated) (Figure 17). Mohn's rho values for SSB were close to zero, and had small positive biases for the last three years; the mean F in 2017 tended to be higher.

In the retrospective forecasting, the retrospective bias for recruitment was reduced due to the loss of positive bias for the 2018 and 2020 year-classes (since they are predicted from the stock-recruitment relationship and therefore no longer takes extreme values), but retrospective patterns for other state variables were similar to those when no future forecasting was done (Figure 18).

*5.2.3 Leave-one-out index analysis*

The LOO index analysis showed that the abundance and exploitation rate did not change much regardless of which index was removed, indicating that the stock estimates are very robust (Figure 19). A closer look shows that the SSB estimates increased slightly in recent years when the dipnet

fishery CPUE and spawning egg indices were excluded, and the SSB estimates decreased slightly when the age-0 and age-1 fish indices were excluded. This may be because the age-0 and age-1 fish indices have had high values in many years since 2013 and have a role in increasing SSB, whereas the two SSB indices have tended to decrease slowly in recent years and thus decrease SSB (Figure 19). Although there were conflicting trends in the indices for age 0-1 fish and the indices for SSB, the effect of a single index was small because there were multiple indices for young and old fish, respectively. The influence of the Chinese purse seine CPUE was small.

*5.2.4 Evaluation of the One Step Ahead residuals*

OSA residuals were calculated for the age composition data the indices of abundance (Figures 20 and 21). The largest age composition residual was in the first year of the model for age 2 fish. In general, the age composition OSA residuals tended to be small and lacked any consistent patterning. The OSA residuals from the fits to the indices of abundance showed a similar lack of patterning and did not suggest systematic model deficiencies such as underfitting or overfitting. Overall, the OSA residuals indicate no issues with the model's performance. The residuals are appropriately centered around zero and show no significant persistent patterning, the quantile plot (Figure 22) indicates a good git.

*5.3 Reference points*

*5.3.1 Historical change in spawning potential of SPR0*

SPR0 has changed annually according to the biological parameters that changed each year (Figure 23). In particular, SPR0 decreased significantly from FY2015 onwards, reaching a minimum in 2019 and remaining low during the FY2020-2023 period. The average SPR0 for the 2020s (FY2020-2022) was 165 g in scenario S28-ProcEst which is about half of the SPR0 averaged for other decades.

*5.3.2 MSY-based reference points*

In the stock-recruitment relationship estimated by the base case model (S28-ProcEst), there was almost no density dependence effect within the range of spawning stock biomass and recruitment numbers observed in past, so the SSB0 and $SSB_{MSY}$ calculated based on this stock-recruitment relationship are extrapolated values that greatly exceed the past recruitment and spawning stock biomass (Fig. 10). Furthermore, since the productivity of this stock, represented by SPR0, has changed significantly over the years as seen in Fig. 6, the estimated values of SSB0 and $SSB_{MSY}$ (even under the single stock-recruitment relationship) varied greatly depending on which year's biological parameters were used. For example, the $SSB_{MSY}$ estimated using the biological parameters from 2016-2022 was about half of the estimate by using the biological parameters from all of the years (Table 3). In addition, the MSY reference points differed greatly among the different model specifications owing to the extreme extrapolation (Table ANNEX 2).

*5.4 Future projections*

The future projection under a constant catch scenario has a much wider prediction interval for future spawning biomass than the projection with a constant $F_{cur}$ (Figure 24). Because there is a trade-off between fluctuations in stock abundance and catch, it is impossible to avoid these high fluctuations in stock abundance under the scenario of constant catches. Therefore, in future projections, it is necessary to focus not only on the average values of SSB but also on the lower confidence interval (e.g. lower 5%) of SSB to evaluate the probability of the future SSB falling below a level below which we do not want to fall.

The future projection under a constant catch scenario has a very different outlook depending on whether the biological parameters are based on the recent years (FY2016-2022) or all years (FY1970-2022) (Figures 25 and 26).

The 5th percentile of the future SSB and average catch and SSB were compared among various harvesting scenarios (Figures 25 and 26). The results of the projections from the base case differed greatly based on choice of the biological parameters. These results suggest that the future projection of the stock depends greatly on the assumption of future biological parameters, whether or not the delay in growth and maturation will continue in the future. In detail, Table 5 shows the probabilities that future SSB is above the estimated SSB in FY2022 based on the results of 5000 times stochastic projections.

## DISCUSSION

In this working paper, a stock assessment of Northwestern Pacific chub mackerel was conducted using SAM with existing agreed data. SSB gradually decreased from the high period in the 1970s to the 1980s, and SSB remained at a low level from the 1990s to the early 2000s; the beginning of the decreasing trend in SSB in the 1980s can be explained by a reversal from the positive recruitment residuals that often appeared until FY1977 to negative residuals that often appeared thereafter, shown in the plot for process errors (Figure 18). High fishing mortalities were found since FY1986 thorough the 1990s, causing the extremely low levels of SSB for this time period. In the late 2000s, SSB gradually recovered as fishing pressure slowly decreased, and after the occurrence of the strong year class in FY2013. Although SSB recovered in the 2010s, it was still lower than in the late 1970s.

In SAM, it is possible to account for process errors for age-specific stock numbers, but we assumed that process errors after recruitment (for age-1 fish and older) would be much smaller. This is due to the difficulty of interpreting process errors for age-1 and older fish and the complexity of population dynamics, which makes it difficult to predict the future. The results of relaxing this

assumption are presented in a separate working paper (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-WP04).

SAM requires estimating the process error in age-specific F and the observation error in age-specific catch number. Since attempting to calculate these standard deviations (SDs) by age may lead to the failure of model convergence and overfitting, model selection based on AIC was performed. As a result, the observation errors in age-specific catch numbers were common for age-5 fish in the selected model, showing high SD for young and old age groups and low SD for intermediate age groups (minimum for 3-year-old fish). On the other hand, the process error for F was estimated to be larger for 0-1 year old fish than for older fish, suggesting that the change in fishing pressure is greater for younger age groups.

Because it is known that estimating nonlinearities in stock abundance index in an age-structured model improves model performance, such as reducing retrospective bias (Hashimoto et al. 2018), we examined whether to estimate nonlinear coefficients. We showed that AICs were significantly reduced in models with nonlinear coefficients estimated for age-0 and age-1 fish indices from the Japanese trawl surveys. AIC was only slightly reduced in the model with estimated nonlinear coefficients for the spawning egg index, but since the estimation of nonlinear coefficients can make the model estimation unstable, a simpler model assuming linearity for spawning egg was chosen here as the model for the base case scenarios. Nonlinear coefficients were estimated larger than 1 for the Japanese trawl survey indices and had a tendency toward hyperdepletion. The reason for this is not clear, but it may be because the survey was conducted at a particular time of year, and thus the variation in the index values is larger than the actual variation in recruitment. In addition, there was a strong negative correlation between this nonlinear coefficient and the proportionality constant, which can be explained by the relationship between the intercept and slope in the simple regression. The relationship between the index value and the number of stock tails is expressed as $\log(I_{k,y}) = \log(q_k) + b_k \log\{(N_{a,y})\} + \varepsilon_{k,y}$. In this equation $\log(q_k)$ and $b_k$ correspond to the intercept and slope, respectively, in the linear regression model having $\log(I_{k,y})$ as the response variable and $\log\{(N_{a,y})\}$ as the explanatory variable. In the current specification, Na,y has very large values (in millions) and is far from zero in the range of $\log\{(N_{a,y})\}$. Therefore, a small difference in slope bk can greatly change the value of intercept $\log(q_k)$, resulting in a high correlation between these parameters, and relatively large estimation errors and confidence intervals for $\log(q_k)$. As a test, when the unit of Na,y was made larger (1 billion fish) and $\log\{(N_{a,y})\}$ was made closer to zero, the correlation became weaker and the estimation error smaller, but the estimated parameters remained the same except for $\log(q_k)$. Thus, the high correlation between the nonlinear coefficients and the proportionality constant and the relatively larger SE of the proportionality constant are considered to be a matter of abundance scale and not a threat to estimability or identifiability for these parameters.

Retrospective analysis revealed a positive bias in recruitment and total biomass. This is because recent high recruitment (especially for the 2018 and 2020 classes), elevated by high recruitment index values, has been revised downward by low catch numbers and low SSB index values. In other words, there is a conflict between the age-0 and age-1 fish indices, which have been high since FY2013, and the SSB indices, which have been declining in recent years. The LOO index analysis showed that the effect of excluding one index was small, suggesting that the age-0 and age-1 fish indices have similar information to each other and the two SSB have similar information to each other. In a nutshell, this situation means that the high recruitment expected in the survey has disappeared, never showing up as catch or SSB. Unfortunately, the reason for this curious phenomenon is unknown at this moment.

In this stock, the choice of the stock-recruitment relationship is a difficult issue. In this case, we used the Beverton-Holt model, which is the simplest model and fits well with chub mackerel, but recruitment shows almost proportional relationship with SSB and the density-dependent effect is very small. Therefore, the uncertainty of the parameters related to the density dependence was large. Such low density-dependent effects and large uncertainties greatly affect the calculation of biological reference points and future projections (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-WP05). Estimating stock recruitment relationships in an assessment model is inherently challenging due to the complex interplay of biological and environmental factors that influence fish population dynamics. Variability in recruitment can result from factors such as fluctuating environmental conditions, changes in predator-prey interactions, and genetic diversity within the stock (Myers, 1998). Additionally, data limitations, such as insufficient time series data, measurement errors, and biases in sampling methods, further complicate the estimation process (Maunder & Deriso, 2013). These difficulties are exacerbated by the non-linear and often unpredictable nature of recruitment, making it hard to develop reliable models that accurately capture the true dynamics of fish populations (Hilborn & Walters, 1992). Another possible stock-recruitment relationship is the use of the hockey-stick model, but it cannot be applied as is in SAM using TMB, where optimization is performed by automatic differentiation. From the viewpoint of stock assessment and management for chub mackerel, it will be necessary to consider how the stock-recruitment relationship should be characterized in the future.

This is the first chub mackerel stock assessment in NPFC since the TWG CMSA was established in 2017. Although it has taken a very long time to select the stock assessment model by simulation, the data and model to be used this time have been determined with the agreement of all Members. The stock of chub mackerel was increasing in the 2010s, but the situation has changed since the beginning of the 2020s, and at least the period of increase is considered to have passed. Furthermore, the abundance indices for SSB in 2023 for Japan, which was not used in the base case analysis, is

significantly reduced (Figure 1), and a sensitivity analysis using these indices would reduce SSB more recently than in the base case (NPFC-2024-TWG CMSA09-WP04), so this SSB in this working paper may also be an overestimate. Although there are still issues to be resolved, such as retrospective bias and highly uncertain parameters, it is hoped that the results of the stock assessment in the base case scenario while taking into account the results of sensitivity analysis will provide effective scientific advice for the sustainable use of chub mackerel in the Northwestern Pacific Ocean.

The chub mackerel stock in the NWPO has experienced large changes in biological parameters over the time period of the model. The main temporal changes are a recent decrease in maturity at age, along with a recent decrease in the weight at age, both of which were observed to change over the model time period to cause temporal changes of biological reference points. Maximum sustainable yield (MSY)-based reference points are highly variable over the time series of the assessment because the weight- and maturity- at age of chub mackerel has varied widely (Figures 3 and 4), which impacts the productivity of the stock. Unfished spawning biomass per recruit (SPR0) represents the theoretical equilibrium productivity per fish assuming no fishing. SPR0 has varied remarkably over time (Figure 5).

In addition, as there is little recruitment compensation in the stock-recruitment relationship within the range of historically observed SSB and recruitment (Figure 8), estimates of biomass-based MSY reference points are extreme explorations that are highly sensitive to model configuration.

Because of the above reasons, commonly used reference points such as MSY-related or SPR-related reference points vary over time and are uncertain, and are potentially misleading with respect to stock status. For example, the MSY based reference points have varied by the assumption of biological parameters to be used (Table 31). The exploitation rates corresponding to the MSY as 10% when assuming biological parameters during the whole historical period, but it dropped to 5% when using the most recent 7 years biological parameters.

As such, at this time, the TWG CMSA does not recommend the use of MSY-based reference points for management advice. Instead, the TWG CMSA provides information of current estimates of chub mackerel SSB and F (average FY2020-2022) relative to the minimum, 25th, 50th, 75th and maximum value of the SSB and F values over the entire time period (FY1970-2022; Table 6). Values relating to the most recent time period (FY2016-2022) are also shown in order to describe the current stock relative to recent conditions.

The abundance estimated by the Japanese egg survey and the CPUEs from the Japanese dipnet and Russian trawl decreased over recent years, showing that they were simultaneously reduced to about

half the level of recent years in 2023. Therun of the stock assessment model including Japanese CPUE for FY2023 shows substantial decline in biomass and SSB in FY2022 and further in FY2023 and higher fishing mortality in the last few years (Figure 7).

## SUMMARY

**Exploitation status**

Estimated rates of exploitation (fishing year catch/fishing year total biomass) time series generally fluctuated between 5 and 20% and followed the estimated Fs over time, with annual removal rates that ranged from roughly 10 to 30% over the modeled timeframe (Figure 9), with some larger annual removals in excess of 40%.

**Harvest Recommendations**

Given the uncertainty in biological parameters in future, which have a large impact on the projection results, the TWG CMSA considers it is not appropriate to provide long-term harvesting recommendations at this time. A short-term (towards 2028) projection was undertaken to assess the effects of varying catch levels, ranging from 50 to 400 thousand tons, based on the most recent seven years' biological data (Figure 9) and the entire time series of biological data (Figure 10) for management considerations. Projections based on the most recent seven years' biological data showed that Fcur leads to future constant decline of SSB and it is necessary to reduce current fishing mortality (Table 3).

**Data and Research needs**

The assessment results, including projections, are dependent on biological parameters and processes which are uncertain. Therefore, future studies should be focused on collecting and analyzing biological information, e.g., maturity-at-age, weight-at-age, which would improve the assessment. Fisheries-dependent data, such as fleet-specific catch-at-age, are also critical to develop Member-specific fishing fleet and age-specific abundance indices.

A critically important recommendation that should be carried out in 2-3 years is to develop a harvest control rule specific to this stock via an MSE process. This HCR should be dynamic and able to adjust annual total catches depending on the stock abundance as well as the target and limit reference points. During the process of the development of MSE, uncertainties in parameter estimates, time-varying or density-dependent biological parameters, and stock-recruitment assumptions should be considered.

Timely collection of biological information and further research on biological parameters and processes, including the effect of environment and climate change, are critically important to facilitate the accurate estimation of reference points.

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## TABLES

*Table 1*

*The list of mathematical notations for SAM, including the symbol used, its type (Index, Data, random effects: RE, fixed effects: FE, and derived quantities: DQ, and its description).*

| Symbol | Type | Description |
|---|---|---|
| $a$ | Index | Age class (from 0 to 6+) |
| $y$ | Index | Fishing year (from 1970 to 2022) |
| $k$ | Index | Fleet ID for abundance index (from 1 to 6) |
| $C_{a,y}$ | Data | Observed catch number at age *a* in a year *y* |
| $w_{a,y}$ | Data | Stock weight at age *a* in a year *y* (also used as catch weight for simplicity) |
| $g_{a,y}$ | Data | Maturity at age *a* in a year *y* |
| $M_{a,y}$ | Data | Natural mortality coefficient at age *a* in a year *y* |
| $N_{a,y}$ | RE | Number at age *a* in a year *y* |
| $F_{a,y}$ | RE | Fishing mortality coefficient at age *a* in a year *y* |
| $\omega_a$ | FE | SD for the process error in number at age *a* |
| $\sigma_a$ | FE | SD for the process error in F at age *a* |
| $\rho$ | FE | Correlation coefficient in MVN of F random walk between adjacent age classes |
| $\tau_a$ | FE | SD for the measurement error in catch at age *a* |
| $q_k$ | FE | Catchability coefficient for abundance index *k* |
| $v_k$ | FE | SD for the measurement error in abundance index *k* |
| $b_k$ | FE | Nonlinear coefficient for abundance index *k* |
| $\alpha$ | FE | Slope of stock-recruitment relationship at the origin |
| $\beta$ | FE | Strength of density dependence in stock-recruitment relationship |
| $\hat{C}_{a,y}$ | DQ | Predicted catch number at age *a* in a year *y* |
| $\hat{s}_{a,y}$ | DQ | Selectivity at age *a* in a year *y* |

*Table 2*

*Fixed-effect parameters (FE), their maximum likelihood estimates (MLE), their standard errors (SE), their final gradients, symbols including the information on age class and index fleet, and unlinked value (inverse link function of MLE) in the selected model (see Table 4) under Scenario S28-ProcEst.*

| FE | MLE | SE | Gradient | Unlinked value | Symbol |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| logQ | -14.65 | 2.15 | 0.0000 | 4.36E-07 | $q_1$ |
| logQ | -15.54 | 2.25 | 0.0001 | 1.79E-07 | $q_2$ |
| logQ | -10.10 | 1.68 | 0.0000 | 4.12E-05 | $q_3$ |
| logQ | -0.23 | 0.14 | -0.0001 | 0.7926 | $q_4$ |
| logQ | -2.50 | 0.17 | -0.0001 | 0.0818 | $q_5$ |
| logQ | -4.85 | 0.24 | 0.0000 | 0.0078 | $q_6$ |
| logB | 0.80 | 0.12 | 0.0001 | 2.2251 | $b_1$ |
| logB | 0.89 | 0.11 | 0.0025 | 2.4281 | $b_2$ |
| logB | 0.54 | 0.13 | 0.0003 | 1.7182 | $b_3$ |
| logSdLogFsta | -0.89 | 0.18 | 0.0000 | 0.4101 | $\sigma_{0\text{-}1}$ |
| logSdLogFsta | -1.24 | 0.17 | 0.0000 | 0.2894 | $\sigma_{2\text{-}6+}$ |
| logSdLogN | -0.22 | 0.13 | 0.0001 | 0.7993 | $\omega_0$ |
| logSdLogN | -1.06 | 0.29 | 0.0000 | 0.3475 | $\omega_1$ |
| logSdLogN | -1.31 | 0.22 | -0.0001 | 0.2698 | $\omega_{2-4}$ |
| logSdLogN | -1.27 | 0.60 | 0.0000 | 0.2814 | $\omega_{5\text{-}6+}$ |
| logSdLogObs | -0.41 | 0.11 | 0.0001 | 0.6624 | $\tau_{0\text{-}1}$ |
| logSdLogObs | -1.31 | 0.19 | 0.0000 | 0.2695 | $\tau_{2\text{-}3}$ |
| logSdLogObs | -0.90 | 0.17 | 0.0000 | 0.4067 | $\tau_{4\text{-}5}$ |
| logSdLogObs | -0.12 | 0.14 | -0.0001 | 0.8842 | $\tau_{6+}$ |
| logSdLogObs | -0.27 | 0.23 | 0.0000 | 0.7603 | $v_1$ |
| logSdLogObs | -0.58 | 0.39 | 0.0000 | 0.5595 | $v_2$ |
| logSdLogObs | -0.33 | 0.23 | 0.0000 | 0.7166 | $v_3$ |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| logSdLogObs | -1.06 | 0.20 | 0.0000 | 0.3455 | $v_4$ |
| logSdLogObs | -0.56 | 0.17 | 0.0000 | 0.5721 | $v_5$ |
| logSdLogObs | -0.51 | 0.25 | 0.0000 | 0.5987 | $v_6$+ |
| rec_loga | -4.36 | 0.20 | 0.0001 | 0.0128 | α |
| rec_logb | -8.66 | 2.17 | 0.0000 | 0.0002 | β |
| logit_rho | 3.65 | 0.80 | 0.0000 | 0.9747 | ρ |

*Table 3*

*Reference points for the base case scenario. Reference point values in this table are calculated by holding $F_{current}$ the same for all calculations, but by varying the time period (either FY1970-FY2022 or FY2016-FY2022) over which the biological parameters are estimated. Refer to Glossary in the body of the assessment for the definitions. For the description of the biological parameters, see Table ANNEX 3.*

| **Biological parameters used** | **FY2016-FY2022** | FY1970-FY2022 |
|---|---|---|
| | **S28-ProcEst** | S28-ProcEst |
| current%SPR | **28.3** | 40.3 |
| Fmed/Fcur | **0.478** | 1.629 |
| F0.1/Fcur | **1.344** | 1.344 |
| FpSPR.30.SPR/Fcur | **0.942** | 1.498 |
| FpSPR.40.SPR/Fcur | **0.673** | 1.010 |
| FpSPR.50.SPR/Fcur | **0.484** | 0.696 |
| FpSPR.60.SPR/Fcur | **0.342** | 0.475 |
| FpSPR.70.SPR/Fcur | **0.230** | 0.311 |
| $F_{MSY}$/Fcur | **0.258** | 0.668 |
| $B_{MSY}$ | **9396.157** | 17179.502 |
| $SSB_{MSY}$ | **2904.704** | 6084.597 |
| h | **0.358** | 0.501 |
| SSB0 | **7123.476** | 17441.919 |
| $SSB_{MSY}$/SSB0 | **0.408** | 0.349 |
| $F_{MSY}$SPR | **0.673** | 0.511 |
| MSY | 436.8467 | 1713.406 |
| MSY/$B_{MSY}$ (exploitation rate at MSY) | 0.046 | 0.10 |

*Table 4*

*Time series of estimates of total biomass, spawning stock biomass, recruitment, catch, and exploitation rate (catch/biomass) and their standard error (SE) under Scenario S28-ProcEst. The SEs were derived using the delta method.*

| Fishing | Biomass (1000 MT) | | SSB (1000 MT) | | Recruitment (billion) | | Catch (1000 MT) | | Exploitation rate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| year | Estimate | SE | MLE | SE | MLE | SE | MLE | SE | MLE | SE |
| 1970 | 4,019 | 749 | 678.8 | 99.3 | 18.991 | 7.573 | 782.6 | 133.2 | 0.195 | 0.040 |
| 1971 | 4,547 | 771 | 863.4 | 124.8 | 18.903 | 7.061 | 842.6 | 123.2 | 0.185 | 0.033 |
| 1972 | 4,700 | 830 | 749.4 | 113.0 | 7.774 | 3.115 | 668.9 | 107.6 | 0.142 | 0.026 |
| 1973 | 4,224 | 659 | 937.1 | 137.5 | 7.824 | 2.953 | 780.2 | 110.7 | 0.185 | 0.030 |
| 1974 | 4,026 | 590 | 1253.2 | 191.4 | 12.672 | 4.621 | 846.4 | 115.6 | 0.210 | 0.034 |
| 1975 | 3,616 | 534 | 1070.1 | 158.5 | 19.237 | 6.994 | 867.6 | 119.3 | 0.240 | 0.037 |
| 1976 | 4,417 | 765 | 1046.2 | 147.7 | 21.643 | 7.800 | 708.0 | 98.0 | 0.160 | 0.029 |
| 1977 | 5,481 | 887 | 1200.8 | 163.1 | 17.649 | 6.316 | 947.0 | 139.1 | 0.173 | 0.029 |
| 1978 | 5,700 | 868 | 1322.2 | 171.6 | 12.187 | 4.505 | 1345.9 | 208.5 | 0.236 | 0.036 |
| 1979 | 3,563 | 485 | 1327.6 | 184.9 | 5.883 | 2.137 | 996.9 | 138.1 | 0.280 | 0.038 |
| 1980 | 2,228 | 302 | 1068.2 | 160.1 | 6.684 | 2.414 | 594.3 | 81.6 | 0.267 | 0.039 |
| 1981 | 2,392 | 409 | 734.4 | 116.7 | 8.037 | 2.880 | 404.5 | 58.2 | 0.169 | 0.032 |
| 1982 | 2,203 | 357 | 551.1 | 82.2 | 5.372 | 1.916 | 365.5 | 52.2 | 0.166 | 0.028 |
| 1983 | 1,795 | 261 | 517.9 | 71.7 | 5.721 | 2.020 | 374.6 | 51.4 | 0.209 | 0.032 |
| 1984 | 2,322 | 379 | 601.2 | 80.3 | 7.272 | 2.565 | 498.0 | 69.2 | 0.214 | 0.035 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1985 | 1,978 | 299 | 480.7 | 62.3 | 6.889 | 2.416 | 468.5 | 70.6 | 0.237 | 0.036 |
| 1986 | 1,486 | 218 | 347.0 | 45.0 | 3.056 | 1.075 | 509.2 | 86.8 | 0.343 | 0.043 |
| 1987 | 937 | 124 | 322.3 | 41.3 | 1.206 | 0.431 | 362.0 | 55.8 | 0.386 | 0.041 |
| 1988 | 554 | 71 | 256.0 | 37.6 | 0.549 | 0.208 | 230.7 | 34.1 | 0.416 | 0.045 |
| 1989 | 313 | 48 | 137.0 | 20.5 | 0.446 | 0.166 | 102.9 | 15.1 | 0.329 | 0.051 |
| 1990 | 237 | 48 | 75.3 | 13.8 | 0.548 | 0.209 | 32.4 | 4.9 | 0.137 | 0.030 |
| 1991 | 342 | 83 | 56.5 | 10.5 | 1.230 | 0.448 | 28.2 | 4.7 | 0.082 | 0.020 |
| 1992 | 589 | 139 | 63.4 | 10.1 | 2.436 | 0.910 | 65.8 | 13.1 | 0.112 | 0.025 |
| 1993 | 581 | 105 | 92.5 | 14.9 | 0.923 | 0.322 | 181.2 | 45.1 | 0.312 | 0.051 |
| 1994 | 407 | 61 | 110.4 | 15.4 | 0.825 | 0.294 | 116.1 | 19.0 | 0.285 | 0.041 |
| 1995 | 395 | 69 | 92.2 | 12.5 | 1.544 | 0.544 | 115.6 | 21.7 | 0.292 | 0.045 |
| 1996 | 677 | 183 | 51.2 | 6.6 | 4.024 | 1.507 | 169.6 | 46.8 | 0.250 | 0.048 |
| 1997 | 621 | 139 | 43.7 | 5.8 | 0.671 | 0.233 | 262.1 | 80.0 | 0.422 | 0.062 |
| 1998 | 316 | 47 | 87.9 | 15.1 | 0.358 | 0.129 | 94.6 | 17.0 | 0.300 | 0.041 |
| 1999 | 298 | 58 | 89.3 | 14.0 | 0.883 | 0.313 | 75.8 | 12.6 | 0.255 | 0.042 |
| 2000 | 248 | 49 | 54.0 | 7.3 | 0.574 | 0.225 | 57.2 | 12.7 | 0.230 | 0.044 |
| 2001 | 161 | 27 | 59.4 | 9.3 | 0.336 | 0.128 | 36.9 | 6.3 | 0.229 | 0.039 |
| 2002 | 299 | 56 | 42.5 | 6.3 | 1.743 | 0.469 | 36.2 | 7.2 | 0.121 | 0.025 |
| 2003 | 345 | 61 | 53.6 | 7.2 | 1.183 | 0.332 | 56.6 | 12.4 | 0.164 | 0.032 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2004 | 854 | 160 | 137.3 | 20.9 | 4.418 | 1.147 | 128.3 | 24.0 | 0.150 | 0.028 |
| 2005 | 894 | 153 | 86.4 | 11.5 | 1.692 | 0.395 | 194.4 | 45.4 | 0.217 | 0.038 |
| 2006 | 759 | 106 | 272.3 | 44.2 | 0.525 | 0.142 | 209.2 | 36.2 | 0.275 | 0.039 |
| 2007 | 728 | 104 | 268.2 | 44.5 | 2.545 | 0.644 | 153.1 | 22.6 | 0.210 | 0.033 |
| 2008 | 692 | 99 | 158.8 | 25.4 | 1.367 | 0.290 | 150.6 | 25.8 | 0.218 | 0.035 |
| 2009 | 754 | 104 | 165.7 | 26.4 | 2.539 | 0.535 | 139.5 | 21.4 | 0.185 | 0.032 |
| 2010 | 846 | 127 | 155.0 | 27.6 | 2.130 | 0.438 | 124.3 | 21.6 | 0.147 | 0.029 |
| 2011 | 941 | 143 | 217.8 | 39.1 | 1.176 | 0.271 | 102.0 | 16.4 | 0.108 | 0.021 |
| 2012 | 1,206 | 176 | 317.3 | 54.3 | 3.103 | 0.712 | 129.2 | 18.2 | 0.107 | 0.020 |
| 2013 | 3,093 | 541 | 352.9 | 59.5 | 15.566 | 3.718 | 220.4 | 37.7 | 0.071 | 0.015 |
| 2014 | 3,004 | 570 | 453.2 | 75.4 | 4.067 | 1.092 | 309.9 | 60.5 | 0.103 | 0.021 |
| 2015 | 3,126 | 484 | 309.9 | 58.3 | 6.271 | 1.404 | 420.0 | 67.9 | 0.134 | 0.023 |
| 2016 | 3,850 | 574 | 459.8 | 84.3 | 12.688 | 3.016 | 471.9 | 68.8 | 0.123 | 0.022 |
| 2017 | 3,360 | 464 | 762.4 | 145.3 | 10.329 | 2.364 | 457.1 | 62.4 | 0.136 | 0.022 |
| 2018 | 4,108 | 666 | 774.4 | 151.4 | 22.590 | 5.807 | 435.8 | 59.7 | 0.106 | 0.020 |
| 2019 | 3,018 | 462 | 734.2 | 154.9 | 5.963 | 1.257 | 358.4 | 51.4 | 0.119 | 0.022 |
| 2020 | 2,971 | 445 | 619.7 | 125.0 | 10.933 | 2.537 | 423.9 | 55.9 | 0.143 | 0.026 |
| 2021 | 2,868 | 516 | 512.0 | 106.9 | 12.216 | 3.355 | 357.4 | 48.7 | 0.125 | 0.026 |
| 2022 | 2,825 | 555 | 446.9 | 109.5 | 9.695 | 2.397 | 252.3 | 39.6 | 0.089 | 0.022 |

*Table 5*

*Probability that future SSB is above 2022 SSB in each model.*

| Name | HCR_name | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B2-Mage | Catch000 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 90 | 44 | 43 | 45 | 43 |
| B2-Mage | Catch050 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| B2-Mage | Catch100 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| B2-Mage | Catch150 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 98 | 98 | 98 |
| B2-Mage | Catch200 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 98 | 92 | 93 | 94 |
| B2-Mage | Catch300 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 72 | 68 | 69 | 70 |
| B2-Mage | Catch400 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 66 | 42 | 43 | 42 | 40 |
| S32-JP23indics | Catch000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| S32-JP23indics | Catch050 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| S32-JP23indics | Catch100 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 97 | 95 | 96 |
| S32-JP23indics | Catch150 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 92 | 67 | 71 | 73 |
| S32-JP23indics | Catch200 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 31 | 35 | 41 | 42 |
| S32-JP23indics | Catch300 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 6 |
| S32-JP23indics | Catch400 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| S28-ProcEst | Catch000 | 38 | 57 | 76 | 64 | 48 | 44 | 46 | 43 |
| S28-ProcEst | Catch050 | 38 | 57 | 97 | 99 | 98 | 98 | 98 | 99 |
| S28-ProcEst | Catch100 | 38 | 57 | 96 | 96 | 94 | 94 | 95 | 96 |
| S28-ProcEst | Catch150 | 38 | 57 | 93 | 92 | 88 | 88 | 89 | 90 |
| S28-ProcEst | Catch200 | 38 | 57 | 89 | 87 | 80 | 78 | 79 | 80 |
| S28-ProcEst | Catch300 | 38 | 57 | 79 | 70 | 58 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| S28-ProcEst | Catch400 | 38 | 57 | 66 | 49 | 38 | 36 | 34 | 32 |
| S34-ProcEst23 | Catch000 | 0 | 7 | 47 | 26 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 12 |
| S34-ProcEst23 | Catch050 | 0 | 7 | 95 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 97 | 98 |
| S34-ProcEst23 | Catch100 | 0 | 7 | 89 | 93 | 88 | 84 | 86 | 88 |
| S34-ProcEst23 | Catch150 | 0 | 7 | 80 | 81 | 69 | 64 | 67 | 68 |
| S34-ProcEst23 | Catch200 | 0 | 7 | 70 | 63 | 45 | 42 | 44 | 45 |
| S34-ProcEst23 | Catch300 | 0 | 7 | 45 | 25 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 12 |
| S34-ProcEst23 | Catch400 | 0 | 7 | 24 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 |

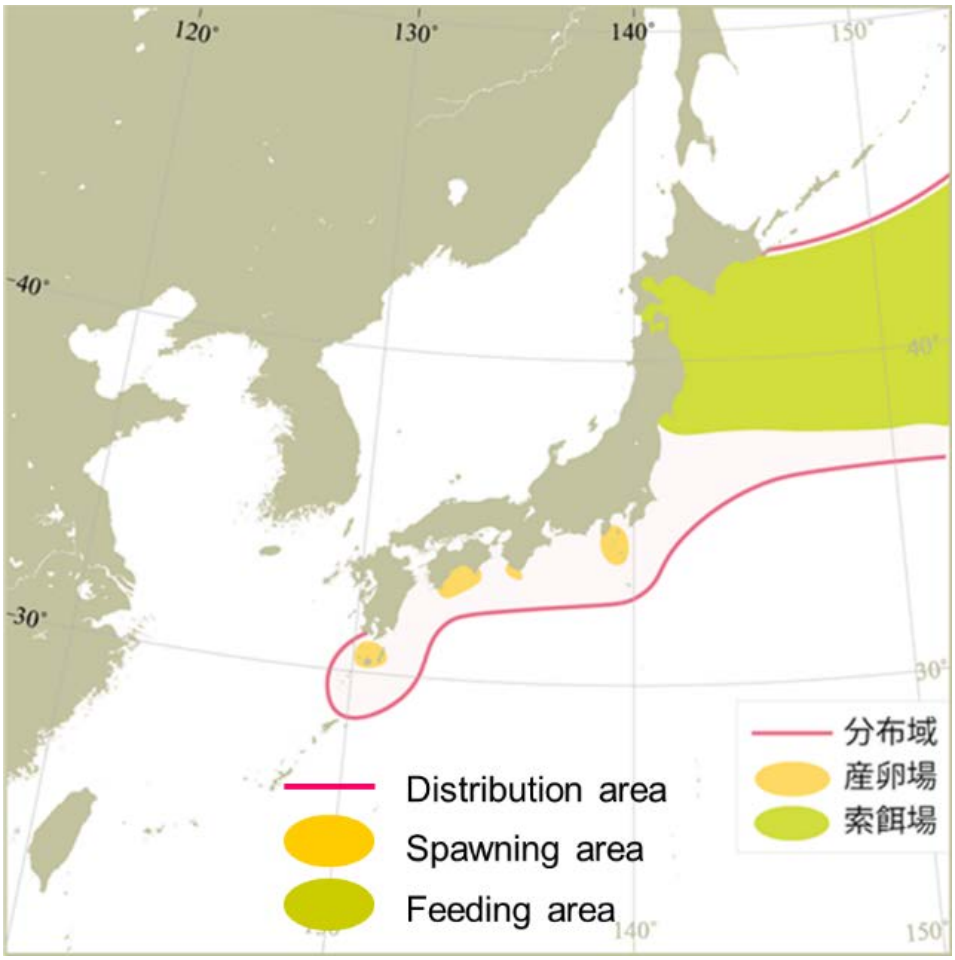
*Table 6*

*Stock status summary from the base case scenario.*

| Stock Status Summary Table | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SSB (Thousand MT) | Total Biomass (Thousand MT) | Recruitment (Million Individuals) | F | Exploitation | SPR_0 |
| **2022 Estimate** | 447 | 2,825 | 9,839 | 0.23 | 0.089 | 171.1 |
| **Current (Average 2020-2022)** | 526 | 2,888 | 11,097 | 0.28 | 0.119 | 165.4 |
| | | | | | | |
| **Values relative to the all years of the time series (i.e. 1970-2022)** | **SSB (Thousand MT)** | **Total Biomass (Thousand MT)** | **Recruitment (million individuals)** | **F** | **Exploitation** | **SPR_0** |
| **Historical Minimum (Min)** | 45 | 172 | 365 | 0.23 | 0.071 | 155 |
| **Historical 25 percentile (25%)** | 97 | 634 | 1,308 | 0.36 | 0.136 | 266 |
| **Historical Median (Med)** | 335 | 1,566 | 4,353 | 0.61 | 0.185 | 344 |
| **Historical 75 percentile (75%)** | 744 | 3,177 | 9,839 | 0.71 | 0.25 | 379 |
| **Historical Maximum (Max)** | 1,394 | 6,050 | 23,579 | 1.11 | 0.422 | 501 |
| | | | | | | |
| **Ratios Relative to 1970-2022** | Stock Status Related to Biomass | | | Stock Status Related to Fishing Intensity | | |
| **Current /Historical Minimum** | 11.694 | 16.81 | 30.436 | 1.21 | 1.674 | 1.067 |
| **Current /25%_Historical** | 5.418 | 4.554 | 8.483 | 0.79 | 0.874 | 0.622 |
| **Current /Med_Historical** | 1.569 | 1.844 | 2.55 | 0.47 | 0.643 | 0.481 |
| **Current /75%_Historical** | 0.707 | 0.909 | 1.128 | 0.40 | 0.475 | 0.436 |
| **Current /Max_Historical** | 0.377 | 0.477 | 0.471 | 0.25 | 0.282 | 0.33 |
| | | | | | | |
| **Values relative to 2016-2022** | **SSB (Thousand MT)** | **Total Biomass (Thousand MT)** | **Recruitment (million individuals)** | **F** | **Exploitation** | **SPR_0** |
| **Recent Minimum (Min)** | 447 | 2,825 | 6,043 | 0.23 | 0.089 | 155.0 |
| **Recent 25th percentile (25%)** | 486 | 2,919 | 10,154 | 0.26 | 0.112 | 162.5 |
| **Recent Median (Med)** | 620 | 3,018 | 11,077 | 0.29 | 0.123 | 167.5 |
| **Recent75 percentile (75%)** | 748 | 3,605 | 12,622 | 0.30 | 0.130 | 177.6 |
| **Recent Maximum (Max)** | 774 | 4,108 | 22,898 | 0.31 | 0.143 | 217.7 |
| | | | | | | |
| **Ratios Relative to 2016-2022** | Stock Status Related to Biomass | | | Stock Status Related to Fishing Intensity | | |
| **Current / Recent Min** | 1.18 | 1.02 | 1.84 | 1.21 | 1.34 | 1.07 |
| **Current /25%_Recent** | 1.08 | 0.99 | 1.09 | 1.10 | 1.06 | 1.02 |
| **Current /Med_Recent** | 0.85 | 0.96 | 1.00 | 0.98 | 0.97 | 0.99 |
| **Current /75%_Recent** | 0.70 | 0.80 | 0.88 | 0.94 | 0.91 | 0.93 |
| **Current /Max_Recent** | 0.68 | 0.70 | 0.48 | 0.92 | 0.83 | 0.76 |

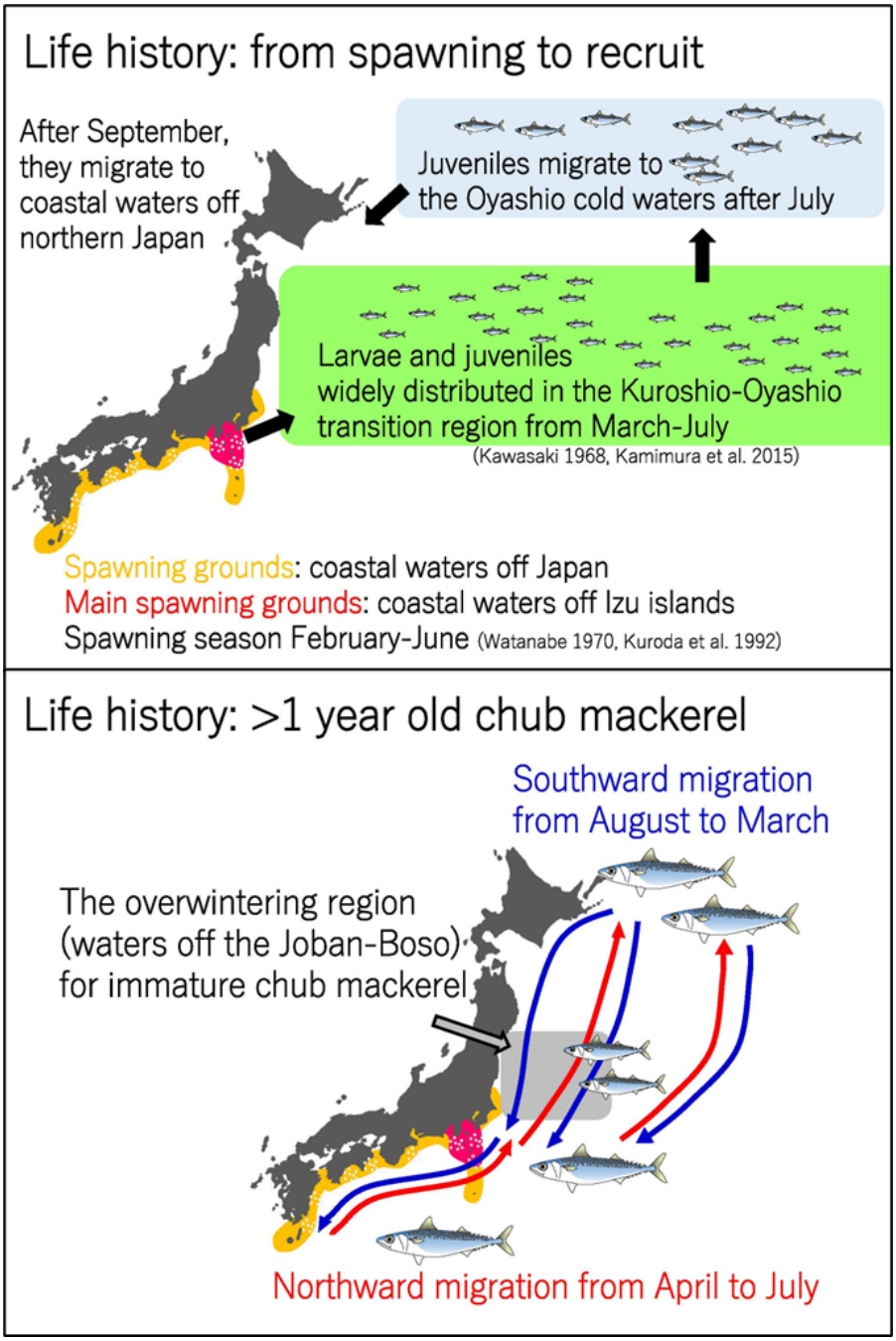
## FIGURES

*Figure 1*



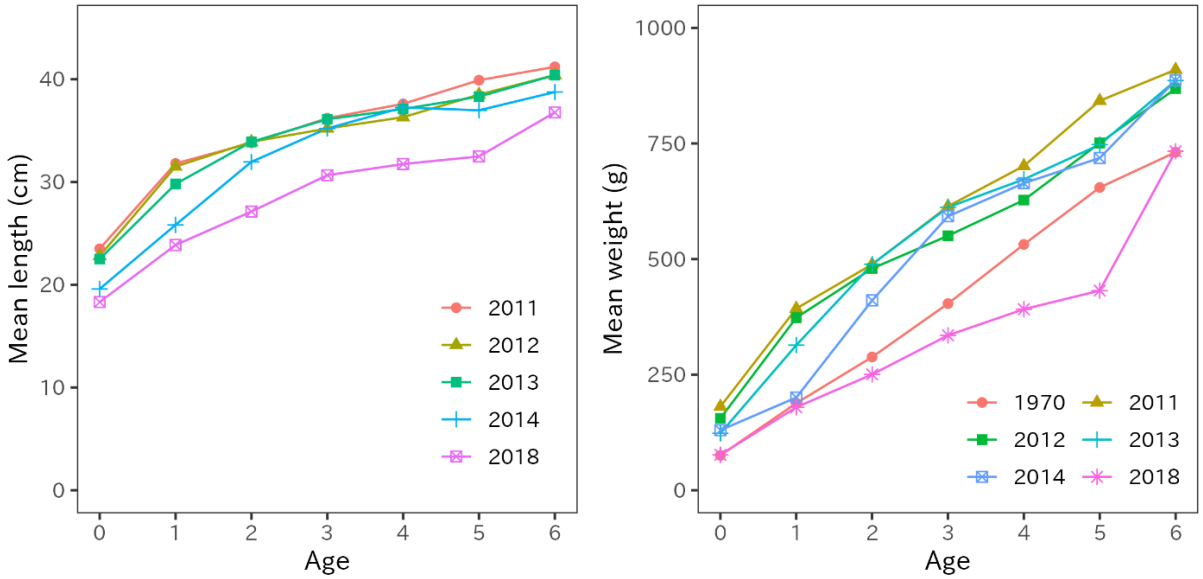

*Map of distribution of chub mackerel in the North Pacific (Yukami et al. 2024).*

*Figure 2*



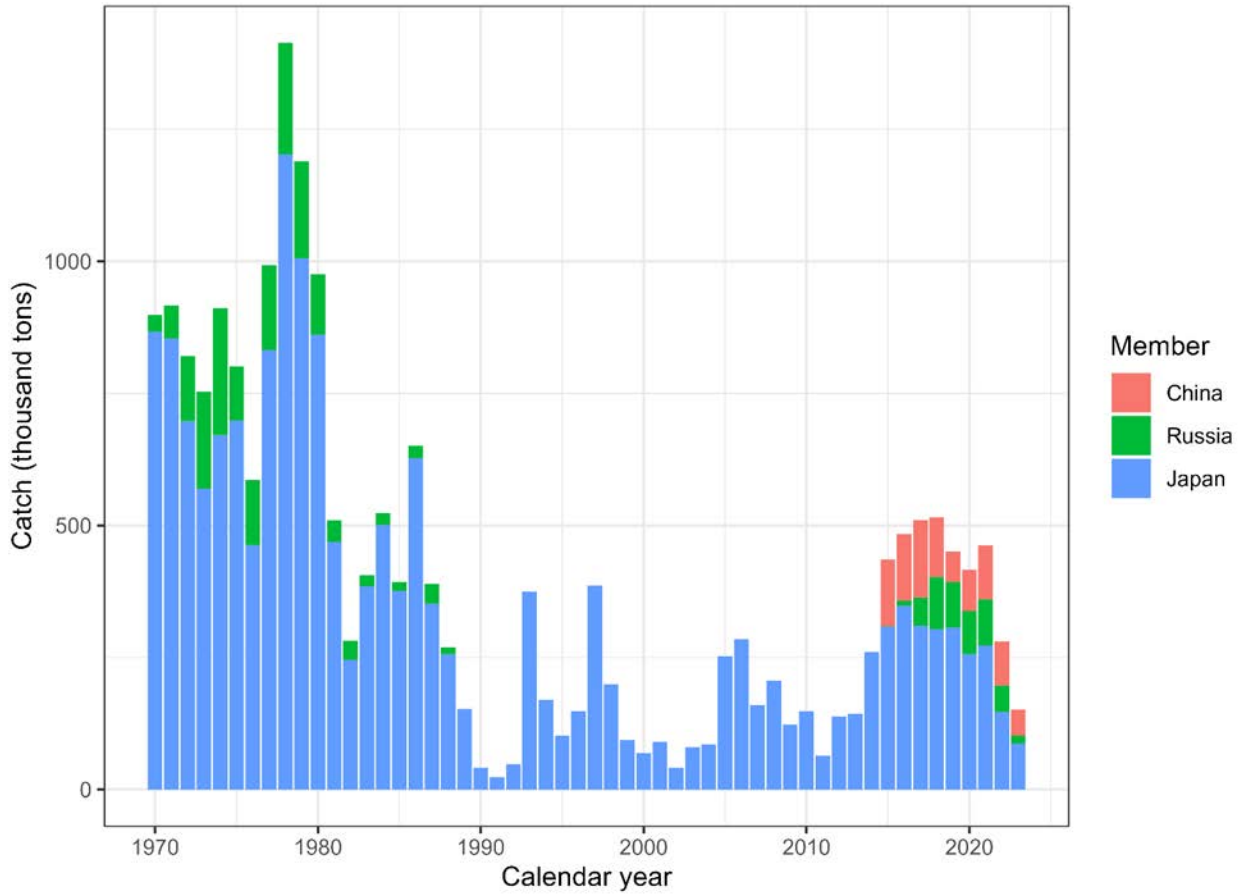

*Migration pattern of chub mackerel by growth stage. The upper and bottom panels show seasonal movement of age 0 fish from spawning to recruitment and fish at age 1 and older, respectively (Kamimura, 2017).*

*Figure 3*



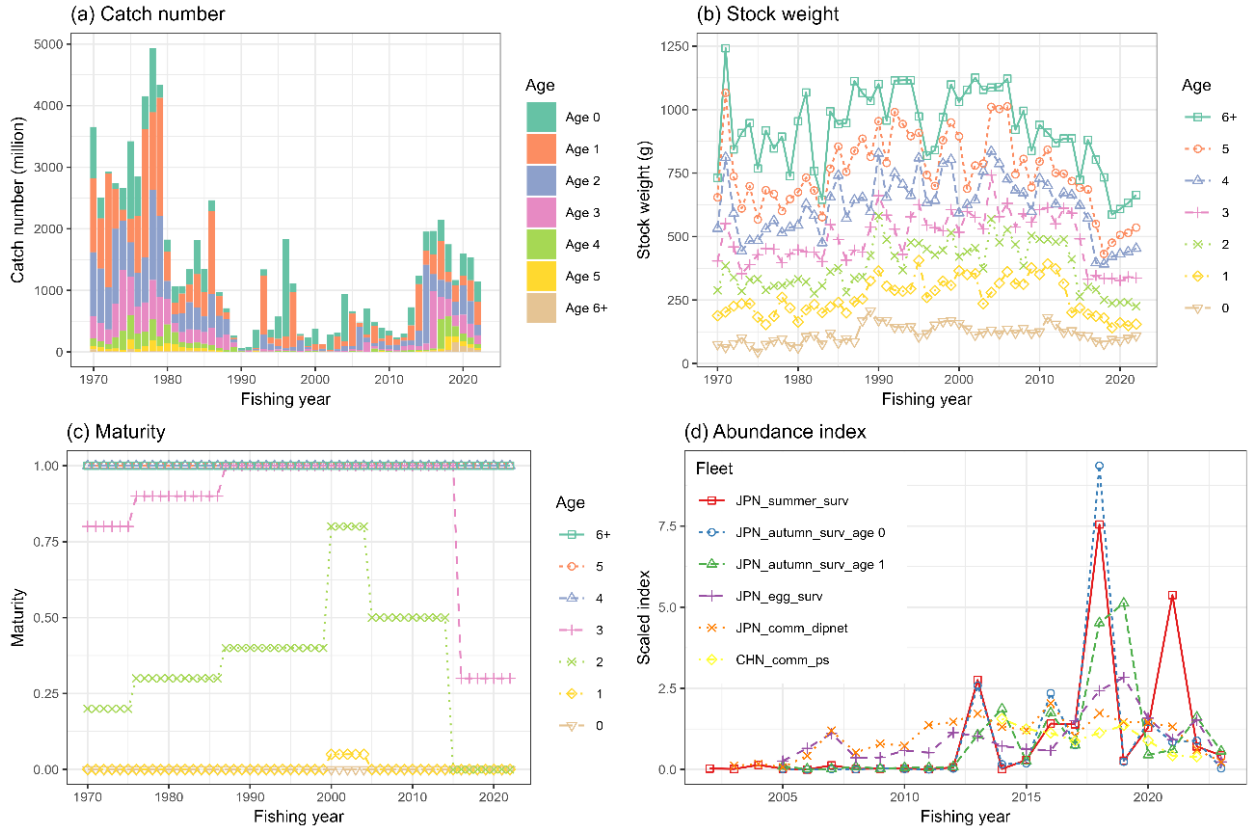

*Mean fork lengths of chub mackerel at ages 0 to 6 in FY2011-2014 and FY2018 (left panel). Mean weight at age in FY1970s, FY2011-2014 and FY2018 (right panel).*

*Figure 4*



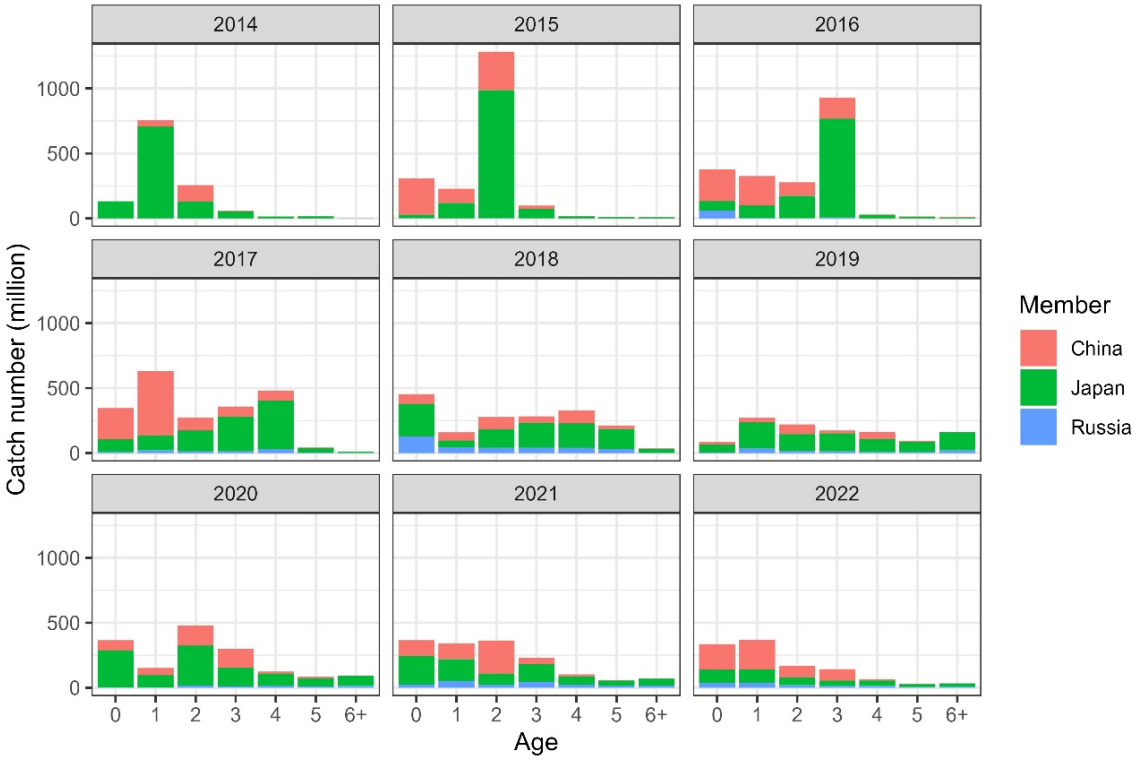

*Historical chub mackerel catch in weight by Member. The provisional Chinese catch for CY2023 is estimated using the historical ratio for chub mackerel and blue mackerel. Blue mackerel has been excluded from the catch using the chub-to-blue-mackerel ratio. Catch data for China was obtained from the Annual Summary Footprint, which is available at https://www.npfc.int/summary-footprint-chub-mackerel-fisheries and adjusted using this ratio. Russia's catch data is sourced from the Annual Summary Footprint which reflects no blue mackerel catches. Japan's catch data was collected from coastal prefectures along the Pacific Ocean, where chub mackerel are typically captured. The catch data of this figure is different from the catch data described in the data section above.*

*Figure 5*



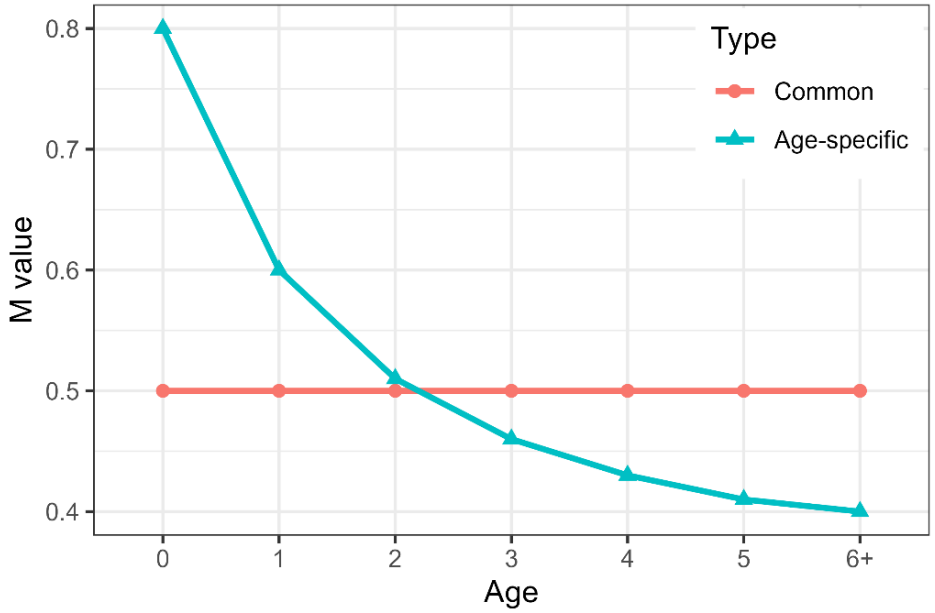

*The time series data used for the base case scenario of chub mackerel stock assessmnet. (a) catch number by age, (b) weight by age, (c) maturity by age, (d) abundance index. Each abundance index is scaled by its mean value for visualization. Note that the five Japanese abundance indices are included through FY2023, but are not used in the base case analysis.*

*Figure 6*



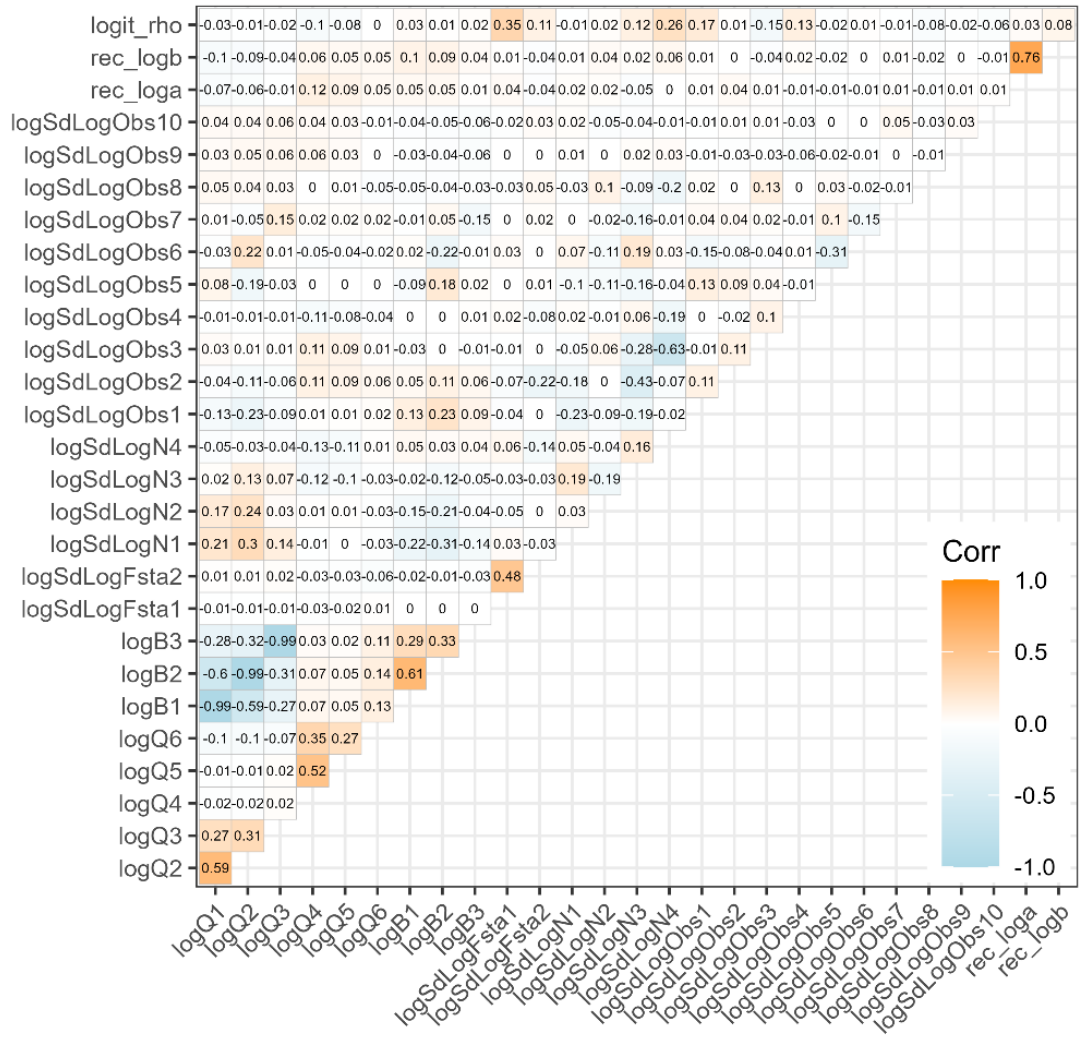

*Catch number of chub mackerel by member by age by year from CY2014 to CY2022.*

*Figure 7*



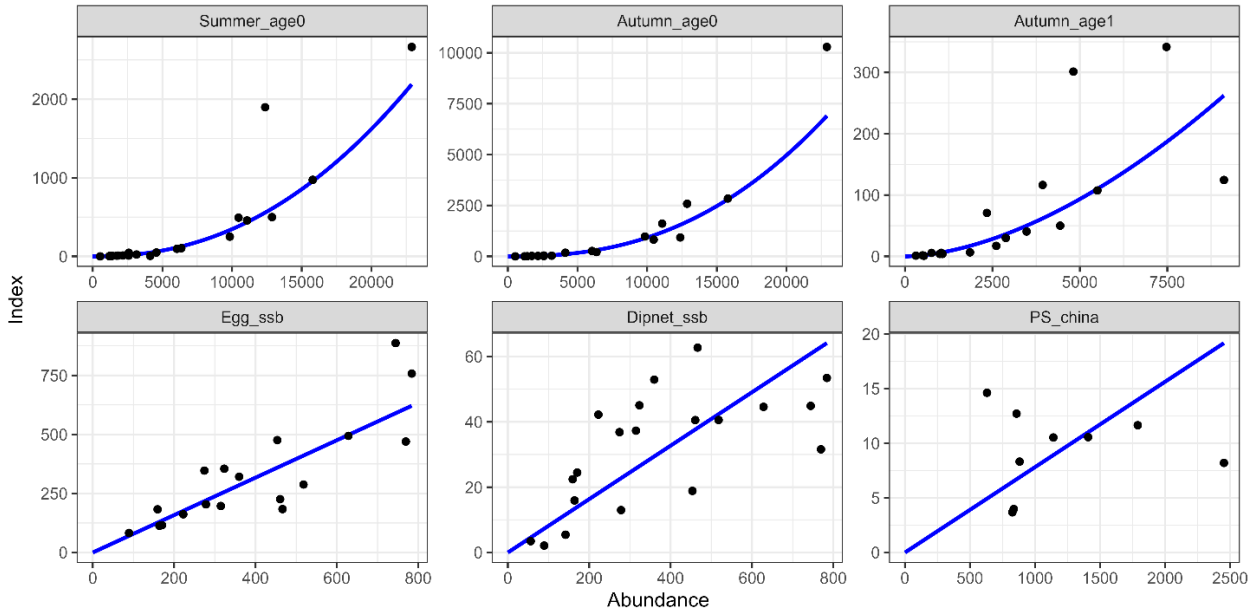

*Natural mortality (M) values of chub mackerel under the two base case scenarios. The age-specific M was applied to the base case and representative scenarios.*

*Figure 8*



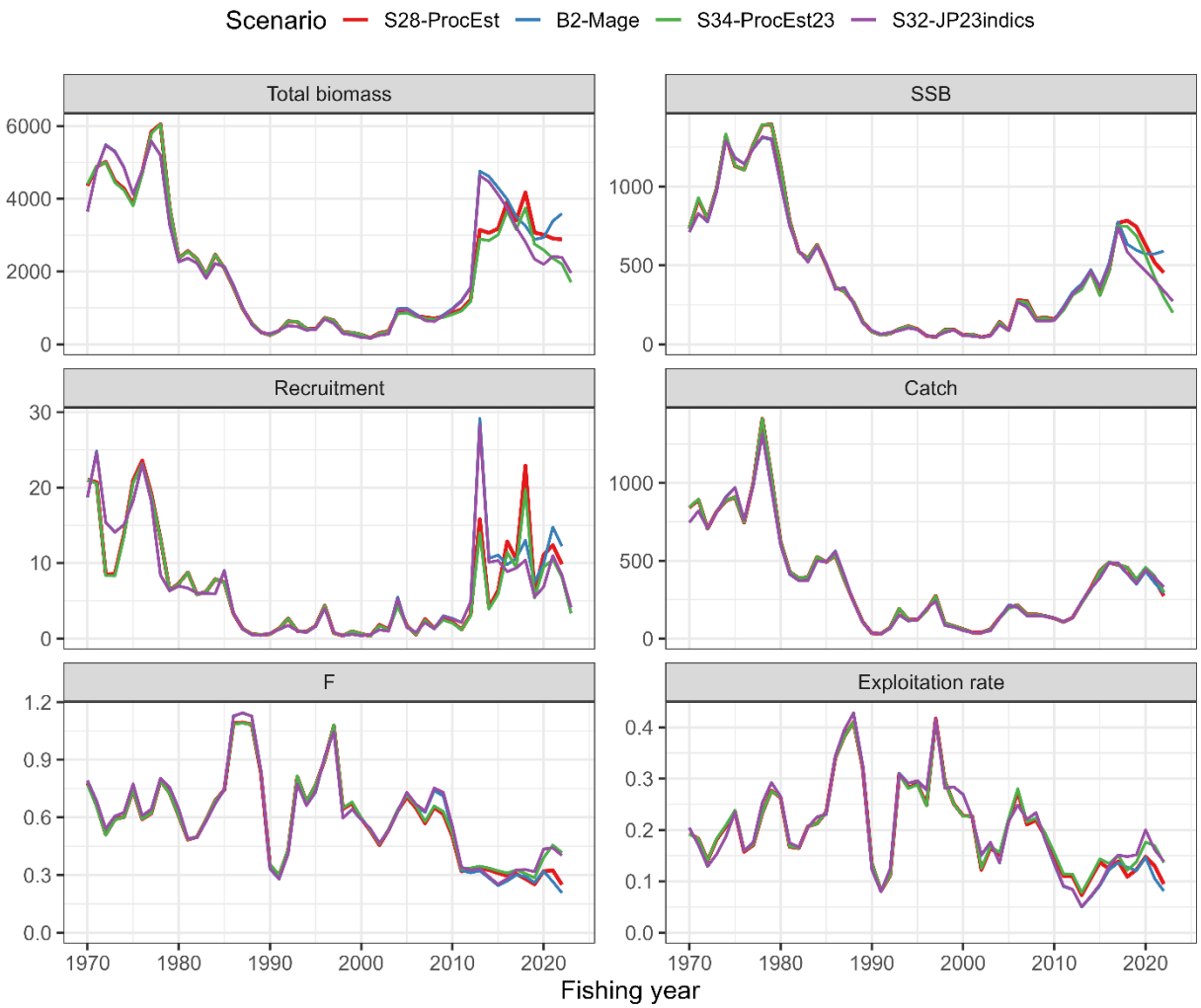

*Plot of the correlation matrix obtained from the covariance matrix of the fixed effects parameter estimates, for the base case scenario (S28-ProcEst). Orange colors indicate positive correlation, while light blue indicates negative correlation.*

*Figure 9*



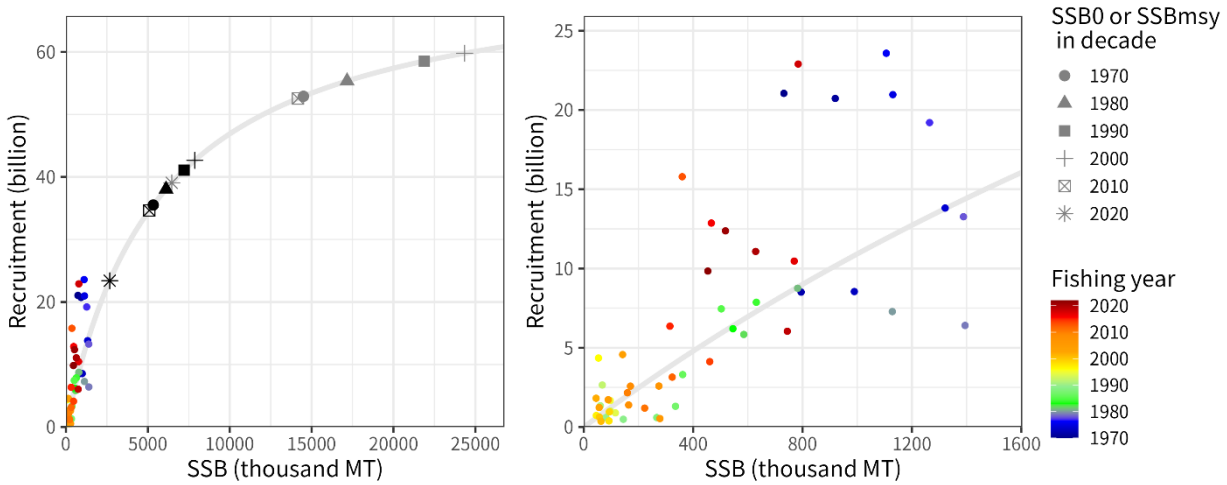

*Relationship between six abundance index and their corresponding abundance estimates under the base case scenario (S28-ProcEst). The blue lines indicate the precited relationships.*

*Figure 10*



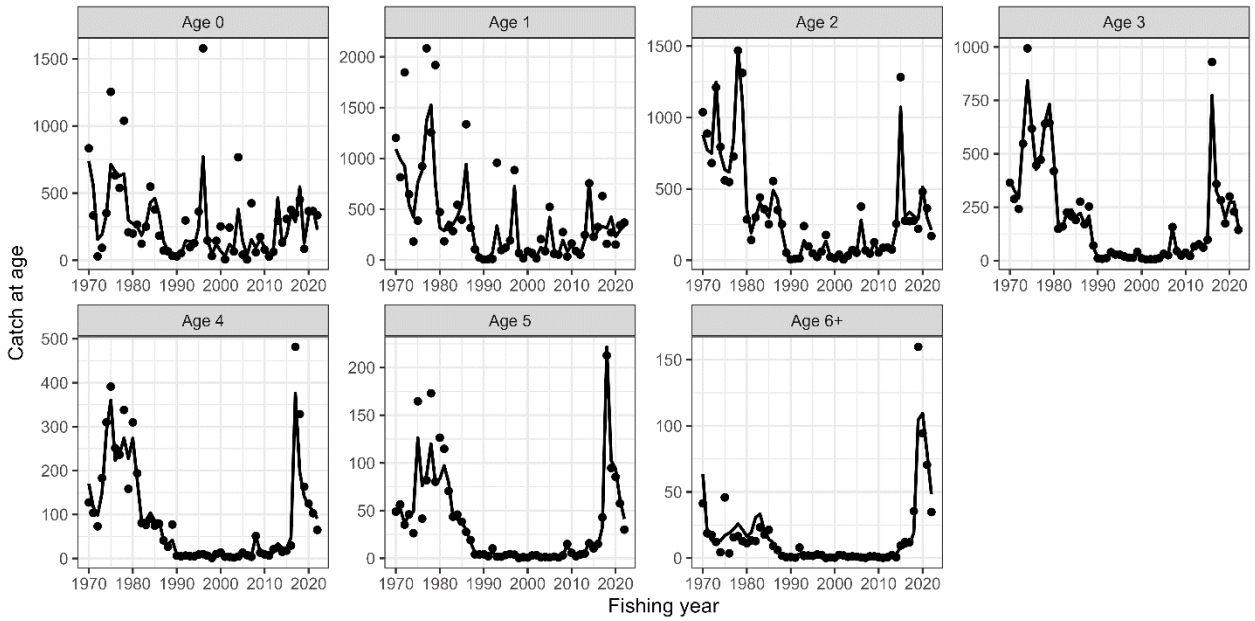

*Time series of estimates of total biomass (1,000 MT), SSB (1,000 MT), recruitment (billion), catch (1,000 MT), mean F, and exploitation rate (catch divided by total biomass) of chub mackerel under the initial base case scenario (B2-Mage), the final base case S28-ProcEst and the representative case scenarios of S32-JP23, and S34-PRocEst23.*

*Figure 11*



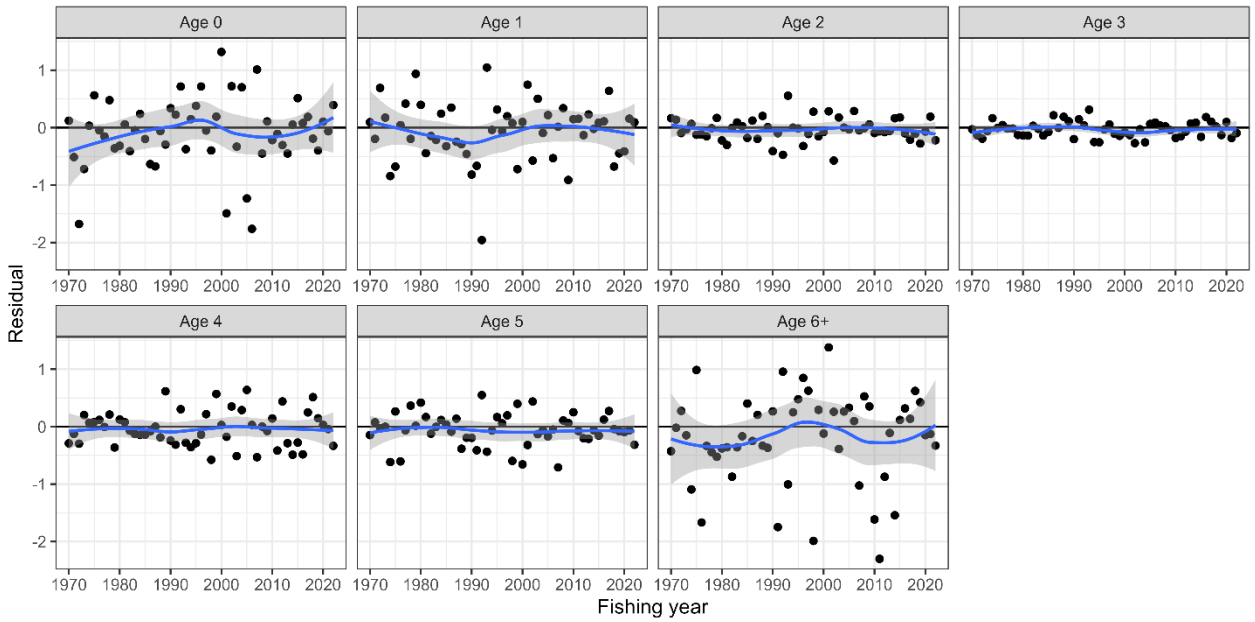

*Estimated Beverton-Holt stock recruitment relationship of chub mackerel under the base case scenario (S28-ProcEst) (gray lines) and estimated past SSB and number of recruits (colored circles) overplotted with estimated SSB0 (equilibrium unexploited spawning biomass, grey symbols) and* $SSB_{MSY}$ *(black symbols). The reference points are calculated using biological parameters averaged during the decades. The unit of SSB on the x-axis is 1000 mt and the unit of subscription on the y-axis is billions.*

*Figure 12*



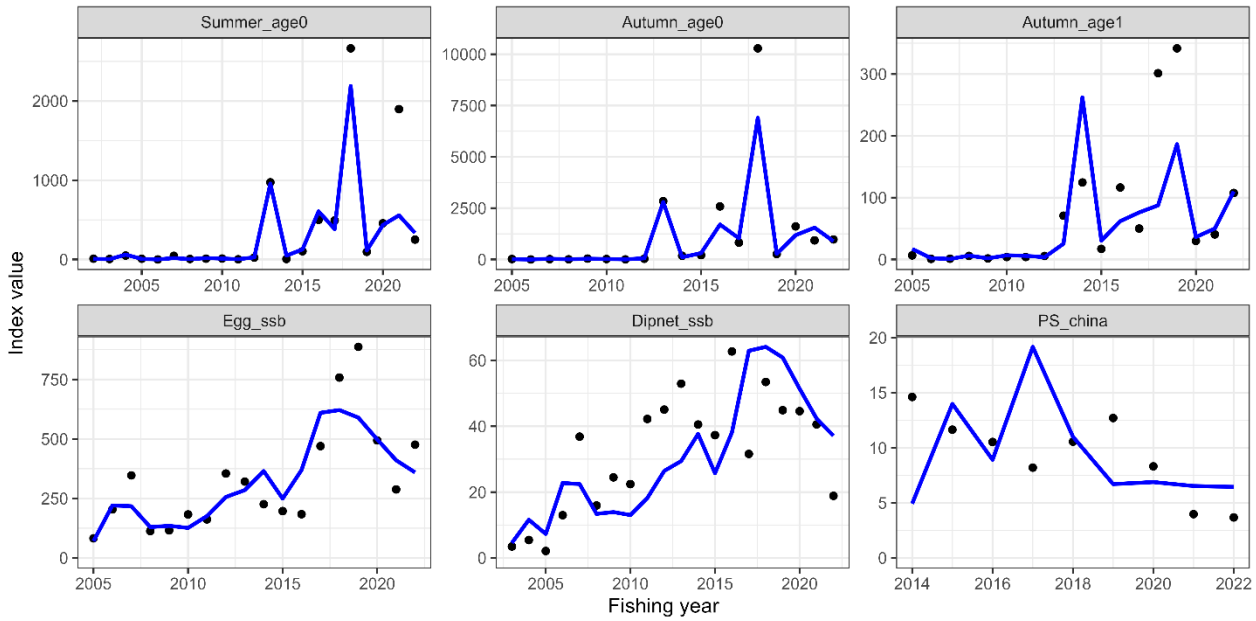

*Observed catch numbers by age (dots) and their predicted values (lines)of chub mackerel under the base case scenario of S28-ProcEst.*

*Figure 13*



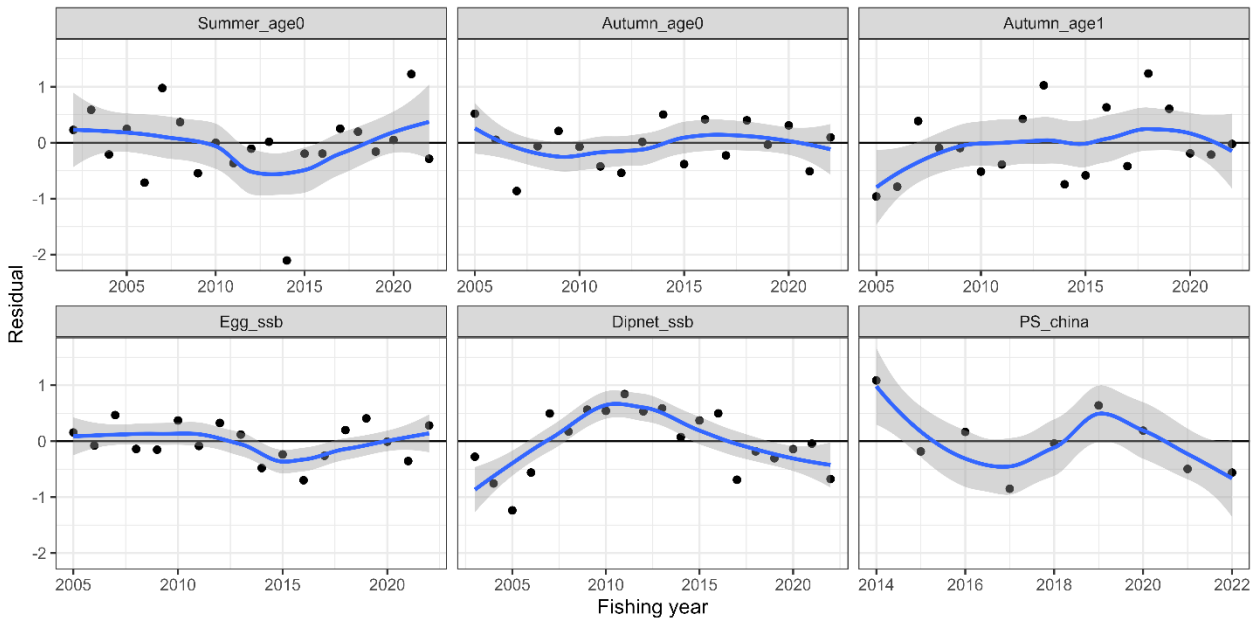

*Residual plot for catch numbers of chub mackrel by age under the base case scenario of S28-ProcEst. Blue curves and shaded areas indicate smoothed curves estimated by LOESS and their 95% confidence intervals.*

*Figure 14*



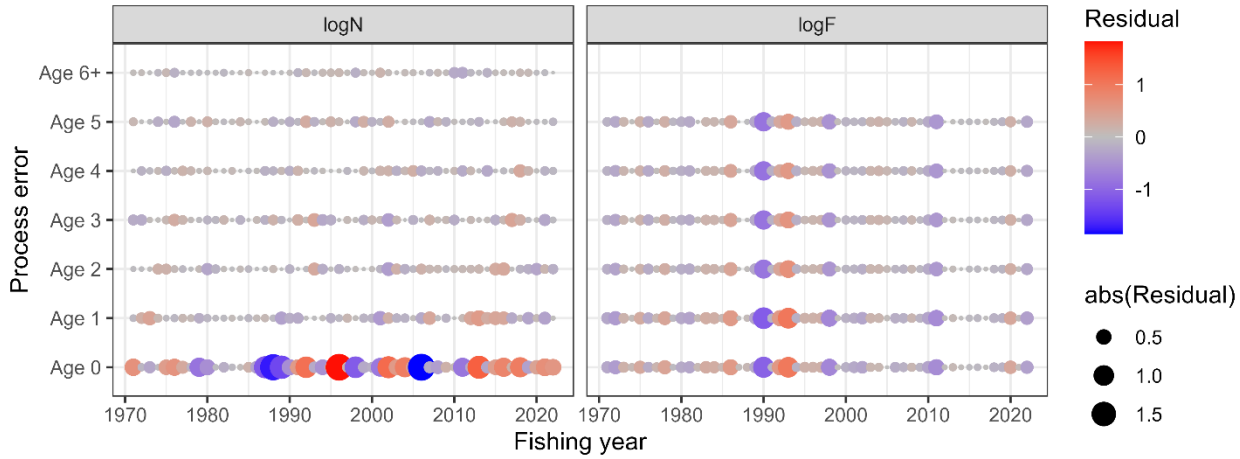

*Trends of abundance indices used (dots) and their predicted values (lines) of chub mackerel under the base case scenario of S28-ProcEst.*

*Figure 15*



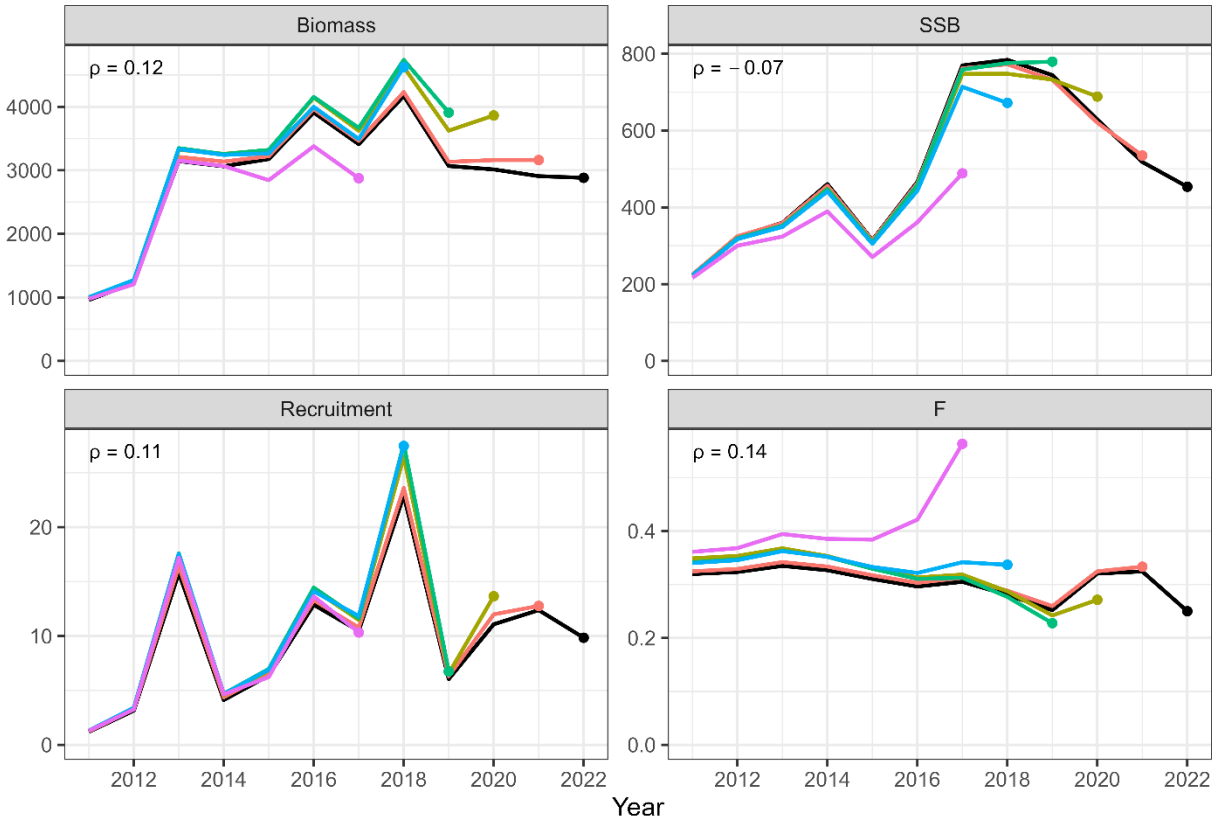

*Residual plot for abundance indices of chub mackerel under the base case scenario of S28-ProcEst. Blue curves and shaded areas indicate smoothed curves estimated by LOESS and their 95% confidence intervals.*

*Figure 16*



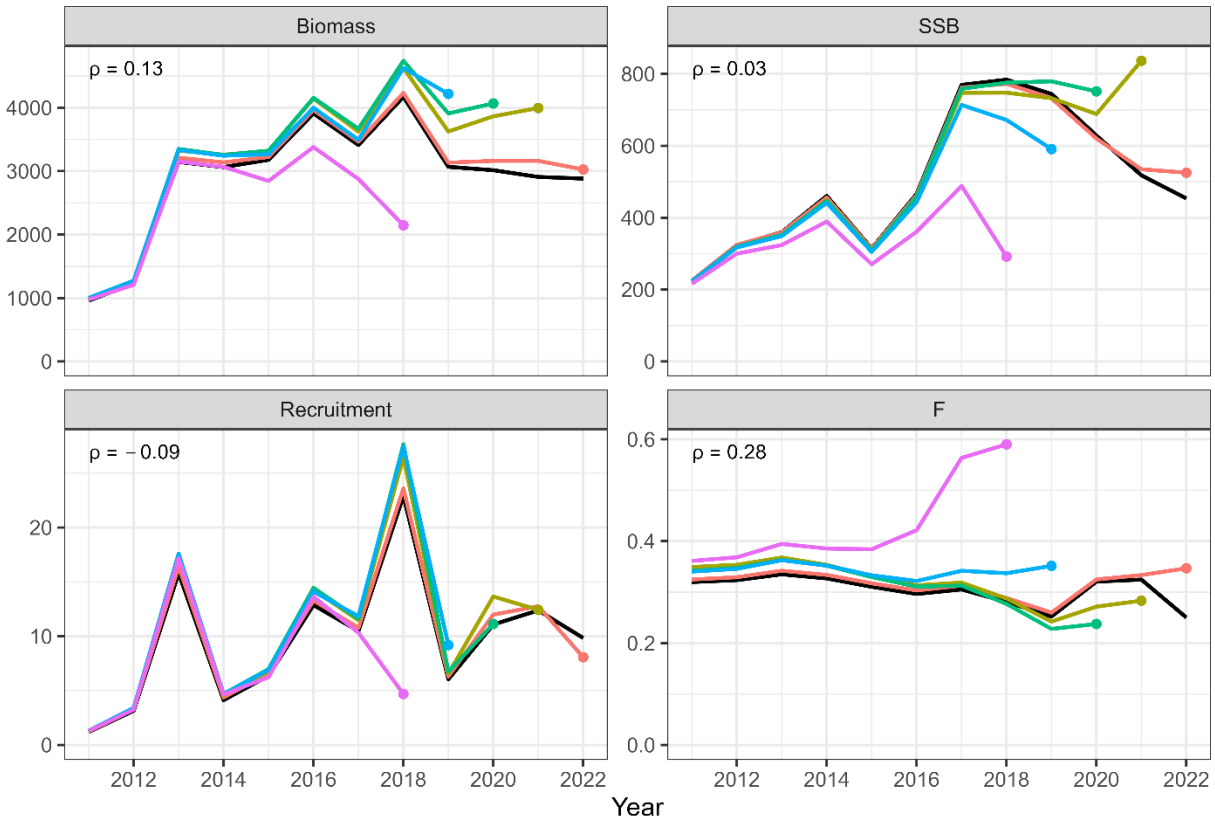

*Process errors log(N) (left) and log(F) (right) of chub mackerel under the base case scenario (S28-ProcEst). Note that the process error in the number of individuals is almost zero, since the number of fish above one year of age is fixed to a small value, and the residuals of zero-year-old recruitment are shown as scattered up and down.*

*Figure 17*



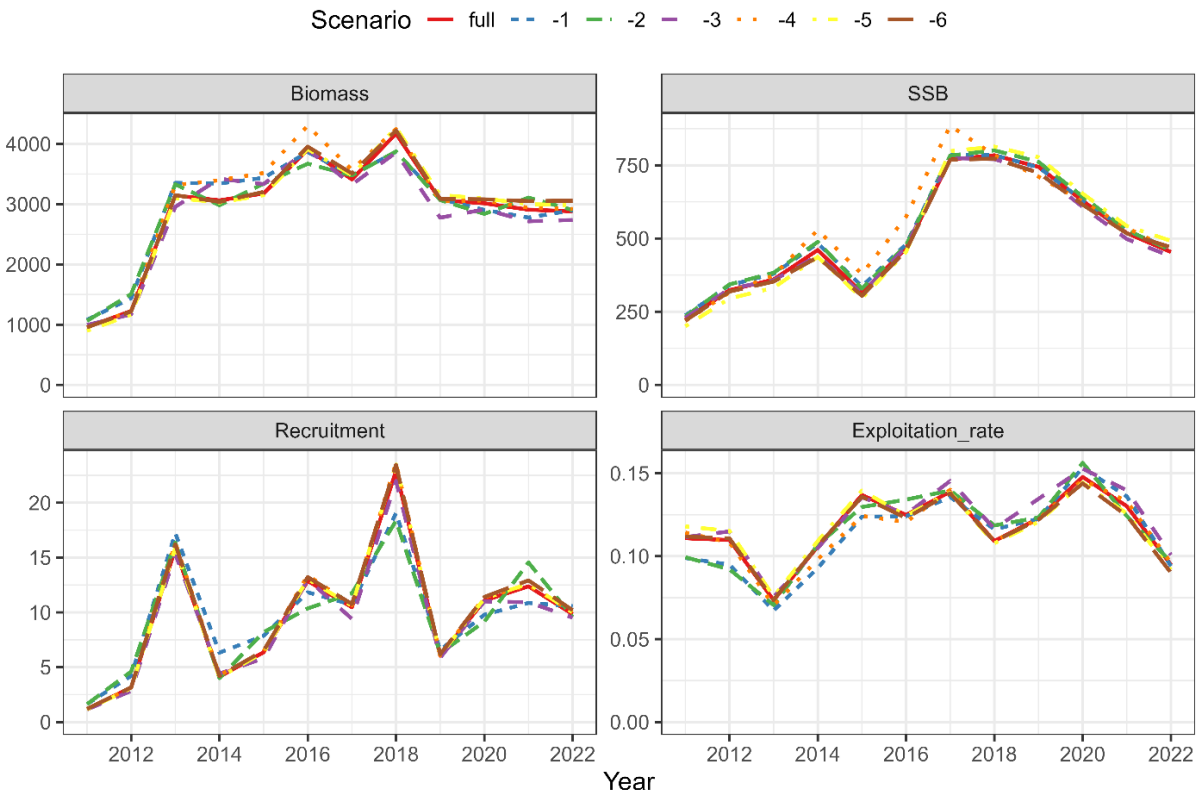

*Retrospective patterns for total biomass (top left), SSB (top right), recruitment (bottom left), and mean F (bottom right) of chub mackerel under the base case scenario of S28-ProcEst. Black Lines represent models with all data, and colored lines represent models with the most recent data trimmed. Mohn's rho is shown in the upper left corner. The dots indicate the terminal year for the calculation of Mohn's rho.*

*Figure 18*



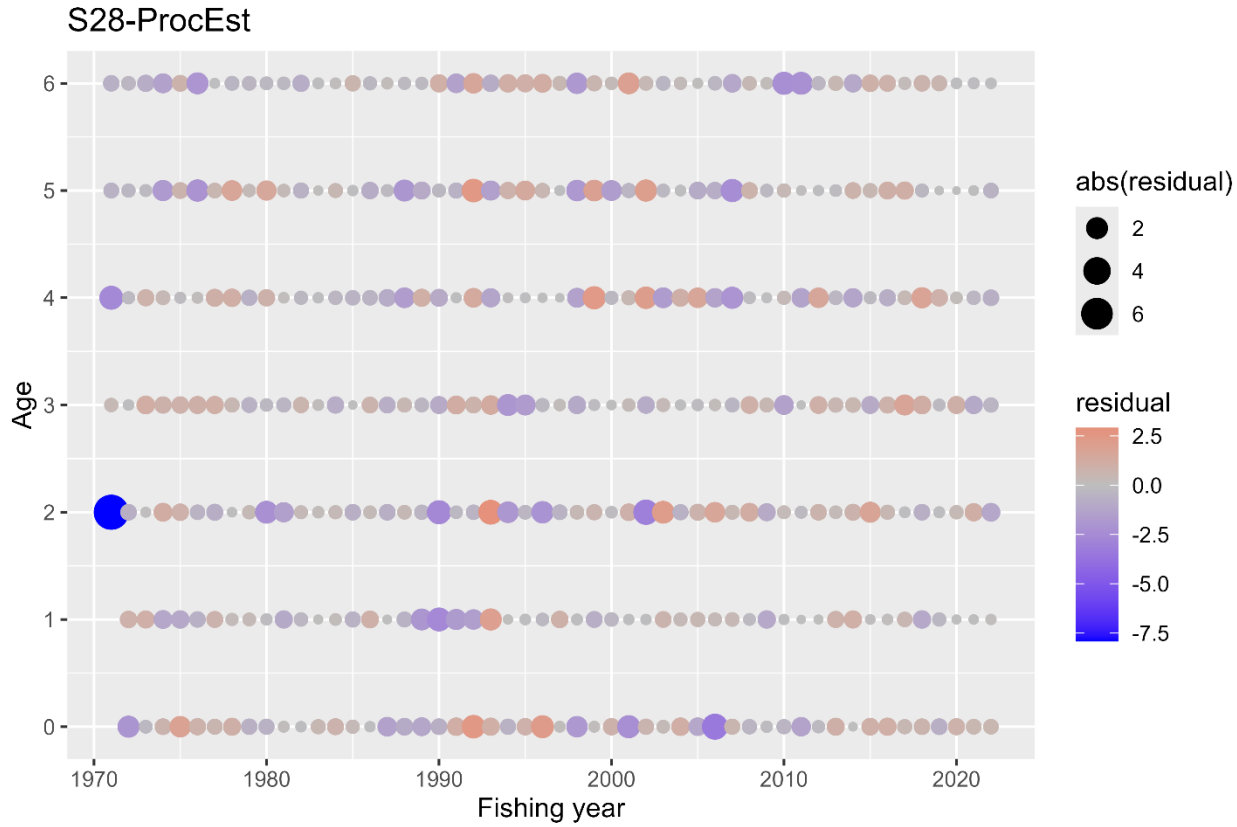

*Patterns of retrospective forecasting for total biomass (top left), SSB (top right), recruitment (bottom left), and mean F (bottom right) of chub mackerel under the base case scenario of S28-ProcEst. Black Lines represent models with all data, and colored lines represent models with the most recent data trimmed. Mohn's rho is shown in the upper left corner. The dots indicate the year of one-year-ahead forecasting, used for the calculation of Mohn's rho.*

*Figure 19*



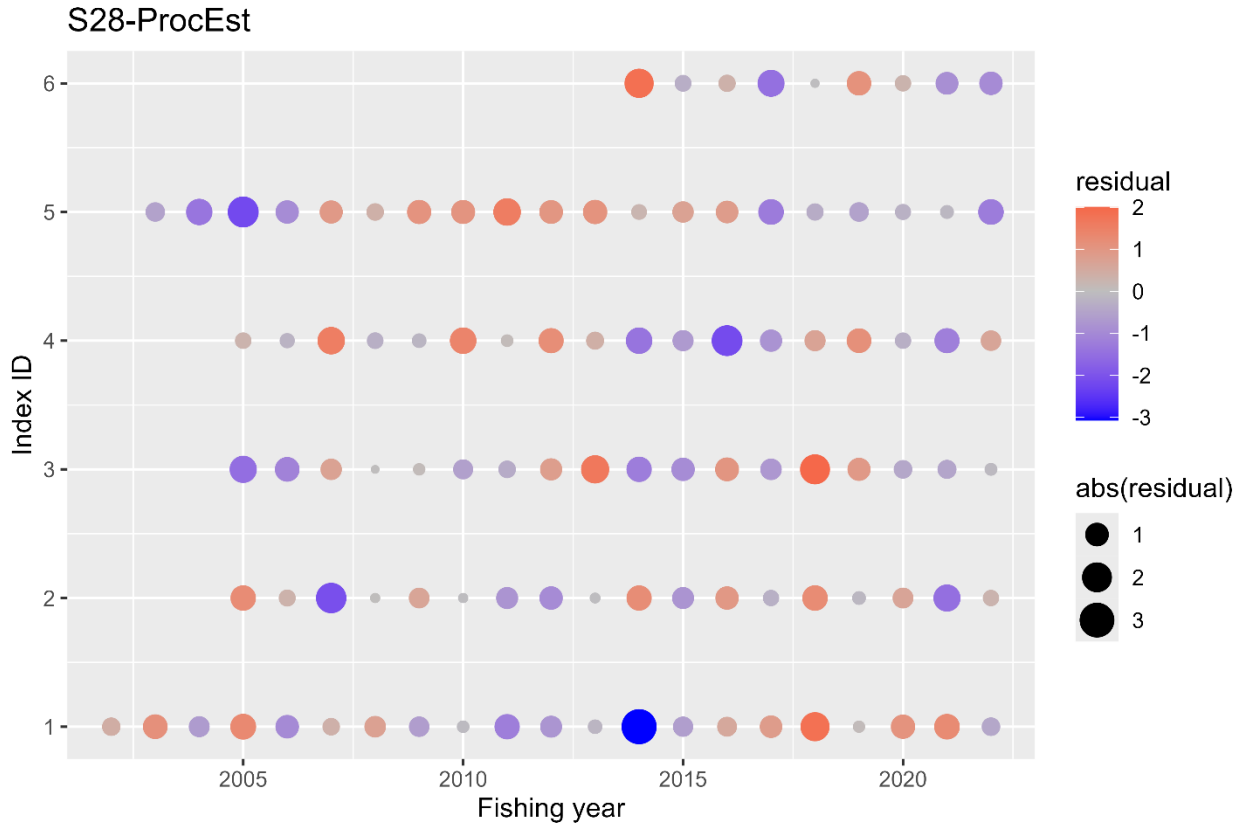

*Comparison of the results of the estimates of chub mackerel when all index values are used and when each indicator is excluded for the base case scenario of S28-ProcEst S28-ProcEst. The IDs of the index are as follows: (1) relative stock number of age 0 from the summer survey by Japan, (2) relative stock number of age 0 from the autumn survey by Japan, (3) relative stock number of age 1 from the autumn survey by Japan, (4) relative SSB from the egg survey by Japan, (5) relative SSB from the dip-net fishery by Japan, and (6) relative vulnerable stock biomass from the light purse-seine fishery by China.*

*Figure 20*



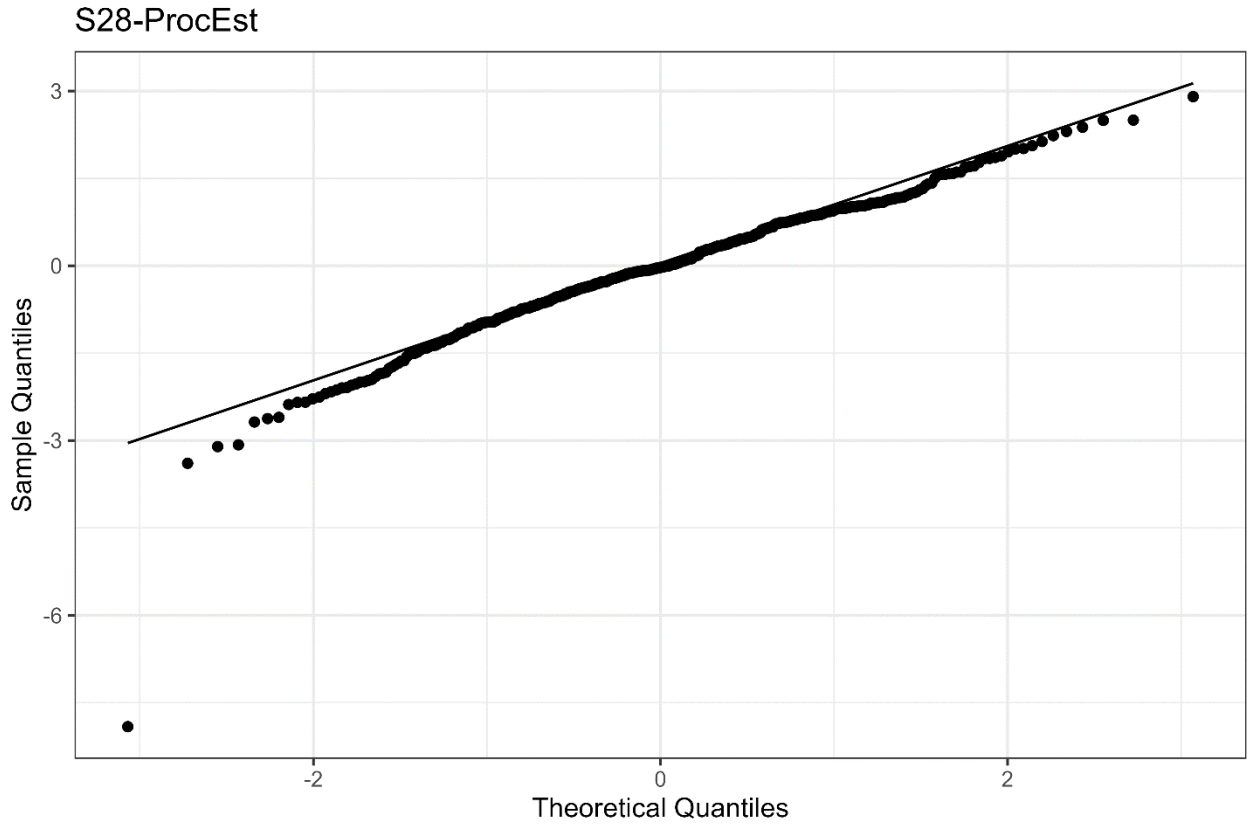

*One-Step-Ahead residuals for the age composition for the base case scenario of S28-ProcEst.*

*Figure 21*



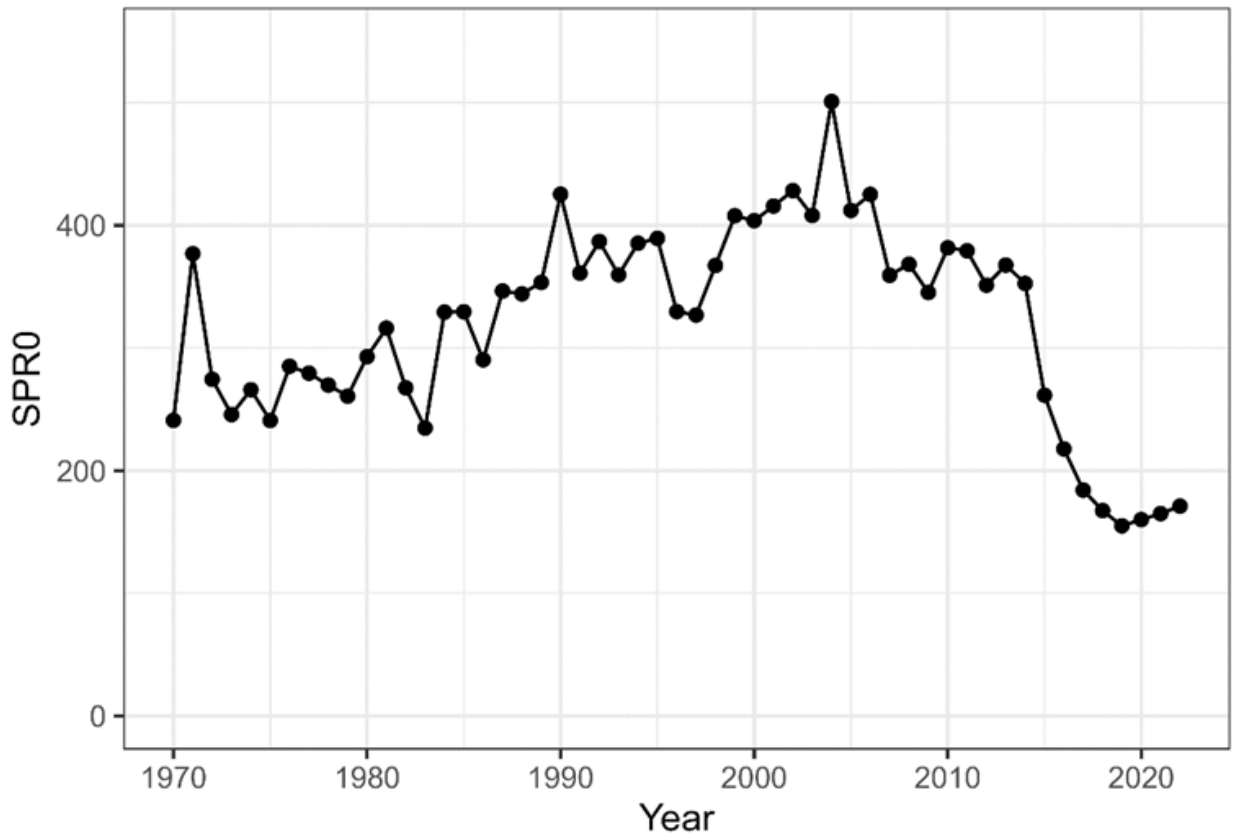

*One-Step-Ahead residuals for the indices of abundance for the base case scenario of S28-ProcEst. The IDs of the index are as follows: (1) relative stock number of age 0 from the summer survey by Japan, (2) relative stock number of age 0 from the autumn survey by Japan, (3) relative stock number of age 1 from the autumn survey by Japan, (4) relative SSB from the egg survey by Japan, (5) relative SSB from the dip-net fishery by Japan, and (6) relative vulnerable stock biomass from the light purse-seine fishery by China.*

*Figure 22*



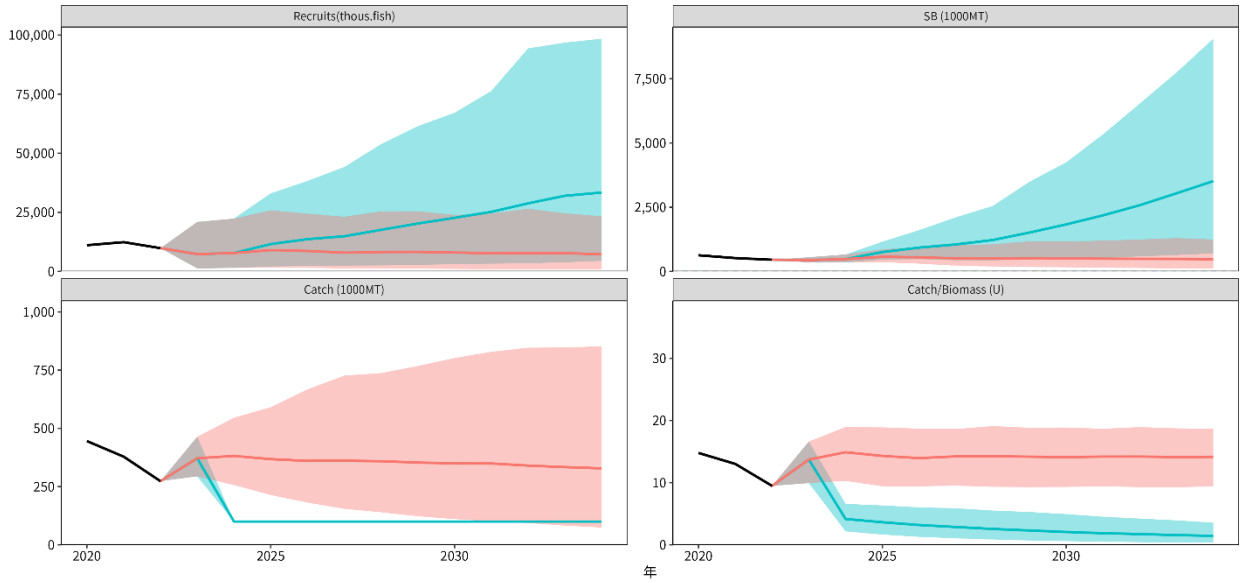

*QQplot of the One-Step-Ahead residuals from the indices for the base case scenario of S28-ProcEst .*

*Figure 23*



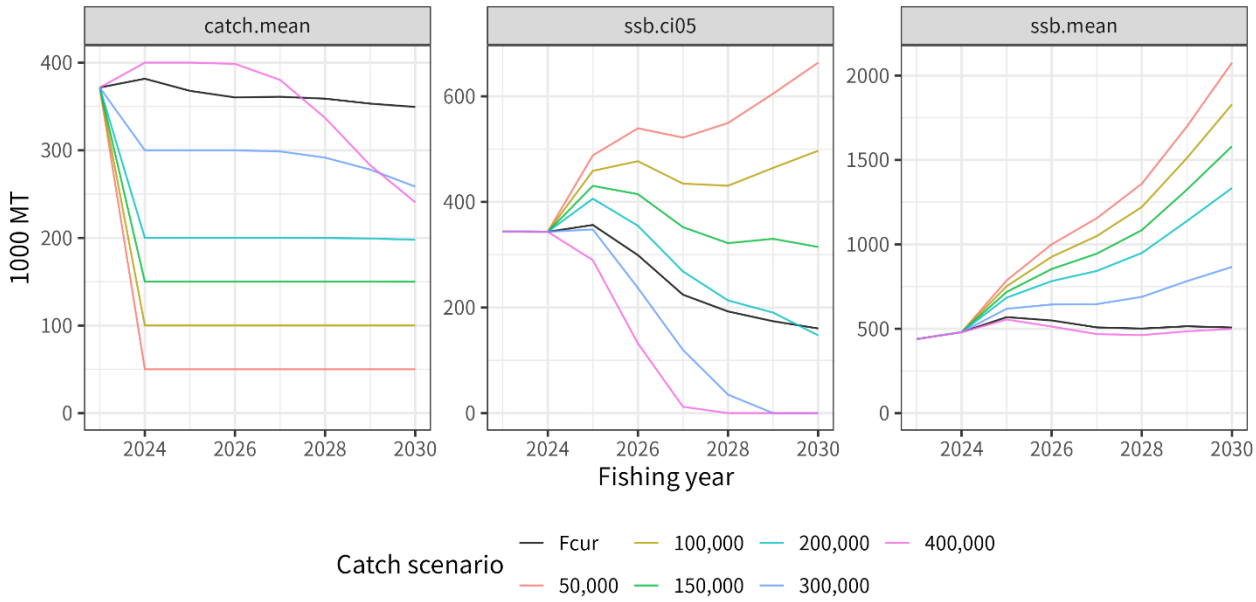

*Trajectories of spawners per recruit without fishing (SPR0 in grams).*

*Figure 24*



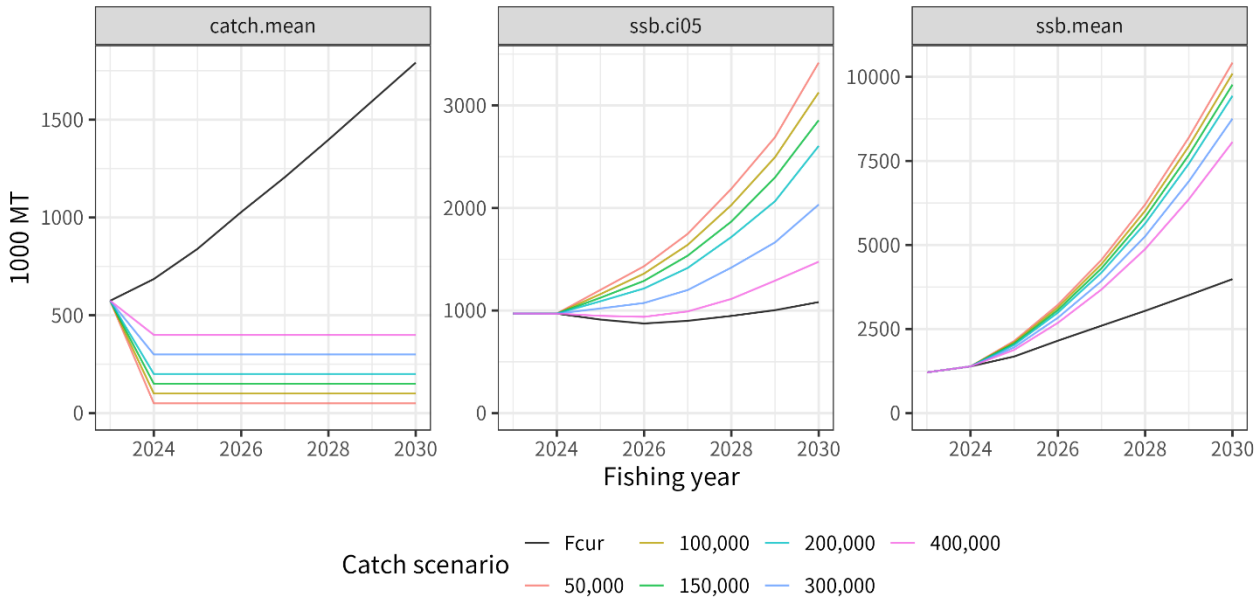

*Examples of stochastic future projection results of chub mackerel. In this figure, results based on constant catch=100,000MT (blue) and current F (red) are compared. The shaded areas represent 90% prediction intervals, black solid lines are estimates by SAM, and colored solid lines are average.*

*Figure 25*




*Comparison of future trajectories in different future harvest scenarios ("Catch100" means 100,000MT constant catch) for future average catch (left, catch.mean), lower 5 percentile of spawning biomass (middle, ssb.ci05) and average spawning biomass (right, ssb.mean) of chub mackerel.*

*Figure 26*




*Comparison of future trajectories in different future harvest scenarios using all the biological parameter from 1970-2022. ("Catch100" means 100,000MT constant catch) for future average catch (left, catch.mean), lower 5 percentile of spawning biomass (middle, ssb.ci05) and average spawning biomass (right, ssb.mean) of chub mackerel..*

**APPENDIX 1**

Results for representative case runs of B2-Mage (B2), S32-JP23, and S34-PRocEst23

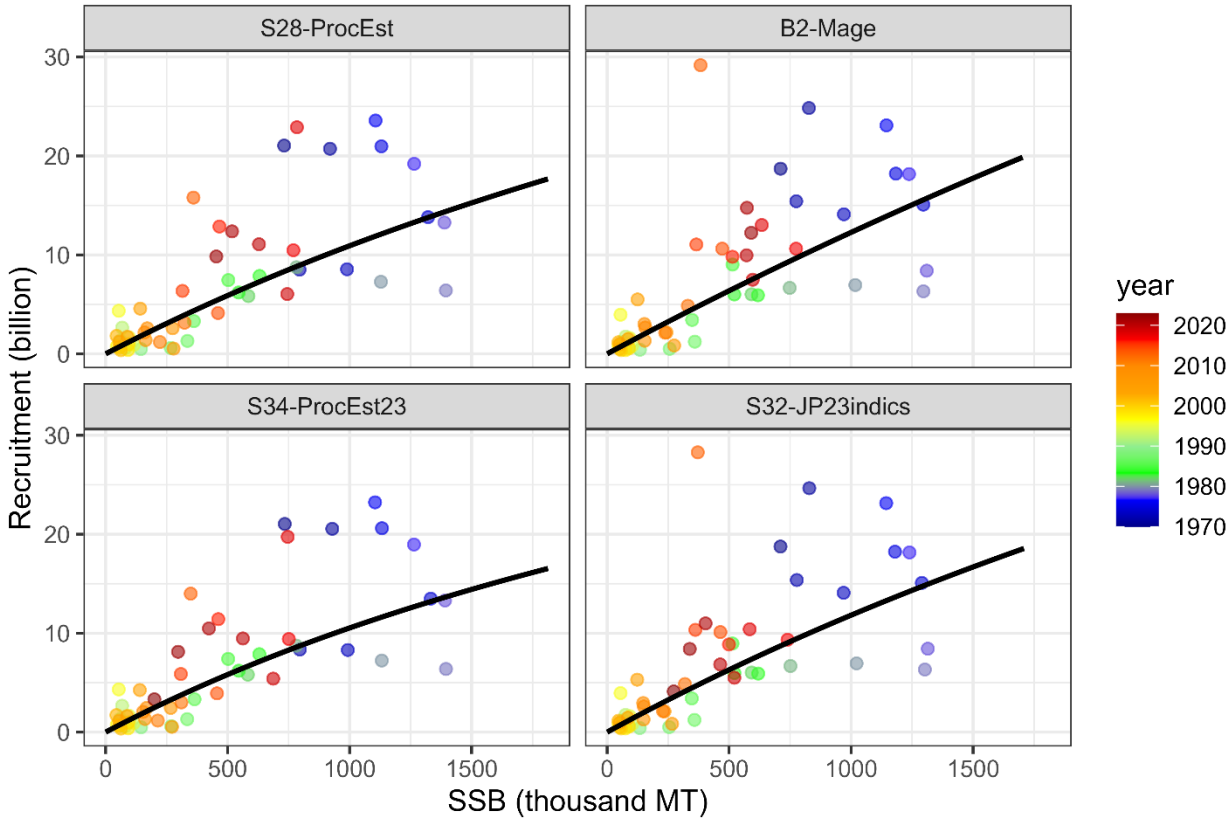
**Stock assessment scenarios**

In order to improve the SAM fit to abundance indices and retrospective patterns, the TWG CMSA recognized the necessity of introduction of estimation of process error in survival of age groups older than age 0. The TWG CMSA also considered inclusion of FY2023 from the Japanese abundance indices, which had a large impact on the stock status of the most recent years. As a result, the following four scenarios were employed as representative cases:

1) B2, Estimate process error for only age 0 (recruitment) ;
2) S28-ProcEst, Estimate process error for all age groups;
3) S32-JP23, Estimate process error for only age 0 and use Japanese indices up to FY2023; and
4) S34-ProcEst23, Estimate process error for all age groups and use Japanese indices up to FY2023

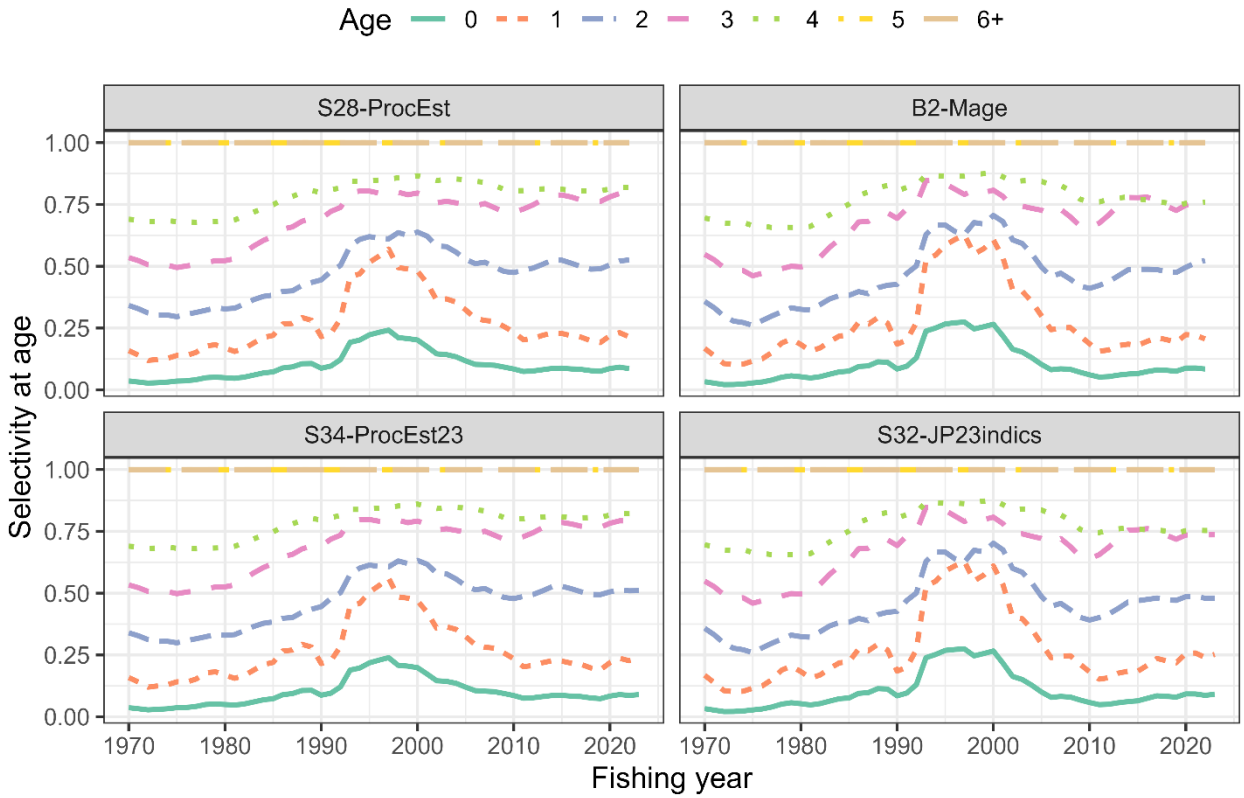
TWG CMSA agreed to select S28-ProcEst as a base case scenario because of the better diagnostics than the model only with recruitment process error and agreement of data usage up to FY2022. This Annex shows the comparison of the above four models along with the following models B1-Mcom, S31-JP23indics,27-ProcEst and S33-ProcEst23.

*Figure ANNEX 1*



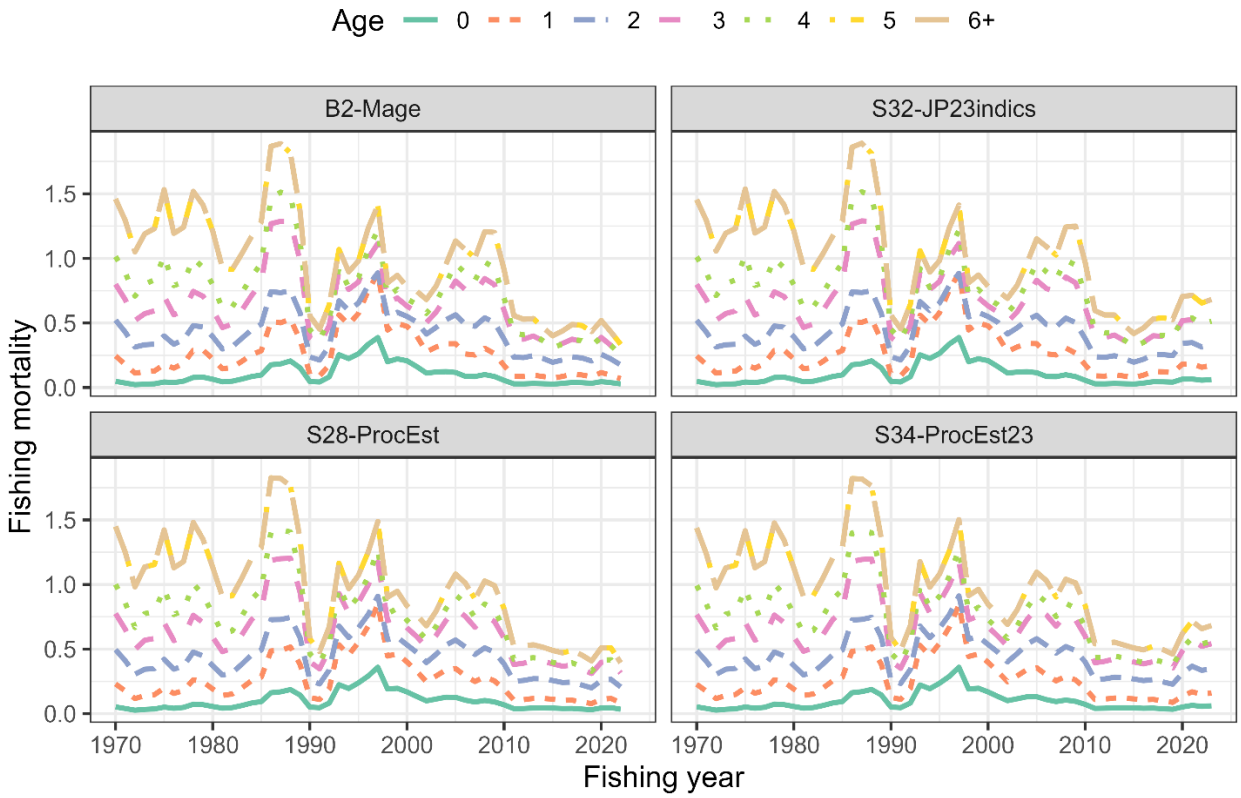

*Estimated Beverton-Holt stock recruitment relationship (black lines) and estimated past SSB and number of recruits (colored circles) of chub mackerel under the final base case S28-ProcEst, the initial base case scenario B2-Mage, and other representative cases of S34-ProcEst23 and S32-JP23indics.*

*Figure ANNEX 2*



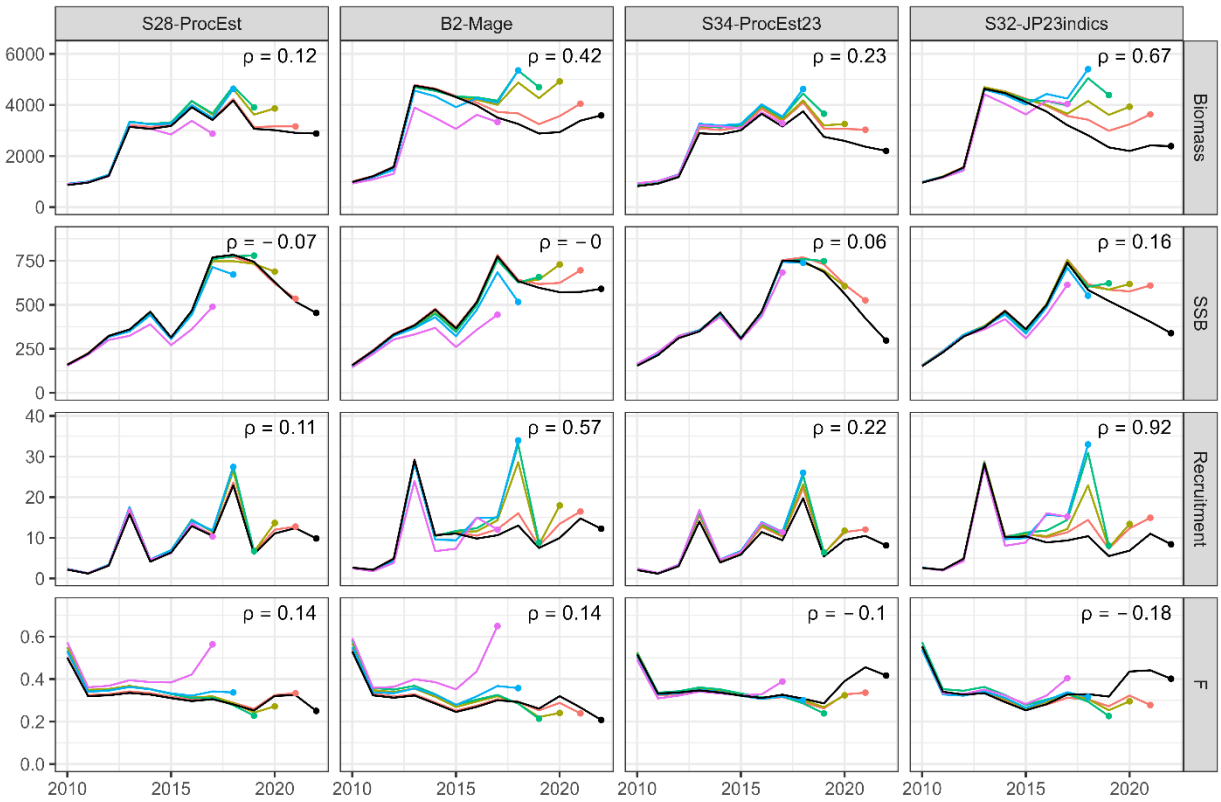

*Estimated annual selectivity at age under the final base case S28-ProcEst, the initial base case scenario (B2-Mage), and the other representative cases of S34-ProcEst23 and S32-JP23indics.*

*Figure ANNEX 3*



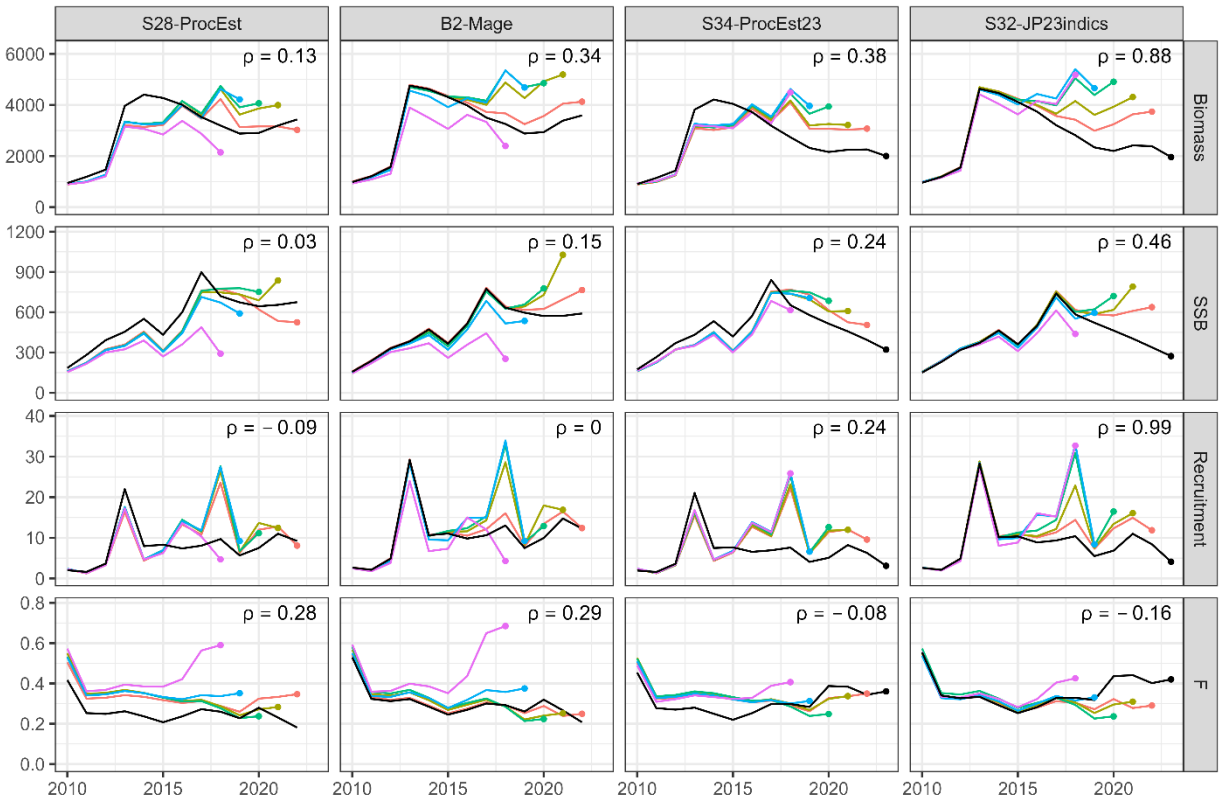

*Time series of estimates of F at age for the final base case S28-ProcEst, the initial base case scenario B2-Mage, and the other representative cases of S34-ProcEst23 and S32-JP23indics.*

*Figure ANNEX 4*



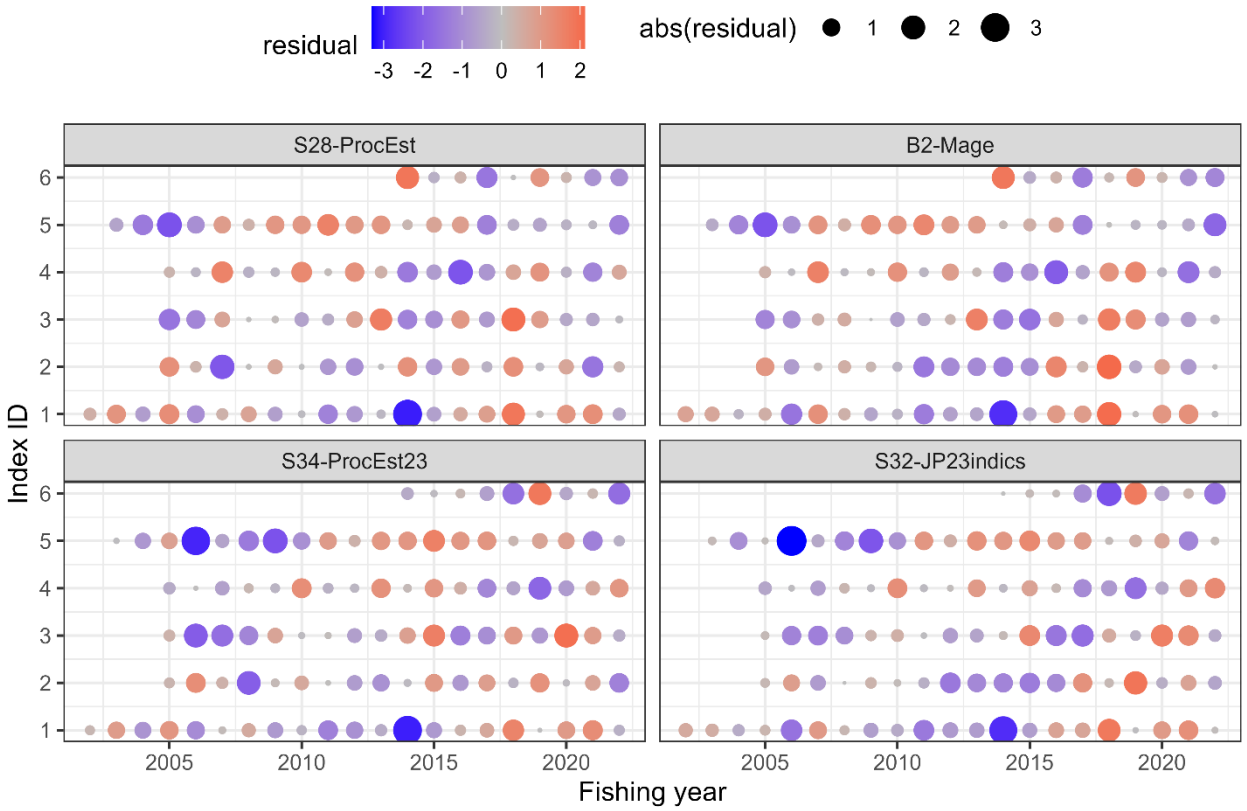

*Retrospective patterns for total biomass (top row), SSB (second row), recruitment (third row), and mean F (bottom) of chub mackerel. Black Lines represent models with all data, and colored lines represent models with the most recent data trimmed. Mohn's rho is shown in the upper right corner. The dots indicate the terminal year for the calculation of Mohn's rho. Scenarios shown here are the final base case S28-ProcEst, the initial base case scenario B2-Mage, the other representative cases of S34-PRocEst23 and S32-JP23indics.*

*Figure ANNEX 5*



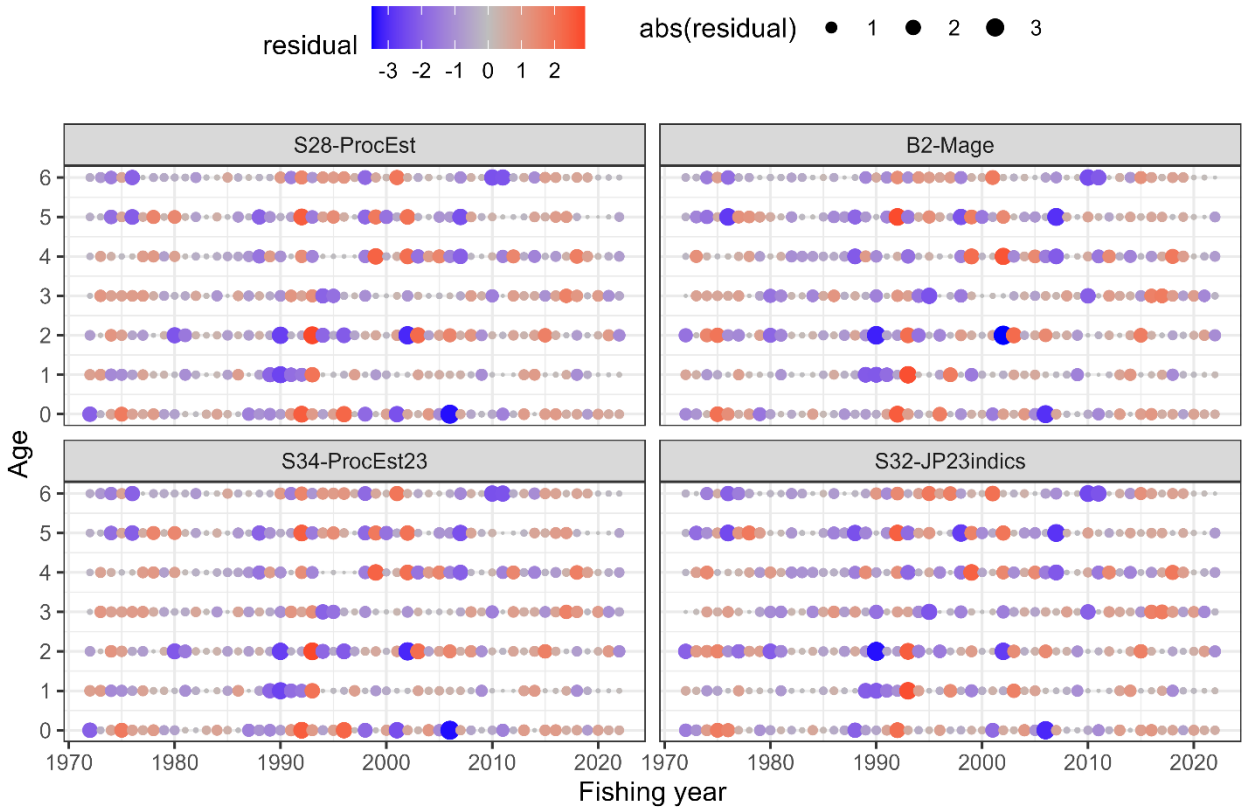

*Patterns of retrospective forecasting for total biomass of chub mackerel. Black Lines represent models with all data, and colored lines represent models with the most recent data trimmed. Mohn's rho is shown in the upper right corner. The dots indicate the year of one-year-ahead forecasting, used for the calculation of Mohn's rho. Retrospective patterns for total biomass (top row), SSB (second row), recruitment (third row), and mean F (bottom). Black Lines represent models with all data, and colored lines represent models with the most recent data trimmed. Mohn's rho is shown in the upper right corner. Scenarios shown here are the final base case S28-ProcEst, the initial base case scenario B2-Mage, and the other representative cases of S34-PRocEst23 and S32-JP23indics.*

*Figure ANNEX 6*



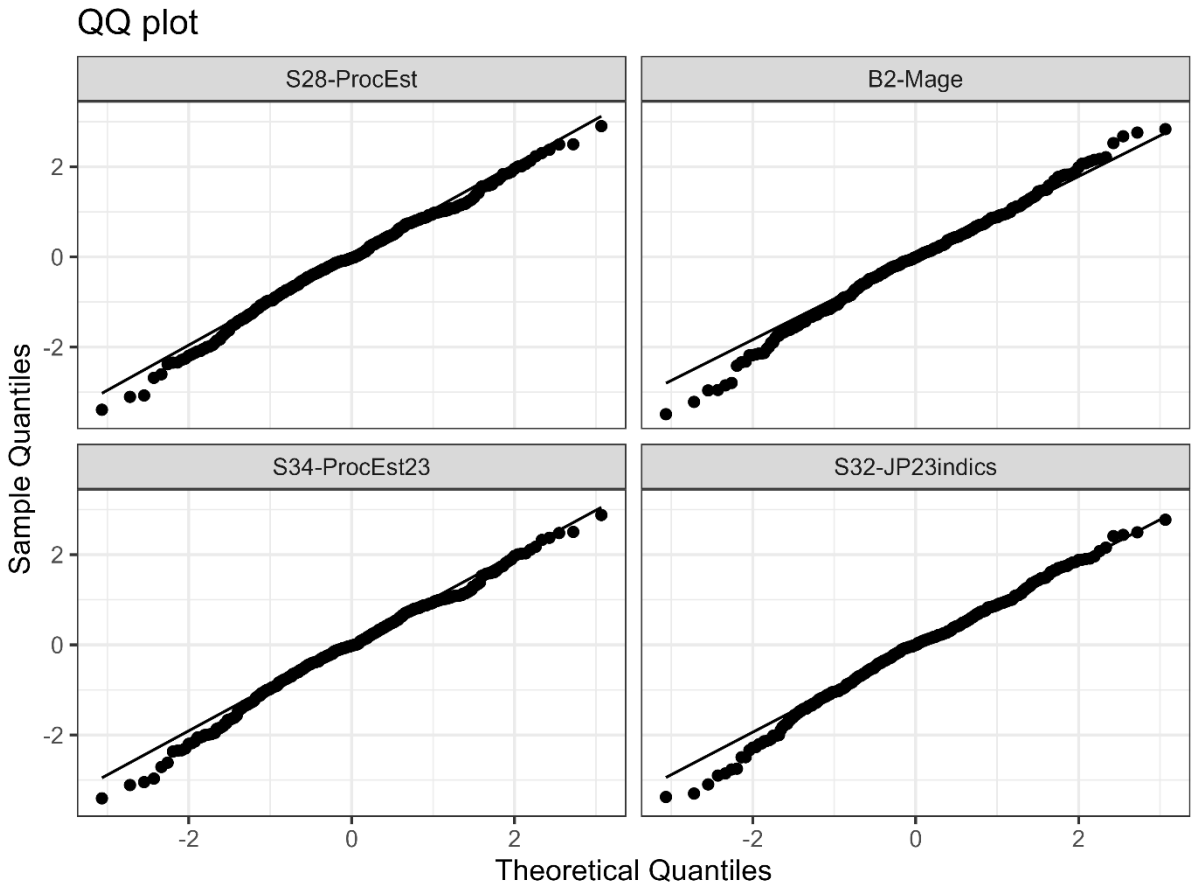

*One-Step-Ahead residuals for the indices of abundance. The IDs of the index are as follows: (1) relative stock number of age 0 from the summer survey by Japan, (2) relative stock number of age 0 from the autumn survey by Japan, (3) relative stock number of age 1 from the autumn survey by Japan, (4) relative SSB from the egg survey by Japan, (5) relative SSB from the dip-net fishery by Japan, and (6) relative vulnerable stock biomass from the light purse-seine fishery by China. Scenarios shown here are the final base case S28-ProcEst, the initial base case scenario B2-Mage, and the other representative cases of S34-PRocEst23 and S32-JP23indics.*

*Figure ANNEX 7*



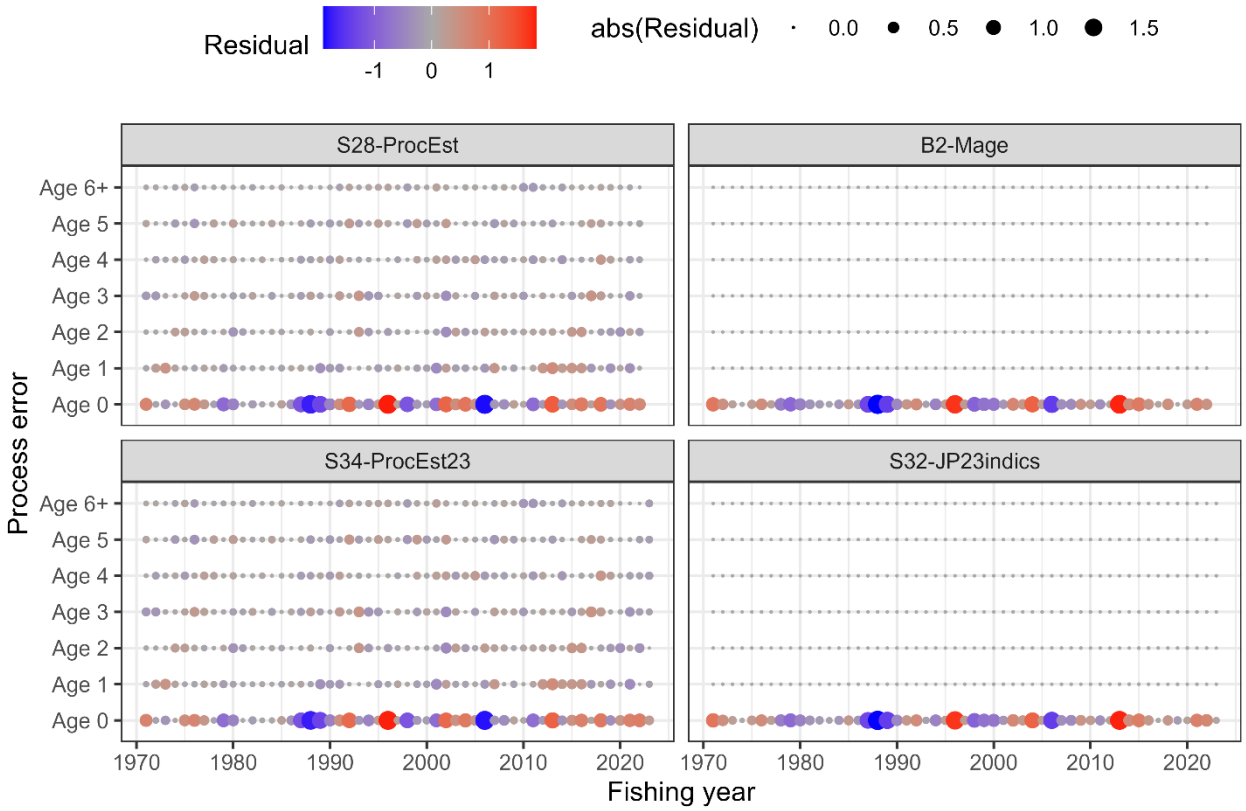

*One-Step-Ahead residuals for the Catch at Age data. Scenarios shown here are the final base case S28-ProcEst, the initial base case scenario B2-Mage, and the other representative cases of S34-PRocEst23 and S32-JP23indics.*

*Figure ANNEX 8*




*QQ plot of the One-Step-Ahead residuals Scenarios shown here are the final base case S28-ProcEst, the initial base case scenario B2-Mage, and the other representative cases of S34-PRocEst23 and S32-JP23indics.*

*Figure ANNEX 9*




*Estimated process error in the numbers at age by year and model. Scenarios shown here are the final base case S28-ProcEst, the initial base case scenario B2-Mage, and the other representative cases S34-PRocEst23 and S32-JP23indics.*

*Table ANNEX 1*

*Convergence diagnostics by model. Scenarios shown here are the initial base case scenario B2-Mage, the final base case S28-ProcEst, and the other representative cases of S31-JP23indics and S34-PRocEst23. Bold values indicate the selected base case.*

| **Model** | **convergence** | **pdHess** | **maxGrad** |
|---|---|---|---|
| B2-Mage | ✓ | ✓ | 0.000107 |
| S32-JP23indices | ✓ | ✓ | 0.001964 |
| **S28-ProcEst** | **✓** | **✓** | **0.002456** |
| S34-ProcEst23 | ✓ | ✓ | 0.001749 |

*Table ANNEX 2*

*Performance measures by model. Scenarios shown here are the initial base case scenario B2-Mage, the final base case S28-ProcEst, and the other representative cases of S31-JP23indics and S34-PRocEst23. Bold values indicate the selected base case.*

| PM | B2-Mage | S32-JP23indics | S28-ProcEst | S34-ProcEst23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TBy2022** | 3,591 | 2,388 | **2,882** | 2,204 |
| **Sby2022** | 591 | 339 | **454** | 297 |
| **Ry2018** | 13,019 | 10,398 | **22,898** | 19,737 |
| **Ry2019** | 7,490 | 5,496 | **6,043** | 5,405 |
| **Ry2020** | 9,960 | 6,840 | **11,077** | 9,464 |
| **Ry2021** | 14,760 | 10,989 | **12,377** | 10,479 |
| **Ry2022** | 12,234 | 8,407 | **9,839** | 8,120 |
| **AFy2018** | 0.306 | 0.344 | **0.294** | 0.326 |
| **AFy2019** | 0.274 | 0.333 | **0.276** | 0.315 |
| **AFy2020** | 0.329 | 0.446 | **0.342** | 0.420 |
| **AFy2021** | 0.268 | 0.427 | **0.333** | 0.462 |
| **AFy2022** | 0.202 | 0.356 | **0.243** | 0.376 |
| **Ey2018** | 0.128 | 0.148 | **0.109** | 0.122 |
| **Ey2019** | 0.121 | 0.152 | **0.123** | 0.138 |
| **Ey2020** | 0.147 | 0.200 | **0.148** | 0.176 |
| **Ey2021** | 0.106 | 0.162 | **0.130** | 0.170 |
| **Ey2022** | 0.081 | 0.139 | **0.095** | 0.136 |
| **currentSPR** | 0.319 | 0.191 | **0.283** | 0.193 |
| **deple_median_last3** | 1.609 | 1.172 | **1.591** | 1.382 |
| **Fmed/Fcur** | 0.787 | 0.490 | **0.478** | 0.367 |
| **F0.1/Fcur** | 1.516 | 0.964 | **1.344** | 0.970 |
| **FpSPR.30.SPR/Fcur** | 1.069 | 0.664 | **0.942** | 0.668 |
| **FpSPR.40.SPR/Fcur** | 0.764 | 0.474 | **0.673** | 0.478 |
| **FpSPR.50.SPR/Fcur** | 0.549 | 0.341 | **0.484** | 0.344 |
| **FpSPR.60.SPR/Fcur** | 0.387 | 0.240 | **0.342** | 0.243 |
| **FpSPR.70.SPR/Fcur** | 0.260 | 0.162 | **0.230** | 0.163 |
| **Fmsy/Fcur** | 0.306 | 0.194 | **0.258** | 0.187 |
| **Bmsy** | 21517 | 12592 | **9396** | 7127 |
| **SBmsy** | 6582 | 3834 | **2905** | 2193 |
| **h** | 0.366 | 0.370 | **0.358** | 0.362 |
| **SB0** | 16292 | 9542 | **7123** | 5400 |
| **SBmsy/SB0** | 0.404 | 0.402 | **0.408** | 0.406 |
| **FmsySPR** | 0.662 | 0.656 | **0.673** | 0.668 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **B/Bmsy** | 0.167 | 0.190 | **0.307** | 0.309 |
| **SB/SBmsy** | 0.090 | 0.088 | **0.156** | 0.135 |
| **SBmsy/SBmax** | 5.024 | 2.917 | **2.083** | 1.572 |

*Table ANNEX 3*

*Description of performance measures (PM). The most recent three-year averages (FY2020-2022) of F-at-age and the biological parameters (maturity at age and weight at age) are used for PMs related to current F, F reference points, stock-recruitment relationship, and MSY.*

| PM | Description |
|---|---|
| TBy2022 | Total stock biomass in FY2022 (1,000 MT) |
| Sby2022 | Spawning stock biomass in FY2022 (1,000 MT) |
| Ry2018 | The number of recruits in FY2018 (million) |
| Ry2019 | The number of recruits in FY2019 (million) |
| Ry2020 | The number of recruits in FY2020 (million) |
| Ry2021 | The number of recruits in FY2021 (million) |
| Ry2022 | The number of recruits in FY2022 (million) |
| AFy2018 | Weighted average of F-at-age by estimated catch-at-age in FY2018 |
| AFy2019 | Weighted average of F-at-age by estimated catch-at-age in FY2019 |
| AFy2020 | Weighted average of F-at-age by estimated catch-at-age in FY2020 |
| AFy2021 | Weighted average of F-at-age by estimated catch-at-age in FY2021 |
| AFy2022 | Weighted average of F-at-age by estimated catch-at-age in FY2022 |
| Ey2018 | Exploitation rate (estimated catch divided by stock biomass) in FY2018 |
| Ey2019 | Exploitation rate in FY2019 |
| Ey2020 | Exploitation rate in FY2020 |
| Ey2021 | Exploitation rate in FY2021 |
| Ey2022 | Exploitation rate in FY2022 |
| currentSPR | Spawners per recruit (SPR) in the average of FY2020-2022 (%) |
| deple_median_last3 | Ratio of the average of spawning biomass in FY2020-2022 to its historical median |
| Fmed/Fcur | Ratio of F median to current F (average F in FY2020-2022) |
| F0.1/Fcur | Ratio of F0.1 to current F (average F in FY2020-2022) |
| FpSPR.30.SPR/Fcur | Ratio of F30%SPR to current F (average F in FY2020-2022) |
| FpSPR.40.SPR/Fcur | Ratio of F40%SPR to current F (average F in FY2020-2022) |
| FpSPR.50.SPR/Fcur | Ratio of F50%SPR to current F (average F in FY2020-2022) |
| FpSPR.60.SPR/Fcur | Ratio of F60%SPR to current F (average F in FY2020-2022) |
| FpSPR.70.SPR/Fcur | Ratio of F70%SPR to current F (average F in FY2020-2022) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Fmsy/Fcur | Ratio of $F_{MSY}$ to current F (average F in FY2020-2022) |
| Bmsy | Deterministic MSY reference point for total biomass (1,000 MT) |
| SBmsy | Deterministic MSY reference point for spawning biomass (1,000 MT) |
| h | Steepness |
| SB0 | Virgin spawning stock biomass (1,000 MT) |
| SBmsy/SB0 | Ratio of $SB_{MSY}$ to SB0 |
| FmsySPR | %SPR for $F_{MSY}$ |
| B/Bmsy | Ratio of total biomass in FY2022 to $B_{MSY}$ |
| SB/SBmsy | Ratio of spawning biomass in FY2022 to $SB_{MSY}$ |
| SBmsy/SBmax | Ratio of $SB_{MSY}$ to the historical maximum of spawning biomass |

**Annex Q**

# Stock assessment report for Pacific saury

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Data used in the assessment modeling

Data are included from the NPFC Convention Area and Members' Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). Pacific saury (*Cololabis saira*) is widely distributed from the subarctic to the subtropical regions of the North Pacific Ocean. The fishing grounds are west of 180° E but differ among Members (China, Japan, Korea, Russia, Chinese Taipei, and Vanuatu). Figure 1 shows the historical catches of Pacific saury by Member. Figure 2 shows CPUE and Japanese survey biomass indices used in the stock assessment. Appendix 1 shows data used for the updated stock assessment.

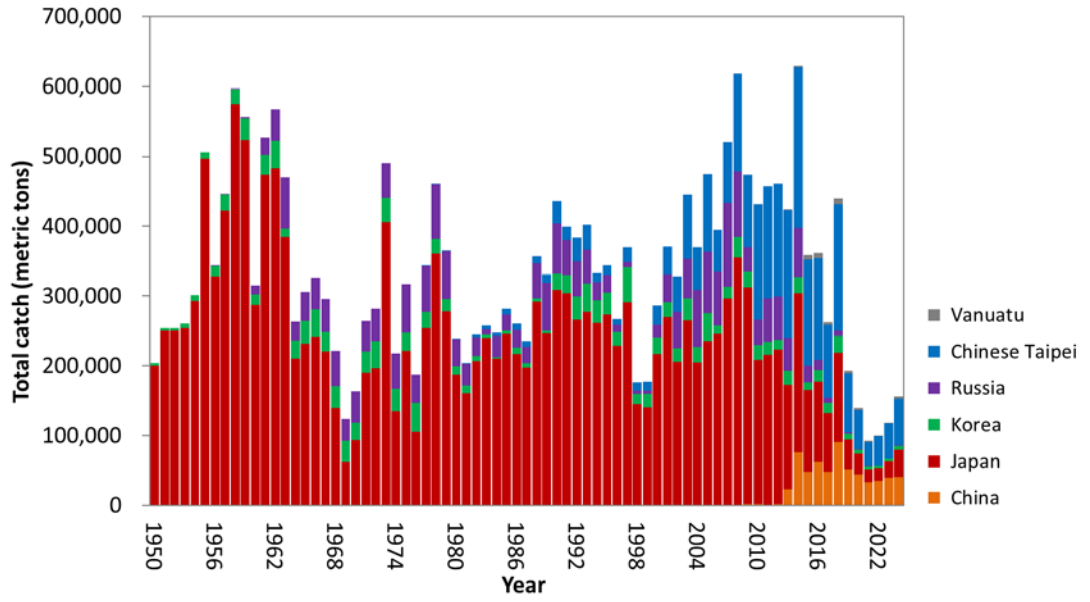



Figure 1. Time series of catch by Member during 1950-2024. The catch data for 1950-1979 are shown but not used in stock assessment modeling. Catch data in 2024 are preliminary (as of 29 November 2024) and not used in the assessment.

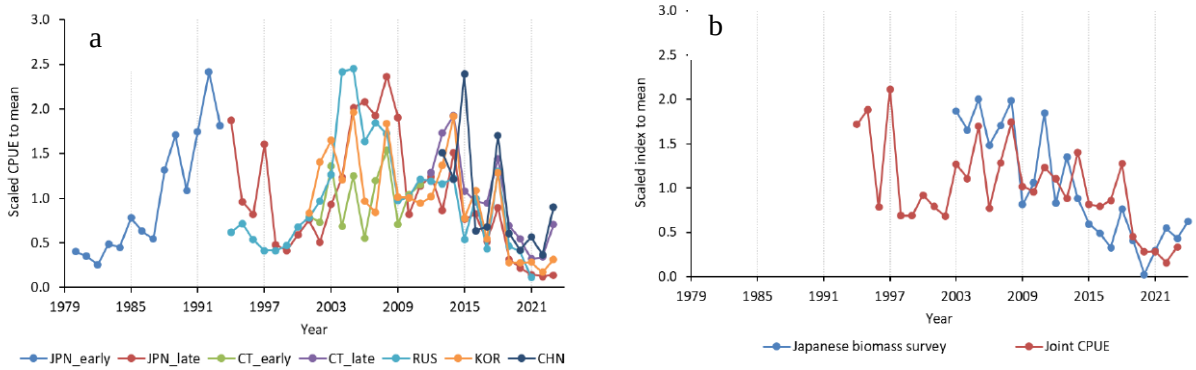



Figure 2. Time series of (a) Japanese survey biomass index and joint CPUE and (b) Member's standardized CPUE indices used in the assessment modeling.

## Brief description of specification of analysis and models

A Bayesian state-space production model (BSSPM) used in previous stock assessments was employed as an agreed provisional stock assessment model for Pacific saury during 1980-2024. Scientists from three Members (China, Japan and Chinese Taipei) each conducted analyses following the agreed specification which called for two base case scenarios and two sensitivity scenarios (see Annex F, SSC PS13 report for more details). The two base case scenarios differ in using each Member's standardized CPUEs (base case B1) or standardized joint CPUEs (base case B2). For the two sensitivity cases with Japanese early CPUE (1980-1994), time-varying catchability was assumed to account for potential increases in catchability. A higher weight was given to the Japanese biomass survey estimates than to Members' CPUEs in B1 while comparable weights were given to the Japanese biomass survey estimates and the joint CPUEs in B2. The CPUE data were modeled as nonlinear indices of biomass. Members used similar approaches with some differences in the assumption of the time-varying catchability and prior distributions for the free parameters in the model.

## Summary of stock assessment results

The SSC PS considered the BSSPM results and noted the agreement in trends among Members' results for each base case model. However, there was a marked difference in the biomass level between B1 and B2 due to the different CPUE trends used. The SSC PS discussed and recognized that the results covered a wide range of uncertainties in data, model and estimation, and it therefore concluded the outcomes of MCMC runs could be aggregated over the 6 models (2 base case models x 3 Members) as in the previous assessments. The aggregated results for assessing the overall median values and their associated 80% credible intervals are shown in Table 1a (The aggregated results for 2023 are shown in Table 1b). The graphical presentations for times series of a) biomass (B), b) B-ratio (=B/$B_{MSY}$), c) harvest rate (F), d) F-ratio (F/$F_{MSY}$) and e) B/K are shown in Figure 3. The Kobe plot with time trajectory using aggregated model outcomes is shown in Figure 4. Time series of median estimated values for biomass, harvest rate, B-ratio, F-ratio and depletion level relative to K are shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Summary of estimates of reference quantities. Medians and credible intervals for the aggregated results are presented. In addition, median values of Member's combined results (over B1 and B2) are shown.

a. 2024 assessment

| | Median | Lower10% | Upper10% | Median_CHN | Median_JPN | Median_CT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C_2023 (10000 t) | 11.836 | 11.836 | 11.836 | 11.836 | 11.836 | 11.836 |
| AveC_2021_2023 | 10.352 | 10.352 | 10.352 | 10.352 | 10.352 | 10.352 |
| AveF_2021_2023 | 0.328 | 0.158 | 0.528 | 0.352 | 0.339 | 0.302 |
| F_2023 | 0.297 | 0.155 | 0.469 | 0.313 | 0.307 | 0.277 |
| FMSY | 0.330 | 0.139 | 0.543 | 0.357 | 0.336 | 0.310 |
| MSY (10000 t) | 39.440 | 32.021 | 47.010 | 40.155 | 39.284 | 39.010 |
| F_2023/FMSY | 0.920 | 0.656 | 1.411 | 0.915 | 0.942 | 0.903 |
| AveF_2021_2023/FMSY | 1.008 | 0.755 | 1.435 | 1.013 | 1.026 | 0.988 |
| K (10000 t) | 248.067 | 151.766 | 565.726 | 234.100 | 253.396 | 254.500 |
| B_2023 (10000 t) | 39.875 | 25.214 | 76.394 | 37.830 | 38.599 | 42.720 |
| B_2024 (10000 t) | 52.763 | 35.130 | 91.631 | 50.920 | 52.120 | 55.155 |
| AveB_2022_2024 | 41.563 | 27.387 | 77.406 | 39.705 | 40.555 | 44.165 |
| BMSY (10000 t) | 120.100 | 78.060 | 253.481 | 113.800 | 119.008 | 125.100 |
| BMSY/K | 0.485 | 0.392 | 0.604 | 0.480 | 0.471 | 0.505 |
| B_2023/K | 0.161 | 0.101 | 0.228 | 0.158 | 0.154 | 0.169 |
| B_2024/K | 0.212 | 0.122 | 0.315 | 0.212 | 0.206 | 0.219 |
| AveB_2022_2024/K | 0.169 | 0.106 | 0.236 | 0.168 | 0.163 | 0.175 |
| B_2023/BMSY | 0.328 | 0.225 | 0.452 | 0.323 | 0.322 | 0.339 |
| B_2024/BMSY | 0.435 | 0.270 | 0.628 | 0.433 | 0.431 | 0.440 |
| AveB_2022_2024/BMSY | 0.345 | 0.235 | 0.470 | 0.341 | 0.341 | 0.352 |

b. 2023 assessment

| | Median | Lower10% | Upper10% | Median_CHN | Median_JPN | Median_CT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C_2022 (10000 t) | 10.009 | 10.009 | 10.009 | 10.009 | 10.009 | 10.009 |
| AveC_2020_2022 | 11.066 | 11.066 | 11.066 | 11.066 | 11.066 | 11.066 |
| AveF_2020_2022 | 0.337 | 0.141 | 0.621 | 0.328 | 0.376 | 0.316 |
| F_2022 | 0.245 | 0.113 | 0.426 | 0.231 | 0.270 | 0.237 |
| FMSY | 0.314 | 0.108 | 0.576 | 0.305 | 0.350 | 0.297 |
| MSY (10000 t) | 39.657 | 30.473 | 48.874 | 40.434 | 39.856 | 38.940 |
| F_2022/FMSY | 0.806 | 0.519 | 1.436 | 0.810 | 0.799 | 0.809 |
| AveF_2020_2022/FMSY | 1.111 | 0.770 | 1.748 | 1.159 | 1.106 | 1.079 |
| K (10000 t) | 264.054 | 147.520 | 702.181 | 285.000 | 251.768 | 260.100 |
| B_2022 (10000 t) | 40.820 | 23.503 | 88.382 | 43.290 | 37.073 | 42.300 |
| B_2023 (10000 t) | 54.940 | 33.227 | 108.300 | 57.340 | 52.284 | 55.320 |
| AveB_2021_2023 | 42.410 | 25.270 | 90.015 | 44.623 | 39.042 | 43.883 |
| BMSY (10000 t) | 128.100 | 74.289 | 317.407 | 136.900 | 118.580 | 130.150 |
| BMSY/K | 0.481 | 0.389 | 0.604 | 0.469 | 0.469 | 0.506 |
| B_2022/K | 0.155 | 0.089 | 0.233 | 0.150 | 0.151 | 0.163 |
| B_2023/K | 0.209 | 0.105 | 0.341 | 0.200 | 0.210 | 0.214 |
| AveB_2021_2023/K | 0.163 | 0.092 | 0.244 | 0.156 | 0.160 | 0.170 |
| B_2022/BMSY | 0.316 | 0.195 | 0.474 | 0.306 | 0.316 | 0.323 |
| B_2023/BMSY | 0.426 | 0.227 | 0.698 | 0.412 | 0.441 | 0.424 |
| AveB_2021_2023/BMSY | 0.331 | 0.201 | 0.496 | 0.320 | 0.336 | 0.337 |

Table 2. Time series of median estimated values for biomass, harvest rate, B-ratio, F-ratio and depletion level relative to K. The unit of biomass is 10,000 tons.

| Year | Biomass | HarvestRate | Bratio | Fratio | Depletion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 136.290 | 0.175 | 1.123 | 0.554 | 0.549 |
| 1981 | 143.000 | 0.143 | 1.217 | 0.438 | 0.594 |
| 1982 | 154.500 | 0.158 | 1.321 | 0.482 | 0.646 |
| 1983 | 159.818 | 0.161 | 1.364 | 0.490 | 0.671 |
| 1984 | 163.400 | 0.151 | 1.391 | 0.459 | 0.685 |
| 1985 | 167.300 | 0.168 | 1.422 | 0.511 | 0.701 |
| 1986 | 167.100 | 0.156 | 1.413 | 0.475 | 0.697 |
| 1987 | 170.216 | 0.138 | 1.434 | 0.424 | 0.706 |
| 1988 | 174.700 | 0.204 | 1.461 | 0.630 | 0.719 |
| 1989 | 164.800 | 0.201 | 1.372 | 0.621 | 0.677 |
| 1990 | 160.800 | 0.271 | 1.346 | 0.838 | 0.661 |
| 1991 | 146.700 | 0.272 | 1.225 | 0.849 | 0.601 |
| 1992 | 138.900 | 0.276 | 1.166 | 0.867 | 0.567 |
| 1993 | 132.866 | 0.303 | 1.115 | 0.962 | 0.539 |
| 1994 | 124.225 | 0.268 | 1.040 | 0.860 | 0.498 |
| 1995 | 121.400 | 0.283 | 0.993 | 0.944 | 0.473 |
| 1996 | 113.402 | 0.235 | 0.911 | 0.798 | 0.434 |
| 1997 | 118.500 | 0.312 | 0.913 | 1.110 | 0.435 |
| 1998 | 103.500 | 0.170 | 0.802 | 0.600 | 0.383 |
| 1999 | 114.500 | 0.154 | 0.873 | 0.549 | 0.419 |
| 2000 | 127.800 | 0.224 | 1.002 | 0.769 | 0.481 |
| 2001 | 131.800 | 0.281 | 1.071 | 0.920 | 0.518 |
| 2002 | 135.296 | 0.243 | 1.120 | 0.768 | 0.545 |
| 2003 | 155.200 | 0.286 | 1.292 | 0.890 | 0.631 |
| 2004 | 153.300 | 0.241 | 1.269 | 0.744 | 0.625 |
| 2005 | 166.208 | 0.285 | 1.350 | 0.892 | 0.668 |
| 2006 | 148.600 | 0.265 | 1.213 | 0.826 | 0.599 |
| 2007 | 155.978 | 0.334 | 1.268 | 1.040 | 0.629 |
| 2008 | 149.101 | 0.414 | 1.198 | 1.305 | 0.595 |
| 2009 | 111.116 | 0.425 | 0.917 | 1.315 | 0.451 |
| 2010 | 109.500 | 0.393 | 0.897 | 1.220 | 0.442 |
| 2011 | 114.800 | 0.397 | 0.924 | 1.250 | 0.458 |
| 2012 | 101.700 | 0.453 | 0.834 | 1.402 | 0.411 |
| 2013 | 100.373 | 0.422 | 0.814 | 1.314 | 0.404 |
| 2014 | 93.029 | 0.677 | 0.768 | 2.068 | 0.380 |
| 2015 | 63.708 | 0.563 | 0.525 | 1.736 | 0.259 |
| 2016 | 56.762 | 0.637 | 0.471 | 1.950 | 0.232 |
| 2017 | 48.322 | 0.543 | 0.402 | 1.670 | 0.197 |
| 2018 | 51.780 | 0.842 | 0.427 | 2.545 | 0.212 |
| 2019 | 30.715 | 0.636 | 0.255 | 1.944 | 0.126 |
| 2020 | 25.040 | 0.558 | 0.209 | 1.709 | 0.103 |
| 2021 | 25.250 | 0.365 | 0.209 | 1.127 | 0.103 |
| 2022 | 31.970 | 0.313 | 0.264 | 0.969 | 0.130 |
| 2023 | 39.875 | 0.297 | 0.328 | 0.920 | 0.161 |
| 2024 | 52.763 | | 0.435 | | 0.212 |

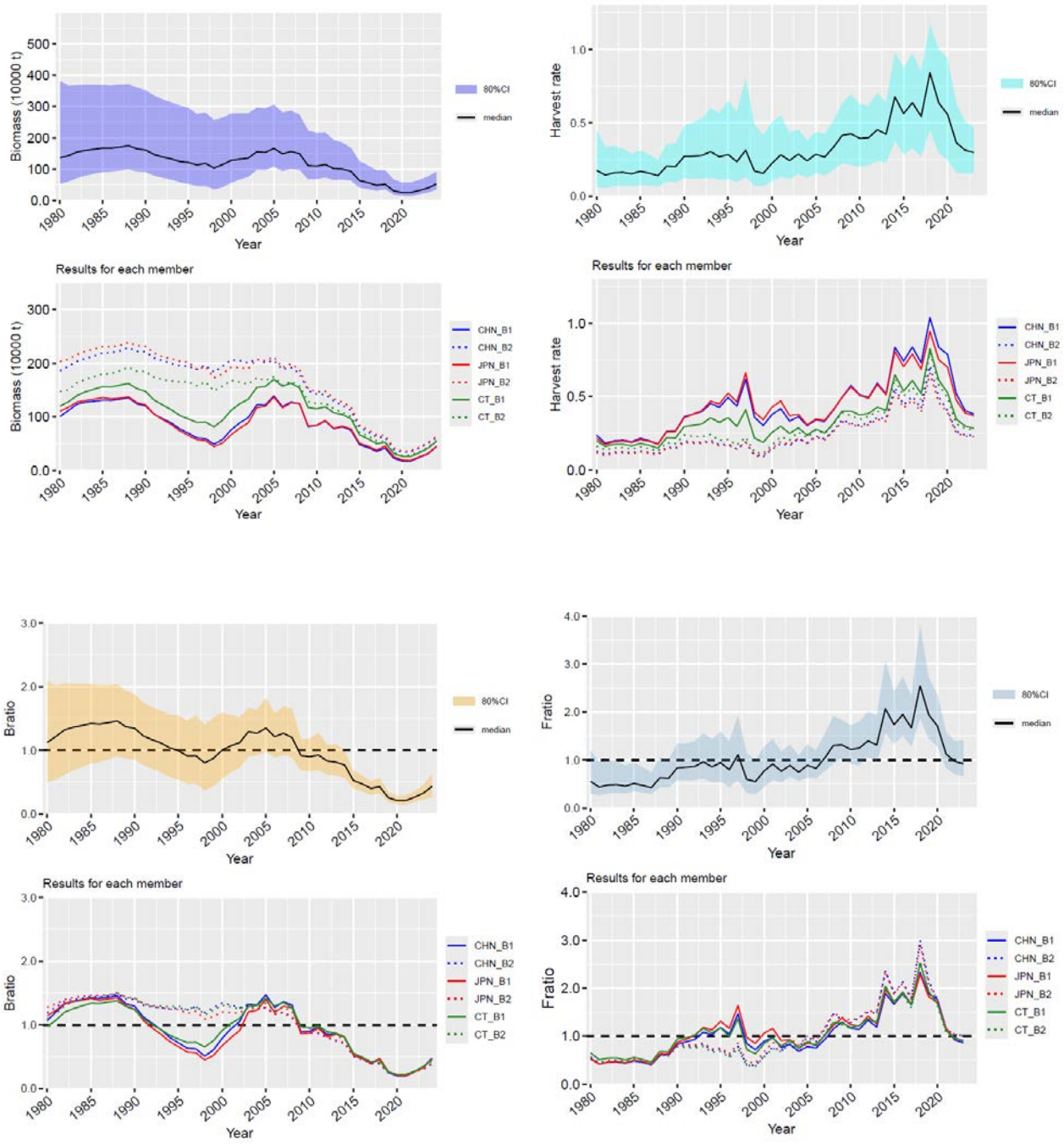



Figure 3. Time series of median estimated values of six runs for biomass, harvest rate, B-ratio, F-ratio and depletion level relative to K. The solid and shaded lines correspond to B1 and B2, respectively.

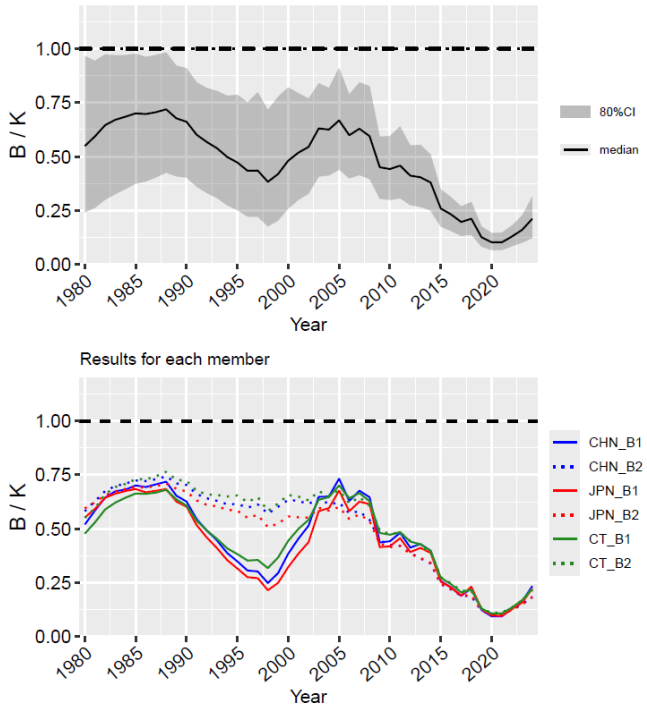



Figure 3 (Continued).

2024 assessment

2023 assessment

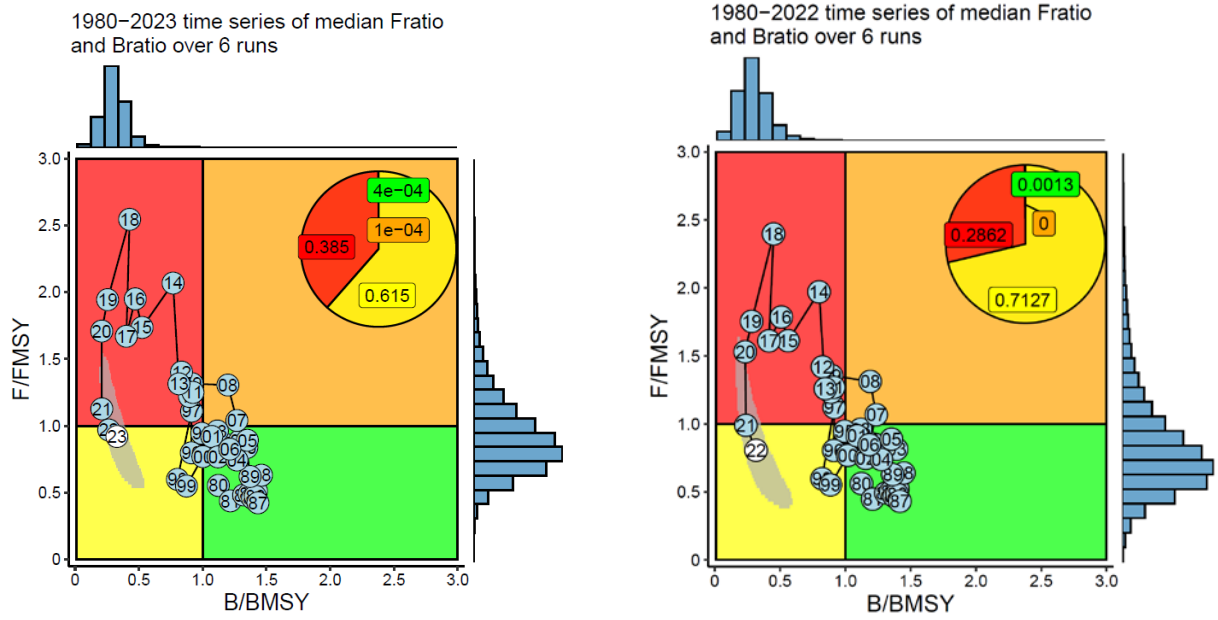



Figure 4. Kobe plot with time trajectory in 2024 (left) and 2023 (right) assessments. The data are aggregated across 6 model results (2 base-case models by 3 Members).

## Current stock condition and management advice

***Summary of stock status***

Results of all Members' and combined model estimates indicate the stock declined with high interannual variability from a high biomass level in the mid-2000's after a period of high productivity to the current low biomass levels. Combined results show that average B was below $B_{MSY}$ during 2022–2024 (median average $B/B_{MSY}$ during 2022–2024 = 0.345, 80%CI = 0.235–0.470) and average F was above $F_{MSY}$ (average $F/F_{MSY}$ during 2021–2023 = 1.008, 80%CI = 0.755–1.435). Thus, stock biomass remained at low levels in recent years. Biomass may have increased modestly during 2022–2024 based on the abundance indices and higher recruitment that may be evident in the Japanese fishery size composition. Based on CPUE, survey data, and model results, the condition of the Pacific saury stock and fishery improved in recent years although biomass remains below $B_{MSY}$. Harvest rates decreased while biomass and catch increased during 2020–2024. The improvement could be due at least in part to reductions in catch since 2020 and potentially due to unidentified environmental variability.

***Uncertainty in assessment***

Uncertainty in estimated biomass for the terminal year for Pacific saury translates into uncertainty about unconstrained TAC recommendations for the next fishing season. The estimated biomass for Pacific saury during 2023 in the 2023 assessment (549,400 mt) was substantially higher than the updated estimate (398,750 mt) for 2023 in 2024 assessment. As a result, the recommended 2024 TAC without restriction was 73,490 mt based on the 2023 assessment results, but would have been 75,741 mt based on the 2024 assessment results. Such changes occur because new data bring additional information about recent conditions. Ideally, positive and negative changes are equally likely, and the changes are small. Retrospective patterns in some runs for Pacific saury may have affected the HCR calculations. This is an important topic for work in the next assessment (see "Research Recommendations").

The average ensemble 2024 biomass estimate from all three Members and both base case runs was similar (527,630 mt) to estimates from the Member with no retrospective patterns (Chinese Taipei's average of two base case runs 551.450 mt). The agreement suggests that the ensemble average is precise enough for use in 2025 management.

***Management advice***

An interim harvest control rule (HCR) for Pacific saury was adopted under CMM 2024-08 For Pacific Saury by the NPFC in April 2024 (Figure 5). The HCR states that the unconstrained Total Annual Catch (TAC) in the following year ($year_{t+1}$) is a function of the biomass, fishing mortality, and $B_{MSY}$ calculated in the current year (t): $TAC_{t+1} = B_t * F_{MSY,} * (B_t/B_{MSY})$. In addition, the HCR constrains changes in TAC to no more than 10% from one year to the next. The unconstrained 2025 TAC based on the results of the 2024 stock assessment is $B_{2024} * F_{MSY} * (B_{2024}/B_{MSY}) = 75{,}741$ tons, which is smaller than the 90% of the 2024 TAC of 225,000 mt. Following the application of the maximum 10% change aspect of the HCR, the final TAC for 2025 is 202,500 tons.

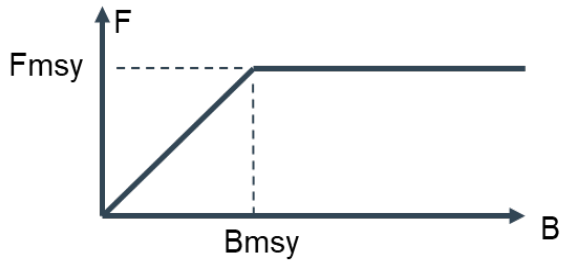



Figure 5. Shapes of the function used in the harvest control rule adopted in 2024 Commission meeting.

## Special comments regarding the procedures and stock assessment results

The SSC PS worked collaboratively to produce this consensus stock assessment, which includes significant

technical improvements. This section highlights several important aspects of the stock assessment procedure and results.

1) Standardized CPUE data were assumed to be hyperstable and thus less likely to react to changes in biomass. Thus, standardized CPUE were down-weighted relative to the Japanese survey in the first base case (B1), which used CPUE from individual Members. In B1, a single non-linear parameter was used for the CPUEs for each Member. Model results support this decision.

2) Estimated trends in relative stock size measures and reference points from Chinese Taipei (CT), Japan (JPN), China (CHN) and combined models were similar to one another. CPUE, survey trends and model results suggest that stock size is still low but increased since 2020. The $F_{MSY}$ * B * Bratio for 2024 based on the combined models in this assessment is similar to the $F_{MSY}$ * B *Bratio calculated for 2023 in the last assessment despite the recent increasing trend in biomass. The two $F_{MSY}$ * B *Bratio values are similar because recent biomass estimates are lower in the 2024 assessment.

3) Biomass estimates from the 2023 and 2024 assessments are similar in spite of suggestion from the data that stock size increased. This is because the estimated scale of recent biomass is lower in this assessment than in the last assessment. Such uncertainties and shifts in scale can occur because results for most recent years are relatively uncertain and because of retrospective patterns. Retrospective patterns (estimated biomass declined with additional years of data) were noted in results for two Members. Changes were also made in the handling of some CPUE time series in the current model that improved model fit. These changes and the retrospective patterns may have contributed to lower estimated biomass in this assessment for Pacific saury in 2023.

4) Oceanographic or biological factors responsible for changes in Pacific saury productivity have not yet been determined. Development of modeling procedures to incorporate environmental change is an important area for future research. The work should include refinements to stock assessment models to better reflect and estimate environmental effects on recruitment and biology. This work should be coordinated among Members and folded into the development of age-structured and improved BSSPM models.

5) Experience with the HCR rule this year suggests that the use of more current data might improve management advice. Currently, the HCR for 2025 is based on CPUE and catch data through 2023 and survey data through 2024. However, catch data are nearly complete for the most recent year when the assessment for that year is completed and reasonably precise CPUE standardization could probably be completed early as well. It would be advisable for the SSC PS to consider approaches to using the most recent data in the assessment. One approach to demonstrating potential benefits would be to do a retrospective analysis of HCR calculations based on the actual terminal year and the year before.

# STOCK ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR PACIFIC SAURY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### *1.1 Distribution*

Pacific saury (*Cololabis saira* Brevoort, 1856) has a wide distribution extending in the subarctic and subtropical North Pacific Ocean from inshore waters of Japan and the Kuril Islands to eastward to the Gulf of Alaska and southward to Mexico. Pacific saury is a commercially important fish in the western North Pacific Ocean (Parin 1968; Hubbs and Wisner 1980).

### *1.2 Migration*

Pacific saury migrates extensively between the northern feeding grounds in the Oyashio waters around Hokkaido and the Kuril Islands in summer and the spawning areas in the Kuroshio waters off southern Japan in winter (Fukushima 1979; Kosaka 2000). Pacific saury in offshore regions (east of 160°E) also migrate westward toward the coast of Japan after October every year (Suyama et al. 2012).

### *1.3 Population structure*

Genetic evidence suggests there are no distinct stocks in the Pacific saury population based on 141 individuals collected from five distant locales (East China Sea, Sea of Okhotsk, northwest Pacific, central North Pacific, and northeast Pacific) (Chow et al. 2009).

### *1.4 Spawning season and grounds*

The spawning season of Pacific saury is relatively long, beginning in September and ending in June of the following year (Watanabe and Lo 1989). Pacific saury spawns over a vast area from the Japanese coastal waters to eastern offshore waters (Baitaliuk et al. 2013). The main spawning grounds are considered to be located in the Kuroshio-Oyashio transition region in fall and spring and in the Kuroshio waters and the Kuroshio Extension waters in winter (Watanabe and Lo 1989).

### *1.5 Food and feeding*

The Pacific saury larvae prey on the nauplii of copepods and other small-sized zooplankton. As they grow, they begin to prey on larger zooplankton such as krill (Odate 1977). The Pacific saury is preyed on by large fish ranked higher in the food chain, such as *Thunnus alalunga* (Nihira 1988) and coho salmon, *Oncorhynchus kisutsh* (Sato and Hirakawa 1976) as well as by animals such as minke whales *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* (Konishi et al. 2009) and sea birds (Ogi 1984).

### *1.6 Age and growth*

Based on analysis of daily otolith increments, Pacific saury reaches approximately 20 cm in knob length (distance from the tip of lower jaw to the posterior end of the muscular knob at the base of a caudal peduncle; hereafter as body length) in 6 or 7 months after hatching (Watanabe et al. 1988; Suyama et al. 1992). There is some variation in growth rate depending on the hatching month during this long spawning season (Kurita et al. 2004) and geographical differences (Suyama et al. 2012b). The maximum lifespan is 2 years (Suyama et al. 2006). The age 1 fish grow to over 27 cm in body length in June and July when Japanese research surveys are conducted and reach over 29 cm in the fishing season between August and December (Suyama et al. 2006).

### *1.7 Reproduction*

The minimum size of maturity of Pacific saury has been estimated at about 25 cm in the field (Hatanaka 1956) or rearing experiments (Nakaya et al. 2010). In rare cases, saury have been found to mature at 22 cm (Sugama 1957; Hotta 1960). Under rearing experiments, Pacific saury begins spawning 8 months after hatching, and spawning activity continues for about 3 months (Suyama et al. 2016). Batch fecundity is about 1,000 to 3,000 eggs per saury (Kosaka 2000).

## 2. FISHERY

### *2.1 Overview of fisheries*

Western North Pacific

In Japan, the stick-held dip net fishery for Pacific saury was developed in the 1940s. Since then, the stick-held dip net gears have become the dominant fishing technique to catch Pacific saury in the northwest Pacific Ocean. Since 1995, more than 97% of Japan's total catch is caught by the stick-held dip net. The annual catch of Pacific saury for stick-held dip net fishery has fluctuated. Maximum and minimum catches of 355 thousand tons and 18 thousand tons were recorded in 2008 and 2022, respectively.

Pacific saury fisheries in Korea have been operated with gillnet since the late 1950s in Tsushima Warm Current region. Korean stick-held dip net fishery started from 1985 in the Northwest Pacific Ocean. The largest catch of 50 thousand tons was recorded in 1997 (Gong and Suh 2013).

Russian fishery for Pacific saury has been conducted using stick-held dip nets in the northwest Pacific Ocean in the area that includes national waters (mainly within the Russian EEZ) and adjacent NPFC Convention Areas. Russian catch statistics for saury fishery exists, beginning from 1956, and standardized CPUE indices from that fishery were calculated since 1994. Saury fishery traditionally occurred from August to November; however, in recent years, the onset of fishing for saury shifted to the early summer period. Peak catch of saury of over 100 thousand tons was in 2007.

China commenced its exploratory saury fishing using stick-held dip nets in the high seas in 2003, but only started to develop this fishery in 2012. The fishing seasons mainly cover the period from June-November.

Chinese Taipei's Pacific saury fishery can date back to 1975 and had its first commercial catch in 1977. Over the past decade, the number of active Pacific saury fishing vessels has been increasing from 68 to 91 and the catch has fluctuated between 39,750 tons and 229,937 tons since 2001. Aside from Pacific saury fishery, most of the Pacific saury fishing vessels also conduct flying squid jigging operations in the Northwest Pacific Ocean.

Vanuatu commenced its development of Pacific saury fishery by using stick-held dip net in the high seas in 2004. Currently there are four vessels operating in the Northwest Pacific targeting saury, but the total accumulative number of its authorized Pacific saury fishing vessels from 2004 to 2020 is 16. The fishing season mainly covers the period from July to November each year.

Eastern North Pacific

Although Pacific saury occur in the Canada EEZ, there is no targeted fishery for the species. There is no historical record of Canadian participation in international fisheries for saury. Domestic fisheries sometimes capture saury as bycatch in pelagic and bottom trawls and there are a handful of records from other gear types including commercial longlines. The most recently compiled estimates indicate around 300 kg of saury were captured by Canadian commercial fisheries over 17 years from 1997-2013 (Wade and Curtis 2015; NPFC-2022-SSC PS09-IP01). There are also records of saury catches from research trawls (surface, pelagic and bottom trawls) in Canadian waters, but the catches have been minimal.

Management plans developed by the United States' National Marine Fisheries Service currently prohibit targeted fishing on marine forage species including the Pacific saury. In the 1950's to mid-1970's there were sporadic attempts to commercially fish for Pacific saury off of California with limited success using purse seines and light attraction (Kato 1992). Catches from 1969-1972 averaged 450 tons. Currently landings are only "occasionally" reported as bycatch in fisheries on the US west coast. Landings of Pacific saury as bycatch on the US west coast averaged 5.5 kg per year from 2011-2015 (NOAA Fisheries National Bycatch Report Database System, https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/, accessed March 8, 2019)

Historically, Japanese and Russian vessels operated mainly within their own EEZs, but they have shifted into the Convention Area in recent years. Chinese, Korean and Chinese Taipei vessels operate mainly in the high seas of

the North Pacific (Figure 1).

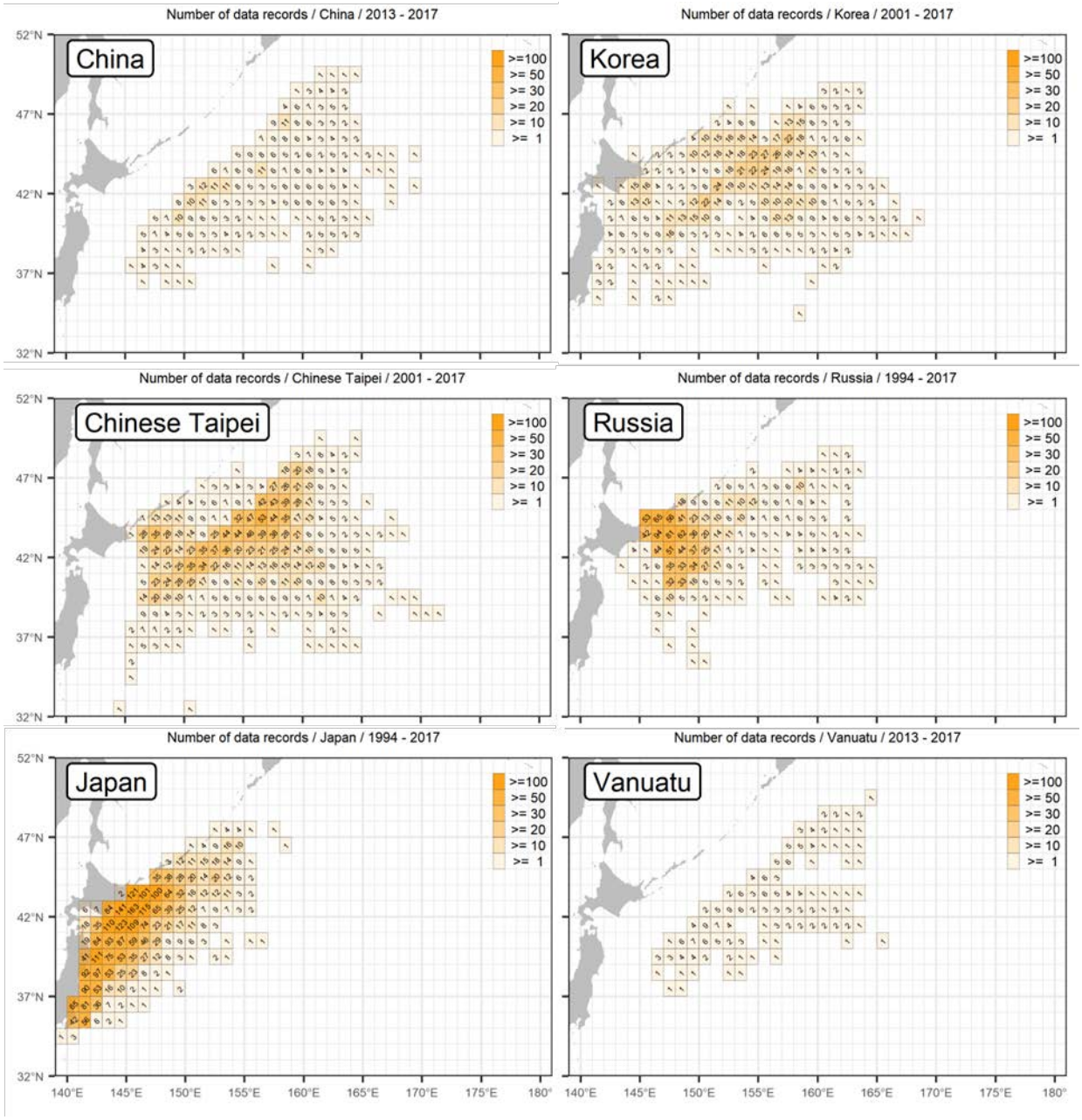



Figure 1 (a). Main fishing grounds for Pacific saury by fishing members in the western North Pacific Ocean during 1994-2017. The legend shows the number of data records. This figure is based on the data shared by the Members for the development of a joint CPUE index

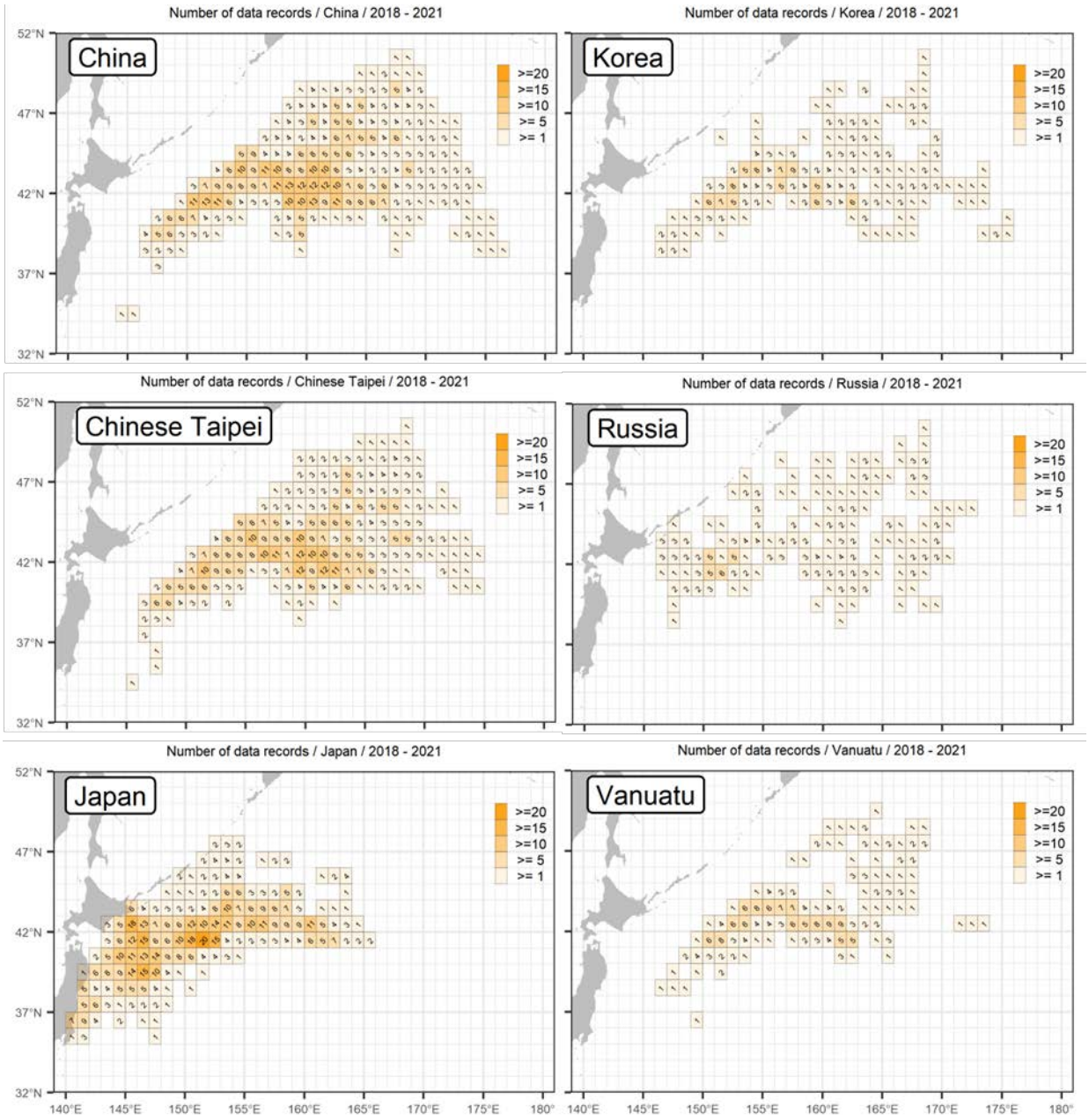



Figure 1 (b). Main fishing grounds for Pacific saury by fishing members in the western North Pacific Ocean during 2018-2021. The legend shows the number of data records. This figure is based on the data shared by the Members for the development of a joint CPUE index

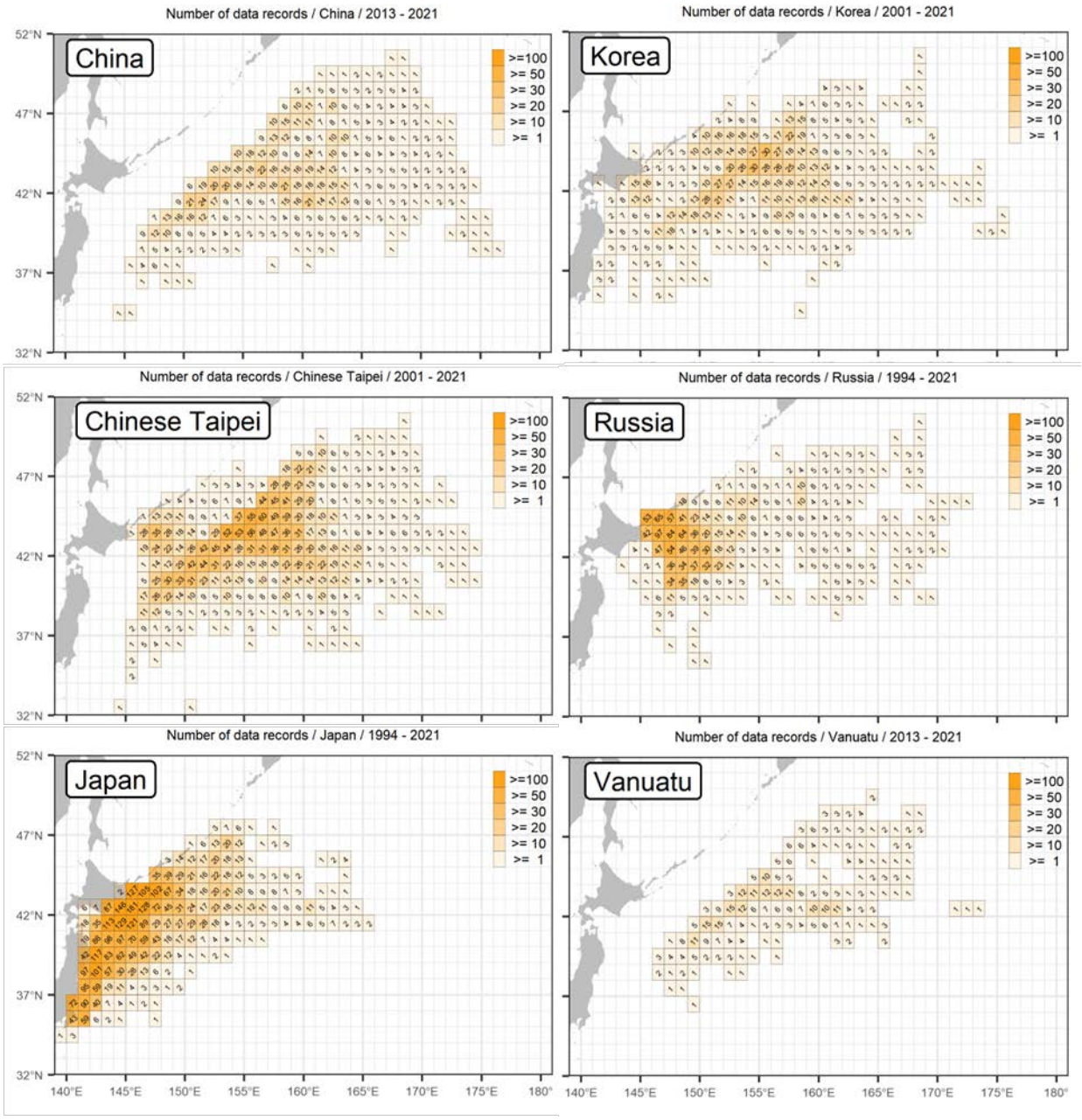



Figure 1 (c). Main fishing grounds for Pacific saury by fishing members in the western North Pacific Ocean during 1994-2021. The legend shows the number of data records. This figure is based on the data shared by the Members for the development of a joint CPUE index

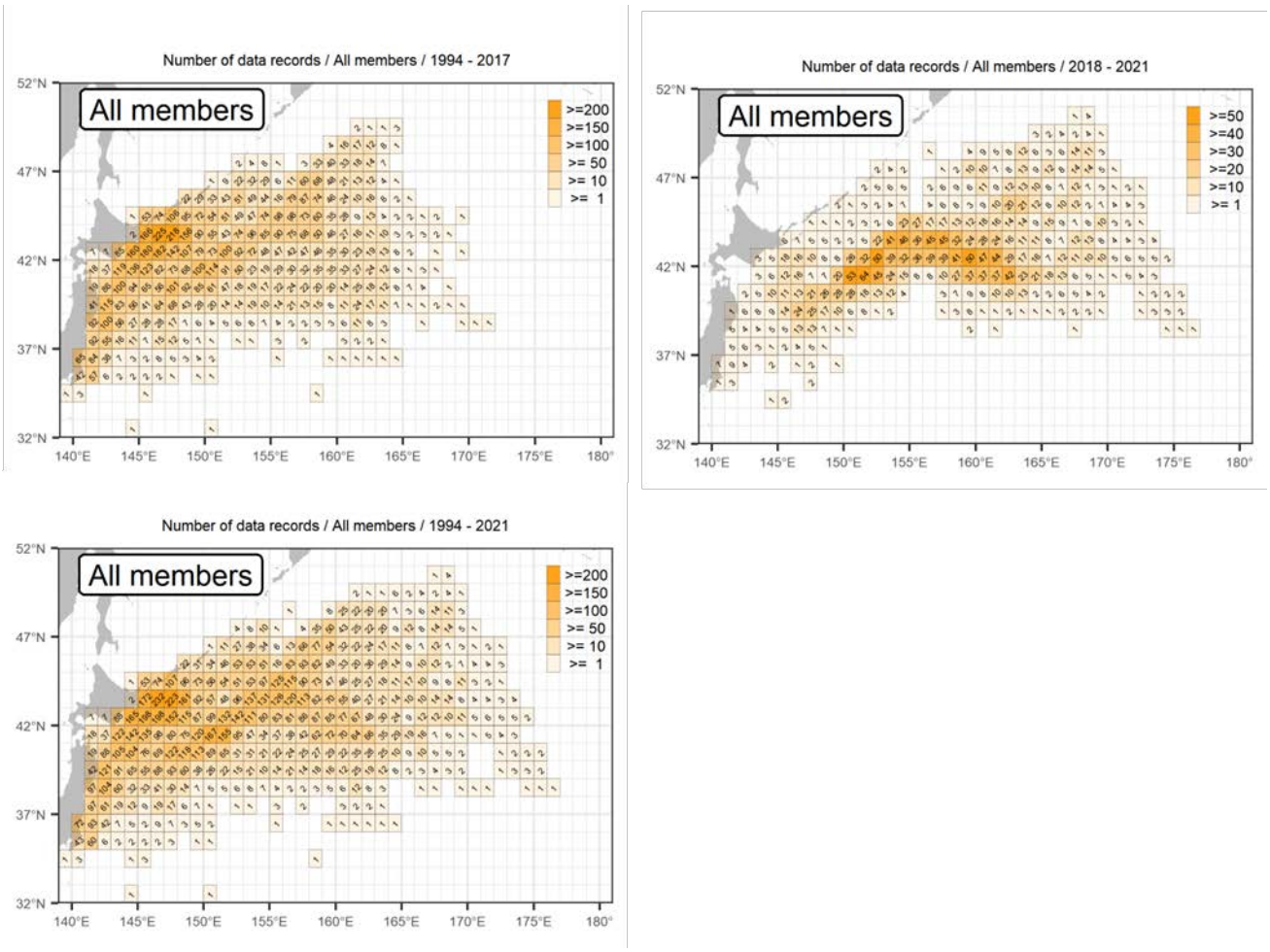



Figure 1 (d). Main fishing grounds for Pacific saury in the western North Pacific Ocean. The legend shows the number of data records. This figure is based on the data shared by the Members for the development of a joint CPUE index

## *2.2 Catch records*

Figure 2 shows the historical catches of Pacific saury in the northwest Pacific Ocean by Member.

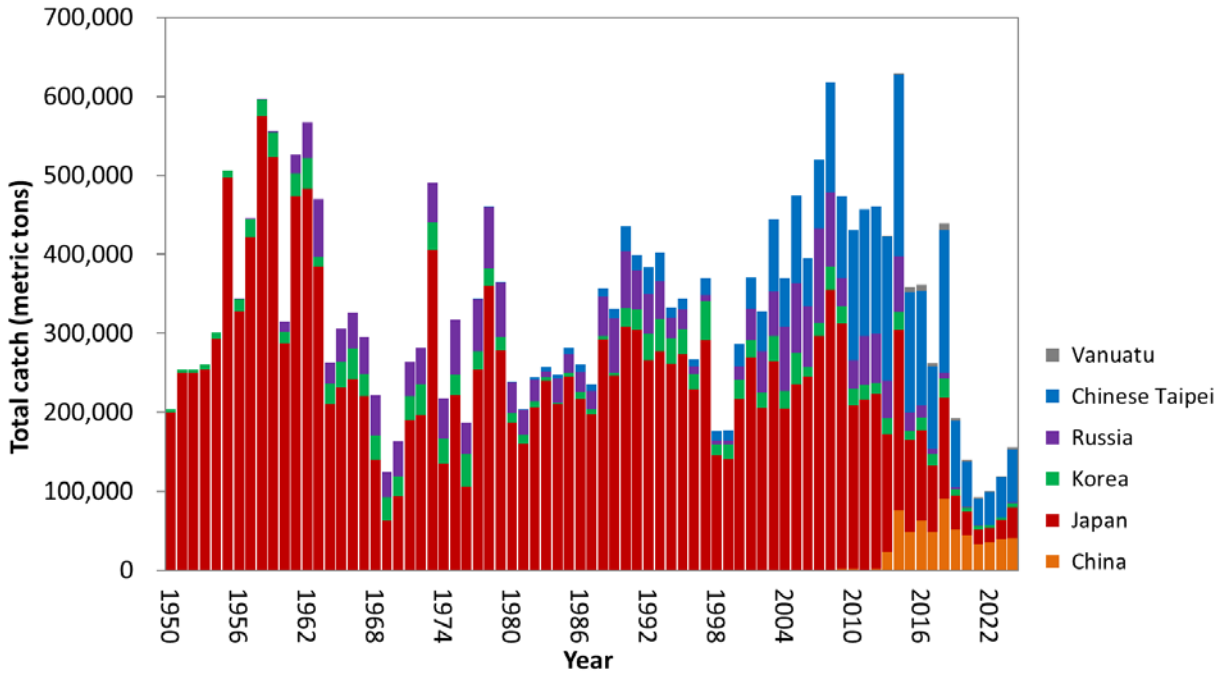



Figure 2. Time series of catch by Member during 1950-2024. The catch data for 1950-1979 are shown but not used in stock assessment modeling. Catch data in 2024 are preliminary (as of 29 November 2024) and not used in the assessment.

## 3. SPECIFICATION OF STOCK ASSESSMENT

A Bayesian state-space production model (BSSPM) used in previous stock assessments was employed as an agreed provisional stock assessment model for Pacific saury during 1980-2024. Scientists from three Members (China, Japan and Chinese Taipei) each conducted analyses following the agreed specification which called for two base case scenarios and two sensitivity scenarios (see Annex G, SSC PS13 report for more details). The two base case scenarios differ in using each Member's standardized CPUEs (base case B1) or standardized joint CPUEs (base case B2). For the two sensitivity cases with Japanese early CPUE (1980-1994), time-varying catchability was assumed to account for potential increases in catchability. A higher weight was given to the Japanese biomass survey estimates than to Members' CPUEs in B1 while comparable weights were given to the Japanese biomass survey estimates and the joint CPUEs in B2. The CPUE data were modeled as nonlinear indices of biomass. Members used similar approaches with some differences in the assumption of the time-varying catchability and prior distributions for the free parameters in the model.

### *3.1 Bayesian state-space production model*

The population dynamics is modelled by the following equations:

$$B_t = \{B_{t-1} + B_{t-1} f(B_{t-1}) - C_{t-1}\} e^{u_t}, \quad u_t \sim N(0, \tau^2)$$

$$f(B_t) = r\left[1 - \left(\frac{B_t}{K}\right)^z\right]$$

where

$B_t$ : the biomass at the beginning of year $t$

$C_t$ : the total catch of year $t$

$u_t$ : the process error in year $t$

$f(B)$ : the production function (Pella-Tomlinson)

$r$ : the intrinsic rate of natural increase
$K$ : the carrying capacity
z: the degree of compensation (shape parameter; different symbols were used by the 3 members)

The multiple biomass indices are modelled as follows:

**Survey biomass estimate**

$$I_{t,biomass} = q_{biomass} B_t \, exp(\, v_{t,biomass}), \qquad \text{where} \;\; v_{t,biomass} \sim N\left(0, \sigma^2_{biomass}\right)$$

where

$q_{biomass}$: the relative bias in biomass estimate
$v_{t,biomass}$: the observation error term in year *t* for survey biomass estimate
$\sigma^2_{biomass}$: the observation error variance for survey biomass estimate

**CPUE series**

$$I_{t,f} = q_f B_t^b \, exp(\, v_{t,f}), \qquad \text{where} \;\; v_{t,f} \sim N\left(0, \sigma_f^2\right)$$

where

$I_{t,f}$ : the biomass index in year *t* for biomass index *f*

$q_f$ : the catchability coefficient for biomass index *f*

$b$: the hyper-stability/depletion parameter
$v_{t,f}$: the observation error term in year *t* for biomass index *f*
$\sigma_f^2$: the observation error in year *t* for biomass index *f*

For the estimation of parameters, Bayesian methods were used with Member-specific differences in preferred assumptions for the prior distributions for the free parameters. MCMC methods were employed for simulating the posterior distributions. For the assumptions of uniform priors used in China and Japan, see documents NPFC-2024-SSC PS14-WP10 and NPFC-2024-SSC PS14-WP11; for the non-uniform priors used in Chinese Taipei, see document NPFC-2024-SSC PS14-WP09.

### *3.2 Agreed scenarios*

Table 1. Definition of scenarios

| | **Base case (NB1)** | **Base case (NB2)** | **Sensitivity case (NS1)** | **Sensitivity case (NS2)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Initial year | 1980 | 1980 | 1980 | 1980 |
| Biomass survey | $I_{t,bio} = q_{bio}\, B_t e^{v_{t,bio}}$<br>$v_{t,bio} \sim N(0, cv_{t,bio}^2 + \sigma^2)$<br>$q_{bio} \sim$ U(0,1)<br>(2003-2024) | Same as left | Same as left | Same as left |
| CPUE | CHN(2013-2023)<br>JPN_late(1994-2023)<br>KOR(2001-2023)<br>RUS(1994-2023)<br>CT(2001-2011, 2012-2023)<br><br>$I_{t,f} = q_f B_t^b e^{v_{t,f}}$<br>$v_{t,f} \sim N(0, \sigma_f^2)$<br>$\sigma_f^2 = c \cdot (ave(cv_{t,bio}^2) + \sigma^2)$, where $ave(cv_{t,bio}^2)$ is computed except for 2020 survey<br>($c$ = 5) | Joint CPUE (1994-2023)<br>$I_{t,joint} = q_{joint} B_t^b e^{v_{t,joint}}$<br>$v_{t,joint} \sim N(0, cv_{t,joint}^2 + \sigma^2)$ | CHN(2013-2023)<br>JPN_early(1980-1993, time-varying $q$)<br>JPN_late(1994-2023)<br>KOR(2001-2023)<br>RUS(1994-2023)<br>CT(2001-2011, 2012-2023)<br><br>$I_{t,f} = q_f B_t^b e^{v_{t,f}}$<br>$v_{t,f} \sim N(0, \sigma_f^2)$<br>$\sigma_f^2 = c \cdot (ave(cv_{t,bio}^2) + \sigma^2)$, where $ave(cv_{t,bio}^2)$ is computed except for 2020 survey<br>($c$ = 6) | JPN_early(1980-1993, time-varying $q$)<br>$I_{t,JE} = q_{t,JE} B_t^b e^{v_{t,JE}}$<br>$v_{t,JE} \sim N(0, \sigma_{JE}^2)$<br>$\sigma_{JE}^2 = c\ ave(cv_{t,joint}^2 + \sigma^2)$<br><br>Joint CPUE (1994-2023)<br>$I_{t,joint} = q_{joint} B_t^b e^{v_{t,joint}}$<br>$v_{t,joint} \sim N(0, cv_{t,joint}^2 + \sigma^2)$ |
| Hyper-depletion / stability | A common parameter for all fisheries with a prior distribution,<br>$b \sim U(0, 1)$ | $b \sim U(0, 1)$ | A common parameter for all fisheries but JPN_early, with a prior distribution, $b \sim U(0, 1)$ [$b$ for JPN_early is fixed at 1] | $b \sim U(0, 1)$ for joint CPUE. [$b$ for JPN_early is fixed at 1] |
| Prior for other than $q_{bio}$ | Own preferred options | Own preferred options | Own preferred options | Own preferred options |

Table 2. Description of symbols used in the stock assessment

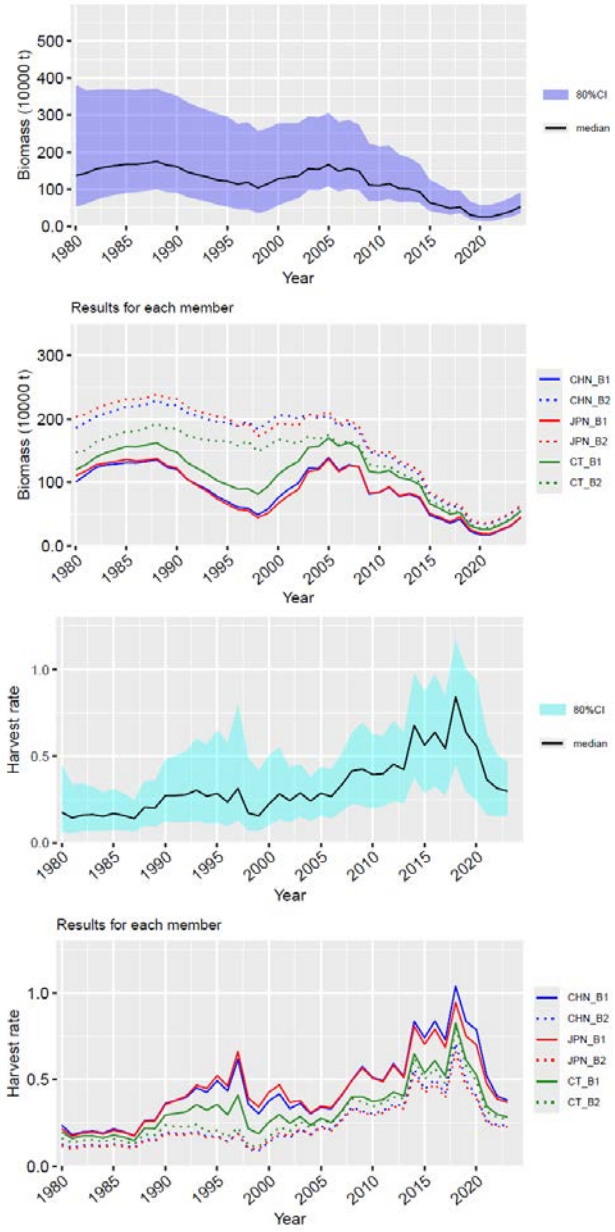
| Symbol | Description |
|---|---|
| $C_{2023}$ | Catch in 2023 |
| $AveC_{2021\text{-}2023}$ | Average catch for a recent period (2021–2023) |
| $AveF_{2021\text{-}2023}$ | Average harvest rate for a recent period (2021–2023) |
| $F_{2023}$ | Harvest rate in 2023 |
| $F_{MSY}$ | Annual harvest rate producing the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) |
| MSY | Equilibrium yield at $F_{MSY}$ |
| $F_{2023}/F_{MSY}$ | Average harvest rate in 2023 relative to $F_{MSY}$ |
| $AveF_{2021\text{-}2023}/F_{MSY}$ | Average harvest rate for a recent period (2021–2023) relative to $F_{MSY}$ |
| K | Equilibrium unexploited biomass (carrying capacity) |
| $B_{2023}$ | Stock biomass in 2023 estimated in the model |
| $B_{2024}$ | Stock biomass in 2024 estimated in the model |
| $AveB_{2022\text{-}2024}$ | Stock biomass for a recent period (2022–2024) estimated in the model |
| $B_{MSY}$ | Stock biomass that will produce the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) |
| $B_{MSY}/K$ | Stock biomass that produces the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) relative to the equilibrium unexploited biomass[a] |
| $B_{2023}/K$ | Stock biomass in 2023 relative to K[a] |
| $B_{2024}/K$ | Stock biomass in 2024 relative to K[a] |
| $B_{2022\text{-}2024}/K$ | Stock biomass in the latest time period (2022-2024) relative to the equilibrium unexploited stock biomass[a] |
| $B_{2023}/B_{MSY}$ | Stock biomass in 2023 relative to $B_{MSY}$[a] |
| $B_{2024}/B_{MSY}$ | Stock biomass in 2024 relative to $B_{MSY}$[a] |
| $B_{2022\text{-}2024}/B_{MSY}$ | Stock biomass for a recent period (2022–2024) relative to the stock biomass that produces maximum sustainable yield (MSY) [a] |

[a]calculated as the average of the ratios.

## 4. SOME AGGREGATED RESULTS FOR VISUALIZATION PURPOSE

### *4.1 Visual presentation of results*

The graphical presentations for times series of biomass (B), B-ratio ($B/B_{MSY}$), exploitation rate (F), F-ratio ($F/F_{MSY}$) and B/K are shown in Figure 3.



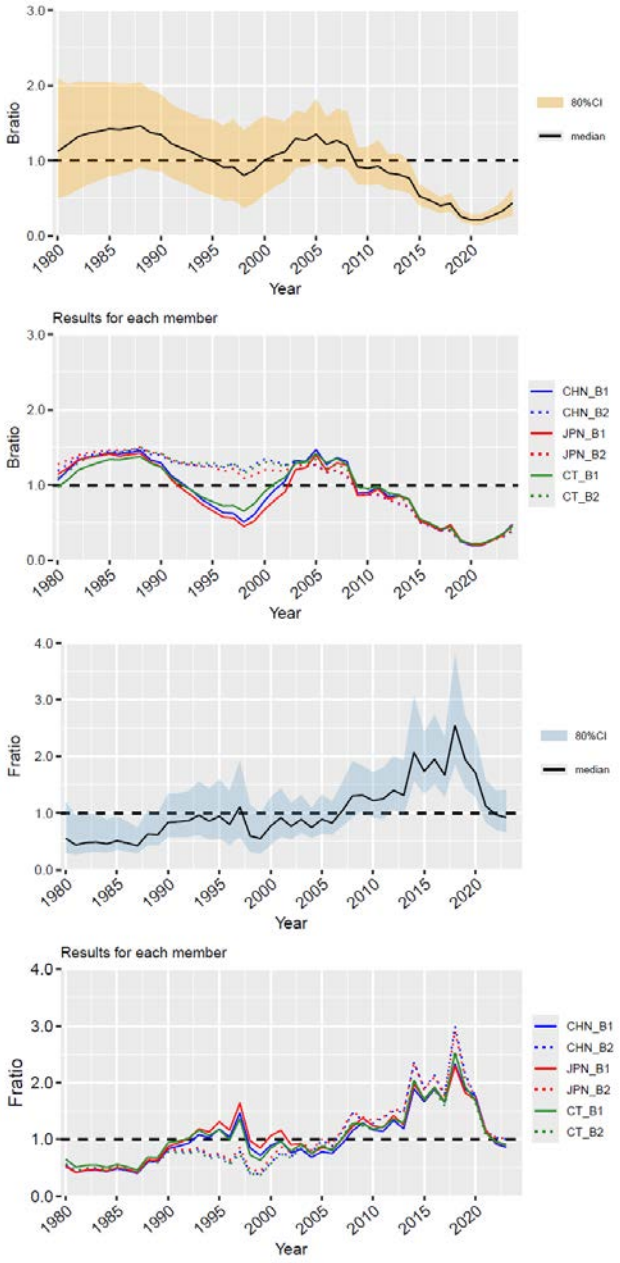



Figure 3. Time series of median estimated values of six runs for biomass, harvest rate, B-ratio, F-ratio and depletion level relative to K. The solid and shaded lines correspond to B1 and B2, respectively.

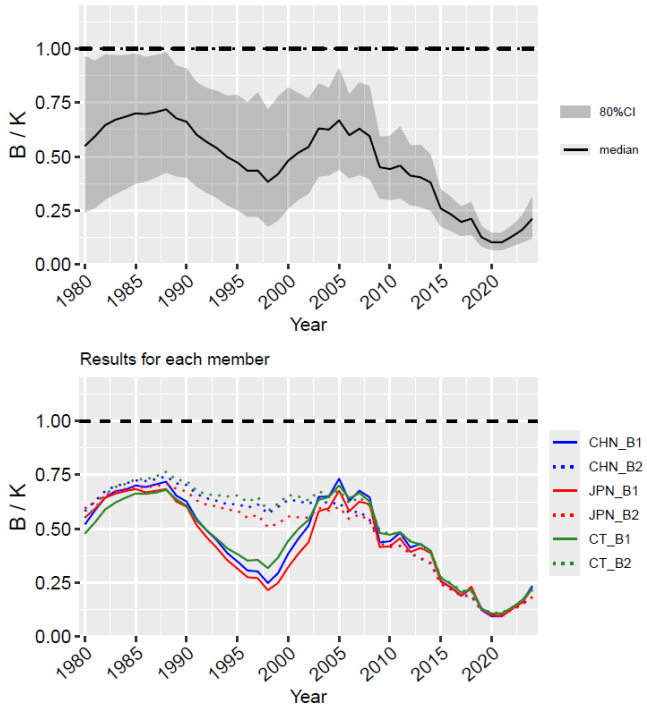



Figure 3 (Continued).

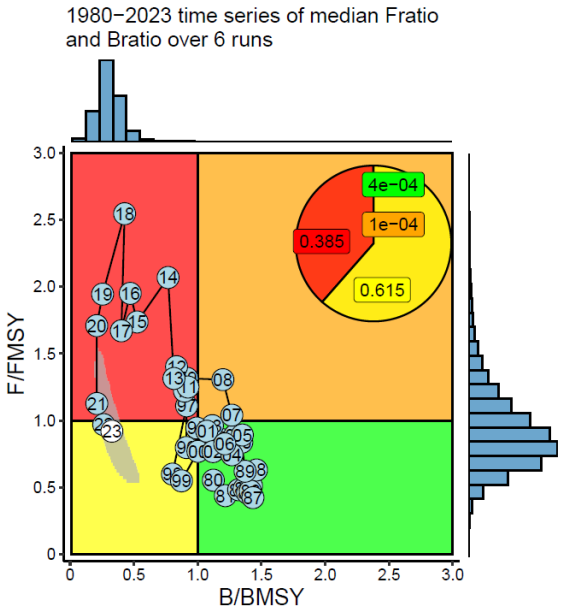



Figure 4. Kobe plot with time trajectory. The data are aggregated across 6 model results (2 base-case models by 3 Members).

*4.2 Summary table*

Table 3. Summary of estimates of reference quantities. Median and credible interval for the aggregated results are presented. In addition, median values of Member's combined results (over B1 and B2) are shown.

| | Median | Lower10% | Upper10% | Median_CHN | Median_JPN | Median_CT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C_2023 (10000 t) | 11.836 | 11.836 | 11.836 | 11.836 | 11.836 | 11.836 |
| AveC_2021_2023 | 10.352 | 10.352 | 10.352 | 10.352 | 10.352 | 10.352 |
| AveF_2021_2023 | 0.328 | 0.158 | 0.528 | 0.352 | 0.339 | 0.302 |
| F_2023 | 0.297 | 0.155 | 0.469 | 0.313 | 0.307 | 0.277 |
| FMSY | 0.330 | 0.139 | 0.543 | 0.357 | 0.336 | 0.310 |
| MSY (10000 t) | 39.440 | 32.021 | 47.010 | 40.155 | 39.284 | 39.010 |
| F_2023/FMSY | 0.920 | 0.656 | 1.411 | 0.915 | 0.942 | 0.903 |
| AveF_2021_2023/FMSY | 1.008 | 0.755 | 1.435 | 1.013 | 1.026 | 0.988 |
| K (10000 t) | 248.067 | 151.766 | 565.726 | 234.100 | 253.396 | 254.500 |
| B_2023 (10000 t) | 39.875 | 25.214 | 76.394 | 37.830 | 38.599 | 42.720 |
| B_2024 (10000 t) | 52.763 | 35.130 | 91.631 | 50.920 | 52.120 | 55.155 |
| AveB_2022_2024 | 41.563 | 27.387 | 77.406 | 39.705 | 40.555 | 44.165 |
| BMSY (10000 t) | 120.100 | 78.060 | 253.481 | 113.800 | 119.008 | 125.100 |
| BMSY/K | 0.485 | 0.392 | 0.604 | 0.480 | 0.471 | 0.505 |
| B_2023/K | 0.161 | 0.101 | 0.228 | 0.158 | 0.154 | 0.169 |
| B_2024/K | 0.212 | 0.122 | 0.315 | 0.212 | 0.206 | 0.219 |
| AveB_2022_2024/K | 0.169 | 0.106 | 0.236 | 0.168 | 0.163 | 0.175 |
| B_2023/BMSY | 0.328 | 0.225 | 0.452 | 0.323 | 0.322 | 0.339 |
| B_2024/BMSY | 0.435 | 0.270 | 0.628 | 0.433 | 0.431 | 0.440 |
| AveB_2022_2024/BMSY | 0.345 | 0.235 | 0.470 | 0.341 | 0.341 | 0.352 |

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

See the Executive Summary.

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Appendix 1

Updated total catch, CPUE standardizations and biomass estimates for the stock assessment of Pacific saury

| Year | Total catch (metric tons) | Biomass JPN (VAST, 1000 metric tons) | CV (%) | CPUE CHN (metric tons/ vessel/ day) | CPUE JPN_early (metric tons/ net haul) | CPUE JPN_late (metric tons/ net haul) | CPUE KOR (metric tons/ vessel/ day) | CPUE RUS (metric tons/ vessel/ day) | CPUE CT_early (metric tons/ net haul) | CPUE CT_late (metric tons/ net haul) | Joint CPUE (VAST) | CV (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 238510 | | | | 0.72 | | | | | | | |
| 1981 | 204263 | | | | 0.63 | | | | | | | |
| 1982 | 244700 | | | | 0.46 | | | | | | | |
| 1983 | 257861 | | | | 0.87 | | | | | | | |
| 1984 | 247044 | | | | 0.81 | | | | | | | |
| 1985 | 281860 | | | | 1.4 | | | | | | | |
| 1986 | 260455 | | | | 1.13 | | | | | | | |
| 1987 | 235510 | | | | 0.97 | | | | | | | |
| 1988 | 356989 | | | | 2.36 | | | | | | | |
| 1989 | 330592 | | | | 3.06 | | | | | | | |
| 1990 | 435869 | | | | 1.95 | | | | | | | |
| 1991 | 399017 | | | | 3.13 | | | | | | | |
| 1992 | 383999 | | | | 4.32 | | | | | | | |
| 1993 | 402185 | | | | 3.25 | | | | | | | |
| 1994 | 332509 | | | | | 4.08 | | 0.747 | | | 1.720 | 0.37 |
| 1995 | 343743 | | | | | 2.10 | | 0.869 | | | 1.882 | 0.37 |
| 1996 | 266424 | | | | | 1.79 | | 0.646 | | | 0.786 | 0.37 |
| 1997 | 370017 | | | | | 3.49 | | 0.501 | | | 2.112 | 0.37 |
| 1998 | 176364 | | | | | 1.05 | | 0.501 | | | 0.688 | 0.41 |
| 1999 | 176498 | | | | | 0.90 | | 0.568 | | | 0.688 | 0.39 |
| 2000 | 286186 | | | | | 1.28 | | 0.822 | | | 0.921 | 0.36 |
| 2001 | 370823 | | | | | 1.65 | 8.51 | 0.947 | 1.44 | | 0.792 | 0.31 |
| 2002 | 328362 | | | | | 1.11 | 14.28 | 1.172 | 1.33 | | 0.679 | 0.30 |
| 2003 | 444642 | 990.8 | 25.7 | | | 2.03 | 16.80 | 1.526 | 2.47 | | 1.272 | 0.29 |
| 2004 | 369400 | 879.4 | 21.3 | | | 2.69 | 12.23 | 2.914 | 1.24 | | 1.109 | 0.29 |
| 2005 | 473907 | 1064.5 | 30.4 | | | 4.39 | 19.94 | 2.963 | 2.27 | | 1.700 | 0.27 |
| 2006 | 394093 | 786.1 | 30.1 | | | 4.53 | 9.86 | 1.975 | 1.00 | | 0.768 | 0.25 |
| 2007 | 520207 | 906.3 | 32.4 | | | 4.19 | 8.54 | 2.231 | 2.17 | | 1.285 | 0.27 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2008 | 617509 | 1055.6 | 29.1 | | 5.15 | 18.70 | 2.083 | 2.79 | | 1.742 | 0.26 |
| 2009 | 472177 | 433.2 | 20.7 | | 4.15 | 10.27 | 1.175 | 1.29 | | 1.019 | 0.28 |
| 2010 | 429808 | 561.7 | 28.3 | | 1.78 | 10.24 | 1.224 | 1.89 | | 0.958 | 0.27 |
| 2011 | 456263 | 979.3 | 32.9 | | 2.48 | 9.61 | 1.467 | 2.09 | | 1.235 | 0.29 |
| 2012 | 460544 | 439.6 | 19.7 | | 2.71 | 10.36 | 1.442 | | 2.61 | 1.103 | 0.30 |
| 2013 | 423790 | 716.7 | 27.8 | 15.63 | 1.89 | 13.90 | 1.407 | | 3.50 | 0.883 | 0.27 |
| 2014 | 629576 | 466.9 | 22.6 | 12.60 | 3.28 | 19.50 | 1.479 | | 3.90 | 1.405 | 0.25 |
| 2015 | 358883 | 316.9 | 20.6 | 24.81 | 1.67 | 7.90 | 0.652 | | 2.19 | 0.817 | 0.28 |
| 2016 | 361688 | 261.4 | 26.4 | 6.60 | 1.80 | 11.08 | 1.208 | | 1.95 | 0.791 | 0.27 |
| 2017 | 262640 | 173.4 | 27.6 | 7.06 | 1.12 | 5.54 | 0.525 | | 1.91 | 0.862 | 0.27 |
| 2018 | 435881 | 406.9 | 28.2 | 17.70 | 1.95 | 13.06 | 1.577 | | 2.92 | 1.276 | 0.28 |
| 2019 | 195251 | 217.0 | 21.3 | 6.29 | 0.69 | 2.86 | 0.558 | | 1.40 | 0.451 | 0.22 |
| 2020 | 139779 | 11.9 | 99.2 | 4.37 | 0.48 | 2.81 | 0.497 | | 1.11 | 0.279 | 0.27 |
| 2021 | 92117 | 158.7 | 31.1 | 5.85 | 0.32 | 2.89 | 0.141 | | 0.65 | 0.283 | 0.29 |
| 2022 | 100085 | 290.7 | 22.4 | 3.82 | 0.27 | 1.77 | | | 0.69 | 0.159 | 0.28 |
| 2023 | 118355 | 230.0 | 29.4 | 9.37 | 0.30 | 3.18 | | | 1.43 | 0.335 | 0.33 |
| 2024 | | 331.8 | 17.2 | | | | | | | | |

**Annex R**

**Revised CMM 2024-05 - Conservation and Management Measure for Bottom Fisheries and Protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in the Northwestern Pacific Ocean**

**CMM 2024-05**

***(Entered into force 1 January 2025)***

## CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR BOTTOM FISHERIES AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS IN THE NORTHWESTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

*The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),*

*Strongly supporting* protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and sustainable management of fish stocks based on the best scientific information available;

*Recalling* the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions (UNGA) on Sustainable Fisheries, particularly paragraphs 66 to 71 of the UNGA59/25 in 2004, paragraphs 69 to 74 of UNGA60/31 in 2005, and paragraphs 69 and 80 to 91 of UNGA61/105 in 2006; paragraphs 113, 117 and 119 to 124 of resolution 64/72 in 2009, paragraphs 121, 126, 129, 130 and 132 to 134 of resolution 66/68 in 2011, paragraphs 156, 171, 175, 177 to 188 and 219 of resolution 71/123 in 2016 and paragraphs 181 and 203-219 of resolution 77/118 in 2022;

*Noting*, in particular, paragraphs 66 and 69 of UNGA59/25 that call upon States to take action urgently to address the issue of bottom trawl fisheries on VMEs and to cooperate in the establishment of new regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements;

*Recognizing* UNGA's calls to identify and overcome barriers to the implementation of the relevant paragraphs of General Assembly resolutions such as data availability, especially with regard to baseline data and the spatial distribution and connectivity of vulnerable marine ecosystems, including their associated and dependent species; periodically review and revise impact assessments whenever a substantial change in the fishery has occurred or there is relevant new information; and ensure that the precautionary approach is applied, including in the utilization of impact assessments to inform management decisions and consideration of significant adverse impacts on vulnerable

marine ecosystems, including their associated and dependent species;

*Recognizing further* that fishing activities, including bottom fisheries, are an important contributor to the global food supply and that this must be taken into account when seeking to achieve sustainable fisheries and to protect VMEs;

*Recognizing* the importance of collecting scientific data to assess the impacts of bottom fisheries on marine species and VMEs;

*Recognizing* that scientific literature indicates the likely occurrence of VMEs on most seamounts in the area and has documented significant adverse impacts to VMEs resulting from bottom fishing in the area, which reinforces the importance of regularly updating impact assessments and considering the adequacy of the existing management framework through the SC and the Commission*;*

*Concerned* about potential significant adverse impacts of bottom fisheries on marine species and VMEs in the western part of the Convention Area.

*Recognizing* Article 2 of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean (the Convention), which provides that the objective of the Convention is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the Convention Area while protecting the marine ecosystems of the North Pacific Ocean in which these resources occur;

*Recognizing* further Articles 3 (c) and (e) of the Convention, which call on the Commission to adopt and implement measures in accordance with the precautionary approach and ecosystem approach to fisheries and protect biodiversity in the marine environment, including by preventing significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems;

*Re-affirming* NPFC's commitment to the precautionary approach and to implementing an ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

*Noting* the ongoing work of the Scientific Committee to address the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas, including the identification of VMEs;

*Underscoring* the ecological importance of the Emperor Seamounts to the fisheries resources and biodiversity of the NPFC convention area;

*Adopts* the following Conservation and Management Measure:

**Scope**

1. This CMM applies to all bottom fishing activities for fisheries resources throughout the high seas areas of the Northwestern Pacific Ocean, defined, for the purposes of this document, as those occurring in the Convention Area as set out in Article 4 of the Convention text to the west of the line of 175 degrees W longitude (hereinafter called “the western part of the Convention Area”).

**General purpose**

2. The objective of this CMM is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the Convention Area while protecting the marine ecosystems of the North Pacific Ocean in which these resources occur. The measures in this CMM aim to prevent significant adverse impacts on VMEs in the Convention Area of the North Pacific Ocean, acknowledging the complex dependency of fishing resources and species belonging to the same ecosystem within VMEs. The Commission shall regularly review, and as appropriate, revise this CMM considering the best available science and the recommendations of the NPFC Scientific Committee, and with reference to relevant guidance adopted by UNGA and FAO.

**Principles**

3. The implementation of this CMM shall:

(a) be based on the best scientific information available,

(b) be in accordance with existing international laws and agreements including UNCLOS and other relevant international instruments,

(c) establish appropriate and effective conservation and management measures,

(d) be in accordance with the precautionary approach, and

(e) incorporate an ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

**Measures**

4. Members of the Commission shall implement the following measures in order to achieve sustainable management of fish stocks and protection of VMEs in the western part of the Convention Area:

A. Limit fishing effort in bottom fisheries on the western part of the Convention Area to the level agreed in February 2007 in terms of the number of fishing vessels and other parameters which reflect the level of fishing effort, fishing capacity or potential impacts on marine ecosystems.

B. Not allow bottom fisheries to expand into the western part of the Convention Area where no such fishing is currently occurring, in particular, by limiting such bottom fisheries to seamounts located south of 45 degrees North Latitude and not allow bottom fisheries in other areas of the western part of the Convention Area covered by these measures and also not allow bottom fisheries to conduct fishing operation in areas deeper than 1,500m.

C. Notwithstanding subparagraphs A and B above, exceptions to these restrictions may be provided in cases where it can be shown that any fishing activity beyond such limits or in any new areas would not have significant adverse impacts (SAIs) on marine species or any VME. Such fishing activity is subject to an exploratory fishery protocol (Annex 1).

D. Any determinations pursuant to subparagraph C that any proposed fishing activity will not have SAIs on marine species or any VME are to be in accordance with the Science-based Standards and Criteria (Annex 2), which are consistent with the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deepsea Fisheries in the High Seas.

E. Any determinations, by any flag State or pursuant to any subsequent arrangement for the management of the bottom fisheries in the areas covered by these measures, that fishing activity would not have SAIs on marine species or any VMEs, shall be made publicly available through agreed means.

F. Prohibit its vessels from engaging in directed fishing on the following taxa: black coral (Antipatharia), gorgonians, pennatulaceans, stony corals (Scleractinia), soft corals, the classes of Hexactinellida and Demospongiae in the phylum Porifera as well as any other indicator species for VMEs as may be identified from time to time by the SC and approved by the Commission. The translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names is attached to the VME taxa identification guide (link) [to this CMM (Annex 7)].

G. Further, considering accumulated information regarding fishing activities in the western part of the Convention Area, in areas where, in the course of fishing operations, cold water corals more than 50Kg or sponges more than 350Kg are encountered in one gear retrieval, Members of the Commission shall require vessels flying their flag to cease bottom fishing activities in that location. In such cases, the vessel shall not resume fishing activities until it has relocated a sufficient distance, which shall be no less than 1 nautical mile, so that additional encounters with VMEs are unlikely. All such encounters, including the location, gear type, date, time and name and weight of the VME indicator species, shall be reported to the Secretariat, through the Member, within one business day. The Executive Secretary shall, within one business day, notify the other Members of the Commission and at the same time implement a temporary closure in the area to prohibit fishing vessels from contacting the sea floor with their fishing gear. Members shall inform their fleets and enforcement operations within one business day of the receipt of the notification from the Executive Secretary. It is agreed that the VME indicator taxa include five groups of cold water corals, specifically black corals (Antipatharia), gorgonians, pennatulaceans, stony coral (Scleractinia), and soft corals. The VME indicator taxa also include the classes of Hexactinellida and Demospongiae in the phylum Porifera.

H. Based on all the available data, including data on the VME encounter and distribution received from the fishing vessel(s), research survey data, visual survey data, and/or model results, the Scientific Committee (SC) shall assess and conclude if the area has a VME. If so, the SC shall recommend to the Commission that the temporary closure be made permanent, although the boundary of the closure may be adjusted, or suggest other appropriate measures. Otherwise, the Executive Secretary shall inform the Members that they may reopen the area to their vessels.

I. C-H seamount, the Southeastern part of Koko seamount (specifically, the area South of 34 degrees 57 minutes North, East of the 400m isobaths, East of 171 degrees 54 minutes East, North of 34 degrees 50 minutes North), are closed to prevent potential significant adverse impacts on VMEs consistent with the precautionary approach. Fishing in these areas requires exploratory fishery protocol (Annex 1).

J. Ensure that the distance between the footrope of the gill net and sea floor is greater than 70 cm.

.

K. Apply a bottom fisheries closure from November to January.

L. Limit annual catch of North Pacific armorhead consistent with the precautionary approach. In years when strong recruitment of North Pacific armorhead is not detected by the monitoring survey (Annex 6), Japan shall limit the catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 500 tons, and Korea shall limit its catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 200 tons. When a strong recruitment of North Pacific armorhead is detected by the monitoring survey (Annex 6), Japan shall limit its annual catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 10,000 tons, and Korea shall limit its annual catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 2,000 tons. The catch overages for any given year shall be subtracted from the applicable annual catch limit in the following year, and catch underages during any given year shall not be added to the applicable annual catch limit during the following year.

M. During a year when high recruitment is detected, bottom fishing with trawl gear shall be prohibited in specific areas in the Emperor seamounts where half of the catch occurred in 2010 and 2012 (Annex 6). Determination of a strong recruitment year and of the specific areas where bottom fishing with trawl gear is prohibited shall be communicated to all Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties following the procedure specified in Annex 6.

N. Catch in the monitoring surveys shall not be included in the catch limits specified in paragraphs L but shall be reported to the Secretariat.

O. Development of new fishing activity for the North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino in the Convention Area by Members without documented historical catch for North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino in the Convention Area shall be determined in accordance with relevant provisions, including but not limited to Article 3, paragraph (h) and Article 7, subparagraphs 1(g) and (h) of the Convention.

P. Fishing activity for the North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino in the Convention Area by Members with documented historical catch for North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino in the Convention Area is not precluded.

Q. Members shall require vessels flying their flags to use trawl nets with mesh size greater than or equal to 130mm of stretched mesh with 5kg tension in the codend when conducting fishing activities for North Pacific armorhead or splendid alfonsino.

R. Task the Scientific Committee with reviewing the appropriate methods for establishing catch limits, and the adequacy and practicability of the adaptive management plan described in subparagraphs K, L, M, N, O, P, Q and Annex 6 from time to time and recommending revisions and actions, if necessary.

S. Prohibit its bottom fishing vessels from contacting the sea floor with their fishing gear in the following ~~two~~ four sites with VME indicator species. A Member of the Commission whose fishing vessels entered these areas shall report to the TCC as to how it ensured the compliance of this measure.

Sites with VME indicator species (Areas surrounded by the straight lines linking the 4 geographical points below)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Northwestern part of Koko Seamount | 35-44.75 N 171-07.60 E | 35-44.75 N 171-07.80 E |
| | 35-43.80 N 171-07.80 E | 35-43.80 N 171-08.00 E |
| Northern Ridge of Colahan Seamount | 31-03.85 N 175-53.40 E | 31-03.85 N 175-53.65 E |
| | 31-03.5 N 175-53.50 E | 31-03.05 N 175-53.85 E |
| Northwestern part of | 32-42.75 N 172-12.90 E | 32-42.75 N 172-13.65 E |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yuryaku Seamount | 32-43.50 N 172-13.65 E | 32-43.50 N 172-12.90 E |
| Southeastern part of Yuryaku Seamount | 32-37.80 N 172-18.00 E | 32-37.80 N 172-18.60 E |
| | 32-38.40 N 172-18.60 E | 32-38.40 N 172-18.00 E |

**Contingent Action**

5. Members of the Commission shall submit to the SC their assessments of the impacts of fishing activity on marine species or any VMEs, including the proposed management measures to prevent such impact. Such submissions shall include all relevant data and information in support of any such assessment. Procedures for such reviews including procedures for the provision of advice and recommendations from the SC to the submitting Member are attached (Annex 3). Members will only authorize bottom fishing activity pursuant to paragraph 4 (C).

**Scientific Information**

6. To facilitate the scientific work associated with the implementation of these measures, each Member of the Commission shall undertake:

   A. Reporting of information for purposes of defining the footprint

   Members of the Commission shall provide, for each year, the number of vessels by gear type, size of vessels (tons), number of fishing days or days on the fishing grounds, total catch by species, and areas fished (names of seamounts) to the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall circulate the information received to the other Members consistent with the approved Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information. To support assessments of the fisheries and refinement of conservation and management measures, Members of the Commission are to provide updated information on an annual basis.

   B. Collection of information

   (i) Members shall ensure each bottom fishing vessel operating in the western part of the Convention Area collects the following scientific information. Members shall provide the scientific information to the Secretariat.

   (a) Catch and effort data

   (b) Related information such as time, location, depth, temperature, etc.

(ii) As appropriate, Members should encourage the collection of information from research vessels operating in the western part of the Convention Area and provide updates to the Commission to the extent possible.

(a) Physical, chemical, biological, oceanographic, meteorological, etc.

(b) Ecosystem surveys.

(c) Seabed mapping (e.g. multibeam or other echosounder); seafloor images by drop camera, remotely operated underwater vehicle (ROV) and/or autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV).

(iii) Collection of observer data

Duly designated observers from the flag member shall collect information from bottom fishing vessels operating in the western part of the Convention Area. Observers shall collect data in accordance with Annex 5. Each Member of the Commission shall submit the reports to the Secretariat in accordance with Annex 4. The Secretariat shall compile this information on an annual basis and make it available to the Members of the Commission.

**Vessel Monitoring System**

7. To strengthen its control over bottom fishing vessels flying its flag, each Member of the Commission shall ensure that all such vessels operating in the western part of the Convention Area be equipped with an operational vessel monitoring system.

**Observers**

8. Members shall ensure that all vessels authorized to bottom fish in the western part of the Convention Area shall carry an observer on board. Members shall ensure that observers are independent, impartial, and qualified to fulfill the requirements of this measure and to enhance data collection. An observer is deemed to be independent, impartial, and qualified if the observer:

(a) is deployed from a Commission Member's, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party's, national observer program, and familiar with NPFC fisheries resources, fishing activities, and CMMs;

(b) is neither part of the crew, nor has any employment or family relationship to the

ownership or operator of the fishing vessel; and
(c) does not have any shared business interests with the owner or operator of the fishing vessel.

An observer shall be provisioned, accommodated, and provided safe working conditions and access to independent communications in accordance with the Commission requirements and the Member's domestic laws and regulations.

**Final Clauses**

9. This CMM shall enter into force on January 1st, 2025, replacing CMM 2023-05.

**Annex 1**

## EXPLORATORY FISHERY PROTOCOL IN THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

1. From 1 January 2009, all bottom fishing activities in new fishing areas and areas where fishing is prohibited in a precautionary manner or with bottom gear not previously used in the existing fishing areas, are to be considered as "exploratory fisheries" and to be conducted in accordance with this protocol.

2. Precautionary conservation and management measures, including catch and effort controls, are essential during the exploratory phase of deep sea fisheries. Implementation of a precautionary approach to sustainable exploitation of deep sea fisheries shall include the following measures:
   (i) precautionary effort limits, particularly where reliable assessments of sustainable exploitation rates of target and main by-catch species are not available;
   (ii) precautionary measures, including precautionary spatial catch limits where appropriate, to prevent serial depletion of low-productivity stocks;
   (iii) regular review of appropriate indices of stock status and revision downwards of the limits listed above when significant declines are detected;
   (iv) measures to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems; and
   (v) comprehensive monitoring of all fishing effort, capture of all species and interactions with VMEs.

3. When a member of the Commission would like to conduct exploratory fisheries, it is to follow the following procedure:
   (i) Prior to the commencement of fishing, the member of the Commission is to circulate the information and assessment in Appendix 1.1 to the members of the Scientific Committee (SC) for review and to all members of the Commission for information, together with the impact assessment. Such information is to be provided to the other members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which the information shall be reviewed.
   (ii) The assessment in (i) above is to be conducted in accordance with the procedure set forth in "Science-based Standards and Criteria for Identification of VMEs and Assessment of Significant Adverse Impacts on VMEs and Marine Species (Annex 2)", with the understanding that particular care shall be taken in the evaluation of risks of the significant

adverse impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), in line with the precautionary approach.

(iii) The SC is to review the information and the assessment submitted in (i) above in accordance with "SC Assessment Review Procedures for Bottom Fishing Activities (Annex 3)."

(iv) The exploratory fisheries are to be permitted only where the assessment concludes that they would not have significant adverse impacts (SAIs) on marine species or any VMEs and on the basis of comments and recommendations of SC. Any determinations, by any Member of the Commission or the SC, that the exploratory fishing activities would not have SAIs on marine species or any VMEs, shall be made publicly available through the NPFC website.

4. The member of the Commission is to ensure that all vessels flying its flag conducting exploratory fisheries are equipped with a satellite monitoring device and have an observer on board at all times.

5. Within 3 months of the end of the exploratory fishing activities or within 12 months of the commencement of fishing, whichever occurs first, the member of the Commission is to provide a report of the results of such activities to the members of the SC and all members of the Commission. If the SC meets prior to the end of this 12-month period, the member of the Commission is to provide an interim report 30 days in advance of the SC meeting. The information to be included in the report is specified in Appendix 1.2.

6. The SC is to review the report in 5 above and decide whether the exploratory fishing activities had SAIs on marine species or any VME. The SC then is to send its recommendations to the Commission on whether the exploratory fisheries can continue and whether additional management measures shall be required if they are to continue. The Commission is to strive to adopt conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs on marine species or any VMEs. If the Commission is not able to reach consensus on any such measures, each fishing member of the Commission is to adopt measures to avoid any SAIs on VMEs.

7. Members of the Commission shall only authorize continuation of exploratory fishing activity, or commencement of commercial fishing activity, under this protocol on the basis of comments and recommendations of the SC.

8. The same encounter protocol should be applied in both fished and unfished areas specified in Annex 2, paragraph 4(1)(a).

**Appendix 1.1**

**Information to be provided before exploratory fisheries start**

1. A harvesting plan
   - Name of vessel
   - Flag member of vessel
   - Description of area to be fished (location and depth)
   - Fishing dates
   - Anticipated effort
   - Target species
   - Bottom fishing gear-type used
   - Area and effort restrictions to ensure that fisheries occur on a gradual basis in a limited geographical area.

2. A mitigation plan
   - Measures to prevent SAIs to VMEs that may be encountered during the fishery

3. A catch monitoring plan
   - Recording/reporting of all species brought onboard to the lowest possible taxonomic level
   - 100% satellite monitoring
   - 100% observer coverage

4. A data collection plan
   - Data is to be collected in accordance with “Type and Format of Scientific Observer Data to be Collected” (Annex 5)

**Appendix 1.2**

**Information to be included in the report**

- Name of vessel
- Flag member of vessel
- Description of area fished (location and depth)
- Fishing dates
- Total effort
- Bottom fishing gear-type used
- List of VME encountered (the amount of VME indicator species for each encounter specifying the location: longitude and latitude)
- Mitigation measures taken in response to the encounter of VME
- List of all organisms brought onboard
- List of VMEs indicator species brought onboard by location: longitude and latitude

**Annex 2**

# SCIENCE-BASED STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF VMES AND ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS ON VMES AND MARINE SPECIES

1. Introduction

Members of the Commission have hereby established science-based standards and criteria to guide their implementation of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 61/105 and the measures adopted by the Members in respect of bottom fishing activities in the North Pacific Ocean (NPO). In this regard, these science-based standards and criteria are to be applied to identify vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and assess significant adverse impacts (SAIs) of bottom fishing activities on such VMEs or marine species and to promote the long-term sustainability of deep sea fisheries in the Convention Area. The science-based standards and criteria are consistent with the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas, taking into account the work of other RFMOs implementing management of deep-sea bottom fisheries in accordance with UNGA Resolution 61/105. The standards and criteria are to be modified from time to time as more data are collected through research activities and monitoring of fishing operations.

2. Purpose

(1) The purpose of the standards and criteria is to provide guidelines for each member of the Commission in identifying VMEs and assessing SAIs of individual bottom fishing activities[1] on VMEs or marine species in the Convention Area. Each member of the Commission, using the best information available, is to decide which species or areas are to be categorized as VMEs, identify areas where VMEs are known or likely to occur, and assess whether individual bottom fishing activities would have SAIs on such VMEs or marine species. The results of these tasks are to be submitted to and reviewed by the Scientific Committee with a view to reaching a common understanding among the members of the Commission.

[1] "individual bottom fishing activities" means fishing activities by each fishing gear. For example, if ten fishing vessels operate bottom trawl fishing in a certain area, the impacts of the fishing activities of these vessels on the ecosystem are to be assessed as a whole rather than on a vessel-by-vessel basis. It should be noted that if the total number or capacity of the vessels using the same fishing gear has increased, the impacts of the fishing activities are to be assessed again.

(2) For the purpose of applying the standards and criteria, the bottom fisheries are defined as follows:

(a) The fisheries are conducted in the Convention Area;

(b) The total catch (everything brought up by the fishing gear) includes species that can only sustain low exploitation rates; and

(c) The fishing gear is likely to contact the seafloor during the normal course of fishing operations.

3. Definition of VMEs

(1) Although Paragraph 83 of UNGA Resolution 61/105 refers to seamounts, hydrothermal vents and cold-water corals as examples of VMEs, there is no definitive list of specific species or areas that are to be regarded as VMEs.

(2) Vulnerability is related to the likelihood that a population, community or habitat will experience substantial alteration by fishing activities and how much time will be required for its recovery from such alteration. The most vulnerable ecosystems are those that are both easily disturbed and are very slow to recover or may never recover. The vulnerabilities of populations, communities and habitats are to be assessed relative to specific threats. Some features, particularly ones that are physically fragile or inherently rare may be vulnerable to most forms of disturbance, but the vulnerability of some populations, communities and habitats may vary greatly depending on the type of fishing gear used or the kind of disturbance experienced. The risks to a marine ecosystem are determined by its vulnerability, the probability of a threat occurring and the mitigation means applied to the threat. Accordingly, the FAO Guidelines only provide examples of potential vulnerable species groups, communities and habitats as well as features that potentially support them (Annex 2.1).

(3) A marine ecosystem is to be classified as vulnerable based on its characteristics. The following list of characteristics is used as criteria in the identification of VMEs.

(a) Uniqueness or rarity - an area or ecosystem that is unique or that contains rare species whose loss could not be compensated for by other similar areas. These include:

(i) Habitats that contain endemic species;

(ii) Habitats of rare, threatened or endangered species that occur in discrete areas;

(iii)Nurseries or discrete feeding, breeding, or spawning areas.

(b) Functional significance of the habitat – discrete areas or habitats that are necessary for

the survival, function, spawning/reproduction or recovery of fish stocks, particular life-history stages (e.g. nursery grounds or rearing areas), or of rare, threatened or endangered marine species.

(c) Fragility – an ecosystem that is highly susceptible to degradation by anthropogenic activities

(d) Life-history traits of component species that make recovery difficult – ecosystems that are characterized by populations or assemblages of species with one or more of the following characteristics:

(i) Slow growth rates

(ii) Late age of maturity

(iii)Low or unpredictable recruitment

(iv)Long-lived

(e) Structural complexity – an ecosystem that is characterized by complex physical structures created by significant concentrations of biotic and abiotic features. In these ecosystems, ecological processes are usually highly dependent on these structured systems. Further, such ecosystems often have high diversity, which is dependent on the structuring organisms.

(4) Management response may vary, depending on the size of the ecological unit in the Convention Area. Therefore, the spatial extent of the ecological unit is to be decided first. That is, whether the ecological unit is the entire Area, or the current fishing ground, namely, the Emperor Seamount and Northern Hawaiian Ridge area (hereinafter called "the ES-NHR area"), or a group of the seamounts within the ESNHR area, or each seamount in the ES-NHR area, is to be decided using the above criteria.

4. Identification of potential VMEs

(1) Fished seamounts

(a) Identification of fished seamounts

It is reported that four types of fishing gear are currently used by the members of the Commission in the ES-NHR area, namely, bottom trawl, bottom gillnet, bottom longline and pot. A fifth type of fishing gear (coral drag) was used in the ES-NHR area from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s and is possibly still used by non-members of the Commission. These types of fishing gear are usually used on the top or slope of

seamounts, which could be considered VMEs. It is therefore necessary to identify the footprint of the bottom fisheries (fished seamounts) based on the available fishing record. The following seamounts have been identified as fished seamounts: Suiko, Showa, Youmei, Nintoku, Jingu, Ojin, Northern Koko, Koko, Kinmei, Yuryaku, Kammu, Colahan, and CH. Since the use of most of these gears in the ES-NHR area dates back to the late 1960s and 1970s, it is important to establish, to the extent practicable, a time series of where and when these gears have been used in order to assess potential long-term effects on any existing VMEs.

Fishing effort may not be evenly distributed on each seamount since fish aggregation may occur only at certain points of the seamount and some parts of the seamount may be physically unsuitable for certain fishing gears. Thus, it is important to know actual fished areas within the same seamount so as to know the gravity of the impact of fishing activities on the entire seamount.

Due consideration is to be given to the protection of commercial confidentiality when identifying actual fishing grounds.

(b) Assessment on whether a specific seamount that has been fished is a VME

After identifying the fished seamounts or fished areas of seamounts, it is necessary to assess whether each fished seamount is a VME or contains VMEs in accordance with the criteria in 3 above, individually or in combination using the best available scientific and technical information as well as Annex 2.1. A variety of data would be required to conduct such assessment, including pictures of seamounts taken by an ROV camera or drop camera, biological samples collected through research activities and observer programs, and detailed bathymetry map. Where site-specific information is lacking, other information that is relevant to inferring the likely presence of VMEs is to be used. The flow chart to identify data that can be used to identify VMEs is attached in Annex 2.3.

(2) New fishing areas

Any place other than the fished seamounts above is to be regarded as a new fishing area. If a member of the Commission is considering fishing in a new fishing area, such a fishing area is to be subject to, in addition to these standards and criteria, an exploratory fishery protocol (Annex 1).

5. Assessment of SAIs on VMEs or marine species

(1) Significant adverse impacts are those that compromise ecosystem integrity (i.e., ecosystem structure or function) in a manner that: (i) impairs the ability of affected populations to replace themselves; (ii) degrades the long-term natural productivity of habitats; or (iii) causes, on more than a temporary basis, significant loss of species richness, habitat or community types. Impacts are to be evaluated individually, in combination and cumulatively.

(2) When determining the scale and significance of an impact, the following six factors are to be considered:

(a) The intensity or severity of the impact at the specific site being affected;

(b) The spatial extent of the impact relative to the availability of the habitat type affected;

(c) The sensitivity/vulnerability of the ecosystem to the impact;

(d) The ability of an ecosystem to recover from harm, and the rate of such recovery;

(e) The extent to which ecosystem functions may be altered by the impact; and

(f) The timing and duration of the impact relative to the period in which a species needs the habitat during one or more life-history stages.

(3) Temporary impacts are those that are limited in duration and that allow the particular ecosystem to recover over an acceptable timeframe. Such timeframes are to be decided on a case-by-case basis and be on the order of 5-20 years, taking into account the specific features of the populations and ecosystems.

(4) In determining whether an impact is temporary, both the duration and the frequency with which an impact is repeated is to be considered. If the interval between the expected disturbances of a habitat is shorter than the recovery time, the impact is to be considered more than temporary.

(5) Each member of the Commission is to conduct assessments to establish if bottom fishing activities are likely to produce SAIs in a given seamount or other VMEs. Such an impact assessment is to address, *inter alia*:

(a) Type of fishing conducted or contemplated, including vessel and gear types, fishing areas, target and potential bycatch species, fishing effort levels and duration of fishing;

(b) Best available scientific and technical information on the current state of fishery resources, and baseline information on the ecosystems, habitats and communities in the fishing area, against which future changes are to be compared;

(c) Identification, description and mapping of VMEs known or likely to occur in the fishing

area;

(d) The data and methods used to identify, describe and assess the impacts of the activity, identification of gaps in knowledge, and an evaluation of uncertainties in the information presented in the assessment;

(e) Identification, description and evaluation of the occurrence, scale and duration of likely impacts, including cumulative impacts of activities covered by the assessment on VMEs and low-productivity fishery resources in the fishing area;

(f) Risk assessment of likely impacts by the fishing operations to determine which impacts are likely to be SAIs, particularly impacts on VMEs and low-productivity fishery resources (Risk assessments are to take into account, as appropriate, differing conditions prevailing in areas where fisheries are well established and in areas where fisheries have not taken place or only occur occasionally);

(g) The proposed mitigation and management measures to be used to prevent SAIs on VMEs and ensure long-term conservation and sustainable utilization of low-productivity fishery resources, and the measures to be used to monitor effects of the fishing operations.

(6) Impact assessments are to consider, as appropriate, the information referred to in these Standards and Criteria, as well as relevant information from similar or related fisheries, species and ecosystems.

(7) Where an assessment concludes that the area does not contain VMEs or that significant adverse impacts on VMEs or marine species are not likely, such assessments are to be repeated when there have been significant changes to the fishery or other activities in the area, or when natural processes are thought to have undergone significant changes.

6. Proposed conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs

As a result of the assessment in 5 above, if it is considered that individual fishing activities are causing or likely to cause SAIs on VMEs or marine species, the member of the Commission is to adopt appropriate conservation and management measures to prevent such SAIs. The member of the Commission is to clearly indicate how such impacts are expected to be prevented or mitigated by the measures.

7. Precautionary approach

If after assessing all available scientific and technical information, the presence of VMEs or the likelihood that individual bottom fishing activities would cause SAIs on VMEs or marine

species cannot be adequately determined, members of the Commission are only to authorize individual bottom fishing activities to proceed in accordance with:

(a) Precautionary, conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs;

(b) Measures to address unexpected encounters with VMEs in the course of fishing operations;

(c) Measures, including ongoing scientific research, monitoring and data collection, to reduce the uncertainty; and

(d) Measures to ensure long-term sustainability of deep sea fisheries.

8. Template for assessment report

Annex 2.2 is a template for individual member of the Commission to formulate reports on identification of VMEs and impact assessment.

**Annex 2.1**

**Examples of potential vulnerable species groups, communities and habitats as well as features that potentially support them**

The following examples of species groups, communities, habitats and features often display characteristics consistent with possible VMEs. Merely detecting the presence of an element itself is not sufficient to identify a VME. That identification is to be made on a case-by-case basis through application of relevant provisions of the Standards and Criteria, particularly Sections 3, 4 and 5.

| Examples of species groups, communities and habitat forming species that are documented or considered sensitive and potentially vulnerable to deep-sea fisheries in the high-seas, and which may contribute to forming VMEs: | |
|---|---|
| a. | certain cold-water corals, e.g., reef builders and coral forest including: stony corals (Scleractinia), gorgonians, black corals (Antipatharia), and hydrocorals (stylasteridae), |
| b. | Some types of sponge dominated communities, |
| c. | communities composed of dense emergent fauna where large sessile protozoans (xenophyophores) and invertebrates (e.g., hydroids and bryozoans) form an important structural component of habitat, and |
| d. | seep and vent communities comprised of invertebrate and microbial species |

| | |
|---|---|
| | found nowhere else (i.e., endemic). |

Examples of topographical, hydrophysical or geological features, including fragile geological structures, that potentially support the species groups or communities referred to above:

a. submerged edges and slopes (e.g., corals and sponges)
b. summits and flanks of seamounts, guyots, banks, knolls, and hills (e.g., corals, sponges and xenophyphores)
c. canyons and trenches (e.g., burrowed clay outcrops, corals),
d. hydrothermal vents (e.g., microbial communities and endemic invertebrates), and
e. cold seeps (e.g., mud volcanoes, microbes, hard substrates for sessile invertebrates).

**Annex 2.2**

**Template for reports on identification of VMEs and assessment of impacts caused by individual fishing activities on VMEs or marine species**

1. Name of the member of the Commission
2. Name of the fishery (e.g., bottom trawl, bottom gillnet, bottom longline, pot)
3. Status of the fishery (existing fishery or exploratory fishery)
4. Target species
5. Bycatch species
6. Recent level of fishing effort (every year at least since 2002)
   (1) Number of fishing vessels
   (2) Tonnage of each fishing vessel
   (3) Number of fishing days or days on the fishing ground
   (4) Fishing effort (total operating hours for trawl, # of hooks per day for long-line, # of pots

per day for pot, total length of net per day for gillnet)

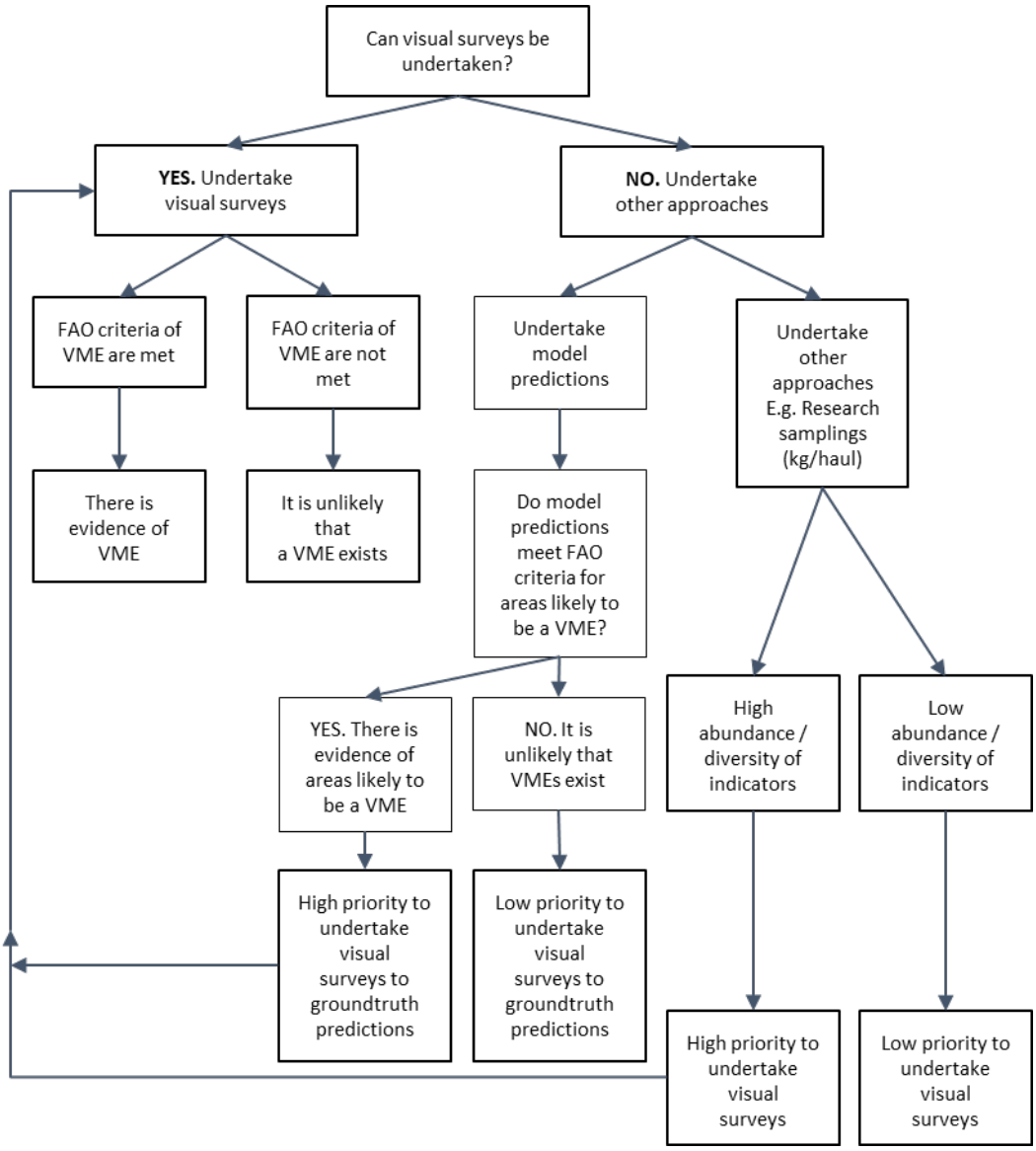
(5) Total catch by species

(6) Names of seamounts fished or to be fished

7. Fishing period
8. Analysis of status of fishery resources
   (1) Data and methods used for analysis
   (2) Results of analysis
   (3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties
9. Analysis of status of bycatch species resources
   (1) Data and methods used for analysis
   (2) Results of analysis
   (3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties
10. Analysis of existence of VMEs in the fishing ground
    (1) Data and methods used for analysis
    (2) Results of analysis
    (3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties
11. Impact assessment of fishing activities on VMEs or marine species including cumulative impacts, and identification of SAIs on VMEs or marine species, as detailed in Section 5 above, Assessment of SAIs on VMEs or marine species
12. Other points to be addressed
13. Conclusion (whether to continue or start fishing with what measures, or stop fishing).

**Annex 2.3**

## Flow chart to identify data that can be used to identify VMEs in the NPFC Convention Area



**Annex 3**

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR BOTTOM FISHING ACTIVITIES

1. The Scientific Committee (SC) is to review identifications of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and assessments of significant adverse impact on VMEs, including proposed management measures intended to prevent such impacts submitted by individual Members.

2. Members of the Commission shall submit their identifications and assessments to members of the SC at least 21 days prior to the SC meeting at which the review is to take place. Such submissions shall include all relevant data and information in support of such determinations.

3. The SC will review the data and information in each assessment in accordance with the Science-based Standards and Criteria for Identification of VMEs and Assessment of Significant Adverse Impacts on VMEs and Marine Species (Annex 2), previous decisions of the Commission, and the FAO Technical Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas, paying special attention to the assessment process and criteria specified in paragraphs 47-49 of the Guidelines.

4. In conducting the review above, the SC will give particular attention to whether the deep-sea bottom fishing activity would have a significant adverse impact on VMEs and marine species and, if so, whether the proposed management measures would prevent such impacts.

5. Based on the above review, the SC will provide advice and recommendations to the submitting Members on the extent to which the assessments and related determinations are consistent with the procedures and criteria established in the documents identified above; and whether additional management measures will be required to prevent SAIs on VMEs.

6. Such recommendations will be reflected in the report of the SC meeting at which the assessments are considered.

**Annex 4**

# FORMAT OF NATIONAL REPORT SECTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER PROGRAMMES

## Report Components

Annual Observer Programme implementation reports should form a component of annual National Reports submitted by members to the Scientific Committee. These reports should provide a brief overview of observer programmes conducted in the NPFC Convention Area. Observer programme reports should include the following sections:

## A. Observer Training

An overview of observer training conducted, including:

- Overview of training programme provided to scientific observers.
- Number of observers trained.

## B. Scientific Observer Programme Design and Coverage

Details of the design of the observer programme, including:

- Which fleets, fleet components or fishery components were covered by the programme.
- How vessels were selected to carry observers within the above fleets or components.
- How was observer coverage stratified: by fleets, fisheries components, vessel types, vessel sizes, vessel ages, fishing areas and seasons.

Details of observer coverage of the above fleets, including:

- Components, areas, seasons and proportion of total catches of target species, specifying units used to determine coverage.
- Total number of observer employment days, and number of actual days deployed on observation work.

## C. Observer Data Collected

List of observer data collected against the agreed range of data set out in Annex 5, including:

- Effort Data: Amount of effort observed (vessel days, net panels, hooks, etc), by area and season and % observed out of total by area and seasons
- Catch Data: Amount of catch observed of target and by-catch species, by area and season, and % observed out of total estimated catch by species, area and seasons
- Length Frequency Data: Number of fish measured per species, by area and season.
- Biological Data: Type and quantity of other biological data or samples (otoliths, sex, maturity, etc.) collected per species.
- The size of length-frequency and biological sub-samples relative to unobserved quantities.

**D. Detection of Fishing in Association with Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems**

- Information about VME encounters (species and quantity in accordance with Annex 5, H, 2).

**E. Tag Return Monitoring**

- Number of tags returns observed, by fish size class and area.

**F. Problems Experienced**

- Summary of problems encountered by observers and observer managers that could affect the NPFC Observer Programme Standards and/or each member's national observer programme developed under the NPFC standards.

**Annex 5**

# NPFC BOTTOM FISHERIES OBSERVER PROGRAMME STANDARDS: SCIENTIFIC COMPONENT

## TYPE AND FORMAT OF SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER DATA TO BE COLLECTED

### A. Vessel & Observer Data to be collected for Each Trip

1. Vessel and observer details are to be recorded only once for each observed trip.
2. The following observer data are to be collected for each observed trip:
   (a) NPFC vessel ID.
   (b) Observer's name.
   (c) Observer's organisation.
   (d) Date observer embarked (UTC date).
   (e) Port of embarkation.
   (f) Date observer disembarked (UTC date).
   (g) Port of disembarkation.

### B. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Trawl Fishing Activity

1. Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (tow by tow) basis for all observed trawls.
2. The following data are to be collected for each observed trawl tow:
   (a) Tow start date (UTC).
   (b) Tow start time (UTC).
   (c) Tow end date (UTC).
   (d) Tow end time (UTC).
   (e) Tow start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (f) Tow end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (g) Type of trawl, bottom or mid-water.
   (h) Type of trawl, single, double or triple.
   (i) Height of net opening (m).
   (j) Width of net opening (m).

(k) Mesh size of the cod-end net (stretched mesh, mm) and mesh type (diamond, square, etc).
(l) Gear depth (of footrope) at start of fishing (m).
(m) Bottom (seabed) depth at start of fishing (m).
(n) Gear depth (of footrope) at end of fishing (m).
(o) Bottom (seabed) depth at end of fishing (m).
(p) Status of the trawl operation (no damage, lightly damaged*, heavily damaged*, other (specify)).
*Degree may be evaluated by time for repairing (<=1hr or >1hr).
(q) Duration of estimated period of seabed contact (minute)
(r) Intended target species.
(s) Catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
(t) Estimate of the amount (weight or volume) of all living marine resources discarded, split by species.
(u) Record of the numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught.

**C. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Bottom Gillnet Fishing Activity**

1. Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (set by set) basis for all observed bottom gillnet sets.
2. The following data are to be collected for each observed bottom gillnet set:
   (a) Set start date (UTC).
   (b) Set start time (UTC).
   (c) Set end date (UTC).
   (d) Set end time (UTC).
   (e) Set start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (f) Set end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (g) Net panel (“tan”) length (m).
   (h) Net panel (“tan”) height (m).
   (i) Net mesh size (stretched mesh, mm) and mesh type (diamond, square, etc)
   (j) Bottom depth at start of setting (m).
   (k) Bottom depth at end of setting (m).
   (l) Number of net panels for the set.

(m) Number of net panels retrieved.
(n) Number of net panels actually observed during the haul.
(o) Actually observed catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
(p) An estimation of the amount (numbers or weight) of marine resources discarded, split by species, during the actual observation.
(q) Record of the actually observed numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught.
(r) Intended target species.
(s) Catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
(t) Estimate of the amount (weight or volume) of all marine resources discarded* and dropped off, split by species. * Including those retained for scientific samples.
(u) Record of the numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught (including those discarded and dropped-off).

**D. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Bottom Long Line Fishing Activity**

1. Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (set by set) basis for all observed longline sets.
2. The following fields of data are to be collected for each set:
   (a) Set start date (UTC).
   (b) Set start time (UTC).
   (c) Set end date (UTC).
   (d) Set end time (UTC).
   (e) Set start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (f) Set end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (g) Total length of longline set (m).
   (h) Number of hooks or traps for the set.
   (i) Bottom (seabed) depth at start of set.
   (j) Bottom (seabed) depth at end of set.
   (k) Number of hooks or traps actually observed during the haul.
   (l) Intended target species.
   (m) Actually observed catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).

(n) An estimation of the amount (numbers or weight) of marine resources discarded* or dropped-off, split by species, during the actual observation. * Including those retained for scientific samples.

(o) Record of the actually observed numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught (including those discarded and dropped-off).

**E. Length-Frequency Data to Be Collected**

1. Representative and randomly distributed length-frequency data (to the nearest mm, with record of the type of length measurement taken) are to be collected for representative samples of the target species and other main by-catch species. Total weight of length-frequency samples should be recorded, and observers may be required to also determine sex of measured fish to generate length-frequency data stratified by sex. The length-frequency data may be used as potential indicators of ecosystem changes (for example, see: Gislason, H. et al. (2000. ICES J Mar Sci 57: 468-475), Yamane et al. (2005. ICES J Mar Sci, 62: 374-379), and Shin, Y-J. et al. (2005. ICES J Mar Sci, 62: 384-396)).
2. The numbers of fish to be measured for each species and distribution of samples across area and month strata should be determined, to ensure that samples are properly representative of species distributions and size ranges.

**F. Biological sampling to be conducted (optional for gillnet and long line fisheries)**

1. The following biological data are to be collected for representative samples of the main target species and, time permitting, for other main by-catch species contributing to the catch:
   (a) Species
   (b) Length (to the nearest mm), with record of the type of length measurement used.
   (c) Length and depth in case of North Pacific armorhead.
   (d) Sex (male, female, indeterminate, not examined)
   (e) Maturity stage (immature, mature, ripe, ripe-running, spent)
2. Representative stratified samples of otoliths are to be collected from the main target species and, time permitting, from other main by-catch species regularly occurring in catches. All otoliths to be collected are to be labelled with the information listed in 1 above, as well as the date, vessel name, observer name and catch position.

3. Where specific trophic relationship projects are being conducted, observers may be requested to also collect stomach samples from certain species. Any such samples collected are also to be labelled with the information listed in 1 above, as well as the date, vessel name, observer name and catch position.
4. Observers may also be required to collect tissue samples as part of specific genetic research programmes implemented by the SC.
5. Observers are to be briefed and provided with written length-frequency and biological sampling protocols and priorities for the above sampling specific to each observer trip.

**G. Data to be collected on Incidental Captures of Protected Species**

1. Flag members operating observer programs are to develop, in cooperation with the SC, lists and identification guides of protected species or species of concern (seabirds, marine mammals or marine reptiles) to be monitored by observers.
2. The following data are to be collected for all protected species caught in fishing operations:
   (a) Species (identified as far as possible, or accompanied by photographs if identification is difficult).
   (b) Count of the number caught per tow or set.
   (c) Life status (vigorous, alive, lethargic, dead) upon release.
   (d) Whole specimens (where possible) for onshore identification. Where this is not possible, observers may be required to collect sub-samples of identifying parts, as specified in biological sampling protocols.

**H. Detection of Fishing in Association with Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems**

1. The SC is to develop a guideline, species list and identification guide for benthic species (e.g. sponges, sea fans, corals) whose presence in a catch will indicate that fishing occurred in association with a vulnerable marine ecosystem (VME). All observers on vessels are to be provided with copies of this guideline, species list and ID guide.
2. For each observed fishing operation, the following data are to be collected for all species caught, which appear on the list of vulnerable benthic species:
   (a) Species (identified as far as possible or accompanied by a photograph where identification is difficult).

(b) An estimate of the quantity (weight (kg) or volume ($m^3$)) of each listed benthic species caught in the fishing operation.

(c) An overall estimate of the total quantity (weight (kg) or volume ($m^3$)) of all invertebrate benthic species caught in the fishing operation.

(d) Where possible, and particularly for new or scarce benthic species which do not appear in ID guides, whole samples should be collected and suitable preserved for identification on shore.

**I. Data to be collected for all Tag Recoveries**

1. The following data are to be collected for all recovered fish, seabird, mammal or reptile tags:

(a) Observer name.

(b) Vessel name.

(c) Vessel call sign.

(d) Vessel flag.

(e) Collect, label (with all details below) and store the actual tags for later return to the tagging agency.

(f) Species from which tag recovered.

(g) Tag colour and type (spaghetti, archival).

(h) Tag numbers (The tag number is to be provided for all tags when multiple tags were attached to one fish. If only one tag was recorded, a statement is required that specifies whether or not the other tag was missing)

(i) Date and time of capture (UTC).

(j) Location of capture (Lat/Lon, to the nearest 1 minute)

(k) Animal length / size (to the nearest cm) with description of what measurement was taken (such as total length, fork length, etc).

(l) Sex (F=female, M=male, I=indeterminate, D=not examined)

(m) Whether the tags were found during a period of fishing that was being observed (Y/N)

(n) Reward information (e.g. name and address where to send reward)

(It is recognised that some of the data recorded here duplicates data that already exists in the previous categories of information. This is necessary because tag recovery information may be sent separately to other observer data.)

**J. Hierarchies for Observer Data Collection**

1. Trip-specific or programme-specific observer task priorities may be developed in response to specific research programme requirements, in which case such priorities should be followed by observers.
2. In the absence of trip- or programme-specific priorities, the following generalised priorities should be followed by observers:
   (a) Fishing Operation Information
      - All vessel and tow / set / effort information.
   (b) Monitoring of Catches
      - Record time, proportion of catch (e.g. proportion of trawl landing) or effort (e.g. number of hooks), and total numbers of each species caught.
      - Record numbers or proportions of each species retained or discarded.
   (c) Biological Sampling
      - Length-frequency data for target species.
      - Length-frequency data for main by-catch species.
      - Identification and counts of protected species.
      - Basic biological data (sex, maturity) for target species.
      - Check for presence of tags.
      - Otoliths (and stomach samples, if being collected) for target species.
      - Basic biological data for by-catch species.
      - Biological samples of by-catch species (if being collected)
      - Photos
3. The monitoring of catches and biological sampling procedures should be prioritised among species groups as follows:

| **Species** | **Priority (1 highest)** |
|---|---|
| Primary target species (such as North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino) | 1 |
| Other species typically within top 10 in the fishery (such as mirror dory, and oreos) | 2 |
| Protected species | 3 |

| | |
|---|---|
| All other species | 4 |

The allocation of observer effort among these activities will depend on the type of operation and setting. The size of sub-samples relative to unobserved quantities (e.g. number of hooks/panels examined for species composition relative to the number of hooks/panels retrieved) should be explicitly recorded under the guidance of member country observer programmes.

**K. Coding Specifications to be used for Recording Observer Data**

1. Unless otherwise specified for specific data types, observer data are to be collected in accordance with the same coding specifications as specified in this Annex.
2. Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) is to be used to describe times.
3. Degrees and minutes are to be used to describe locations.
4. The following coding schemes are to be used:
   (a) Species are to be described using the FAO 3 letter species codes or, if species do not have a FAO code, using scientific names.
   (b) Fishing methods are to be described using the International Standard Classification of Fishing Gear (ISSCFG - 29 July 1980) codes.
   (c) Types of fishing vessel are to be described using the International Standard Classification of Fishery Vessels (ISSCFV) codes.
5. Metric units of measure are to be used, specifically:
   (a) Kilograms are to be used to describe catch weight.
   (b) Metres are to be used to describe height, width, depth, beam or length.
   (c) Cubic metres are to be used to describe volume.
   (d) Kilowatts are to be used to describe engine power.

**Annex 6**

**Implementation of the Adaptive Management for North Pacific armorhead**

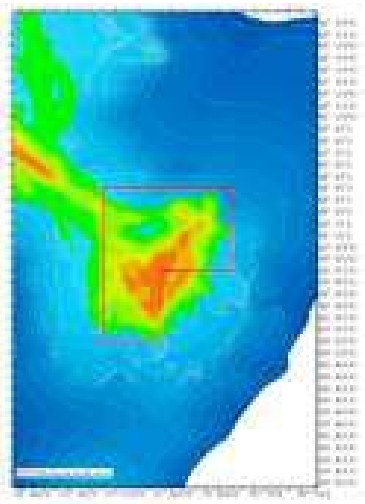
## 1. Monitoring survey for the detection of strong recruitment of North Pacific armorhead

### (1) Location of monitoring surveys

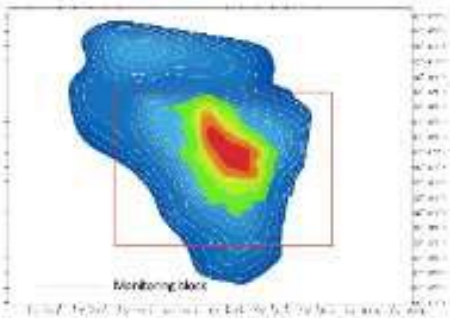
Monitoring surveys for the detection of strong recruitment of North Pacific armorhead will be conducted by trawl fishing vessels in the pre-determined four (24) monitoring blocks of Koko (South eastern), Yuryaku, Kammu (North western) and/or Colahan seamounts.

**Monitoring blocks**

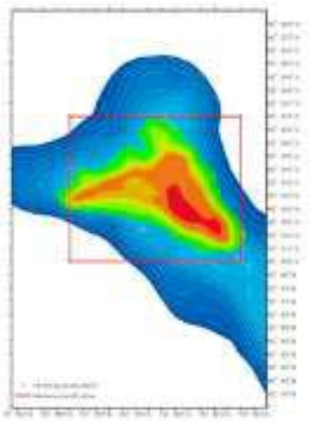
(1) Koko seamount (34°51’ –35°04’N, 171°49’ –172°00’ E)



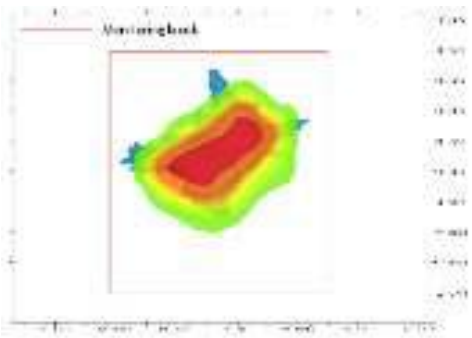
(2) Yuryaku seamount (32°35’ –32°45’N, 172°10’ –172°24’E)



(3) Kammu seamount (32°10’–32°21’N, 172°44’–172°57’E)



(4) Colahan seamount (30°57’–31°05’N, 175°50’–175°57’E)



**(2) Schedule for monitoring surveys**

Monitoring surveys will be conducted from March 1st to June 30th each year, with at least a one week interval between monitoring surveys. For each survey, a trawl fishing vessel will conduct a monitoring survey in one of the four monitoring blocks that is the nearest from the location of the trawl fishing vessel at the time of prior notification in (4) below. The base schedule for monitoring surveys will be notified to the Executive Secretary by the end of February of each year. The base

schedule may be revised during the year subject to prior notification to the Executive Secretary.

**(3) Data to be collected during monitoring surveys**

For each monitoring survey, a trawl net will be towed for one hour. A scientific observer onboard the trawl fishing vessel will calculate nominal-CPUE (kg/hour) of North Pacific armorhead. The scientific observer will also calculate fat index* (FI) of randomly sampled 100 individuals of North Pacific armorhead by measuring fork length (FL) and body height (BH) of each individual.
(*fat index (FI) = body height (BH) / fork length (FL) )

**(4) Prior notifications and survey results**

At least three (3) days before each survey, a prior notification with monitoring date/time, location and trawl fishing vessel name will be provided by the flag state of the trawl fishing vessel to the Executive Secretary.

No later than three (3) days after each survey, the survey result including date/time, location, catch, nominal-CPUE (kg/hour) and percentage of fish with fat index (FI)>0.3 will be provided by the flag state to the Executive Secretary.

The Executive Secretary will circulate these prior notifications and survey results to all Members of the Commission without delay.

**2. Areas where bottom fishing with trawl gear is prohibited when high recruitment is detected**

**(1) Criteria for a high recruitment**

It is considered that high recruitment has occurred if the following criteria are met in four (4) consecutive monitoring surveys.

- Nominal CPUE > 10t/h
- Individuals of fat index (FI)> 0.3 account for 80% or more

**(2) Areas where bottom fishing with trawl gear is prohibited**

Bottom fishing with trawl gear shall be prohibited in the following two (2) seamount areas (*) during the year when high recruitment is detected. In such a case, all monitoring surveys scheduled during the year will be cancelled.

- Northern part of Kammu seamount (north of 32°10.0′ N)
- Yuryaku seamount

(*) The catch of North Pacific armorhead in the above two seamounts accounts for a half of the total catch in the entire Emperor Seamounts area based on the catch records in 2010 and 2012.

**(3) Notification by the Secretariat**

When the criteria for high recruitment are met as defined in 2(1) above, the Executive Secretary will notify all Members of the Commission of the fact with a defined date/time from which bottom fishing with trawl gear is prohibited in the areas as defined in 2(2) above until the end of the year.

# Annex 7

## Translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names

**VME Indicator Corals from Emperor Seamounts: Present Classification *1, Taxa, and Common (nominal) Names in NPFC**

| Sub phylum | Class | Order | Superfamily | Family | Genus/Subgenus | NPFC_2023 | NPFC_2024~ *2 | Guide Cat. *3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anthozoa | Hexacorallia | Antipatharia | | Antipathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Aphanipathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Cladopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Leiopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Schizopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | Scleractinia | | Caryophylliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Deltocyathidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Dendrophylliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Flabellidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Fungiacyathidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Micrabaciidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Oculinidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Turbinoliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Madreporidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | Octocorallia *4 | Scleralcyonacea ≒Calcaxonia-Pennatulacea | Pennatuloidea *5 | Anthoptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Balticinidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Funiculinidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Kophobelemnidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Pennatulidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Protoptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Scleroptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Stachyptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Umbellulidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Veretillidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Virgulariidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Chrysogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Keratoisididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Primnoidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | **Briareidae** | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Clavulariidae>> **Briareidae** | *Pachyclavularia*>>***Briareum*** | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Alcyoniidae>> **Coralliidae** *6 | *Anthomastus* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | | *Paraminabea* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Paragorgiidae>> **Coralliidae** *6 | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | **Coralliidae** *6 | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | Malacalcyonacea ≒Holaxonia-Alcyoniina | | Clavulariidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | —— | *Pseudocladochonus* *7 | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Tubiporidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Nidaliidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Siphonogorgiidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Anthothelidae>> **Alcyoniidae** *8 | *Anthothela* | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Nephtheidae>> **Alcyoniidae** *8 | *Gersemia* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | **Alcyoniidae** *8 | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Nephtheidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Paralcyoniidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Gorgoniidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Isididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Keroeididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Astrogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Euplexauridae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Anthogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Acanthogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Victorgorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |
| | | | | Plexauridae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |
| | | | | —— | *Calcigorgia* *9 | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |

***1** Classification is based on WoRMS (in July 2024)

***2** Nominal names of VME indicator corals agreed by NPFC for adoption after 2025 (NPFC-2024-COM08-Final Report-ANNEX O-G)

***3** Coral Morphology Categories of "NPFC VME Taxa Identification Guide (Western North Pacific Ocean)"

***4** See WoRMS based on McFadden *et al*. (2022) for the present octocorallian classificaton, and McFadden *in* Daly *et al*. (2007) for the former one
The current families of octocorals and their correspondence to former suborders/systems are well summarized *in* Table 2 of McFadden *et al*. (2022)

***5** 2024_9th_COM has agreed to add pennatulaceans (sea pens) to the VME indicator taxa (entered into force 1 January 2025)

***6** The family Coralliidae is originally gorgonians (Gorgonacea), but the current classification includes some soft corals (formerly Alcyonacea) (e.g. Anthomastus)

***7** *Pseudocladochonus* is the genus Octocorallia *incertae sedis* in McFadden *et al*. (2022) and in also WoRMS. (See Table 3 *in* McFadden *et al*., 2022)

***8** The family Alcyoniidae is originally soft corals (former Alcyonacea), but the current classification includes some gorgonians (Gorgonacea) (e.g. Anthothela)

***9** *Calcigorgia* is a gorgonian genus in Octocorallia *incertae sedis* in McFadden *et al*. (2022) and in also WoRMS. (See Table 3 *in* McFadden *et al*., 2022)

>> pink= former Gorgonacea (Gorgonians); yellow= former Alcyonecea (Soft Corals)

**WoRMS** World Register of Marine Species) https://www.marinespecies.org/index.php

**Daly *et al*. (2007)** The phylum Cnidaria: A review of phylogenetic patterns and diversity 300 years after Linnaeus. *Zootaxa*, 1668: 127–182.

**McFadden *et al*. (2022)** Revisionary systematics of Octocorallia (Cnidaria: Anthozoa) guided by phylogenomics. *Bull. Soc. Syst. Biol.*, 1: 1–79.

**Annex S**

**Revised CMM 2024-06 - Conservation and Management Measure for Bottom Fisheries and Protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in the Northeastern Pacific Ocean**

**CMM 2024-06**

***(Entered into force 24 July 2024)***

## CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR BOTTOM FISHERIES AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS IN THE NORTHEASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

*The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC):*

*Seeking* to ensure the long term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources of the Northeastern Pacific Ocean and, in so doing, protect the vulnerable marine ecosystems that occur there, in accordance with the Sustainable Fisheries Resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) including, in particular, paragraphs 66 to 71 of the UNGA59/25 in 2004, paragraphs 69 to 74 of UNGA60/31 in 2005, paragraphs 69 and 80 to 91 of UNGA61/105 in 2006, and paragraphs 113 to 124 of UNGA64/72 in 2009;

*Recalling* that paragraph 85 of UNGA 61/105 calls upon participants in negotiations to establish regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements with the competence to regulate bottom fisheries to adopt permanent measures in respect of the area of application of the instruments under negotiation;

*Noting* that North Pacific Fisheries Commission has previously adopted interim measures for the Northeastern Pacific Ocean;

*Conscious* of the need to adopt permanent measures for the Northeastern Pacific Ocean to ensure that this area is not left as the only major area of the Pacific Ocean where no such measures are in place;

*Hereby adopt* the following Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for bottom fisheries of the Northeastern Pacific Ocean while working to develop and implement other permanent management arrangements to govern these and other fisheries in the North Pacific Ocean.

**Scope**

1. These Measures are to be applied to all bottom fishing activities throughout the high seas areas of the Northeastern Pacific Ocean, defined, for the purposes of this document, as those occurring in the Convention Area as set out in Article 4 of the Convention text to the east of the line of 175 degrees W longitude (here in after called "the eastern part of the Convention Area") including all such areas and marine species other than those species already covered by existing international fisheries management instruments, including bilateral agreements and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations or Arrangements.

   For the purpose of these Measures, the term vulnerable marine ecosystems is to be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the International Guidelines on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries on the High Seas adopted by the FAO on 29 August 2008 (see Annex 2 for further details).

2. The implementation of these Measures shall:
   a. be based on the best scientific information available in accordance with existing international laws and agreements including UNCLOS and other relevant international instruments,
   b. establish appropriate and effective conservation and management measures,
   c. be in accordance with the precautionary approach, and
   d. incorporate an ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

3. Actions by Members of the Commission
   Members of the Commission will take the following actions in respect of vessels operating under its Flag or authority in the area covered by these Measures:
   a. Conduct the assessments called for in paragraph 83(a) of UNGA Resolution 61/105, in a manner consistent with the FAO Guidelines and the Standards and Criteria included in Annex 2;
   b. Submit to the SC their assessments conducted pursuant to subparagraph (a) of this paragraph, including all relevant data and information in support of any such assessment, and receive advice and recommendations from the SC, in accordance with the procedures in Annex 3;

c. Taking into account all advice and recommendations received from the SC, determine whether the fishing activity or operations of the vessel in question are likely to have a significant adverse impact on any vulnerable marine ecosystem;

d. If it is determined that the fishing activity or operations of the vessel or vessels in question would have a significant adverse impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems, adopt conservation and management measures to prevent such impacts on the basis of advice and recommendations of the SC, which are subject to adoption by the Commission;

e. Ensure that if any vessels are already engaged in bottom fishing, that such assessments have been carried out in accordance with paragraph 119(a)/UNGA RES 2009, the determination called for in subparagraph (c) of this paragraph has been rendered and, where appropriate, managements measures have been implemented in accordance with the advice and recommendations of the SC, which are subject to adoption by the Commission;

f. Further ensure that they will only authorize fishing activities on the basis of such assessments and any comments and recommendations from the SC;

g. Prohibit its vessels from engaging in directed fishing on the following taxa: black corals (Antipatharia), gorgonians, pennatulaceans, stony corals (Scleractinia), soft corals, the classes of Demospongiae and Hexactinellida in the phylum Porifera as well as any other indicator species for vulnerable marine ecosystems as may be identified from time to time by the SC and approved by the Commission. The translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names is attached to the VME taxa identification guide (link) [to this CMM (Annex 6)].

h. In respect of areas where vulnerable marine ecosystems are known to occur or are likely to occur, based on the best available scientific information, ensure that bottom fishing activities do not proceed unless conservation and management measures have been established to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems;

i. Limit fishing effort in bottom fisheries on the Eastern part of the Convention Area to the level of a historical average (baseline to be determined through consensus in the SC based on information to be provided by Members) in terms of the number of fishing vessels and other parameters which reflect the level of fishing effort, fishing capacity or potential impacts on marine ecosystems dependent on new SC advice;

j. Further, considering accumulated information regarding fishing activities in the Eastern part of the Convention Area, in areas where, in the course of fishing operations with pot gear, cold water corals that exceed 2Kg or sponges (Demospongiae and Hexactinellida) that

exceed 5Kg are encountered in one gear retrieval, Members of the Commission shall require vessels flying their flag to cease bottom fishing activities in that location. In the course of fishing operations with all other gears, cold water corals that exceed 50Kg or sponges (Demospongiae and Hexactinellida) that exceed 350Kg are encountered in one gear retrieval, Members of the Commission shall require vessels flying their flag to cease bottom fishing activities in that location. In such cases, the vessel shall not resume fishing activities until it has relocated a sufficient distance, which shall be no less than 1 nautical mile, so that additional encounters with VMEs are unlikely. All such encounters, including the location, gear type, date, time and name and weight of the VME indicator species, shall be reported to the Secretariat, through the Member, within one business day. The Executive Secretary shall notify the other Members of the Commission and at the same time implement a temporary closure in the area to prohibit its bottom fishing vessels from contacting the sea floor with their trawl nets. Members shall inform their fleets and enforcement operations within one business day of the receipt of the notification from the Executive Secretary. It is agreed that the VME indicator taxa include cold water corals black corals (Antipatharia), gorgonians, pennatulaceans, stony corals (Scleractinia), and soft corals. The VME indicator taxa also include the classes of Demospongiae and Hexactinellida in the phylum Porifera.

k. Based on all the available data, including data on the VME encounter and distribution received from the fishing vessel(s), research survey data, visual survey data, and/or model results, the Scientific Committee (SC) shall assess and conclude if the area has a VME. If so, the SC shall recommend to the Commission that the temporary closure be made permanent, although the boundary of the closure may be adjusted, or suggest other appropriate measures. Otherwise, the Executive Secretary shall inform the Members that they may reopen the area to their vessels.

l. Prohibit bottom fishing vessels from fishing in the following areas in order to achieve sustainable protection of VMEs in the eastern part of the Convention Area:

| Area | Latitude | Longitude |
|---|---|---|
| Northwestern Cobb Seamount | 46.8178 N | 130.872 W |
| | 46.7703 N | 130.861 W |
| | 46.8277 N | 130.825 W |
| | 46.7802 N | 130.814W |
| Northeastern Cobb Seamount | 46.7759 N | 130.735 W |
| | 46.7675 N | 130.694 W |
| | 46.7482 N | 130.756 W |
| | 46.7399 N | 130.716 W |

4. All assessments and determinations by any Member as to whether fishing activity would have significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems, as well as measures adopted in order to prevent such impacts, will be made publicly available through agreed means.

Control of Bottom Fishing Vessels

5. Members will exercise full and effective control over each of their bottom fishing vessels operating in the high seas of the Northeastern Pacific Ocean, including by means of fishing licenses, authorizations or permits, and maintenance of a record of these vessels as outlined in the Convention and applicable CMM.

6. New and exploratory fishing will be subject to the exploratory fishery protocol included as Annex 1.

Scientific Committee (SC)

7. Scientific Committee will provide scientific support for the implementation of these CMMs.

Scientific Information

8. The Members shall provide all available information as required by the Commission for any current or historical fishing activity by their flag vessels, including the number of vessels by gear type, size of vessels (tons), number of fishing days or days on the fishing grounds, total catch by species, areas fished (names or coordinates of seamounts), and information from scientific observer programmes (see Annexes 4 and 5) to the NPFC Secretariat as soon as possible and no later than one month prior to SC meeting. The Secretariat will make such information available

to SC.

9. Scientific research activities for stock assessment purposes are to be conducted in accordance with a research plan that has been provided to SC prior to the commencement of such activities.

**Annex 1**

## EXPLORATORY FISHERY PROTOCOL IN THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

1. From 1 January 2009, all bottom fishing activities in new fishing areas and areas where fishing is prohibited in a precautionary manner or with bottom gear not previously used in the existing fishing areas, are to be considered as "exploratory fisheries" and to be conducted in accordance with this protocol.

2. Precautionary conservation and management measures, including catch and effort controls, are essential during the exploratory phase of deep sea fisheries. Implementation of a precautionary approach to sustainable exploitation of deep sea fisheries shall include the following measures:

i. precautionary effort limits, particularly where reliable assessments of sustainable exploitation rates of target and main by-catch species are not available;
ii. precautionary measures, including precautionary spatial catch limits where appropriate, to prevent serial depletion of low-productivity stocks;
iii. regular review of appropriate indices of stock status and revision downwards of the limits listed above when significant declines are detected;
iv. measures to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems; and
v. comprehensive monitoring of all fishing effort, capture of all species and interactions with VMEs.

3. When a member of the Commission would like to conduct exploratory fisheries, it is to follow the following procedure:

(1) Prior to the commencement of fishing, the member of the Commission is to circulate the information and assessment in Appendix 1.1 to the members of the Scientific Committee (SC) for review and to all members of the Commission for information, together with the impact assessment. Such information is to be provided to the other members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which the information shall be reviewed.

(2) The assessment in (1) above is to be conducted in accordance with the procedure set forth in

"Science-based Standards and Criteria for Identification of VMEs and Assessment of Significant Adverse Impacts on VMEs and Marine Species (Annex 2)", with the understanding that particular care shall be taken in the evaluation of risks of the significant adverse impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), in line with the precautionary approach.

(3) The SC is to review the information and the assessment submitted in (1) above in accordance with "SC Assessment Review Procedures for Bottom Fishing Activities (Annex 3)."

(4) The exploratory fisheries are to be permitted only where the assessment concludes that they would not have significant adverse impacts (SAIs) on marine species or any VMEs and on the basis of comments and recommendations of SC. Any determinations, by any Member of the Commission or the SC, that the exploratory fishing activities would not have SAIs on marine species or any VMEs, shall be made publicly available through the NPFC website.

4. The member of the Commission is to ensure that all vessels flying its flag conducting exploratory fisheries are equipped with a satellite monitoring device and have an observer on board at all times.

5. Within 3 months of the end of the exploratory fishing activities or within 12 months of the commencement of fishing, whichever occurs first, the member of the Commission is to provide a report of the results of such activities to the members of the SC and all members of the Commission. If the SC meets prior to the end of this 12-month period, the member of the Commission is to provide an interim report 30 days in advance of the SC meeting. The information to be included in the report is specified in Appendix 1.2.

6. The SC is to review the report in 5 above and decide whether the exploratory fishing activities had SAIs on marine species or any VME. The SC then is to send its recommendations to the Commission on whether the exploratory fisheries can continue and whether additional management measures shall be required if they are to continue. The Commission is to strive to adopt conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs on marine species or any VMEs. If the Commission is not able to reach consensus on any such measures, each fishing member of the Commission is to adopt measures to avoid any SAIs on VMEs.

7. Members of the Commission shall only authorize continuation of exploratory fishing activity, or

commencement of commercial fishing activity, under this protocol on the basis of comments and recommendations of the SC.

8. The same encounter protocol should be applied in both fished and unfished areas specified in Annex 2, paragraph 4(1)(a).

**Appendix 1.1**

**Information to be provided before exploratory fisheries start**

1. A harvesting plan
   - Name of vessel
   - Flag member of vessel
   - Description of area to be fished (location and depth)
   - Fishing dates
   - Anticipated effort
   - Target species
   - Bottom fishing gear-type used
   - Area and effort restrictions to ensure that fisheries occur on a gradual basis in a limited geographical area.
2. A mitigation plan
   - Measures to prevent SAIs to VMEs that may be encountered during the fishery

3. A catch monitoring plan
   - Recording/reporting of all species brought onboard to the lowest possible taxonomic level
   - 100% satellite monitoring
   - 100% observer coverage

4. A data collection plan
   - Data is to be collected in accordance with “Type and Format of Scientific Observer Data to be Collected” (Annex 5)

**Appendix 1.2**

**Information to be included in the report**

- Name of vessel
- Flag member of vessel
- Description of area fished (location and depth)
- Fishing dates
- Total effort
- Bottom fishing gear-type used
- List of VME encountered (the amount of VME indicator species for each encounter specifying the location: longitude and latitude)
- Mitigation measures taken in response to the encounter of VME
- List of all organisms brought onboard
- List of VMEs indicator species brought onboard by location: longitude and latitude

**Annex 2**

# SCIENCE-BASED STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF VMES AND ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS ON VMES AND MARINE SPECIES

## 1. Introduction

Members of the Commission have hereby established science-based standards and criteria to guide their implementation of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 61/105 and the measures adopted by the Members in respect of bottom fishing activities in the North Pacific Ocean (NPO). In this regard, these science-based standards and criteria are to be applied to identify vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and assess significant adverse impacts (SAIs) of bottom fishing activities on such VMEs or marine species and to promote the long-term sustainability of deep sea fisheries in the Convention Area. The science-based standards and criteria are consistent with the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas, taking into account the work of other RFMOs implementing management of deep-sea bottom fisheries in accordance with UNGA Resolution 61/105. The standards and criteria are to be modified from time to time as more data are collected through research activities and monitoring of fishing operations.

## 2. Purpose

(1) The purpose of the standards and criteria is to provide guidelines for each member of the Commission in identifying VMEs and assessing SAIs of individual bottom fishing activities[2] on VMEs or marine species in the Convention Area. Each member of the Commission, using the best information available, is to decide which species or areas are to be categorized as VMEs, identify areas where VMEs are known or likely to occur, and assess whether individual bottom fishing activities would have SAIs on such VMEs or marine species. The results of these tasks are to be submitted to and reviewed by the Scientific Committee with a view to reaching a common understanding among the members of the Commission.

(2) For the purpose of applying the standards and criteria, the bottom fisheries are defined as

[2] "individual bottom fishing activities" means fishing activities by each fishing gear. For example, if ten fishing vessels operate bottom trawl fishing in a certain area, the impacts of the fishing activities of these vessels on the ecosystem are to be assessed as a whole rather than on a vessel-by-vessel basis. It should be noted that if the total number or capacity of the vessels using the same fishing gear has increased, the impacts of the fishing activities are to be assessed again.

follows:

(a) The fisheries are conducted in the Convention Area;

(b) The total catch (everything brought up by the fishing gear) includes species that can only sustain low exploitation rates; and

(c) The fishing gear is likely to contact the seafloor during the normal course of fishing operations

3. Definition of VMEs

(1) Although Paragraph 83 of UNGA Resolution 61/105 refers to seamounts, hydrothermal vents and cold water corals as examples of VMEs, there is no definitive list of specific species or areas that are to be regarded as VMEs.

(2) Vulnerability is related to the likelihood that a population, community or habitat will experience substantial alteration by fishing activities and how much time will be required for its recovery from such alteration. The most vulnerable ecosystems are those that are both easily disturbed and are very slow to recover, or may never recover. The vulnerabilities of populations, communities and habitats are to be assessed relative to specific threats. Some features, particularly ones that are physically fragile or inherently rare may be vulnerable to most forms of disturbance, but the vulnerability of some populations, communities and habitats may vary greatly depending on the type of fishing gear used or the kind of disturbance experienced. The risks to a marine ecosystem are determined by its vulnerability, the probability of a threat occurring and the mitigation means applied to the threat. Accordingly, the FAO Guidelines only provide examples of potential vulnerable species groups, communities and habitats as well as features that potentially support them (Annex 2.1).

(3) A marine ecosystem is to be classified as vulnerable based on its characteristics. The following list of characteristics is used as criteria in the identification of VMEs.

(a) Uniqueness or rarity - an area or ecosystem that is unique or that contains rare species whose loss could not be compensated for by other similar areas. These include:

(i) Habitats that contain endemic species;

(ii) Habitats of rare, threatened or endangered species that occur in discrete areas;

(iii) Nurseries or discrete feeding, breeding, or spawning areas

(b) Functional significance of the habitat – discrete areas or habitats that are necessary

for the survival, function, spawning/reproduction or recovery of fish stocks, particular life-history stages (e.g. nursery grounds or rearing areas), or of rare, threatened or endangered marine species.

(c) Fragility – an ecosystem that is highly susceptible to degradation by anthropogenic activities

(d) Life-history traits of component species that make recovery difficult – ecosystems that are characterized by populations or assemblages of species with one or more of the following characteristics:

(i) Slow growth rates

(ii) Late age of maturity

(iii) Low or unpredictable recruitment

(iv) Long-lived

(e) Structural complexity – an ecosystem that is characterized by complex physical structures created by significant concentrations of biotic and abiotic features. In these ecosystems, ecological processes are usually highly dependent on these structured systems. Further, such ecosystems often have high diversity, which is dependent on the structuring organisms.

(4) Management response may vary, depending on the size of the ecological unit in the Convention Area. Therefore, the spatial extent of the ecological unit is to be decided first. For example, whether the ecological unit is a group of seamounts, or an individual seamount in the Convention Area, is to be decided using the above criteria.

4. Identification of potential VMEs

(1) Fished seamounts

(a) Identification of fished seamounts

It is reported that two types of fishing gear are currently used by members of the Commission in the NE area, namely long-line hook and long-line trap. The footprint of the bottom fisheries (fished seamounts) is identified based on the available fishing record. The following seamounts have been identified as fished seamounts at some point in the past: Brown Bear, Cobb, Warwick, Eickelberg, Pathfinder, Miller, Murray, Cowie, Surveyor, Pratt, and Durgin. It is important to establish, to the extent practicable, a time

series of where and when these gears have been used in order to assess potential long-term effects on any existing VMEs.

Fishing effort may not be evenly distributed on each seamount since fish aggregation may occur only at certain points of the seamount and some parts of the seamount may be physically unsuitable for certain fishing gears. Thus, it is important to know actual fished areas within the same seamount so as to know the gravity of the impact of fishing activities on the entire seamount.

Due consideration is to be given to the protection of commercial confidentiality when identifying actual fishing grounds.

(b) Assessment on whether a specific seamount that has been fished is a VME

After identifying the fished seamounts or fished areas of seamounts, it is necessary to assess whether each fished seamount is a VME or contains VMEs in accordance with the criteria in 3 above, individually or in combination using the best available scientific and technical information as well as Annex 2.1. A variety of data would be required to conduct such assessment, including pictures of seamounts taken by an ROV camera or drop camera, biological samples collected through research activities and observer programs, and detailed bathymetry map. Where site-specific information is lacking, other information that is relevant to inferring the likely presence of VMEs is to be used. The flow chart to identify data that can be used to identify VMEs is attached in Annex 2.3.

(2) New fishing areas

Any place other than the fished seamounts above is to be regarded as a new fishing area. If a member of the Commission is considering fishing in a new fishing area, such a fishing area is to be subject to, in addition to these standards and criteria, an exploratory fishery protocol (Annex 1).

5. Assessment of SAIs on VMEs or marine species

(1) Significant adverse impacts are those that compromise ecosystem integrity (i.e., ecosystem structure or function) in a manner that: (i) impairs the ability of affected populations to replace themselves; (ii) degrades the long-term natural productivity of habitats; or (iii) causes, on more than a temporary basis, significant loss of species richness, habitat or community types.

Impacts are to be evaluated individually, in combination and cumulatively.

(2) When determining the scale and significance of an impact, the following six factors are to be considered:

(a) The intensity or severity of the impact at the specific site being affected;

(b) The spatial extent of the impact relative to the availability of the habitat type affected;

(c) The sensitivity/vulnerability of the ecosystem to the impact;

(d) The ability of an ecosystem to recover from harm, and the rate of such recovery;

(e) The extent to which ecosystem functions may be altered by the impact; and

(f) The timing and duration of the impact relative to the period in which a species needs the habitat during one or more life-history stages.

(3) Temporary impacts are those that are limited in duration and that allow the particular ecosystem to recover over an acceptable timeframe. Such timeframes are to be decided on a case-by-case basis and be on the order of 5-20 years, taking into account the specific features of the populations and ecosystems.

(4) In determining whether an impact is temporary, both the duration and the frequency with which an impact is repeated is to be considered. If the interval between the expected disturbances of a habitat is shorter than the recovery time, the impact is to be considered more than temporary.

(5) Each member of the Commission is to conduct assessments to establish if bottom fishing activities are likely to produce SAIs in a given seamount or other VMEs. Such an impact assessment is to address, *inter alia*:

(a) Type of fishing conducted or contemplated, including vessel and gear types, fishing areas, target and potential bycatch species, fishing effort levels and duration of fishing;

(b) Best available scientific and technical information on the current state of fishery resources, and baseline information on the ecosystems, habitats and communities in the fishing area, against which future changes are to be compared;

(c) Identification, description and mapping of VMEs known or likely to occur in the fishing area;

(d) The data and methods used to identify, describe and assess the impacts of the activity,

identification of gaps in knowledge, and an evaluation of uncertainties in the information presented in the assessment

(e) Identification, description and evaluation of the occurrence, scale and duration of likely impacts, including cumulative impacts of activities covered by the assessment on VMEs and low-productivity fishery resources in the fishing area;

(f) Risk assessment of likely impacts by the fishing operations to determine which impacts are likely to be SAIs, particularly impacts on VMEs and low-productivity fishery resources (Risk assessments are to take into account, as appropriate, differing conditions prevailing in areas where fisheries are well established and in areas where fisheries have not taken place or only occur occasionally);

(g) The proposed mitigation and management measures to be used to prevent SAIs on VMEs and ensure long-term conservation and sustainable utilization of low-productivity fishery resources, and the measures to be used to monitor effects of the fishing operations.

(6) Impact assessments are to consider, as appropriate, the information referred to in these Standards and Criteria, as well as relevant information from similar or related fisheries, species and ecosystems.

(7) Where an assessment concludes that the area does not contain VMEs or that significant adverse impacts on VMEs or marine species are not likely, such assessments are to be repeated when there have been significant changes to the fishery or other activities in the area, or when natural processes are thought to have undergone significant changes.

6. Proposed conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs

As a result of the assessment in 5 above, if it is considered that individual fishing activities are causing or likely to cause SAIs on VMEs or marine species, the member of the Commission is to adopt appropriate conservation and management measures to prevent such SAIs. The member of the Commission is to clearly indicate how such impacts are expected to be prevented or mitigated by the measures.

7. Precautionary approach

If after assessing all available scientific and technical information, the presence of VMEs or the likelihood that individual bottom fishing activities would cause SAIs on VMEs or marine species

cannot be adequately determined, members of the Commission are only to authorize individual bottom fishing activities to proceed in accordance with:

(a) Precautionary, conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs;

(b) Measures to address unexpected encounters with VMEs in the course of fishing operations;

(c) Measures, including ongoing scientific research, monitoring and data collection, to reduce the uncertainty; and

(d) Measures to ensure long-term sustainability of deep sea fisheries.

8. Template for assessment report

Annex 2.2 is a template for individual member of the Commission to formulate reports on identification of VMEs and impact assessment.

**ANNEX 2.1**

## EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL VULNERABLE SPECIES GROUPS, COMMUNITIES AND HABITATS AS WELL AS FEATURES THAT POTENTIALLY SUPPORT THEM

The following examples of species groups, communities, habitats and features often display characteristics consistent with possible VMEs. Merely detecting the presence of an element itself is not sufficient to identify a VME. That identification is to be made on a case-by-case basis through application of relevant provisions of the Standards and Criteria, particularly Sections 3, 4 and 5.

| Examples of species groups, communities and habitat forming species that are documented or considered sensitive and potentially vulnerable to deep-sea fisheries in the high-seas, and which may contribute to forming VMEs: | |
|---|---|
| a. | certain coldwater corals, e.g., reef builders and coral forest including: stony corals (scleractinia), alcyonaceans and gorgonians (octocorallia), black corals (antipatharia), and hydrocorals (stylasteridae), |
| b. | Some types of sponge dominated communities, |
| c. | communities composed of dense emergent fauna where large sessile protozoans (xenophyophores) and invertebrates (e.g., hydroids and bryozoans) form an important structural component of habitat, and |

| | |
|---|---|
| d. | seep and vent communities comprised of invertebrate and microbial species found nowhere else (i.e., endemic). |

| Examples of topographical, hydrophysical or geological features, including fragile geological structures, that potentially support the species groups or communities, referred to above: | |
|---|---|
| a. | submerged edges and slopes (e.g., corals and sponges), |
| b. | summits and flanks of seamounts, guyots, banks, knolls, and hills (e.g., corals, sponges, xenophyphores), |
| c. | canyons and trenches (e.g., burrowed clay outcrops, corals), |
| d. | hydrothermal vents (e.g., microbial communities and endemic invertebrates), and |
| e. | cold seeps (e.g., mud volcanoes, microbes, hard substrates for sessile invertebrates). |

**ANNEX 2.2**

# TEMPLATE FOR REPORTS ON IDENTIFICATION OF VMEs AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS CAUSED BY INDIVIDUAL FISHING ACTIVITIES ON VMEs OR MARINE SPECIES

1. Name of the member of the Commission
2. Name of the fishery (e.g., bottom trawl, bottom gillnet, bottom longline, pot)
3. Status of the fishery (existing fishery or exploratory fishery)
4. Target species
5. Bycatch species
6. Recent level of fishing effort (every year at least since 2002)
   (1) Number of fishing vessels
   (2) Tonnage of each fishing vessel
   (3) Number of fishing days or days on the fishing ground
   (4) Fishing effort (total operating hours for trawl, # of hooks per day for long-line, # of pots per day for pot, total length of net per day for gillnet)
   (5) Total catch by species
   (6) Names of seamounts fished or to be fished
7. Fishing period
8. Analysis of status of fishery resources
   (1) Data and methods used for analysis
   (2) Results of analysis
   (3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties
9. Analysis of status of bycatch species resources
   (1) Data and methods used for analysis
   (2) Results of analysis
   (3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties
10. Analysis of existence of VMEs in the fishing ground
   (1) Data and methods used for analysis

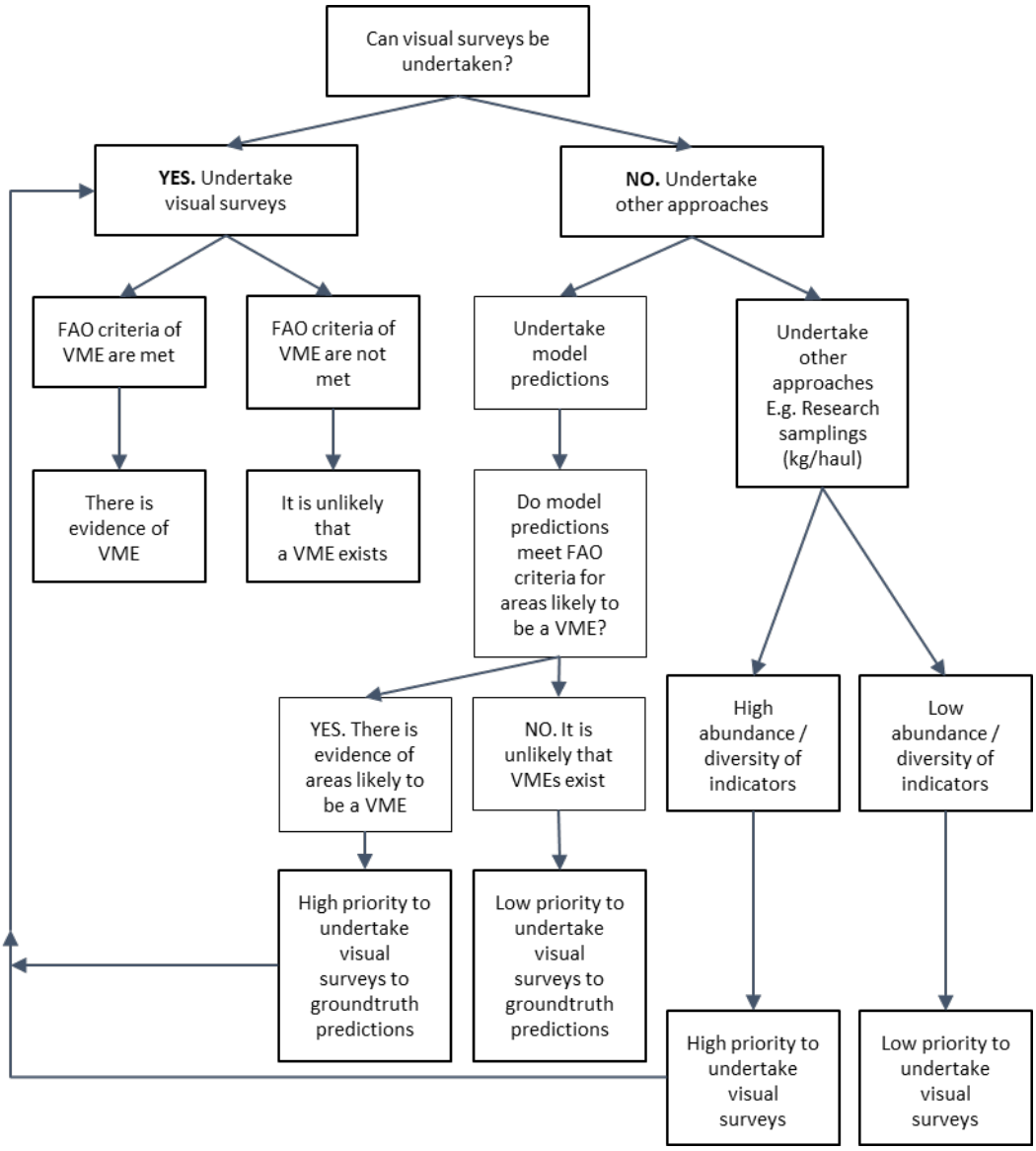
(2) Results of analysis

(3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties

11. Impact assessment of fishing activities on VMEs or marine species including cumulative impacts, and identification of SAIs on VMEs or marine species, as detailed in Section 5 above, Assessment of SAIs on VMEs or marine species
12. Other points to be addressed
13. Conclusion (whether to continue or start fishing with what measures, or stop fishing).

**Annex 2.3**

## Flow chart to identify data that can be used to identify VMEs in the NPFC Convention Area



**Annex 3**

# SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR BOTTOM FISHING ACTIVITIES

1. The Scientific Committee (SC) is to review identifications of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and assessments of significant adverse impact on VMEs, including proposed management measures intended to prevent such impacts submitted by individual Members.

2. Members of the Commission shall submit their identifications and assessments to members of the SC at least 21 days prior to the SC meeting at which the review is to take place. Such submissions shall include all relevant data and information in support of such determinations.

3. The SC will review the data and information in each assessment in accordance with the Science-based Standards and Criteria for Identification of VMEs and Assessment of Significant Adverse Impacts on VMEs and Marine Species (Annex 2), previous decisions of the Commission, and the FAO Technical Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas, paying special attention to the assessment process and criteria specified in paragraphs 47-49 of the Guidelines.

4. In conducting the review above, the SC will give particular attention to whether the deep-sea bottom fishing activity would have a significant adverse impact on VMEs and marine species and, if so, whether the proposed management measures would prevent such impacts.

5. Based on the above review, the SC will provide advice and recommendations to the submitting Members on the extent to which the assessments and related determinations are consistent with the procedures and criteria established in the documents identified above; and whether additional management measures will be required to prevent SAIs on VMEs.

6. Such recommendations will be reflected in the report of the SC meeting at which the assessments are considered.

**Annex 4**

# FORMAT OF NATIONAL REPORT SECTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER PROGRAMMES

## Report Components

Annual Observer Programme implementation reports should form a component of annual National Reports submitted by members to the Scientific Committee. These reports should provide a brief overview of observer programmes conducted in the NPFC Convention Area. Observer programme reports should include the following sections:

## A. Observer Training

An overview of observer training conducted, including:

- Overview of training programme provided to scientific observers.
- Number of observers trained.

## B. Scientific Observer Programme Design and Coverage

Details of the design of the observer programme, including:

- Which fleets, fleet components or fishery components were covered by the programme.
- How vessels were selected to carry observers within the above fleets or components.
- How was observer coverage stratified: by fleets, fisheries components, vessel types, vessel sizes, vessel ages, fishing areas and seasons.

Details of observer coverage of the above fleets, including:

- Components, areas, seasons and proportion of total catches of target species, specifying units used to determine coverage.
- Total number of observer employment days, and number of actual days deployed on observation work.

**C. Observer Data Collected**

List of observer data collected against the agreed range of data set out in Annex 5, including:

- Effort Data: Amount of effort observed (vessel days, net panels, hooks, etc), by area and season and % observed out of total by area and seasons
- Catch Data: Amount of catch observed of target and by-catch species, by area and season, and % observed out of total estimated catch by species, area and seasons
- Length Frequency Data: Number of fish measured per species, by area and season.
- Biological Data: Type and quantity of other biological data or samples (otoliths, sex, maturity, etc) collected per species.
- The size of length-frequency and biological sub-samples relative to unobserved quantities.

**D. Detection of Fishing in Association with Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems**

- Information about VME encounters (species and quantity in accordance with Annex 5, H, 2).

**E. Tag Return Monitoring**

- Number of tags returns observed, by fish size class and area.

**F. Problems Experienced**

- Summary of problems encountered by observers and observer managers that could affect the NPFC Observer Programme Standards and/or each member's national observer programme developed under the NPFC standards.

**Annex 5**

**NPFC BOTTOM FISHERIES**
**OBSERVER PROGRAMME STANDARDS: SCIENTIFIC COMPONENT**

**TYPE AND FORMAT OF SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER DATA TO BE COLLECTED**

## A. Vessel & Observer Data to be collected for Each Trip

1. Vessel and observer details are to be recorded only once for each observed trip.

2. The following observer data are to be collected for each observed trip:
   a) NPFC vessel ID
   b) Observer's name.
   c) Observer's organisation.
   d) Date observer embarked (UTC date).
   e) Port of embarkation.
   f) Date observer disembarked (UTC date).
   g) Port of disembarkation.

## B. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Trawl Fishing Activity

1. Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (tow by tow) basis for all observed trawls.

2. The following data are to be collected for each observed trawl tow:
   a) Tow start date (UTC).
   b) Tow start time (UTC).
   c) Tow end date (UTC).
   d) Tow end time (UTC).
   e) Tow start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   f) Tow end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   g) Type of trawl, bottom or mid-water.
   h) Type of trawl, single, double or triple.
   i) Height of net opening (m).
   j) Width of net opening (m).
   k) Mesh size of the cod-end net (stretched mesh, mm) and mesh type (diamond, square, etc).
   l) Gear depth (of footrope) at start of fishing (m).
   m) Bottom (seabed) depth at start of fishing (m).

n) Gear depth (of footrope) at end of fishing (m).
o) Bottom (seabed) depth at end of fishing (m).
p) Status of the trawl operation (no damage, lightly damaged*, heavily damaged*, other (specify)). *Degree may be evaluated by time for repairing (<=1hr or >1hr)
q) Duration of estimated period of seabed contact (minute)
r) Intended target species.
s) Catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
t) Estimate of the amount (weight or volume) of all living marine resources discarded, split by species.
u) Record of the numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught.

## C. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Bottom Gillnet Fishing Activity

1. Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (set by set) basis for all observed bottom gillnet sets.

2. The following data are to be collected for each observed bottom gillnet set:
   a) Set start date (UTC).
   b) Set start time (UTC).
   c) Set end date (UTC).
   d) Set end time (UTC).
   e) Set start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   f) Set end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   g) Net panel (“tan”) length (m).
   h) Net panel (“tan”) height (m).
   i) Net mesh size (stretched mesh, mm) and mesh type (diamond, square, etc)
   j) Bottom depth at start of setting (m).
   k) Bottom depth at end of setting (m).
   l) Number of net panels for the set.
   m) Number of net panels retrieved.
   n) Number of net panels actually observed during the haul.
   o) Actually observed catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
   p) An estimation of the amount (numbers or weight) of marine resources discarded, split by species, during the actual observation.

q) Record of the actually observed numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught.
r) Intended target species.
s) Catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
t) Estimate of the amount (weight or volume) of all marine resources discarded* and dropped-off, split by species. * Including those retained for scientific samples.
u) Record of the numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught (including those discarded and dropped-off).

**D. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Bottom Long Line Fishing Activity**

1. Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (set by set) basis for all observed longline sets.

2. The following fields of data are to be collected for each set:
   a) Set start date (UTC).
   b) Set start time (UTC).
   c) Set end date (UTC).
   d) Set end time (UTC).
   e) Set start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   f) Set end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   g) Total length of longline set (m).
   h) Number of hooks or traps for the set.
   i) Bottom (seabed) depth at start of set.
   j) Bottom (seabed) depth at end of set.
   k) Number of hooks or traps actually observed during the haul.
   l) Intended target species.
   m) Actually observed catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
   n) An estimation of the amount (numbers or weight) of marine resources discarded* or dropped-off, split by species, during the actual observation. * Including those retained for scientific samples.
   o) Record of the actually observed numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught (including those discarded and dropped-off).

## E. Length-Frequency Data to Be Collected

1. Representative and randomly distributed length-frequency data (to the nearest mm, with record of the type of length measurement taken) are to be collected for representative samples of the target species and other main by-catch species. Total weight of length-frequency samples should be recorded, and observers may be required to also determine sex of measured fish to generate length-frequency data stratified by sex. The length-frequency data may be used as potential indicators of ecosystem changes (for example, see: Gislason, H. et al. (2000. ICES J Mar Sci 57: 468-475), Yamane et al. (2005. ICES J Mar Sci, 62: 374-379), and Shin, Y-J. et al. (2005. ICES J Mar Sci, 62: 384-396)).

2. The numbers of fish to be measured for each species and distribution of samples across area and month strata should be determined, to ensure that samples are properly representative of species distributions and size ranges.

## F. Biological sampling to be conducted (optional for gillnet and long line fisheries)

1. The following biological data are to be collected for representative samples of the main target species and, time permitting, for other main by-catch species contributing to the catch:
   a) Species
   b) Length (to the nearest mm), with record of the type of length measurement used.
   c) Length and depth in case of North Pacific armorhead.
   d) Sex (male, female, indeterminate, not examined)
   e) Maturity stage (immature, mature, ripe, ripe-running, spent)

2. Representative stratified samples of otoliths are to be collected from the main target species and, time permitting, from other main by-catch species regularly occurring in catches. All otoliths to be collected are to be labelled with the information listed in 1 above, as well as the date, vessel name, observer name and catch position.

3. Where specific trophic relationship projects are being conducted, observers may be requested to also collect stomach samples from certain species. Any such samples collected are also to

be labelled with the information listed in 1 above, as well as the date, vessel name, observer name and catch position.

4. Observers may also be required to collect tissue samples as part of specific genetic research programmes implemented by the SC.

5. Observers are to be briefed and provided with written length-frequency and biological sampling protocols and priorities for the above sampling specific to each observer trip.

## G. Data to be collected on Incidental Captures of Protected Species

1. Flag members operating observer programs are to develop, in cooperation with the SC, lists and identification guides of protected species or species of concern (seabirds, marine mammals or marine reptiles) to be monitored by observers.

2. The following data are to be collected for all protected species caught in fishing operations:
   a) Species (identified as far as possible, or accompanied by photographs if identification is difficult).
   b) Count of the number caught per tow or set.
   c) Life status (vigorous, alive, lethargic, dead) upon release.
   d) Whole specimens (where possible) for onshore identification. Where this is not possible, observers may be required to collect sub-samples of identifying parts, as specified in biological sampling protocols.

## H. Detection of Fishing in Association with Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems

1. The SC is to develop a guideline, species list and identification guide for benthic species (e.g. sponges, sea fans, corals) whose presence in a catch will indicate that fishing occurred in association with a vulnerable marine ecosystem (VME). All observers on vessels are to be provided with copies of this guideline, species list and ID guide.

2. For each observed fishing operation, the following data are to be collected for all species caught, which appear on the list of vulnerable benthic species:

a) Species (identified as far as possible, or accompanied by a photograph where identification is difficult).
b) An estimate of the quantity (weight (kg) or volume ($m^3$)) of each listed benthic species caught in the fishing operation.
c) An overall estimate of the total quantity (weight (kg) or volume ($m^3$)) of all invertebrate benthic species caught in the fishing operation.
d) Where possible, and particularly for new or scarce benthic species which do not appear in ID guides, whole samples should be collected and suitable preserved for identification on shore.

## I. Data to be collected for all Tag Recoveries

1. The following data are to be collected for all recovered fish, seabird, mammal or reptile tags:
   a) Observer name.
   b) Vessel name.
   c) Vessel call sign.
   d) Vessel flag.
   e) Collect, label (with all details below) and store the actual tags for later return to the tagging agency.
   f) Species from which tag recovered.
   g) Tag colour and type (spaghetti, archival).
   h) Tag numbers (The tag number is to be provided for all tags when multiple tags were attached to one fish. If only one tag was recorded, a statement is required that specifies whether or not the other tag was missing)
   i) Date and time of capture (UTC).
   j) Location of capture (Lat/Lon, to the nearest 1 minute)
   k) Animal length / size (to the nearest cm) with description of what measurement was taken (such as total length, fork length, etc).
   l) Sex (F=female, M=male, I=indeterminate, D=not examined)
   m) Whether the tags were found during a period of fishing that was being observed (Y/N)
   n) Reward information (e.g. name and address where to send reward)

(It is recognised that some of the data recorded here duplicates data that already exists in the

previous categories of information. This is necessary because tag recovery information may be sent separately to other observer data.)

**J. Hierarchies for Observer Data Collection**

2. Trip-specific or programme-specific observer task priorities may be developed in response to specific research programme requirements, in which case such priorities should be followed by observers.

3. In the absence of trip- or programme-specific priorities, the following generalised priorities should be followed by observers:

a) Fishing Operation Information
- All vessel and tow / set / effort information.

b) Monitoring of Catches
- Record time, proportion of catch (e.g. proportion of trawl landing) or effort (e.g. number of hooks), and total numbers of each species caught.
- Record numbers or proportions of each species retained or discarded.

c) Biological Sampling
- Length-frequency data for target species.
- Length-frequency data for main by-catch species.
- Identification and counts of protected species.
- Basic biological data (sex, maturity) for target species.
- Check for presence of tags.
- Otoliths (and stomach samples, if being collected) for target species.
- Basic biological data for by-catch species.
- Biological samples of by-catch species (if being collected)
- Photos

4. The monitoring of catches and biological sampling procedures should be prioritised among species groups as follows:

| **Species** | **Priority (1 highest)** |
|---|---|
| Primary target species (such as North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino) | 1 |
| Other species typically within top 10 in the fishery (such as mirror dory, and oreos) | 2 |
| Protected species | 3 |
| All other species | 4 |

The allocation of observer effort among these activities will depend on the type of operation and setting. The size of sub-samples relative to unobserved quantities (e.g. number of hooks/panels examined for species composition relative to the number of hooks/panels retrieved) should be explicitly recorded under the guidance of member country observer programmes.

## K. Coding Specifications to be used for Recording Observer Data

1. Unless otherwise specified for specific data types, observer data are to be collected in accordance with the same coding specifications as specified in this Annex.

2. Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) is to be used to describe times.

3. Degrees and minutes are to be used to describe locations.

4. The following coding schemes are to be used:
    a. Species are to be described using the FAO 3 letter species codes or, if species do not have a FAO code, using scientific names.
    b. Fishing methods are to be described using the International Standard Classification of Fishing Gear (ISSCFG - 29 July 1980) codes.
    c. Types of fishing vessel are to be described using the International Standard Classification of Fishery Vessels (ISSCFV) codes.

5. Metric units of measure are to be used, specifically:
    a. Kilograms are to be used to describe catch weight.
    b. Metres are to be used to describe height, width, depth, beam or length.
    c. Cubic metres are to be used to describe volume.
    d. Kilowatts are to be used to describe engine power.

# Annex 6

## Translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names

**VME Indicator Corals from Emperor Seamounts: Present Classification *1, Taxa, and Common (nominal) Names in NPFC**

| Sub phylum | Class | Order | Superfamily | Family | Genus/Subgenus | NPFC_~2023 | NPFC_2024~ *2 | Guide Cat. *3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anthozoa | Hexacorallia | Antipatharia | | Antipathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Aphanipathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Cladopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Leiopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Schizopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | Scleractinia | | Caryophylliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Deltocyathidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Dendrophylliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Flabellidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Fungiacyathidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Micrabaciidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Oculinidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Turbinoliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Madreporidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | Octocorallia *4 | Scleralcyonacea ≒Calcaxonia-Pennatulacea | Pennatuloidea *5 | Anthoptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Balticinidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Funiculinidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Kophobelemnidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Pennatulidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Protoptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Scleroptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Stachyptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Umbellulidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Veretillidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Virgulariidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Chrysogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Keratoisididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Primnoidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | **Briareidae** | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Clavulariidae>> **Briareidae** | *Pachyclavularia*>>***Briareum*** | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Alcyoniidae>> **Coralliidae** *6 | *Anthomastus* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | | *Paraminabea* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Paragorgiidae>> **Coralliidae** *6 | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | **Coralliidae** *6 | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | Malacalcyonacea ≒Holaxonia-Alcyoniina | | Clavulariidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | —— | *Pseudocladochonus* *7 | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Tubiporidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Nidaliidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Siphonogorgiidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Anthothelidae>> **Alcyoniidae** *8 | *Anthothela* | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Nephtheidae>> **Alcyoniidae** *8 | *Gersemia* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | **Alcyoniidae** *8 | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Nephtheidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Paralcyoniidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Gorgoniidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Isididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Keroeididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Astrogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Euplexauridae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Anthogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Acanthogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Victorgorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |
| | | | | Plexauridae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |
| | | | | —— | *Calcigorgia* *9 | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |

*1 Classification is based on WoRMS (in July 2024)

*2 Nominal names of VME indicator corals agreed by NPFC for adoption after 2025 (NPFC-2024-COM08-Final Report-ANNEX O-G)

*3 Coral Morphology Categories of "NPFC VME Taxa Identification Guide (Western North Pacific Ocean)"

*4 See WoRMS based on McFadden *et al*. (2022) for the present octocorallian classificaton, and McFadden *in* Daly *et al*. (2007) for the former one
The current families of octocorals and their correspondence to former suborders/systems are well summarized *in* Table 2 of McFadden *et al*. (2022)

*5 2024_9th_COM has agreed to add pennatulaceans (sea pens) to the VME indicator taxa (entered into force 1 January 2025)

*6 The family Coralliidae is originally gorgonians (Gorgonacea), but the current classification includes some soft corals (formerly Alcyonacea) (e.g. Anthomastus)

*7 *Pseudocladochonus* is the genus Octocorallia *incertae sedis* in McFadden *et al*. (2022) and in also WoRMS. (See Table 3 *in* McFadden *et al*., 2022)

*8 The family Alcyoniidae is originally soft corals (former Alcyonacea), but the current classification includes some gorgonians (Gorgonacea) (e.g. Anthothela)

*9 *Calcigorgia* is a gorgonian genus in Octocorallia *incertae sedis* in McFadden *et al*. (2022) and in also WoRMS. (See Table 3 *in* McFadden *et al*., 2022)

>> pink= former Gorgonacea (Gorgonians); yellow= former Alcyonecea (Soft Corals)

WoRMS World Register of Marine Species) https://www.marinespecies.org/index.php

Daly *et al*. (2007) The phylum Cnidaria: A review of phylogenetic patterns and diversity 300 years after Linnaeus. *Zootaxa*, 1668: 127–182.

McFadden *et al*. (2022) Revisionary systematics of Octocorallia (Cnidaria: Anthozoa) guided by phylogenomics. *Bull. Soc. Syst. Biol.*, 1: 1–79.

**Annex T**

**US statement on its ongoing call for closure of the bottom fisheries on the Emperor Seamount Chain and Northwestern Hawaiian Ridge**

The US has several points to add regarding our ongoing efforts calling for closure of the bottom fisheries on the Emperor Seamount Chain and Northwestern Hawaiian Ridge at various points since 2015 - first to allow recovery of NPA and SA, then to protect VMEs and now, since 2023, for stronger, scientifically supported concerns regarding both VMEs and the target fish stocks.

The USA expressed concerns about the methodology used to support the claim that no VMEs are present at the other survey sites on Yuryaku seamount as discussed in Japan's paper (NPFC-2024-SSC BFME05-WP11 (Rev. 1)), despite visible VME patches in the GoPro footage, and notably despite the camera's highly limited field of view.

Additionally, the expert thresholds applied by Japan for closures are relatively high and solely density based (thus only partially capturing 1 of the 5 FAO criteria for designating a VME) and have not been validated in a peer review process unlike other methods previously presented to the SSC BF-ME (in particular, NPFC-2022-SSC BFME03-OP02). This raises a serious question about the methodology and criteria used to dismiss other VME patches on Yuryaku (as well as Koko and Kammu VME patches in the same report).

The US also notes an alternative possibility for how areas that were previously identified as VMEs in the peer-reviewed scientific literature, on Koko, Kammu and Yuryaku, during AUV surveys in 2014-2015, were not found during the Japanese surveys 2021-2024. This raises concerns that the VMEs were lost to fishing in the intervening 7-10 years between the 2 sets of surveys of these sites, constituting SAIs to each of these sites and further emphasizing the urgent need for immediate action to protect VME areas on the ESC and NWHR seamounts before any more are lost.

The SWG review of Global Habitat Suitability Models, NPFC-2024-SSC BFME05-RP02, concluded that the Tong et al (2023) habitat suitability model for scleractinians had a reasonable match to the data, implying this is an accurate way to predict suitable habitat for unexplored areas in the NPFC convention area. Using this model almost the entire area of Yuryaku shallower than ~750 m had highly suitable habitat (defined as >75% suitable) for at least two species (of the 4 reef-forming species of Pacific scleractinian corals for which there were available models). In some areas there was high suitability for 3-4 species. This implies that an extensive area of Yuryaku is a "likely VME" which requires protective action based on the UNGA resolutions and FAO Guidelines.

In support of this broader view of the distribution of the VMEs on Yuryaku, surveys conducted by US scientists in 2021 and 2022 showed extensive areas of reefs just outside of the boxes proposed by Japan.

Larger-scale, more comprehensive surveys using ROVs, AUVs, and other advanced tools—whose findings have undergone peer review—have consistently demonstrated the presence of VMEs in

other areas in Yuryaku (as well as on additional seamounts). The best available science must be applied along with the precautionary approach in decision-making processes (CMM 2024-05) and integrating existing VME mapping by ROV/AUV surveys on Yuryaku and other seamounts of the Emperor Seamount Chain and Northwest Hawaiian Ridge are warranted.

Considering these scientific lines of evidence for VMEs, the US requests that the Commission close bottom fishing on the entirety of Yuryaku seamount. At minimum the closure areas should be expanded considerably to include locations of known VMEs.

As a separate issue, the SSC BF-ME presentation by the invited experts Maite Pons, Ricardo Amoroso and SWG NPA-SA Chair Kota Sawada (NPFC-2024-SSC BFME05-WP09) indicated that trawl fishing for SA was capturing reproductively immature individuals with a very pronounced size targeting gear selection curve. A fundamental principle of fisheries science is that a fishery that targets individuals prior to the chance to reproduce erodes the base of the population. Although the focus of the discussion was on selectivity of the gear, and/or selective targeting of habitat, the critical result remains that bottom trawling for SA targets and captures immature fish. This data came out too late to include in the US proposal for closure, but adds an entire extra layer of reasoning for full closure of the bottom trawl fishery, further supporting the US proposal. A temporary closure would allow time to redesign gear and/or change fishing practices such that the fishery targets larger individuals and/or adult populations rather than juveniles as well as allow recovery from growth and recruitment overfishing. The NPFC convention text clearly establishes the obligation, in article 3(f) to take actions, individually or collectively as appropriate, to prevent or eliminate overfishing and ensure that levels of fishing effort or harvest levels are based on the best scientific information available and do not exceed those commensurate with the sustainable use of the fisheries resources. Articles 3(a) and 3(b) further obligate the NPFC to ensure the optimum utilization and long term sustainability of fisheries resources and measures and that fisheries resources are maintained at or restored to levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield. Therefore, with regard to bottom fishing target fish stocks, this additional concern, coupled with scientific findings of overfishing, align and support the US proposal for closure of all bottom fishing in the Emperor Seamount Chain and Northwestern Hawaiian Ridge.

**Annex U**

**Terms of Reference for the Small Scientific Committee on Neon Flying Squid**

1. To review and evaluate fishery data
   - Catch and efforts (including spatial-temporal distribution of landings and discards)
   - Age/size composition data
   - Evaluation of data quantity, data quality, sources of uncertainty
   - Others
   - Recommendation for future works

2. To review and evaluate fishery-dependent and fishery-independent indices
   - Evaluate/update sampling design for fishery-independent survey
   - Characterize the source of uncertainty for the fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data
   - Review/update the CPUE standardization Protocol
   - Conduct CPUE standardization
   - Review and update fishery-dependent and fishery-independent indices
   - Recommendation for future works

3. To review and update biological and other information/data relevant to stock assessment
   - Stock structure
   - Growth
   - Reproduction and maturity schedule
   - Natural mortality
   - Migration pattern
   - Environmental influences (e.g. oceanographic, habitat, or species interactions)
   - Others
   - Evaluation of data quantity, data quality, sources of uncertainty
   - Recommendation for future works

4. To conduct the stock assessment
   - Review existing/potential stock assessment methods or develop new methods
   - Application of candidates of stock assessment models and comparison of the results (if needed)
   - Determine models for the stock assessment
   - Conduct stock assessment following the Stock Assessment Protocol
   - Create the scientific advice on management based on the results of the stock assessment
   - Recommendation for future works

5. To facilitate data- and code- sharing processes and potentially primary publication

6. To review/improve presentation of stock assessment results (including stock status summary report in a format to be determined by the SSC NFS)

7. To explore and develop alternative approaches, such as the management strategy evaluation framework and data-limited management procedures, to provide effective management advice

**Annex V**

## CPUE Standardization Protocol for neon flying squid

CPUE is catch per unit effort obtained either from fishery independent or fishery dependent data. The use of CPUE in a stock assessment implicitly assumes that CPUE is proportional to stock abundance/biomass. However, many factors other than stock abundance/biomass may influence CPUE. Thus, any other factors, other than stock abundance/biomass, that may influence CPUE should be removed from the CPUE index. The process of reducing/removing the impacts of these factors on CPUE is referred to as CPUE standardization.

The following protocol is developed for the CPUE standardization:

(1) Provide a description of the type of data (logbook, observer, survey, etc. ), and the "resolution" of the data (aggregated, set-by-set etc..).

(2) Identify potential explanatory variables (i.e., spatial, temporal, environmental, and fisheries variables) that may influence CPUE values.

(3) Plot annual/monthly spatial catch, effort and nominal CPUE distributions and determine temporal and spatial resolution for CPUE standardization.

(4) Make scatter plots (for continuous variables) and/or box plots (for categorical variables) and present correlation matrix if possible to evaluate correlations between each pair of those variables.

(5) Describe selected explanatory variables based on (2)-(4) to develop full model for the CPUE standardization.

(6) Specify model type and software (packages) and fit the data to the assumed statistical models (i.e., GLM, GAM, Delta-lognormal GLM, Neural Networks, Regression Trees, Habitat based models, and Statistical habitat based models).

(7) Evaluate and select the best model(s) using methods such as likelihood ratio test, information criterions, cross validation etc.

(8) Provide diagnostic plots to support the chosen model is appropriate and assumption are met (QQ plot and residual plots along with predicted values and important explanatory variables, etc.).

(9) Extract yearly standardized CPUE and standard error by a method that is able to account for spatial heterogeneity of effort, such as least squares mean or expanded grid. If the model includes area and the size of spatial strata differs or the model includes interactions between time and area, then standardized CPUE should be calculated with area weighting for each time step. Model with interactions between area and season or month requires careful consideration on a case by case basis. Provide details on how the CPUE index was extracted.

(10) Calculate uncertainty (SD, CV, CI) for standardized CPUE for each year. Provide detailed explanation on how the uncertainty was calculated.

(11) Provide a table and a plot of nominal and standardized CPUEs over time. When the trends between nominal and standardized CPUE are largely different, explain the reasons (e.g. spatial shift of fishing efforts), whenever possible.

**Annex W**

**Stock Assessment Protocol for neon flying squid**

(1) Identify the data that will be available to the stock assessment;

(2) Evaluate data quality and quantity and potential error sources (e.g., sampling errors, measurement errors, and associated statistical property (e.g., biased or random errors, statistical distribution) to ensure that the best available information is used in the assessment;

(3) Select population models describing the dynamics of the stock and observational models linking population variables with the observed variables;

(4) Develop base case scenarios and alternative scenarios for sensitivity analyses;

(5) For each scenario, fit the model to the data, diagnostics of model convergence, plot and evaluate residual patterns, and evaluate biological implications of the estimated parameters;

(6) Develop retrospective analysis to verify whether any possible systematic inconsistencies exist among model estimates of biomass and fishing mortality;

(7) For each scenario, estimate and plot exploitable stock biomass and fishing mortality (and their relevant credibility distributions) over time;

(8) For each scenario, estimate biological reference points (e.g., MSY, $B_{MSY}$, $F_{MSY}$) and its associated uncertainty;

(9) Have the Kobe plot for each scenario;

(10) Develop alternative ABCs for the projection (e.g., 2-year projection);

(11) Include relevant ecosystem considerations regarding the stock for future assessment, including data and results from other scientific studies regarding potential impacts on the stock due to climate change, non-stationary population and fisheries processes, predator-prey dynamics, or impacts of distribution and phenological changes on assessment data.

**Annex X**

## Table of tasks for the SWG JFS, the SWG JS, and the SWG BM in 2025

| Tasks | BM | JFS | JS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Update shared data (monthly catch and effort, biological data) among members | | | ☑ |
| Update catch and effort data among members | ☑ | ☑ | |
| Start on joint review paper of impacts of climate change on JS | | | ☑ |
| Calculate ratio of BM and CM in catches | ☑ | | |
| Evaluate the influence of environmental variables on the life history, biology, and population dynamics (lower priority) | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| Revise and update species summary document | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| Japan: provide a summary of its 2024 stock assessment at SC10 | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| SWG Leads: prepare slide(s) to SC Chair for presentation to COM | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| Prepare stock assessment summary | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |

**Annex Y**

**Terms of Reference for the Small Working Group on Data (SWG Data)**

1) Guide the Secretariat in creating a data management system, including data collection, verification, reporting, storing, and dissemination

    a. Discuss the creation of a relational database for data storage and what the necessary steps would be

    b. Continue developing data provision templates, incorporating feedback from the SC's subsidiary bodies.

2) Identify the scope of the SWG, its membership and roles of Members, Secretariat and a contractor(s)

**Annex Z**

## Revised Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information

These Regulations are intended to govern the security of, exchange of, access to and dissemination of scientific data and computer code (referred to as code hereafter) held by, or accessed by Members of the Commission, its subsidiary bodies, the Secretariat, and by service providers, contractors, or consultants acting on their behalf or others so authorized for access by the Secretariat. These Regulations supplement the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol which is an overall Commission policy for data management and security.

### I. Guidance for Management of Scientific Data and Code

1. Objectives

The objectives of this Guidance are (1) to support stock assessments, ecosystem assessments and accumulation of scientific knowledge of fisheries resources under the Commission's jurisdiction, (2) to encourage cooperation on scientific analyses among Members, and (3) to establish a process for handling scientific data and code.

2. Scientific Data included in Members' Annual Reports

Scientific data (e.g., catch amount, number of vessels, number of fishing days and so on) included in Members' Annual Reports should be uploaded to the public section of the NPFC website for public access and use. In order not to reveal the individual activities of any vessel, catch and effort data in the public domain shall be made up of observations from a minimum of three vessels, unless the owner of the data decides otherwise.

3. Other scientific data and code, not included in Members' Annual Reports, submitted for use in stock assessments and ecosystem assessments

The Secretariat should not disclose Members' scientific data or code submitted by means other than Members' Annual Reports or meeting documents open to the public in accordance with paragraph 4.

Members, cooperating non-contracting Parties (CNCPs) or contractors (invited experts and/or consultants), within the scope of its contract with the Secretariat, may cite and/or use such data and/or code for the purpose of consideration by the Scientific Committee and its subsidiary bodies, including informal working groups, in accordance with the relevant rules including the Terms of References of informal working groups. Before a Member, CNCP or contractor accesses data and/or code for analyses outside the activities outlined in the workplans of SC subsidiary bodies, the party should obtain prior consent with the provider(s) for the use of the data or code through the Secretariat, stating 1) the data or code subject to the request, and 2) the purpose for which the data or code is intended to be used.

If a Member, CNCP or contractor, within the scope of its contract with the Secretariat, wishes to cite and/or use these data and/or code for work that is intended to be conducted or shared outside

of the NPFC, such Member, CNCP or contractor should consult with the provider(s) of the data or code through the Secretariat, stating 1) the data or code subject to the request, and 2) the purpose for which the data or code is intended to be used and 3) who the data or code will be shared with. The Secretariat should immediately notify the provider(s) of the request. The provider(s) should inform the Secretariat within 30 calendar days whether to accept or reject the request. If the provider(s) reject the request, the provider(s) should state the reason(s) for the rejection. If the provider(s) accept the request, the provider(s) may request an agreed-upon credit line in any subsequently-created product. Those who cited/used data or code should not distribute the data and/or code further nor use it for a purpose not declared.

In addition to the above paragraph, if a Member, CNCP or contractor after presentation and review at NPFC Scientific meetings, wishes to publish a scientific article in an external journal using the requested data and/or code, such Member, CNCP or contractor should ensure that all data/code providers have reviewed the results and approved using them in the external publication.

## II. Regulations for management of scientific meeting documents, meeting reports and intersessional communications on the NPFC website

4. Working Papers, Meeting Info Papers, Information Papers, Reference Documents/Papers, Observer Papers

In accordance with the NPFC Document Policy from COM09, the SC recommends making the above named documents available to the public through the NPFC website to enhance and encourage collaborations with researchers, scientists, RFMOs, and science organizations, and to encourage transparency of the NPFC processes. The default rule would be that all the above named documents would be posted on the public domain of the NPFC website upon receipt All meeting papers submitted to any NPFC scientific meetings through the Secretariat should indicate how they should be cited in accordance with the NPFC Document Rules. If the document author(s) or submitting Member do not authorize the release of the document, they must indicate that clearly on the cover page or first page of the document, OR they may request to the Secretariat in writing of their desire to not release the document to the public on the website.

5. SC Meeting Reports, SC Subsidiary Body Reports (SSC, TWG) and Other Scientific Reports (Workshop)

5.1. The SC recommends that the above named documents be released to the public after acceptance by the Commission Members within 45 days in accordance with the procedures stated in Paragraph 8.2 of Rules of Procedure.

5.2. For SC subsidiary body reports: If there are portions of the report which are deemed by the subsidiary body to be too sensitive to release prior to the SC report, the specific sensitive portions may be redacted, and the report released as described in #5.1 above. Following the SC meeting, the entire report (inclusive of redacted portions) will be released in conjunction with the SC report. If the report as a whole is deemed too sensitive to release, the report may be held and released to the public in conjunction with the SC Meeting Report. Decisions about which portion or whether the whole report is to be redacted shall be made during the subsidiary body meeting.

6. Intersessional Communication using the NPFC Collaboration website

The NPFC has made available a web-based tool to facilitate discussion of its subsidiary bodies, informal working groups, discussion groups, and other temporary groups on a project-by-project basis. Access to this tool is restricted to members of a specific project/topic. Following the completion of the discussion, the group facilitator/chair may summarize the discussions to make them available and accessible to the appropriate Commission body (TCC, SC, SWG MSE PS, Commission). At the conclusion of the discussions of the group and after the summary is complete, the discussion text and documents will be archived by the Secretariat but not maintained on the website except for a summary made by the group facilitator/chair.

7. Redaction or withdrawal of Working Papers, Meeting Info Papers, Information Papers, Reference Documents/Papers, Observer Papers which were submitted to workshop or meeting

Documents of the types listed above may not be redacted or withdrawn from the public or Member-only area of the website by a Member or the Secretariat once it has been published unless notification is provided to all Members which details the reason for the withdrawal request. If an error is identified in a publicly available document, the member responsible for the document submission can submit a cover letter or document text which describes the error and the resolution to be prepended to the original document. Errors identified in documents prior to publication on the public website or during meetings or workshops can be revised or documents withdrawn before or during the meeting, but other members or meeting participants must be notified of the specifics of the changes as soon as possible.

**Annex AA**

**Scientific projects**

| # | Project | Time | Status | Next step:<br>activities, required funds |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Pacific saury stock assessment meetings (meeting costs) | Every year | *TWG PSSA meetings: Feb 2017, Dec 2017, Nov 2018, Mar 2019.*<br>*SSC PS meetings: Nov 2019, Aug 2023.* | WG NSAM meeting.<br>Jul 2025.<br>*2025 FY: 2mil JPY*<br>*Source: China's Voluntary Contribution Fund (VCF)*<br>SSC PS15 meeting.<br>Sep 2025.<br>*2025 FY: virtual, no funds required.* |
| 2 | Chub mackerel stock assessment meeting (meeting costs) | Every year | *TWG CMSA meetings: Dec 2017, Mar 2019, Sep 2023, Jul 2024.* | TWG CMSA11 meeting.<br>Jul 2025.<br>*2025 FY: 1.5mil JPY (10,000USD)*<br>*Source: SC fund.*<br>TWG CMSA12.<br>Early 2026.<br>*2025 FY: virtual, no funds required.* |
| 3 | Neon flying squid stock assessment meeting (meeting costs) | Every year | | SSC NFS02 meeting.<br>Jul 2025.<br>*2025 FY: 1.5mil JPY (10,000USD)*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 4 | Invited expert to support TWG CMSA (consultancy fee and travel costs for one in-person meeting) | 2020-current | An external expert has been contracted to support TWG CMSA. | *2025 FY:*<br>*0.6mil JPY - SC fund, and*<br>*0.8mil JPY - US VCF.* |
| 5 | Invited expert to support SSC PS (consultancy fee and travel costs for two in-person meeting) | 2019-current | An external expert has been contracted to support SSC PS and its subsidiary WG NSAM. | *2025 FY: 2.4mil JPY*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Invited expert to support WG NSAM (consultancy fee and travel costs for one in-person meeting) | 2024- | | *2025 FY: 3.3mil JPY*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 7 | Invited expert to support SSC NFS (consultancy fee and travel costs for two in-person meetings) | 2024-current | An external expert has been contracted to support SSC NFS. | *2025 FY: 2.2mil JPY*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 8 | Invited expert to support SA and NPA stock assessments | 2024-current | Two external experts were contracted in 2024 as a separate project covered by the Special Project Fund. | *2025 FY: 2.2mil JPY*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 9 | PICES Annual meeting | Every year | Travel support to a participant of the SC or its subsidiary bodies to attend PICES Annual meeting. | *2025 FY: 0.75mil JPY (5,000USD)*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 10 | Other science meetings / capacity development | 2024 | Training for capacity building or travel support to attend other relevant science meetings. | *2026 FY: 0.75mil JPY (5,000USD)*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 11 | PICES/ICES/FAO Small Pelagic Fish Symposium. 4-8 May 2026, La Paz, Mexico | 2025& 2026 | An invitation from PICES for co-sponsorship and participation in the symposium. | *2025 FY: 0.75mil JPY (5,000USD)*<br>*2026 FY: 0.75mil JPY (5,000USD)*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 12 | Database for scientific data | 2025-2026 | A proposal to develop a database for scientific data. | *2025 FY: 10,000 EUR*<br>*2026 FY: 20,000 EUR*<br>*Source: EU's VCF and Members' in kind contribution* |
| | Total | | | *2025 FY: 15.2mil JPY*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |

** The recurrent projects should be funded annually from the SC Fund allocated by the Commission. If total costs exceed the SC Fund, the SC may make a proposal for the Special Project Fund or other funds subject to the decision by the Commission.*

**Past projects**

| # | Project | Time | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | NPFC/FAO VME workshop | 2018-2019 | *Concluded.* |
| P2 | Workshop to address data requirements and data sharing for SAI assessment and other tasks identified in the Work Plan by SSC VME and SSC BF | 2018 | *Concluded.* |
| P3 | Workshop on biological reference points (BRP), harvest control rule (HCR) and management strategy evaluation (MSE) | 2019 | *Concluded.* |
| P4 | Literature review of target and limit reference points used in pelagic species fisheries by other general RFMOs and other fishery management bodies | 2018 | *Done.*<br>*Available on the NPFC website.* |
| P5 | Joint PICES-NPFC workshop (W11) on *The influence of environmental changes on the potential for species distributional shifts and subsequent consequences for estimating abundance of Pacific saury* | 2019 | *Concluded.* |
| P6 | VME taxa identification guide | 2017-2022 | *Concluded.*<br>VME taxa ID guide has been printed out and distributed to Members. |
| P7 | International Course for NPFC observers for VME indicator taxa identification<br>(consultant fees and travel costs for two lecturers, meeting costs) | 2022 | *Postponed until further notice.* |
| P8 | PICES-ICES-FAO Small Pelagic Fish Symposium, 7-11 November 2022, Lisbon, Portugal. | 2022 | *Concluded.*<br>NPFC contributed 15,000USD to the organizers for the symposium logistics. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| P9 | GIS database/module as a part of NPFC database management system for spatial management of bottom fisheries and VMEs | 2018- | *Regular update.*<br>*Fund source: Database management.* |
| P10 | Joint spatial/temporal map of Members' catch and effort on Pacific saury with a spatial resolution of one-degree grids and a temporal resolution of one month. | 2018- | *Regular update.*<br>*Fund source: Database management.* |
| P11 | Expert to review Pacific saury stock assessment (consultant fee and travel costs) | TBD | *Removed. May be revisited in future.* |
| P12 | Observer Program | 2018- | *Removed. May be revisited in future.* |
| P13 | Promotion of cooperation with NPAFC including macro-scale multinational survey in the North Pacific in 2022 | 2021- | *Completed.*<br>The NPAFC reported on the 2022 IYS Winter High Seas Research Expedition which was co-sponsored by NPFC. |
| P14 | Standardization of bycatch species list and fish species identification guides (translation of the existing fish ID guide from Japanese to additional languages) | 2019-2023 | *Completed.* |
| P15 | PICES 2023 session on Seamount Ecology and VME Identification | 2023 | *Completed.* |
| P16 | Understanding the basis by which other RFMOs' VME encounter thresholds were determined by taxa and gear-type | 2023 | *Completed.* |

**Annex BB**

**Evaluation and ranking of nominations for SC representatives to be financially supported to participate in relevant scientific meetings**

At SC-05, Members recommended that the Commission provide financial support for three members of the SC or its subsidiary bodies to attend the PICES-ICES small pelagic fish (SPF) symposium (NPFC-2020-SC05-OP04). The SC also recommended that the Commission financially support the travel of two members of the SC or its subsidiary bodies to participate in the PICES Annual Meetings in 2021, if financial support was necessary.

At SC-06, Members recommended that the Commission financially support the travel of one member of the SC or its subsidiary bodies to participate in the PICES Annual Meeting, if financial support was necessary. During the same meeting, the SC agreed that Members would provide nominations for NPFC representatives to be supported financially to participate in those meetings. Nominations would specify the scientific meeting in question, the name of the proposed participant, and one or two sentences about how the participant meets each of the six criteria endorsed by the SC. Those criteria are:

- part of a member's delegation to NPFC
- anticipated contributions
- expertise
- financial need
- early career scientist
- willingness to report back to the SC on key meeting outcomes of interest

At SC-08, Members agreed that capacity building was important and support for scientists to attend training and meetings should be supported as much as possible. With financial support for capacity building would come an obligation to transmit the skills and knowledge to the SC through reports, workshops, or shared scientific products (e.g. modeling methods or code).

In this information paper, a method is proposed to evaluate and rank nominations for SC representatives to be financially supported to participate in relevant scientific meetings, including opportunities that build capacity to undertake scientific analyses.

**Step 1**

The SC Chair and the Secretariat receive nominations by a date agreed by the SC. If no nominations are received by the agreed date, the SC Chair may extend the deadline.

**Step 2**

The SC Chair evaluates and scores nominees according to Table 1 below. Nominees are ranked according to their total score such that the nominee with the highest score is offered financial support first.

Table 1. Six selection criteria and description of scores assigned to each criterion.

| **Criterion** | **Score = 1** | **Score = 2** | **Score = 3** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Part of a Member's delegation | No | Invited expert or other relevant colleague | Yes |
| Anticipated role / contribution | One point for each role or contribution (to a maximum of 3) | | |
| Expertise | One point for each relevant subject matter of expertise (to a maximum of 3) | | |
| Financial Need | Would be able to participate without financial support | Alternative funding may be available | Would not be able to participate without financial support |
| Early Career Scientist | >5 years since PhD | <5 years since PhD | PhD in progress, or no PhD |
| Report back to NPFC | Unwilling / unable to report back to the NPFC's SC | No experience reporting back to the NPFC's SC | Experience reporting back to the NPFC's SC |

**Step 3**

The SC Chair works with the Chairs of the SC's subsidiary bodies (currently the SSC PS, the SSC BF-ME, the SSC NFS, and the TWG CMSA) to review assigned scores and rankings, and agree on one or more SC representatives in the order of the summed scores. If the Chairs differ in their assessment of nominees, each Chair shall score the nominee using Table 1. Then the scores from all Chairs shall be summed, and nominees ranked according to their summed scores.

**Step 4**

The rankings are shared with the Secretariat who contacts the successful nominees and arranges for financial support, if it is needed by the nominees. In the case that a nominee declines the financial support, then the support is offered to the next most highly ranked nominee.

Below is an example of scores for two potential SC representatives nominated to participate in the PICES-ICES SPF symposium: Nominee A (Table 2) and Nominee B (Table 3). These scores are simply meant to illustrate the method of evaluating and ranking nominees.

Table 2. Potential scores assigned by the SC Chair to each criterion for Nominee A to participate in the SFP symposium.

| **Criterion** | **Score = 1** | **Score = 2** | **Score = 3** | **Score** |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Part of a Member's delegation | | | Yes | 3 |
| Anticipated role / contribution | Representing the NPFC's SC | | | 1 |
| Expertise | Knowledge of the ecology and stock assessment of the NPFC's small pelagic fish | | | 1 |
| Financial Need | | Alternative funding may be available | | 2 |
| Early Career Scientist | >5 years since PhD | | | 1 |
| Report back to the NPFC | | | Experience reporting back to the NPFC | 3 |

The total score for Nominee A would be 11 out of a potential 18.

Table 3. Potential scores assigned by the SC Chair to each criterion for Nominee B to participate in the SPF symposium.

| **Criterion** | **Score = 1** | **Score = 2** | **Score = 3** | **Score** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Part of a Member's delegation | | | Yes | 3 |
| Anticipated role / contribution | Member of the SPF symposium's Steering Committee<br>Member of joint PICES/ICES WG43 on Small Pelagic Fish<br>Representing the NPFC's SSC PS<br>Representing the NPFC's SC | | | 3 |
| Expertise | Ecological research on small pelagic fishes<br>Stock assessment and management advice for pelagic fishes<br>Knowledge of or research on NPFC's pelagic priority species | | | 3 |
| Financial Need | | Alternative funding may be available | | 2 |
| Early Career Scientist | >5 years since PhD | | | 1 |
| Report back to the NPFC | | | Experience reporting back to NPFC | 3 |

The total score for Nominee B would be 15 out of a potential 18.

In this example, all Chairs of the SC subsidiary bodies agree with the SC Chair's scoring and ranking of the two nominees. Nominee B ranks more highly than Nominee A to represent the NPFC's SC at the SPF symposium. Therefore, they would first be offered financial support. If they accepted the financial support and the Commission had adopted a recommendation from the SC to financially support the travel of more than one SC representative to the SPF symposium, Nominee A would also be offered financial support. If the Commission had only agreed to support one SC representative, Nominee A would only be offered financial support to participate in the meeting if Nominee B declined the offer of financial support from the NPFC.

**Annex CC**

**Five-Year Research Plan and Work Plan of the Scientific Committee**

**North Pacific Fisheries Commission**
**Scientific Committee**
**2024-2028 Research Plan**

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

Article 10, Section 4(a) of the *Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean* states that the Scientific Committee (SC) will "recommend to the Commission a research plan including specific issues and items to be addressed by the scientific experts or by other organizations or individuals, as appropriate, and identify data needs and coordinate activities that meet those needs."

An initial draft of this research and accompanying work plan was presented for review during the 4th Preparatory Conference and a subsequent discussion was held by a small working group to establish science priorities for the NPFC. This plan draws on those discussions and was updated by the SC Chair based on the progress made by the NPFC since that Conference.

The development of multi-year science research or work plans is common across regional fisheries management organizations as well as domestic fisheries science agencies. This draft plan draws on such examples, and has been developed for consideration by the SC before it may be adopted by the Commission.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

The research plan is intended to guide the work of the Scientific Committee by identifying key research priorities and associated areas of work to be undertaken or maintained. The plan should also serve to: ensure efficient utilization of scarce resources within the Commission; inform Parties' domestic research planning as a means of complementing the Commission's science activities; and help the Commission identify potential sources of external funding.

It is not intended as an exhaustive plan describing all research activities that may be carried out by Parties, nor is it intended to preclude work already taking place. The plan should support the Commission's primary objective (*Article 2* in the Convention), which is to "ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the Convention Area while protecting the marine ecosystems of the North Pacific Ocean in which these resources occur". The plan should also help the Scientific Committee fulfill its functions as specified in the Convention.

## 3.0 PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS

In addition to discussions held during the Preparatory Conference (referenced above) followed by the Commission and Scientific Committee after their establishment, the identification of priority research areas draws largely from the Commission's Convention, which outlines specific functions for the Scientific Committee in *Article 10, Section 4*. These priority research areas are subject to the approval of the Commission, and may be revisited and/or revised as deemed appropriate by the Commission. Proposed rolling five-year work plans for the priority areas are available in the attached (Annex 1).

The proposed priority research areas are:
1. Stock assessments for target fisheries and bycatch species
2. Ecosystem approach to fisheries management
3. Data collection, management and security

At its 7th meeting, the Commission adopted a resolution on climate change and tasked the SC to identify relevant data availability and needs and integrate analyses of climate change relevant to NPFC fisheries into its work plan. The resolution also requires SC to include climate change as a standing agenda item of its meetings.

### 3.1 Stock Assessments

Rationale

Accurate stock assessments are critical in helping to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources in the Convention Area. One of the primary functions of the Commission is setting total allowable catch or total allowable level of fishing effort, and as per *Article 7-1(b),* this is to be in "accordance with the advice and recommendations of the Scientific Committee".

Consistent with this, *Article 10-4(b)* states that one of the functions of the Scientific Committee is to "regularly plan, conduct and review the scientific assessments of the status of fisheries resources in the Convention Area, identify actions required for their conservation and management, and provide advice and recommendations to the Commission".

Finally, *Article 10-4(i)* states that the Scientific Committee shall also "develop rules and standards, for adoption by the Commission, for the collection, verification, reporting, and the security of, exchange of, access to and dissemination of data on fisheries resources, species belonging to the

same ecosystem, or dependent upon or associated with the target stocks and fishing activities in the Convention Area".

The Scientific Committee should endeavor to understand the current status and trends in production of populations of priority species as agreed by the 2nd Commission meeting in 2016, as well as factors that may affect future trends.

Areas of work

• Development of baseline assessment of the status of priority stocks
• Review of existing data standards in relation to stock assessments (e.g. Annual Report template, NPFC's vessel monitoring system)
• Stock delineation of important commercial species for the purpose of providing advice for the determination of management units
• For each commercial species, determination of data requirement, including data availability and data gaps; identification, where possible, of strategies to fill the data gaps, including for bycatch
• Development of a standardized method to provide advice to the Commission
• Development of assessment models by species and research as required to determine various assessment parameters

3.1.1. Pelagic fish stock assessment

Rationale

Pelagic fish and squids are primary fisheries resources for NPFC Members. They comprised more than 99% of total catch of species covered by the Convention. Many of them are migratory species with wide geographical distributions which include both EEZs of the North Pacific Rim countries and High Seas. Management of such stocks requires close cooperation among Members concerned to ensure sustainable use and conservation of fisheries resources.

Four fish species and two squid species were recognized by the Scientific Committee as priority species: Pacific saury *Cololabis saira*, Chub mackerel *Scomber japonicus*, Blue mackerel *Scomber australasicus*, Japanese sardine *Sardinops melanostictus*, Neon flying squid *Ommastrephes bartramii*, Japanese flying squid *Todarodes pacificus*.

Areas of work

• Completion of stock assessment for Pacific saury and development of the framework and timeline for its regular improvement and update
• Conducting stock assessment for Chub mackerel and other priority species considering their top-down prioritization (Spotted mackerel - Japanese sardine - Neon flying squid – Japanese flying squid) and available funds and capacity
• Identification of data gaps, determination of activities to address those gaps and development of standards and mechanisms for data collection and verification

• Develop a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for Pacific saury in collaboration with NPFC's Commission, Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS), Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC), fishery managers, fishers, stakeholders, and observers.

3.1.2. Bottom fish stock assessment

Rationale

Data used for traditional stock assessment are sparse for bottom fish, and it is unlikely that traditional methods will be applicable for most deepwater species in the Convention Area. In addition, some bottom species have unique life cycles, sporadic recruitment patterns and irregular spawning-recruitment relationships that also makes difficult accurate stock assessment. All these require specific approaches for management and sustainable use of bottom fisheries resources. More than ten bottom species have been exploited by fisheries in the Convention Area during the last two decades. Four fishes are recognized as priority species: North Pacific armorhead (NPA) *Pentaceros wheeleri,* splendid alfonsino (SA) *Beryx splendens,* sablefish *Anonoploma fimbria,* and skilfish *Erilepsis zonifer*.

Areas of work

• Review of approaches applicable for stock assessment of target bottom species and investigate various management strategies
• Further development of the Adaptive Management approach for NPA and mechanism for its implementation
• Identification of data needs and establishment of activities to fill data gaps

**3.2 Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management**

Rationale

*Article 3 (c)* in the Convention states that: “In giving effect to the objective of this Convention, the following actions shall be taken individually or collectively as appropriate: (c) adopting and implementing measures in accordance with the precautionary approach and an ecosystem approach to fisheries, and in accordance with the relevant rules of international law, in particular as reflected in the 1982 Convention, the 1995 Agreement and other relevant international instruments”.

*Article 7-1 (c,d)* in the Convention states that the Commission shall: “adopt, where necessary, conservation and management measures for species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with the target stocks”; and, “adopt, where necessary, management strategies for any fisheries resources and for species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with the target stocks, as may be necessary to achieve the objective of this Convention.”

*Article 10-4 (d)* states that the Scientific Committee shall “assess the impacts of fishing activities on fisheries resources and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with the target stocks.”

Areas of work

• Formulation of a work plan on how to implement the ecosystem approach to fisheries management in the Convention Area
• Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems
• Understand ecological interactions among species
• Ecosystem modelling
• Evaluate impacts of fishing on fisheries resources and their ecosystem components, including bycatch species
• Other issues related to marine ecosystems including marine debris and pollution

3.2.1 Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems

Rationale

The identification of vulnerable marine ecosystems is a necessary precursor to implementing measures to protect these ecosystems, and such measures that are explicitly called for in the Convention (e.g. *Article 7-1(e)*).

*Article 10-4 (e)* states that the Scientific Committee shall “develop a process to identify vulnerable marine ecosystems, including relevant criteria for doing so, and identify, based on the best scientific

information available, areas or features where these ecosystems are known to occur, or are likely to occur, and the location of bottom fisheries in relation to these areas or features, taking due account of the need to protect confidential information."

*Article 7-1 (e)* states that the Commission shall "adopt conservation and management measures to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems in the Convention Area, including but not limited to: measures for conducting and reviewing impact assessments to determine if fishing activities would produce such impacts on such ecosystems in a given area; measures to address unexpected encounters with vulnerable marine ecosystems in the course of normal bottom fishing activities; and as appropriate, measures that specify locations in which fishing activities shall not occur."

To date, Japan, Russia, Korea, the US and Canada have completed a report on identification of VMEs and an assessment of impacts caused by bottom fishing activities on VMEs and marine species. The Scientific Committee may build on these reports, which will be kept up to date by respective Parties.

Areas of work

• Review existing NPFC standards on VME data collection, including guidelines set forth in the CMMs for bottom fisheries and protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the northwestern and northeastern Pacific Ocean (CMM 2024-05 and CMM 2024-06), and determine if any modifications to these standards are needed in the short-term and/or longer term
• Review of Encounter Protocol for bottom fisheries on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems
• Determination of data requirements and identification of what data may be collected through commercial fishing operations
• Develop consensus on criteria used to identify VMEs and how this might be applied in the NPFC (note that guidelines from the FAO are already referenced in Annex 2 of the CMM 2024-05 and CMM 2024-06)
• Analysis of known or suspected VMEs in the Convention Area
• Visual surveys of VMEs for data collection
• Development of a framework to conduct assessments of Impacts of Bottom Fishing Activities on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems

*3.2.1.1 Review of Encounter Protocol for bottom fisheries on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems*

Rationale

The purposes of VME encounter protocols in NPFC Convention Area include:
• Ensuring early detection and protection of potential VMEs within an existing fishing area;
• Ensuring early detection and protection of potential VME within an unfished area;
• Documenting information on known occurrences of VME indicators within the Convention Area.

Development of the Encounter Protocol progressed through Scientific Committee meetings as well as intersessional activities. VME encounter protocols are incorporated in the CMMs for bottom fisheries and protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the northwestern and northeastern Pacific Ocean, specifically in Para 4(g) and 3(j), respectively.

Areas of Work

Consideration of the following subjects of research and analyses are recommended to further refine encounter protocols in the Convention Area (as notified in Appendix C, NPFC01-2016-SSCVME01- Final Report):

• Other taxa, topographical, geographical and geological features that may indicate the presence of VMEs;
• Taxon-specific encounter thresholds and reporting;
• Framework for evaluating the effectiveness of encounter protocols;
• Tiered approach with different encounter protocols associated with different thresholds;
• Gear-specific thresholds to reflect differences in catchability;
• Gear-specific move-on distances to reflect type of gear;
• Different reporting requirements for different catches;
• Tiered approach to reporting bycatch of VME indicator taxa;
• Different encounter protocols for existing and new fishing areas

**3.3 Data collection, management and security**

Rationale

*Article 10, paragraph 4 (i)* in the Convention states that the functions of the Scientific Committee shall be to: “develop rules and standards, for adoption by the Commission, for the collection, verification, reporting, and the security of, exchange of, access to and dissemination of data on fisheries resources, species belonging to the same ecosystem, or dependent upon or associated with the target stocks and fishing activities in the Convention Area”.

Areas of work

• Review of data standards related to stock assessments and other relevant data, including VME data collection and vessel monitoring systems
• Identify data sources to meet data needs for priority areas of work above and develop programs for data collection
• Develop data security policy including data handling and sharing protocol, information confidentiality classification and access control security guideline

**4.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

The SC will review the Research Plan and update it as necessary on an annual basis. The Research Plan will form the foundation of SC's rolling five-year Work Plan. Monitoring the implementation of this Research Plan will be the responsibility of the Chair of the Scientific Committee in collaboration with the Chairs of the Scientific Committees' subsidiary groups and the Executive Secretary. Members of the Commission and the Secretariat will share responsibility for implementation of the Research Plan.

Full implementation of the Research Plan will likely be beyond the means of the Commission's core budget. Extra-budgetary funds from voluntary contributions of Members and other sources will be required and actively sought by the Commission. Nevertheless, adoption of the Plan by the Scientific Committee and subsequent strong support from the Commission is a prerequisite to securing the necessary extra-budgetary funds.

An independent external review of the Plan may periodically be requested by the SC. The Scientific Committee will be responsible for preparing the terms of reference for the review. The Scientific Committee will present the report of the review to the next regular session of the Commission.

**5.0 SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

While not included as a priority, *Article 21* of the Convention addresses cooperation with other organizations or arrangements. It calls on the Commission to cooperate, as appropriate, on matters of mutual interest with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), other specialized agencies of the FAO and relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). Further, the Commission is called on to develop cooperative working relationships, including potential agreements, with intergovernmental organizations that can contribute to its work.

*Article 10* also speaks to this issue in clauses five and six, stating that the Scientific Committee may exchange information on matters of mutual interest with other relevant scientific organizations or

arrangements, and that the Committee shall not duplicate the activities of other scientific organizations and arrangements that cover the Convention Area.

The impetus to collaborate is made stronger by the prospect of limited research funding in the Commission, at least in the short-term, but it is also in the best interests of the Commission to seek synergies with other organizations with mutual interests and similar membership (e.g. North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) and North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC)).

Activities could include:

• Evaluate reports of International Organizations that may be relevant to the functioning of the Scientific Committee
• Identify other organizations with relevant mandates and activities
• Formalize relationships with these organizations (e.g. MOUs, standing invitations to meetings)
• Identify potential funding opportunities

Annex 1

**Five-Year Work Plan of the Scientific Committee and its subsidiary bodies**

**Small Scientific Committee on Pacific Saury**

Priority list:

1. Conduct a stock assessment update based on BSSPM analyses
2. Further investigate improvements to the BSSPM
3. Develop an age/size-structured model
4. Develop a list of plausible ranges for biological parameters
5. Develop databases to support age/size-structured models
6. Continue joint CPUE work to incorporate broader spatial and temporal coverage
7. Update the biomass estimate using the existing method (swept area method)
8. Develop spatio-temporal model for the biomass estimate
9. Continue exploring climate indices to explain impacts on Pacific saury stock productivity
10. Support any technical work on MSE under SWG MSE PS

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Regular update of inputs** | | | | | | |
| Update & improvement of biomass survey index | Continue regular review of<br>1) survey plan<br>2) analytical work<br>3) any related issues including experiments to produce absolute biomass index and additional surveys by other Members to increase coverage | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Completed annually |
| Update & improvement of CPUE indices | Continue review of outcomes of regular update and | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Completed annually |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | analytical works | | | | | |
| Development of joint CPUE index | Continue review of outcomes of regular update and analytical works | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Completed annually |
| **Regular update of the existing SA** | | | | | | |
| Routine update BSSPM as a benchmark | Continue review of outcomes of regular BSSPM update [1)] | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Completed annually |
| Improvement and further investigation of BSSPM | Review any outcomes of improvements, inter alia in light of possible incorporation of environmental information and reduction of retrospective pattern | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Completed annually |
| **Toward age/size-structured models (ASSMs)** | | | | | | |
| Data preparation/update | Explore age-specific abundance indices and recruitment indices.<br>Conditional age at length information.<br>Spatio-temporal variation of size composition. | TBD[2)] | TBD[2)] | TBD[2)] | TBD[2)] | Completed annually |
| Summarizing available information on PS biology | Update regularly, specifically maturity ogive and growth function | Continue | Continue | Continue | Continue | Collaboration between modelers and biologists has been done well and it will continue for updates. |
| Development of models | Review preliminary models to be evaluated | Finalize development of a new stock assessment model | Test the age-structured model capabilities for Bayesian estimation, | External review | | SS3 model was reviewed. WG NSAM will continue to work on the development of |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | simulation testing and MSE work | | | the SS3 model. |
| Uncertainty in models (possible link with OM grid under MSE) | Refine the plausible range of values of key biological parameters.<br>Refine assumptions about prior distributions and the ranges for model parameters. | Continue | Continue | Continue | Continue | On going with in the work on new stock assessment |
| | | | | | | |
| **Other key matters** | | | | | | |
| Spatio-temporal modelling | Explore better modelling approaches to understand distribution patterns and produce more reliable indices, possibly including several key environmental variables | Continue | Continue | Continue | Continue | Modelling with VAST and sdmTMB has been conducted and the work to be continued |
| Climate impact assessment | Explore models for assessing climate impacts on distribution and productivity | Continue | Continue | Continue | Continue | Modelling has been conducted and the work to be continued |
| HCR | | Evaluate the performance of the interim HCR in the presence of retrospective pattern | Continue | | | Start in 2025 |

[1)] Until any new stock assessment models other than the BSSPM are accomplished, the outcome will produce key inputs for the Harvest Control Rule (HCR).

**Small Scientific Committee on Bottom Fish and Marine Ecosystems**

Priority list:

1. NPA: Review monitoring survey
2. NPA: Conduct stock assessment and provide management advice
3. SA: Conduct stock assessment and provide management advice
4. NPA, SA and Sablefish: Develop and implement harvest control rule
5. Sablefish: Evaluate historical harvest relative to trip limits and update trip limits if necessary
6. Sablefish and VME: Conduct trade-off analysis between commercial fishing and VME protection
7. VME: Assess the relative risk of SAI for VME as a step towards standardize approach to SAI

| ITEM | SSC BFME05 (2024) | SSC BFME06 (2025) | SSC BFME07 (2026) | SSC BFME08 (2027) | SSC BFME09 (2028) | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North Pacific Armorhead | | | | | | |
| Assess and monitor status of stock | Update catch data for NPA | Update catch data for NPA | Update catch data for NPA | Update catch data for NPA | Update catch data for NPA | Completed annually |
| | Review results of NPA monitoring surveys | Review results of NPA monitoring surveys | Review results of NPA monitoring surveys | Review results of NPA monitoring surveys | Review results of NPA monitoring surveys | Completed annually |
| | ~~Implement alternative methods for stock status~~ | Implement alternative methods for stock status | Implement alternative methods for stock status | Update status of stock | Update status of stock | Exploring alternative methods for stock status |
| | Evaluate trend in directed effort relative to NPA catch | | ~~Compare CPUE and acoustic estimates~~ | | | Completed summary of trend in directed effort (to be presented at BFME05) |

| ITEM | SSC BFME05 (2024) | SSC BFME06 (2025) | SSC BFME07 (2026) | SSC BFME08 (2027) | SSC BFME09 (2028) | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Identify and conduct additional research on NPA | Identify and conduct additional research on NPA | Identify and conduct additional research on NPA | Identify and conduct additional research on NPA | Identify and conduct additional research on NPA | Completed annually |
| | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Completed annually |
| Conserve stock | ~~Develop conservation objective(s)~~ | | Develop conservation objective(s) | | | Not completed |
| | ~~Implement adaptive management~~ | | Implement adaptive management | | | Not completed |
| | ~~Develop HCR and implement~~ | ~~Update data and implement HCR~~ | Develop HCR and implement | Update data and implement HCR | Update data and implement HCR | Not completed |
| Splendid alfonsino | | | | | | |
| Assess and monitor status of stock | Update catch data for SA | Update catch data and CPUE standardization for SA | Update catch data and CPUE standardization for SA | Update catch data and CPUE standardization for SA | Update catch data and CPUE standardization for SA | Completed annually |
| | Implement life history based approach, and provide management advice | Update life history based approach and provide management advice if necessary | Update life history based approach and provide management advice if necessary | Update life history based approach and provide management advice if necessary | Update life history based approach and provide management advice if necessary | Completed life history based approach (to be presented at BFME05) |

| ITEM | SSC BFME05 (2024) | SSC BFME06 (2025) | SSC BFME07 (2026) | SSC BFME08 (2027) | SSC BFME09 (2028) | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Apply data-limited integrated approach | Complete data-limited integrated approach | | | Not completed |
| | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | | Completed annually |
| Conserve stock | ~~Develop conservation objective(s);~~ ~~Define and implement harvest control rule~~ | Develop conservation objective(s); Define and implement harvest control rule based on stock synthesis approach | Update data and implement HCR | Update data and implement HCR | Update data and implement HCR | Not completed |
| | | | | | | |
| Sablefish | | | | | | |
| Assess and monitor status of stock | Update catch data and CPUE index | Update catch data and CPUE index | Update catch data and CPUE index | Update catch data and CPUE index | Update catch data and CPUE index | Completed annually |
| | Provide an update on USA-Canada stock assessment models for | Provide an update on USA-Canada stock assessment models for | Provide an update on USA-Canada stock assessment models for | Provide an update on USA-Canada stock assessment models for | Provide an update on USA-Canada stock assessment models for | Completed annually |

| ITEM | SSC BFME05 (2024) | SSC BFME06 (2025) | SSC BFME07 (2026) | SSC BFME08 (2027) | SSC BFME09 (2028) | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Sablefish and joint research on Sablefish | Sablefish and joint research on Sablefish | Sablefish and joint research on Sablefish | Sablefish and joint research on Sablefish | Sablefish and joint research on Sablefish | |
| | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Completed annually |
| Conserve stock | ~~Design HCR specific to NPFC Sablefish (joint intersessional work with Canada and USA assessment authors~~ | [Design HCR specific to NPFC Sablefish (joint intersessional work with Canada and USA assessment authors] | Update data and implement HCR | Update data and implement HCR | Update data and implement HCR | Not completed |
| Other research | ~~Update trade-off analysis for Sablefish fishing and VME protection (as new data is available)~~ | | Update trade-off analysis for Sablefish fishing and VME protection (as new data is available) | | | Not updated (no new data available) |
| Vulnerable marine ecosystems | | | | | | |
| Defining and Identifying VMEs | Summarize VME indicator taxa observation data from | | Consolidate other potential data sources and clarify gaps and | | | Completed mapping (SWG VME report) |

| ITEM | SSC BFME05 (2024) | SSC BFME06 (2025) | SSC BFME07 (2026) | SSC BFME08 (2027) | SSC BFME09 (2028) | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | various sources and map for NPFC area | | deficiencies in VME data | | | |
| | Review and update quantitative definition of VMEs as needed | Review and update quantitative definition of VMEs as needed | Review and update quantitative definition of VMEs as needed | Review and update quantitative definition of VMEs as needed | Review and update quantitative definition of VMEs as needed | Completed annually |
| | | Update identification of new VME and areas likely to be VMEs as new data becomes available | Update identification of new VME and areas likely to be VMEs as new data becomes available | Update identification of new VME and areas likely to be VMEs as new data becomes available | Update identification of new VME and areas likely to be VMEs as new data becomes available | Completed annually |
| | Review updated taxonomy for corals and VME indicator taxa as needed (Hydrocorals) | Review updated taxonomy for corals and VME indicator taxa as needed | Review updated taxonomy for corals and VME indicator taxa as needed | Review updated taxonomy for corals and VME indicator taxa as needed | Review updated taxonomy for corals and VME indicator taxa as needed | Completed annually |
| Identifying and defining SAI's | Determine data requirements and spatial/temporal resolution for SAI assessment and continue developing risk assessment for SAI | Determine data requirements and spatial/temporal resolution for SAI assessment and continue developing risk assessment for SAI | Assess risk of SAI for bottom fisheries | Conduct integrated SAI assessment | Conduct integrated SAI assessment | Work in progress |

| ITEM | SSC BFME05 (2024) | SSC BFME06 (2025) | SSC BFME07 (2026) | SSC BFME08 (2027) | SSC BFME09 (2028) | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Develop standardized and measurable metrics to assess cumulative impacts of fisheries on VME | Assess other threats to VME, such as climate change and lost fishing gear | | | |
| Quantifying interactions between fisheries and VMEs | Update spatially explicit fishing effort data | Update spatially explicit fishing effort data | Update spatially explicit fishing effort data | Update spatially explicit fishing effort data | | Completed annually |
| | Use data-based methods applied to Japan and Korea's indicator taxa bycatch to further refine encounter thresholds | Develop or research alternative methods to apply to Japan and Korea's indicator taxa bycatch to further refine encounter thresholds that are taxon and gear specific | | | | Completed - To be presented at BFME05? |
| | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Review fisheries observer program data collection for adequacy to produce data streams to support management advice | Completed annually |

| ITEM | SSC BFME05 (2024) | SSC BFME06 (2025) | SSC BFME07 (2026) | SSC BFME08 (2027) | SSC BFME09 (2028) | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conserving VMEs | ~~Refine framework for future monitoring of recovering VMEs~~ | Refine framework for future monitoring of recovering VMEs | Periodic review of VME management | Periodic review of VME management | Periodic review of VME management | Not completed |
| Other ecosystem components | | | | | | |
| Assess the impact of fisheries on other ecosystem components | Examine discards over time (species composition, weight of discards) for bottom fisheries in CA | | Work towards assessment of fishing impacts on other (non-target) ecosystem components | | | Completed - To be presented at BFME05 |
| Climate Change | SSC BFME05 (2024) | SSC BFME06 (2025) | SSC BFME07 (2026) | SSC BFME08 (2027) | SSC BFME09 (2028) | Progress |
| Preparing for climate change effect on bottom fish | | Literature review for SA, NPA (SWG NPA&SA) Or Sablefish (Canada) | | | | NA |

**Small Scientific Committee on Neon Flying Squid**

Priority list:

11. Conduct research to appropriately separate two cohorts using spatial and age/size characteristics
12. Continue CPUE standardization work
13. Conduct research and literature reviews to better understand the biological characteristic (e.g., growth rate, natural mortality), life history (e.g., cohorts associated with spawning timing and location, feeding and spawning migration) of the species and population structure (e.g. genetic analysis)
14. Conduct a stock assessment based on surplus production model
15. Further investigate improvements to the surplus production model
16. Explore and develop alternative approaches, such as the management strategy evaluation framework and data-limited management procedures, to provide effective management advice
17. Conduct research and literature reviews to better understand the factors driving abundance fluctuations (including climate change) in this short-lived species
18. Review other successful (or unsuccessful) stock assessment and management practices for squid or other short-lived species globally to inform SSC NFS work
19. Develop other models e.g., age/size-structured model
20. Develop databases to support age/size-structured models

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Regular update of inputs** | | | | | | |
| Update & improvement of CPUE indices | Continue review of outcomes of regular update and analytical works | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | |
| Joint CPUE standardization | | Conduct joint CPUE standardization | TBD | TBD | TBD | |
| | | | | | | |
| **Regular update of the surplus production model** | | | | | | |
| Update and review of surplus production model and other stock assessment models | Continue review of outcomes of surplus production model | Conduct preliminary stock assessment | Finalize stock assessment | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | |
| Improvement and further investigation of surplus production model | Review any outcomes of improvements, inter alia in light of possible incorporation of environmental information | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | Same as on the left | |
| **Toward age/size-structured models** | | | | | | |
| Data inventory (CPUE and size/age in space and time) | | | | Explore age-specific abundance indices or recruitment indices. Conditional age at length information. Spatio-temporal variation of size composition. | TBD | |
| Summarizing available information on neon | | | | Update regularly, specifically maturity | Continue | |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| flying squid biology | | | | ogive and growth function | | |
| Development of models | | | | Develop models to be evaluated | TBD | |
| **Toward other approaches to provide management advises** | | | | | | |
| MSE or data-limited management procedures | | | | Develop framework to provide management advices (MSE or data-limited management procedures) | TBD | |
| Review other successful (or unsuccessful) stock assessment and management practices for squid or other short-lived species globally to inform SSC NFS work | Review by the invited expert | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD | |

**Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment**

Priority list:

1. Data preparation and review of biological information
2. Conduct stock assessment of chub mackerel
3. Set biological reference points
4. Provide scientific advice on the management of chub mackerel stock to the Commission
5. Explore the influence of climate changes on chub mackerel stock
6. Regularly update and refine inputs

| ITEM | 2024 summer | 2025 winter | 2025 summer | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Regular update of inputs** | | | | | | | |
| Research survey indices | Finalize data used for the stock assessment | Update | | Update | Update | Update | Research survey indices have been finalized and used for stock assessment. |
| CPUE indices | Finalized CPUE standardization | Update | | Update | Update | Update | CPUE standardization has been finalized and used for stock assessment. |
| Catch data/catch composition | Finalize data used for the stock assessment | Update CAA data | | Update | Update | Update | Catch data and catch composition have been finalized and used for stock assessment. |
| Biological parameters (maturity, M, weight) | Finalize assumptions for the stock assessment | • Review biological parameters<br>• Discuss setting of natural mortality at age for future | | Review biological parameters | Review biological parameters | Review biological parameters | Assumptions on biological parameters have been finalized and used for stock |

| ITEM | 2024 summer | 2025 winter | 2025 summer | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | base cases<br>• Explore mechanisms of temporal change of maturity at age and weight at age used for calculation of reference points and future projections<br>• Bridge the gaps in maturity at age data among Members | | | | | assessment. |
| Quarterly fishery data (CAA, WAA, Maturity-at-age) | • Submit quarterly fishery data<br>• Share and standardize age-counting rule | • Update quarterly fishery data<br>• Share and standardize age-counting rule | | Update | Update | Update | Quarterly fishery data has been submitted. |
| **Stock assessment** | | | | | | | |
| Benchmark stock assessment | Complete stock assessment with the selected SA model | | Update SA | Update SA | Update SA | Update SA | Benchmark stock assessment has been conducted. |
| Improvement and further investigation of the selected model | | Review and improve, if needed, the SA model | Review and improve, if needed, the SA model | Review and improve, if needed, the SA model | Review and improve, if needed, the SA model | Review and improve, if needed, the SA model | |
| New stock assessment models | | | Explore new stock assessment models, if available | Explore new stock assessment models, if available | Explore new stock assessment models, if available | Explore new stock assessment models, if available | |
| **Reference points, HCR, future projections and MSE** | | | | | | | |

| ITEM | 2024 summer | 2025 winter | 2025 summer | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Set biological reference points (limit and target) | Review and calculate reference points | Discuss how to calculate biological reference points in consideration of nature of temporal changes in biological parameters | Review and calculate reference points | Review and calculate reference points | Review and calculate reference points | Review and calculate reference points | Commonly used reference points are reviewed, and calculation with the results of SA have been completed |
| Develop future projections | Provide preliminary results of future projection, if possible | • Initiate discussion of harvest control rule (HCR) to determined future catch, according to traits of CM biological parameters<br>• Explore more sophisticated method for conducting future projections with more uncertainties | Candidates of HCR are tested in future projections | Selection of HCR | Improvement | Improvement | Preliminary results of future projection have been provided. |
| Develop Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) | | Start discussion | Development | Trial to be used for selection of HCR | Improvement | Improvement | |

**Scientific Committee - other**

Priority list

As stipulated in the Convention, Article 10, the Scientific Committee shall provide scientific advice and recommendations to the Commission which is considered the highest priority task of the SC. The following priority areas have been identified for SC:

1. Priority species summaries and stock assessments for management advice
2. Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for priority species
3. Ecosystem approach to fisheries management: understand ecological interactions among species and impacts of fishing on fisheries resources and their ecosystem components
4. Collaboration with other organizations
5. Regular review of the research plan and work plan
6. Data collection, management, and security

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Priority Species** | | | | | | |
| Summaries of priority species | Update summary sheets as needed | Update summary sheets as needed | Update summary sheets as needed | Update summary sheets as needed | Update summary sheets as needed | Summary sheets are complete for 10 priority species |
| Assessment of Blue (Spotted) Mackerel and associated bycatch | Update data on Blue Mackerel and provide relevant data for stock assessment | Update data on Blue Mackerel and provide relevant data for stock assessment | Update data on Blue Mackerel and provide relevant data for stock assessment | Update data on Blue Mackerel and provide relevant data for stock assessment | Update data on Blue Mackerel and provide relevant data for stock assessment | Data on Blue Mackerel up to 2022 fishing year have been collated and provided for stock assessment |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Compile data on the catch composition of Chub Mackerel and Blue Mackerel and provide information to TWG CMSA and SWG BM<br><br>Observe Japan's stock assessment of Blue Mackerel<br><br>Provide management advice to the Commission as needed. | Compile data on the catch composition of Chub Mackerel and Blue Mackerel and provide information to TWG CMSA and SWG BM<br><br>Observe Japan's stock assessment of Blue Mackerel<br><br>Provide management advice to the Commission as needed.<br><br>Develop data collection templates | Compile data on the catch composition of Chub Mackerel and Blue Mackerel and provide information to TWG CMSA and SWG BM<br><br>Observe Japan's stock assessment of Blue Mackerel<br><br>Provide management advice to the Commission as needed. | Compile data on the catch composition of Chub Mackerel and Blue Mackerel and provide information to TWG CMSA and SWG BM<br><br>Observe Japan's stock assessment of Blue Mackerel<br><br>Provide management advice to the Commission as needed.<br><br>Collate data on associated bycatch species | Compile data on the catch composition of Chub Mackerel and Blue Mackerel and provide information to TWG CMSA and SWG BM<br><br>Observe Japan's stock assessment of Blue Mackerel<br><br>Provide management advice to the Commission as needed.<br><br>Assess impacts of fishery on dependent or associated species | Data on catch composition are compiled up to 2022 fishing year and were provided to TWG CMSA and SWG BM<br><br>The SC observed Japan's stock assessment of Blue Mackerel. Stock assessment results were communicated to the Commission |
| Assessment of Japanese Sardine and associated bycatch | Update data on Japanese Sardine | Update data on Japanese Sardine | Update data on Japanese Sardine | Update data on Japanese Sardine | Update data on Japanese Sardine | Data on Japanese Sardine have been collated |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Observe Japan's stock assessment of Japanese sardine<br><br>Provide management advice to the Commission as needed. | Observe Japan's stock assessment of Japanese sardine<br><br>Provide management advice to the Commission as needed. | Observe Japan's stock assessment of Japanese sardine.<br><br>Provide management advice to the Commission as needed. | Observe Japan's stock assessment of Japanese sardine.<br><br>Provide management advice to the Commission as needed.<br><br>Collate data on associated bycatch species | Observe Japan's stock assessment of Japanese sardine.<br><br>Provide management advice to the Commission as needed.<br><br>Assess impacts of fishery on dependent or associated species | The SC observed Japan's stock assessment of Japanese Sardine<br><br>Stock assessment results were communicated to the Commission |
| Assessment of Japanese Flying Squid and associated bycatch | Update data on Japanese Flying Squid<br><br>Observe Japan's stock assessment of Japanese Flying Squid | Update data on Japanese Flying Squid<br><br>Observe Japan's stock assessment of Japanese Flying Squid | Update data on Japanese Flying Squid<br><br>Observe Japan's stock assessment of Japanese Flying Squid | Update data on Japanese Flying Squid<br><br>Observe Japan's stock assessment of Japanese Flying Squid | Update data on Japanese Flying Squid<br><br>Observe Japan's stock assessment of Japanese Flying Squid | Data on Japanese Flying Squid have been collated<br><br>The SC observed Japan's domestic stock assessment |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Provide management advice to the Commission as needed. | Provide management advice to the Commission as needed.<br><br>Develop data collection templates | Provide management advice to the Commission as needed.<br><br>Collate data on associated bycatch species | Provide management advice to the Commission as needed.<br><br>Collate data on associated bycatch species | Provide management advice to the Commission as needed.<br><br>Assess impacts of fishery on dependent or associated species | of Japanese Flying Squid<br><br>Stock assessment results were communicated to the Commission |
| **Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE)** | | | | | | |
| Pacific Saury | Support NPFC's SWG MSE PS in achieving its goals | Support NPFC's SWG MSE PS in achieving its goals | Support NPFC's SWG MSE PS in achieving its goals | Support NPFC's SWG MSE PS in achieving its goals | Support NPFC's SWG MSE PS in achieving its goals | The SC/SSC PS supported NPFC's SWG MSE PS |
| **Ecosystem approach to fisheries management** | | | | | | |
| Ecological Interactions | Understand ecological interactions among species in the North | Understand ecological interactions among species in the North | Understand ecological interactions among species in the North | Understand ecological interactions among species in the North | Understand ecological interactions among species in the North | |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pacific Ocean | Pacific Ocean | Pacific Ocean | Pacific Ocean | Pacific Ocean | |
| Impacts of fishing on ecosystem components | Evaluate impacts of fishing on fisheries resources and their ecosystem components, including bycatch species and discards | Evaluate impacts of fishing on fisheries resources and their ecosystem components, including bycatch species and discards | Evaluate impacts of fishing on fisheries resources and their ecosystem components, including bycatch species and discards | Evaluate impacts of fishing on fisheries resources and their ecosystem components, including bycatch species and discards | Evaluate impacts of fishing on fisheries resources and their ecosystem components, including bycatch species and discards | No assessment of the impacts of fishing on bycatch or discards were reported. |
| Climate change | Consider possible key vulnerabilities and management implications of changing oceanographic conditions resulting from climate change on NPFC fisheries resources and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with target stocks. | Consider possible key vulnerabilities and management implications of changing oceanographic conditions resulting from climate change on NPFC fisheries resources and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with target stocks. | Consider possible key vulnerabilities and management implications of changing oceanographic conditions resulting from climate change on NPFC fisheries resources and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with target stocks. | Consider possible key vulnerabilities and management implications of changing oceanographic conditions resulting from climate change on NPFC fisheries resources and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with target stocks. | Consider possible key vulnerabilities and management implications of changing oceanographic conditions resulting from climate change on NPFC fisheries resources and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with target stocks. | SC discussed implications of climate change and received three presentations including Tools for incorporating climate change considerations into scientific advice by Tom Carruthers, a FAO consultancy report on climate change in the |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Make recommendations to help adapt to climate change and promote resilience in NPFC fisheries | Make recommendations to help adapt to climate change and promote resilience in NPFC fisheries | Make recommendations to help adapt to climate change and promote resilience in NPFC fisheries | Make recommendations to help adapt to climate change and promote resilience in NPFC fisheries | Make recommendations to help adapt to climate change and promote resilience in NPFC fisheries | North Pacific and Ongoing research activities PICES' Basin-scale Events to Coastal Impacts (BECI) project |
| **Collaboration with other Organizations** | | | | | | |
| PICES | Review implementation of NPFC-PICES Framework for Collaboration; Consider renewing this Framework for another 5 years<br><br>Review ICES-PICES WGSPF activities (PICES WG43) | Review implementation of NPFC-PICES Framework for Collaboration | Review implementation of NPFC-PICES Framework for Collaboration | Review implementation of NPFC-PICES Framework for Collaboration | Review implementation of NPFC-PICES Framework for Collaboration | SC reviewed implementation of NPFC-PICES Framework for Collaboration and endorsed its renewal<br><br>SSC BFME reviewed PICES WG43 activities |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Review ICES-PICES WGSPF activities (PICES WG53)<br><br>Identify other opportunities for collaboration with PICES. | Review ICES-PICES WGSPF activities (PICES WG53)<br><br>Identify other opportunities for collaboration with PICES. | Review ICES-PICES WGSPF activities (PICES WG53)<br><br>Identify other opportunities for collaboration with PICES | Review ICES-PICES WGSPF activities (PICES WG53)<br><br>Identify other opportunities for collaboration with PICES | Identify other opportunities for collaboration with PICES | SC reviewed PICES WG53 activities |
| FAO | Review NPFC's involvement with the ABNJ Deep-sea fisheries project<br><br>Review NPFC's partnership with the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System of FAO (FIRMS) | Review NPFC's involvement with the ABNJ Deep-sea fisheries project<br><br>Review NPFC's partnership with the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System of FAO (FIRMS) | Review NPFC's involvement with the ABNJ Deep-sea fisheries project<br><br>Review NPFC's partnership with the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System of FAO (FIRMS) | Review NPFC's involvement with the ABNJ Deep-sea fisheries project<br><br>Review NPFC's partnership with the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System of FAO (FIRMS) | Review NPFC's involvement with the ABNJ Deep-sea fisheries project<br><br>Review NPFC's partnership with the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System of FAO (FIRMS) | SC reviewed its collaboration with the ABNJ Deep-sea fisheries project<br><br>SC reviewed its partnership with the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System of FAO (FIRMS) |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NPAFC | Undertake scientific activities to achieve relevant deliverables of the NPFC/NPAFC work plan | Undertake scientific activities to achieve relevant deliverables of the NPFC/NPAFC work plan | Undertake scientific activities to achieve relevant deliverables of the NPFC/NPAFC work plan | Undertake scientific activities to achieve relevant deliverables of the NPFC/NPAFC work plan | Undertake scientific activities to achieve relevant deliverables of the NPFC/NPAFC work plan | SC reviewed NPFC/NPAFC activities |
| Other organizations | Review collaborations with other organizations | Review collaborations with other organizations | Review collaborations with other organizations | Review collaborations with other organizations | Review collaborations with other organizations | SC was updated on the MOU with SPRFMO and n collaboration with ISC and WCPFC |
| **Research and Work Plans** | | | | | | |
| Terms of Reference | Review SC's Terms of Reference, as needed | Review SC's Terms of Reference, as needed | Review SC's Terms of Reference, as needed | Review SC's Terms of Reference, as needed | Review SC's Terms of Reference, as needed | SC reviewed its TOR and agreed it did not need to be revised |
| Research Plan | Update SC's rolling 5-year research plan | Update SC's rolling 5-year research plan | Update SC's rolling 5-year research plan | Update SC's rolling 5-year research plan | Update SC's rolling 5-year research plan | SC updated its rolling 5-year research plan |
| Work Plan | Update SC's rolling 5-year work plan | Update SC's rolling 5-year work plan | Update SC's rolling 5-year work plan | Update SC's rolling 5-year work plan | Update SC's rolling 5-year work plan | SC updated its rolling 5-year work plan |
| Projects | Review completed | Review completed | Review completed | Review completed | Review completed | SC reviewed its |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | and ongoing projects<br><br>Identify and prioritize new projects and recommend sources of funding | and ongoing projects<br><br>Identify and prioritize new projects and recommend sources of funding | and ongoing projects<br><br>Identify and prioritize new projects and recommend sources of funding | and ongoing projects<br><br>Identify and prioritize new projects and recommend sources of funding | and ongoing projects<br><br>Identify and prioritize new projects and recommend sources of funding | completed and ongoing projects, and recommended new projects and sources of funding |
| **Data Management** | | | | | | |
| | Review data inventories and the status of data gaps<br><br>Review data standards in relation to stock assessment of priority species<br><br>Discuss need for additional sources of data for scientific analyses and associated data | Review data inventories and the status of data gaps<br><br>Review data standards in relation to stock assessment of priority species<br><br>Discuss need for additional sources of data for scientific analyses and associated data | Review data inventories and the status of data gaps<br><br>Review data standards in relation to stock assessment of priority species<br><br>Discuss need for additional sources of data for scientific analyses and associated data | Review data inventories and the status of data gaps<br><br>Review data standards in relation to stock assessment of priority species<br><br>Discuss need for additional sources of data for scientific analyses and associated data | Review data inventories and the status of data gaps<br><br>Review data standards in relation to stock assessment of priority species<br><br>Discuss need for additional sources of data for scientific analyses and associated data | SC discussed data standards in relation to stock assessment of priority species.<br><br>SC discussed the need for additional sources of data for scientific analyses and associated data management policy |

| ITEM | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | management policy | management policy | management policy | management policy | management policy | |
| **Recommendations** | | | | | | |
| Advice | Develop recommendations for the Commission, TCC, and FAC | Develop recommendations for the Commission, TCC, and FAC | Develop recommendations for the Commission, TCC, and FAC | Develop recommendations for the Commission, TCC, and FAC | Develop recommendations for the Commission, TCC, and FAC | SC made recommendations for the Commission, TCC, and FAC |
| **Media Communication** | | | | | | |
| Press Release | Prepare and publish a press release about SC activities during its meeting | Prepare and publish a press release about SC activities during its meeting | Prepare and publish a press release about SC activities during its meeting | Prepare and publish a press release about SC activities during its meeting | Prepare and publish a press release about SC activities during its meeting | SC drafted and endorsed a press release about SC activities during its SC09 meeting |

**USA Statement on Bottom Fishing for COM09 Report**

The United States noted high seas bottom fisheries require unique management approaches given potential impacts on deep-sea vulnerable marine ecosystems and described the recent history of changes to CMM 2024-05. It noted the importance of SC recommendations to update impact assessments and establish two new small closure areas, while also emphasizing the need to consider all relevant peer-reviewed information on VMEs and obtain additional scientific advice on temporary prohibitions or time/area closures that would help to meet the objectives of the Convention and measure and ensure long-term sustainable management of deep-sea fisheries.

The United States has raised concerns and advocated for consideration of temporary closures on fisheries targeting North Pacific armorhead or splendid alfonsino since 2017 given the lack of stock assessments or scientific advice on what level of fishing activity is sustainable, and indications they are overfished or subject to growth overfishing. The United States noted that it has maintained domestic closures for bottomfish and seamount groundfish on the Hancock Seamounts in the U.S. EEZ around the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands since 1986 due to the overfished condition of North Pacific armorhead caused by foreign fishing vessels on the high seas. NPFC could consider similar management approaches consistent with the Convention text regarding compatible management and the need to ensure high seas measures do not undermine domestic measures. The United States also notes that, aside from target species, some NPFC bottom fisheries result in significant catch of deep-sea sharks with unclear impacts on such stocks.

The United States reserves its position on broader policy issues related to this measure while we obtain guidance from our new Administration. The U.S. delegation will support the recommendations by the SC, even if we leave open the question of whether they are satisfactory in light of these broader concerns the United States has raised in the past. The United States intends to ensure that high seas bottom-fisheries are conducted consistent with scientific advice and do not contribute to overfishing or delayed rebuilding on overfished stocks that prevent the development of U.S. domestic fisheries and related opportunities for U.S. industry. The United States looks forward to continued progress in promoting long-term sustainable management of deep-sea high seas fisheries and greater parity between foreign fishing on the high seas and U.S. domestic measures.

**Tasking from the Commission to the Scientific Committee**

- Develop stock status templates in view to ensuring consistency in the presentation to the Commission of the conservation status and management advice for NPFC stocks: by COM10 in 2026
- For stocks for which a NPFC assessment has been developed by the SC, advice on the appropriate frequency between benchmark and update stock assessments, based-on species life history and biology, data availability management needs and other relevant criteria. For stocks for which no NPFC assessment is available, develop fisheries dependent/independent indicators allowing tracking significant trends in fisheries of NPFC priority species
- Science-based management options available for operationalizing the precautionary approach as outlined in the Convention for NPFC priority species
- Develop a detailed work plan, including indicative timelines, to advise on how climate change considerations can be included in the scientific processes of NPFC, to capture effects of climate change on fisheries and allow the development of climate resilient management frameworks for NPFC species

# 8th Meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee

**FINAL REPORT**

**18-21 March 2025**

**This paper may be cited in the following manner: Technical and Compliance Committee.**
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# North Pacific Fisheries Commission
# 8th Meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee

**Osaka, Japan (hybrid)**

**FINAL REPORT**

Agenda Item 1. Opening of Meeting

*1a. Welcome to Participants*

1. The 8th Meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) was held in a hybrid format, with participants attending in-person in Osaka, Japan, or online via WebEx, on 18-21 March 2025, and was attended by Members from Canada, China, the European Union (EU), Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, the United States of America (USA), and Vanuatu. The meeting was opened by Ms. Alisha Falberg (USA), who served as the TCC Chair.

*1b. Appointment of Rapporteur*

2. Mr. Jacques Chaumont was appointed as the Rapporteur.

*1c. Introduction of Observers*

3. The Chair introduced approved observers permitted to be present. The accredited observers were Panama, Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew), the Ocean Foundation, Ocean Governance Institute, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC), the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), and the IMCS Network. The observers were admitted without objection.

*1d. Adoption of Agenda*

4. The provisional agenda was adopted (Annex A) with the understanding that substantive discussion on historic fishing levels would be moved from item 4 to item 15 (Other Matters). The List of Documents and List of Participants are attached (Annexes B, C).

*1e. Meeting Arrangements*

5. The Compliance Manager, Ms. Judy Dwyer, outlined the meeting arrangements.

Agenda Item 2. Report from Secretariat

*2a. Fisheries Overview 2024*

6. The Compliance Manager presented the overview of NPFC fisheries from 2019 to 2024 (NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP01).

7. The TCC thanked the Secretariat for preparing the fisheries overview but noted several inconsistencies in the data presented, including instances where the number of active vessels appears to have exceeded the number of authorized vessels for certain Members, and issues with double-counting vessels targeting multiple species.

8. The EU requested the addition of CPUE trends from SC and graphical representations in future fisheries overviews and expressed concern about the significant increase in the number of active vessels in some NPFC fisheries, particularly for Japanese sardine and chub mackerel.

9. The TCC requested that Members work with the Secretariat throughout the meeting to reconcile the discrepancy issues raised, with the goal of producing a revised fisheries overview prior to the Commission meeting.

10. Several Members reiterated concerns about the discrepancies and inaccuracies in the numbers of their authorized vessels within the fisheries overview and discussed the appropriateness of adding disclaimers about the data tables to the Secretariat's report or within the TCC Report. Several Members expressed concern that a blanket disclaimer would be inappropriate, but individual Members may provide explanations for certain information if necessary.

11. The TCC closed discussion on fisheries overview, but the Secretariat's Fisheries Overview information paper was left open for Members to provide further updates and corrections to the data through the Commission meeting.

*2b. Data Management System Update and Initiatives for 2025*

12. The Data Coordinator, Mr. Sungkuk Kang, presented a summary of the status of all TCC-related data management systems' update and new initiatives for further development in 2025 by the Secretariat (NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP02). Updates have been made to the Members Home, Significant Dates/Events, Meeting Page, Transshipment Map, Annual Reports, Vessel Registry, HSBI Events, e-IUU, Pacific Saury Weekly Report, Chub Mackerel Monthly/Weekly Report, and Collaboration sections. In 2025, the Secretariat intends to advance the following key initiatives: incorporating a dashboard in the Member Portal to improve user accessibility and efficiency, integration of air surveillance data, implementing the transshipment API, improving Member account management, and regularly updating the NPFC website to ensure its data management systems align with Member requirements.

13. The TCC thanked the Secretariat for continuing to develop the NPFC data management system and improve its functionality and usability.

14. Several Members suggested potential further improvements to the data management system, including:

(a) Allowing delayed submission of transshipment reports in cases occurring due to administrative oversight;
(b) Continuing the development of the transshipment API;
(c) Enabling users to create their own accounts with administrator approval; and
(d) Adding bulk modification capabilities for the NPFC vessel registry.

Agenda Item 3. Review of MCS related issues from SC

15. The Science Manager, Dr. Aleksandr Zavolokin, provided a summary of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) matters for coordination between the Scientific Committee (SC) and the TCC (NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP03). These included proposed revisions to CMM 2024-05 for two new bottom fishing area closures to protect VMEs on Yuryaku Seamount; the SC's response to questions from the TCC Chair regarding a regional observer program; and ongoing discussion about data needs and data gaps that could be filled by a regional observer program.

16. The TCC noted the information provided by the Science Manager and welcomed the continued coordination and collaboration between the TCC and the SC.

17. The TCC Chair reported on her intersessional coordination with the SC Chair regarding potential options for a regional observer program beyond the transshipment observer program currently under development.

18. Some Members expressed concern that feedback received from the SC was insufficient, and encouraged seeking further guidance from the SC on what data would be useful to collect through an observer program to inform TCC discussions on implementation approaches.

19. Many Members expressed support for a stepwise approach to implementing observer programs, prioritizing the establishment of the transshipment observer program before considering a broader regional observer program. Some Members noted that important scientific data could be obtained through port sampling, existing Members' observer programs, and the forthcoming transshipment observer program.

20. The Ocean Foundation and Pew emphasized the importance of at-sea monitoring to verify catch data, detect potential high-grading or discards, and identify shark species caught.

21. Regarding the regional observer program, the TCC agreed that the TCC Chair should continue discussions with the SC Chair to seek more detailed information on potential scientific data needs that could be addressed through a broader regional observer program.
***Recommendation:*** That the TCC Chair and SC Chair continue to work intersessionally towards identifying the potential data needs for a broader regional observer program.

22. The TCC noted the SC's recommendation regarding revisions to CMM 2024-05 for new bottom fishing area closures. Several Members expressed their support for this recommendation.

Agenda Item 4. SWG Reports on Progress, Priorities and Recommendations

*4a. SWG Planning and Development Report - Report and Recommendations*

23. Ms. Amber Lindstedt (Canada), Co-Lead of the SWG on Planning and Development (SWG PD), presented a summary of the work conducted by the SWG PD in the 2024-2025 intersessional period. Six meetings were held, in addition to advancing key files through email communication. Two priority tasks were completed: developing revised rules of transparency for TCC pertaining to participation of observers, and developing a proposal for a regional observer program for transshipment. The SWG PD developed a proposal for a new standalone transshipment observer program CMM (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP13) and proposed amendments to the existing transshipment CMM (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP15). Some issues remain in square brackets in the proposed text. The SWG PD was also tasked with developing a multi-year work plan in accordance with paragraph 27 of the compliance monitoring scheme measure that was revised at COM08, but did not have the capacity to address this item this year.

24. The TCC reviewed the proposed rules of transparency for TCC (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP16) and endorsed the changes to remove the "INTERIM" designation from the title and make the proposed amendments, including those to accommodate the CMS process and to open the meetings to accredited observers as a general practice in accordance with the NPFC Rules of Procedure, and subject to NPFC's Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol.
***Recommendation:*** That the Commission adopt the NPFC Rules of Transparency for TCC (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP16).(Annex D)

*4b. SWG Operations Report - Report and Recommendations*

25. Ms. Patricia DeMille (Canada), Co-Lead of the SWG on Operations (SWG Ops), presented a summary of the work conducted by the SWG Ops in the 2024-2025 intersessional period. The SWG Ops held six meetings and prepared amendments to the transshipment and VMS measures. The SWG Ops discussed updates on the HSBI implementation plan and archiving it on the website for historical reference and creating a living MCS resource page. The SWG Ops advanced work on historical existing levels by creating a table with data from members for 2009-2023, but was unable to reach consensus on how to identify historical existing levels. The SWG Ops did not have time to address the tasking on responsibility for vessels under charter arrangements. Discussion on the matter of historical existing levels was moved to Other Matters in the agenda.

26. The TCC discussed the SWG Ops' work on serious violations. Several Members questioned the utility of continuing to task SWG Ops with defining serious violations, noting that relevant provisions already exist in the NPFC Convention, the UN Fish Stock Agreement, and the HSBI CMM.

27. Some Members expressed the view that the CMS process and the IUU vessel listing process are different approaches, with the former focused on Members' performance and the latter on individual vessel activities.

28. Other Members noted the importance of clarifying the connection between serious violations and further actions, such as the listing of IUU vessels, and suggested that the Commission has discretion to further elaborate the list of serious violations.

29. Following discussion with interested Members in the margins, the SWG Ops Co-Lead provided an overview of possible paths forward on the serious violations tasking. She noted that SWG Ops had conducted extensive review and analysis of serious violations but was unable to identify a path to inserting this work into a measure. She outlined options including developing a guidance document to support inspectors rather than formalizing this into a measure, and developing procedures for flag state responsibilities when a serious violation is detected.

30. The TCC noted that specific concerns with serious violations could be addressed through amendments to existing measures that Members could propose to future TCC meetings.
***Recommendation:*** That the Commission task the SWG Ops in the intersessional period with: (a) compiling a list of all serious violations and vessel-based measures into a guidance

document or inspector's aid, noting that these would be guidelines only and not measures; and (b) developing a document outlining more robust actions and responsibilities for flag states when a serious violation is detected and the flag state is notified.

Agenda Item 5. Conservation and Management Measures – Amendments or new CMMs

31. Korea and the EU presented their respective proposals for minimum standards for port state measures (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP09, NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP14), explaining that the proposals aim to fill a gap in the compliance and enforcement areas of the NPFC legal framework and strengthen the capacity of the organization to combat IUU activities in the Convention Area and implement Article 14.2(a) of the Convention.

32. The TCC discussed the two proposals for port state measures. Some Members expressed support for adopting port state measures as soon as possible, while other Members indicated that more time was needed for internal coordination related to PSMA implementation. There were concerns about specific provisions, including the mandatory nature of port designation and inspection timelines. Members provided various suggestions, including changing certain mandatory provisions to non-mandatory, aligning more closely with the WCPFC model, and ensuring consistency with the FAO PSMA.

33. The EU worked with Korea and interested Members to consolidate the two proposals in the margins of the meeting, and Canada agreed to co-sponsor the proposal.

34. The TCC discussed the proposal and was unable to reach a consensus. The TCC noted several fundamental issues remained unresolved despite productive discussions on the proposal.
***Recommendation:*** That the Commission further consider the consolidated proposal on port state measures, taking into account the discussions at TCC.

35. The EU presented its proposal for establishing minimum standards for the collection, reporting, verification, and exchange of data (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP10). The EU explained that the proposal aimed to address data-related issues by creating a more standardized approach to data collection processes in NPFC in accordance with Article 16 of the Convention.

36. The TCC discussed the proposal, noting that while there was general support for the direction of standardizing data collection, several technical concerns were raised. These included the practicality of certain data fields for different fisheries, the mandatory requirement for electronic logbooks, prescribed timelines for data submission, and the level of detail in the

annexes. Members suggested that the SC and its SWG on Data should review the technical aspects of the proposal.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission task the TCC and SC to continue work intersessionally on the proposal for minimum standards for data collection, with the goal of adopting a measure in the near future.

37. The Co-Lead of the SWG Ops, Ms. DeMille, presented proposed amendments to CMM 2024-12 On the Vessel Monitoring System (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP12) to require Members to notify the Secretariat of their vessels' entry into and exit from the Convention Area. The initial proposal added a new paragraph 11 requiring notification to be received no later than 60 minutes of entering or exiting the Convention Area, with procedures for notification to be chosen by Members from options listed in a new Annex 2.

38. The TCC discussed the proposed amendments to the VMS CMM. Several technical issues were raised by Members, including: (1) concerns about the 60-minute notification timeframe and how to account for minor technical delays; (2) the need for clarification on whether Members should notify the Secretariat about which notification option they choose; (3) issues with specific options in the annex, particularly regarding buffer zones inside EEZs; (4) questions about whether having multiple notification options would create complexity for the Secretariat's analysis; and (5) suggestions to allow for procedures beyond those listed in the annex.

39. During the TCC meeting, Japan proposed a one-year extension of paragraph 23 of CMM 2024-12 on VMS for research vessels to report position data through AIS instead of VMS. Japan noted many of its research vessels now have VMS and its understanding that this CMM does not apply to oceanographic research vessels that may incidentally capture small amounts of non-commercially exploited NPFC resources, such as plankton. With that understanding, and that the proposal was not made 30 days prior to the TCC meeting, Japan withdrew its proposal.

40. The TCC noted that while revised text in paragraph 11 did not include a date certain for notifying the Secretariat of transmission method that they will use to allow for later changes in methods, for the first time using the entry/exit notification procedure, Members committed to notifying the Secretariat by 1 January 2026. The TCC continued discussion on revisions to Option 2 in Annex 2 relating to vessel positions.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission adopt the proposed amendments to CMM 2024-12.

41. The Co-Lead of the SWG PD, Ms. Lindstedt, presented the proposed Regional Transshipment Observer Program (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP13). She noted that the development of this program was defined as a priority at COM08. The SWG PD had accomplished substantial intersessional work, with a large proportion of the text agreed among Members. Outstanding issues remaining in square brackets included: the inclusion of national observer programs in the regional transshipment observer program, qualifying characteristics of independent and impartial observers, the role of observers in collection of catch data during port offloading, how to reflect expected progress on electronic monitoring, and how to address the refusal of observers to deploy to vessels where safety concerns are identified.

42. The TCC held extensive discussion on the bracketed text within the proposal, including: the definition qualifiers of "external" and "non-governmental" for observer service providers, acknowledging different situations for different Members; observer duties for offloading in port; provision of internet connectivity to observers on vessels to ensure their communication capabilities; the timing for development of electronic monitoring systems; and the timeframe of notifying observers prior to a transshipment. The TCC was unable to reach consensus on bracketed text within several paragraphs.
***Recommendation:*** That the Commission further consider the proposal for a new Transshipment Observer Program measure in NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP13 Rev.1, recognizing that some sections remain in square brackets.

43. Canada presented its proposal (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP08) to amend CMM 2024-03 On Transshipment to require mandatory use of the online transshipment reporting system by January 1, 2026. The proposal would add language to paragraph 7 requiring all advance notifications, modifications, cancellations, and transshipment declarations to be submitted through the online system developed by the Secretariat. Korea offered to co-sponsor this proposal.

44. The Co-Lead of SWG PD, Ms. Lindstedt, introduced proposed amendments to the transshipment measure (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP15) to align it with the proposed Regional Transshipment Observer Program, noting these amendments would streamline the text by removing sections that would be covered by the new standalone measure.

45. The Co-Lead of SWG Ops, Ms. DeMille, presented proposed amendments to CMM 2024-03 On Transshipment (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP11) to clarify requirements for reporting all marine species in transshipment reports. The amendments would add language to paragraph

9 and both annexes requiring all species, including bycatch, to be recorded by species using their FAO code.

46. The TCC accepted Canada's offer to prepare a consolidated document that would incorporate all three proposals into a single draft amendment to the transshipment CMM, while maintaining clear attribution of the source of each proposed change.

47. The TCC discussed the three proposals to amend CMM 2024-03. Several concerns were raised regarding the mandatory use of the online system, including: (1) the need for provisions to address system unavailability; (2) suggestions to maintain the 50-nautical mile and 72-hour restrictions by removing "for 2024 only" language; (3) technical challenges in connecting national systems to the NPFC system; and (4) clarifying responsibility for submission (vessel or Member). Regarding the bycatch reporting amendments, there was a suggestion to add "all species retained" to avoid confusion between target and bycatch species.

48. The TCC discussed the consolidated proposal (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP19), with paragraph 7 amendments requiring mandatory use of the online transshipment reporting system. Members extensively discussed implementation timing, with agreement to change the effective date from January 1, 2026 to April 1, 2026. The TCC also considered the linked amendments to paragraphs 15, 16, and 17 regarding notification timeframes and distances.

49. China noted that it is working actively with the Secretariat to develop an API connection that would enable direct transmission of data from its national transshipment system to the NPFC online transshipment reporting system. China indicated its understanding that such an API connection, once established, would meet the requirements in paragraph 7 regarding submission via the NPFC online transshipment reporting system. TCC noted the interpretation.

50. The TCC considered the remaining sections of the consolidated proposal.
***Recommendation:*** That the Commission further consider the proposed amendments to CMM 2024-03, recognizing that some sections remain in square brackets.

Agenda Item 6. IUU Vessel List

*6a. Recommendation for Provisional IUU Vessel List to the Commission*

51. The Compliance Manager presented the draft IUU Vessel List (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP01). The draft list contained three vessels nominated for inclusion on the Provisional IUU Vessel List.

52. Japan presented information regarding the Chinese vessel it nominated, explaining that the vessel's appearance differed from its NPFC registry photo, and it delayed boarding inspection for approximately two hours. Japan considered this a potential denial of HSBI.

53. China explained that the incorrect photo resulted from a staff error and a review process was established to prevent future mistakes. China maintained that the delay was for legitimate purposes and denied that any evidence was hidden.

54. Following bilateral discussion between Japan and China in the margins and discussion in TCC, Japan as the nominating Member expressed satisfaction on the actions taken by China. Taking into account these actions, the TCC agreed to remove the vessel nominated by Japan from the Provisional IUU Vessel List, with the inclusion of the following commitment from China recorded in the TCC Report:

"It is the commitment of China to have close cooperation with other Members of NPFC, including Japan, to have smooth and timely conducted HSBIs, and China will take effective measures to ensure its fishing vessels accept HSBIs in a timely manner."

55. Canada presented information regarding the two Chinese vessels (No. 2 and No. 3) it nominated. Both vessels were found with Pacific saury on board after closure of the fishery, with evidence of misreporting catch on board. For vessel No. 2, China reported that the investigation was concluded, that fines were imposed and paid, and that the illegal catch was confiscated. For vessel No. 3, China reported that the investigation was concluded, but the sanction process was still underway as the violation report was only received in late December.

56. The TCC discussed issues including China's domestic prohibition on retention of Pacific saury by purse seiners and its potential inconsistency with CMM 2024-08 to retain all catch of Pacific saury, and the adequacy of sanctions imposed against the master of the vessel. There were differing views on whether vessels should be listed when flag state action had been taken or was in progress.

57. Some Members expressed the view that China had taken effective action in response to the IUU fishing activities in question, as required under paragraph 17(b) of CMM 2024-02, including sanctions and confirmation of payment of the fines imposed for one of the two fishing vessels, and therefore that fishing vessel nominated by Canada should not be included on the provisional IUU Vessel List.

58. Other Members expressed the view that these were serious violations directly related to the conservation objectives of the Commission, and that further consideration of these cases was warranted at the Commission meeting. These Members raised concerns about whether the sanctions imposed were specifically for violations of NPFC CMMs or for violations of domestic measures that may be inconsistent with NPFC CMMs.

59. Following further discussions, China proposed retaining only the third vessel on the provisional IUU Vessel List while removing the second vessel.

60. China provided further information indicating the measures it took as a flag state related to non-compliance with misreporting and measures to address fishing without a quota. China stated it will commit to monitor purse seiners and providing guidance to ensure vessels are not directed fishing for Pacific saury and are retaining and reporting catch consistent with NPFC measures, and if they were found to do such directed fishing, China provided additional assurances that they would carry out punishment such as considering to force the responsible company to scrap the offending vessels. The TCC agreed to remove the second vessel nominated from the Provisional IUU Vessel List.
***Recommendation:*** That the Commission consider the Provisional NPFC IUU Vessel List containing one vessel proposed by Canada (Annex X).

*6b. Recommendations for amendments to current NPFC IUU Vessel List to Commission*

61. The Compliance Manager presented information regarding the NPFC IUU listed fishing vessel AN TON (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP04). The Secretariat had received information from Bangladeshi authorities and China that the vessel had been scrapped. China provided further explanation on the vessel in IP07.

62. The TCC discussed the sufficiency of evidence for the scrapping, and the appropriate procedure for removing a vessel from the IUU Vessel List. Several Members noted that according to CMM 2024-02 (paragraph 19), removal can only be initiated by the flag State (Comoros) of the vessel.

63. Some Members expressed their concern about the transshipment activities undertaken by Chinese fishing vessels with the An Ton in 2023 (then named Wan Ton) while the vessel was still on the NPFC IUU List regardless of China's interpretation that the vessel was no longer an IUU Vessel as it had changed its flag and ownership, and considered these activities are inconsistent with the NPFC Convention and CMM 2024-02.

64. The TCC could not reach consensus on recommending removal of the vessel from the NPFC IUU Vessel List, and requested that the Secretariat continue to seek confirmation from the last flag of the vessel (Comoros) and gather additional evidence.

65. The Secretariat reported that it had contacted authorities in Comoros, who acknowledged receipt of the request for information and advised they were consulting and would provide more information when available. The TCC noted that it lacked sufficient information at this time to consider removal of the vessel from the NPFC IUU Vessel List.
***Recommendation:*** That the Commission note that the TCC did not propose any changes to the current NPFC IUU Vessel List.

Agenda Item 7. Compliance Monitoring Scheme

*7a. Draft Compliance Reports for 2024*

66. The Compliance Manager presented the Draft Compliance Report, which contained data retrieved from various sources on compliance with the 78 obligations listed in Annex 2 of CMM 2024-13. The sources included the implementation reports submitted by Members, annual reports, HSBI reports including aerial surveillance, and reviews of VMS and transshipment data. The draft report highlighted seven instances of potential non-compliance for three Members regarding obligations under five CMMs. The main instance of potential non-compliance related to the vessel registry and vessel marking (CMM 2023-01, paragraph 5), with 13 incidents recorded for three Members. Other instances of potential non-compliance were found in obligations under the transshipment measure, the Pacific saury measure CMM 2024-08, HSBI CMM 2024-09 (related to the submission of an annual report), and CMM 2024-15 on marine pollution.

*7b. Develop Provisional Compliance Report*

67. The TCC extensively discussed the format and methodology of the draft compliance report and this first implementation of the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS). Several suggestions for improvement were made, including consideration of:

(a) Providing more detailed information within the draft report about compliance status for all obligations, not just highlighting potential non-compliance;
(b) More clearly defining “Priority Non-Compliant” status in cases besides repeated non-compliance;
(c) Clarifying the methodology used for assessing compliance, especially for quantitative obligations;
(d) Creating audit points for each obligation to guide future assessments;

(e) Focusing on Members' actions in response to violations rather than individual vessel compliance;
(f) Define a more clear process for assessing Members' actions in response to violations of individual vessels.

68. The Secretariat explained they considered all available data sources when assessing the obligations, with most identified issues coming from HSBI reports. They noted a targeted approach was taken with VMS data gaps to avoid flagging thousands of minor issues.

69. The TCC agreed to proceed based on the following process for developing the Provisional Compliance Report: (1) examine the seven highlighted areas indicating potential non-compliance identified by the Secretariat; (2) consider any other areas of potential non-compliance identified by Members; and (3) review the list in Annex 2 of obligations to be assessed. The section of the report containing detailed information on specific cases would serve as background rather than each case being individually assessed.

70. The TCC reviewed each area of potential non-compliance highlighted by the Secretariat.

71. Regarding China's vessel marking issues (CMM 2024-01, paragraph 5), eight incidents were identified through HSBI events. For two vessels, China clarified that the small boats in question were rescue boats required by Chinese regulations, not fishing skiffs, and therefore were not subject to marking requirements. For other vessels, China reported that sanctions had been imposed. China provided additional evidence of sanctions imposed. Based on the information provided by China, the TCC determined this case to be "Compliant."

72. Regarding Russia's vessel marking issues (CMM 2024-01, paragraph 5), five vessels were identified through aerial surveillance as having inadequate markings. Russia explained that sanctions had been applied and the completeness of markings was verified. Members disagreed on whether additional alphanumeric identifiers on the hull constituted a violation of paragraph 4 of Annex 2, with Russia maintaining these were boarding numbers required by national regulations. Based on the information provided by Russia to verify the sanctions issued the TCC determined this case to be "Compliant," noting that the CMM would require minor amendment to prevent similar cases in the future for Members requiring domestic and other markings.

73. Regarding Chinese Taipei's vessel marking potential non-compliance issue (CMM 2024-01, paragraph 5), Chinese Taipei explained that when the inspection was conducted, the vessel's

radio call sign was temporarily obscured by boxes, which were immediately removed upon detection. The vessel had been sanctioned in accordance with domestic law. Based on the information provided by Chinese Taipei, including a link to verify the sanctions issued, the TCC determined this case to be "Compliant." Japan pointed out many cardboard boxes were placed on the deck together with an awning over these boxes.

74. Regarding transshipment reporting potential non-compliance issues related to China (CMM 2024-03, paragraph 8), the Secretariat noted this case was also being considered under the draft IUU vessel list. Several Members suggested that cases discussed under the IUU agenda item should not be duplicated in the CMS process to avoid inconsistent outcomes. The TCC determined the case to be "Flag State Action Ongoing" pending the completion of sanctions procedures by China.

75. Regarding China's Pacific saury potential non-compliance issue (CMM 2024-08, paragraph 10), questions were raised about whether China had exceeded its catch limit following closure of its fishery. China clarified that even with confiscated illegal catch added to their reported catch, they remained below their total catch limit. The TCC determined the case to be "Unable to be Assessed at this time" as there was an issue of differences in interpretation of the CMM. Further clarity and possible amendment of the measure would be needed to clarify whether or how it applies to only targeted fishing or includes bycatch.

76. Regarding Russia's delayed submission of its final annual report (CMM 2024-09, paragraph 2), which was received on March 14, 2025, after the February 15 deadline, the TCC determined this to be a case of "Delayed Submission."

77. Regarding Chinese Taipei's identified marine pollution potential non-compliance issue (CMM 2024-15, paragraph 8) concerning the discharge of incinerator ashes from plastic products into the sea, Chinese Taipei reported that the vessel had been sanctioned and required to further improve its recycling procedures. Upon reviewing the sanction information provided, the TCC determined this case to be "Compliant."

78. The TCC also considered additional potential non-compliance issues raised by Members:

79. Some Members raised concerns about China's compliance with CMM 2024-02 paragraphs 24(b) and 24(f), citing information in IP07 indicating that Chinese vessels had engaged in transshipment activities with a vessel (WAN TONG) on the NPFC IUU Vessel List during October to December 2023. China responded that this was part of a settlement strategy to

persuade the vessel's new owner to scrap the vessel. The TCC determined these cases to be "Non-Compliant."

80. The EU expressed concern that the commitment to freeze fishing effort in some fisheries, including chub mackerel, had not been fulfilled by some Members. The EU noted that based on data provided by Members, current effort levels appeared to exceed those from historical years before 2019 when the measure was adopted.

81. The US and the EU also raised concerns about possible non-compliance with effort limits in CMM 2024-07 for Chub mackerel and CMM 2024-11 for Japanese sardine, suggesting significant growth in authorized vessels by China and Russia. China responded that they had frozen their fleet at 109 vessels since 2018, and Russia stated they had not increased beyond historical levels. As the TCC was still discussing how to define historical existing levels, the TCC determined these cases to be "Unable to be Assessed at this time." The US noted that it concurred with that assessment at this stage of the compliance monitoring scheme and related work, but that if there is not adequate progress on defining historical existing level, it may be necessary to reconsider non-compliance assessments in the future based on the information available.

*7c. List of obligations for consideration for the Compliance Monitoring Scheme in 2025*

82. Following discussion on the process for identifying obligations to be assessed, the TCC agreed to add the following to the list of obligations for consideration for the Compliance Monitoring Scheme in 2025:

(a) Paragraph 16 of CMM 2024-08 for Pacific saury regarding retention requirements;
(b) Paragraph 31 of CMM 2024-09 regarding timely submission of High Seas Boarding and Inspection reports; and
(c) Paragraphs 5, 7, 9, and 11 of CMM 2024-16 on anadromous species.
(d) Paragraph 2 of CMM 2023-01 on the vessel registry, though there was not agreement from all Members on adding this to the list of obligations.

83. Considering that some CMMs may become effective before others, the paragraph numbers and contents may change following decisions at the Commission meeting. The TCC agreed that the final review of obligations to be assessed under Annex 2 of the CMS CMM should occur at the Commission meeting.

84. The TCC adopted the Provisional Compliance Monitoring Report including the Executive Summary.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission consider the Provisional Compliance Monitoring Report adopted by the TCC, along with the attached Executive Summary.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission consider the TCC's list of obligations for consideration for the Compliance Monitoring Scheme in 2025.

Agenda Item 8. Transshipment

*8a. Secretariat Report on 2024 Activity*

85. The Fisheries and Data Analysis Consultant, Dr. Jihwan Kim, presented the 2024 Transshipment Overview (NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP08 Rev.1). In 2024, 52% of total catch was transshipped, with the number of events exceeding 2,000, similar to 2023. Other Transshipment Activities (OTAs) exceeded 2,500 events, a slight increase from 2023. Most transshipments occurred within the Convention Area, with only five events occurring outside. The volume per transshipment event averaged 147 metric tons, ranging from 4 to 1,784 metric tons. An online application launched in 2023 for document submission had seen increased usage following system improvements and a workshop in 2024. An API was developed in late 2024 to enable automated submission, with one Member currently integrating their system with the NPFC API, which should eliminate manual entry by the 2024 fishing season. The updated transshipment data visualization tools now include a geographic map allowing users to filter events by time and region. The map displays planned fish transshipments, completed transshipments, and planned OTAs.

86. One Member inquired about reported discrepancies in OTA records, the transshipment of Alaska pollock, and the lack of information regarding implementation and reporting from existing observer requirements. The Secretariat explained that inconsistencies in OTA numbers occurred because many events were submitted via email, requiring manual alignment with notification reports, creating challenges in tracking cancellations effectively. Regarding the observer reports, the Secretariat noted that while the current observer form does not contain extensive information, a sample review of 100 reports from approximately 3,000 had not identified any violations.

87. Several Members emphasized the importance of analyzing observer information as a source of data to support compliance processes, and one Member requested that future reports include sections summarizing information on observers.

88. The TCC noted the uncertainties and inaccuracies in some figures presented in the transshipment overview, and the Secretariat prepared a further revision to the report (NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP08 Rev.3) to address these issues.

Agenda Item 9. Vessel Monitoring System

*9a. Secretariat Report on Implementation*

89. The Fisheries and Data Analysis Consultant presented the 2024 VMS Overview (NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP09 Rev.1) as required by paragraph 24 of CMM 2024-12. The system had demonstrated robust performance during its three years of operation from 2022 to 2024, with technical issues such as SSL certificate management and data interruption promptly addressed. The Secretariat actively collaborated with Member FMCs to address data discrepancies and enhance overall VMS data quality. Data was shared on unique vessels present in the Convention Area during 2024.

90. The Secretariat identified vessels operating under expired authorization status, noting that this does not necessarily signal unauthorized fishing activities as investigation into previous cases determined that the vessels were typically WCPFC carrier vessels or squid vessels steaming to the SPRFMO Convention Area. The Secretariat also outlined three proposed options for notifying vessel entry and exit to and from the Convention Area. The presentation included a comparison of positions recorded in transshipment documents with VMS data, revealing a higher rate of location discrepancy for OTA events compared to fish transshipment. On investigation of AIS data as a supplementary data source as instructed by TCC07, the Secretariat found that free AIS data available via public websites was found to be labor intensive for large-scale use, while overlaying AIS data on the VMS platform would cost approximately $5,000 per year for real-time and historical data access.

91. Several Members expressed concerns about using AIS data, citing its unreliability and potential for manipulation. Members did not support spending budget on purchasing AIS data, preferring to rely on more accurate and reliable VMS data.

92. The Secretariat confirmed that it had sent relevant data regarding vessels with expired authorization status and location discrepancies to the concerned Members for their review.

Agenda Item 10. High Seas Boarding and Inspection

*10a. Secretariat Report*

93. The Compliance Assistant, Mr. Jumpei Hinata, presented the HSBI summary for 2024. In the past year, 53 inspections were conducted by four inspection Members, twice the number conducted in 2023. No violations were noted in 42 reports, while violations were noted in 11 reports, with three classified as serious violations. Over 11% of active vessels were inspected, with approximately 72% of inspected vessels being either purse seiners, jigging vessels, or

carrier vessels. The most common violations related to vessel marking infringements. Three serious violations were reported: obscuring vessel marking, Pacific saury fishing during a closed time, and unauthorized fishing. Two of these cases resulted in nominations to the 2025 draft IUU list. The Secretariat highlighted that 2024 saw a record number of at-sea inspections, although the number of identified violations remained consistent with the previous three years. Initiatives planned for 2025 include improving data collection and analysis, harmonizing boarding remarks and violation classifications, updating the implementation plan to make the HSBI webpage more user-friendly, and developing a feature for reporting aerial surveillance results within the HSBI system at an estimated cost of $7,200.

94. The Secretariat prepared and distributed a revised version of the HSBI report (Rev.1) based on comments from several Members who noted that updates had not been transferred from the Fisheries Overview into this paper.

95. One Member suggested the addition of a column including the total number of fishing days to provide a more informative basis for comparing inspection coverage in future Secretariat reports. Another Member requested for “Violations identified in HSBI” to be renamed to “Potential non-compliance” and maintaining email as an option for HSBI notifications and reports alongside the online entry system. Some Members suggested more balanced inspection coverage across Members.

*10b. Members Reports*

96. Noting that more information on HSBI is provided in Members’ Annual Reports, China, Canada, the USA, and Japan presented brief reports of their HSBI activities for 2024.

Agenda Item 11. Review of Applications for CNCP Status

97. TCC noted the lateness of the application for CNCP Status of Panama and highlighted the importance of meeting submission deadlines established within the Rules of Procedure.

98. Panama explained that it is seeking CNCP status, emphasizing its commitment to sustainable management of fisheries resources in the North Pacific and to complying with the Convention and CMMs of NPFC. Panama outlined steps taken to strengthen its monitoring and control mechanisms, including the adoption of five resolutions in 2024-2025 related to observer programs, transshipment regulation, port controls, electronic monitoring, and vessel registration procedures. Panama noted their fleet consists primarily of carrier vessels that may engage in transshipmentd activities, and explained that their national observer program had been implemented since October 2024, with both Panamanian and foreign observers.

99. The TCC considered Panama's application but was unable to reach a consensus on recommending approval. While several Members expressed general support for Panama's application for CNCP status, several Members also raised several questions regarding Panama's ability to effectively monitor and control its flagged vessels, referencing past issues with Panamanian-flagged vessels in the NPFC Convention Area. Some Members suggested that if Panama were granted CNCP status, their vessels should only begin transshipment activities in the Convention Area following the implementation of the NPFC regional observer program, which would begin on April 1, 2026. Panama expressed willingness to wait before commencing transshipment activities in the Convention Area should that be a condition of their granting of CNCP status. The EU requested that Panama provide ahead of the annual meeting of the Commission additional written information including concrete improvements in its operational capacity to monitor their flag fishing vessels in complement to the explanations made on the floor in support of its application.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission further review Panama's application for CNCP status for 2025-2027, noting that Panama was requested to provide more information in writing about their monitoring capabilities ahead of the Commission meeting to address the concerns raised by the TCC.

Agenda Item 12. Climate Change

100. The TCC Chair noted this is a standing agenda item and there was no further discussion.

Agenda Item 13. Cooperation with Other Organizations (Cont'd)

*13a. MoU with SPRFMO*

101. The Secretariat informed the TCC that NPFC and SPRFMO had finalized an MoU, allowing for enhanced cooperation on best practices and technical work related to shared ecosystems and similar species coverage in the Pacific.

*13b. MoU with WCPFC*

102. The Secretariat informed the TCC that NPFC had finalized an MoU with WCPFC in summer 2024, enabling collaborative work on technical systems and data sharing. It was noted that WCPFC had agreed to share their document management system coding with NPFC, creating opportunities for cost savings and increased efficiency in database operations.

*13c. NPFC-NPAFC Workplan*

103. The NPAFC Executive Director, Mr. Yoshikiyo Kondo, provided a verbal update on cooperation with NPFC. He expressed appreciation for the adoption of the CMM 2024-16 on

Anadromous Species and NPFC's contribution to the IYS North Pacific high seas expedition in 2022. He noted NPAFC is continuing to implement the five-year work plan endorsed by both organizations' Commissions in 2023. Mr. Kondo highlighted several areas of cooperation from an enforcement perspective, including exchange of information on suspicious fishing vessels, IUU vessel lists, and bycatch data of Pacific salmon. NPAFC prepared a draft Terms of Reference for a secure SharePoint to facilitate this information exchange, respecting NPFC's data confidentiality policy. Mr. Kondo informed the TCC that NPAFC had been seeking an opportunity to hold a joint workshop with NPFC and prepared a concept paper, but decided to first hold an NPAFC workshop on transshipment in May 2026 in conjunction with their annual meeting before revisiting the potential joint workshop. He expressed NPAFC's strong willingness to continue cooperation with NPFC.

104. Members expressed various views on cooperation with NPAFC. Some Members expressed support for NPAFC's approach to hosting a workshop within NPAFC's purview focusing on interactions between NPFC fisheries and anadromous catch. It was noted that all NPAFC Members are also NPFC Members and suggestions could be raised directly in NPFC or NPAFC meetings. One Member, not being a Member of NPAFC, raised considerations related to budget implications, the appropriate organizational level for cooperation discussions, and a request for equal participation opportunities for NPFC Members wishing to participate in NPAFC meetings.

105. Several Members sought clarification on NPAFC's intentions regarding the joint workshop and noted concerns for future consideration including budgetary implications, process issues around joint workshops between international bodies, clarity of goals and outcomes, and consistency with NPFC's rules of transparency. Mr. Kondo confirmed that NPAFC was suspending the joint workshop discussions and would work towards organizing an NPAFC workshop in 2026 focused on fisheries interactions with anadromous species and would provide opportunity for NPFC input.

*13d. IMCS Network*

106. As the International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (IMCS) Network was not present, the Secretariat provided a verbal update on collaborative activities between NPFC and the IMCS Network. The Secretariat highlighted that NPFC had benefited significantly from involvement with the network since joining. IMCS had sponsored a visit by NPFC's web database service provider to Tokyo in 2024, helping planning purposes. Two initiatives were underway: an IUU vessel list hub that would allow RFMO secretariats easier access to up-to-

date information when cross-listing vessels, and a combined registry of authorized vessels using publicly available information with a search feature.

107. One Member suggested that NPFC consider developing an MoU with IATTC, noting that the two organizations have overlapping Convention Areas, and the relevant recommendation from the Performance Review, and the FAO transshipment guidelines highlight the importance of data sharing between overlapping RFMOs.

108. Several Members agreed with this suggestion, and the TCC discussed the procedure in terms of timeline and who would be responsible in producing the draft MoU.
***Recommendation:*** That the Commission task the Secretariat with drafting an MoU with IATTC, to be circulated to Membersvia electronic correspondence for input before being submitted as an information paper to the IATTC meeting in August 2025.

Agenda Item 14. Performance Review Recommendations Relevant to TCC

109. The TCC Chair presented an update (IP06) on the status of the Performance Review Recommendations relevant to TCC.

110. One Member recognized the helpful progress made by the Commission on the performance review recommendations and the table with status updates from the Secretariat and TCC Chair. However, they noted that the tasking from COMM08 for the Secretariat to work with chairs to update the table and then solicit intersessional feedback from Members was not followed and there is not adequate time to discuss the details at this meeting. The Member requested the TCC Chair work with the Secretariat to update the table and send it to Members for intersessional input via email so there is a Member-driven process on Commission priorities taking into account the Performance Review recommendations.
***Recommendation:*** That the Commission task the TCC Chair and Secretariat to continue working on tracking the performance review recommendations relevant to TCC and seeking Member input intersessionally consistent with COM08 tasking.

Agenda Item 15. Other Matters

*15a. Consideration of Recommendations for TCC Chair/Vice Chair*

111. The TCC noted that the terms of the current TCC Chair, Ms. Alisha Falberg (USA), and Vice Chair, Ms. Amber Lindstedt (Canada), were ending at the conclusion of TCC08.

112. Following nominations from Members, the TCC recommended to the Commission that Ms. Alisha Falberg (USA) serve as TCC Chair and Ms. Amber Lindstedt (Canada) serve as TCC Vice Chair for another two-year term.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission renew the terms of Alisha Falberg (USA) to serve as TCC Chair and Amber Lindstedt (Canada) to serve as TCC Vice-Chair.

*15b. Historical Catch Level*

113. The SWG Ops Co-Lead, Ms. Patricia DeMille, reported on intersessional work of the SWG to compile data on historic fishing levels into a standard format, covering 2009 to 2023 by target species with a breakdown by gear type. The SWG Ops was unable to reach consensus on how to identify the specific year or years that would constitute the historical existing level.

114. The EU noted the long lasting and inconclusive discussions on the definition of historical levels of authorized vessels in NPFC and questioned the relevance of this metric both in terms of monitoring compliance and effectively restricting fishing effort in line with the spirit and intent of the NPFC CMMs that include this metric. Japan pointed out Members have been implementing historical existing effort provisions based on their interpretation which could be different among Members, and further discussion is needed to define a uniform interpretation on this matter.

115. Following extensive discussion, the TCC agreed to recommend that the Commission consider the following: (a) Continue work on this issue, considering options discussed at TCC; (b) compile in one document when each CMM mentioning historical level was first adopted; (c) Seek clarity on data sources from Members for the compiled table; (d) Work to reconcile Member data with Secretariat records; (e) Consider amending CMMs that reference historical fishing level to provide greater clarity; and (f) Further consider criteria proposed by Members for defining historical fishing level, including: (i) a period from CMM adoption year minus one through adoption year minus three; (ii) A three-year period from the CMM adoption year going back three years; (iii) A timeframe reflecting the development of the fishery; or (iv) Other appropriate timeframes from one to multiple years.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission consider and carry forward work on historical fishing levels, taking into account the criteria, options and considerations identified by the TCC.

Agenda Item 16. Review and Endorsement of TCC Work Plan for 2025/2026

116. The TCC reviewed the TCC/SWG Work Plan for 2025/2026 (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP06) against the progress made to date and in consideration of new items of work arising from TCC08.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission revise the draft Work Plan developed by the Secretariat, including work completed, and consider further revisions, then task TCC and relevant SWGs with the activities in the revised Work Plan (Annex X).

Agenda Item 17. Recommendations to the Commission

117. The TCC recommended the following to the Commission:

(Agenda Item 3)

(a) That the TCC Chair and SC Chair continue to work intersessionally towards identifying the potential data needs for a broader regional observer program.

(Agenda Item 4)

(b) That the Commission adopt the NPFC Rules of Transparency for TCC (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP16).(Annex D)

(c) That the Commission task the SWG Ops in the intersessional period with: (a) compiling a list of all serious violations and vessel-based measures into a guidance document or inspector's aid, noting that these would be guidelines only and not measures; and (b) developing a document outlining more robust actions and responsibilities for flag states when a serious violation is detected and the flag state is notified.

(Agenda Item 5)

(d) That the Commission further consider the consolidated proposal on port state measures, taking into account the discussions at TCC.

(e) That the Commission task the TCC and SC to continue work intersessionally on the proposal for minimum standards for data collection, with the goal of adopting a measure in the near future.

(f) That the Commission adopt the proposed amendments to CMM 2024-12.

(g) That the Commission further consider the proposal for a new Transshipment Observer Program measure in NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP13 Rev.1, recognizing that some sections remain in square brackets.

(h) That the Commission further consider the proposed amendments to CMM 2024-03, recognizing that some sections remain in square brackets.

(Agenda Item 6)

(i) That the Commission consider the Provisional NPFC IUU Vessel List containing one vessel proposed by Canada (Annex X).

(j) That the Commission note that the TCC did not propose any changes to the current NPFC IUU Vessel List.

(Agenda Item 7 (CMS))

(k) That the Commission consider the Provisional Compliance Monitoring Report adopted by the TCC, along with the attached TCC Chair's Executive Summary.

(l) That the Commission consider the TCC's list of obligations for consideration for the Compliance Monitoring Scheme in 2025.

(Agenda Item 11)

(m) That the Commission further review Panama's application for CNCP status for 2025-2027, noting that Panama was requested to provide more information in writing about their monitoring capabilities ahead of the Commission meeting to address the concerns raised by the TCC.

(Agenda Item 13)

(n) That the Commission task the Secretariat with drafting an MoU with IATTC, to be circulated to Members via electronic correspondence for input before being submitted as an information paper to the IATTC meeting in August 2025.

(Agenda Item 14)

(o) That the Commission task the TCC Chair and Secretariat to continue working on tracking the Performance Review recommendations relevant to TCC and seeking Member input intersessionally consistent with COM08 tasking.

(Agenda Item 15)

(p) That the Commission renew the terms of Alisha Falberg (USA) to serve as TCC Chair and Amber Lindstedt (Canada) to serve as TCC Vice-Chair.

(q) That the Commission consider and carry forward work on historical fishing levels, taking into account the criteria, options and considerations identified by the TCC.

(Agenda Item 16)

(r) That the Commission revise the draft Work Plan developed by the Secretariat, including work completed, and consider further revisions, then task TCC and relevant SWGs with the activities in the revised Work Plan (Annex X).

Agenda Item 18. Next Meeting

118. ***Recommendation:*** That the Commission hold the next TCC meeting in conjunction with the next Commission meeting.

Agenda Item 19. Adoption of the Report

119. The report was adopted by consensus.

Agenda Item 20. Close of the Meeting

120. The TCC meeting was closed at 20:36, JST, on 21 March 2025.

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# List of Annexes to TCC08 Report


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| Annex A | Agenda |
| Annex B | List of Documents |
| Annex C | List of Participants |
| Annex D | Rules of Transparency |

# TCC08 Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
    a. Welcome to Participants
    b. Appointment of Rapporteur
    c. Introduction of Observers
    d. Adoption of Agenda
    e. Meeting Arrangements

2. Report from Secretariat
    a. Fisheries Overview
    b. Data Management System Update and Initiatives for 2025

3. Review of MCS related issues from SC

4. SWG Reports on Progress, Priorities and Recommendations
        a. SWG Planning and Development - Report and Recommendations
            i. NPFC Rules for Transparency Pertinent to TCC

        b. SWG Operations - Report and Recommendations

5. Conservation and Management Measures – Amendments or new CMMs

6. IUU Vessel List
    a. Recommendation for Provisional IUU Vessel List to the Commission
    b. Recommendations for amendments to current NPFC IUU Vessel List to Commission

7. Compliance Monitoring Scheme
    a. Draft Compliance Monitoring Reports for 2024 presentation by Secretariat
    b. Develop Provisional Compliance Report- Annual determination of compliance status and potential responses for each obligation subject to assessment for each Member
    c. List of obligations for consideration for the Compliance Monitoring Scheme in 2025

8. Transshipment
    a. Secretariat Report on 2024 activity

9. Vessel Monitoring System
    a. Secretariat report on implementation

10. High Seas Boarding and Inspection
    a. Secretariat Report
    b. Member Reports

11. Review of Applications for CNCP Status

12. Climate Change

13. Cooperation with Other Organizations
    a. MoU with SPRFMO
    b. MoU with WCPFC
    c. NPFC-NPAFC Work Plan
    d. IMCS Network

14. Performance Review- Recommendations relevant to TCC

15. Other Matters
    a. Consideration of Recommendations for TCC Chair/Vice Chair
    b. Historical Catch Level

16. Review and Endorsement of TCC Work Plan for 2024/2025

17. Recommendations to the Commission

18. Next Meeting

19. Adoption of the Report

20. Close of the Meeting

# LIST OF DOCUMENTS

## MEETING INFORMATION PAPERS

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-FAC07/TCC08/COM09-MIP01 Rev.1 | Meeting Information |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-MIP02 | Provisional Agenda |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-MIP03 | Annotated Indicative Provisional Agenda |

## WORKING PAPERS

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP01 Rev.1 | NPFC 2025 Draft IUU Vessel List |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP02 | Current NPFC IUU Vessel List (See NPFC Circular #11/2025) |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP03 | See NPFC-2025-Draft CR Rev. 5 |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP04 | NPFC IUU Listed Vessel AN TON |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP05 | Small Working Group Ops Seeks Review of Serious Violation Tasking |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP06 | TCC Work Plan 2025-2026 (later COM09WP08 Rev.3) |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP07 | Panama Application for Cooperating Non-Contracting Party Status |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP07 SuppDoc.1 | Annex 1: Panama 2023 NPFC Transshipment Activities Report |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP08 | Proposal to Amend CMM-2024-03 on Transshipments CAN |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP09 | EU Proposal for a Conservation and Management Measure on Minimum Standards for Port State Measures in NPFC |
| NPFC-2025-TCC8-WP10 | Proposal from the European Union for a Conservation and Management Measure for Minimum Standards for the Collection, Reporting, Verification and Exchange of data in NPFC |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP11 | Proposed Amendments to the Transshipment Measure for TCC Consideration - Small Working Group Ops |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP12 | SWG Ops VMS Entry/Exit Notification Options |

| | |
|---|---|
| Rev.4 | |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP13 Rev.2 | Proposal for a new Transshipment Observer Program measure SWG PD |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP14 | KOR Proposal for Conservation and Management Measure on Minimum Standards for Port State Measures |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP15 Rev.1 | Proposal to Amend CMM-2024-03 on Transshipments |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP16 | NPFC Rules of Transparency - Working Paper submitted by SWG PD |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP17 | Proposal from the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission for a Joint Workshop on interactions between anadromous fish and NPFC fisheries |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP18 | Document Number Not Used |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP19 Rev.1 | Consolidated Proposals to Amend CMM-2024-03 on Transshipments |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP20 | CA, EU, KR Proposal for a CMM on Minimum Standards for Port State Measures in NPFC |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP21 | 2025 Provisional IUU Vessel List |

**INFORMATION PAPERS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP01 Rev.6 | NPFC 2024 Fisheries Overview |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP01 Rev. 6 SuppDoc.1 | Summary of Discrepancies Between Secretariat and Member Vessel Data |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP02 | NPFC Data Management System Update and New Initiatives |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP03 | Matters for coordination between SC and TCC |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP04 Rev.1 | SWG Ops Summary Report for 2024-2025 period |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP05 Rev.1 | 2024 High Seas Boarding and Inspection Overview |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP06 | Performance Review Recommendations relevant to TCC |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP06 SuppDoc.1 | TCC Related From Performance Review (Supporting Document for NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP06) |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP07 | Information paper submitted by China |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP08 Rev.3 | NPFC 2024 Transshipment Overview |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP09 Rev.2 | NPFC 2024 Vessel Monitoring System Overview |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP10 | SWG OPs Supplemental report on Historical Catch Tasking |

| | |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-IP10 SuppDoc.1 | Historic Existing Level with CMM |

**OBSERVER PAPERS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-OP01 | Statement to the 8th Meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee and 9th Annual Session of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-OP02 | NPAFC-Progress of 5 year workplan |

**REPORTS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-Draft CR Rev.5 | NPFC-2025-Draft CR |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-Draft 2025 CR Rev.5 Excel Table | NPFC 2025 Draft Compliance Report |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-Draft 2025 CR SuppDoc.1 | 2023-2024 Members Implementation Report COM Draft Report |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-Draft 2025 CR SuppDoc.2 | Executive Summary for 2025 NPFC CMR |
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-Draft 2025 CR SuppDoc.3 | Sanction Letter From Russia |

**REFERENCES**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-TCC08-Final Report | TCC08 Final Report in Track Changes and Cleaned |

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# NPFC RULES OF TRANSPARENCY FOR TCC

## 1) Accredited Observer Participation at TCC

In the case of accredited observers (as listed in Rule of Procedure 9.1), participation in meetings of the TCC, as a subsidiary body to the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC), will be in accordance with Commission Rules of Procedure 9: Observers.

TCC discussions relating to draft and provisional compliance reports will be open to accredited observers as a default practice. Accredited observers may not disclose information from TCC meetings or associated documentation, as per Rule 9.7, including non-public domain information as per the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol. Failure to comply will be addressed consistent with Rule 9.8 of the Rules of Procedure.

## 2) Accredited Observer participation in TCC small working group (SWG) meetings

In the case of accredited observers (as listed in Rule of Procedure 9.1), attendance and participation in TCC Small Working Group (SWG) meetings will be in accordance with the following procedures:

a) Accredited Observers may generally attend any TCC SWG meeting in accordance with Rule of Procedure 9 and these Transparency Rules. Should a Member object to an accredited observer's participation in a TCC SWG meeting, that Member must submit a rationale to the Secretariat, to be distributed to Members, at least 14 days before the SWG meeting in question. A simple majority of Members must concur, through email correspondence, with the exclusion of an accredited observer from the SWG meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting, otherwise the observer may attend.

b) Meetings of TCC SWGs, or portions of TCC SWG meetings, may be closed to accredited observers if the meeting or a portion of the meeting would disclose information listed in (i), (ii), or (iii) below.

i) confidential commercial, financial or other operational information deemed privileged or confidential under Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol;

ii) confidential information on monitoring, control and surveillance, particularly on High Seas Boarding and Inspection enforcement and fishery related activities data, including transshipment data, deemed privileged or confidential under NPFC's Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol;

iii) confidential information relating solely to the internal rules and practices of the NPFC, such as personnel matters, that are required to be kept confidential by NPFC policy.

**3) Accredited Observer access to all TCC documents, including documents of SWGs**

For TCC meetings, accredited observers shall receive access to draft and provisional compliance reports, Implementation Questionnaires and associated documentation and other non-public domain information on or around the same time as Commission Members. Access to these meeting documents is subject to confidentiality rules adopted by the Commission, including the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol and the NPFC Document Policy.

For TCC SWG meetings, documents will be made available to accredited observers unless otherwise specified, on or around the same time as Commission Members. Materials developed during the SWG meeting will be made available to the above-mentioned accredited observers upon completion of the meeting in a time consistent with Member access to the materials. Access to these meeting documents is subject to confidentiality rules adopted by the Commission, including the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol and the NPFC Document Policy.

These rules will be reviewed at COM10, and as necessary thereafter, and revised as necessary.

North Pacific Fisheries Commission

# NPFC IUU VESSEL LIST FOR 2025

Commission Members adopted the attached NPFC IUU List at the Ninth Commission Meeting concluded on 27 March 2025

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | LIAO YUAN YU 071 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| It was seen at 42˚15.4'N, 153˚22.8'E on 23 Aug 2016. When the Japanese patrol vessel approached, a vessel crew tried to hide the vessel name. Communication between the Japanese patrol vessel and LIAO YUAN YU 071 indicated that they hid the vessel name because they didn't want to be caught. (Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type; Lighted lift net vessel; Tonnage: 800t) | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | LIAO YUAN YU 072 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |
| | **j. Summary of activities** | | | | **k. subsequent sightings/Other information** | | | |
| | It was seen at 42˚18.7'N, 153˚27.9'E on 23 Aug and at 42˚9.2'N, 151˚16.4'E on 11 Oct 2016. Vessel name was hidden by paint. (Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type; Lighted lift net vessel; Tonnage: 800t) | | | | | | | |
| | **g. Photographs** | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | LIAO YUAN YU 9 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| It was seen at 42˚3.0'N, 153˚0.8'E on 23 Aug and at 42˚10.0'N, 151˚16.8'E on 11 Oct 2016. Vessel name was hidden by paint.<br>(Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type; Lighted lift net vessel; Tonnage: 800t) | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | ZHOU YU 651 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| It was seen at 42˚30'2N, 152˚05'4E on 29 Sep 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel:<br>Fungcheng; Vessel type; Lighted lift net vessel; Tonnage: 850t) | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | ZHOU YU 652 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| It was seen at 42˚48.9'N, 152˚48.2'E on 7 Sep 2016. Port of registry was hidden by paint. (Vessel type; Lighted lift net vessel; Tonnage: 820t). MMSI: 412569986 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | ZHOU YU 653 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| It was seen with LU RONG YU YUN 56219 and ZHOU YU 656 at 42˚11.9'N, 151˚14.6'E on 30 Sep 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel: Fungcheng; Vessel type; Lighted lift net vessel; Tonnage: 850t) Communication between Japanese patrol vessel and LU RONG YU YUN 56219 indicated ZHOU YU 653 were transshipping 1500t of mackerel together with ZHOU YU 656. | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | ZHOU YU 656 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |
| | **j. Summary of activities** | | | | **k. subsequent sightings/Other information** | | | |
| | It was seen with LU RONG YU YUN 56219 and ZHOU YU 656 at 42˚11.9'N, 151˚14.6'E on 30 Sep 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel: Fungcheng; Vessel type; Lighted lift net vessel; Tonnage: 850t)<br>Note that the same vessel name with the different port of registry (Zhoushan) (600t) has been seen in the similar area.<br><br>Communication between Japanese patrol vessel and LU RONG YU YUN 56219 indicated ZHOU YU 656 were transshipping 1500t of mackerel together with ZHOU YU 653. MMSI: 100900240 412440242 | | | | | | | |
| | **g. Photographs (No Photographs Available)** | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | ZHOU YU 657 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |
| | **j. Summary of activities** | | | | **k. subsequent sightings/Other information** | | | |
| | It was seen at 42˚35.5'N, 152˚6.7'E on 12 Sep 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel: Zhoushan; Vessel type; Lighted lift net vessel; Tonnage: 600t) | | | | | | | |
| | **g. Photographs** | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | ZHOU YU 658 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| It was seen at 40˚12.3'N, 148˚40.5'E on 29 May 2016 and at 42˚46.7'N, 152˚41.2'E on 7 Sep 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel: Zhoushan; Vesseltype; Lighted lift net vessel; Tonnage: 600t) | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | ZHOU YU 659 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |
| | **j. Summary of activities** | | | | **k. subsequent sightings/Other information** | | | |
| | It was seen in the NPFC area on 2, 4, 13, 17 Jun and 7 Sep 2016. On 4 Jun the vessel name on the right side was hidden by paint. (Port displayed on the vessel: Zhoushan; Vessel type: Lighted lift net vessel; Tonnage: 600t) | | | | | | | |
| | **g. Photographs** | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | ZHOU YU 660 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |

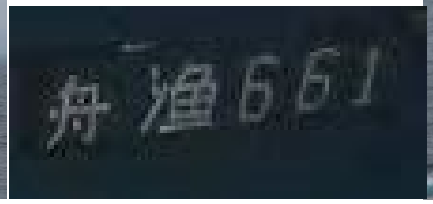
| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| It was seen in the Japanese EEZ on 10 May 2016 and in NPFC area multiple times from May to Sep 2016. On 10 May the vessel showed Korean flag but changed the Korean to Japanese flag when the Japanese patrol vessel approached.<br>Vessel name changed between 15 May and 12 Sep 2016 (see the photos). The vessel is not permitted in Japan nor registered in NPFC. (Port displayed on the vessel:Basuo-not apparent; Vessel type: Lightedlift net vessel; Tonnage: 600t) | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | ZHOU YU 661 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| It was seen in the Japanese EEZ on 10 and 13 May 2016 and in NPFC area on 15, 29 May and 7 Sep 2016. The vessel names on the left and right side changed frequently (see the photos). The vessel showed Japanese flag in May. But the vessel is not permitted in Japan nor registered in NPFC. (Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type: Lighted lift net vessel; Tonnage: 600t) | |

**g. Photographs**



| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | HAI DA 705 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| Communications between Japanese Patrol vessel and HAI DA 705 at 43˚10.4'N, 153˚38.6'E on 11 Sep 2016 indicated they caught squid with drift net in the high sea. (Port displayed on the vessel: 沈家们; Vessel type: Drift net vessel; Tonnage: 290t) | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | LU RONG YU 1189 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |
| | **j. Summary of activities** | | | | **k. subsequent sightings/Other information** | | | |
| | It was seen at 41˚24.9'N, 140˚32.7'E (Japan EEZ) on 14 Jun 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type: Carrier vessel; Tonnage: 100t) MMSI: 412321992 | | | | | | | |
| | **g. Photographs** | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | ZHE LING YU LENG 90055 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| It was seen at 40˚25.3'N, 149˚13.2'E on 29 May 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel: Wenling; Vessel type: Carrier vessel; Tonnage: 600t) MMSI: 412000000 413202046 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | ZHE LING YU LENG 905 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 29 Aug. 2017 | |
| | **j. Summary of activities** | | | | **k. subsequent sightings/Other information** | | | |
| | It was seen at 42˚45.6'N, 152˚45.8'E on 24 Aug 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel: Wenling; Vessel type: Carrier vessel; Tonnage: 1000t) MMSI: 412000000 412000256 | | | | | | | |
| | **g. Photographs (No Photographs Available)** | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | LU RONG YUAN YU 101 | unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 13 Nov. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| While LU RONG YUAN YU 101 is registered as a light PS vessel in the NPFC list, the identical name with different vessel types were seen. LU RONG YUAN YU 101 with lift net type was seen at 49˚9.2'N, 149˚19.5'E on 17 May 2016. LU RONG YUAN YU 101 with stern-trawl type was seen at 38˚0.2'N, 145˚58.5'E on 20 May 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type: Stern Trawl/Light lift net vessel; Tonnage: 800t/651t) MMSI: Lift Netter 656558842 Trawler 412328753 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | LU RONG YUAN YU 102 | unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 13 Nov. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| While LU RONG YUAN YU 102 is registered as one light PS vessel in the NPFC list, the identical name with different vessel types were seen. LU RONG YUAN YU 102 with lift net type was seen at 42˚21.3'N, 151˚ 55.5'E on 11 Oct 2016. LU RONG YUAN YU 102 with stern-trawl type was seen at 42˚ 7.3'N, 151˚13.8'E on the same day. LU RONG YUAN YU 102 was also seen with a carrier vessel “MIN FU DING YU LENG 08888” at 42˚22.2'N, 151˚19.6'E on 12 Oct 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type: Stern Trawl/Light lift net vessel;<br>Tonnage: 800t/651t) MMSI: Trawler 412328752; Lift Net 413228752 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | LU RONG YUAN YU 103 | unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 13 Nov. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| While LU RONG YUAN YU 103 is registered as one light PS vessel in the NPFC list, the identical name with different vessel types were seen. LU RONG YUAN YU 103 with lift net type was seen at 40˚25.9'N, 150˚ 9.9'E on 1 June 2016. LU RONG YUAN YU 103 with stern-trawl type was seen at 37˚59.9'N, 145˚58.5'E on 20 May 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type: Stern Trawl/Light lift net vessel; Tonnage: 651t/651t) MMSI: Lift Net & Trawler 412328751 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | LU RONG YUAN YU 105 | unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 13 Nov. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| While LU RONG YUAN YU 105 is registered as one light PS vessel in the NPFC list, the identical name with different vessel types were seen. LU RONG YUAN YU 105 with lift net type was seen at 42˚27'N, 152˚ 5.8'E on 11 Oct 2016.LU RONG YUAN YU 105 with stern-trawl type was seen at 41˚54.8'N, 151˚17.4'E on 5 Sep 2016. (Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type: Stern Trawl/Light lift net vessel; Tonnage: 651t/651t) MMSI: Lift Netter 926001560<br>412428757 Trawler 412328749 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | LU RONG YUAN YU 106 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 13 Nov. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| While LU RONG YUAN YU 106 is registered as one light PS vessel in the NPFC list, the identical name with different vessel types were seen. LU RONG YUAN YU 106 with lift net type was seen at 40˚30.4'N, 149˚ 34'E on 29 May 2016. LU RONG YUAN YU 106 with stern-trawl type was seen at 40˚17.6'N, 148˚33'E on the same day.<br>The two fishing vessels with duplicate names “LU RONG YUAN YU 106” were seen transshipping with a carrier vessel “MIN FU DING YU LENG 08888” at 42˚16.4'N, 151˚21.4'E on 8 Oct 2016 (see the last photo). (Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type: Stern Trawl/Light lift net vessel; Tonnage: 651t/651t) MMSI: Lift Netter 412328748 Trawler 412328748 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | LU RONG YUAN YU 108 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 13 Nov. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| While LU RONG YUAN YU 108 is registered as one light PS vessel in the NPFC list, the identical name with different vessel types were seen. LU RONG YUAN YU 108 with lift net type was seen at 40˚28.4'N, 149˚28.1'E on 29 May 2016. LU RONG YUAN YU 108 with stern-trawl type was seen at 40˚18.6'N, 148˚30.7'E on the same day. (Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type: Stern Trawl/Light lift net vessel; Tonnage: 651t/651t) MMSI: Trawler 800024754 Lift Netter 412443265 412328746 800025754 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | LU RONG YUAN YU 109 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 13 Nov. 2017 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| While LU RONG YUAN YU 109 is registered as one light PS vessel in the NPFC list, the identical name with different vessel types were seen. LU RONG YUAN YU 109 with lift net type was seen at 40˚25.1'N, 149˚ 25 'E on 29 May 2016. LU RONG YUAN YU 109 with stern-trawl type was seen at 40˚16.4'N, 148˚32.1'E on the same day. (Port displayed on the vessel: Shidao; Vessel type: Stern Trawl/Light lift net vessel; Tonnage: 651t/651t) MMSI: Trawler 412328745<br>800025747 Lift Netter 412328745 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | LU RONG●YU 612 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 19 Aug 2018 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese patrol vessel sighted this fishing vessel was drifting in the Convention area at 39˚50.00'N, 147˚1.8'E on July 21. The port of registry is Shidao and AIS information showed that the vessel name is “Lu Long Yuan Yu 108”, which is on the current IUU vessel list and is different from the name shown on the vessel side, and that MMSI is 412328746.<br>The tonnage 651 t was derived from the information of “Lu Long Yuan Yu 108” in the current IUU vessel list.<br>Ref: NPFC-2018-TCC03-WP04 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | LU RONG YUAN YU 787 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 19 Aug 2018 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese patrol vessel sighted this fishing vessel was drifting in the Convention area at 39˚49.7'N, 147˚2.8'E on July 21 2017, and Japanese patrol aircraft sighted the same vessel anchored at 41˚3.3'N, 150˚22.1'E on August 2 2017. The China flag was raised and the sign of “CHINA” was painted on the vessel side (see the photos).<br>MMSI is 413800814 and the port of registry is Shidao.<br>Ref: NPFC-2018-TCC03-WP04 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | LU RONG YUAN YU YUN 958 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 19 Aug 2018 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese patrol fishing vessel sighted this fishing vessel was drifting in the Convention area at 39˚50.9'N, 147˚4.3'E on July 21. The vessel raised China flag and the port of registry was Shidao.<br>AIS information showed that the vessel name is 958 and MMSI is 412452812.<br>Ref: NPFC-2018-TCC03-WP04 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27 | LU RONG YUAN YU 797 | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | 19 Aug 2018 | |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese patrol aircraft sighted this fishing vessel in the Convention area was operating at 42˚7.1'N, 151˚40.9'E on July 7 2017. China flag was raised and “CHINA” was painted on the vessel side (see the photo).<br>MMSI is 412327980.<br>Ref: NPFC-2018-TCC03-WP04 | |

g. Photographs

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | LU RONG SHUI 158 (鲁荣水158) | Unknown | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | | CMM 2017-02 para 3. a |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese patrol vessel sighted this fishing vessel in the Convention area at 39˚59.2'N, 147˚39.7'E on July 7, 2018. There is no vessel registration of this vessel on the NPFC vessel register. MMSI 412688540 | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | Unknown(*) | Unknown – raised flag of China | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | | CMM 2017-02 para 3. a |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese trawl vessel sighted this fishing vessel indicating its vessel name "ZHOU YU 808" MMSI 412671880, in the Koko seamount area of Convention area at 36˚44'N, 171˚27'E on August 29, 2018, allegedly conducted fishing for deep sea coral. There was a duly registered vessel with the same name "ZHOU YU 808" on the NPFC vessel registry, but it is confirmed that the sighted vessel is not the duly licensed one. | |

**g. Photographs**

**Associated Documents**

Circular 030-2018 (https://www.npfc.int/system/files/2018-11/Circular%20030-2018%20Sighting%20Information%20of%20Fishing%20Vessels%20without%20Nationality.pdf)
Japanese Document (https://www.npfc.int/system/files/2018-11/Sighting%20infomation%20from%20Japan.pdf)

(*) This vessel indicated its name as " Zhou Yu 808 (舟漁 808)" when sighted.

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | Unknown (*) | Unknown – raised flag of China | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | | CMM 2017-02 para 3. a |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese trawl vessel sighted this fishing vessel indicating its vessel name "ZHOU YU 809" MMSI 412401260, in the Koko seamount area of Convention area at 36˚44'N, 171˚27'E on August 29, 2018, allegedly conducted fishing for deep sea coral. There was a duly registered vessel with the same name "ZHOU YU 809" on the NPFC vessel registry, but it is confirmed that the sighted vessel is not the duly licensed one. | |

**g. Photographs**

**Associated Documents**

Circular 030-2018 (https://www.npfc.int/system/files/2018-11/Circular%20030-2018%20Sighting%20Information%20of%20Fishing%20Vessels%20without%20Nationality.pdf)
Japanese Document (https://www.npfc.int/system/files/2018-11/Sighting%20infomation%20from%20Japan.pdf)

(*) This vessel indicated its name as "ZHOU YU 809 (舟漁809)" when sighted.

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31 | YUANDA 6 (Assumed from MMSI number) | Unknown – raised flag of China | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | | CMM 2017-02 para 3. a |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese patrol vessel sighted this vessel conducting fishing operation in the Convention area at 25˚45'9N, 147˚07'06E on April 15, 2019. This nameless vessel (assumed "YUANDA6" from the vessel's NMSI) was operating and running away when the Japanese patrol vessel approached. | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 | YUANDA 8 (Assumed from MMSI number) | Unknown – raised flag of China | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | | CMM 2017-02 para 3. a |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese patrol vessel sighted this fishing vessel conducting fishing operation in the Convention area at 25˚46'02N, 147˚07'08E on April 15, 2019. This nameless vessel (assumed "YUANDA8" from the vessel's NMSI) was operating and running away when the Japanese patrol vessel approached. | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33 | ZHEXIANG YU 23029 | Unknown – raised flag of China | Not known | Not known | Not known | Not known | | CMM 2017-02 para 3. a |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese patrol vessel sighted this fishing vessel in the Convention area at 25˚42'03N, 147˚11'02E on April 15, 2019. This vessel apparently had just finished as the gear was wet. the vessel name, which was not registered on the NPFC vessel registry, was erased deliberately. | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 34 | Unknown | No Nationality | | | | | | CMM 2019-01 (para5) |
| | **j. Summary of activities** | | | | **k. subsequent sightings/Other information** | | | |
| | A Japanese patrol vessel sighted this fishing vessel displaying the name LU RONGYUAN YU 581 鲁荣远渔 581 in the Convention area at 41°11.6'N, 174°17.7'W on July 15, 2020. This vessel was fishing under the name of a legally authorized vessels which was not in the Convention Area, consequently this vessel was conducting IUU fishing and did not display an IRCS. | | | | | | | |
| | **g. Photographs** | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35 | Unknown | No Nationality | | | | | | CMM 2019-01 (para5) |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese patrol vessel sighted this fishing vessel displaying the name LU RONG YUAN YU 582 鲁荣远渔 582 in the Convention area at 41°11.4'N, 174°22.9'W on July 15, 2020.<br>This vessel was fishing under the name of a legally authorized vessels which was not in the Convention Area, consequently this vessel was conducting IUU fishing and did not display an IRCS. | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 36 | Unknown | No Nationality | | | | | | CMM 2019-01 (para5) |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| A Japanese patrol vessel sighted this fishing vessel displaying the name LU RONG YUAN YU 197 鲁 荣 远 渔 197 in the Convention area at 41°11.3'N, 174°20.3'W on July 15, 2020.<br>This vessel was fishing under the name of a legally authorized vessels which was not in the Convention Area, consequently this vessel was conducting IUU fishing and did not display an IRCS. | |

**g. Photographs**

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37 | AN TON (previously WAN TONG, ZHONG FU HAO 111, HUMBOLDT BAY) | Bangladesh (Comoros) (Cameroon) (Panama) (Liberia) | New Millenium Ocean Shipping Company Ltd. (FUWANTONG OCEAN SHIPPING CO., LIMITED.) | Ke Benwen | TJM0159 (previously HO4706) | 8907888 | 26-7-23 | CMM2021-01 (para1,2,3,6,9,10)<br>CMM 2019-02 (para3) |

| j. Summary of activities | k. subsequent sightings/Other information |
|---|---|
| This vessel was observed conducting unauthorized transshipment activities in the NPFC Convention Area on September 6, 2021. | Information presented at March 2025 NPFC Commission meeting suggest the vessel was scrapped in Bangladesh in 2024; awaiting confirmation. |

**g. Photographs**

Photos taken at 7:43 (JST) on September 6, 2021

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38 | RIWA (previously GLORIWAVE) | Togo (Sierra Leone) | Salimar Limited | | 5VIR8 (previously T8A4017) | 9017666 | 26-7-23 | CMM 2021-01 (para1,2,3,6, 9,10),<br><br>CMM 2019-02 (para3) |
| | **j. Summary of activities** | | | | **k. subsequent sightings/Other information** | | | |
| | This vessel was observed conducting unauthorized bunkering activities in the NPFC Convention Area on June 26, 2022.<br>NOTE: TCC06 was informed that the vessel is understood to have flagged to Palau, and later Togo, and may also be using the name RIWA. | | | | | | | |
| | **g. Photographs** | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39 | QIAN YUAN | UNKNOWN (Panama) | GINSIL HOLDING GROUP LIMITED | PHAM HONG NAM | H3YK (5VEZ8) | 8819691 | 26-7-23 | JAPAN:<br>CMM 2021-01 (para1,2,3,6,9,10),<br>CMM 2019-02 (para3),<br>CMM 2021-09 (para38)<br><br>PANAMA:<br>As per Annex A, items i and j |
| | **j. Summary of activities** | | | | **k. subsequent sightings/Other information** | | | |
| | This vessel was observed conducting unauthorized transshipment activities in the NFPC Convention Area between June 23 and 26, 2022. | | | | | | | |
| | **g. Photographs** | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

| No. | a. Name of vessel (previous names) | b. Flag of vessel (previous flags) | c. Owner (previous owners) | d. Operator of vessel (previous operators) | e. Call sign of vessel (previous call signs) | f. Lloyds/IMO number | h. Date first included on NPFC IUU Vessel List | i. CMM and paragraph noting violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 40 | HAN (previously SHUN HANG, VILA MOOSUN) | St Kitts & Nevis (Panama) (Tuvalu) | Trade Shipping Inc (SHUNHANG INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING CO.,LIMITED) | Machtrans Ship Management (HOWLADER MD NAJIR) | V4BK5 (previously H3DE) | 8214645 | 26-7-23 | CMM 2021-12 (para7) |
| | **j. Summary of activities** | | | | **k. subsequent sightings/Other information** | | | |
| | This vessel was observed actively engaged in transshipment activities in the Convention Area on September 17th and a review showed it had not transmitted required VMS positional data to the NPFC Secretariat between September 16th and September 21st, 2022. | | | | | | | |
| | **g. Photographs** | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

# 2025 NPFC Compliance Monitoring Report
# Executive Summary

The TCC forwards the Provisional Compliance Monitoring Report (CMR) to the Commission for consideration at its 9th annual meeting. The provisional CMR includes an Executive Summary, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the CMM 2024-13, with recommendations or observations from TCC regarding:

a) Non-compliance trends

This was the first year implementing the CMS CMM, so no non-compliance trends were identified (as there are no past CMRs). However, Members noted some of the areas of potential non-compliance showed multiple, similar infractions, which could indicate possible trends in the future.

b) Existing obligations that should be amended or improved

One area that repeatedly prevents TCC to undertake conclusive assessments concern those obligations referring to fishing effort levels compared to the historic levels, present in several CMMs. Defining historical fishing level was tasked to the TCC SWG for Operations and is an on-going issue. Without this information, existing obligations related to possible increased fishing efforts (in potential violation of some CMMs) are difficult to adequately assess. Thus, defining historical fishing level in those CMMs which refer to such levels, is needed to be able to properly assess compliance. TCC also noted the recurrent challenges to conciliate the number of authorized vessels reported in recent years in the annual fisheries overview report presented by the Secretariat to TCC and which does not allow undertaking any compliance assessment against the relevant obligations.

c) Revisions to the list of obligations to be assessed

Members recommend the following obligations be added to the List of Obligations to be Assessed (Annex II of the CMS CMM):

- Para. 16 of the Pacific saury CMM (2024-08)
- Para. 31 of HSBI CMM (2024-09)
- Para. 5 of the anadromous fish CMM (2024-16)
- Para. 7 of the anadromous fish CMM (2024-16)
- Para. 9 of the anadromous fish CMM (2024-16)
- Para. 11 of the anadromous fish CMM (2024-16)
- Para. 2 of the vessel registry CMM (2023-01)

Members also suggest the Commission keep the List of Obligations to be Assessed open while the Commission considers new and amended CMMs, in case Members wish to add any obligations from such new or amended CMMs to the List of Obligations to be Assessed for next year.

No deletions were suggested.

d) Obstacles to implementation identified by Members and CNCPs

One obstacle to implementation identified by Members was the interpretation of CMMs. In a few cases, Members interpreted CMMs differently, which led to considerable discussion about whether there was a non-compliance issue.

e) Capacity building assistance needs

This was not discussed by TCC.

TCC also identified areas where there were data gaps and provided general feedback on the process to improve future CMRs. This included:

- Members acknowledged that this assessment process should be "member-based," rather than "vessel-based." In addition, it was also acknowledged that according to CMM 2024-13 members' actions in response to alleged violations by their flagged vessels or nationals should be also assessed during the CMR. Hence, vessel-based violations should be considered (through a member-compliance lens) when assessing member compliance.
- Members noted that it would be helpful to have more information and detail in future draft CMRs complied by the Secretariat. For example, more detail on how the Secretariat used to identify potential areas of non-compliance and the data-source(s) used, an outline of the process the Secretariat used to identify areas of potential non-compliance, more detail on the potential non-compliance issue (the facts provided in a background summary attachment), and more data to help Members assess compliance (e.g. actual catch/effort vs. established catch/limits, if potential non-compliance issue relates to exceeding quantitative limits).
- The "Priority Non-Compliant" status could use clearer guidelines. For example, besides repeated non-compliance, what constitutes non-compliance that "significantly undermines the objective of the Convention?"
- Data gaps included: more detail needed in Implementation Questionnaire (questions and replies seem "too simple" and possibly not helpful), more information should be gathered from observer reports (from transshipment CMM), and more detail was requested in the response from Members (including detail on sanctions, if applicable, to help determine deterrent effect).
- Feedback was provided on the process of going through the CMR at TCC. Generally, there was support for the process suggested and taken by the TCC Chair, while recognizing it is time consuming, it was seen as necessary, and is consistent with other RFMO practices. However, it was also noted that more time for Members to consider other areas of potential non-compliance (beyond what the Secretariat identifies) would be necessary.

- Additional work is needed to streamline the two key pillars of the CMR, (ie, Members' compliance with NPFC obligations and Members' responses to violations of their flagged vessels) and ensure adequate articulation with future IUU listings to avoid duplication and inconsistencies between the two processes.

- Additionally, while not an obstacle to Members implementing CMMs, one obstacle to implementing this CMS CMM was identified by some Members: the need for clear CMS process and audit points to clarify the Commission's obligations assessed under the CMS and how Members should be meeting these obligations, as well as assist the Secretariat to identify non compliance issues.

| NPFC 2025 Compliance Monitoring Report | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Members | | | | | | | | |
| Measure | Paragraph Number | Description | Source | CA | CN | EU | JP | KR | RU | CT | US | VU |
| 2023-01 | 3 | Promptly update Vessel Registry | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4 | Notify active vessels | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 5 | Mark Vessels | HSBI/Air Surv. | | COMPLIANT | | | | COMPLIANT | COMPLIANT | | |
| | 7 | IUU attestation | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2024-02 | 24(a) | Remove IUU vessels from Vessel Registry | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 24(b) | No transshipments, joint fishing, or support operations with IUU-listed vessels | IP07 | | NON-COMPLIANT | | | | | | | |
| | 24(c) | No port entry for IUU-listed vessels (except force majeure) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 24(d) | No chartering of IUU-listed vessels | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 24(e) | Do not flag IUU-listed vessels unless they are proven no longer IUU-associated | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 24(f) | No commercial dealings with IUU-listed vessels (imports, landings, transshipments) | IP07 | | NON-COMPLIANT | | | | | | | |
| | 4 | Only transship if both vessels are authorized and on the NPFC Vessel Registry | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 6 | Authorization required if transshipping under national jurisdiction | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 8 | Follow Commission reporting procedures | Draft IUU List | | FLAG STATE ACTION ONGOING | | | | | | | |
| | 9 | Report all marine species, including bycatch and unregulated species | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | Keep an onboard record of each transshipment (declarations and daily logs) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 12 | Provide at least 24-hour advance notice of intended transshipment | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 14 | Provide at least 24-hour advance notice of other transfer activity | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 15 | If transshipment doesn't start within 24 hours or 20 nm, update notification | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 16 | If other transfer doesn't start within 24 hours or 20 nm, update notification | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2024-03 | 19 | If transshipment is canceled, notify the Secretariat promptly | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 21 | Investigate any non-compliance information received about flagged vessel | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 22 | Report investigation progress within 60 days to Secretariat and info provider | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 23 | Keep each offloading vessel's catch separate with a stowage plan | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 25 | Submit a transshipment declaration within 10 days | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 27 | Until observer/EM program is in place, deploy independent observers | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 29 | Receiving vessel must provide safe conditions, accommodation, and comms for observers | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 30 | Ensure receiving vessels have an observer onboard | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 31 | Only one transshipment at a time per observer | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 32 | Observer must have full access and adequate workspace | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 34 | Observer to record transshipment report immediately and submit a final report within 10 days post-disembarkation | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 35 | Observer promptly reports any violation to Secretariat and relevant authorities | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 36 | Flag State investigates violations and reports actions in the Annual Report | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 47 | In force majeure, notify Secretariat before transshipment ends and provide declaration within 10 days | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 49 | Annually summarize transshipment data in the Annual Report | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 50 | Verify all transshipment information received from vessels | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 52 | Investigate potential non-compliance and report results to the Commission | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2023-05 | 4.A | Limit effort to 2007 agreed level | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4.G | Move on when encountering sponges/corals | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4.L | Japan: limit NPA to 15,000 MT | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 5 | Submit impact assessments (Annex 3) and authorize bottom fishing per 4 C | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 6.A | Report bottom fishing details annually | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 6.B | Collect and report scientific info (Annex 4); observers collect data (Annex 5) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 8 | All vessels carry observers | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2024-06 | 8 | One month before SC, provide historical/current fishing info and observer data | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2024-07 | 1 | If substantial CA harvest, no expansion beyond historical level until assessment done | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 13 | Provide CA/NW-separated data by end of February | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2024-08 | 1 | Non-NW saury fishers refrain from expanding beyond historical level | | | UNABLE TO BE ASSESSED AT THIS TIME | | | | UNABLE TO BE ASSESSED AT THIS TIME | | | |
| | 2 | NW saury fishers refrain from rapid CA expansion beyond historical level | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 9 | Until TAC is set, reduce 2024 saury catch to 55% of 2018 level | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | Provide weekly saury catches by Wednesday of following week. | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | At 90% TAC, large quota (>10,000 mt) must close within 72 hrs; smaller quota must not exceed 90% of limit | HSBI | | UNABLE TO BE ASSESSED AT THIS TIME | | | | | | | |
| | 12 | At 70% limit, SEC notifies; at 100% limit, close fishery and notify SEC | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2024-09 | 7 | Ensure vessels accept boardings | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 7 | Inspectors follow procedures | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 26 | Vessel masters facilitate safe boarding and cooperate | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 28 | Unless safety warrants delay, authorities must ensure compliance. If the master refuses, suspend fishing and return to port; notify inspectors and the Commission | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 41 | Members report annually on inspections and possible violations | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 42 | Members report annually on actions taken for alleged violations, including sanctions | Annual Report | | | | | | DELAYED SUBMISSION | | | |
| 2019-10 | 8 | All sablefish vessels: 100% observer coverage | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2024-11 | 1 | Substantial harvesters: no expansion beyond historical level until assessment done | | | UNABLE TO BE ASSESSED AT THIS TIME | | | | UNABLE TO BE ASSESSED AT THIS TIME | | | |
| | 7 | Submit data on 3 pelagics as required in annual report | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2024-12 | 8 | Vessels transmit data hourly to FMC | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | FMC auto-transmits data to SEC within 60 min | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 11 | FMC can auto-receive and auto-transmit data to SEC | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 12 | Provide FMC contact details (name/position/email/phone) to SEC | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 22 | After two transmission failures/year, investigate (examine MTU) and report to SEC | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2024-14 | 6 | No shark finning | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 7 | No retention/transshipment/landing of detached shark fins | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 8 | Only remove fins if shark identifiable and allowed methods used | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 9 | Record all sharks | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | Report sharks annually | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2024-15 | 4 | No discarding/abandoning gear at sea | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 8 | No plastic release at sea (including incinerator ash) | HSBI | | | | | | | COMPLIANT | | |
| | 11 | FV prevent gear/garbage/plastic loss at sea | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 12 | FV retrieve lost/abandoned gear/plastic if possible | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 16 | Store gear/garbage/plastic onboard until port disposal | | | | | | | | | | |

**Country/Region Code Legend:**

CA for Canada, CN for China, EU for European Union, JP for Japan, KR for Korea (Republic of Korea), RU for Russia, CT for Chinese Taipei, US for United States, VU for Vanuatu

# TCC WORK PLAN 2025-2026 (including SWG OPs and PD)

| No. | ISSUE | LEAD | ACTION / TIMELINE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Transshipment** | | |
| | | | |
| | Transshipment amendment implementation | SWG OPs/Secretariat | Continue to track issues related to implementation of transshipment measure. |
| 2 | **Observer program / EM** | | |
| | | | |
| | Implement ROP for transshipment | TCC/SWG | Identify and track tasks necessary for April 2026 implementation |
| | Continue planning for broader NPFC observer program | TCC/SC (Chairs) | Continue dialogue between TCC and SC Chairs on what data should be collected |
| 3 | **Vessel Registry** | | |
| | Update Vessel registry to address errors in current and historic data | Secretariat/Members | Secretariat to work with Members to confirm data in Registry |
| | Information gaps in Vessel Registry | Secretariat/SWG Ops | Secretariat to continue "cleanup" of VR, removing and identifying "information gaps" in Registry. |
| | | | SWG Ops to review and identify gaps and recommend cooperation from Members to update the Registry with current details |
| | Para 4, Annex 2 of CMM2023-01 | SWG Ops | Amend "or" to "in paragraph 4 of Annex 2 of Vessel Registry CMM 2023-01 |
| 4 | **CMS** | | |
| | Multiyear work plan in para. 27 of CMS CMM | SWG PD | Auto- responses, corrective actions, develop audit points, and consider Executive Summary feedback on improvements to the CMS |
| 5 | **HSBI** | | |
| | Update Implementation plan | SWG Ops | Continue to develop HSBI plan for review at TCC08 |
| | Enhancements to the HSBI Events page are required to facilitate data analysis | Secretariat | Establish mechanism for reporting aerial surveillance results on Events page |
| | | | Work with service provider to seek options/costs of enhancing the data entry process for HSBI reports to enable direct entry of reports by Members and automated report generation by Secretariat. |
| 6 | **Port Inspection program** | | |
| | Port state measure draft CMM | SWG PD /OPS Secretariat | Continue work on PSM draft measure, including exploring notification options in view to considering this measure in 2026 for possible adoption. |
| 7 | **Performance Review** | | |
| | Consideration of TCC relevant recommendations consistent with direction from Commission | Secretariat/COM/SC/TCC/ FAC Chairs | 1. The Commission agreed to work intersessionally to continue to update the matrix by: |
| | | | (a) tasking the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chairs of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, to update the matrix based on the outcomes of the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, |
| | | | (b) circulating the updated matrix among Members to seek comments on the priority and suggested way forward for each recommendation, |
| | | | (c) compiling comments from Members and circulating the revised matrix, |
| | | | (d) repeating this process to the extent possible during the intersessional period. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | **Effort Controls** | | |
| | Continue historic existing levels discussion | Secretariat/SWG/SC | "Following extensive discussion, the TCC agreed to recommend that the Commission consider the following:<br><br>(a) Continue work on this issue, considering options discussed at TCC;<br><br>(b) compile in one document when each CMM mentioning historical level was first adopted;<br><br>(c) Seek clarity on data sources from Members for the compiled table;<br><br>(d) Work to reconcile Member data with Secretariat records;<br><br>(e) Consider amending CMMs that reference historical fishing level to provide greater clarity; and<br><br>(f) Further consider criteria proposed by Members for defining historical fishing level, including:<br><br>(i) a period from CMM adoption year minus one through adoption year minus three;<br>(ii) A three-year period from the CMM adoption year going back three years;<br>(iii) (iii) A timeframe reflecting the development of the fishery; or<br>(iv) Other appropriate timeframes from one to multiple years." |
| 9 | **Annual Report Template** | | |
| | Update template | Secretariat/SWGs SC | Review existing reporting template and update to align authorizations/active vessels to their respective fisheries and propose other appropriate revisions at TCC09 |
| 10 | **Data Standards** | | |
| | Data standardization draft CMM | SWG PD | Await progress from SC -SWG Data |

**CMM 2025-13**
***(Entered into force XX July 2025)***

# CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR THE COMPLIANCE MONITORING SCHEME

*The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),*

*Acknowledging* the importance of compliance by Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties to achieve the objective of the Convention as defined in Article 2;

*Recognizing* that Article 7 of the Convention directs the Commission to establish procedures for reviewing compliance with the Convention and measures adopted pursuant to the Convention;

*Recalling* that the Commission has adopted a wide range of conservation and management measures to give effect to the objective of the Convention;

*Noting* that, in accordance with Article 17 of the Convention, Members of the Commission are required to enforce the provisions of the Convention and any conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission;

*Noting* also that, in accordance with international law, Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties have responsibilities to effectively exercise jurisdiction and control over their flagged vessels and with respect to their nationals;

*Acknowledging* that Article 13 of the Convention obliges Members of the Commission to take the necessary measures to ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag comply with the provisions of the Convention and the conservation and management measures adopted pursuant thereto;

*Recognizing* the responsibility of Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties to fully and effectively implement the provisions of the Convention and the conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission, and the need to improve such implementation and ensure compliance with these commitments;

*Noting* that, in a responsible, open, transparent and non-discriminatory manner, the Commission should be made aware of all available information that may be relevant to the work of the Commission in identifying and addressing instances of non-compliance with conservation measures;

*Also recognizing* the importance of having a shared understanding of what is required to comply with an obligation thereby ensuring clear and consistent assessment of the compliance of Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties with all relevant obligations

*Adopts* the following conservation and management measure in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention:

## I. Purpose

1. The purpose of the NPFC Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) is to ensure that all Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CNCPs) implement and comply with obligations under the Convention and conservation and management measures (CMMs) adopted by the Commission. The purpose of the CMS is also to assess Members' and CNCPs' actions in response to alleged violations by their flagged vessels or nationals, not to assess compliance by individual vessels or persons.

2. The CMS is designed to improve Members' and CNCPs' implementation of and compliance with their obligations under the Convention and CMMs by:
    (a) Establishing procedures for reviewing compliance with obligations deriving from the Convention and CMMs;
    (b) Assessing compliance and identifying any trends in non-compliance;
    (c) Identifying areas in which technical assistance or capacity building may be needed to assist Members or CNCPs to attain compliance;
    (d) Identifying obligations which may require amendment for effective implementation and assessment of compliance;
    (e) Providing responses to non-compliance; and,
    (f) Monitoring and verifying corrective actions taken by a Member or CNCP to resolve outstanding instances of non-compliance.

## II. Scope and Application

3. The Commission, with the assistance of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC), shall assess Members' and CNCPs' implementation of and compliance with the obligations arising under the Convention and the CMMs adopted by the Commission and identify trends in and instances of non-compliance.

4. For obligations relating to fishing activities, unless otherwise specified in the relevant CMM, the compliance assessment shall apply to those activities occurring in the Convention Area.

5. The CMS shall not prejudice the rights, jurisdiction and duties of any Member or CNCP to enforce its domestic laws or to take more stringent measures in accordance with its domestic laws, consistent with that Member's or CNCP's international obligations.

6. For obligations on quantitative annual limits (e.g., catch limit, effort limit), the compliance assessment period shall be the previous calendar year. For other obligations, the compliance

assessment period shall be from November 1st of year X-1 to October 31st of year X, where X is the calendar year preceding the TCC meeting.

7. The Commission, with the assistance of TCC, shall determine annually for each Member and CNCP, compliance status and potential responses for each obligation subject to assessment, in accordance with Annexes I and II.

8. Each Member and CNCP shall provide annually to the Secretariat responses to an Implementation Questionnaire, to be developed based on the obligations in Annex II, indicating how it has implemented the conservation and management measures and ensured compliance with and enforcement of obligations adopted by the Commission. The Questionnaire will be made available by the Secretariat for Member use as soon as possible annually, but at the latest 135 days before the TCC meeting. Members and CNCPs shall submit responses to the Secretariat through their Implementation Questionnaire 90 days before the TCC meeting and submit their Annual Reports by February 15th each year.

## III. Draft Compliance Report

9. Prior to TCC, the Secretariat shall compile relevant data and information received from Members and CNCPs, including through their Annual Reports, any data collection source held by the Commission (e.g., reports from observers, Vessel Monitoring Systems, High Seas Boarding and Inspections, and high seas transshipments), communications with Members and CNCPs and, where appropriate, any other relevant information relating to compliance with NPFC CMMs available to the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall then prepare a Draft Compliance Report.

10. The Draft Compliance Report shall:

    (a) Present all available relevant data and information relating to each Member's or CNCP's implementation of and compliance with each obligation under the Convention or CMMs listed in Annex II and identify the data and information sources.

    (b) Identify the areas of potential non-compliance for each Member and CNCP for the obligations listed in Annex II for the current assessment year, and any areas of potential repeated non-compliance with a particular obligation for two or more consecutively assessed years where Members do not fulfill their obligations including imposed sanctions to those vessels in violation of the CMMs adopted by the Commission, or as determined by the Commission**.**

    As appropriate, the Secretariat may request any follow-up information relating to any issues of potential non-compliance identified for the current assessment year.

    (c) Report on any outstanding compliance issues for each Member or CNCP that were identified from previous years, including unresolved non-compliance issues, flag state investigations, or any corrective actions reported by the Member or CNCP, and, as appropriate, requests from the Secretariat for any follow-up information relating to the

previous compliance issues.

(d) Identify provisions/obligations that lack clarity or have inadequate reporting mechanisms or have insufficient data that make it challenging for the Secretariat and TCC to conduct compliance assessments, including factors that contribute to the lack of clarity or data gaps, and suggest means to address these issues.

11. No later than 60 days before the TCC meeting, the Secretariat shall provide each Member and CNCP its section of the Draft Compliance Report.

12. No later than 30 days before the TCC meeting, each Member and CNCP shall provide any additional information needed/requested on its section of the Draft Compliance Report to the Secretariat. This information shall, as appropriate:

(a) Provide information, clarifications, amendments, or corrections that address the potential compliance issues identified or respond to any request for additional information and/or evidence demonstrating implementation of and compliance with the relevant obligations;

(b) Propose corrective actions to be taken, along with time frames, to come into compliance;

(c) Identify any causes of the potential compliance issues or mitigating circumstances;

(d) Identify any technical assistance or capacity building that could assist with achieving compliance; and,

(e) Indicate progress of on-going flag state investigations in response to alleged violations by its flagged vessels.

13. The Secretariat shall then revise the Draft Compliance Report to add all information provided pursuant to paragraph 12 above.

14. No later than 10 days before TCC, the Secretariat shall circulate the revised Draft Compliance Report to Members and CNCPs and make it available on the non-public section of the Commission website.

**IV. Provisional Compliance Report**

15. TCC shall consider the Draft Compliance Report and may take into account any additional, readily verifiable information provided by Members, CNCPs, and accredited observers, including from non-governmental organizations or other organizations concerned with matters relevant to the implementation of the Convention.

16. In considering and assessing the compliance of each Member or CNCP with relevant obligations or any areas of repeated non-compliance, TCC shall also focus on clarifying the intent and purpose of each obligation to be assessed and assessing whether Members and CNCPs have adopted and/or implemented effective mechanisms to ensure the compliance

with the NPFC obligations

17. TCC shall develop a Provisional Compliance Report, which shall include an assessment for each Member's or CNCP's compliance with obligations included in Annex II and any areas of repeated non-compliance, and which shall assign a compliance status for each individual obligation based on Annex I.

18. Each compliance assessment shall be decided by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached. the Provisional Compliance Report shall indicate majority and minority views.

19. Notwithstanding paragraph 18 above, a Member or CNCP cannot block agreement on its own compliance assessment if all other Members present have concurred with the assessment. If the assessed Member disagrees with the assessment, its views shall be reflected in the Provisional Compliance Report.

20. The Provisional Compliance Report shall also include an Executive Summary with recommendations or observations from TCC regarding, as appropriate:
    (a) Non-compliance trends;
    (b) Existing obligations that should be amended or improved;
    (c) Revisions to the list of obligations to be assessed;
    (d) Obstacles to implementation identified by Members and CNCPs; and
    (e) Capacity building assistance needs.

21. TCC shall forward the Provisional Compliance Report to the Commission for consideration at the annual meeting.

## V. Final Compliance Report

22. At each regular Commission meeting, the Commission shall consider the Provisional Compliance Report recommended by TCC and adopt by consensus a Final Compliance Report. If consensus cannot be reached, the Final Compliance Report shall indicate majority and minority views. A Member or CNCP cannot block consensus on its own compliance assessment.

23. The Final Compliance Report shall include:
    (a) A final compliance status for each Member and CNCP against each assessed obligation;
    (b) All identified areas of repeated non-compliance by a Member or CNCP.
    (c) All responses taken and to be taken to address areas of non-compliance; and,
    (d) An Executive Summary addressing the issues listed in paragraph 20.

24. Within 30 days following the adoption of the Final Compliance Report, the Chair of the Commission shall send a Letter of Concern to each Member or CNCP assessed as Non-Compliant or Priority Non-Compliant. Such letters shall describe the relevant compliance issue(s) and the required response(s) identified in the Final Compliance Report.

## VI. Data Protection

25. The Draft and Provisional Compliance Reports, and all associated documentation, shall constitute confidential data, but the Final Compliance Report and the executive summary shall be public domain data.

## VII. Identification of obligations to be Assessed

26. Annex II includes the list of obligations to be assessed as part of the annual Compliance Monitoring Report (CMR). The TCC will review Annex II annually and recommend removing or adding obligations to be assessed in the following year's CMR. Each year, upon consideration of the TCC's recommendations, the Commission shall update what obligations shall be assessed in the following year's CMR, as appropriate, taking into account factors such as:
    (a) The needs and priorities of the Commission;
    (b) The advice of TCC;
    (c) Evidence of non-compliance or repeated non-compliance with a particular obligation;
    (d) The risks posed by non-compliance to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention; and,
    (e) Whether sufficient verifiable information is available to determine compliance.

## VIII. Future Work and Review of this Conservation Measure

27. The Commission tasks the TCC to establish a multi-year workplan of tasks to enhance the Compliance Monitoring Scheme with the aim of making it more efficient and effective. This workplan shall include the development of the following guidelines and operating procedures to support the implementation of the CMS, as necessary:
    (a) audit points to clarify the Commission's obligations assessed under the CMS
    (b) automatic responses for non-compliance with certain administrative obligations listed in Annex II to streamline the process;
    (c) corrective actions to encourage and incentivize Members' compliance with the Commission's obligations where non-compliance is identified; and,
    (d) any other guidelines or procedures that it deems necessary to enhance the effectiveness

and efficiency of the CMS.

28. As a matter of priority by the 9th Commission meeting, the TCC will develop and the Commission will consider revised Rules of Transparency for TCC to clarify any additional guidelines pertaining to the participation of observers in TCC meetings related to the Compliance Monitoring Scheme. Until the Commission adopts the revised Rules of Transparency for TCC, notwithstanding Paragraph 25, the consideration of the draft compliance report and the provisional compliance report, as detailed in paragraphs 15 and 22 respectively, shall be open to participation by accredited observers, in accordance with NPFC Rules of Procedure, in particular Rule 5.2.1 and Rule 9.

29. The obligations to be assessed in Annex II shall be reviewed annually by the Commission, and as necessary, the Implementation Questionnaire. The conservation and management measure as a whole shall be reviewed at Commission meetings as necessary**.**

**ANNEXES**

- Annex I – Compliance Status Table
- Annex II – Obligations to be Assessed

**Annex I**

**Compliance Status Table**

| Compliance Status | Criteria | Potential Responses |
|---|---|---|
| **Compliant** | Member or CNCP fully compliant with obligation.<br>Member or CNCP has taken required actions under the Convention in particular article 17 to investigate or address potential violations of its vessels. | None |
| **Delayed Submission** | Member or CNCP has fulfilled its reporting obligations (those not related to individual vessels reporting) after the mandatory deadlines, and it is not a repeated case of non-compliance. | Member or CNCP to provide the missing report and indicate any relevant actions taken. |
| **Non-Compliant** | Member or CNCP not compliant with obligation identified in Annex II and which does not meet the criteria of Delayed Submission.<br>Member or CNCP has failed to undertake required actions under the Convention in particular article 17 to investigate or address potential violations of its vessels. | i Member or CNCP to rectify non-compliance and include in its next Annual Report all actions taken,<br>ii Consideration of further responses. |
| **Priority non-compliant** | Member or CNCP has demonstrated non-compliance of a particular obligation listed in Annex II for two or more consecutively assessed years, non-compliance that significantly undermines the objectives of the Convention, or any other non-compliance identified as | i Member or CNCP to rectify non-compliance and include in its next Annual Report all actions taken,<br>ii Consideration of further responses. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Priority non-compliance by the Commission.<br>Member or CNCP has repeatedly failed to undertake required actions under the Convention in particular article 17 to investigate or address potential violations of its vessels. | |
| **Unable to be Assessed at this time** | Ambiguity of relevant obligation, or insufficient data. | (for ambiguity)<br>Review and potentially amend relevant provision(s)<br>(for insufficient data)<br>Identify how data gaps might be remedied and potentially amend relevant provision(s) |
| **Not Applicable** | Relevant obligation is not applicable to Member or CNCP | None |
| **Flag State Action Ongoing** | Flag state action currently ongoing to investigate or address potential violations of its flagged vessels. | i. Member or CNCP to report progress in its Annual Report until resolved; and,<br>ii. Review by TCC and Commission and deadline(s) placed on Member or CNCP to provide further information to the Secretariat and/or take action(s) until resolved |

**Annex II**

## Obligations to be Assessed

**As per Article 13(1) of the Convention, a Member shall take such measures as may be necessary to ensure that fishing vessels entitled to fly its flag abide by the CMMs and therefore, for the obligations listed below, it is the Member's compliance that is being assessed regardless of the wording of a specific obligation.**

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
|---|---|---|
| **CMM 2023-01<br>INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR VESSEL REGISTRATION** | | |
| | | For the purpose of the effective implementation of the Convention, each Commission member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party shall: |
| 1 | 3 | Promptly update the NPFC Vessel Registry with:<br>(a) any additions to the record; e.g., new vessel authorizations;<br>(b) any modifications to this information with dates of such modifications; and<br>(c) any deletions from the record, specifying which of the following reasons is applicable:<br>(i) the voluntary relinquishment of the fishing by the fishing vessel owner or operator;<br>(ii) the withdrawal or non-renewal of the fishing authorization issued in respect of the fishing vessel under Article 13, paragraph 2 of the Convention;<br>(iii) the fact that the fishing vessel concerned is no longer entitled to fly its flag;<br>(iv) the scrapping, decommissioning or loss of the fishing vessel concerned; or<br>(v) any other grounds, with a specific explanation provided. |
| 2 | 4 | Provide to the Commission, as part of the annual report required pursuant to Article 16 of the Convention, the names of the fishing vessels entered in the record that conducted fishing activities during the previous calendar year. |
| 3 | 5 | Each Commission Member and Cooperating non Contracting Party shall ensure that every fishing vessel authorized to fly its flag bear markings that are readily identified in accordance with the *FAO Standard Specifications for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels,* and recognize that non-compliance with these standards shall be considered a serious violation according to Article 17, paragraph 5 of the NPFC Convention and Article 21 Paragraph 11(f) of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement. |
| 4 | 7 | The Commission member or Cooperating non-Contracting Parties entering vessels identified in paragraph 2 on the NPFC |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
|---|---|---|
| | | Vessel Registry established under paragraph 1 shall attest that the vessel or vessels being added recommended are not vessels:<br>(a) with a history of illegal, unreported or unregulated (IUU) fishing, unless the ownership of the vessel has subsequently changed and the new owner has provided sufficient evidence demonstrating that the previous owner or operator has no legal, beneficial or financial interest in, or control of the vessels, or Commission members or Cooperating non-Contracting Parties concerned is satisfied that, having taken into account all relevant facts, the vessel is no longer engaged in or associated with IUU fishing; or<br>(b) that are currently listed on any of the IUU vessel lists adopted by regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs) |
| **CMM 2024-02<br>TO ESTABLISH A LIST OF VESSELS PRESUMED TO HAVE CARRIED OUT ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED ACTIVITIES IN THE CONVENTION AREA** | | |
| | | 24. Members/CNCPs shall take all necessary non-discriminatory measures under their applicable legislation, international law and each Members/CNCPs' international obligations, and pursuant to paras 56 and 66 of the IPOA-IUU to: |
| 5 | 24(a) | Remove or withdraw vessels on the NPFC IUU Vessel List from the NPFC Vessel Registry; |
| 6 | 24(b) | Ensure that fishing vessels, support vessels, mother ships or cargo vessels flying their flag do not participate in any transshipment or joint fishing operations with, support or re-supply vessels on the NPFC IUU Vessel List; |
| 7 | 24(c) | Prohibit the entry into their ports of vessels included on the NPFC IUU Vessels List, except in the case of *force majeure*; |
| 8 | 24(d) | Prohibit the chartering of a vessel on the NPFC IUU Vessels List; |
| 9 | 24(e) | Refuse to grant their flag to vessels on the NPFC IUU Vessel List, unless the ownership of the vessel has subsequently changed and the new owner has provided sufficient evidence demonstrating that the previous owner has no legal, beneficial |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| | | or financial interest in, or control of the vessels, or the member concerned is satisfied that that, having taken into account all relevant facts, the vessel is no longer engaged in or associated with IUU fishing activities; |
| 10 | 24(f) | Prohibit commercial transactions, imports, landings and/or transshipment of species covered by the Convention from vessels on the IUU Vessel List. |
| **CMM 2024-09<br>HIGH SEAS BOARDING AND INSPECTION PROCEDURES** | | |
| 11 | 7 | Each Member of the Commission shall ensure that vessels flying its flag accept boarding and inspection by authorized inspectors in accordance with these procedures. |
| 12 | 7 | Such authorized inspectors shall comply with these procedures in the conduct of any such activities. |
| 13 | 26 | During the conduct of a boarding and inspection, the master of the fishing vessel shall:<br>(a) follow internationally accepted principles of good seamanship so as to avoid risks to the safety of authorized inspection vessels and inspectors;<br>(b) accept and facilitate prompt and safe boarding by the authorized inspectors;<br>(c) provide a boarding ladder. Annex A provides guidelines for a safe boarding ladder;<br>(d) cooperate with and assist in the inspection of the vessel pursuant to these procedures;<br>(e) not assault, resist, intimidate, interfere with, or unduly obstruct or delay the inspectors in the performance of their duties;<br>(f) allow the inspectors to communicate with the crew of the inspection vessel, the authorities of the inspection vessel, any embarked observers, as well as with the authorities of the fishing vessel being inspected;<br>(g) provide the inspectors onboard with reasonable facilities, including, where appropriate, food and accommodation; and<br>(h) facilitate safe disembarkation by the inspectors |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| 14 | 28 | The authorities of the fishing vessel, unless generally accepted international regulations, procedures and practices relating to safety at sea make it necessary to delay the boarding and inspection, shall direct the master to accept the boarding and inspection. If the master does not comply with such direction, the Member shall suspend the vessel's authorization to fish and order the vessel to return immediately to port. The Member shall immediately notify the authorities of the inspection vessel and the Commission of the action it has taken in these circumstances. |
| 15 | 31 | Authorized inspectors shall prepare a full report on each boarding and inspection they carry out pursuant to these procedures in accordance with a format specified by the Commission. The authorities of the inspection vessel from which the boarding and inspection was carried out shall transmit a copy of the boarding and inspection report to the authorities of the fishing vessel being inspected, as well as the Secretariat, within 3 (three) full working days of the completion of the boarding and inspection. Where it is not possible for the authorities of the inspection vessel to provide such report to the authorities of the fishing vessel within this timeframe, the authorities of the inspection vessel shall inform the authorities of the fishing vessel and shall specify the time period within which the report will be provided. |
| 16 | 41 | Contracting Parties that authorize inspection vessels to operate under these procedures shall report annually to the Commission on the boarding and inspections carried out by its authorized inspection vessels, as well as upon possible violations observed. |
| 17 | 42 | Contracting Parties shall include in their annual statement of compliance within their Annual Report to the Commission under Article 16 of the Convention action that they have taken in response to boarding and inspections of their fishing vessels that resulted in observation of alleged violations, including any proceedings instituted and sanctions applied. |
| **CMM-2025-05<br>BOTTOM FISHERIES AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS IN THE NORTHWESTERN PACIFIC OCEAN** | | |
| | | 4. Members of the Commission shall take the following measures in order to achieve sustainable management of fish stocks and protection of VMEs in the western part of the Convention Area: |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| 18 | 4.A | Limit fishing effort in bottom fisheries on the western part of the Convention Area to the level agreed in February 2007 in terms of the number of fishing vessels and other parameters which reflect the level of fishing effort, fishing capacity or potential impacts on marine ecosystems. |
| 19 | 4.G | Further, considering accumulated information regarding fishing activities in the western part of the Convention Area, in areas where, in the course of fishing operations, cold water corals more than 50Kg or sponges more than 350Kg are encountered in one gear retrieval, Members of the Commission shall require vessels flying their flag to cease bottom fishing activities in that location. In such cases, the vessel shall not resume fishing activities until it has relocated a sufficient distance, which shall be no less than 1 nautical mile, so that additional encounters with VMEs are unlikely. All such encounters, including the location, gear type, date, time and name and weight of the VME indicator species, shall be reported to the Secretariat, through the Member, within one business day. The Executive Secretary shall, within one business day, notify the other Members of the Commission and at the same time implement a temporary closure in the area to prohibit fishing vessels from contacting the sea floor with their fishing gear. Members shall inform their fleets and enforcement operations within one business day of the receipt of the notification from the Executive Secretary. It is agreed that the VME indicator taxa include five groups of cold water corals, specifically black corals (Antipatharia), gorgonians, pennatulaceans, stony coral (Scleractinia), and soft corals. The VME indicator taxa also include the classes of Hexactinellida and Demospongiae in the phylum Porifera. |
| 20 | 4.L | Limit annual catch of North Pacific armorhead consistent with the precautionary approach. In years when strong recruitment of North Pacific armorhead is not detected by the monitoring survey (Annex 6), Japan shall limit the catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 500 tons, and Korea shall limit its catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 200 tons. When a strong recruitment of North Pacific armorhead is detected by the monitoring survey (Annex 6), Japan shall limit its annual catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 10,000 tons, and Korea shall limit its annual catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 2,000 tons. The catch overages for any given year shall be subtracted from the applicable annual catch limit in the following year, and catch underages during any given year shall not be added to the applicable annual catch limit during the following year. |
| 21 | 5 | Members of the Commission shall submit to the SC their assessments of the impacts of fishing activity on marine species or any VMEs, including the proposed management measures to prevent such impact. Such submissions shall include all relevant |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| | | data and information in support of any such assessment. Procedures for such reviews including procedures for the provision of advice and recommendations from the SC to the submitting Member are attached (Annex 3). Members will only authorize bottom fishing activity pursuant to paragraph 4 (C). |
| | | 6. To facilitate the scientific work associated with the implementation of these measures, each Member of the Commission shall undertake: |
| 22 | 6.A | Reporting of information for purposes of defining the footprint<br>Members of the Commission shall provide, for each year, the number of vessels by gear type, size of vessels (tons), number of fishing days or days on the fishing grounds, total catch by species, and areas fished (names of seamounts) to the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall circulate the information received to the other Members consistent with the approved Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information. To support assessments of the fisheries and refinement of conservation and management measures, Members of the Commission are to provide updated information on an annual basis. |
| 23 | 6.B | Collection of information<br>(i) Members shall ensure each bottom fishing vessel operating in the western part of the Convention Area collects the following scientific information. Members shall provide the scientific information to the Secretariat.<br>(a) Catch and effort data<br>(b) Related information such as time, location, depth, temperature, etc.<br>(ii) As appropriate, Members should encourage the collection of information from research vessels operating in the western part of the Convention Area and provide updates to the Commission to the extent possible.<br>(a) Physical, chemical, biological, oceanographic, meteorological, etc.<br>(b) Ecosystem surveys.<br>(c) Seabed mapping (e.g. multibeam or other echosounder); seafloor images by drop camera, remotely operated underwater vehicle (ROV) and/or autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV).<br>(iii) Collection of observer data<br>Duly designated observers from the flag member shall collect information from bottom fishing vessels operating in the western part of the Convention Area. Observers shall collect data in accordance with Annex 5. Each Member of the |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| | | Commission shall submit the reports to the Secretariat in accordance with Annex 4. The Secretariat shall compile this information on an annual basis and make it available to the Members of the Commission. |
| 24 | 8 | Members shall ensure that all vessels authorized to bottom fish in the western part of the Convention Area shall carry an observer on board. Members shall ensure that observers are independent, impartial, and qualified to fulfill the requirements of this measure and to enhance data collection. An observer is deemed to be independent, impartial, and qualified if the observer:<br>(a) is deployed from a Commission Member's, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party's, national observer program, and familiar with NPFC fisheries resources, fishing activities, and CMMs;<br>(b) is neither part of the crew, nor has any employment or family relationship to the ownership or operator of the fishing vessel; and<br>(c) does not have any shared business interests with the owner or operator of the fishing vessel.<br><br>An observer shall be provisioned, accommodated, and provided safe working conditions and access to independent communications in accordance with the Commission requirements and the Member's domestic laws and regulations. |
| **CMM 2025-06<br>BOTTOM FISHERIES AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS IN THE NORTHEASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN** | | |
| 25 | 8 | The Members shall provide all available information as required by the Commission for any current or historical fishing activity by their flag vessels, including the number of vessels by gear type, size of vessels (tons), number of fishing days or days on the fishing grounds, total catch by species, areas fished (names or coordinates of seamounts), and information from scientific observer programmes (see Annexes 4 and 5) to the NPFC Secretariat as soon as possible and no later than one month prior to SC meeting. The Secretariat will make such information available to SC. |
| **CMM 2025-07<br>CHUB MACKEREL** | | |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| 26 | 1 | Members of the Commission and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CNCPs) with substantial harvest of chub mackerel in the Convention Area shall refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for chub mackerel from the historical existing level. |
| 27 | 3 | As a provisional measure, Members shall take necessary measures to ensure that the fishing activities for chub mackerel in the Convention Area shall be undertaken in accordance with the fishing season defined in paragraph 17 and the following provisions:<br>(a) The annual total allowable catch of chub mackerel in the Convention Area, excluding the amount in paragraph 11, shall be set at 66,740 tones for the 2025 fishing season.<br>(b) Of this annual total allowable catch, the catch for trawlers shall not exceed 7,940 tones for the 2025 fishing season.<br>(c) Of this annual total allowable catch, the catch for purse seiners shall not exceed 58,800 tones for the 2025 fishing season.<br>(d) China shall not authorize more than 3 trawlers to conduct fishing operations at the same time.<br>(e) The EU shall not authorize more than 1 trawler to conduct fishing operations at the same time. |
| 28 | 6 | Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag that fish for chub mackerel in the Convention Area record their catches, including incidental catches of other NPFC species, and any discards and report them to the relevant flag state authorities in accordance with their national data recording and reporting requirements. |
| 29 | 13 | Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall provide their data on chub mackerel separated by the Convention Area and the areas under national jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area in accordance with the data requirements adopted by the Commission in the Annual Report every year. The Commission shall review such information at the annual meeting of every year. |
| **CMM 2025-08<br>PACIFIC SAURY** | | |
| 30 | 1 | Members of the Commission, not described under Paragraph 2, and that are currently fishing for Pacific saury shall refrain |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| | | from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for Pacific saury from the historical existing level. |
| 31 | 2 | Members fishing for Pacific saury in areas of their jurisdiction that are adjacent to the Convention Area shall refrain from rapid expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for Pacific saury from the historical existing level. |
| 32 | 9 | As a provisional measure until the Commission decides allocation of the TAC, each Member of the Commission shall reduce the annual total catch of Pacific saury by the fishing vessels entitled to fly its flag in 2025 by 55% from its reported catch in 2018 (Annex II), and shall take necessary measures so that the total catch in the Convention Area will not exceed the TAC set out in paragraph 8. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that discards of Pacific saury count against their catch limits. |
| 33 | 10 | To comply with the TAC, the following measures shall be in place in 2025:<br>(a) Members of the Commission shall report to the Executive Secretary, in the electronic format, weekly catches of Pacific saury in the Convention Area by fishing vessels flying their flags by Wednesday of the next week. The Executive Secretary shall make publicly available the compiled catch of Pacific saury in the Convention Area on the Commission's website as well as share each Member's catch of Pacific saury in the Convention Area on the Member's page of Commission's website without delay; and<br>(b) In the event that the total reported catch of all Members reaches 90% of the TAC set out in paragraph 8, the Executive Secretary shall notify all Members without delay. Those Members with more than 10,000 mt of catch limits shall close the fishery within 72 hours from the receipt of the notification. Those Members with less than 10,000 mt of catch limits may continue operations, but their total catch shall not exceed 90% of their catch limits.<br>(c) If any Members commit to reduce its annual total catch of Pacific Saury by fishing vessels entitled to fly its flag in 2025 by 65.5% from its reported catch in 2018, it shall be exempted from the requirements stipulated in Paragraph 10 (b). In case of that, the TAC for the rest of the member referred in the paragraph 10 (b) shall be 121,500 metric tons minus the catch limit of member(s) that make such commitment. Such commitment shall be submitted to the Secretariat no later than May 1st, 2025, and be circulated to all Members, as well as TAC applied to those Members subject to paragraph 10 (c). |

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| 34 | 11 | Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag that fish for Pacific saury in the Convention Area record their catches, including incidental catches of other NPFC species, and any discards and report them to the relevant flag state authorities in accordance with their national data recording and reporting requirements. |
| 35 | 12 | In the event that a Member reaches 70% of its catch limit set out in paragraph 9, the Executive Secretary shall inform that Member of that fact, with a copy to all other Members. That Member shall close the fishery for its flagged vessels when the total catch of its flagged vessels is equivalent to 100% of its catch limit. Such Member shall notify promptly the Executive Secretary of the date of the closure, except as described in paragraph 13. Upon receipt of the notification, the Executive Secretary shall circulate it to all the Members. |
| 36 | 16 | In order to prevent discards and contribute to the proper stock assessment, Members of the Commission shall take necessary measures to ensure that fishing vessels flying their flags in the Convention Area fishing for Pacific saury retain all the catch of Pacific saury on board. |
| **CMM 2019-10<br>SABLEFISH** | | |
| 37 | 8 | All vessels authorized to fish sablefish in the eastern part of the Convention Area shall have 100% observer coverage. |
| **CMM 2025-11<br>JAPANESE SARDINE, NEON FLYING SQUID AND JAPANESE FLYING SQUID** | | |
| 38 | 1 | Members of the Commission and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CNCPs) with substantial harvest of any of Japanese sardine, neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid (hereinafter referred to as “the three Pelagic Species”) in the Convention Area shall refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for such species from the historical existing level until the stock assessment for such species by the SC has been completed. |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| 39 | 6 | Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag that fish for the three Pelagic Species in the Convention Area record their catches, including incidental catches of other NPFC species, and any discards and report them to the relevant flag state authorities in accordance with their national data recording and reporting requirements. |
| 40 | 7 | Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall provide their data on the three Pelagic Species in accordance with the data requirements adopted by the Commission in the Annual Report by the end of February, every year. The Commission shall review such information at the annual meeting of every year. |
| **CMM 2025-12<br>VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM** | | |
| 41 | 8 | All Members or CNCPs shall ensure that its flagged vessels that are authorized under NPFC and present in the Convention Area transmit VMS data every hour to their FMC. |
| 42 | 10 | Each Member or CNCP shall ensure that their FMC automatically transmits VMS data to the Secretariat, which shall be received no later than 60 minutes upon receipt of the data at their FMC. |
| 43 | 11 | Each Member or CNCP shall ensure that its authorized NPFC fishing vessels conducting or planning to conduct fishing activities notify the Secretariat of their intention to enter and exit the Convention Area (Annex 2). The procedure used for such notification may be chosen by Members based on a list of options created by the Secretariat and approved by the Commission. Members shall inform the Secretariat of their preferred notification procedure. |
| 44 | 13 | Each Member or CNCP shall provide the Secretariat with VMS contact points in their FMCs including the name, position, email address and phone number of their VMS contact points. The Secretariat will make a list of VMS contact points available to all Members and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties. |
| 45 | 23 | If a failure to transmit occurs more than two times within a period of one year, the flag Member or CNCP of the fishing vessel shall investigate the matter, including having an authorized official examine the MTU on board the vessel. The |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| | | outcome of this investigation shall be forwarded to the Secretariat within fifteen (15) days of its completion. |
| **CMM 2025-03<br>TRANSSHIPMENTS** | | |
| 46 | 4 | A fishing vessel shall only engage in a transshipment, or other transfer activity in the Convention Area, if both the offloading and receiving vessel are duly authorized by its Flag State and included in the NPFC Vessel Registry |
| 47 | 6 | If a fishing vessel intends to engage in a transshipment in an area under national jurisdiction, including a port, the fishing vessel shall receive an authorization from the relevant coastal or port State before engaging in the transshipment. |
| 48 | 8 | All reporting shall comply with the procedures to be adopted by the Commission. |
| 49 | 9 | All reporting related to a transshipment shall include all marine species taken in the Convention Area, including bycatch and unregulated species, recorded by species using the FAO code. |
| 50 | 10 | A fishing vessel shall maintain an electronic or physical record on board the fishing vessel of each transshipment it has engaged in during the current trip. The record shall include each transshipment declaration and daily activity records, such as those in a navigation logbook. |
| 51 | 12 | A fishing vessel, or a Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party on behalf of the vessel, shall provide an advance notification to the authorities listed in paragraph 13 as soon as possible, and at least 24 hours in advance of the intended transshipment. The advance notification form is included in Annex I. |
| 52 | 14 | A receiving vessel, or a Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party on behalf of the receiving vessel, shall provide an advance notification to the authorities listed in paragraph 13 as soon as possible, and at least 24 hours in advance of the intended other transfer activity. The advance notification form is included in Annex I. |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| 53 | 15 | If the transshipment does not start after 72 hours of the estimated start time, or within 50 nautical miles of the estimated start location, as contained in the advance notification, the fishing vessels involved in the transshipment, or Commission Members or Cooperating non-Contracting Parties on their behalf, shall modify the submitted advance notification. |
| 54 | 16 | If the other transfer activity does not start after 72 hours of the estimated start time, or within 50 nautical miles of the estimated start location, as contained in the advance notification, the receiving vessel, or Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party of the receiving vessel, shall modify the submitted advance notification. |
| 55 | 18 | If a transshipment is cancelled before it is undertaken, a fishing vessel intending to engage in the transshipment, or the Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party whose fishing vessel intended engage in the transshipment, shall notify the Secretariat of the cancellation as soon as possible. |
| 56 | 20 | If a Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, receives suitably documented information that its flagged fishing vessel is, or appears to be, non-compliant with the Convention, or a conservation and management measure, the Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall conduct an investigation. |
| 57 | 21 | The investigating Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall provide a report on the progress of the investigation, including an attestation of the fishing vessel's status under paragraph 19, no later than 60 days after receiving the information, to:<br>(a) The Secretariat<br>(b) The Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party that provided this information.<br>Following the investigation process, information shall be provided about any appropriate enforcement action taken in line with its national laws. |
| 58 | 22 | If a fishing vessel receives catch from more than one offloading vessel, the fishing vessel shall ensure that the catch from each offloading vessel is stored separately and readily identifiable. The receiving vessel shall have a stowage plan |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| | | available on board at all times. |
| 59 | 24 | A fishing vessel having engaged in, or a Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party whose fishing vessel has engaged in, a transshipment shall provide a transshipment declaration to the authorities listed in paragraph 25 as soon as possible, and no later than 10 days after the transshipment. The transshipment declaration form is included in Annex II. |
| 60 | 26 | The Commission shall establish a regional observer and/or electronic monitoring program no later than its 9th Commission meeting. Until the Transshipment Observer Program enters into force, a Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, is responsible for the deployment of independent, impartial, and qualified observers to fulfill the requirements of this measure. Once this program enters into force, paragraphs 27, 28, 32-34 of this measure shall be superseded by the provisions of the new program. |
| 61 | 28 | An observer shall be provisioned, accommodated, including access to independent communications, and provided safe working conditions by the receiving vessel in accordance with the Commission Member's, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party's, domestic laws and regulations. |
| 62 | 29 | A Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall take necessary measures to ensure that its receiving vessels engaging in a transshipment have an observer on board. |
| 63 | 31 | A Commission Member or CNCP shall take necessary measures to ensure that a fishing vessel may only engage in one transshipment at a time for each observer that is available to monitor and report on the transshipment. If there are two vessels seeking to transship concurrently, but only one observer is present, one vessel must stand off and wait until the first vessel has finished. Only one offloading vessel may be secured to the receiving vessel unless a second observer is performing observer duties for a second transshipment. |
| 64 | 32 | An observer shall have: |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| | | (a) full, unobstructed, and safe access to each fishing vessel involved in the transshipment, including, inter alia, access to crew, gear, equipment, records, electronic means of communication, and fish holds; and<br>(b) adequate and appropriate space to undertake their responsibilities pursuant to this measure. |
| 65 | 34 | An observer shall record an observer report immediately after each transshipment and keep the report onboard, and provide an observer transshipment report, as specified in Annex III, as soon as possible, but no later than 10 days from the disembarkation of the observer, to:<br>(a) the Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, of the flags of the receiving vessel and the offloading vessel; and<br>(b) the Secretariat |
| 66 | 35 | If an observer observes an activity or condition that is not consistent with conservation and management measures, the observer shall report the finding, and provide documented evidence, to the extent possible, without delay or upon disembarkation to the Secretariat. Once the Transshipment Observer Program enters into force, the observer will notify and transmit the report to the Observer service provider as well as the Secretariat. The Secretariat will then transmit the report to the authorities of the Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party of the flags of the receiving and offloading vessels. |
| 67 | 36 | Upon receipt of an observer report with documented evidence in particular Annex III indicating potential non-compliance, or instances of obstruction, intimidation, interference with, or otherwise prevention of the observer from performing their duties, concerning a vessel entitled to fly its flag, the Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party shall:<br>a) treat the report with utmost sensitivity and discretion, in accordance with NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol<br>b) make best efforts to respond to this notification through the Secretariat without delay and; |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| | | c) undertake investigation on any condition or activity that is not consistent with conservation and management measures as per Article 17 of the Convention. The Commission Member or CNCP shall report any findings and/or relevant actions taken, in their Annual Report, and in the CMS Implementation Questionnaire (if applicable). |
| 68 | 46 | In the case of force majeure, the fishing vessel, or Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall:<br>(a) notify the Secretariat prior to the completion of the transshipment, or other transfer activity, as well as the circumstances giving rise to the force majeure; and<br>(b) provide a transshipment declaration on the transshipment as soon as possible, but within 10 days of the transshipment. |
| 69 | 48 | Each Commission Member, and Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall provide an annual summary of the data and information collected from all authorized fishing vessels having undertaken a transshipment, including each year's transshipment declarations, to the Commission at the Technical and Compliance Committee meeting. The summary shall be included in the Annual Report, as per Article 16(3) of the Convention. The template for this summary is included in Annex V. |
| 70 | 49 | A Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall take all reasonable steps to verify the information received from fishing vessels having engaged in a transshipment. |
| 71 | 51 | Commission Members and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties shall investigate instances of potential non-compliance with this measure, and report the results of those investigations to the Commission. |
| **CMM 2023-14<br>SHARKS** | | |
| 72 | 6 | No fishing vessel shall engage in shark finning. |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| 73 | 7 | No fishing vessel shall:<br>(a) retain on board, or otherwise possess or control, a shark fin that is not naturally attached to the corresponding shark; or<br>(b) transship, or land, a shark fin that is not naturally attached to the corresponding shark unless the fishing vessel complies with paragraph 8. |
| 74 | 8 | A fishing vessel may only remove a shark fin from the corresponding shark if the shark is incidentally caught, taken, or harvested, and if:<br>(a) the shark fin and the corresponding shark can be readily identified; and<br>(b) one of the following methods is used:<br>i the shark fin is stored in the same bag, preferably a biodegradable one, as the corresponding shark;<br>ii the shark fin is bound to the corresponding shark using rope or wire; or<br>iii the shark fin and the corresponding shark are identically, uniquely, and numerically tagged in a manner that an authorized inspector can readily identify the matching of the shark fin to the corresponding shark. |
| 75 | 9 | A fishing vessel shall record, and maintain a record of, any shark catch in the Convention Area, to the extent possible by species, in its logbook on board the fishing vessel. |
| 76 | 10 | A Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall annually report all shark catches, to the extent possible by species, from their fishing vessels to the Secretariat. |
| **CMM 2024-15<br>POLLUTION** | | |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| 77 | 4 | No fishing vessel shall discard or abandon fishing gear at sea. A Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party (Member or CNCP) shall take necessary measures to ensure that its fishing vessels do not discard or abandon fishing gear at sea. |
| 78 | 8 | A Member or CNCP shall take necessary measures to ensure that its fishing vessels do not release any plastics, including synthetic ropes, synthetic fishing nets, plastic garbage bags, or incinerator ashes from plastics products, at sea |
| 79 | 11 | A Member or CNCP shall take necessary measures to ensure that its fishing vessels take all reasonable precautions to prevent:<br>a) the abandonment, loss, or discard of fishing gear at sea; and<br>b) the release of garbage, and plastics, at sea. |
| 80 | 12 | A Member or CNCP shall take necessary measures to ensure that its fishing vessels make every reasonable effort to retrieve any abandoned, lost, or discarded gear, garbage, or plastics that it has released as soon as possible and if safe to do so. |
| 81 | 16 | A Member or CNCP shall take necessary measures to ensure that its fishing vessels, to the extent possible, safely store and retain on board all fishing gear, garbage, and plastics until they can be disposed of at an adequate port reception facility. |
| **CMM 2024-16<br>ANADROMOUS FISH** | | |
| 82 | 5 | Members and CNCPs shall take necessary measures to ensure their fishing vessels do not retain on board or otherwise possess anadromous fish. |
| 83 | 7 | Members and CNCPs shall take necessary measures to ensure that if a fishing vessel incidentally captures anadromous fish, those fish shall be returned to the water without delay, in a manner that causes the least harm. |

| No. | Paragraph to be Assessed | OBLIGATION |
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| 84 | 9 | Members and CNCPs shall take necessary measures to ensure their fishing vessels maintain a record on board the vessel of incidentally caught and released anadromous fish in the Convention Area, to the extent possible by species. This record shall be made available to authorized inspectors. A species identification aid is in Annex 2. |
| 85 | 11 | Notwithstanding paragraph 10, a Commission Member or CNCP shall annually report all incidentally caught and released anadromous fish in the Convention Area to the Secretariat, to the extent possible by species. |

**CMM 2025-12**

***(Entered into force XX July 2025)***

# CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE ON THE VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM (VMS)

*The North Pacific Fisheries Commission,*

*Recalling* Article 2 of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries resources in the North Pacific Ocean (Convention), the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the Convention Area while protecting the marine ecosystems of the North Pacific Ocean in which these resources occur.

*Recognizing* Article 7, paragraph 2 (e) of the Convention regarding the development of standards, specifications and procedures for Members of the Commission to report movements and activities using real-time satellite position-fixing transmitters for vessels engaged in fishing activities in the Convention Area and, in accordance with those procedures, coordinate timely dissemination of data collected from Members' satellite vessel monitoring systems,

*Reaffirming* that Article 13, paragraph 1 of the Convention that Members of the Commission or Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CNCPs) shall take necessary measures to ensure that fishing vessels entitled to fly their flag operating in the Convention Area comply with the provisions of the Convention and measures adopted pursuant to the Convention and such vessels do not engage in any activities that undermine the effectiveness of such measures and do not conduct unauthorized fishing activities within areas under national jurisdiction of another State adjacent to the Convention Area,

*Determined* to ensure effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and to address the challenge of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Convention Area,

*Adopts* the following conservation and management measure (CMM) in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention:

Definitions

For the purpose of this CMM, the following definitions apply:

“Convention” means the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries resources in the North Pacific Ocean.

“Convention Area” means the area of the high seas areas of the North Pacific Ocean as specified in Article 4 of the Convention.

“Commission” means the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) established under Article 5 of the Convention.

“Fishing activities” means the activities established under Article 1 (i) of the Convention.

“Fisheries monitoring center (FMC)” means the authorized authority or agency of a Member or CNCP responsible for managing VMS for its flagged fishing vessels.

“Fishing vessels” means any vessel described under Article 1 (j) of the Convention.

“Inspection Presence in the Convention Area” means the Member is authorized by the High Seas Boarding Inspection CMM to conduct boardings and inspections and is planning for or actively engaged in surveillance operations, including aerial surveillance, in the Convention Area.

“Manually report” means the transmission via any alternative means of the date/time, current geographical position (latitude and longitude) when an MTU fails to transmit VMS data.

“Mobile transmitting unit (MTU)” means a satellite communication device capable of receiving and transmitting VMS data.

“VMS” means a satellite-based monitoring system that transmits VMS data from MTUs on fishing vessels to FMCs.

“VMS data” means data transmitted by an MTU including:

MTU unique identifier;

the current geographical position (latitude and longitude) of the vessel (accurate to within 100m); and,

the date and time (expressed in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)) of the fixing of the position of the vessel in paragraph 1(k)(ii).

Purpose

The VMS supports the Convention’s objective to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the Convention Area. The VMS forms an important part of the Commission’s MCS regime to ensure compliance with, and enforcement of, the provisions of the Convention and CMMs. The purpose of the VMS is to continuously monitor the positions and

movements of all fishing vessels in the Convention Area for compliance purposes. VMS data may also be used to support scientific processes as agreed by the Commission.

Application

The VMS applies to all authorized NPFC vessels in the Convention Area.

A Member or CNCP may request that waters under their jurisdiction be also covered by the VMS. This request shall be provided to the Commission for their consideration and approval. Mobile transmitting units (MTUs)

Mobile Transmitting Units (MTUs)

Each Member or CNCP shall ensure that its vessels authorized pursuant to the relevant CMM for Vessel Registration under NPFC in the Convention Area are equipped with an MTU that complies with the guidance on minimum standards for MTUs contained in Annex 1.

Each Member or CNCP shall ensure that MTUs are installed on their flagged fishing vessels in the Convention Area in accordance with relevant domestic legal obligations, procedures and conditions.

VMS Data Transmission Requirements

Each Member or CNCP shall ensure its authorized NPFC vessels provide accurate VMS data to the Secretariat via its FMC, in accordance with this CMM.

All Members or CNCPs shall ensure that its flagged vessels that are authorized under NPFC and present in the Convention Area transmit VMS data every hour to their FMC.

A Member or CNCP may require its fishing vessels to transmit VMS data directly to the Secretariat.

Each Member or CNCP shall ensure that their FMC automatically transmits VMS data to the Secretariat, which shall be received no later than 60 minutes upon receipt of the data at their FMC.

Each Member or CNCP shall ensure that its authorized NPFC fishing vessels conducting or planning to conduct fishing activities notify the Secretariat of their intention to enter and exit the Convention Area (Annex 2). The procedure used for such notification may be chosen by Members based on a list of options created by the Secretariat and approved by the Commission. Members shall inform the Secretariat of their preferred notification procedure.

**Fisheries Monitoring Centers (FMCs)**

Each Member or CNCP shall ensure that their FMC can automatically receive VMS data and transmit VMS data to the Secretariat.

Each Member or CNCP shall provide the Secretariat with VMS contact points in their FMCs including the name, position, email address and phone number of their VMS contact points. The Secretariat will make a list of VMS contact points available to all Members and Cooperating non-

Contracting Parties.

Data Access and Use

All VMS data received by the Secretariat shall be treated as confidential information in accordance with NPFC's Data-Sharing and Data-Security Protocols for Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Data (Annex 3).

In accordance with the NPFC's Data-Sharing and Data-Security Protocols for Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) (Annex 3), the Secretariat shall provide VMS data:

By electronic means to a Member who has an inspection presence in the Convention Area; or

upon request from a Member to support search and rescue (SAR)

Data Sharing, Security and Integrity

In accordance with NPFC's Data-Sharing and Data-Security Protocols for Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Data (Annex 3), VMS data shall only be accessed and used for the purposes included in this measure or for any other purposes as agreed by the Commission.

MTUs on fishing vessels shall be tamper-proof so as to preserve the security and integrity of VMS data.

VMS Data Transmission Failure

In the event that an MTU has failed to transmit VMS data for four hours, the flag Member or CNCP shall require the fishing vessel master to manually report every four hours to the FMC or the Secretariat by other means of communication.

A Member or CNCP may also require its fishing vessels to manually report directly to the Secretariat.

The flag Member or CNCP shall require an MTU that fails to transmit VMS data in accordance with this measure, be repaired or replaced as soon as possible and, in any event, within thirty(30) days of the VMS data transmission failure.

If the fishing vessel returns to port following an MTU VMS data transmission failure, the Member or CNCP shall not permit the vessel to undertake fishing in the Convention Area until the MTU has been replaced in accordance with the guidance in Annex 1 or is repaired and is able to transmit VMS data.

If a Member or CNCP finds that an MTU has failed to transmit VMS data for twelve hours, the Member or CNCP shall immediately notify the fishing vessel master, owner or authorized representative of this failure.

If a failure to transmit occurs more than two times within a period of one year, the flag Member or CNCP of the fishing vessel shall investigate the matter, including having an authorized official examine the MTU on board the vessel. The outcome of this investigation shall be forwarded to the Secretariat within fifteen (15) days of its completion.

Review

The Secretariat shall report on the implementation of this measure annually to the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC). The TCC shall review the implementation of the VMS after two years and make recommendations to the Commission as may be necessary.

Annex 1

**Guidance on minimum standards for mobile transmitting units (MTUs)**

The mobile transmitting unit (MTU) shall automatically and independently of any intervention by the fishing vessel, transmit VMS data as required by NPFC.

The VMS data shall be obtained from a satellite-based positioning system.

MTUs on fishing vessels must be capable of transmitting VMS data at least every fifteen minutes.

MTUs on fishing vessels must be tamper-proof so as to preserve the security and integrity of VMS data.

Storage of VMS data and other relevant information within the MTU must be safe, secure and integrated within a single unit under normal operating conditions.

It must not be reasonably possible for anyone, other than the Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC), to alter any of the VMS data stored in an MTU, including the frequency of position VMS data transmission to the FMC.

Any features built into the MTU or its software to assist with servicing shall not allow unauthorized access to the MTU that could potentially compromise the operation of the VMS.

MTUs shall be installed on fishing vessels by an authorized installer in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and applicable standards and in accordance with a flag State's relevant domestic legal obligations, procedures and conditions.

Under normal satellite navigation operating conditions, VMS data must include the geographical location of a fishing vessel within an accuracy of 100 meters.

The MTU and/or the VMS service provider must be able send VMS data to multiple independent destinations.

The MTU and its component parts shall be fully integrated and housed in the same tamperproof

physical enclosure.

The MTU must have:

all components sealed by the manufacturer; or
official seals[1], individually identified with unique serial numbers, applied.

Relevant domestic legal obligations, procedures and conditions for MTU installation on fishing vessels should be forwarded by members and cooperating non-Contracting Parties to the Secretariat or made available upon request.

The MTU must have an alternate power unit, to act as a backup in case of failure of the main power, to enable the MTU to continue to meet the VMS data transmission requirements of this CMM.

The MTU should include audible or visible alarms to indicate a unit malfunction.

[1] Official seals or other mechanisms must be of such a type to indicate whether the MTU has been accessed or tampered with.

**Annex 2**

**Options for Notification of Entry into and Exit from the NPFC Convention Area**

| Option # | Description |
|---|---|
| **1** | **Automated notification each time a vessel enters or exits the Convention Area.** |
| **2** | **For the notification of entry into and exit from the NPFC Convention Area only, determine an external VMS zone where vessels would be required to report their positions through VMS.**<br><br>**The NPFC external VMS zone would extend 20 NM from the boundaries of the Convention Area. All vessels in NPFC Registry would report when inside this external VMS zone, according to a) or b) below:**<br><br>**Report ALL positions inside the external VMS zone, whether inside an EEZ OR on high seas, OR**<br><br>**Report ALL positions from the high seas inside the external VMS zone, BUT when transiting within an EEZ to enter the Convention Area, report only the LAST position prior to and the FIRST position after entering/exiting the Convention Area[2]. Similarly, when exiting the Convention Area, report LAST position prior to exiting and FIRST position after exiting the Convention Area.** |
| **3** | **The Secretariat shall be notified whenever a fishing vessel flying their flag enters to or exits from the Convention Area either by:**<br><br>**Reporting LAST position prior to, and FIRST position after entering and exiting the Convention Area, OR**<br><br>**Reporting the first position inside the Convention Area with an automated declaration of entry in the "Type of Message" field of the NAF format and reporting the first position after exiting the Convention Area with an automated declaration of exit in the "Type of Message" field of the NAF format.** |

[2] Any authorized NPFC vessels in the Convention Area shall report in accordance with paragraph 8 of this CMM.

**Annex 3**

**NPFC Data-Sharing and Data-Security Protocol for Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Data**

**Definitions**

For the purpose of this Protocol, unless specifically defined herein, words and terms have the same meaning as in the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean (Convention) and any conservation and management measures (CMMs) adopted by the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (Commission or NPFC), including in particular the CMM on the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS).

“Confidential” refers to non-public domain data and information held by Commission Members, the Secretariat, and by service providers contracted by the Commission, or contractors acting on their behalf, that is to be kept private, and shall not be accessed, released or disclosed unless such access, release or disclosure is for the purposes described in, and authorized by, this Protocol;

“Scientific purposes” may include estimating distribution of fishing effort for use in the Commission’s research activities; planning for and implementing tagging programmes; modelling fishing effort for use in fisheries management activities, including management strategy evaluation (MSE); estimating abundance indices or undertaking stock assessments; validating logbook data; and, any other scientific purposes agreed to by the Commission.

Purpose

The purpose of this Protocol is to implement Article 16, paragraph 4 of the Convention, which states, “The Commission shall establish rules to ensure the security of, access to and dissemination of data, including data reported via real-time satellite position-fixing transmitters, while maintaining confidentiality where appropriate and taking due account of the domestic practices and domestic laws of members of the Commission.”

Scope of Application

This Protocol applies to VMS data transmitted to, received by, stored, and, used by the Secretariat, the Commission and its Members, and authorized contractors, from authorized NPFC vessels in the Convention Area.

General Provisions

*Accountability and Control System*

All VMS data shall be considered confidential.

It is the responsibility of each Commission Member, and the Secretariat, to take all necessary measures to comply with this Protocol when transmitting and receiving VMS data.

Prior to accessing VMS data, authorized contractors shall be informed that VMS data is confidential and shall sign the Confidentiality Agreement (attached as Appendix 1) stipulating that they have been informed that the VMS data is confidential and that they have reviewed, are familiar with, and agree to the procedures to protect confidential VMS data set forth in the Confidentiality Agreement.

Where VMS data is transmitted by the Secretariat, with the approval of the Commission, to a party not already authorized to receive VMS data in accordance with this protocol, the Secretariat shall remain responsible for such data. The third party must receive written authorization from Secretariat to receive VMS data and shall be required to sign the Confidentiality Agreement (attached as Appendix 1). Breach of the Confidentiality Agreement constitutes breach of this Protocol, and will result in access to confidential VMS data being revoked, until corrective actions deemed appropriate by the Commission and the Secretariat have been taken. The third party will maintain the data provided to it in a manner no less stringent than the security standards established by the Commission.

The Executive Secretary will report to the Commission annually on the compliance with this Protocol, including any breach thereof.

*Data Purposes*

All VMS data collection, access, storage, use, and dissemination shall only be undertaken for the purposes of monitoring, control, and surveillance in the Convention Area, supporting search and rescue operations, and fulfilling the functions of the Commission, as established in Article 7(1) and (2) of the Convention, including scientific purposes as defined above, and subject to any additional relevant regulations, protocols, CMMs or policies approved by the Commission.

*Safeguards*

All authorized personnel having access to VMS data are prohibited from unauthorized use or disclosure of such data.

All VMS data shall be protected against loss or theft, as well as unauthorized access, dissemination, copying, use, or modification, by security safeguards, in accordance with the Data Retention and Security Section of this Protocol.

Data Access and Use

VMS data should only be accessed and/or used by authorized personnel in the Secretariat, authorized MCS entities and personnel, and authorized contractors, for the identified purposes in this Protocol or for other purposes identified by the Commission.

The Secretariat shall not make VMS data available to a Member where the Commission has established that the Member has not complied with this Protocol, or the CMM for VMS.

*Use for Inspection Presence in Convention Area*

For a Member who has an Inspection Presence in the Convention Area, VMS data shall be made available electronically in accordance with the following provisions:

Each Member shall identify a point of contact for VMS data;

Each Member who has an Inspection Presence in the Convention Area shall provide the Secretariat with the geographic area (in multiples of 10 degrees latitude and longitude with a north and south latitude boundary and an east and west longitude boundary) of the planned boarding and inspection or surveillance operations at least 72 hours in advance, when practicable;

Each Member who has an Inspection Presence in the Convention Area shall only make VMS data available to authorities or inspectors, as defined in the CMM for High Seas Boarding and Inspection Procedures for the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) responsible for fisheries monitoring, control, and surveillance activities in the Convention Area unless the data is being used in an investigation, or a judicial, or administrative proceeding, and subject to any relevant domestic laws and policies, and has requested VMS data in support of HSBI/MCS activities.

Where the fishing vessel to which the VMS data pertains has been involved in an alleged violation of a CMM, the Convention, or domestic laws or regulations, the VMS data pertaining to the alleged violation may be retained, and the Secretariat will be notified, by Members who have an inspection presence in the Convention Area until appropriate proceedings, including investigations, and judicial or administrative proceedings, have concluded.

Should no VMS data be retained pursuant to paragraph 16, each Member who has an Inspection Presence in the Convention Area shall delete all VMS data received from the Secretariat within seven days following the completion of monitoring, control, and surveillance activities in the Convention Area. The Member shall also submit a written confirmation to the Secretariat of the deletion of the VMS data within seven working days following the completion of monitoring, control, and surveillance activities.

*Use for Search and Rescue Operations*

For the purpose of supporting search and rescue operations by a Commission Member, the Secretariat shall make VMS data available upon request from a Member.

Data Retention and Security

*Data Retention*

All VMS data transmitted to the Secretariat in accordance with the Convention and CMMs shall be retained by the Secretariat.

Each Commission Member shall retain VMS data for fishing vessels flying its flag for at least one year.

*Data Security*

Each Commission Member and the Executive Secretary shall ensure the security of VMS data in their respective electronic data processing facilities, particularly where the use of VMS data involves transmission over a network.

Security measures must be appropriate to the level of risk posed by the transmission, processing, and storage of VMS data. At a minimum, the following security requirements must be implemented prior to transmitting or receiving VMS data:

The Executive Secretary shall ensure that regional system access to VMS data under its control is protected such that all data that enters the system is securely stored and will not be accessed by or tampered with from unauthorized individuals by implementing, at minimum, the following measures:

physical access to the computer system which transmits, uses, and stores VMS data is controlled;

each user of the system is assigned a unique identification and associated password, and each time the user logs on to the system, he or she must provide the correct password;

user access shall be audited annually for analysis and detection of security breaches; and

each user shall be given access only to the data necessary for his or her task.

Data exchange protocols for electronic transmission of VMS data between Commission Members and the Secretariat shall be duly tested by the Secretariat and periodically reviewed by the Commission. Electronic transmission is subject to security procedures established in this Protocol.

Appropriate encryption protocols duly tested by the Secretariat and periodically reviewed by the Commission shall be applied by authorized contractors, including the use of cryptographic techniques to ensure confidentiality and authenticity.

Security procedures shall be designed by authorized contractors addressing access to the

system hardware and software, system administration and maintenance, backup, and general usage of the system. Each Commission Member, and the Executive Secretary, shall ensure proper maintenance of system security and restrict access to the system accordingly. Each Commission Member shall liaise with the Secretariat in order to identify and resolve any security breaches or issues.

**Appendix 1**

**Confidentiality Agreement**
**For Accessing North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) Confidential Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Data**

Applicant Name, contact information, and signature:

| **Full Name** | **Agency/Organization, Address, Email, and Phone** | **Signature and Date** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

In return for the NPFC Secretariat granting me access to confidential NPFC VMS data, I hereby make the following declarations and promises:

I am (check the appropriate box):

×× a contractor employed by the NPFC, or one of its Members, whose official duties require access to confidential VMS data.

×× an employee of an organization, which the NPFC Secretariat has authorized in writing to receive confidential VMS data.

I am requesting access to confidential NPFC VMS data:

for the following purposes (provide a detailed explanation, attaching an additional sheet if necessary):

on behalf of the following organization: ____.

I have read and understood the NPFC Data-Sharing and Data-Security Protocols for Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Data ("Protocols"). I understand that the VMS data I am requesting are confidential, as defined in the Protocols. I agree to abide by the provisions of the Protocols that address protecting and safeguarding confidential VMS data.

I agree to abide by any additional written conditions regarding the use of confidential VMS data the Secretariat attaches to this Confidentiality Agreement.

I agree to abide by the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocols.

I agree that the confidential VMS data shall be used only for the purposes for which I am requesting the data, be accessed only by me and other individuals who have signed a Confidentiality Agreement, and be destroyed upon completion of the usage for which the data are being requested. I further agree to report the destruction of the confidential VMS data to the Secretariat.

I agree to make no unauthorized copies of the requested confidential VMS data. If a copy of all, or part, of the data is made by me, all copies, and/or parts thereof, will be registered with the Secretariat and will be destroyed upon completion of the purpose for which I requested the data.

Prior to the publication of any report in which I intend to use requested confidential VMS data, I agree to provide the report to the Secretariat for clearance to ensure that no confidential VMS data will be published.

I agree to provide a copy of any published reports referenced in paragraph 8 to the Secretariat.

I agree not to disclose, divulge, or transfer, either directly or indirectly, the requested confidential VMS data to any third party without the prior written consent of the Secretariat.

I agree to promptly notify the Secretariat, in writing, of any unauthorized or inadvertent disclosure of confidential VMS data.

I assume all liability, if any, with respect to my breach of this Confidentiality Agreement after I receive the requested confidential VMS data.

In the event of my breach of this Confidentiality Agreement, I understand that the Secretariat will not grant me access to confidential VMS data until corrective actions deemed appropriate by the Secretariat have been taken by me, my employer, or by the Member under whose supervision I work.

This Agreement is effective on the date indicated below upon signature of an authorized representative of the Secretariat.

_____ _____

Authorized NPFC Secretariat Representative Date

North Pacific Fisheries Commission

# 7th Meeting of the NPFC Finance and Administration Committee
# FINAL REPORT

**22, 24 and 25 March 2025**

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# North Pacific Fisheries Commission
# 7th Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee

**Osaka, Japan (hybrid)**

## FINAL REPORT

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. The 7th Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) was held in a hybrid format, with participants attending in-person in Osaka, Japan, or online via WebEx, on 22 March 2025, and was attended by Members from Canada, China, the European Union (EU), Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, the United States of America (USA), and Vanuatu. Panama and Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) attended as observers. The meeting was opened by Mr. Dan Hull (USA), who served as the FAC Chair.

Agenda Item 2. Appointment of Rapporteur

2. Mr. Jacques Chaumont was appointed as the Rapporteur.

Agenda Item 3. Adoption of Agenda

3. The FAC Chair proposed minor changes to the ordering of discussion on subitems within Agenda Item 5, due to the confidential nature of personnel matters.

4. The agenda was adopted (Annex A) as amended. The List of Documents and List of Participants are attached (Annexes B, C).

5. The Executive Secretary, Dr. Robert Day, outlined the logistical arrangements for the meeting.

Agenda Item 4. Financial Statement

*4a. Audit Report for 2023/2024 fiscal year*

6. The NPFC Auditor's Report for the 2023/2024 Financial Year (NPFC-2025-FAC07-IP01) was taken as read, with supplementary comments from the Executive Secretary regarding the transition to commercial financial software, a transfer to the General Fund from the Special Projects Fund, and the General Fund surplus being transferred to the Working Capital Fund as well as acknowledging the delay in the audit.

***Recommendation***: That the Commission adopt the NPFC Auditor's Report for the 2023/2024 Financial Year.

7. One Member noted that following paragraph 22 of the Financial Regulations, the Executive Secretary shall require, as part of observations of the external auditors, that the external auditors provide specific recommendations for the cap of the Working Capital Fund at the amount equivalent to the funds required to sustain the Commission's operations for set number of months. That Member stated that the information related to this cap should be included in the next external audit.

*4b. Status of Member Contributions*

8. The Executive Secretary reported on the status of Member contributions for 2024/2025 (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP01 Rev.1). As of 5 March 2025, payments of 170,463,481 (JPY) had been received with 116,241 (JPY) outstanding as accounts receivable from Russia. The Executive Secretary noted that Russia was expected to make the final remaining contribution during the meeting.

9. The Executive Secretary notified the FAC prior to the end of the meeting that all Member contributions for 2024/2025 were fully paid.

10. The FAC accepted the report from the Secretariat on Member contributions.

*4c. Secretariat financial update to 31 January 2025*

*i. for 2024/2025 fiscal year (General Fund)*

11. The Executive Secretary presented the Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ending 31 March 2024 (2023/2024 fiscal year) and unaudited values for 2024/2025 (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP01 Rev.1). He noted that expenditures as of 31 December 2024 were 55,382,669 (JPY), with significant expenses still pending for the SC09 related meetings, database projects, and COM09 related meetings. Projected expenditures were expected to reach approximately 91% of the appropriated funds.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission adopt the financial update to 31 January 2025 for the 2024/2025 fiscal year, including the statement of income and expenditures for the year ending 31 March 2024 (2023/2024 fiscal year) and unaudited values for 2024/2025.

12. One Member requested that, considering some discrepancies between the information received prior to the meeting and presented during the meeting, revised versions of working papers be provided when updates occur, to ensure members have clarity on expenditures relative to the budget.

13. Some Members recalled that at FAC06, the Secretariat was requested to report on what kinds of contractual services it engaged in the previous year and what outputs it received from those services. The Executive Secretary acknowledged this oversight and committed to providing this information in the future.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission direct the Secretariat to provide a report on contractual services engaged and outputs received, as requested in paragraph 33 of the FAC06 Final Report.

*ii. Working Capital Fund*
*iii. Voluntary Contribution*
*iv. Special Project Fund*
*v. Repatriation Fund*

14. The Executive Secretary reported on the status of the other funds, including the Working Capital Fund, the Voluntary Contribution, the Special Project Fund, and the Repatriation Fund (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP01 Rev.1).

15. Several Members raised questions about the Working Capital Fund cap referenced in paragraph 22 of the Financial Regulations, which states that "Transfers to the Working Capital Fund shall be capped at an amount equivalent to the funds required to sustain the Commission's operations for a set number of months."

16. The Executive Secretary noted that while the practice has been to maintain approximately one year of operating funds, this had not been formally established. Several Members inquired whether the Working Capital Fund cap should be increased or more formally decided.

17. Regarding the Working Capital Fund, one Member requested that information about the Working Capital Fund cap be included in future audit reports, as required by the Financial Regulations paragraph 22. Another Member suggested reviewing practices of other RFMOs with similar size and mandate to inform the determination of an appropriate cap.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission direct the Secretariat to analyze past discussion by the FAC and options for the Working Capital Fund cap consistent with the Financial Regulations, examine past history of how that number of months has been determined, and present options to FAC08 for determining the optimal number of months of operating funds to be available in the Working Capital Fund for the Commission.

18. The FAC thanked Canada, China, the United States, and Panama for their voluntary contributions.

19. The EU announced its intention to provide a voluntary contribution of approximately 50,000 (EUR) to support the Secretariat in data collection and processing, particularly for SC- and TCC-related activities.

20. The FAC noted the status of other funds.

Agenda Item 5. Administration Matters

*5a. Staffing considerations*

21. The Executive Secretary presented a report assessing the NPFC's staffing, capabilities and needs (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP04) highlighting the increased activities requiring support from the Secretariat. The report noted that despite the expansion of operations, including the regional Vessel Monitoring Scheme, transshipment reporting, and stock assessment methodologies, the Secretariat has maintained its original complement of staff while investing in contract and technological solutions to manage the increased workload. The Executive Secretary also noted the support and additional capacity provided to the Secretariat through the role of secondee and interns.

22. The FAC expressed appreciation for the hard work of the Secretariat staff in handling a wide range of work with limited resources.

23. One Member expressed the view that they did not see benefits in expanding the level of Secretariat staff at this time and supported continuing the practice of using contractors.

24. The Executive Secretary requested that Members consider the resource implications for the Secretariat when proposing new CMMs. He noted that while there is no formal process requiring cost assessments for new measures, Members should be mindful of the costs of technology development and potential staffing cost implications.

25. One Member suggested that NPFC consider implementing a requirement for Members to attach a cover sheet when submitting proposals for new measures, indicating potential additional costs or workload for the Secretariat. Another Member noted that while they agreed on the importance of considering the financial implications of new measures, they had reservations about implementing requirements that could deter the development and submission of proposals to the Commission, as well as their adoption.

*5b. Pay and benefits system*

26. Discussions under Agenda Item 5b were carried out in a closed session due to the confidential nature of personnel matters.

*i. General Service Staff*

27. The Executive Secretary provided a progress report and proposal on issues related to General Service staff pay in response to the tasking from FAC06 and COM08 (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP05).

28. The FAC thanked the Executive Secretary for providing the progress report. The FAC acknowledged the complexities of addressing these issues, as outlined in the Executive Secretary's report. The FAC recognized the importance of the Secretariat having competitive and equitable pay scales and remuneration to support the work of the Commission but noted that additional information and clarification were needed before making specific recommendations.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission direct the Secretariat and an ad hoc intersessional correspondence group of the FAC to develop clearer options and recommendations on staff pay scales for both General Service and Professional/Director level positions for consideration at FAC08, with a view to making recommendations to the Commission at COM10.

*ii. Manager and Executive Secretary Staff*

29. The Executive Secretary provided a progress report and proposal on issues related to Manager and Executive Secretary staff pay (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP09).

30. The FAC thanked the Executive Secretary for his efforts, acknowledging the complexities of this issue, and recognizing that it is similar in nature to the General Service staff pay issue.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission maintain the current approach to Manager and Executive Secretary staff pay for fiscal year 2025/2026 while additional work continues intersessionally to consider clear options and recommendations on Professional and General Service salaries.

*5c. Proposed revisions to the Staff Regulations*

31. Discussions under Agenda Item 5c were carried out in a closed session due to the confidential nature of personnel matters.

32. The Executive Secretary presented proposed revisions to Staff Regulation 8.1 regarding social security benefits (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP06). The proposal suggested modifications to address health insurance, workers accident insurance, and retirement fund provisions.

33. The FAC discussed and endorsed the proposal to update Staff Regulation 8.1 to better reflect current practices and improve benefits coverage, including the addition of workers' accident insurance for international staff.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission adopt the proposed revisions to Staff Regulation 8.1, with the removal of the phrase "as outlined in NPFC Policy" for clarity and to implement the Secretariat's approach to provide staff with social security benefits beginning in the 2025/2026 fiscal year.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission direct the Secretariat to develop an applicable NPFC Social Security Policy for consideration of FAC08.

*5d. Potential revisions to the Financial Regulations (e.g., approach for the transshipment observer scheme)*

34. The TCC Chair, Ms. Alisha Falberg (USA), briefed the FAC on the funding mechanism proposed for the transshipment observer scheme, as contained in the draft CMM for a transshipment observer program being forwarded by TCC to the Commission. The relevant paragraph in the draft CMM states that costs of implementing the program shall be financed by the flag member or CNCP of offloading vessels wishing to engage in transshipment operations, with the fee calculated based on the total costs of the program.

35. The FAC noted the information provided but did not make specific recommendations on revisions to the Financial Regulations at this time.

*5e. 2024 Internship and Secondment programs*

36. Discussions under Agenda Item 5e were carried out in a closed session due to the confidential nature of personnel matters.

37. The Executive Secretary reported on the outcomes of the 2024/2025 Intern and Secondment Program and noted there were no new applications for interns and there was one application for the secondment program for the 2025/2026 fiscal year (NPFC-2024-FAC06-WP02). The Executive Secretary noted the valuable contributions of all participants and indicated that Mr. Jumpei Hinata was applying to extend his secondment for an additional year. The FAC reviewed the application for renewal.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission accept the secondment application from Mr. Jumpei Hinata for a 12-month period commencing in June 2025.

*5f. Proposed revisions to the Internship and Secondment Program*

38. Discussions under Agenda Item 5f were carried out in a closed session due to the confidential nature of personnel matters.

39. The Executive Secretary outlined the proposed changes to the NPFC Internship and Secondment Program based on direction from COM08 and recent experience (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP03). The proposal aimed to provide greater flexibility in the application process and engagement of interns and secondees.

40. The FAC endorsed the proposed revisions with minor amendments suggested by some Members, including clarifying the confidentiality agreement requirement for secondees and modifying the announcement process for successful interns (Annex D).

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission adopt the proposed revisions to the NPFC Intern and Secondment Program policies (Annex D) and provide the budgetary resources necessary for the Secretariat to engage qualified candidates for the internship program intersessionally beginning in fiscal year 2025/2026.

Agenda Item 6. Performance Review and items of relevance to FAC

41. The Executive Secretary presented the NPFC Performance Review recommendations that concern the FAC (NPFC-2025-COM09-IP02).

42. The FAC noted the ongoing work to address the recommendations from the Performance Review Panel.

43. On the recommendation related to the requirement for cost assessments to accompany new proposals, some Members expressed reservations, noting concerns that such requirements could potentially deter the development and submission of proposals, as well as their adoption at the Commission.

44. Some Members suggested that the FAC continue working on the Performance Review recommendations in the intersessional period, with involvement of Members to have a more Member-driven discussion on which recommendations to focus on and prioritize. One Member noted the intersessional process to solicit Member input as outlined at COM08 was not followed and suggested that be pursued over the next year.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission task the FAC and the Secretariat with continuing intersessional work to address the recommendations from the Performance Review Panel as a standing agenda item, with involvement of Members to effectively focus and prioritize work as outlined in paragraph 94 of the COM08 Final Report.

Agenda Item 7. Secretariat's Work Plan: Budget Estimates for 2025/2026 to 2027/2028

*7a. Secretariat Work Plan 2025/2026 including staffing*

45. The Executive Secretary presented the Secretariat's Work Plan for the 2025/2026 fiscal year (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP10).

46. One Member noted that while many of the planned travel items for cooperation with other organizations seemed appropriate, the Secretariat should consider which meetings required in-person attendance versus virtual participation, noting that MoUs with other organizations are not intended to have significant budgetary implications.

47. The FAC endorsed the work plan.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission adopt the Secretariat's Work Plan for 2025/2026 (Annex E), in addition to tasking the Secretariat with other necessary work identified by FAC07.

*7b. Budget estimates for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 and indicative budget estimates for 2027/2028 and 2028/2029*

48. The Executive Secretary presented the proposed budget for 2025/2026 (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP01 Rev.1) for the review of the FAC. He highlighted the financial pressures of the devaluation of the yen, inflation, and growing costs of database management and some contracts (e.g., Webex).

49. Some Members expressed concern that the original proposed budget distributed to Members did not reflect the agreed exchange rate (124.36 JPY to 1 USD) for Secretariat staff whose pay in JPY is calculated from USD.

50. The FAC was unable to conclude discussion on the budget on 22 March, and thus adjourned and reconvened on 24 March during the margins of the Commission meeting. As the FAC Chair, Mr. Dan Hull, was unable to attend, Mr. Haruo Tominaga (Japan) served as interim FAC Chair for the remainder of discussion on Agenda Item 7 and for the report adoption process.

51. The Executive Secretary presented a revised version of the proposed budget, which addressed issues involving personnel costs.

52. Some Members requested that more information be provided in future budget proposals and presentations, such as more detailed breakdowns for MCS costs and the inflationary adjustment amounts to personnel costs.

53. The FAC endorsed the proposed budget for 2025/2026 as revised by the Executive Secretary.

**Recommendation:** That the Commission adopt the proposed budget for 2025/2026 (Annex F, Table 1).

**Recommendation:** That the Commission adopt the proposed Member contributions for 2025/2026 (Annex F, Table 2).

Agenda Item 8. Other matters

54. The Science Manager, Dr. Aleksandr Zavolokin, presented a proposal for a special project to assist the SWG NPA-SA with stock assessments for splendid alfonsino and north Pacific armorhead (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP07). The proposal requested 2,142,700 (JPY) from the Special Project Fund for 2025/2026 to hire external experts to conduct an assessment of the north Pacific armorhead stock and improve the assessment of the splendid alfonsino stock.

55. One Member pointed out that it is not clear how budget is allocated among SC related projects. The Member also proposed that FAC, in consultation with SC, review what budget is allocated to which SC projects to consider appropriate budget allocation.

56. The FAC endorsed the proposal and recommended funding from the Special Project Fund.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission approve the allocation of 2,142,700 (JPY) from the Special Project Fund for hiring external experts to assist with stock assessments for splendid alfonsino and north Pacific armorhead in 2025/2026.

57. The Executive Secretary presented proposed revisions to the FAC Terms of Reference (NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP08), including extending the maximum number of consecutive terms for the Chair from two to three 2-year terms and updating the quorum requirements (to two-thirds).

58. The FAC endorsed the proposed revisions (Annex G).

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission adopt the revised FAC Terms of Reference as proposed in NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP08 (Annex G).

*8a. Consideration of Recommendations for FAC Chair/Vice Chair*

59. The FAC noted that the terms of the current FAC Chair, Mr. Dan Hull (USA), and Vice Chair, Mr. Luoliang Xu (China), were ending at the conclusion of FAC07. The FAC thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for their excellent work. Following nominations from Members, the FAC recommended to the Commission that Mr. Haruo Tominaga (Japan) serve as the FAC Chair and Mr. Bernard Blazkiewicz (EU) serve as the FAC Vice Chair for a two-year term.

***Recommendation:*** That the Commission appoint Mr. Haruo Tominaga (Japan) to serve as the FAC Chair and Mr. Bernard Blazkiewicz (EU) to serve as the FAC Vice Chair for a two-year term.

Agenda Item 9. Next Meeting

60. ***Recommendation:*** That the Commission consider holding the next FAC meeting in conjunction with the next Commission meeting.

Agenda Item 10. Recommendations to the Commission

61. The FAC recommended the following to the Commission:

(Agenda Item 4)

(a) That the Commission adopt the NPFC Auditor's Report for the 2023/2024 Financial Year.

(b) That the Commission adopt the financial update to 31 January 2025 for the 2024/2025 fiscal year, including the statement of income and expenditures for the year ending 31 March 2024 (2023/2024 fiscal year) and unaudited values for 2024/2025.

(c) That the Commission direct the Secretariat to provide a report on contractual services engaged and outputs received, as requested in paragraph 33 of the FAC06 Final Report.

(d) That the Commission direct the Secretariat to analyze past discussion by the FAC and options for the Working Capital Fund cap consistent with the Financial Regulations, examine past history of how that number of months has been determined, and present options to FAC08 for determining the optimal number of months of operating funds to be available in the Working Capital Fund for the Commission.

(Agenda Item 5)

(e) That the Commission direct the Secretariat and an ad hoc intersessional correspondence group of the FAC to develop clearer options and recommendations on staff pay scales for both General Service and Professional/Director level positions for consideration at FAC08, with a view to making recommendations to the Commission at COM10.

(f) That the Commission maintain the current approach to Manager and Executive Secretary

staff pay for fiscal year 2025/2026 while additional work continues intersessionally to consider clear options and recommendations on Professional and General Service salaries.

(g) That the Commission adopt the proposed revisions to Staff Regulation 8.1, with the removal of the phrase "as outlined in NPFC Policy" for clarity and to implement the Secretariat's approach to provide staff with social security benefits beginning in the 2025/2026 fiscal year.

(h) That the Commission direct the Secretariat to develop an applicable NPFC Social Security Policy for consideration of FAC08.

(i) That the Commission accept the secondment application from Mr. Jumpei Hinata for a 12-month period commencing in June 2025.

(j) That the Commission adopt the proposed revisions to the NPFC Intern and Secondment Program policies (Annex D) and provide the budgetary resources necessary for the Secretariat to engage qualified candidates for the internship program intersessionally beginning in fiscal year 2025/2026.

(Agenda Item 6)

(k) That the Commission task the FAC and the Secretariat with continuing intersessional work to address the recommendations from the Performance Review Panel as a standing agenda item, with involvement of Members to effectively focus and prioritize work as outlined in paragraph 94 of the COM08 Final Report.

(Agenda Item 7)

(l) That the Commission adopt the Secretariat's Work Plan for 2025/2026 (Annex E), in addition to tasking the Secretariat with other necessary work identified by FAC07.

(m) That the Commission adopt the proposed budget for 2025/2026 (Annex F Table 1).

(n) That the Commission adopt the proposed Member contributions for 2025/2026 (Annex F Table 2).

(Agenda Item 8)

(o) That the Commission approve the allocation of 2,142,700 (JPY) from the Special Project Fund for hiring external experts to assist with stock assessments for splendid alfonsino and North Pacific armorhead in 2025/2026.

(p) That the Commission adopt the revised FAC Terms of Reference as proposed in NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP08 (Annex G).

(q) That the Commission appoint Mr. Haruo Tominaga (Japan) to serve as the FAC Chair and Mr. Bernard Blazkiewicz (EU) to serve as the FAC Vice Chair for a two-year term.

(Agenda Item 9)

(r) That the Commission consider holding the next FAC meeting in conjunction with the next Commission meeting.

Agenda Item 11. Adoption of the Report

62. The report was adopted by consensus.

Agenda Item 12. Close of the Meeting

63. The FAC meeting closed at 14:25, Osaka time, on 25 March 2025.

# List of Annexes to FAC07 Report


| | |
|---|---|
| Annex A | Agenda |
| Annex B | List of Documents |
| Annex C | List of Participants |
| Annex D | Updated Intern Policy |
| Annex E | Secretariat Work Plan |
| Annex F | Budgets and Assessed Contributions |
| Annex G | Updated FAC Terms of Reference |

North Pacific Fisheries Commission

7th Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee

22, 24 and 25 March 2025

Osaka, Japan (hybrid)

# Agenda (as amended at FAC07)

1. Opening of the Meeting

2. Appointment of Rapporteur

3. Adoption of Agenda

4. Financial Statement
    a. Audit Report for the 2023/2024 fiscal year
    b. Status of Member Contributions
    c. Secretariat financial updates to 31 January 2025:
        i. for 2024/2025 fiscal year (General Fund)
        ii. Working Capital Fund
        iii. Voluntary Contribution Funds
        iv. Special Project Fund
        v. Repatriation Fund
5. Administration Matters
    a. Staffing considerations
    b. Pay and benefits system (closed session)
        i. General Service Staff
            1. Pay
            2. Benefits
        ii. Manager and Executive Secretary Staff
            1. Pay
            2. Benefits
    c. 2024 Internship and Secondment programs (closed session)
    d. Proposed revisions to the Internship and Secondment Program (closed session)
    e. Proposed revisions to the Staff Regulations
    f. Potential revisions to the Financial Regulations (e.g., approach for the transshipment observer scheme)

6. Performance Review updates and items of relevance to FAC

7. Secretariat's Work Plan: Budget Estimates for 2025/2026 to 2028/2029
    a. Secretariat Work Plan 2025/2026 including staffing
    b. Budget estimates for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 and indicative budget estimates for 2027/2028 and 2028/2029

8. Other matters
    a. Consideration of Recommendations for FAC Chair/Vice Chair

9. Next meeting

10. Recommendations to the Commission

11. Adoption of the Report

12. Close of the Meeting

# FAC07 LIST OF DOCUMENTS

## MEETING INFORMATION PAPERS

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-FAC07/TCC08/COM09-MIP01 Rev.1 | Meeting Information |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-MIP02 | Provisional Agenda |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-MIP03 | Annotated Indicative Provisional Agenda |

## WORKING PAPERS

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP01 Rev.2 | DRAFT COMMISSION BUDGETS 2025/2026 to 2028/2029 |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP02 | NPFC INTERN and SECONDMENT PROGRAM Fiscal Year 2025/2026 |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP03 | PROPOSED UPDATES TO THE NPFC SECONDMENT AND INTERNSHIP POLICIES |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP04 | NPFC SECRETARIAT WORKLOAD AND STAFFING LEVELS |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP05 | NPFC STAFF REGULATIONS – PROPOSAL REGARDING GENERAL SERVICE PAY |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP06 | NPFC STAFF REGULATIONS – PROPOSAL REGARDING SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP07 | Update on the special project for hiring an expert to assist the SWG NPA-SA to conduct an assessment for Splendid Alfonsino and North Pacific Armorhead and funding request for 2025 |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP08 | FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP09 | NPFC STAFF REGULATIONS – PROPOSAL REGARDING PROFESSIONAL (P) and DIRECTOR (D) LEVEL PAY |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-WP10 | Secretariat Work Plan 2025-2026 |

**INFORMATION PAPERS**

| Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-IP01 | NPFC Auditor's Report for 2023/2024 Financial Year |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-IP02 | Performance Review Update |
| NPFC-2025-FAC07-IP02 SuppDoc.1 | SC/TCC/FAC RELATED FROM PERFORMANCE REVIEW Excel Table |

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# NPFC SECONDMENT AND INTERNSHIP POLICIES

Version from FAC07/COM09 (March 2025)

## Secondment Policy

*Introduction*

NPFC invites citizens from its member Parties to apply for the NPFC secondment. The period of the secondment is from 1 to 12 months. The secondee will work at the NPFC Secretariat in Tokyo, Japan or in exceptional circumstances, remotely.

*Objective*

To assist NPFC Secretariat in setting up new systems and mechanisms, and provide advice on operational matters.

*Qualifications of Candidates*

This individual is a senior technical specialist from a Member Party who can assist the Secretariat in the set-up key Commission systems, e.g., data, website, intranet, VMS, science projects, and others.

*Period of Secondment*

The period is from 1 (one) to 12 (twelve) months and can be renewed once with the approval of the Commission.

*Guidelines for application and selection procedure*

1. Applicants will apply to the NPFC Secretariat following the procedure described on the NPFC website. Applicants must describe their interests and qualifications in a cover letter, provide a resume delineating their work experience, and submit a reference letter written by the Member's Representative.
2. Applications (including cover letter, resume, and reference letter) must be received by the NPFC Secretariat 60 days prior to the NPFC Commission Meeting. The NPFC Executive Secretary will review applications and transmit his/her recommendation(s) to the NPFC Points of Contact 30 days prior to the NPFC Commission Meeting.
3. The Commission will announce any successful secondee at the Commission Meeting. The NPFC Secretariat staff will contact the secondee immediately after the Commission Meeting by email, or by phone, or by regular mail to make arrangements with the secondee to assume the secondment.
4. Once selected, a secondee requiring a "Certificate of Eligibility (CoE) and/or a Visa for work purposes will have 4 (four) months to successfully receive their

documentation. The Secretariat will provide support on the application process but cannot guarantee that the necessary Visa will be authorized by Japanese immigration officials.

*Travel expenses*

The secondee may or may not be provided air travel at economy rate subject to discussions and approval of the Executive Secretary.

*How to Apply*

1. Provide an introductory letter in English to the Executive Secretary which includes:
   a. Name and contact details and affiliation with the Member and/or NPFC;
   b. Interest in NPFC and where technical experience could further assist the Secretariat in setting up or further developing key systems for the Commission.
2. Provide a resume showing academic, work experience and technical qualifications along with copies of diploma and/or any certificate(s) that shows the specialties (certificates/diplomas can be provided in their original language along with a translation to English.
3. Submit two (2) letters of reference from persons knowledgeable of the applicant's qualifications with e-mail contacts for each reference.
4. Indicate the expected period of secondment and intended outputs, noting the initial limit of 12 months.
5. Indicate the acceptance of the terms for remuneration and travel for the secondment.

*Deadline*

All applications must be received in full at the office of the NPFC Executive Secretary 60 days prior to the Annual Session of the Commission.

*Review and Approval*

The Executive Secretary will review all applications and provide Representatives, Alternates and Official Contacts a summary and recommendation for consideration at the following Commission meeting through the Finance and Administration Committee. Review and decision will be provided by the Commission. It is envisioned that there would be a maximum of two (2) Secondees at any one time working in the Secretariat. Applicants must be willing to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to commencing their secondment.

*Starting date of the Secondment*

Date to be mutually agreed upon between the candidate(s) and the Executive Secretary.

## Internship Policy

*Introduction*

NPFC invites citizens from its member Parties to apply for the NPFC Internship Program. The period of the internship is up to six months. Up to two interns per year will be accepted as long as funds are identified in the Budget approved by the Commission. The intern will work at the NPFC Secretariat in Tokyo, Japan. Remote work is not envisioned for this role.

*Objectives*

The NPFC Internship Program has two goals:

1. To help early-career professionals gain experience and knowledge in operations of the Commission, and
2. To increase the capacity of the NPFC secretariat through the presence of an additional professional bringing his/her experience and knowledge.

*Nature of the Internship*

The intern works under the supervision of the Executive Secretary and/or his/her designates and may be given a wide variety of tasks:

- Fisheries management;
- Fisheries science;
- Databases;
- Administrative, meeting coordination, publications; and
- Other NPFC activities delegated by the Executive Secretary.

*Period of internship:*

The period is from 1 (one) month up to a maximum of 6 (six) months.

*Qualifications of Candidates*

Applicants must be from NPFC Member, have a minimum of a university degree, the ability to read, write, and speak English, the ability to use computers and the internet, and demonstrated personal initiative.

Applicants must currently be a part of the government or academic sector, a recent graduate, or currently enrolled in school for an advanced degree.

*Guidelines for application and selection procedure*

1. Applicants will apply to the NPFC Secretariat following the procedure described on the NPFC website. Applicants must describe their interests and qualifications in a cover letter, provide a resume delineating their academic and work experience, and submit

two professional reference letters.

2. Applications (including cover letter, resume, and two reference letters) must be received by the NPFC Secretariat 60 days prior to the NPFC Annual Meeting. The NPFC Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Science and Compliance Managers, decide upon the successful candidate(s).

3. The Executive Secretary will announce the successful intern at the Commission Meeting (assumed to be in March or April). The NPFC Secretariat staff will contact the successful intern immediately after the Annual Meeting by email, or by phone, or by regular mail to make arrangements with the intern to assume the internship.

4. Once selected, an intern requiring a "Certificate of Eligibility (CoE)" and/or a Visa for work purposes will have up to 4 (four) months to successfully receive their documentation. The Secretariat will provide support on the application process but cannot guarantee that the necessary Visa will be authorized by Japanese immigration officials. In that case, the internship would be cancelled to allow for other candidates to be considered.

5. Should an internship opportunity remain available intersessionally (i.e., funds remain available), the Executive Secretary can advertise the opportunity on the NPFC website and engage an intern outside of the regular cycle noted above.

*Financial Support*

NPFC will provide a stipend of 220,000 JPY per month to assist in accommodation and living costs. Commuter costs from their local residence to the Secretariat office will also be provided under the NPFC Commuting Allowance Policy. Travel costs for the intern to move to and from their customary place of residence and the location of the Secretariat in Minato-ku, Tokyo will be at his/her own expense or by home country support. Travel expenses associated with the Intern's work in the Secretariat will be covered by NPFC. The Intern's medical insurance and benefits are not covered by the NPFC Internship Program.

*How to Apply*

The applicant should submit the following to the Executive Secretary by email at executive.secretary@npfc.int:

1. Provide an introductory letter in English to the Executive Secretary which includes:
   a. Name and contact details and affiliation with the Member and/or NPFC;

   b. Interest in NPFC and the reasons for applying for the internship noting the range of tasks performed by the Secretariat which includes:
   - Fisheries management;
   - Fisheries science;
   - Databases;
   - Administrative, meeting coordination, publications; and
   - Other NPFC activities delegated by the Executive Secretary.

2. Provide a resume showing academic and/or work experience and copies of diploma and/or any certificate(s) that shows the specialties (certificates/diplomas can be provided in their original language along with a translation to English,.
3. Submit two (2) letters of reference from persons knowledgeable of the applicant's qualifications with e-mail contacts for each reference.
4. Indicate the expected period of internship and intended outputs, noting the limit of 6 months.
5. Indicate the acceptance of the terms for remuneration and travel for the internship

*Deadline for application*

The applicant should submit their application 60 days before the Commission meeting or as detailed in any intersessional call for applicants.

*Review and Approval*

The Executive Secretary will review all applications and provide Representatives, Alternates and Official Contacts a summary and decision on the successful candidates as soon as possible after the decision is made. Applicants must be willing to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to commencing their internship.

*Starting date of the Internship*

Date to be mutually agreed upon and ideally interns are not significantly overlapping should 2 (two) be engaged.

# SECRETARIAT WORK PLAN 2025/2026

## ABSTRACT

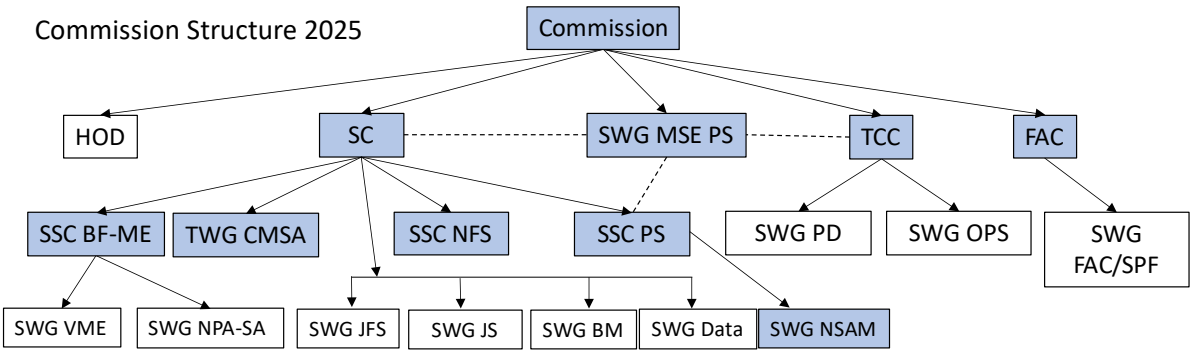
This paper provides the Secretariat's work plan for the 2025/2026 fiscal year for four key areas (the workplan will be informed by COM09 decisions):

(a) Coordination of scientific activities of the Commission;
(b) Coordination of compliance activities and operational reporting to the Commission;
(c) Data management and security;
(d) Provision of finance and administration services to support the Commission in the execution of Secretariat's work plan

## DETAILS:

The function of the NPFC Secretariat is the provision of services to, and representation of, the Commission as determined by its Members in accordance with the Convention and relevant rules and regulations. As identified by the Secretariat and shared with Members, four key areas highlighted below provide the Secretariat and the Commission guidance with regard to the Commission's activities in 2025/2026 fiscal year. The structure of Commission related entities is provided in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Commission related entities supported by the Secretariat**



## I. Coordination of scientific activities of the Commission

The Secretariat coordinates the scientific activities of the Commission including:

a. Implementation of the Scientific Committee rolling Five-Year Research Plan and Work Plan for each Priority Area:
    - Stock assessments for target fisheries and bycatch species
    - Ecosystem approach to fisheries management
    - Data collection, management, and security
    - Climate change impact
b. Implementation of the scientific projects to be conducted in 2025/2026 (see the table below for details).
c. Organizing informal virtual meetings to facilitate intersessional work, including rapporteur services: 13 SC subsidiary bodies, 2-4 meetings per each.
d. Organizing formal meetings of SC, SSCs and TWGs to finalize outputs, formalize recommendation and develop scientific advice: 1 SC, 5 SSCs and 2 TWG meetings per year.
e. Providing infrastructure services for data collection, sharing and dissemination, including assistance in:
    - Developing a new database for scientific data (see details under IV. Data management)
    - Developing/updating data collection standards and data provision templates
    - Providing data storage and maintaining data inventories
    - Compiling annual catch and effort statistics
    - Developing/updating data sharing and security policies
    - Identifying data gaps which can be fulfilled by an observer program
f. Conducting data analyses: NPA monitoring survey, PS weekly catch, annual catch and effort trends for NPFC priority species, scope study on VMS data for science etc.
g. Assisting Members in selection and contracting invited experts: 4 contracts for PS, CM, NFS, and bottom fish.
h. Making scientific data, meeting documents, policies and templates available to relevant SC members while ensuring data security.
i. Promoting cooperation with other organizations
    - NPAFC: five-year Work Plan to implement the NPAFC/NPFC Memorandum of Cooperation
    - PICES: PICES annual meeting in 2025, PICES-ICES SPF Working Group, establishment of a joint NPFC/PICES Working Group, updated Framework for cooperation
    - BECI: following up with the developments of the Basin Scale Events and Coastal Impacts (BECI) project
    - FAO DSF project: collaborative activities on climate change impact, data-limited stock assessment, shark ID guide, and ecosystem approach to fisheries management
    - FAO FIRMS: providing stock and fisheries information in accordance with the partnership agreement
    - SPRFMO, ISC/WCPFC: implementation of MOUs
j. Liaising with TCC for issues of common interest
k. Assisting Members with addressing science-related recommendations from the NPFC Performance Review report

*Scientific projects*

| # | Project | Time | Status | Next step:<br>activities, required funds |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Pacific saury stock assessment meetings (meeting costs) | Every year | *TWG PSSA meetings: Feb 2017, Dec 2017, Nov 2018, Mar 2019.*<br>*SSC PS meetings: Nov 2019, Aug 2023.* | WG NSAM meeting.<br>Jul 2025.<br>*2025 FY: 2mil JPY*<br>*Source: China's Voluntary Contribution Fund (VCF)*<br>SSC PS15 meeting.<br>Sep 2025.<br>*2025 FY: virtual, no funds required.* |
| 2 | Chub mackerel stock assessment meeting (meeting costs) | Every year | *TWG CMSA meetings: Dec 2017, Mar 2019, Sep 2023, Jul 2024.* | TWG CMSA11 meeting.<br>Jul 2025.<br>*2025 FY: 1.5mil JPY (10,000USD)*<br>*Source: SC fund.*<br>TWG CMSA12.<br>Early 2026.<br>*2025 FY: virtual, no funds required.* |
| 3 | Neon flying squid stock assessment meeting (meeting costs) | Every year | | SSC NFS02 meeting.<br>Jul 2025.<br>*2025 FY: 1.5mil JPY (10,000USD)*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 4 | Invited expert to support TWG CMSA (consultancy fee and travel costs for one in-person meeting) | 2020-current | An external expert has been contracted to support TWG CMSA. | *2025 FY:*<br>*0.6mil JPY - SC fund, and*<br>*0.8mil JPY - US VCF.* |
| 5 | Invited expert to support SSC PS (consultancy fee and travel costs for two in-person meeting) | 2019-current | An external expert has been contracted to support SSC PS and its subsidiary WG NSAM. | *2025 FY: 2.4mil JPY*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Invited expert to support WG NSAM (consultancy fee and travel costs for one in-person meeting) | 2024- | | *2025 FY: 3.3mil JPY*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 7 | Invited expert to support SSC NFS (consultancy fee and travel costs for two in-person meetings) | 2024-current | An external expert has been contracted to support SSC NFS. | *2025 FY: 2.2mil JPY*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 8 | Invited expert to support SA and NPA stock assessments | 2024-current | Two external experts were contracted in 2024 as a separate project covered by the Special Project Fund. | *2025 FY: 2.2mil JPY*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 9 | PICES Annual meeting | Every year | Travel support to a participant of the SC or its subsidiary bodies to attend PICES Annual meeting. | *2025 FY: 0.75mil JPY (5,000USD)*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 10 | Other science meetings / capacity development | 2024 | Training for capacity building or travel support to attend other relevant science meetings. | *2026 FY: 0.75mil JPY (5,000USD)*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 11 | PICES/ICES/FAO Small Pelagic Fish Symposium. 4-8 May 2026, La Paz, Mexico | 2025& 2026 | An invitation from PICES for co-sponsorship and participation in the symposium. | *2025 FY: 0.75mil JPY (5,000USD)*<br>*2026 FY: 0.75mil JPY (5,000USD)*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |
| 12 | Database for scientific data | 2025-2026 | A proposal to develop a database for scientific data. | *2025 FY: 10,000 EUR*<br>*2026 FY: 20,000 EUR*<br>*Source: EU's VCF and Members' in kind contribution* |
| | Total | | | *2025 FY: 15.2mil JPY*<br>*Source: SC fund.* |

## II. Coordination of the joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS)

a. Organizing joint SC-TCC-COM SWG MSE PS meetings to develop an MSE for Pacific saury: 1-2 meetings per year
b. Assisting Members in selection and contracting an invited expert
c. Supporting SWG MSE PS's intersessional activities including informal virtual meetings and liaison with SSC PS

## III. Coordination of compliance activities of the Commission

The Secretariat coordinates compliance activities of the Commission including:

a. Implementation of compliance work plan and priorities through the two SWGs, Operations and Planning and Development, to address the following:
    i. Preparation for implementation of anticipated CMM for a regional transshipment observer program
    ii. Continued implementation and refinement of transshipment reporting and analysis
    iii. Implementation and analysis of NPFC regional VMS
    iv. Implementation of the Compliance Monitoring Scheme and provision of the resultant Compliance Monitoring Report
    v. Maintaining the Vessel Registry
    vi. Implementation of the HSBI procedure
b. Coordinating and assisting Members to hold TCC and SWG meetings in 2025/2026
c. Review of existing CMMs for revision and consideration of new CMMs, if any, from Members
d. Maintain the Vessel Registry and provide assistance to new CNCPs as they join the Commission
e. Maintain and upgrade the e-IUU vessel system, e-annual report system, and development of the data warehouse to assist the Commission in the analysis of the data
f. Coordinate the e- IUU vessel listing process from data submitted by Members
g. Provide Draft Compliance report for TCC09 meeting
h. Address VMS and other electronic monitoring system issues and assess compliance as directed by the Commission
i. Promoting cooperation with other organizations in compliance: IMCS, TCN, PPFCN, NPAFC, WCPFC, SPRFMO. The Tuna Compliance Network will meet in June 2025 at the NPFC Secretariat office in Tokyo.
j. Other tasking to be set at TCC08 and COM09

## IV. Data management and security and Information Technology

The data management system supports the storing and analysis of scientific and compliance data

for the Commission's decision-making process. The NPFC relational database is designed to provide a secure, user-friendly, accessible, and reliable platform for compiling information to meet the Commission's scientific and compliance needs.

The database is structured to integrate all data modules within the Commission, ensuring a streamlined, efficient decision-making process for Members. In addition, enhancing the efficiency of electronic services provided by the Secretariat to Members and other stakeholders is a key priority. To this end, the Secretariat is continuously working on database improvements and will undertake several initiatives to further develop the Commission's data management system, including:

a. **SC Data Development**

   At its most recent meeting, the Scientific Committee (SC) endorsed the development of an SC database to facilitate more efficient management and utilization of scientific data for analyses. The SC also agreed to establish the SWG Data to provide direction on the SC needs in developing an advanced data management system. Currently, the project is in the initial stage of development and defining the project's scope and specifications in detail.

b. **NPFC Member Account Management Project**

   Currently, the Members accounts and all access on the NPFC website is updated manually by the Secretariat based on Member requests. The goal of this project is to introduce a more flexible and user-friendly interface, allowing each Member's group administrator to directly add, update, and manage their group members, thereby improving overall efficiency and accessibility. The Secretariat has provided guidelines to the service provider, and the project is expected to be completed this calendar year. This will also include increased security options such as two factor authentication for sensitive data.

c. **Review of NPFC Data Management System**

   The NPFC data management system has evolved significantly, incorporating systems for the transshipment reporting system, catch reporting, e-IUU, HSBI, VMS, Vessel Registry, and Annual Report, among others. The Secretariat will undertake a comprehensive review of these systems, supported by expert analysis and guidance. The review will focus on examining the overall data structure, compiling a data inventory, and establishing appropriate permission levels. This review will benefit the NPFC and its stakeholders by enhancing data transparency, ensuring secure and efficient access to critical information, and improving overall system reliability.

d. **Member Portal**

The Secretariat plans to develop a Member Portal, incorporating a dashboard that will allow Members to easily locate required submissions, track deadlines, and monitor the status of their submissions. This initiative aims to streamline the submission process, enhance user accessibility, and improve overall efficiency.

e. **Integration of Air Surveillance Data**

As directed by Members, the Secretariat plans to develop a mechanism for integrating aerial surveillance data into the NPFC's existing data management system. This enhancement will strengthen data collection, improve analytical capabilities, and support more effective decision-making.

f. **Transshipment API**

The Secretariat has developed the Transshipment API data entry system to support straightforward data entry by Members and is currently working with interested Members to facilitate Member-side system development.

g. **Website Updates**

The Secretariat will update the NPFC website regularly to enhance public awareness and provide Members with the necessary system access for various Commission operations.

## V. Finance and Administration

### 1. Financial matters to support the Secretariat and Commission in the execution of its duties

Securing funds for the Commission's activities and implementation of approved activities through formal and internationally recognized financial mechanisms is one of the areas for the Secretariat to assist Members and the Commission to achieve objectives of the Convention.

Following are the major financial activities for 2025/2026:

a. Drafting a four-year budget plan 2026-2029 (proposed budgets for 2026 and 2027, indicative budgets for 2028 and 2029) for approval at the 10th$^{th}$ Commission meeting;
b. Submission of the external Auditor's Report for the Commission's 2023/2024 financial affairs
c. Continue to implement (Quick Books for Non-Profits) to support streamlined financial reporting

### 2. Provision of administrative services to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies

**1) Hosting Commission meetings**

The Secretariat facilitates all NPFC meetings to be held in 2025 by providing logistical support and preparing meeting documents and reports:

a. Commission and Subsidiary-body Meetings
   - 8th Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC), 18-21 March 2025
   - 7th Finance and Administration Committee (FAC), 22 March 2025
   - 9th Session of the Commission, 24-27 March 2025
   - 10th Scientific Committee, 16-19 December 2025
   - Potentially the 10th Session of the Commission if it is agreed to host in this fiscal year (i.e., March 2026)
b. Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS) meeting, Jan/Feb 2026
c. Small Scientific Committees and Technical Working Groups meetings
d. TCC SWG meetings to take place as decided by the TCC
e. SC SWGs meetings to take place as decided by the SC

**2) Cooperation with other organizations**

The Secretariat currently liaises with other organizations including RFMOs by attending their meetings for information sharing and for developing other joint or reciprocal activities of mutual interest. In 2025/2026, the meetings scheduled to be represented by Secretariat staff are as follows:

| Meeting | Date and place | Purpose | Expected outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 32nd NPAFC Annual Meeting | 12-16 May 2025 Vancouver, Canada | Secretariat to attend annual meeting of NPAFC | Facilitation of cooperation with NPAFC based on the work plan to be agreed by both Commissions to implement MOC established in 2019 |
| ISC 25 | 17-20 June 2025 Korea | Secretariat to attend the plenary meeting | Facilitate cooperation with ISC under the recently signed MOU. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PICES Annual meeting | November 2025, Yokohama, Japan | Secretariat to attend annual meeting of PICES and intersessional meetings of its committees and working groups (virtually or in-person) | Enhancing scientific cooperation between NPFC and PICES as specified in the Framework for cooperation, including such key areas as Stock assessment support, VMEs and Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries. |
| FAO DSF Project Steering Committee meeting | January 2026 Rome, Italy | Secretariat to attend the 3rd Project Steering Committee meeting (virtually or in-person) | Review of the progress made and discussion on workplan for 2026 including joint activities between NPFC and DSF project |
| GFETW 8 | Mid 2026 TBD (Asia Pacific) | Secretariat to attend the Global Fisheries Enforcement Workshop, hosted by IMCS Network, planned for mid 2026 in Asia Pacific | The GFETW is a biennial workshop that brings together the global fisheries community to discuss priority and emerging MCS challenges and opportunities to exchange information and share lessons learned. |

Further representation will be determined at TCC, FAC and the Commission Meetings.

Besides attendance at the meetings, there are areas for cooperation with other organizations, which require further consideration and input from the Commission:

f. Implementation of MOUs with SPRFMO, ISC and WCPFC.
g. Cooperation for compliance purposes in line with Commission objectives (e.g., with all Members for VMS and HSBI, Pan Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network, Tuna Compliance Network (TCN)).
h. Cooperation with FAO ABNJ Deep Sea Fisheries Project Phase 2 as one of the partner organizations with commitment of in-kind contribution to the project

**3) Enhancing public awareness**

The Secretariat will enhance public awareness through various means:

a. Develop a cooperative mechanism with the Tokyo University of Marine Science and

Technology (the location of the NPFC Secretariat) to allow for increased engagement (e.g., lectures and outreach, education opportunities for TUMSAT students, supporter access to facilities such as electronic library or meeting space, and research cooperation)

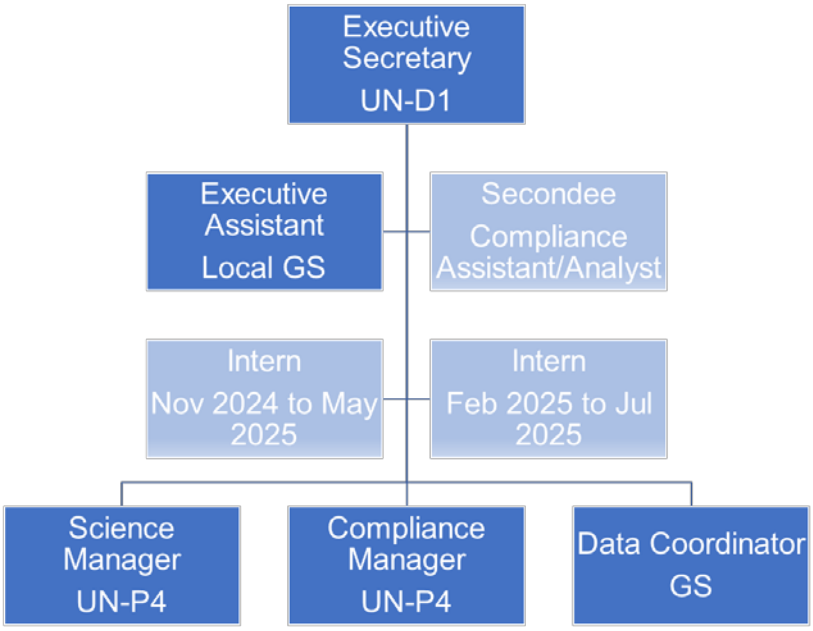
b. Maintain and update official website to provide the public information on Commission's activities
c. Give lectures and seminars relevant to NPFC work upon request from local government or universities and international fora
d. Submit articles to newsletters of RSN and RFMOs
e. Publish the NPFC Yearbook to entail activities of the Commission for 2024
f. Receive visitors from international organizations, local government, embassies, and universities

**4) Management of human resources (organization chart shown in Figure 2)**

Effective management of human resources intends to maximize employee performance while considering the best economic use of the resources of the Commission. According to the Secretariat's Work Plan and Commission's decision, the Secretariat will coordinate the following:

a. Initiate process to recruit a new Compliance Manager as current incumbent is not seeking renewal (to arrive for July 2026).
b. Conduct annual performance reviews of the Secretariat staff for 2024/2025 fiscal year (April 2024-March 2025): staff performance review by Executive Secretary, and a performance review of the Executive Secretary by the Commission.
c. Implement General Service and Professional Staff pay and benefit changes (if adopted).
d. A major focus for this fiscal is to document processes and procedures related to HR and linked to administrative, financial and data considerations.
e. Continue to ensure that the Secretariat complies with Japanese labor law related to benefits for Japanese staff.
f. Manage intern process (if amended policy is adopted) and secondees from Members after consideration and approval by the Commission.

**Figure 2: Secretariat structure**




*Note to Figure 2: Contractors and consultants are not represented. The decision on Secondee for 2025/2026 will be taken at COM09.*

Table 1: Proposed budgets for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027

| | Year 2025/26 Proposed | Year 2026/27 Proposed | Year 2027/28 Estimated | Year 2028/29 Estimated |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Items | Cost (JPY) | Cost (JPY) | Cost (JPY) | Cost (JPY) |
| 1. PERSONNEL COSTS | | | | |
| 1.1 Executive Secretary | 20,981,682 | 21,611,132 | 22,259,466 | 22,927,250 |
| 1.2 Professional Category CM | 15,318,789 | 15,500,000 | 14,600,000 | 15,038,000 |
| 1.3 Professional Category SM | 16,935,668 | 17,443,739 | 17,967,051 | 18,506,062 |
| 1.4 General Services Category EA | 8,534,000 | 8,790,020 | 9,053,721 | 9,325,332 |
| 1.5 General Services Category DC | 8,080,000 | 8,322,400 | 8,572,072 | 8,829,234 |
| 1.6 Temporary Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1.7 (a) Social Security & Insurance | 3,878,647 | 2,260,000 | 2,260,000 | 2,260,000 |
| 1.7 (b) Pension Costs | 10,756,922 | 11,036,763 | 11,157,656 | 11,492,385 |
| 1.8 Overtime | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| 1.9 (a) Staff Allowances - Home Leave | 1,000,000 | 2,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 2,000,000 |
| 1.9 (b) Staff Allowances – Relocation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1.9 (C) Staff Allowances – Repatriation | 3,000,000 | 3,000,000 | 3,000,000 | 3,000,000 |
| 1.9 (d) Staff Allowances - Accommodation Subsidy | 9,100,000 | 9,100,000 | 9,100,000 | 9,100,000 |
| 1.10 Professional Development / Training | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| 1.11 Education Fee | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 |
| 1.12 Separation Allowances | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL PERSONNEL | 101,085,708 | 102,564,054 | 102,469,965 | 105,978,264 |
| 2. OTHER SERVICE COSTS | | | | |
| 2.1 Office Equipment & Furniture | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 |
| 2.2 Office Supplies | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| 2.3 Rentals | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2.4 Communications | 1,300,000 | 1,300,000 | 1,300,000 | 1,300,000 |
| 2.5 Printing | 450,000 | 400,000 | 400,000 | 420,000 |
| 2.6 Duty Travel | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 |
| 2.7 Auditing and Bank fees | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 |
| 2.8 Contractual Services | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 |
| 2.9 Database Management | 15,000,000 | 15,000,000 | 15,000,000 | 15,000,000 |
| 2.10 MCS Costs | 16,000,000 | 16,000,000 | 16,000,000 | 16,000,000 |
| 2.11a Meeting Costs COM/FAC/TCC | 20,000,000 | 20,000,000 | 20,000,000 | 20,000,000 |
| 2.11b Meeting Costs - SWG MSE PS | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| 2.12 Science Support | 17,342,700 | 15,200,000 | 15,200,000 | 15,200,000 |
| 2.13 Staff Recruitment & Hiring | 1,500,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2.14 To / From Working Capital Fund | -20,000,000 | -10,000,000 | 0 | 0 |
| 2.14 To / From Working Capital Fund | -3,804,000 | | | |
| 2.14 bis To/From Special Project Fund | -2,142,700 | | 0 | 0 |
| 2.15 Representation Expenses | 250,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 |
| 2.16 Miscellaneous | 500,000 | 500,000 | 500,000 | 500,000 |
| TOTAL OTHER SERVICE COSTS | 64,796,000 | 77,050,000 | 87,050,000 | 87,070,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **165,881,708** | **179,614,054** | **189,519,965** | **193,048,264** |

Table 2.a: Assessed contribution table for 2025/2026

| Member\Rule | a) | b) | c) | Fixed Contribution | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canada | 5,332,325 | 0 | 2,370,624 | | 7,702,949 | 4.6 |
| China | 5,332,325 | 59,506,836 | 557,078 | | 65,396,238 | 39.4 |
| EU | 5,332,325 | 0 | 1,840,643 | | 7,172,967 | 4.3 |
| Korea | 5,332,325 | 578,450 | 1,572,669 | | 7,483,443 | 4.5 |
| Russia | 5,332,325 | 153,702 | 607,552 | | 6,093,579 | 3.7 |
| Chinese Taipei | 5,332,325 | 6,623,001 | 1,432,982 | | 13,388,308 | 8.1 |
| USA | 5,332,325 | 0 | 3,657,823 | | 8,990,148 | 5.4 |
| Vanuatu | 5,332,325 | 172,952 | 148,800 | | 5,654,076 | 3.4 |
| Japan | | | | 44,000,000 | 44,000,000 | 26.5 |
| Total | 42,658,598 | 67,034,939 | 12,188,171 | 44,000,000 | 165,881,708 | 100.0 |

Table 2.b: Assessed contribution table for 2026/2027

| Member\Rule | a) | b) | c) | Fixed Contribution | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canada | 5,933,115 | 0 | 2,637,721 | | 8,570,836 | 4.8 |
| China | 5,933,115 | 65,707,532 | 619,843 | | 72,260,490 | 40.2 |
| EU | 5,933,115 | 0 | 2,048,027 | | 7,981,142 | 4.4 |
| Korea | 5,933,115 | 580,682 | 1,749,861 | | 8,263,657 | 4.6 |
| Russia | 5,933,115 | 10,513 | 676,005 | | 6,619,633 | 3.7 |
| Chinese Taipei | 5,933,115 | 8,110,445 | 1,594,436 | | 15,637,995 | 8.7 |
| USA | 5,933,115 | 0 | 4,069,948 | | 10,003,063 | 5.6 |
| Vanuatu | 5,933,115 | 178,557 | 165,565 | | 6,277,237 | 3.5 |
| Japan | | | | 44,000,000 | 44,000,000 | 24.5 |
| Total | 47,464,919 | 74,587,730 | 13,561,405 | 44,000,000 | 179,614,054 | 100.0 |

**NORTH PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION**
**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**
**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Original Version 2016**

**This version from FAC07/COM09 (March 2025)**

1. The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) established the standing Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) as a subsidiary body pursuant to Article 6 paragraph 1 of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean at the second Annual Session of the Commission in Tokyo, Japan. The purpose of the FAC is to provide advice and recommendations to the Commission on matters related to the budget, finance and administration of the Commission.

2. Membership of the FAC shall be open to each member of the Commission.

3. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the FAC will be selected by consensus in accordance with relevant provisions of the Convention and the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, unless the Commission decides otherwise. The Chair's term will begin at his or her first Committee meeting. In the case that the Chair is unable or unwilling to serve a full term, the Vice-Chair will assume the Chair's position for a two-year term. The Vice-Chair would succeed the Chair after the Chair's term expires and a new Vice-Chair would be identified. The Chair and Vice-Chair will be selected for a period of two years and shall be eligible for reelection but shall not serve for more than three successive terms of two years in the same capacity.

4. The Commission requests the FAC to convene in the day or days prior to the commencement of the Annual Regular Session of the Commission. If necessary, sessions of the FAC may be continued or convened during a regular session of the Commission or inter-sessionally, subject to Article 5 of the Convention and Rule 2 of the NPFC Rules of Procedure. The meeting will be open to Members of the Commission, CNCPs, and observer States unless decided otherwise by the Members of the Commission.

5. The FAC shall make every effort to adopt a summary report of each of its meetings by consensus for transmission to the Commission.

6. The FAC may consider developing its rules of procedure, which must be agreed by the Commission, taking into consideration the rules of procedure of other subsidiary bodies of the Commission. In the meantime a quorum for the FAC shall be 2/3 of Committee members.

Table 1: Proposed budgets for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027

| | Year 2025/26 Proposed | Year 2026/27 Proposed | Year 2027/28 Estimated | Year 2028/29 Estimated |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Items | Cost (JPY) | Cost (JPY) | Cost (JPY) | Cost (JPY) |
| 1. PERSONNEL COSTS | | | | |
| 1.1 Executive Secretary | 20,981,682 | 21,611,132 | 22,259,466 | 22,927,250 |
| 1.2 Professional Category CM | 15,318,789 | 15,500,000 | 14,600,000 | 15,038,000 |
| 1.3 Professional Category SM | 16,935,668 | 17,443,739 | 17,967,051 | 18,506,062 |
| 1.4 General Services Category EA | 8,534,000 | 8,790,020 | 9,053,721 | 9,325,332 |
| 1.5 General Services Category DC | 8,080,000 | 8,322,400 | 8,572,072 | 8,829,234 |
| 1.6 Temporary Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1.7 (a) Social Security & Insurance | 3,878,647 | 2,260,000 | 2,260,000 | 2,260,000 |
| 1.7 (b) Pension Costs | 10,756,922 | 11,036,763 | 11,157,656 | 11,492,385 |
| 1.8 Overtime | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| 1.9 (a) Staff Allowances - Home Leave | 1,000,000 | 2,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 2,000,000 |
| 1.9 (b) Staff Allowances – Relocation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1.9 (C) Staff Allowances – Repatriation | 3,000,000 | 3,000,000 | 3,000,000 | 3,000,000 |
| 1.9 (d) Staff Allowances - Accommodation Subsidy | 9,100,000 | 9,100,000 | 9,100,000 | 9,100,000 |
| 1.10 Professional Development / Training | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| 1.11 Education Fee | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 |
| 1.12 Separation Allowances | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL PERSONNEL | 101,085,708 | 102,564,054 | 102,469,965 | 105,978,264 |
| 2. OTHER SERVICE COSTS | | | | |
| 2.1 Office Equipment & Furniture | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 |
| 2.2 Office Supplies | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| 2.3 Rentals | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2.4 Communications | 1,300,000 | 1,300,000 | 1,300,000 | 1,300,000 |
| 2.5 Printing | 450,000 | 400,000 | 400,000 | 420,000 |
| 2.6 Duty Travel | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 |
| 2.7 Auditing and Bank fees | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 |
| 2.8 Contractual Services | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 |
| 2.9 Database Management | 15,000,000 | 15,000,000 | 15,000,000 | 15,000,000 |
| 2.10 MCS Costs | 16,000,000 | 16,000,000 | 16,000,000 | 16,000,000 |
| 2.11a Meeting Costs COM/FAC/TCC | 20,000,000 | 20,000,000 | 20,000,000 | 20,000,000 |
| 2.11b Meeting Costs - SWG MSE PS | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| 2.12 Science Support | 17,342,700 | 15,200,000 | 15,200,000 | 15,200,000 |
| 2.13 Staff Recruitment & Hiring | 1,500,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2.14 To / From Working Capital Fund | -20,000,000 | -10,000,000 | 0 | 0 |
| 2.14 To / From Working Capital Fund | -3,804,000 | | | |
| 2.14 bis To/From Special Project Fund | -2,142,700 | | 0 | 0 |
| 2.15 Representation Expenses | 250,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 |
| 2.16 Miscellaneous | 500,000 | 500,000 | 500,000 | 500,000 |
| TOTAL OTHER SERVICE COSTS | 64,796,000 | 77,050,000 | 87,050,000 | 87,070,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **165,881,708** | **179,614,054** | **189,519,965** | **193,048,264** |

Table 2.a: Assessed contribution table for 2025/2026

| Member\Rule | a) | b) | c) | Fixed Contribution | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canada | 5,332,325 | 0 | 2,370,624 | | 7,702,949 | 4.6 |
| China | 5,332,325 | 59,506,836 | 557,078 | | 65,396,238 | 39.4 |
| EU | 5,332,325 | 0 | 1,840,643 | | 7,172,967 | 4.3 |
| Korea | 5,332,325 | 578,450 | 1,572,669 | | 7,483,443 | 4.5 |
| Russia | 5,332,325 | 153,702 | 607,552 | | 6,093,579 | 3.7 |
| Chinese Taipei | 5,332,325 | 6,623,001 | 1,432,982 | | 13,388,308 | 8.1 |
| USA | 5,332,325 | 0 | 3,657,823 | | 8,990,148 | 5.4 |
| Vanuatu | 5,332,325 | 172,952 | 148,800 | | 5,654,076 | 3.4 |
| Japan | | | | 44,000,000 | 44,000,000 | 26.5 |
| Total | 42,658,598 | 67,034,939 | 12,188,171 | 44,000,000 | 165,881,708 | 100.0 |

Table 2.b: Assessed contribution table for 2026/2027

| Member\Rule | a) | b) | c) | Fixed Contribution | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canada | 5,933,115 | 0 | 2,637,721 | | 8,570,836 | 4.8 |
| China | 5,933,115 | 65,707,532 | 619,843 | | 72,260,490 | 40.2 |
| EU | 5,933,115 | 0 | 2,048,027 | | 7,981,142 | 4.4 |
| Korea | 5,933,115 | 580,682 | 1,749,861 | | 8,263,657 | 4.6 |
| Russia | 5,933,115 | 10,513 | 676,005 | | 6,619,633 | 3.7 |
| Chinese Taipei | 5,933,115 | 8,110,445 | 1,594,436 | | 15,637,995 | 8.7 |
| USA | 5,933,115 | 0 | 4,069,948 | | 10,003,063 | 5.6 |
| Vanuatu | 5,933,115 | 178,557 | 165,565 | | 6,277,237 | 3.5 |
| Japan | | | | 44,000,000 | 44,000,000 | 24.5 |
| Total | 47,464,919 | 74,587,730 | 13,561,405 | 44,000,000 | 179,614,054 | 100.0 |

**CMM 2025-05**

***(Entered into force XX July 2025)***

# CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR BOTTOM FISHERIES AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS IN THE NORTHWESTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

*The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),*

*Strongly supporting* protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and sustainable management of fish stocks based on the best scientific information available;

*Recalling* the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions (UNGA) on Sustainable Fisheries, particularly paragraphs 66 to 71 of the UNGA59/25 in 2004, paragraphs 69 to 74 of UNGA60/31 in 2005, and paragraphs 69 and 80 to 91 of UNGA61/105 in 2006; paragraphs 113, 117 and 119 to 124 of resolution 64/72 in 2009, paragraphs 121, 126, 129, 130 and 132 to 134 of resolution 66/68 in 2011, paragraphs 156, 171, 175, 177 to 188 and 219 of resolution 71/123 in 2016 and paragraphs 181 and 203-219 of resolution 77/118 in 2022;

*Noting,* in particular, paragraphs 66 and 69 of UNGA59/25 that call upon States to take action urgently to address the issue of bottom trawl fisheries on VMEs and to cooperate in the establishment of new regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements;

*Recognizing* UNGA's calls to identify and overcome barriers to the implementation of the relevant paragraphs of General Assembly resolutions such as data availability, especially with regard to baseline data and the spatial distribution and connectivity of vulnerable marine ecosystems, including their associated and dependent species; periodically review and revise impact assessments whenever a substantial change in the fishery has occurred or there is relevant new information; and ensure that the precautionary approach is applied, including in the utilization of impact assessments to inform management decisions and consideration of significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems, including their associated and dependent species;

*Recognizing further* that fishing activities, including bottom fisheries, are an important contributor

to the global food supply and that this must be taken into account when seeking to achieve sustainable fisheries and to protect VMEs;

*Recognizing* the importance of collecting scientific data to assess the impacts of bottom fisheries on marine species and VMEs;

*Recognizing* that scientific literature indicates the likely occurrence of VMEs on most seamounts in the area and has documented significant adverse impacts to VMEs resulting from bottom fishing in the area, which reinforces the importance of regularly updating impact assessments and considering the adequacy of the existing management framework through the SC and the Commission*;*

*Concerned* about potential significant adverse impacts of bottom fisheries on marine species and VMEs in the western part of the Convention Area.

*Recognizing* Article 2 of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean (the Convention), which provides that the objective of the Convention is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the Convention Area while protecting the marine ecosystems of the North Pacific Ocean in which these resources occur;

*Recognizing* further Articles 3 (c) and (e) of the Convention, which call on the Commission to adopt and implement measures in accordance with the precautionary approach and ecosystem approach to fisheries and protect biodiversity in the marine environment, including by preventing significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems;

*Re-affirming* NPFC's commitment to the precautionary approach and to implementing an ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

*Noting* the ongoing work of the Scientific Committee to address the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas, including the identification of VMEs;

*Underscoring* the ecological importance of the Emperor Seamounts to the fisheries resources and biodiversity of the NPFC convention area;

*Adopts* the following Conservation and Management Measure:

**Scope**

1. This CMM applies to all bottom fishing activities for fisheries resources throughout the high seas areas of the Northwestern Pacific Ocean, defined, for the purposes of this document, as those occurring in the Convention Area as set out in Article 4 of the Convention text to the west of the line of 175 degrees W longitude (hereinafter called “the western part of the Convention Area”).

**General purpose**

2. The objective of this CMM is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the Convention Area while protecting the marine ecosystems of the North Pacific Ocean in which these resources occur. The measures in this CMM aim to prevent significant adverse impacts on VMEs in the Convention Area of the North Pacific Ocean, acknowledging the complex dependency of fishing resources and species belonging to the same ecosystem within VMEs. The Commission shall regularly review, and as appropriate, revise this CMM considering the best available science and the recommendations of the NPFC Scientific Committee, and with reference to relevant guidance adopted by UNGA and FAO.

**Principles**

3. The implementation of this CMM shall:

(a) be based on the best scientific information available,

(b) be in accordance with existing international laws and agreements including UNCLOS and other relevant international instruments,

(c) establish appropriate and effective conservation and management measures,

(d) be in accordance with the precautionary approach, and

(e) incorporate an ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

**Measures**

4. Members of the Commission shall implement the following measures in order to achieve sustainable management of fish stocks and protection of VMEs in the western part of the

Convention Area:

A. Limit fishing effort in bottom fisheries on the western part of the Convention Area to the level agreed in February 2007 in terms of the number of fishing vessels and other parameters which reflect the level of fishing effort, fishing capacity or potential impacts on marine ecosystems.

B. Not allow bottom fisheries to expand into the western part of the Convention Area where no such fishing is currently occurring, in particular, by limiting such bottom fisheries to seamounts located south of 45 degrees North Latitude and not allow bottom fisheries in other areas of the western part of the Convention Area covered by these measures and also not allow bottom fisheries to conduct fishing operation in areas deeper than 1,500m.

C. Notwithstanding subparagraphs A and B above, exceptions to these restrictions may be provided in cases where it can be shown that any fishing activity beyond such limits or in any new areas would not have significant adverse impacts (SAIs) on marine species or any VME. Such fishing activity is subject to an exploratory fishery protocol (Annex 1).

D. Any determinations pursuant to subparagraph C that any proposed fishing activity will not have SAIs on marine species or any VME are to be in accordance with the Science-based Standards and Criteria (Annex 2), which are consistent with the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deepsea Fisheries in the High Seas.

E. Any determinations, by any flag State or pursuant to any subsequent arrangement for the management of the bottom fisheries in the areas covered by these measures, that fishing activity would not have SAIs on marine species or any VMEs, shall be made publicly available through agreed means.

F. Prohibit its vessels from engaging in directed fishing on the following taxa: black coral (Antipatharia), gorgonians, pennatulaceans, stony corals (Scleractinia), soft corals, the classes of Hexactinellida and Demospongiae in the phylum Porifera as well as any other indicator species for VMEs as may be identified from time to time by the SC and approved

by the Commission. The translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names is attached to this CMM (Annex 7).

G. Further, considering accumulated information regarding fishing activities in the western part of the Convention Area, in areas where, in the course of fishing operations, cold water corals more than 50Kg or sponges more than 350Kg are encountered in one gear retrieval, Members of the Commission shall require vessels flying their flag to cease bottom fishing activities in that location. In such cases, the vessel shall not resume fishing activities until it has relocated a sufficient distance, which shall be no less than 1 nautical mile, so that additional encounters with VMEs are unlikely. All such encounters, including the location, gear type, date, time and name and weight of the VME indicator species, shall be reported to the Secretariat, through the Member, within one business day. The Executive Secretary shall, within one business day, notify the other Members of the Commission and at the same time implement a temporary closure in the area to prohibit fishing vessels from contacting the sea floor with their fishing gear. Members shall inform their fleets and enforcement operations within one business day of the receipt of the notification from the Executive Secretary. It is agreed that the VME indicator taxa include five groups of cold water corals, specifically black corals (Antipatharia), gorgonians, pennatulaceans, stony coral (Scleractinia), and soft corals. The VME indicator taxa also include the classes of Hexactinellida and Demospongiae in the phylum Porifera.

H. Based on all the available data, including data on the VME encounter and distribution received from the fishing vessel(s), research survey data, visual survey data, and/or model results, the Scientific Committee (SC) shall assess and conclude if the area has a VME. If so, the SC shall recommend to the Commission that the temporary closure be made permanent, although the boundary of the closure may be adjusted, or suggest other appropriate measures. Otherwise, the Executive Secretary shall inform the Members that they may reopen the area to their vessels.

I. C-H seamount, the Southeastern part of Koko seamount (specifically, the area South of 34 degrees 57 minutes North, East of the 400m isobaths, East of 171 degrees 54 minutes East, North of 34 degrees 50 minutes North), are closed to prevent potential significant adverse

impacts on VMEs consistent with the precautionary approach. Fishing in these areas requires exploratory fishery protocol (Annex 1).

J. Ensure that the distance between the footrope of the gill net and sea floor is greater than 70 cm.

.

K. Apply a bottom fisheries closure from November to January.

L. Limit annual catch of North Pacific armorhead consistent with the precautionary approach. In years when strong recruitment of North Pacific armorhead is not detected by the monitoring survey (Annex 6), Japan shall limit the catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 500 tons, and Korea shall limit its catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 200 tons. When a strong recruitment of North Pacific armorhead is detected by the monitoring survey (Annex 6), Japan shall limit its annual catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 10,000 tons, and Korea shall limit its annual catch of North Pacific armorhead by vessels flying its flag to 2,000 tons. The catch overages for any given year shall be subtracted from the applicable annual catch limit in the following year, and catch underages during any given year shall not be added to the applicable annual catch limit during the following year.

M. During a year when high recruitment is detected, bottom fishing with trawl gear shall be prohibited in specific areas in the Emperor seamounts where half of the catch occurred in 2010 and 2012 (Annex 6). Determination of a strong recruitment year and of the specific areas where bottom fishing with trawl gear is prohibited shall be communicated to all Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties following the procedure specified in Annex 6.

N. Catch in the monitoring surveys shall not be included in the catch limits specified in paragraphs L but shall be reported to the Secretariat.

O. Development of new fishing activity for the North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino in the Convention Area by Members without documented historical catch for North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino in the Convention Area shall be determined in accordance

with relevant provisions, including but not limited to Article 3, paragraph (h) and Article 7, subparagraphs 1(g) and (h) of the Convention.

P. Fishing activity for the North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino in the Convention Area by Members with documented historical catch for North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino in the Convention Area is not precluded.

Q. Members shall require vessels flying their flags to use trawl nets with mesh size greater than or equal to 130mm of stretched mesh with 5kg tension in the codend when conducting fishing activities for North Pacific armorhead or splendid alfonsino.

R. Task the Scientific Committee with reviewing the appropriate methods for establishing catch limits, and the adequacy and practicability of the adaptive management plan described in subparagraphs K, L, M, N, O, P, Q and Annex 6 from time to time and recommending revisions and actions, if necessary.

S. Prohibit its bottom fishing vessels from contacting the sea floor with their fishing gear in the following four sites with VME indicator species. A Member of the Commission whose fishing vessels entered these areas shall report to the TCC as to how it ensured the compliance of this measure.

Sites with VME indicator species (Areas surrounded by the straight lines linking the 4 geographical points below)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Northwestern part of Koko Seamount | 35-44.75 N 171-07.60 E | 35-44.75 N 171-07.80 E |
| | 35-43.80 N 171-07.80 E | 35-43.80 N 171-08.00 E |
| Northern Ridge of Colahan Seamount | 31-03.85 N 175-53.40 E | 31-03.85 N 175-53.65 E |
| | 31-03.5 N 175-53.50 E | 31-03.05 N 175-53.85 E |
| Northwestern part of Yuryaku Seamount | 32-42.75 N 172-12.90 E | 32-42.75 N 172-13.65 E |
| | 32-43.50 N 172-13.65 E | 32-43.50 N 172-12.90 E |
| Southeastern part of Yuryaku Seamount | 32-37.80 N 172-18.00 E | 32-37.80 N 172-18.60 E |
| | 32-38.40 N 172-18.60 E | 32-38.40 N 172-18.00 E |

**Contingent Action**

5. Members of the Commission shall submit to the SC their assessments of the impacts of fishing activity on marine species or any VMEs, including the proposed management measures to prevent such impact. Such submissions shall include all relevant data and information in support of any such assessment. Procedures for such reviews including procedures for the provision of advice and recommendations from the SC to the submitting Member are attached (Annex 3). Members will only authorize bottom fishing activity pursuant to paragraph 4 (C).

**Scientific Information**

6. To facilitate the scientific work associated with the implementation of these measures, each Member of the Commission shall undertake:

   A. Reporting of information for purposes of defining the footprint

   Members of the Commission shall provide, for each year, the number of vessels by gear type, size of vessels (tons), number of fishing days or days on the fishing grounds, total catch by species, and areas fished (names of seamounts) to the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall circulate the information received to the other Members consistent with the approved Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information. To support assessments of the fisheries and refinement of conservation and management measures, Members of the Commission are to provide updated information on an annual basis.

   B. Collection of information

   (i) Members shall ensure each bottom fishing vessel operating in the western part of the Convention Area collects the following scientific information. Members shall provide the scientific information to the Secretariat.

   (a) Catch and effort data

   (b) Related information such as time, location, depth, temperature, etc.

   (ii) As appropriate, Members should encourage the collection of information from research vessels operating in the western part of the Convention Area and provide updates to the Commission to the extent possible.

   (a) Physical, chemical, biological, oceanographic, meteorological, etc.

   (b) Ecosystem surveys.

(c) Seabed mapping (e.g. multibeam or other echosounder); seafloor images by drop camera, remotely operated underwater vehicle (ROV) and/or autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV).

(iii) Collection of observer data

Duly designated observers from the flag member shall collect information from bottom fishing vessels operating in the western part of the Convention Area. Observers shall collect data in accordance with Annex 5. Each Member of the Commission shall submit the reports to the Secretariat in accordance with Annex 4. The Secretariat shall compile this information on an annual basis and make it available to the Members of the Commission.

**Vessel Monitoring System**

7. To strengthen its control over bottom fishing vessels flying its flag, each Member of the Commission shall ensure that all such vessels operating in the western part of the Convention Area be equipped with an operational vessel monitoring system.

**Observers**

8. Members shall ensure that all vessels authorized to bottom fish in the western part of the Convention Area shall carry an observer on board. Members shall ensure that observers are independent, impartial, and qualified to fulfill the requirements of this measure and to enhance data collection. An observer is deemed to be independent, impartial, and qualified if the observer:

(a) is deployed from a Commission Member's, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party's, national observer program, and familiar with NPFC fisheries resources, fishing activities, and CMMs;

(b) is neither part of the crew, nor has any employment or family relationship to the ownership or operator of the fishing vessel; and

(c) does not have any shared business interests with the owner or operator of the fishing vessel.

An observer shall be provisioned, accommodated, and provided safe working conditions

and access to independent communications in accordance with the Commission requirements and the Member's domestic laws and regulations.

**Annex 1**

## EXPLORATORY FISHERY PROTOCOL IN THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

1. From 1 January 2009, all bottom fishing activities in new fishing areas and areas where fishing is prohibited in a precautionary manner or with bottom gear not previously used in the existing fishing areas, are to be considered as "exploratory fisheries" and to be conducted in accordance with this protocol.

2. Precautionary conservation and management measures, including catch and effort controls, are essential during the exploratory phase of deep sea fisheries. Implementation of a precautionary approach to sustainable exploitation of deep sea fisheries shall include the following measures:
   (i) precautionary effort limits, particularly where reliable assessments of sustainable exploitation rates of target and main by-catch species are not available;
   (ii) precautionary measures, including precautionary spatial catch limits where appropriate, to prevent serial depletion of low-productivity stocks;
   (iii) regular review of appropriate indices of stock status and revision downwards of the limits listed above when significant declines are detected;
   (iv) measures to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems; and
   (v) comprehensive monitoring of all fishing effort, capture of all species and interactions with VMEs.

3. When a member of the Commission would like to conduct exploratory fisheries, it is to follow the following procedure:
   (i) Prior to the commencement of fishing, the member of the Commission is to circulate the information and assessment in Appendix 1.1 to the members of the Scientific Committee (SC) for review and to all members of the Commission for information, together with the impact assessment. Such information is to be provided to the other members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which the information shall be reviewed.
   (ii) The assessment in (i) above is to be conducted in accordance with the procedure set forth in "Science-based Standards and Criteria for Identification of VMEs and Assessment of Significant Adverse Impacts on VMEs and Marine Species (Annex 2)", with the understanding that particular care shall be taken in the evaluation of risks of the significant

adverse impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), in line with the precautionary approach.

(iii) The SC is to review the information and the assessment submitted in (i) above in accordance with "SC Assessment Review Procedures for Bottom Fishing Activities (Annex 3)."

(iv) The exploratory fisheries are to be permitted only where the assessment concludes that they would not have significant adverse impacts (SAIs) on marine species or any VMEs and on the basis of comments and recommendations of SC. Any determinations, by any Member of the Commission or the SC, that the exploratory fishing activities would not have SAIs on marine species or any VMEs, shall be made publicly available through the NPFC website.

4. The member of the Commission is to ensure that all vessels flying its flag conducting exploratory fisheries are equipped with a satellite monitoring device and have an observer on board at all times.

5. Within 3 months of the end of the exploratory fishing activities or within 12 months of the commencement of fishing, whichever occurs first, the member of the Commission is to provide a report of the results of such activities to the members of the SC and all members of the Commission. If the SC meets prior to the end of this 12-month period, the member of the Commission is to provide an interim report 30 days in advance of the SC meeting. The information to be included in the report is specified in Appendix 1.2.

6. The SC is to review the report in 5 above and decide whether the exploratory fishing activities had SAIs on marine species or any VME. The SC then is to send its recommendations to the Commission on whether the exploratory fisheries can continue and whether additional management measures shall be required if they are to continue. The Commission is to strive to adopt conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs on marine species or any VMEs. If the Commission is not able to reach consensus on any such measures, each fishing member of the Commission is to adopt measures to avoid any SAIs on VMEs.

7. Members of the Commission shall only authorize continuation of exploratory fishing activity, or commencement of commercial fishing activity, under this protocol on the basis of comments and recommendations of the SC.

8. The same encounter protocol should be applied in both fished and unfished areas specified in Annex 2, paragraph 4(1)(a).

**Appendix 1.1**

**Information to be provided before exploratory fisheries start**

1. A harvesting plan
   - Name of vessel
   - Flag member of vessel
   - Description of area to be fished (location and depth)
   - Fishing dates
   - Anticipated effort
   - Target species
   - Bottom fishing gear-type used
   - Area and effort restrictions to ensure that fisheries occur on a gradual basis in a limited geographical area.

2. A mitigation plan
   - Measures to prevent SAIs to VMEs that may be encountered during the fishery

3. A catch monitoring plan
   - Recording/reporting of all species brought onboard to the lowest possible taxonomic level
   - 100% satellite monitoring
   - 100% observer coverage

4. A data collection plan
   - Data is to be collected in accordance with “Type and Format of Scientific Observer Data to be Collected” (Annex 5)

**Appendix 1.2**

**Information to be included in the report**

- Name of vessel
- Flag member of vessel
- Description of area fished (location and depth)
- Fishing dates
- Total effort
- Bottom fishing gear-type used
- List of VME encountered (the amount of VME indicator species for each encounter specifying the location: longitude and latitude)
- Mitigation measures taken in response to the encounter of VME
- List of all organisms brought onboard
- List of VMEs indicator species brought onboard by location: longitude and latitude

**Annex 2**

# SCIENCE-BASED STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF VMES AND ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS ON VMES AND MARINE SPECIES

1. Introduction

Members of the Commission have hereby established science-based standards and criteria to guide their implementation of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 61/105 and the measures adopted by the Members in respect of bottom fishing activities in the North Pacific Ocean (NPO). In this regard, these science-based standards and criteria are to be applied to identify vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and assess significant adverse impacts (SAIs) of bottom fishing activities on such VMEs or marine species and to promote the long-term sustainability of deep sea fisheries in the Convention Area. The science-based standards and criteria are consistent with the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas, taking into account the work of other RFMOs implementing management of deep-sea bottom fisheries in accordance with UNGA Resolution 61/105. The standards and criteria are to be modified from time to time as more data are collected through research activities and monitoring of fishing operations.

2. Purpose

(1) The purpose of the standards and criteria is to provide guidelines for each member of the Commission in identifying VMEs and assessing SAIs of individual bottom fishing activities[1] on VMEs or marine species in the Convention Area. Each member of the Commission, using the best information available, is to decide which species or areas are to be categorized as VMEs, identify areas where VMEs are known or likely to occur, and assess whether individual bottom fishing activities would have SAIs on such VMEs or marine species. The results of these tasks are to be submitted to and reviewed by the Scientific Committee with a view to reaching a common understanding among the members of the

[1] "individual bottom fishing activities" means fishing activities by each fishing gear. For example, if ten fishing vessels operate bottom trawl fishing in a certain area, the impacts of the fishing activities of these vessels on the ecosystem are to be assessed as a whole rather than on a vessel-by-vessel basis. It should be noted that if the total number or capacity of the vessels using the same fishing gear has increased, the impacts of the fishing activities are to be assessed again.

Commission.

(2) For the purpose of applying the standards and criteria, the bottom fisheries are defined as follows:

(a) The fisheries are conducted in the Convention Area;

(b) The total catch (everything brought up by the fishing gear) includes species that can only sustain low exploitation rates; and

(c) The fishing gear is likely to contact the seafloor during the normal course of fishing operations.

3. Definition of VMEs

(1) Although Paragraph 83 of UNGA Resolution 61/105 refers to seamounts, hydrothermal vents and cold-water corals as examples of VMEs, there is no definitive list of specific species or areas that are to be regarded as VMEs.

(2) Vulnerability is related to the likelihood that a population, community or habitat will experience substantial alteration by fishing activities and how much time will be required for its recovery from such alteration. The most vulnerable ecosystems are those that are both easily disturbed and are very slow to recover or may never recover. The vulnerabilities of populations, communities and habitats are to be assessed relative to specific threats. Some features, particularly ones that are physically fragile or inherently rare may be vulnerable to most forms of disturbance, but the vulnerability of some populations, communities and habitats may vary greatly depending on the type of fishing gear used or the kind of disturbance experienced. The risks to a marine ecosystem are determined by its vulnerability, the probability of a threat occurring and the mitigation means applied to the threat. Accordingly, the FAO Guidelines only provide examples of potential vulnerable species groups, communities and habitats as well as features that potentially support them (Annex 2.1).

(3) A marine ecosystem is to be classified as vulnerable based on its characteristics. The following list of characteristics is used as criteria in the identification of VMEs.

(a) Uniqueness or rarity - an area or ecosystem that is unique or that contains rare species whose loss could not be compensated for by other similar areas. These include:

(i) Habitats that contain endemic species;

(ii) Habitats of rare, threatened or endangered species that occur in discrete areas;

(iii)Nurseries or discrete feeding, breeding, or spawning areas.

(b) Functional significance of the habitat – discrete areas or habitats that are necessary for the survival, function, spawning/reproduction or recovery of fish stocks, particular life-history stages (e.g. nursery grounds or rearing areas), or of rare, threatened or endangered marine species.

(c) Fragility – an ecosystem that is highly susceptible to degradation by anthropogenic activities

(d) Life-history traits of component species that make recovery difficult – ecosystems that are characterized by populations or assemblages of species with one or more of the following characteristics:

(i) Slow growth rates

(ii) Late age of maturity

(iii) Low or unpredictable recruitment

(iv) Long-lived

(e) Structural complexity – an ecosystem that is characterized by complex physical structures created by significant concentrations of biotic and abiotic features. In these ecosystems, ecological processes are usually highly dependent on these structured systems. Further, such ecosystems often have high diversity, which is dependent on the structuring organisms.

(4) Management response may vary, depending on the size of the ecological unit in the Convention Area. Therefore, the spatial extent of the ecological unit is to be decided first. That is, whether the ecological unit is the entire Area, or the current fishing ground, namely, the Emperor Seamount and Northern Hawaiian Ridge area (hereinafter called "the ES-NHR area"), or a group of the seamounts within the ESNHR area, or each seamount in the ES-NHR area, is to be decided using the above criteria.

4. Identification of potential VMEs

(1) Fished seamounts

(a) Identification of fished seamounts

It is reported that four types of fishing gear are currently used by the members of the Commission in the ES-NHR area, namely, bottom trawl, bottom gillnet, bottom longline and pot. A fifth type of fishing gear (coral drag) was used in the ES-NHR area from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s and is possibly still used by non-members of the

Commission. These types of fishing gear are usually used on the top or slope of seamounts, which could be considered VMEs. It is therefore necessary to identify the footprint of the bottom fisheries (fished seamounts) based on the available fishing record. The following seamounts have been identified as fished seamounts: Suiko, Showa, Youmei, Nintoku, Jingu, Ojin, Northern Koko, Koko, Kinmei, Yuryaku, Kammu, Colahan, and CH. Since the use of most of these gears in the ES-NHR area dates back to the late 1960s and 1970s, it is important to establish, to the extent practicable, a time series of where and when these gears have been used in order to assess potential long-term effects on any existing VMEs.

Fishing effort may not be evenly distributed on each seamount since fish aggregation may occur only at certain points of the seamount and some parts of the seamount may be physically unsuitable for certain fishing gears. Thus, it is important to know actual fished areas within the same seamount so as to know the gravity of the impact of fishing activities on the entire seamount.

Due consideration is to be given to the protection of commercial confidentiality when identifying actual fishing grounds.

(b) Assessment on whether a specific seamount that has been fished is a VME

After identifying the fished seamounts or fished areas of seamounts, it is necessary to assess whether each fished seamount is a VME or contains VMEs in accordance with the criteria in 3 above, individually or in combination using the best available scientific and technical information as well as Annex 2.1. A variety of data would be required to conduct such assessment, including pictures of seamounts taken by an ROV camera or drop camera, biological samples collected through research activities and observer programs, and detailed bathymetry map. Where site-specific information is lacking, other information that is relevant to inferring the likely presence of VMEs is to be used. The flow chart to identify data that can be used to identify VMEs is attached in Annex 2.3.

(2) New fishing areas

Any place other than the fished seamounts above is to be regarded as a new fishing area. If a member of the Commission is considering fishing in a new fishing area, such a fishing area is to be subject to, in addition to these standards and criteria, an exploratory fishery protocol (Annex 1).

5. Assessment of SAIs on VMEs or marine species

(1) Significant adverse impacts are those that compromise ecosystem integrity (i.e., ecosystem structure or function) in a manner that: (i) impairs the ability of affected populations to replace themselves; (ii) degrades the long-term natural productivity of habitats; or (iii) causes, on more than a temporary basis, significant loss of species richness, habitat or community types. Impacts are to be evaluated individually, in combination and cumulatively.

(2) When determining the scale and significance of an impact, the following six factors are to be considered:

(a) The intensity or severity of the impact at the specific site being affected;

(b) The spatial extent of the impact relative to the availability of the habitat type affected;

(c) The sensitivity/vulnerability of the ecosystem to the impact;

(d) The ability of an ecosystem to recover from harm, and the rate of such recovery;

(e) The extent to which ecosystem functions may be altered by the impact; and

(f) The timing and duration of the impact relative to the period in which a species needs the habitat during one or more life-history stages.

(3) Temporary impacts are those that are limited in duration and that allow the particular ecosystem to recover over an acceptable timeframe. Such timeframes are to be decided on a case-by-case basis and be on the order of 5-20 years, taking into account the specific features of the populations and ecosystems.

(4) In determining whether an impact is temporary, both the duration and the frequency with which an impact is repeated is to be considered. If the interval between the expected disturbances of a habitat is shorter than the recovery time, the impact is to be considered more than temporary.

(5) Each member of the Commission is to conduct assessments to establish if bottom fishing activities are likely to produce SAIs in a given seamount or other VMEs. Such an impact assessment is to address, *inter alia*:

(a) Type of fishing conducted or contemplated, including vessel and gear types, fishing areas, target and potential bycatch species, fishing effort levels and duration of fishing;

(b) Best available scientific and technical information on the current state of fishery resources, and baseline information on the ecosystems, habitats and communities in the fishing area, against which future changes are to be compared;

(c) Identification, description and mapping of VMEs known or likely to occur in the fishing area;

(d) The data and methods used to identify, describe and assess the impacts of the activity, identification of gaps in knowledge, and an evaluation of uncertainties in the information presented in the assessment;

(e) Identification, description and evaluation of the occurrence, scale and duration of likely impacts, including cumulative impacts of activities covered by the assessment on VMEs and low-productivity fishery resources in the fishing area;

(f) Risk assessment of likely impacts by the fishing operations to determine which impacts are likely to be SAIs, particularly impacts on VMEs and low-productivity fishery resources (Risk assessments are to take into account, as appropriate, differing conditions prevailing in areas where fisheries are well established and in areas where fisheries have not taken place or only occur occasionally);

(g) The proposed mitigation and management measures to be used to prevent SAIs on VMEs and ensure long-term conservation and sustainable utilization of low-productivity fishery resources, and the measures to be used to monitor effects of the fishing operations.

(6) Impact assessments are to consider, as appropriate, the information referred to in these Standards and Criteria, as well as relevant information from similar or related fisheries, species and ecosystems.

(7) Where an assessment concludes that the area does not contain VMEs or that significant adverse impacts on VMEs or marine species are not likely, such assessments are to be repeated when there have been significant changes to the fishery or other activities in the area, or when natural processes are thought to have undergone significant changes.

6. Proposed conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs

As a result of the assessment in 5 above, if it is considered that individual fishing activities are causing or likely to cause SAIs on VMEs or marine species, the member of the Commission is to adopt appropriate conservation and management measures to prevent such SAIs. The member of the Commission is to clearly indicate how such impacts are expected to be prevented or mitigated by the measures.

7. Precautionary approach

If after assessing all available scientific and technical information, the presence of VMEs or the

likelihood that individual bottom fishing activities would cause SAIs on VMEs or marine species cannot be adequately determined, members of the Commission are only to authorize individual bottom fishing activities to proceed in accordance with:

(a) Precautionary, conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs;

(b) Measures to address unexpected encounters with VMEs in the course of fishing operations;

(c) Measures, including ongoing scientific research, monitoring and data collection, to reduce the uncertainty; and

(d) Measures to ensure long-term sustainability of deep sea fisheries.

8. Template for assessment report

Annex 2.2 is a template for individual member of the Commission to formulate reports on identification of VMEs and impact assessment.

**Annex 2.1**

**Examples of potential vulnerable species groups, communities and habitats as well as features that potentially support them**

The following examples of species groups, communities, habitats and features often display characteristics consistent with possible VMEs. Merely detecting the presence of an element itself is not sufficient to identify a VME. That identification is to be made on a case-by-case basis through application of relevant provisions of the Standards and Criteria, particularly Sections 3, 4 and 5.

| Examples of species groups, communities and habitat forming species that are documented or considered sensitive and potentially vulnerable to deep-sea fisheries in the high-seas, and which may contribute to forming VMEs: | |
|---|---|
| a. | certain cold-water corals, e.g., reef builders and coral forest including: stony corals (Scleractinia), gorgonians, black corals (Antipatharia), and hydrocorals (stylasteridae), |
| b. | Some types of sponge dominated communities, |
| c. | communities composed of dense emergent fauna where large sessile protozoans (xenophyophores) and invertebrates (e.g., hydroids and bryozoans) form an important structural component of habitat, and |

| | |
|---|---|
| d. | seep and vent communities comprised of invertebrate and microbial species found nowhere else (i.e., endemic). |

Examples of topographical, hydrophysical or geological features, including fragile geological structures, that potentially support the species groups or communities referred to above:

a. submerged edges and slopes (e.g., corals and sponges)
b. summits and flanks of seamounts, guyots, banks, knolls, and hills (e.g., corals, sponges and xenophyphores)
c. canyons and trenches (e.g., burrowed clay outcrops, corals),
d. hydrothermal vents (e.g., microbial communities and endemic invertebrates), and
e. cold seeps (e.g., mud volcanoes, microbes, hard substrates for sessile invertebrates).

**Annex 2.2**

**Template for reports on identification of VMEs and assessment of impacts caused by individual fishing activities on VMEs or marine species**

1. Name of the member of the Commission
2. Name of the fishery (e.g., bottom trawl, bottom gillnet, bottom longline, pot)
3. Status of the fishery (existing fishery or exploratory fishery)
4. Target species
5. Bycatch species
6. Recent level of fishing effort (every year at least since 2002)
   (1) Number of fishing vessels
   (2) Tonnage of each fishing vessel
   (3) Number of fishing days or days on the fishing ground
   (4) Fishing effort (total operating hours for trawl, # of hooks per day for long-line, # of pots

per day for pot, total length of net per day for gillnet)

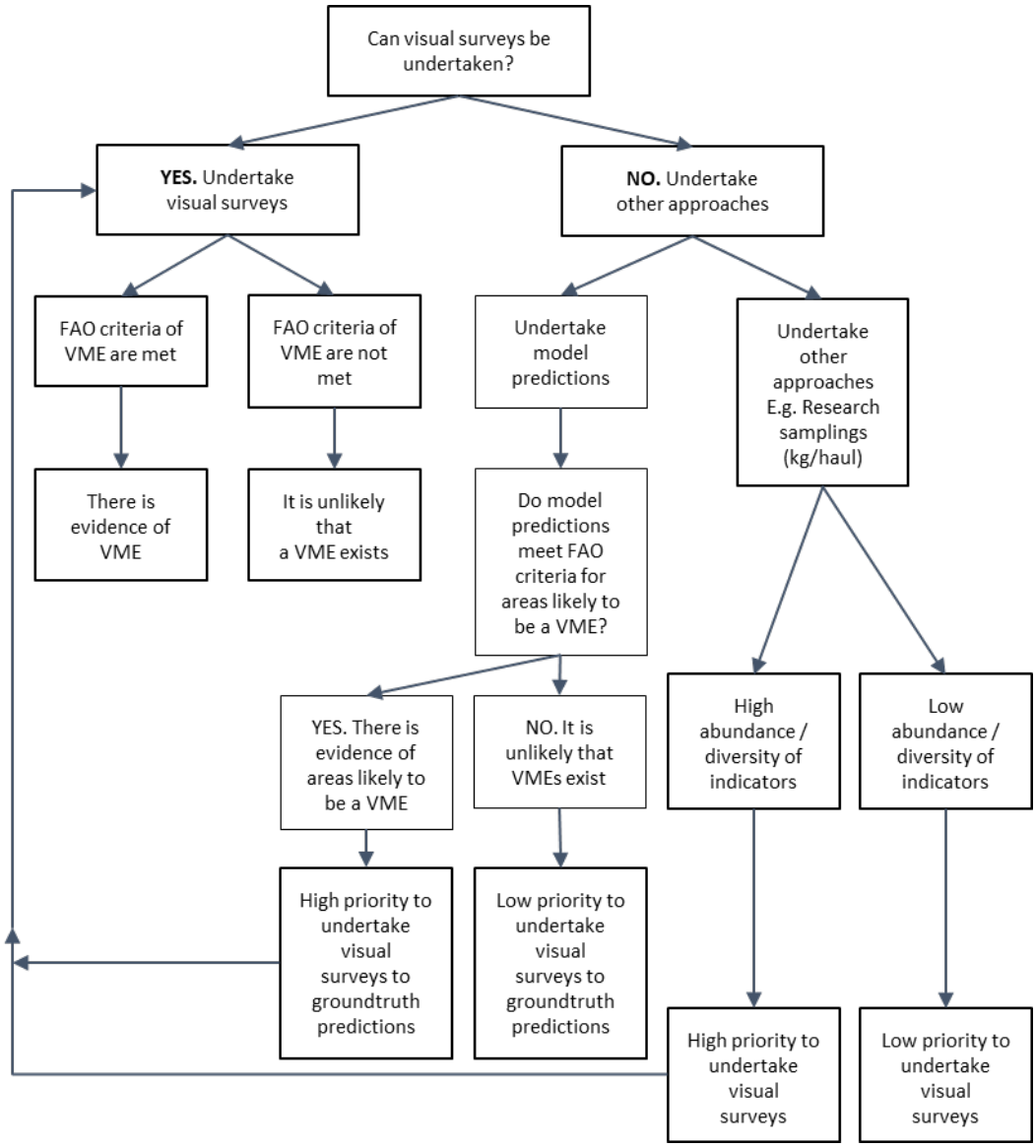
(5) Total catch by species

(6) Names of seamounts fished or to be fished

7. Fishing period
8. Analysis of status of fishery resources
   (1) Data and methods used for analysis
   (2) Results of analysis
   (3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties
9. Analysis of status of bycatch species resources
   (1) Data and methods used for analysis
   (2) Results of analysis
   (3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties
10. Analysis of existence of VMEs in the fishing ground
    (1) Data and methods used for analysis
    (2) Results of analysis
    (3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties
11. Impact assessment of fishing activities on VMEs or marine species including cumulative impacts, and identification of SAIs on VMEs or marine species, as detailed in Section 5 above, Assessment of SAIs on VMEs or marine species
12. Other points to be addressed
13. Conclusion (whether to continue or start fishing with what measures, or stop fishing).

**Annex 2.3**

## Flow chart to identify data that can be used to identify VMEs in the NPFC Convention Area



**Annex 3**

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR BOTTOM FISHING ACTIVITIES

1. The Scientific Committee (SC) is to review identifications of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and assessments of significant adverse impact on VMEs, including proposed management measures intended to prevent such impacts submitted by individual Members.

2. Members of the Commission shall submit their identifications and assessments to members of the SC at least 21 days prior to the SC meeting at which the review is to take place. Such submissions shall include all relevant data and information in support of such determinations.

3. The SC will review the data and information in each assessment in accordance with the Science-based Standards and Criteria for Identification of VMEs and Assessment of Significant Adverse Impacts on VMEs and Marine Species (Annex 2), previous decisions of the Commission, and the FAO Technical Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas, paying special attention to the assessment process and criteria specified in paragraphs 47-49 of the Guidelines.

4. In conducting the review above, the SC will give particular attention to whether the deep-sea bottom fishing activity would have a significant adverse impact on VMEs and marine species and, if so, whether the proposed management measures would prevent such impacts.

5. Based on the above review, the SC will provide advice and recommendations to the submitting Members on the extent to which the assessments and related determinations are consistent with the procedures and criteria established in the documents identified above; and whether additional management measures will be required to prevent SAIs on VMEs.

6. Such recommendations will be reflected in the report of the SC meeting at which the assessments are considered.

**Annex 4**

# FORMAT OF NATIONAL REPORT SECTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER PROGRAMMES

## Report Components

Annual Observer Programme implementation reports should form a component of annual National Reports submitted by members to the Scientific Committee. These reports should provide a brief overview of observer programmes conducted in the NPFC Convention Area. Observer programme reports should include the following sections:

## A. Observer Training

An overview of observer training conducted, including:

- Overview of training programme provided to scientific observers.
- Number of observers trained.

## B. Scientific Observer Programme Design and Coverage

Details of the design of the observer programme, including:

- Which fleets, fleet components or fishery components were covered by the programme.
- How vessels were selected to carry observers within the above fleets or components.
- How was observer coverage stratified: by fleets, fisheries components, vessel types, vessel sizes, vessel ages, fishing areas and seasons.

Details of observer coverage of the above fleets, including:

- Components, areas, seasons and proportion of total catches of target species, specifying units used to determine coverage.
- Total number of observer employment days, and number of actual days deployed on observation work.

**C. Observer Data Collected**

List of observer data collected against the agreed range of data set out in Annex 5, including:

- Effort Data: Amount of effort observed (vessel days, net panels, hooks, etc), by area and season and % observed out of total by area and seasons
- Catch Data: Amount of catch observed of target and by-catch species, by area and season, and % observed out of total estimated catch by species, area and seasons
- Length Frequency Data: Number of fish measured per species, by area and season.
- Biological Data: Type and quantity of other biological data or samples (otoliths, sex, maturity, etc.) collected per species.
- The size of length-frequency and biological sub-samples relative to unobserved quantities.

**D. Detection of Fishing in Association with Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems**

- Information about VME encounters (species and quantity in accordance with Annex 5, H, 2).

**E. Tag Return Monitoring**

- Number of tags returns observed, by fish size class and area.

**F. Problems Experienced**

- Summary of problems encountered by observers and observer managers that could affect the NPFC Observer Programme Standards and/or each member's national observer programme developed under the NPFC standards.

**Annex 5**

# NPFC BOTTOM FISHERIES OBSERVER PROGRAMME STANDARDS: SCIENTIFIC COMPONENT

## TYPE AND FORMAT OF SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER DATA TO BE COLLECTED

### A. Vessel & Observer Data to be collected for Each Trip

1. Vessel and observer details are to be recorded only once for each observed trip.
2. The following observer data are to be collected for each observed trip:
   (a) NPFC vessel ID.
   (b) Observer's name.
   (c) Observer's organisation.
   (d) Date observer embarked (UTC date).
   (e) Port of embarkation.
   (f) Date observer disembarked (UTC date).
   (g) Port of disembarkation.

### B. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Trawl Fishing Activity

1. Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (tow by tow) basis for all observed trawls.
2. The following data are to be collected for each observed trawl tow:
   (a) Tow start date (UTC).
   (b) Tow start time (UTC).
   (c) Tow end date (UTC).
   (d) Tow end time (UTC).
   (e) Tow start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (f) Tow end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (g) Type of trawl, bottom or mid-water.
   (h) Type of trawl, single, double or triple.
   (i) Height of net opening (m).
   (j) Width of net opening (m).

(k) Mesh size of the cod-end net (stretched mesh, mm) and mesh type (diamond, square, etc).
(l) Gear depth (of footrope) at start of fishing (m).
(m) Bottom (seabed) depth at start of fishing (m).
(n) Gear depth (of footrope) at end of fishing (m).
(o) Bottom (seabed) depth at end of fishing (m).
(p) Status of the trawl operation (no damage, lightly damaged*, heavily damaged*, other (specify)).
*Degree may be evaluated by time for repairing (<=1hr or >1hr).
(q) Duration of estimated period of seabed contact (minute)
(r) Intended target species.
(s) Catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
(t) Estimate of the amount (weight or volume) of all living marine resources discarded, split by species.
(u) Record of the numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught.

**C. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Bottom Gillnet Fishing Activity**

1. Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (set by set) basis for all observed bottom gillnet sets.
2. The following data are to be collected for each observed bottom gillnet set:
   (a) Set start date (UTC).
   (b) Set start time (UTC).
   (c) Set end date (UTC).
   (d) Set end time (UTC).
   (e) Set start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (f) Set end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (g) Net panel (“tan”) length (m).
   (h) Net panel (“tan”) height (m).
   (i) Net mesh size (stretched mesh, mm) and mesh type (diamond, square, etc)
   (j) Bottom depth at start of setting (m).
   (k) Bottom depth at end of setting (m).
   (l) Number of net panels for the set.

(m) Number of net panels retrieved.
(n) Number of net panels actually observed during the haul.
(o) Actually observed catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
(p) An estimation of the amount (numbers or weight) of marine resources discarded, split by species, during the actual observation.
(q) Record of the actually observed numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught.
(r) Intended target species.
(s) Catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
(t) Estimate of the amount (weight or volume) of all marine resources discarded* and dropped off, split by species. * Including those retained for scientific samples.
(u) Record of the numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught (including those discarded and dropped-off).

**D. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Bottom Long Line Fishing Activity**

1. Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (set by set) basis for all observed longline sets.
2. The following fields of data are to be collected for each set:
   (a) Set start date (UTC).
   (b) Set start time (UTC).
   (c) Set end date (UTC).
   (d) Set end time (UTC).
   (e) Set start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (f) Set end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
   (g) Total length of longline set (m).
   (h) Number of hooks or traps for the set.
   (i) Bottom (seabed) depth at start of set.
   (j) Bottom (seabed) depth at end of set.
   (k) Number of hooks or traps actually observed during the haul.
   (l) Intended target species.
   (m) Actually observed catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).

(n) An estimation of the amount (numbers or weight) of marine resources discarded* or dropped-off, split by species, during the actual observation. * Including those retained for scientific samples.

(o) Record of the actually observed numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught (including those discarded and dropped-off).

**E. Length-Frequency Data to Be Collected**

1. Representative and randomly distributed length-frequency data (to the nearest mm, with record of the type of length measurement taken) are to be collected for representative samples of the target species and other main by-catch species. Total weight of length-frequency samples should be recorded, and observers may be required to also determine sex of measured fish to generate length-frequency data stratified by sex. The length-frequency data may be used as potential indicators of ecosystem changes (for example, see: Gislason, H. et al. (2000. ICES J Mar Sci 57: 468-475), Yamane et al. (2005. ICES J Mar Sci, 62: 374-379), and Shin, Y-J. et al. (2005. ICES J Mar Sci, 62: 384-396)).
2. The numbers of fish to be measured for each species and distribution of samples across area and month strata should be determined, to ensure that samples are properly representative of species distributions and size ranges.

**F. Biological sampling to be conducted (optional for gillnet and long line fisheries)**

1. The following biological data are to be collected for representative samples of the main target species and, time permitting, for other main by-catch species contributing to the catch:
   (a) Species
   (b) Length (to the nearest mm), with record of the type of length measurement used.
   (c) Length and depth in case of North Pacific armorhead.
   (d) Sex (male, female, indeterminate, not examined)
   (e) Maturity stage (immature, mature, ripe, ripe-running, spent)
2. Representative stratified samples of otoliths are to be collected from the main target species and, time permitting, from other main by-catch species regularly occurring in catches. All otoliths to be collected are to be labelled with the information listed in 1 above, as well as the date, vessel name, observer name and catch position.

3. Where specific trophic relationship projects are being conducted, observers may be requested to also collect stomach samples from certain species. Any such samples collected are also to be labelled with the information listed in 1 above, as well as the date, vessel name, observer name and catch position.
4. Observers may also be required to collect tissue samples as part of specific genetic research programmes implemented by the SC.
5. Observers are to be briefed and provided with written length-frequency and biological sampling protocols and priorities for the above sampling specific to each observer trip.

**G. Data to be collected on Incidental Captures of Protected Species**

1. Flag members operating observer programs are to develop, in cooperation with the SC, lists and identification guides of protected species or species of concern (seabirds, marine mammals or marine reptiles) to be monitored by observers.
2. The following data are to be collected for all protected species caught in fishing operations:
   (a) Species (identified as far as possible, or accompanied by photographs if identification is difficult).
   (b) Count of the number caught per tow or set.
   (c) Life status (vigorous, alive, lethargic, dead) upon release.
   (d) Whole specimens (where possible) for onshore identification. Where this is not possible, observers may be required to collect sub-samples of identifying parts, as specified in biological sampling protocols.

**H. Detection of Fishing in Association with Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems**

1. The SC is to develop a guideline, species list and identification guide for benthic species (e.g. sponges, sea fans, corals) whose presence in a catch will indicate that fishing occurred in association with a vulnerable marine ecosystem (VME). All observers on vessels are to be provided with copies of this guideline, species list and ID guide.
2. For each observed fishing operation, the following data are to be collected for all species caught, which appear on the list of vulnerable benthic species:
   (a) Species (identified as far as possible or accompanied by a photograph where identification is difficult).

(b) An estimate of the quantity (weight (kg) or volume ($m^3$)) of each listed benthic species caught in the fishing operation.

(c) An overall estimate of the total quantity (weight (kg) or volume ($m^3$)) of all invertebrate benthic species caught in the fishing operation.

(d) Where possible, and particularly for new or scarce benthic species which do not appear in ID guides, whole samples should be collected and suitable preserved for identification on shore.

**I. Data to be collected for all Tag Recoveries**

1. The following data are to be collected for all recovered fish, seabird, mammal or reptile tags:

(a) Observer name.

(b) Vessel name.

(c) Vessel call sign.

(d) Vessel flag.

(e) Collect, label (with all details below) and store the actual tags for later return to the tagging agency.

(f) Species from which tag recovered.

(g) Tag colour and type (spaghetti, archival).

(h) Tag numbers (The tag number is to be provided for all tags when multiple tags were attached to one fish. If only one tag was recorded, a statement is required that specifies whether or not the other tag was missing)

(i) Date and time of capture (UTC).

(j) Location of capture (Lat/Lon, to the nearest 1 minute)

(k) Animal length / size (to the nearest cm) with description of what measurement was taken (such as total length, fork length, etc).

(l) Sex (F=female, M=male, I=indeterminate, D=not examined)

(m) Whether the tags were found during a period of fishing that was being observed (Y/N)

(n) Reward information (e.g. name and address where to send reward)

(It is recognised that some of the data recorded here duplicates data that already exists in the previous categories of information. This is necessary because tag recovery information may be sent separately to other observer data.)

## J. Hierarchies for Observer Data Collection

1. Trip-specific or programme-specific observer task priorities may be developed in response to specific research programme requirements, in which case such priorities should be followed by observers.
2. In the absence of trip- or programme-specific priorities, the following generalised priorities should be followed by observers:
   (a) Fishing Operation Information
      - All vessel and tow / set / effort information.

   (b) Monitoring of Catches
      - Record time, proportion of catch (e.g. proportion of trawl landing) or effort (e.g. number of hooks), and total numbers of each species caught.
      - Record numbers or proportions of each species retained or discarded.

   (c) Biological Sampling
      - Length-frequency data for target species.
      - Length-frequency data for main by-catch species.
      - Identification and counts of protected species.
      - Basic biological data (sex, maturity) for target species.
      - Check for presence of tags.
      - Otoliths (and stomach samples, if being collected) for target species.
      - Basic biological data for by-catch species.
      - Biological samples of by-catch species (if being collected)
      - Photos
3. The monitoring of catches and biological sampling procedures should be prioritised among species groups as follows:

| **Species** | **Priority (1 highest)** |
|---|---|
| Primary target species (such as North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino) | 1 |
| Other species typically within top 10 in the fishery (such as mirror dory, and oreos) | 2 |
| Protected species | 3 |
| All other species | 4 |

The allocation of observer effort among these activities will depend on the type of operation and setting. The size of sub-samples relative to unobserved quantities (e.g. number of hooks/panels examined for species composition relative to the number of hooks/panels retrieved) should be explicitly recorded under the guidance of member country observer programmes.

**K. Coding Specifications to be used for Recording Observer Data**

1. Unless otherwise specified for specific data types, observer data are to be collected in accordance with the same coding specifications as specified in this Annex.
2. Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) is to be used to describe times.
3. Degrees and minutes are to be used to describe locations.
4. The following coding schemes are to be used:
   (a) Species are to be described using the FAO 3 letter species codes or, if species do not have a FAO code, using scientific names.
   (b) Fishing methods are to be described using the International Standard Classification of Fishing Gear (ISSCFG - 29 July 1980) codes.
   (c) Types of fishing vessel are to be described using the International Standard Classification of Fishery Vessels (ISSCFV) codes.
5. Metric units of measure are to be used, specifically:
   (a) Kilograms are to be used to describe catch weight.
   (b) Metres are to be used to describe height, width, depth, beam or length.
   (c) Cubic metres are to be used to describe volume.
   (d) Kilowatts are to be used to describe engine power.

**Annex 6**

**Implementation of the Adaptive Management for North Pacific armorhead**

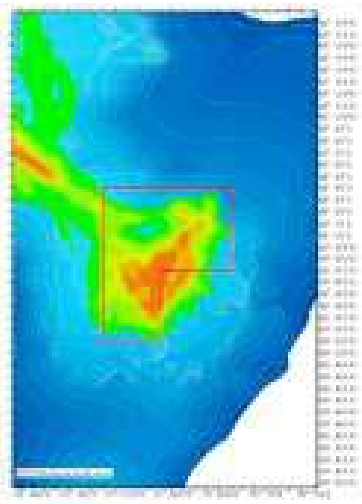
## 1. Monitoring survey for the detection of strong recruitment of North Pacific armorhead

### (1) Location of monitoring surveys

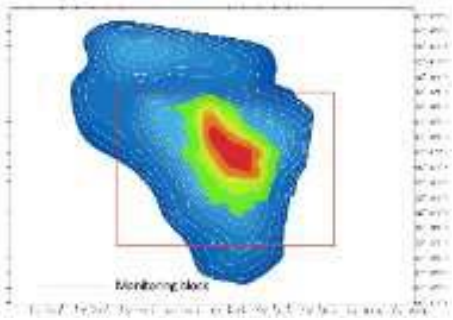
Monitoring surveys for the detection of strong recruitment of North Pacific armorhead will be conducted by trawl fishing vessels in the pre-determined four (24) monitoring blocks of Koko (South eastern), Yuryaku, Kammu (North western) and/or Colahan seamounts.

**Monitoring blocks**

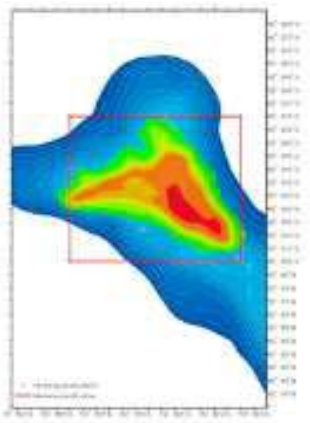
(1) Koko seamount (34°51’ –35°04’N, 171°49’ –172°00’ E)



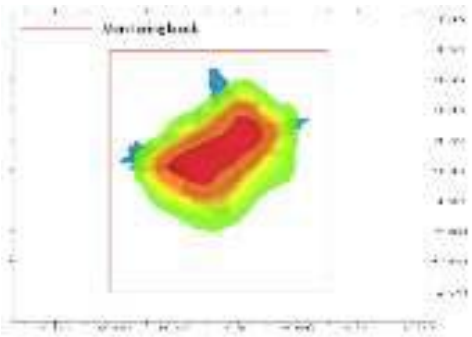
(2) Yuryaku seamount (32°35’ –32°45’N, 172°10’ –172°24’E)



(3) Kammu seamount (32°10’–32°21’N, 172°44’–172°57’E)



(4) Colahan seamount (30°57’–31°05’N, 175°50’–175°57’E)



**(2) Schedule for monitoring surveys**

Monitoring surveys will be conducted from March 1st to June 30th each year, with at least a one week interval between monitoring surveys. For each survey, a trawl fishing vessel will conduct a monitoring survey in one of the four monitoring blocks that is the nearest from the location of the trawl fishing vessel at the time of prior notification in (4) below. The base schedule for monitoring surveys will be notified to the Executive Secretary by the end of February of each year. The base

schedule may be revised during the year subject to prior notification to the Executive Secretary.

**(3) Data to be collected during monitoring surveys**

For each monitoring survey, a trawl net will be towed for one hour. A scientific observer onboard the trawl fishing vessel will calculate nominal-CPUE (kg/hour) of North Pacific armorhead. The scientific observer will also calculate fat index* (FI) of randomly sampled 100 individuals of North Pacific armorhead by measuring fork length (FL) and body height (BH) of each individual.
(*fat index (FI) = body height (BH) / fork length (FL) )

**(4) Prior notifications and survey results**

At least three (3) days before each survey, a prior notification with monitoring date/time, location and trawl fishing vessel name will be provided by the flag state of the trawl fishing vessel to the Executive Secretary.

No later than three (3) days after each survey, the survey result including date/time, location, catch, nominal-CPUE (kg/hour) and percentage of fish with fat index (FI)>0.3 will be provided by the flag state to the Executive Secretary.

The Executive Secretary will circulate these prior notifications and survey results to all Members of the Commission without delay.

**1. Areas where bottom fishing with trawl gear is prohibited when high recruitment is detected**

**(1) Criteria for a high recruitment**

It is considered that high recruitment has occurred if the following criteria are met in four (4) consecutive monitoring surveys.

- Nominal CPUE > 10t/h
- Individuals of fat index (FI)> 0.3 account for 80% or more

**(2) Areas where bottom fishing with trawl gear is prohibited**

Bottom fishing with trawl gear shall be prohibited in the following two (2) seamount areas (*) during the year when high recruitment is detected. In such a case, all monitoring surveys scheduled during the year will be cancelled.

- Northern part of Kammu seamount (north of 32°10.0′ N)
- Yuryaku seamount

(*) The catch of North Pacific armorhead in the above two seamounts accounts for a half of the total catch in the entire Emperor Seamounts area based on the catch records in 2010 and 2012.

**(3) Notification by the Secretariat**

When the criteria for high recruitment are met as defined in 2(1) above, the Executive Secretary will notify all Members of the Commission of the fact with a defined date/time from which bottom fishing with trawl gear is prohibited in the areas as defined in 2(2) above until the end of the year.

**Annex 7**

# Translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names

**VME Indicator Corals from Emperor Seamounts: Present Classification *1, Taxa, and Common (nominal) Names in NPFC**

| Sub phylum | Class | Order | Superfamily | Family | Genus/Subgenus | NPFC_～2023 | NPFC_2024~ *2 | Guide Cat. *3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anthozoa | Hexacorallia | Antipatharia | | Antipathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Aphanipathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Cladopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Leiopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Schizopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | Scleractinia | | Caryophylliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Deltocyathidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Dendrophylliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Flabellidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Fungiacyathidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Micrabaciidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Oculinidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Turbinoliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Madreporidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | Octocorallia *4 | **Scleralcyonacea** ≒Calcaxonia-Pennatulacea | Pennatuloidea *5 | Anthoptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Balticinidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Funiculinidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Kophobelemnidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Pennatulidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Protoptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Scleroptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Stachyptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Umbellulidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Veretillidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Virgulariidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Chrysogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Keratoisididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Primnoidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | **Briareidae** | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Clavulariidae>> **Briareidae** | *Pachyclavularia*>>***Briareum*** | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Alcyoniidae>> **Coralliidae** *6 | *Anthomastus* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | | *Paraminabea* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Paragorgiidae>> **Coralliidae** *6 | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | **Coralliidae** *6 | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | **Malacalcyonacea** ≒Holaxonia-Alcyoniina | | Clavulariidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | —— | *Pseudocladochonus* *7 | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Tubiporidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Nidaliidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Siphonogorgiidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Anthothelidae>> **Alcyoniidae** *8 | *Anthothela* | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Nephtheidae>> **Alcyoniidae** *8 | *Gersemia* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | **Alcyoniidae** *8 | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Nephtheidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Paralcyoniidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Gorgoniidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Isididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Keroeididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Astrogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Euplexauridae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Anthogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Acanthogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Victorgorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |
| | | | | Plexauridae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |
| | | | | —— | *Calcigorgia* *9 | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |

***1** Classification is based on WoRMS (in July 2024)

***2** Nominal names of VME indicator corals agreed by NPFC for adoption after 2025 (NPFC-2024-COM08-Final Report-ANNEX O-G)

***3** Coral Morphology Categories of "NPFC VME Taxa Identification Guide (Western North Pacific Ocean)"

***4** See WoRMS based on McFadden *et al*. (2022) for the present octocorallian classificaton, and McFadden *in* Daly *et al*. (2007) for the former one
The current families of octocorals and their correspondence to former suborders/systems are well summarized *in* Table 2 of McFadden *et al*. (2022)

***5** 2024_9th_COM has agreed to add pennatulaceans (sea pens) to the VME indicator taxa (entered into force 1 January 2025)

***6** The family Coralliidae is originally gorgonians (Gorgonacea), but the current classification includes some soft corals (formerly Alcyonacea) (e.g. Anthomastus)

***7** *Pseudocladochonus* is the genus Octocorallia *incertae sedis* in McFadden *et al*. (2022) and in also WoRMS. (See Table 3 *in* McFadden *et al*., 2022)

***8** The family Alcyoniidae is originally soft corals (former Alcyonacea), but the current classification includes some gorgonians (Gorgonacea) (e.g. Anthothela)

***9** *Calcigorgia* is a gorgonian genus in Octocorallia *incertae sedis* in McFadden *et al*. (2022) and in also WoRMS. (See Table 3 *in* McFadden *et al*., 2022)

>> pink= former Gorgonacea (Gorgonians); yellow= former Alcyonecea (Soft Corals)

**WoRMS** World Register of Marine Species) https://www.marinespecies.org/index.php

**Daly *et al*. (2007)** The phylum Cnidaria: A review of phylogenetic patterns and diversity 300 years after Linnaeus. *Zootaxa*, 1668: 127–182.

**McFadden *et al*. (2022)** Revisionary systematics of Octocorallia (Cnidaria: Anthozoa) guided by phylogenomics. *Bull. Soc. Syst. Biol*., 1: 1–79.

**CMM 2025-06**

***(Entered into force XX July 2025)***

# CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR BOTTOM FISHERIES AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS IN THE NORTHEASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

*The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC):*

*Seeking* to ensure the long term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources of the Northeastern Pacific Ocean and, in so doing, protect the vulnerable marine ecosystems that occur there, in accordance with the Sustainable Fisheries Resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) including, in particular, paragraphs 66 to 71 of the UNGA59/25 in 2004, paragraphs 69 to 74 of UNGA60/31 in 2005, paragraphs 69 and 80 to 91 of UNGA61/105 in 2006, and paragraphs 113 to 124 of UNGA64/72 in 2009;

*Recalling* that paragraph 85 of UNGA 61/105 calls upon participants in negotiations to establish regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements with the competence to regulate bottom fisheries to adopt permanent measures in respect of the area of application of the instruments under negotiation;

*Noting* that North Pacific Fisheries Commission has previously adopted interim measures for the Northeastern Pacific Ocean;

*Conscious* of the need to adopt permanent measures for the Northeastern Pacific Ocean to ensure that this area is not left as the only major area of the Pacific Ocean where no such measures are in place;

*Hereby adopt* the following Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for bottom fisheries of the Northeastern Pacific Ocean while working to develop and implement other permanent management arrangements to govern these and other fisheries in the North Pacific Ocean.

**Scope**

1. These Measures are to be applied to all bottom fishing activities throughout the high seas areas of the Northeastern Pacific Ocean, defined, for the purposes of this document, as those occurring in the Convention Area as set out in Article 4 of the Convention text to the east of the line of 175 degrees W longitude (here in after called "the eastern part of the Convention Area") including all such areas and marine species other than those species already covered by existing international fisheries management instruments, including bilateral agreements and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations or Arrangements.

   For the purpose of these Measures, the term vulnerable marine ecosystems is to be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the International Guidelines on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries on the High Seas adopted by the FAO on 29 August 2008 (see Annex 2 for further details).

2. The implementation of these Measures shall:
   a. be based on the best scientific information available in accordance with existing international laws and agreements including UNCLOS and other relevant international instruments,
   b. establish appropriate and effective conservation and management measures,
   c. be in accordance with the precautionary approach, and
   d. incorporate an ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

3. Actions by Members of the Commission

   Members of the Commission will take the following actions in respect of vessels operating under its Flag or authority in the area covered by these Measures:
   a. Conduct the assessments called for in paragraph 83(a) of UNGA Resolution 61/105, in a manner consistent with the FAO Guidelines and the Standards and Criteria included in Annex 2;
   b. Submit to the SC their assessments conducted pursuant to subparagraph (a) of this paragraph, including all relevant data and information in support of any such assessment, and receive advice and recommendations from the SC, in accordance with the procedures in Annex 3;
   c. Taking into account all advice and recommendations received from the SC, determine

whether the fishing activity or operations of the vessel in question are likely to have a significant adverse impact on any vulnerable marine ecosystem;

d. If it is determined that the fishing activity or operations of the vessel or vessels in question would have a significant adverse impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems, adopt conservation and management measures to prevent such impacts on the basis of advice and recommendations of the SC, which are subject to adoption by the Commission;
e. Ensure that if any vessels are already engaged in bottom fishing, that such assessments have been carried out in accordance with paragraph 119(a)/UNGA RES 2009, the determination called for in subparagraph (c) of this paragraph has been rendered and, where appropriate, managements measures have been implemented in accordance with the advice and recommendations of the SC, which are subject to adoption by the Commission;
f. Further ensure that they will only authorize fishing activities on the basis of such assessments and any comments and recommendations from the SC;
g. Prohibit its vessels from engaging in directed fishing on the following taxa: black corals (Antipatharia), gorgonians, pennatulaceans, stony corals (Scleractinia), soft corals, the classes of Demospongiae and Hexactinellida in the phylum Porifera as well as any other indicator species for vulnerable marine ecosystems as may be identified from time to time by the SC and approved by the Commission. The translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names is attached to this CMM (Annex 6).
h. In respect of areas where vulnerable marine ecosystems are known to occur or are likely to occur, based on the best available scientific information, ensure that bottom fishing activities do not proceed unless conservation and management measures have been established to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems;
i. Limit fishing effort in bottom fisheries on the Eastern part of the Convention Area to the level of a historical average (baseline to be determined through consensus in the SC based on information to be provided by Members) in terms of the number of fishing vessels and other parameters which reflect the level of fishing effort, fishing capacity or potential impacts on marine ecosystems dependent on new SC advice;
j. Further, considering accumulated information regarding fishing activities in the Eastern part of the Convention Area, in areas where, in the course of fishing operations with pot gear, cold water corals that exceed 2Kg or sponges (Demospongiae and Hexactinellida) that exceed 5Kg are encountered in one gear retrieval, Members of the Commission shall require vessels flying their flag to cease bottom fishing activities in that location. In the course of

fishing operations with all other gears, cold water corals that exceed 50Kg or sponges (Demospongiae and Hexactinellida) that exceed 350Kg are encountered in one gear retrieval, Members of the Commission shall require vessels flying their flag to cease bottom fishing activities in that location. In such cases, the vessel shall not resume fishing activities until it has relocated a sufficient distance, which shall be no less than 1 nautical mile, so that additional encounters with VMEs are unlikely. All such encounters, including the location, gear type, date, time and name and weight of the VME indicator species, shall be reported to the Secretariat, through the Member, within one business day. The Executive Secretary shall notify the other Members of the Commission and at the same time implement a temporary closure in the area to prohibit its bottom fishing vessels from contacting the sea floor with their trawl nets. Members shall inform their fleets and enforcement operations within one business day of the receipt of the notification from the Executive Secretary. It is agreed that the VME indicator taxa include cold water corals black corals (Antipatharia), gorgonians, pennatulaceans, stony corals (Scleractinia), and soft corals. The VME indicator taxa also include the classes of Demospongiae and Hexactinellida in the phylum Porifera.

k. Based on all the available data, including data on the VME encounter and distribution received from the fishing vessel(s), research survey data, visual survey data, and/or model results, the Scientific Committee (SC) shall assess and conclude if the area has a VME. If so, the SC shall recommend to the Commission that the temporary closure be made permanent, although the boundary of the closure may be adjusted, or suggest other appropriate measures. Otherwise, the Executive Secretary shall inform the Members that they may reopen the area to their vessels.

l. Prohibit bottom fishing vessels from fishing in the following areas in order to achieve sustainable protection of VMEs in the eastern part of the Convention Area:

| Area | Latitude | Longitude |
|---|---|---|
| Northwestern Cobb Seamount | 46.8178 N | 130.872 W |
| | 46.7703 N | 130.861 W |
| | 46.8277 N | 130.825 W |
| | 46.7802 N | 130.814W |
| Northeastern Cobb Seamount | 46.7759 N | 130.735 W |
| | 46.7675 N | 130.694 W |
| | 46.7482 N | 130.756 W |
| | 46.7399 N | 130.716 W |

4. All assessments and determinations by any Member as to whether fishing activity would have significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems, as well as measures adopted in order to prevent such impacts, will be made publicly available through agreed means.

Control of Bottom Fishing Vessels

5. Members will exercise full and effective control over each of their bottom fishing vessels operating in the high seas of the Northeastern Pacific Ocean, including by means of fishing licenses, authorizations or permits, and maintenance of a record of these vessels as outlined in the Convention and applicable CMM.

6. New and exploratory fishing will be subject to the exploratory fishery protocol included as Annex 1.

Scientific Committee (SC)

7. Scientific Committee will provide scientific support for the implementation of these CMMs.

Scientific Information

8. The Members shall provide all available information as required by the Commission for any current or historical fishing activity by their flag vessels, including the number of vessels by gear type, size of vessels (tons), number of fishing days or days on the fishing grounds, total catch by species, areas fished (names or coordinates of seamounts), and information from scientific observer programmes (see Annexes 4 and 5) to the NPFC Secretariat as soon as possible and no later than one month prior to SC meeting. The Secretariat will make such information available to SC.

9. Scientific research activities for stock assessment purposes are to be conducted in accordance with a research plan that has been provided to SC prior to the commencement of such activities.

**Annex 1**

## EXPLORATORY FISHERY PROTOCOL IN THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

1. From 1 January 2009, all bottom fishing activities in new fishing areas and areas where fishing is prohibited in a precautionary manner or with bottom gear not previously used in the existing fishing areas, are to be considered as "exploratory fisheries" and to be conducted in accordance with this protocol.

2. Precautionary conservation and management measures, including catch and effort controls, are essential during the exploratory phase of deep sea fisheries. Implementation of a precautionary approach to sustainable exploitation of deep sea fisheries shall include the following measures:

i. precautionary effort limits, particularly where reliable assessments of sustainable exploitation rates of target and main by-catch species are not available;
ii. precautionary measures, including precautionary spatial catch limits where appropriate, to prevent serial depletion of low-productivity stocks;
iii. regular review of appropriate indices of stock status and revision downwards of the limits listed above when significant declines are detected;
iv. measures to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems; and
v. comprehensive monitoring of all fishing effort, capture of all species and interactions with VMEs.

3. When a member of the Commission would like to conduct exploratory fisheries, it is to follow the following procedure:

(1) Prior to the commencement of fishing, the member of the Commission is to circulate the information and assessment in Appendix 1.1 to the members of the Scientific Committee (SC) for review and to all members of the Commission for information, together with the impact assessment. Such information is to be provided to the other members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which the information shall be reviewed.

(2) The assessment in (1) above is to be conducted in accordance with the procedure set forth in

"Science-based Standards and Criteria for Identification of VMEs and Assessment of Significant Adverse Impacts on VMEs and Marine Species (Annex 2)", with the understanding that particular care shall be taken in the evaluation of risks of the significant adverse impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), in line with the precautionary approach.

(3) The SC is to review the information and the assessment submitted in (1) above in accordance with "SC Assessment Review Procedures for Bottom Fishing Activities (Annex 3)."

(4) The exploratory fisheries are to be permitted only where the assessment concludes that they would not have significant adverse impacts (SAIs) on marine species or any VMEs and on the basis of comments and recommendations of SC. Any determinations, by any Member of the Commission or the SC, that the exploratory fishing activities would not have SAIs on marine species or any VMEs, shall be made publicly available through the NPFC website.

4. The member of the Commission is to ensure that all vessels flying its flag conducting exploratory fisheries are equipped with a satellite monitoring device and have an observer on board at all times.

5. Within 3 months of the end of the exploratory fishing activities or within 12 months of the commencement of fishing, whichever occurs first, the member of the Commission is to provide a report of the results of such activities to the members of the SC and all members of the Commission. If the SC meets prior to the end of this 12-month period, the member of the Commission is to provide an interim report 30 days in advance of the SC meeting. The information to be included in the report is specified in Appendix 1.2.

6. The SC is to review the report in 5 above and decide whether the exploratory fishing activities had SAIs on marine species or any VME. The SC then is to send its recommendations to the Commission on whether the exploratory fisheries can continue and whether additional management measures shall be required if they are to continue. The Commission is to strive to adopt conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs on marine species or any VMEs. If the Commission is not able to reach consensus on any such measures, each fishing member of the Commission is to adopt measures to avoid any SAIs on VMEs.

7. Members of the Commission shall only authorize continuation of exploratory fishing activity, or

commencement of commercial fishing activity, under this protocol on the basis of comments and recommendations of the SC.

8. The same encounter protocol should be applied in both fished and unfished areas specified in Annex 2, paragraph 4(1)(a).

**Appendix 1.1**

**Information to be provided before exploratory fisheries start**

1. A harvesting plan
   - Name of vessel
   - Flag member of vessel
   - Description of area to be fished (location and depth)
   - Fishing dates
   - Anticipated effort
   - Target species
   - Bottom fishing gear-type used
   - Area and effort restrictions to ensure that fisheries occur on a gradual basis in a limited geographical area.
2. A mitigation plan
   - Measures to prevent SAIs to VMEs that may be encountered during the fishery

3. A catch monitoring plan
   - Recording/reporting of all species brought onboard to the lowest possible taxonomic level
   - 100% satellite monitoring
   - 100% observer coverage

4. A data collection plan
   - Data is to be collected in accordance with “Type and Format of Scientific Observer Data to be Collected” (Annex 5)

**Appendix 1.2**

**Information to be included in the report**

- Name of vessel
- Flag member of vessel
- Description of area fished (location and depth)
- Fishing dates
- Total effort
- Bottom fishing gear-type used
- List of VME encountered (the amount of VME indicator species for each encounter specifying the location: longitude and latitude)
- Mitigation measures taken in response to the encounter of VME
- List of all organisms brought onboard
- List of VMEs indicator species brought onboard by location: longitude and latitude

**Annex 2**

# SCIENCE-BASED STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF VMES AND ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS ON VMES AND MARINE SPECIES

## 1. Introduction

Members of the Commission have hereby established science-based standards and criteria to guide their implementation of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 61/105 and the measures adopted by the Members in respect of bottom fishing activities in the North Pacific Ocean (NPO). In this regard, these science-based standards and criteria are to be applied to identify vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and assess significant adverse impacts (SAIs) of bottom fishing activities on such VMEs or marine species and to promote the long-term sustainability of deep sea fisheries in the Convention Area. The science-based standards and criteria are consistent with the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas, taking into account the work of other RFMOs implementing management of deep-sea bottom fisheries in accordance with UNGA Resolution 61/105. The standards and criteria are to be modified from time to time as more data are collected through research activities and monitoring of fishing operations.

## 2. Purpose

(1) The purpose of the standards and criteria is to provide guidelines for each member of the Commission in identifying VMEs and assessing SAIs of individual bottom fishing activities[1] on VMEs or marine species in the Convention Area. Each member of the Commission, using the best information available, is to decide which species or areas are to be categorized as VMEs, identify areas where VMEs are known or likely to occur, and assess whether individual bottom fishing activities would have SAIs on such VMEs or marine species. The results of these tasks are to be submitted to and reviewed by the Scientific Committee with a view to reaching a common understanding among the members of the Commission.

[1] "individual bottom fishing activities" means fishing activities by each fishing gear. For example, if ten fishing vessels operate bottom trawl fishing in a certain area, the impacts of the fishing activities of these vessels on the ecosystem are to be assessed as a whole rather than on a vessel-by-vessel basis. It should be noted that if the total number or capacity of the vessels using the same fishing gear has increased, the impacts of the fishing activities are to be assessed again.

(2) For the purpose of applying the standards and criteria, the bottom fisheries are defined as follows:

(a) The fisheries are conducted in the Convention Area;

(b) The total catch (everything brought up by the fishing gear) includes species that can only sustain low exploitation rates; and

(c) The fishing gear is likely to contact the seafloor during the normal course of fishing operations

3. Definition of VMEs

(1) Although Paragraph 83 of UNGA Resolution 61/105 refers to seamounts, hydrothermal vents and cold water corals as examples of VMEs, there is no definitive list of specific species or areas that are to be regarded as VMEs.

(2) Vulnerability is related to the likelihood that a population, community or habitat will experience substantial alteration by fishing activities and how much time will be required for its recovery from such alteration. The most vulnerable ecosystems are those that are both easily disturbed and are very slow to recover, or may never recover. The vulnerabilities of populations, communities and habitats are to be assessed relative to specific threats. Some features, particularly ones that are physically fragile or inherently rare may be vulnerable to most forms of disturbance, but the vulnerability of some populations, communities and habitats may vary greatly depending on the type of fishing gear used or the kind of disturbance experienced. The risks to a marine ecosystem are determined by its vulnerability, the probability of a threat occurring and the mitigation means applied to the threat. Accordingly, the FAO Guidelines only provide examples of potential vulnerable species groups, communities and habitats as well as features that potentially support them (Annex 2.1).

(3) A marine ecosystem is to be classified as vulnerable based on its characteristics. The following list of characteristics is used as criteria in the identification of VMEs.

(a) Uniqueness or rarity - an area or ecosystem that is unique or that contains rare species whose loss could not be compensated for by other similar areas. These include:

(i) Habitats that contain endemic species;

(ii) Habitats of rare, threatened or endangered species that occur in discrete areas;

(iii) Nurseries or discrete feeding, breeding, or spawning areas

(b) Functional significance of the habitat – discrete areas or habitats that are necessary for the survival, function, spawning/reproduction or recovery of fish stocks, particular life-history stages (e.g. nursery grounds or rearing areas), or of rare, threatened or endangered marine species.

(c) Fragility – an ecosystem that is highly susceptible to degradation by anthropogenic activities

(d) Life-history traits of component species that make recovery difficult – ecosystems that are characterized by populations or assemblages of species with one or more of the following characteristics:

(i) Slow growth rates

(ii) Late age of maturity

(iii) Low or unpredictable recruitment

(iv) Long-lived

(e) Structural complexity – an ecosystem that is characterized by complex physical structures created by significant concentrations of biotic and abiotic features. In these ecosystems, ecological processes are usually highly dependent on these structured systems. Further, such ecosystems often have high diversity, which is dependent on the structuring organisms.

(4) Management response may vary, depending on the size of the ecological unit in the Convention Area. Therefore, the spatial extent of the ecological unit is to be decided first. For example, whether the ecological unit is a group of seamounts, or an individual seamount in the Convention Area, is to be decided using the above criteria.

4. Identification of potential VMEs

(1) Fished seamounts

(a) Identification of fished seamounts

It is reported that two types of fishing gear are currently used by members of the Commission in the NE area, namely long-line hook and long-line trap. The footprint of the bottom fisheries (fished seamounts) is identified based on the available fishing record. The following seamounts have been identified as fished seamounts at some point in the past: Brown Bear, Cobb, Warwick, Eickelberg, Pathfinder, Miller, Murray, Cowie,

Surveyor, Pratt, and Durgin. It is important to establish, to the extent practicable, a time series of where and when these gears have been used in order to assess potential long-term effects on any existing VMEs.

Fishing effort may not be evenly distributed on each seamount since fish aggregation may occur only at certain points of the seamount and some parts of the seamount may be physically unsuitable for certain fishing gears. Thus, it is important to know actual fished areas within the same seamount so as to know the gravity of the impact of fishing activities on the entire seamount.

Due consideration is to be given to the protection of commercial confidentiality when identifying actual fishing grounds.

(b) Assessment on whether a specific seamount that has been fished is a VME

After identifying the fished seamounts or fished areas of seamounts, it is necessary to assess whether each fished seamount is a VME or contains VMEs in accordance with the criteria in 3 above, individually or in combination using the best available scientific and technical information as well as Annex 2.1. A variety of data would be required to conduct such assessment, including pictures of seamounts taken by an ROV camera or drop camera, biological samples collected through research activities and observer programs, and detailed bathymetry map. Where site-specific information is lacking, other information that is relevant to inferring the likely presence of VMEs is to be used. The flow chart to identify data that can be used to identify VMEs is attached in Annex 2.3.

(2) New fishing areas

Any place other than the fished seamounts above is to be regarded as a new fishing area. If a member of the Commission is considering fishing in a new fishing area, such a fishing area is to be subject to, in addition to these standards and criteria, an exploratory fishery protocol (Annex 1).

5. Assessment of SAIs on VMEs or marine species

(1) Significant adverse impacts are those that compromise ecosystem integrity (i.e., ecosystem structure or function) in a manner that: (i) impairs the ability of affected populations to replace themselves; (ii) degrades the long-term natural productivity of habitats; or (iii) causes, on more

than a temporary basis, significant loss of species richness, habitat or community types. Impacts are to be evaluated individually, in combination and cumulatively.

(2) When determining the scale and significance of an impact, the following six factors are to be considered:

(a) The intensity or severity of the impact at the specific site being affected;

(b) The spatial extent of the impact relative to the availability of the habitat type affected;

(c) The sensitivity/vulnerability of the ecosystem to the impact;

(d) The ability of an ecosystem to recover from harm, and the rate of such recovery;

(e) The extent to which ecosystem functions may be altered by the impact; and

(f) The timing and duration of the impact relative to the period in which a species needs the habitat during one or more life-history stages.

(3) Temporary impacts are those that are limited in duration and that allow the particular ecosystem to recover over an acceptable timeframe. Such timeframes are to be decided on a case-by-case basis and be on the order of 5-20 years, taking into account the specific features of the populations and ecosystems.

(4) In determining whether an impact is temporary, both the duration and the frequency with which an impact is repeated is to be considered. If the interval between the expected disturbances of a habitat is shorter than the recovery time, the impact is to be considered more than temporary.

(5) Each member of the Commission is to conduct assessments to establish if bottom fishing activities are likely to produce SAIs in a given seamount or other VMEs. Such an impact assessment is to address, *inter alia*:

(a) Type of fishing conducted or contemplated, including vessel and gear types, fishing areas, target and potential bycatch species, fishing effort levels and duration of fishing;

(b) Best available scientific and technical information on the current state of fishery resources, and baseline information on the ecosystems, habitats and communities in the fishing area, against which future changes are to be compared;

(c) Identification, description and mapping of VMEs known or likely to occur in the fishing area;

(d) The data and methods used to identify, describe and assess the impacts of the activity, identification of gaps in knowledge, and an evaluation of uncertainties in the information presented in the assessment

(e) Identification, description and evaluation of the occurrence, scale and duration of likely impacts, including cumulative impacts of activities covered by the assessment on VMEs and low-productivity fishery resources in the fishing area;

(f) Risk assessment of likely impacts by the fishing operations to determine which impacts are likely to be SAIs, particularly impacts on VMEs and low-productivity fishery resources (Risk assessments are to take into account, as appropriate, differing conditions prevailing in areas where fisheries are well established and in areas where fisheries have not taken place or only occur occasionally);

(g) The proposed mitigation and management measures to be used to prevent SAIs on VMEs and ensure long-term conservation and sustainable utilization of low-productivity fishery resources, and the measures to be used to monitor effects of the fishing operations.

(6) Impact assessments are to consider, as appropriate, the information referred to in these Standards and Criteria, as well as relevant information from similar or related fisheries, species and ecosystems.

(7) Where an assessment concludes that the area does not contain VMEs or that significant adverse impacts on VMEs or marine species are not likely, such assessments are to be repeated when there have been significant changes to the fishery or other activities in the area, or when natural processes are thought to have undergone significant changes.

6. Proposed conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs

As a result of the assessment in 5 above, if it is considered that individual fishing activities are causing or likely to cause SAIs on VMEs or marine species, the member of the Commission is to adopt appropriate conservation and management measures to prevent such SAIs. The member of the Commission is to clearly indicate how such impacts are expected to be prevented or mitigated by the measures.

7. Precautionary approach

If after assessing all available scientific and technical information, the presence of VMEs or the

likelihood that individual bottom fishing activities would cause SAIs on VMEs or marine species cannot be adequately determined, members of the Commission are only to authorize individual bottom fishing activities to proceed in accordance with:

(a) Precautionary, conservation and management measures to prevent SAIs;

(b) Measures to address unexpected encounters with VMEs in the course of fishing operations;

(c) Measures, including ongoing scientific research, monitoring and data collection, to reduce the uncertainty; and

(d) Measures to ensure long-term sustainability of deep sea fisheries.

8. Template for assessment report

Annex 2.2 is a template for individual member of the Commission to formulate reports on identification of VMEs and impact assessment.

**ANNEX 2.1**

## EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL VULNERABLE SPECIES GROUPS, COMMUNITIES AND HABITATS AS WELL AS FEATURES THAT POTENTIALLY SUPPORT THEM

The following examples of species groups, communities, habitats and features often display characteristics consistent with possible VMEs. Merely detecting the presence of an element itself is not sufficient to identify a VME. That identification is to be made on a case-by-case basis through application of relevant provisions of the Standards and Criteria, particularly Sections 3, 4 and 5.

| Examples of species groups, communities and habitat forming species that are documented or considered sensitive and potentially vulnerable to deep-sea fisheries in the high-seas, and which may contribute to forming VMEs: | |
|---|---|
| a. | certain coldwater corals, e.g., reef builders and coral forest including: stony corals (scleractinia), alcyonaceans and gorgonians (octocorallia), black corals (antipatharia), and hydrocorals (stylasteridae), |
| b. | Some types of sponge dominated communities, |
| c. | communities composed of dense emergent fauna where large sessile protozoans (xenophyophores) and invertebrates (e.g., hydroids and bryozoans) form an important |

| | |
|---|---|
| | structural component of habitat, and |
| d. | seep and vent communities comprised of invertebrate and microbial species found nowhere else (i.e., endemic). |

| Examples of topographical, hydrophysical or geological features, including fragile geological structures, that potentially support the species groups or communities, referred to above: | |
|---|---|
| a. | submerged edges and slopes (e.g., corals and sponges), |
| b. | summits and flanks of seamounts, guyots, banks, knolls, and hills (e.g., corals, sponges, xenophyphores), |
| c. | canyons and trenches (e.g., burrowed clay outcrops, corals), |
| d. | hydrothermal vents (e.g., microbial communities and endemic invertebrates), and |
| e. | cold seeps (e.g., mud volcanoes, microbes, hard substrates for sessile invertebrates). |

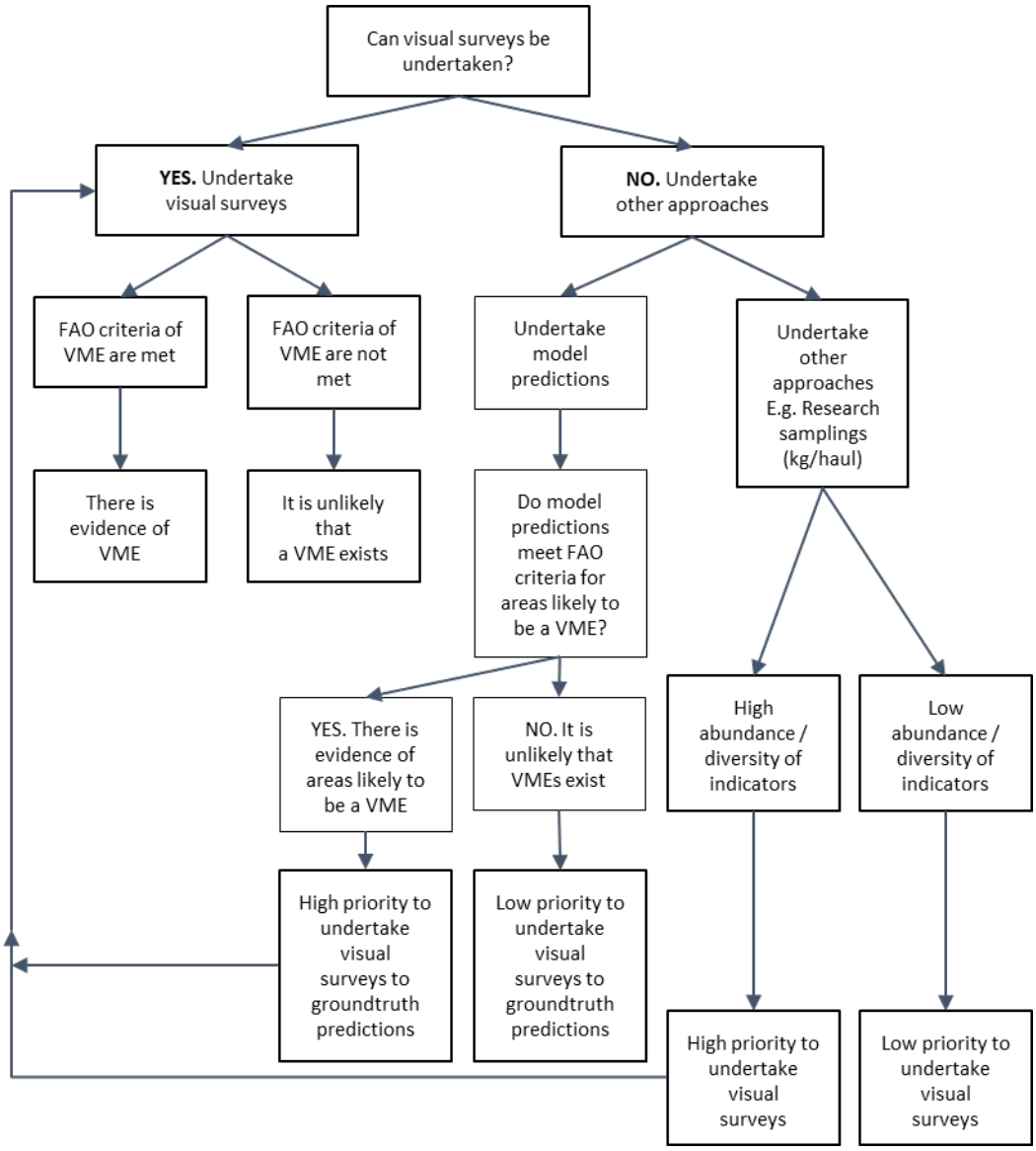
ANNEX 2.2

TEMPLATE FOR REPORTS ON IDENTIFICATION OF VMEs AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS CAUSED BY INDIVIDUAL FISHING ACTIVITIES ON VMEs OR MARINE SPECIES

1. Name of the member of the Commission
2. Name of the fishery (e.g., bottom trawl, bottom gillnet, bottom longline, pot)
3. Status of the fishery (existing fishery or exploratory fishery)
4. Target species
5. Bycatch species
6. Recent level of fishing effort (every year at least since 2002)
(1) Number of fishing vessels
(2) Tonnage of each fishing vessel
(3) Number of fishing days or days on the fishing ground
(4) Fishing effort (total operating hours for trawl, # of hooks per day for long-line, # of pots per day for pot, total length of net per day for gillnet)
(5) Total catch by species
(6) Names of seamounts fished or to be fished
7. Fishing period
8. Analysis of status of fishery resources
(1) Data and methods used for analysis
(2) Results of analysis
(3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties
9. Analysis of status of bycatch species resources
(1) Data and methods used for analysis
(2) Results of analysis
(3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties
10. Analysis of existence of VMEs in the fishing ground
(1) Data and methods used for analysis
(2) Results of analysis
(3) Identification of uncertainties in data and methods, and measures to overcome such uncertainties
11. Impact assessment of fishing activities on VMEs or marine species including cumulative impacts, and identification of SAIs on VMEs or marine species, as detailed in Section 5 above, Assessment of SAIs on VMEs or marine species
12. Other points to be addressed
13. Conclusion (whether to continue or start fishing with what measures, or stop fishing).

Annex 2.3

Flow chart to identify data that can be used to identify VMEs in the NPFC Convention Area



Annex 3

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR BOTTOM FISHING ACTIVITIES

1. The Scientific Committee (SC) is to review identifications of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and assessments of significant adverse impact on VMEs, including proposed management measures intended to prevent such impacts submitted by individual Members.

2. Members of the Commission shall submit their identifications and assessments to members of the SC at least 21 days prior to the SC meeting at which the review is to take place. Such submissions shall include all relevant data and information in support of such determinations.

3. The SC will review the data and information in each assessment in accordance with the Science-based Standards and Criteria for Identification of VMEs and Assessment of Significant Adverse Impacts on VMEs and Marine Species (Annex 2), previous decisions of the Commission, and the FAO Technical Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas, paying special attention to the assessment process and criteria specified in paragraphs 47-49 of the Guidelines.

4. In conducting the review above, the SC will give particular attention to whether the deep-sea bottom fishing activity would have a significant adverse impact on VMEs and marine species and, if so, whether the proposed management measures would prevent such impacts.

5. Based on the above review, the SC will provide advice and recommendations to the submitting Members on the extent to which the assessments and related determinations are consistent with the procedures and criteria established in the documents identified above; and whether additional management measures will be required to prevent SAIs on VMEs.

6. Such recommendations will be reflected in the report of the SC meeting at which the assessments are considered.

Annex 4

FORMAT OF NATIONAL REPORT SECTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER PROGRAMMES

Report Components

Annual Observer Programme implementation reports should form a component of annual National Reports submitted by members to the Scientific Committee. These reports should provide a brief overview of observer programmes conducted in the NPFC Convention Area. Observer programme reports should include the following sections:

A. Observer Training

An overview of observer training conducted, including:
Overview of training programme provided to scientific observers.
Number of observers trained.

B. Scientific Observer Programme Design and Coverage

Details of the design of the observer programme, including:
Which fleets, fleet components or fishery components were covered by the programme.
How vessels were selected to carry observers within the above fleets or components.
How was observer coverage stratified: by fleets, fisheries components, vessel types, vessel sizes, vessel ages, fishing areas and seasons.

Details of observer coverage of the above fleets, including:
Components, areas, seasons and proportion of total catches of target species, specifying units used to determine coverage.
Total number of observer employment days, and number of actual days deployed on observation work.

C. Observer Data Collected

List of observer data collected against the agreed range of data set out in Annex 5, including:
Effort Data: Amount of effort observed (vessel days, net panels, hooks, etc), by area and season and % observed out of total by area and seasons
Catch Data: Amount of catch observed of target and by-catch species, by area and season, and %

observed out of total estimated catch by species, area and seasons
Length Frequency Data: Number of fish measured per species, by area and season.
Biological Data: Type and quantity of other biological data or samples (otoliths, sex, maturity, etc) collected per species.
The size of length-frequency and biological sub-samples relative to unobserved quantities.

D. Detection of Fishing in Association with Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems
Information about VME encounters (species and quantity in accordance with Annex 5, H, 2).

E. Tag Return Monitoring
Number of tags returns observed, by fish size class and area.

F. Problems Experienced
Summary of problems encountered by observers and observer managers that could affect the NPFC Observer Programme Standards and/or each member's national observer programme developed under the NPFC standards.

Annex 5

NPFC BOTTOM FISHERIES
OBSERVER PROGRAMME STANDARDS: SCIENTIFIC COMPONENT

TYPE AND FORMAT OF SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER DATA TO BE COLLECTED

A. Vessel & Observer Data to be collected for Each Trip

Vessel and observer details are to be recorded only once for each observed trip.

The following observer data are to be collected for each observed trip:
NPFC vessel ID
Observer's name.
Observer's organisation.
Date observer embarked (UTC date).
Port of embarkation.
Date observer disembarked (UTC date).
Port of disembarkation.

B. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Trawl Fishing Activity

Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (tow by tow) basis for all observed trawls.

The following data are to be collected for each observed trawl tow:
Tow start date (UTC).
Tow start time (UTC).
Tow end date (UTC).
Tow end time (UTC).
Tow start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
Tow end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
Type of trawl, bottom or mid-water.
Type of trawl, single, double or triple.
Height of net opening (m).
Width of net opening (m).
Mesh size of the cod-end net (stretched mesh, mm) and mesh type (diamond, square, etc).
Gear depth (of footrope) at start of fishing (m).
Bottom (seabed) depth at start of fishing (m).
Gear depth (of footrope) at end of fishing (m).

Bottom (seabed) depth at end of fishing (m).
Status of the trawl operation (no damage, lightly damaged*, heavily damaged*, other (specify)).
*Degree may be evaluated by time for repairing (<=1hr or >1hr)
Duration of estimated period of seabed contact (minute)
Intended target species.
Catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
Estimate of the amount (weight or volume) of all living marine resources discarded, split by species.
Record of the numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught.

C. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Bottom Gillnet Fishing Activity

Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (set by set) basis for all observed bottom gillnet sets.

The following data are to be collected for each observed bottom gillnet set:
Set start date (UTC).
Set start time (UTC).
Set end date (UTC).
Set end time (UTC).
Set start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
Set end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
Net panel (“tan”) length (m).
Net panel (“tan”) height (m).
Net mesh size (stretched mesh, mm) and mesh type (diamond, square, etc)
Bottom depth at start of setting (m).
Bottom depth at end of setting (m).
Number of net panels for the set.
Number of net panels retrieved.
Number of net panels actually observed during the haul.
Actually observed catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
An estimation of the amount (numbers or weight) of marine resources discarded, split by species, during the actual observation.
Record of the actually observed numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught.
Intended target species.
Catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
Estimate of the amount (weight or volume) of all marine resources discarded* and dropped-off, split by species. * Including those retained for scientific samples.
Record of the numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught (including

those discarded and dropped-off).

D. Catch & Effort Data to be collected for Bottom Long Line Fishing Activity

Data are to be collected on an un-aggregated (set by set) basis for all observed longline sets.

The following fields of data are to be collected for each set:
Set start date (UTC).
Set start time (UTC).
Set end date (UTC).
Set end time (UTC).
Set start position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
Set end position (Lat/Lon, 1 minute resolution).
Total length of longline set (m).
Number of hooks or traps for the set.
Bottom (seabed) depth at start of set.
Bottom (seabed) depth at end of set.
Number of hooks or traps actually observed during the haul.
Intended target species.
Actually observed catch of all species retained on board, split by species, in weight (to the nearest kg).
An estimation of the amount (numbers or weight) of marine resources discarded* or dropped-off, split by species, during the actual observation. * Including those retained for scientific samples.
Record of the actually observed numbers by species of all marine mammals, seabirds or reptiles caught (including those discarded and dropped-off).

E. Length-Frequency Data to Be Collected

Representative and randomly distributed length-frequency data (to the nearest mm, with record of the type of length measurement taken) are to be collected for representative samples of the target species and other main by-catch species. Total weight of length-frequency samples should be recorded, and observers may be required to also determine sex of measured fish to generate length-frequency data stratified by sex. The length-frequency data may be used as potential indicators of ecosystem changes (for example, see: Gislason, H. et al. (2000. ICES J Mar Sci 57: 468-475), Yamane et al. (2005. ICES J Mar Sci, 62: 374-379), and Shin, Y-J. et al. (2005. ICES J Mar Sci, 62: 384-396)).

The numbers of fish to be measured for each species and distribution of samples across area and month strata should be determined, to ensure that samples are properly representative of species

distributions and size ranges.

F. Biological sampling to be conducted (optional for gillnet and long line fisheries)

The following biological data are to be collected for representative samples of the main target species and, time permitting, for other main by-catch species contributing to the catch:
Species
Length (to the nearest mm), with record of the type of length measurement used.
Length and depth in case of North Pacific armorhead.
Sex (male, female, indeterminate, not examined)
Maturity stage (immature, mature, ripe, ripe-running, spent)

Representative stratified samples of otoliths are to be collected from the main target species and, time permitting, from other main by-catch species regularly occurring in catches. All otoliths to be collected are to be labelled with the information listed in 1 above, as well as the date, vessel name, observer name and catch position.

Where specific trophic relationship projects are being conducted, observers may be requested to also collect stomach samples from certain species. Any such samples collected are also to be labelled with the information listed in 1 above, as well as the date, vessel name, observer name and catch position.

Observers may also be required to collect tissue samples as part of specific genetic research programmes implemented by the SC.

Observers are to be briefed and provided with written length-frequency and biological sampling protocols and priorities for the above sampling specific to each observer trip.

G. Data to be collected on Incidental Captures of Protected Species

Flag members operating observer programs are to develop, in cooperation with the SC, lists and identification guides of protected species or species of concern (seabirds, marine mammals or marine reptiles) to be monitored by observers.

The following data are to be collected for all protected species caught in fishing operations:
Species (identified as far as possible, or accompanied by photographs if identification is difficult).
Count of the number caught per tow or set.
Life status (vigorous, alive, lethargic, dead) upon release.
Whole specimens (where possible) for onshore identification. Where this is not possible,

observers may be required to collect sub-samples of identifying parts, as specified in biological sampling protocols.

H. Detection of Fishing in Association with Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems

The SC is to develop a guideline, species list and identification guide for benthic species (e.g. sponges, sea fans, corals) whose presence in a catch will indicate that fishing occurred in association with a vulnerable marine ecosystem (VME). All observers on vessels are to be provided with copies of this guideline, species list and ID guide.

For each observed fishing operation, the following data are to be collected for all species caught, which appear on the list of vulnerable benthic species:
Species (identified as far as possible, or accompanied by a photograph where identification is difficult).
An estimate of the quantity (weight (kg) or volume ($m^3$)) of each listed benthic species caught in the fishing operation.
An overall estimate of the total quantity (weight (kg) or volume ($m^3$)) of all invertebrate benthic species caught in the fishing operation.
Where possible, and particularly for new or scarce benthic species which do not appear in ID guides, whole samples should be collected and suitable preserved for identification on shore.

I. Data to be collected for all Tag Recoveries

The following data are to be collected for all recovered fish, seabird, mammal or reptile tags:
Observer name.
Vessel name.
Vessel call sign.
Vessel flag.
Collect, label (with all details below) and store the actual tags for later return to the tagging agency.
Species from which tag recovered.
Tag colour and type (spaghetti, archival).
Tag numbers (The tag number is to be provided for all tags when multiple tags were attached to one fish. If only one tag was recorded, a statement is required that specifies whether or not the other tag was missing)
Date and time of capture (UTC).
Location of capture (Lat/Lon, to the nearest 1 minute)
Animal length / size (to the nearest cm) with description of what measurement was taken (such as total length, fork length, etc).
Sex (F=female, M=male, I=indeterminate, D=not examined)

Whether the tags were found during a period of fishing that was being observed (Y/N)
Reward information (e.g. name and address where to send reward)

(It is recognised that some of the data recorded here duplicates data that already exists in the previous categories of information. This is necessary because tag recovery information may be sent separately to other observer data.)

J. Hierarchies for Observer Data Collection

Trip-specific or programme-specific observer task priorities may be developed in response to specific research programme requirements, in which case such priorities should be followed by observers.

In the absence of trip- or programme-specific priorities, the following generalised priorities should be followed by observers:

Fishing Operation Information
All vessel and tow / set / effort information.

Monitoring of Catches
Record time, proportion of catch (e.g. proportion of trawl landing) or effort (e.g. number of hooks), and total numbers of each species caught.
Record numbers or proportions of each species retained or discarded.

Biological Sampling
Length-frequency data for target species.
Length-frequency data for main by-catch species.
Identification and counts of protected species.
Basic biological data (sex, maturity) for target species.
Check for presence of tags.
Otoliths (and stomach samples, if being collected) for target species.
Basic biological data for by-catch species.
Biological samples of by-catch species (if being collected)
Photos

The monitoring of catches and biological sampling procedures should be prioritised among species groups as follows:

| Species | Priority (1 highest) |
|---|---|
| Primary target species (such as North Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino) | 1 |
| Other species typically within top 10 in the fishery (such as mirror dory, and oreos) | 2 |
| Protected species | 3 |
| All other species | 4 |

The allocation of observer effort among these activities will depend on the type of operation and setting. The size of sub-samples relative to unobserved quantities (e.g. number of hooks/panels examined for species composition relative to the number of hooks/panels retrieved) should be explicitly recorded under the guidance of member country observer programmes.

K. Coding Specifications to be used for Recording Observer Data

Unless otherwise specified for specific data types, observer data are to be collected in accordance with the same coding specifications as specified in this Annex.

Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) is to be used to describe times.

Degrees and minutes are to be used to describe locations.

The following coding schemes are to be used:
Species are to be described using the FAO 3 letter species codes or, if species do not have a FAO code, using scientific names.
Fishing methods are to be described using the International Standard Classification of Fishing Gear (ISSCFG - 29 July 1980) codes.
Types of fishing vessel are to be described using the International Standard Classification of Fishery Vessels (ISSCFV) codes.

Metric units of measure are to be used, specifically:
Kilograms are to be used to describe catch weight.
Metres are to be used to describe height, width, depth, beam or length.
Cubic metres are to be used to describe volume.
Kilowatts are to be used to describe engine power.

# Annex 6

## Translation table of VME indicator corals between common and scientific names

**VME Indicator Corals from Emperor Seamounts: Present Classification *1, Taxa, and Common (nominal) Names in NPFC**

| Sub phylum | Class | Order | Superfamily | Family | Genus/Subgenus | NPFC_~2023 | NPFC_2024~ *2 | Guide Cat. *3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anthozoa | Hexacorallia | Antipatharia | | Antipathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Aphanipathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Cladopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Leiopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | | | Schizopathidae | —— | Black Corals (Antipatharia) | | Black Corals |
| | | Scleractinia | | Caryophylliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Deltocyathidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Dendrophylliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Flabellidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Fungiacyathidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Micrabaciidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Oculinidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Turbinoliidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | | | | Madreporidae | —— | Stony Corals (Scleractinia) | | Hard Corals |
| | Octocorallia *4 | Scleralcyonacea ≒Calcaxonia-Pennatulacea | Pennatuloidea *5 | Anthoptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Balticinidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Funiculinidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Kophobelemnidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Pennatulidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Protoptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Scleroptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Stachyptilidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Umbellulidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Veretillidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Virgulariidae | —— | NA | Pennatulaceans *5 | NA |
| | | | | Chrysogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Keratoisididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Primnoidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | **Briareidae** | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Clavulariidae>> **Briareidae** | *Pachyclavularia*>>***Briareum*** | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Alcyoniidae>> **Coralliidae** *6 | *Anthomastus* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | | *Paraminabea* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Paragorgiidae>> **Coralliidae** *6 | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | **Coralliidae** *6 | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | Malacalcyonacea ≒Holaxonia-Alcyoniina | | Clavulariidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | —— | *Pseudocladochonus* *7 | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Tubiporidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Nidaliidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Siphonogorgiidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Anthothelidae>> **Alcyoniidae** *8 | *Anthothela* | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Nephtheidae>> **Alcyoniidae** *8 | *Gersemia* | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | **Alcyoniidae** *8 | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Nephtheidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Paralcyoniidae | —— | Alcyonacea | Soft Corals | Soft Corals |
| | | | | Gorgoniidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Isididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Keroeididae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Astrogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Euplexauridae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Anthogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Acanthogorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | Gorgonians |
| | | | | Victorgorgiidae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |
| | | | | Plexauridae | —— | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |
| | | | | —— | *Calcigorgia* *9 | Gorgonacea | Gorgonians | NA |

***1** Classification is based on WoRMS (in July 2024)

***2** Nominal names of VME indicator corals agreed by NPFC for adoption after 2025 (NPFC-2024-COM08-Final Report-ANNEX O-G)

***3** Coral Morphology Categories of "NPFC VME Taxa Identification Guide (Western North Pacific Ocean)"

***4** See WoRMS based on McFadden *et al*. (2022) for the present octocorallian classificaton, and McFadden *in* Daly *et al*. (2007) for the former one
The current families of octocorals and their correspondence to former suborders/systems are well summarized *in* Table 2 of McFadden *et al*. (2022)

***5** 2024_9th_COM has agreed to add pennatulaceans (sea pens) to the VME indicator taxa (entered into force 1 January 2025)

***6** The family Coralliidae is originally gorgonians (Gorgonacea), but the current classification includes some soft corals (formerly Alcyonacea)
(e.g. Anthomastus)

***7** *Pseudocladochonus* is the genus Octocorallia *incertae sedis* in McFadden *et al*. (2022) and in also WoRMS. (See Table 3 *in* McFadden *et al*., 2022)

***8** The family Alcyoniidae is originally soft corals (former Alcyonacea), but the current classification includes some gorgonians (Gorgonacea)
(e.g. Anthothela)

***9** *Calcigorgia* is a gorgonian genus in Octocorallia *incertae sedis* in McFadden *et al*. (2022) and in also WoRMS. (See Table 3 *in* McFadden *et al*., 2022)

>> pink= former Gorgonacea (Gorgonians); yellow= former Alcyonecea (Soft Corals)

**WoRMS** World Register of Marine Species) https://www.marinespecies.org/index.php

**Daly *et al*. (2007)** The phylum Cnidaria: A review of phylogenetic patterns and diversity 300 years after Linnaeus. *Zootaxa*, 1668: 127–182.

**McFadden *et al*. (2022)** Revisionary systematics of Octocorallia (Cnidaria: Anthozoa) guided by phylogenomics. *Bull. Soc. Syst. Biol.*, 1: 1–79.

**CMM 2025-11**

***(Entered into force XX July 2025)***

# CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR JAPANESE SARDINE, NEON FLYING SQUID AND JAPANESE FLYING SQUID

*The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),*

*Recalling* that six pelagic species – Pacific saury, chub mackerel, blue mackerel, Japanese sardine, neon flying squid, and Japanese flying squid – are identified as priority species;

*Also recalling* that the NPFC has adopted the CMMs on two species – Pacific saury and chub mackerel;

*Noting* that specific measures for the remaining four species have yet to be introduced while those species have been subject to extensive fishing practices, whether they are target or bycatch species;

*Reaffirming* the General Principles provided in Article 3 of the Convention, in particular, Paragraph (h) stipulating that any expansion of fishing effort does not proceed without prior assessment of the impacts of those fishing activities on the long-term sustainability of fisheries resources;

*Adopts* the following conservation and management measure in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention:

1. Members of the Commission and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CNCPs) with substantial harvest of any of Japanese sardine, neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid (hereinafter referred to as “the three Pelagic Species”) in the Convention Area shall refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for such species from the historical existing level until the stock assessment for such species by the SC has been completed.

2. Members of the Commission and CNCPs without substantial harvest of the three Pelagic Species in the Convention Area are encouraged to refrain from expansion, in the Convention

Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for such species from the historical existing level until the stock assessment for such species by the SC has been completed.

3. Members of the Commission participating in fishing for the three Pelagic Species in areas under their jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area are requested to take compatible measures in paragraph 1. Such Members [1] may divert part of their catch limit for areas under their jurisdiction to their own catch of the species in the Convention Area by vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for the species, provided that: (i) the Member has established a catch limit for the species in its jurisdiction; (ii) the Member has notified the Commission of the catch limit; and (iii) the total catch of the species in the Convention Area and the areas under their jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area will not exceed the Member's total catch limit for its jurisdiction respectively.

4. Development of new fishing activity for the three Pelagic Species in the Convention Area by Members of the Commission without documented historical catch for such species in the Convention Area shall be determined in accordance with relevant provisions, as appropriate, including but not limited to Article 3, paragraph (h) and Article 7, subparagraphs 1(g) and (h) of the Convention.

5. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag operating in the Convention Area authorized to fish the three Pelagic Species are to be equipped with an operational vessel monitoring system that is activated at all times.

6. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag that fish for the three Pelagic Species in the Convention Area record their catches, including incidental catches of other NPFC species, and any discards and report them to the relevant flag state authorities in accordance with their national data recording and reporting requirements.

7. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall provide their data on the three Pelagic Species in accordance with the data requirements adopted by the Commission in the Annual Report by

[1] Paragraph 3 applies to Russia and Japan

the end of February, every year. The Commission shall review such information at the annual meeting of every year.

8. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall cooperate to take necessary measures including sharing information, in order to accurately understand the situation and eliminate IUU fishing for the three Pelagic Species.

9. After a stock assessment for any of the three Pelagic Species has been completed, the provisions in Paragraph 1 shall be reviewed by the Commission and those provisions shall not be a precedent to hinder those Members who are not harvesting substantial amounts of the three Pelagic Species assessed in the Convention Area to develop their own fisheries in the Convention Area noting the Commission shall regularly review the harvests of such species in the Convention Area by all Members.

10. This management measure shall expire and be replaced by the measure to be adopted by the Commission based on the advice and recommendations from the Scientific Committee.

**CMM 2025-07**

***(Entered into forced 1 June 2025)***

# CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR CHUB MACKEREL

*The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),*

*Recognizing* that outcomes of the small ad hoc workshop for the scientific analysis of chub mackerel stock were presented to the Scientific Committee (SC) in April 2017 and the SC recommended to establish the Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment (TWG CMSA);

*Noting* that CMM 2016-07 states the SC will complete the stock assessment of chub mackerel as soon as practicable, even if such assessment is provisional, and provide advice and recommendations to the Commission in accordance with Article 10, paragraph 4(b) of the Convention;

*Reaffirming* the General Principles provided in Article 3 of the Convention, in particular, paragraph (h) stipulating that any expansion of fishing effort does not proceed without prior assessment of the impacts of those fishing activities on the long-term sustainability of fisheries resources;

*Noting* paragraph 1(a) of Article 7 of 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 of 4 December 1995 (hereinafter, “1995 Agreement”), stipulating that the relevant coastal States and the States whose nationals fish for straddling fish stocks in the adjacent high seas area shall seek to agree upon the measures necessary for the conservation of these stocks in the adjacent high seas area;

*Recognizing* paragraph 2(a) of Article 7 of the 1995 Agreement stipulating that the conservation and management measures adopted and applied in accordance with article 61 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in respect of the same stocks by coastal States within areas under national jurisdiction and ensure that measures established in respect of such stocks for the high seas do not undermine the effectiveness of such measures;

*Reaffirming* paragraph (i) of Article 3 of the Convention, stipulating in accordance with Article 7 of the 1995 Agreement, that conservation and management measures established for straddling fish stocks on the high seas and those adopted for areas under national jurisdiction are compatible in order to ensure conservation and management of these fisheries resources in their entirety;

*Recalling* that concern was expressed on an adverse impact on the stock of chub mackerel given the rapid increase in vessels that appear to be fishing for chub mackerel in the Convention Area, as articulated in paragraphs 9 and 10 of Report of the 1st Meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee;

*Noting* that the NPFC Catch/Effort statistics shows a significant fall in chub mackerel catch in 2022, 2023 and 2024 from those in previous years;

*Recognizing that the 9$^{th}$ meeting of the Scientific Committee in December 2024 recommended the current fishing mortality (average 2020-2022) leads to further constant decline of SSB and it is necessary to reduce the current fishing mortality, based on the stock assessment of chub mackerel conducted by the Technical Working Group on Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment and the advice of the Scientific Committee of NPFC.*

*Adopts* the following conservation and management measure in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention:

1. Members of the Commission and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CNCPs) with substantial harvest of chub mackerel in the Convention Area shall refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for chub mackerel from the historical existing level.

2. Members of the Commission and CNCPs without substantial harvest of chub mackerel in the Convention Area are encouraged to refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for chub mackerel from the historical existing level.

3. As a provisional measure, Members shall take necessary measures to ensure that the fishing activities for chub mackerel in the Convention Area shall be undertaken in accordance with the fishing season defined in paragraph 17 and the following provisions:

   (a) The annual total allowable catch of chub mackerel in the Convention Area, excluding the amount in paragraph 11, shall be set at 66,740 tonnes for the 2025 fishing season.

   (b) Of this annual total allowable catch, the catch for trawlers shall not exceed 7,940 tonnes for the 2025 fishing season.

   (c) Of this annual total allowable catch, the catch for purse seiners shall not exceed 58,800 tonnes for the 2025 fishing season.

   (d) China shall not authorize more than 3 trawlers to conduct fishing operations at the same time.

   (e) The EU shall not authorize more than 1 trawler to conduct fishing operations at the same time.

4. Members of the Commission participating in chub mackerel fisheries in areas under national jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area are requested to take compatible measures in paragraph 1 and 3. Such Members[1] may divert part of their catch limit for areas under their jurisdiction to their own catch of chub mackerel in the Convention Area by vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for chub mackerel, provided that: (i) the Member has established a catch limit for chub mackerel in its jurisdiction; (ii) the Member has notified the Commission of the catch limit; and (iii) the total catch of the Member in the Convention Area and the areas under their jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area will not exceed the Member's total catch limit for its jurisdiction.

5. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall prohibit fishing vessels over 10,000 Gross Tonnage that are flying their flag and authorized to fish for chub mackerel, from fishing in the

[1] Paragraph 4 applies to Russia and Japan.

Convention Area.

6. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag that fish for chub mackerel in the Convention Area record their catches, including incidental catches of other NPFC species, and any discards and report them to the relevant flag state authorities in accordance with their national data recording and reporting requirements.

7. To comply with the provisional measure stipulated in paragraph 3, Members of the Commission shall report to the Executive Secretary, in electronic format, monthly catches of chub mackerel in the Convention Area by fishing vessels flying their flags, as follows:
   a) For trawlers: By the 10th of the next month, until the total accumulated catch by Members in a fishing season reaches 60% of the catch limit set out in paragraph 3 (b). After the total accumulated catch by Members in a fishing season reaches 60% of the annual catch limit set out in paragraph 3 (b), Members of the Commission shall report to the Executive Secretary, in electronic format, weekly catches of chub mackerel in the Convention Area by trawlers flying their flags, by Wednesday of the next week.
   b) For purse seiners: By the 10th of the next month, until the total accumulated catch by Members in a fishing season reaches 60% of the catch limit set out in paragraph 3 (c). After the total accumulated catch by Members in a fishing season reaches 60% of the annual catch limit set out in paragraph 3 (c), Members of the Commission shall report to the Executive Secretary, in electronic format, weekly catches of chub mackerel in the Convention Area by purse seiners flying their flags, by Wednesday of the next week.

8. The Executive Secretary shall make publicly available the compiled catch of chub mackerel in the Convention Area on the Commission's website, as well as each Member's catch of chub mackerel in the Convention Area, on the Member's page of Commission website without delay.

9. In the event that the total accumulated catch by Members in a fishing season reaches 95% of the annual catch limit set out in paragraph 3 (b) or (c), the Executive Secretary shall notify Members of that fact without delay, and each Member participating in the chub mackerel fishery shall close the fishery for its flagged vessels within 2 days from the above notification by the Secretariat until the end of the fishing season.

10. Development of new fishing activity for the chub mackerel fishery in the Convention Area by Members of the Commission without documented historical catch for chub mackerel in the Convention Area shall be determined in accordance with relevant provisions, including but not limited to, as appropriate, Article 3, paragraph (h) and Article 7, subparagraphs 1(g) and (h) of the Convention.

11. In accordance with paragraph 10, and in addition to the fishing opportunities under paragraph 3 (b), once the annual total allowable catch under 3 (b) has been exhausted the EU shall be entitled to fish an additional 4,260 tonnes of chub mackerel for 2025 fishing season, without prejudice to future discussions on chub mackerel allocation in the Convention Area. In case the EU does not harvest any chub mackerel in the Convention Area in the 2024 fishing season, 1,740 tons shall be carried over to the catch limit in this paragraph.

12. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag operating in the Convention Area to fish chub mackerel are to be equipped with an operational vessel monitoring system that is activated at all times.

13. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall provide their data on chub mackerel separated by the Convention Area and the areas under national jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area in accordance with the data requirements adopted by the Commission in the Annual Report every year. The Commission shall review such information at the annual meeting every year.

14. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall cooperate to take necessary measures including sharing information, in order to accurately understand the situation and eliminate IUU fishing for chub mackerel.

15. After the chub mackerel stock assessment has been completed, the provisions in Paragraph 1, 3 and 11 shall be reviewed by the Commission and those provisions shall not be a precedent to hinder those Members who are not harvesting substantial amounts of chub mackerel in the Convention Area to develop their own chub mackerel fisheries in the Convention Area, noting the Commission shall regularly review chub mackerel harvests in the Convention Area by all Members.

16. This management measure enters into force on 1 June 2025 (aligned with the start of the fishing season for chub mackerel). The Commission shall review and revise, as appropriate, this CMM based on the advice and recommendations from the SC, but no later than at the 10th Commission meeting.

17. For the purpose of this measure the ‘fishing season’ starts on 1 June and ends on 31 May.

18. This CMM is an amendment of the NPFC CMM 2024-07.

**Chub mackerel CMM: tasking for TWG CMSA and SC**

The TWG CMSA09 recognized that the chub mackerel stock has been in a low-productivity phase since 2016, with full maturation occurring at age 4. However, dominant age classes in the catch are ages 1-3, and strong recruitment years (2013 and 2018) also included age-0 fish. Because these immature fish have limited opportunities to spawn before being caught, F40%SPR alone is insufficient to prevent recruitment overfishing. Additional management measures might be needed alongside TAC reductions to effectively address recruitment overfishing, such as minimum size retention, mesh size limitations or seasonal closures to protect juveniles.

Furthermore, despite a drastic decline in catches in the purse seine fleet from 309,968 t in 2021 to 95,907 t in 2023, the purse seine fleet's average effort by vessel (fishing days) and number of vessels fishing for chub mackerel have remained relatively stable in the annual summary footprint. This is pointing at issues such as change in target species or effort creep that would need to be further investigated by the TWG CMSA.

Based on the above,

The Commission tasks the TWG CMSA to undertake the following:

- Provision and analysis of gear specific data to explore whether there is a need to protect the immature portion of the stock and advice on options for achieving that, as appropriate. This includes also accessory devices used for fishing purposes, such as FADs, light devices, etc.
- Clarification of the correspondence of fishing days and the level of catch in relevant fleets, such as the purse seine fleet.
- Based on the next stock assessment, provide projections and associated probabilities, based on constant catch scenarios (e.g. increments of 5.000 mt) or constant F scenarios, aiming at reaching an appropriate MSY proxy (SSB and F) within 5 to 10 years with a probability higher than 50%.

**CMM 2025-03**
***(Entered into force XX July 2025)***

# CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE ON TRANSSHIPMENTS

*The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),*

*Deeply concerned* about the negative impacts of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and its detrimental effect upon fish stocks, marine ecosystems, and the livelihoods of legitimate fishers, and the increasing need for food security on a global basis;

*Aware of* the need to conduct transshipments of fisheries resources and products of fisheries resources taken in the Convention Area;

*Recognizing* that while transshipment is an important global commercial fishing practice, if not adequately managed, it may increase IUU fishing of NPFC fisheries resources in the North Pacific Ocean;

*Acknowledging* that effective conservation and management of NPFC fisheries resources is dependent on accurate, timely, and shared reporting of catches;

*Recognizing* that effective monitoring, control, and surveillance activities in the high seas require access to information about transshipments and other transfer activities before they occur;

*Noting* Article 7(2)(a) of the Convention which states that the Commission shall establish procedures for the regulation and monitoring of transshipment of fisheries resources and products of fisheries resources taken in the Convention Area, including notification to the Commission of the location and quantity of any transshipment; and

*Desiring* to establish the necessary rules and procedures to monitor, report, and verify transshipments to support monitoring, control, and surveillance activities, enhance science and compliance efforts, and fulfill the objective of the Convention;

*Adopts the following:*

**Definitions**

1. This measure shall be interpreted, unless a contrary intention appears, in accordance with the Convention.[1]

2. The following definitions apply:

   a) "landing" means all transfers of any quantity of fish onboard from a vessel, other than a transshipment, including transfers of fish to a port facility, transfers of fish from one vessel to another through a port facility, or other means of transportation, and transfers of fish from a vessel to a container, truck, train, or another means of transportation;

   b) "other transfer activity" means a transfer of fuel, gear, materials, or other supplies, or a transfer of at least one person, from one fishing vessel to another fishing vessel in the Convention Area;

   c) "port" means any harbour, marine terminal, shore-side facility, or other shore-side place used for landing, loading and unloading, transshipping, packaging, or processing of fisheries resources and products thereof or the refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels in waters of national jurisdiction;

   d) "product of fisheries resources" means any article that is produced from or composed of, in whole or in part, any fisheries resource; and

   e) "trip" means a voyage commencing at the time a fishing vessel leaves a port to engage in a fishing activity and terminates at the time the fishing vessel enters a port.

**Scope**

3. This measure applies to:

   a) any transshipment, either at sea or in port, of any NPFC fisheries resources, or product thereof, taken in the Convention Area, except those that have been previously landed;

   b) any transshipment that occurs in the Convention Area involving a fishing vessel[2] included in the NPFC Vessel Registry; or,

   c) any other transfer activity in the Convention Area involving a fishing vessel intending to engage in, or having engaged in, a fishing activity in the Convention Area.

[1] For this measure, an auxiliary tender boat is regarded as part of its parent receiving vessel under the following circumstances: it is used to transport unprocessed fish from the offloading vessel to the parent receiving vessel; it is loaded onboard the parent receiving vessel on navigation; it operates in the line of sight of the parent receiving vessel; and it is dependent on the parent receiving vessel for transportation to the Convention Area.
[2] For further clarity, obligations to "a fishing vessel" apply to both the offloading vessel and the receiving vessel.

**Fishing Vessels Authorized to Engage in Transshipments**

*Rules for Engaging in Transshipments*

4. A fishing vessel shall only engage in a transshipment, or other transfer activity in the Convention Area, if both the offloading and receiving vessel are duly authorized by its Flag State and included in the NPFC Vessel Registry.

5. A fishing vessel is prohibited from operating as both an offloading vessel and a receiving vessel in the same trip.

*Authorization from Relevant Coastal or Port State*

6. If a fishing vessel intends to engage in a transshipment in an area under national jurisdiction, including a port, the fishing vessel shall receive an authorization from the relevant coastal or port State before engaging in the transshipment.

**General Reporting Requirements**

*Reporting*

7. All reporting to the Secretariat related to a transshipment, or other transfer activity, shall be provided electronically (e.g. email, facsimile, etc.). This includes advance notifications, transshipment declarations, and observer transshipment reports. As of April 1, 2026, Members and CNCPs shall take necessary measures to ensure, all advance notifications, including modifications and cancellations, and all transshipment declarations be submitted via the NPFC's online Transshipment Reporting system. When the online application is unavailable, advance notifications, including modifications, cancellations, and declarations may be submitted via email.

8. All reporting shall comply with the procedures to be adopted by the Commission.

*Reporting of Bycatch and Unregulated Species*

9. All reporting related to a transshipment shall include all marine species taken in the Convention Area, including bycatch and unregulated species, recorded by species using the FAO code.

*Record of Transshipment*

10. A fishing vessel shall maintain an electronic or physical record on board the fishing vessel of each transshipment it has engaged in during the current trip. The record shall include each transshipment declaration and daily activity records, such as those in a navigation logbook.

11. A Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall maintain an electronic or physical record of each transshipment engaged in by each of its fishing vessels for the current year. The record shall include each transshipment declaration.

**Advance Notifications**

*Advance Notifications for Transshipments*

12. A fishing vessel, or a Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party on behalf of the vessel, shall provide an advance notification to the authorities listed in paragraph 13 as soon as possible, and at least 24 hours in advance of the intended transshipment. The advance notification form is included in Annex I.

13. A fishing vessel, or Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall provide the advance notification to:

    a) the Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, of its flag, if the advance notification is provided by the fishing vessel; and

    b) the Secretariat.

*Advance Notification of Other Transfer Activities*

14. A receiving vessel, or a Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party on behalf of the receiving vessel, shall provide an advance notification to the authorities listed in paragraph 13 as soon as possible, and at least 24 hours in advance of the intended other transfer activity. The advance notification form is included in Annex I.

*Modifications to the Advance Notification*

15. If the transshipment does not start after 72 hours of the estimated start time, or within 50 nautical miles of the estimated start location, as contained in the advance notification, the fishing vessels involved in the transshipment, or Commission Members or Cooperating non-Contracting Parties on their behalf, shall modify the submitted advance notification.

16. If the other transfer activity does not start after 72 hours of the estimated start time, or within 50 nautical miles of the estimated start location, as contained in the advance notification, the receiving vessel, or Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party of the receiving vessel, shall modify the submitted advance notification.

*Provision of Authorization from Relevant Flag and Coastal or Port State*

17. If a fishing vessel intends to engage in a transshipment in an area under national jurisdiction, including in a port, it shall not start the operation unless an authorization from the relevant flag and coastal or port State has been provided following the receipt of the transshipment advance notification.

*Cancellation of Transshipment*

18. If a transshipment is cancelled before it is undertaken, a fishing vessel intending to engage in the transshipment, or the Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party whose fishing vessel intended to engage in the transshipment, shall notify the Secretariat of the cancellation as soon as possible.

**Other At-Sea Requirements**

*Commission Member and Cooperating non-Contracting Party Responsibility*

19. After receiving an advance notification for a transshipment, a Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall verify that their fishing vessel complies with the Convention and all conservation and management measures.

20. If a Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, receives suitably documented information that its flagged fishing vessel is, or appears to be, non-compliant with the Convention, or a conservation and management measure, the Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall conduct an investigation.

21. The investigating Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall provide a report on the progress of the investigation, including an attestation of the fishing vessel's status under paragraph 19, no later than 60 days after receiving the information, to:

    a) the Secretariat; and

    b) the Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party that provided the information.

    Following the investigation process, information shall be provided about any appropriate enforcement action taken in line with its national laws.

22. If a fishing vessel receives catch from more than one offloading vessel, the fishing vessel shall ensure that the catch from each offloading vessel is stored separately and readily identifiable. The receiving vessel shall have a stowage plan available on board at all times.

*Mobile Transmitting Unit Failure*

23. In the event of mobile transmitting unit failure, the transshipment shall be suspended, and only resume once the fishing vessel complies with the relevant procedures in CMM *on the Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS)*.

**Transshipment Declaration**

24. A fishing vessel having engaged in, or a Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party whose fishing vessel has engaged in, a transshipment shall provide a transshipment declaration to the authorities listed in paragraph 25 as soon as possible, and no later than 10 days after the transshipment. The transshipment declaration form is included in Annex II.

25. A fishing vessel, or a Commission Member or a Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall provide the transshipment declaration to:

    a) the Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, of its flag; and

    b) the Secretariat.

**Independent Monitoring and Reporting**

*Responsibility for Observers*

26. The Commission shall establish a regional observer and/or electronic monitoring program no later than its 9th Commission meeting. Until the Transshipment Observer Program enters into force, a Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, is responsible for the deployment of independent, impartial, and qualified observers to fulfill the requirements of this measure. Once this program enters into force, paragraphs 27, 28, 32-34 of this measure shall be superseded by the provisions of the new program.

27. An observer is deemed to be independent, impartial, and qualified if the observer:

    a) is deployed from a Commission Member's, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party's, national observer program, and familiar with NPFC fisheries resources, fishing activities, and CMMs;

    b) is neither part of the crew, nor has any employment or family relationship to the ownership or operator of the fishing vessel; and

    c) does not have any shared business interests with the owner or operator of the fishing vessel.

28. An observer shall be provisioned, accommodated, including access to independent communications, and provided safe working conditions by the receiving vessel in accordance with the Commission Member's, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party's, domestic laws and regulations.

*Deployment of Observers*

29. A Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall take necessary measures to ensure that its receiving vessels engaging in a transshipment have an observer on board.

30. A Commission Member or CNCP shall take necessary measures to ensure that a fishing vessel does not engage in a transshipment unless an observer is able and available to monitor and report on the transshipment.

31. A Commission Member or CNCP shall take necessary measures to ensure that a fishing vessel may only engage in one transshipment at a time for each observer that is available to monitor and report on the transshipment. If there are two vessels seeking to transship concurrently, but only one observer is present, one vessel must stand off and wait until the first vessel has finished. Only one offloading vessel may be secured to the receiving vessel unless a second observer is performing observer duties for a second transshipment.

*Access to Fishing Vessels*

32. An observer shall have:

    a) full, unobstructed, and safe access to each fishing vessel involved in the transshipment, including, *inter alia*, access to crew, gear, equipment, records, electronic means of communication, and fish holds; and

    b) adequate and appropriate space to undertake their responsibilities pursuant to this measure.

*Monitoring and Reporting by Observers*

33. An observer shall monitor and report on, to the greatest extent possible, that the transshipment is conducted in a manner consistent with the advance notification and other information available to the observer, and in particular, verify the consistency of transshipped quantities of fisheries resources, or products of fisheries resources.

34. An observer shall record an observer report immediately after each transshipment and keep the report onboard, and provide an observer transshipment report, as specified in Annex III, as soon as possible, but no later than 10 days from the disembarkation of the observer, to:

    a) the Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, of the flags of the receiving vessel and the offloading vessel; and

    b) the Secretariat.

*Procedure in case of potential Non-Compliance*

35. If an observer observes an activity or condition that is not consistent with conservation and management measures, the observer shall report the finding, and provide documented evidence, to the extent possible, without delay or upon disembarkation to the Secretariat. Once the Transshipment Observer Program enters into force, the observer will notify and transmit the report to the Observer service provider as well as the Secretariat. The Secretariat will then transmit the report to the authorities of the Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party of the flags of the receiving and offloading vessels.

36. Upon receipt of an observer report with documented evidence in particular Annex III indicating potential non-compliance, or instances of obstruction, intimidation, interference with, or otherwise prevention of the observer from performing their duties, concerning a vessel entitled to fly its flag, the Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party shall:

    a) treat the report with utmost sensitivity and discretion, in accordance with NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol

    b) make best efforts to respond to this notification through the Secretariat without delay and;

    c) undertake investigation on any condition or activity that is not consistent with conservation and management measures as per Article 17 of the Convention. The Commission Member or CNCP shall report any findings and/or relevant actions taken, in their Annual Report, and in the CMS Implementation Questionnaire (if applicable).

**Data and Information Sharing**

*Establishment of a Transshipment Record*

37. The Commission hereby establishes a record of transshipments, and other transfer activities, hereinafter named the NPFC Transshipment Record, to make all data and information, including all reporting related to, transshipments, and other transfer activities, available to Commission Members and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, in accordance with the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol.

38. The data and information on the NPFC Transshipment Record may be used for either scientific or compliance purposes by:

    a) a Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party; or

    b) the Commission.

39. The Secretariat shall maintain the NPFC Transshipment Record in accordance with Annex IV.

*Public Availability of Data and Information*

40. The Secretariat shall make aggregated anonymized data and information related to transshipments publicly available on the NPFC website, in accordance with the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol.

*Sharing Data and Information with Authorized In-Port Inspectors and Port Authorities*

41. An authorized in-port inspector, or port State authority, may request from the Secretariat, and the Secretariat may provide, data or information related to a fishing vessel's transshipments for in-port inspection purposes, in accordance with the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol.

*Sharing Data and Information with Other RFMOs*

42. The NPFC may share data and information related to transshipments with another regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) if the NPFC has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with that RFMO and if the RFMO agrees to comply with the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol.

**Compliance Monitoring**

43. Compliance monitoring of all transshipments shall be undertaken in accordance with the CMM *for the Compliance Monitoring Scheme*.

44. The assessment of compliance shall encompass all transshipments within the scope of this measure.

**Force Majeure**

45. Nothing in this measure prevents a fishing vessel from engaging in a transshipment, or other transfer activity, with another fishing vessel in cases of *force majeure* that threaten the safety of the crew or result in a significant financial loss through fish or fish product spoilage.

46. In the case of *force majeure*, the fishing vessel, or Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall:

    a) notify the Secretariat prior to the completion of the transshipment, or other transfer activity, as well as the circumstances giving rise to the *force majeure*; and

    b) provide a transshipment declaration on the transshipment as soon as possible, but within 10 days of the transshipment.

47. The Secretariat shall inform the Commission of each incident of *force majeure* upon receiving notification from the fishing vessel, Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party.

**Annual Reporting and Review**

*Annual Reporting*

48. Each Commission Member, and Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall provide an annual summary of the data and information collected from all authorized fishing vessels having

undertaken a transshipment, including each year's transshipment declarations, to the Commission at the Technical and Compliance Committee meeting. The summary shall be included in the Annual Report, as per Article 16(3) of the Convention. The template for this summary is included in Annex V.

49. A Commission Member, or Cooperating non-Contracting Party, shall take all reasonable steps to verify the information received from fishing vessels having engaged in a transshipment.

50. Each year, the Secretariat shall produce and present a summary report on the implementation of this measure to the annual meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee for review. This report shall include summarized information collected from observers, offloading vessels and receiving vessels, and responses from Commission Members and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties on their observer transshipment reports.

51. Commission Members and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties shall investigate instances of potential non-compliance with this measure, and report the results of those investigations to the Commission.

*Review of Measure*

52. This measure will be reviewed regularly at the Annual Session of the Commission. This review will take into account, *inter alia*:

    a) the latest advice from the Technical and Compliance Committee regarding the effectiveness of this measure in:

        i) providing the Commission with information about transshipments; and

        ii) supporting effective monitoring, control, and surveillance activities in line with the obligations of the Convention and conservation and management measures;

    b) required levels of observer coverage and the potential use of electronic monitoring; and,

    c) the scope and provisions of this measure.

**ANNEX I**

## ADVANCE NOTIFICATION

INSTRUCTIONS

In completing the advance notification, the fishing vessel shall ensure that:

1. the information is as **accurate** as possible, and legible; and

2. the information is provided in **clear, legible print** in accordance with the clarifications below (either by hand or electronically).

CLARIFICATIONS

To assist in the accurate and clear completion of the advance notification:

- use the DD-MM-YYYY format to specify the date (e.g. 01-11-2022);

- use the HH:MM format, and the 24-hour clock (UTC, or specify time zone) to specify the time (e.g. 23:15);

- "NW" is an abbreviation for "national waters";

- "OTA" is an abbreviation for "other transfer activities";

- use the Degrees (°) Minutes (′) format to specify the latitude and longitude (e.g. 40° 26′ N, 79° 58′ W);

- for "FAO CODE", utilize the FAO 3-alpha codes found at www.npfc.int/priority-species, or Fisheries and Aquaculture - All Information Collections - ASFIS List of Species for Fishery Statistics Purposes (fao.org);

    - All species including bycatch must be recorded by species, using their specific FAO code.
    - the Codes for major NPFC species are; SAP (Pacific saury), MAS (chub mackerel), MAA (blue mackerel), JAP (Japanese sardine), OFJ (neon flying squid) and SQJ (Japanese flying squid).

- for "GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION", state where the fisheries resource (or fisheries resource processed into a product) was taken; and

- for "STATE OF FISH", state whether the fisheries resource, or product of fisheries resource, is: (1) fresh (FRS), or (2) frozen (FRZ).

| ADVANCE NOTIFICATION FOR TRANSSHIPMENTS (1/2) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **PART I – VESSEL INFORMATION** | | | |
| | **INFORMATION** | **OFFLOADING VESSEL** | **RECEIVING VESSEL** |
| **1** | **Vessel Name** | | |
| **2** | **Flag State** | | |
| **3** | **IMO number** | | |
| **4** | **IRCS, if eligible, or registration number** | | |
| **5** | **Start of Trip** | | |
| | Port Name | | |
| | Date of Departure | | |
| **6** | **End of Trip** (if known) | | |
| | Port Name | | |
| | Date of Entry | | |
| **PART II – INFORMATION ON ANTICIPATED TRANSSHIPMENT** | | | |
| **7** | **Transshipment Location** | ☐ High Seas, In Convention Area<br>☐ High Seas, Outside Convention Area | ☐ In Port<br>☐ NW |
| | Port Name (if applicable) | | |
| | NW (if applicable) | | |
| | Latitude and Longitude (estimated) | Latitude: | Longitude: |
| **8** | **Transshipment Start Date** (estimated) | | |
| **9** | **Transshipment Start Time** (estimated) | | |
| **PART III – VERIFICATION** | | | |
| **10** | **Vessel Master / Vessel Owner or Company** | | |
| | Name | | |
| | Nationality | | |
| | Email address (as applicable) | | |
| | Telephone number (as applicable) | | |
| | Signature | | |
| **11** | **Observer (for the receiving vessel only, if applicable)** | | |
| | Name | | |
| | Nationality | | |
| | Signature | | |

## ADVANCE NOTIFICATION FOR TRANSSHIPMENTS (2/2)

**In completing this form, ensure the estimated information is as accurate as reasonably possible and include all bycatch, recorded by species code.**

**Weight (kg) or unit used (e.g. box, basket), and the estimated total weight in kg:**

| FAO Code | Geographic Location | State of Fish | Type of product (whole, G&G, etc.) | Unit | Kg per unit | Number of Units | TOTAL (kg) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| ADVANCE NOTIFICATION FOR OTHER TRANSFER ACTIVITIES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **PART I – VESSEL INFORMATION** | | | |
| | **INFORMATION** | **OFFLOADING VESSEL** | **RECEIVING VESSEL** |
| **1** | **Vessel Name** | | |
| **2** | **Flag State** | | |
| **3** | **IMO Number** | | |
| **4** | **IRCS, if eligible, or registration number** | | |
| **PART II – INFORMATION ON ANTICIPATED OTA** | | | |
| **5** | **OTA Location** | ☐ High Seas, In Convention Area | |
| | Latitude and Longitude (estimated) | Latitude: | Longitude: |
| **6** | **OTA Start Date** (estimated) | | |
| **7** | **OTA Start Time** (estimated) | | |
| **PART III – VERIFICATION** | | | |
| **8** | **Vessel Master** | | |
| | Name | | |
| | Nationality | | |
| | Signature | | |

**ANNEX II**

## TRANSSHIPMENT DECLARATION

INSTRUCTIONS

In completing the transshipment declaration, the fishing vessel shall ensure that:

1. the information is as **accurate** as possible, and legible; and

2. the information is provided in **clear, legible print** in accordance with the clarifications below (either by hand or electronically).

CLARIFICATIONS

To assist in the accurate completion of the transshipment declaration:

- use the DD-MM-YYYY format to specify the date (e.g. 01-11-2022);

- use the HH:MM format, and the 24-hour clock (UTC, or specify time zone) to specify the time (e.g. 23:15);

- "NW" is an abbreviation for "national waters";

- use the Degrees (°) Minutes (′) format to specify the latitude and longitude (e.g. 40° 26′ N, 79° 58′ W);

- for "FAO CODE", utilize the FAO 3-alpha codes found at www.npfc.int/priority-species, or Fisheries and Aquaculture - All Information Collections - ASFIS List of Species for Fishery Statistics Purposes (fao.org);

    - all species including bycatch must be recorded by species, using their specific FAO code.
    - the Codes for major NPFC species are; SAP (Pacific saury), MAS (chub mackerel), MAA (blue mackerel), JAP (Japanese sardine), OFJ (neon flying squid) and SQJ (Japanese flying squid).

- for "GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION", state where the fisheries resource (or fisheries resource processed into a product) was taken; and

- for "STATE OF FISH", state whether the fisheries resource, or product of fisheries resource, is: (1) fresh (FRS), or (2) frozen (FRZ).

| TRANSSHIPMENT DECLARATION (1/2) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **PART I – VESSEL INFORMATION** | | | |
| | **INFORMATION** | **OFFLOADING VESSEL** | **RECEIVING VESSEL** |
| **1** | **Vessel Name** | | |
| **2** | **Flag State** | | |
| **3** | **IMO number** | | |
| **4** | **IRCS, if eligible, or registration number** | | |
| **5** | **Vessel Owner or Company** (if different from Vessel Master) | | |
| | Name | | |
| | Nationality | | |
| | Phone Number | | |
| | Email | | |
| **6** | **Start of Trip** | | |
| | Port Name | | |
| | Date of Departure | | |
| **7** | **End of Trip** (if known) | | |
| | Port Name | | |
| | Date of Entry | | |
| **PART II – TRANSSHIPMENT INFORMATION** | | | |
| | **INFORMATION** | **COMMENCEMENT** | **COMPLETION** |
| **8** | **Transshipment Location** | ☐ High Seas, In Convention Area<br>☐ High Seas, Outside CA<br>☐ In NW<br>☐ In Port | ☐ High Seas, In Convention Area<br>☐ High Seas, Outside CA<br>☐ In NW<br>☐ In Port |
| | Port Name (if applicable) | | |
| | NW (if applicable) | | |
| | Latitude | | |
| | Longitude | | |
| **9** | **Transshipment Date** | | |
| **10** | **Transshipment Time** | | |
| **PART III - VERIFICATION** | | | |
| | **INFORMATION** | **OFFLOADING VESSEL** | **RECEIVING VESSEL** |
| **10** | **Vessel Master / Vessel Owner or Company** | | |
| | Name | | |
| | Nationality | | |
| | Signature | | |
| **11** | **Observer** | | |
| | Name | | |
| | Nationality | | |
| | Signature | | |

## TRANSSHIPMENT DECLARATION (2/2)

### PART I – FISHERIES RESOURCES OR PRODUCTS TRANSSHIPPED, INCLUDING BYCATCH, RECORDED BY SPECIES CODE

**Weight (kg) or unit used (e.g. box, basket) and the estimated total weight in kg:**

| FAO Code | Geographic Location | State of Fish | Type of product (whole, G&G, etc.) | Unit | Kg per unit | Number of Units | TOTAL (kg) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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### PART II – FISHERIES RESOURCES OR PRODUCTS STILL ON OFFLOADING VESSEL, INCLUDING BYCATCH, RECORDED BY SPECIES CODE (for offloading vessel)

| FAO Code | Geographic Location | State of Fish | Type of product (whole, G&G, etc.) | Unit | Kg per unit | Number of Units | TOTAL (kg) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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### PART III – FISHERIES RESOURCES OR PRODUCTS CURRENTLY ON RECEIVING VESSEL, INCLUDING BYCATCH, RECORDED BY SPECIES CODE (for receiving vessel)

| FAO Code | Geographic Location | State of Fish | Type of product (whole, G&G, etc.) | Unit | Kg per unit | Number of Units | TOTAL (kg) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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**ANNEX III**

## OBSERVER TRANSSHIPMENT REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS

In completing the observer transshipment report, the fishing vessel shall ensure that:

1. the information is as **accurate** as possible, and legible; and

2. the information is provided in **clear, legible print** in accordance with the clarifications below (either by hand or electronically).

The observer must provide (e.g. as an attachment) the completed transshipment declaration with the completed observer transshipment report. It is the responsibility of the observer to provide sufficient reasoning in order to effectively explain any non-compliance.

CLARIFICATIONS

To assist in the accurate completion of the observer transshipment report:

- use the DD-MM-YYYY format to specify the date (e.g. 01-11-2022);

- use the HH:MM format, and the 24-hour clock (UTC, or specify time zone) to specify the time (e.g. 23:15);

- "NW" is an abbreviation for "national waters";

- use the Degrees (°) Minutes (′) format to specify the latitude and longitude (e.g. 40° 26′ N, 79° 58′ W);

- for "FAO CODE", utilize the FAO 3-alpha codes found at www.npfc.int/priority-species, or Fisheries and Aquaculture - All Information Collections - ASFIS List of Species for Fishery Statistics Purposes (fao.org);

- for "GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION", state where the fisheries resource (or fisheries resource processed into a product) was taken;

- for "STATE OF FISH", state whether the fisheries resource, or product of fisheries resource, is: (1) fresh (FRS), or (2) frozen (FRZ); and

- "Interruptions" refers to any stoppage in observation of the transshipment by the observer.

| OBSERVER TRANSSHIPMENT REPORT (1/1) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Please ensure that the completed transshipment declaration is attached/provided. | | |
| **PART I – OBSERVED TRANSSHIPMENT INFORMATION** | | |
| **1** | **Observed** (Y/N) | |
| **2** | **Total Hours Observed** | |
| **3** | **Interruption(s) in Observation** (Y/N) | |
| **4** | **Number of Interruptions** | |
| **5** | **Total Time Interrupted** | |
| **PART II - COMMENTARY** | | |
| **In this section, the observer shall note any observed non-compliance with CMM *on Transshipments*, including the verification of the consistency of the transshipped quantities (by species) of fisheries resources, or products of fisheries resources.** | | |
| | | |
| **PART III - VERIFICATION** | | |
| **6** | **Observer** | |
| | Name | |
| | Nationality | |
| | Signature | |

**ANNEX IV**

## NPFC TRANSSHIPMENT RECORD

In order to facilitate the availability of reporting data and information on transshipments, the following shall be implemented:

*Objective*

**1.** The Secretariat shall ensure that all data and information related to transshipments and other transfer activities, including all reporting, is immediately available through the NPFC Transshipment Record to all Commission Members, and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, upon reception.

*General Specifications*

**2.** The NPFC Transshipment Record shall be maintained on, and be accessible through, the secure NPFC website.

**3.** The NPFC Transshipment Record shall record each transshipment, and other transfer activity, conducted pursuant to this measure.

**4.** Each transshipment, and other transfer activity, shall be recorded through a profile for the transshipment, or other transfer activity. The profile shall contain:

**a)** the advance notification for each fishing vessel involved;

**b)** the authorization from the relevant coastal or port State authority for each fishing vessel involved, if applicable;

**c)** the transshipment declaration for each fishing vessel involved; and

**d)** if a transshipment, the observer transshipment report.

*Specifications for the Record in the Event of Force Majeure*

**5.** If a transshipment, or other transfer activity, is conducted because of *force majeure*, a profile shall be generated and it shall contain:

**a)** the notification of the transshipment, or other transfer activity, and the circumstances giving rise to the *force majeure*; and

**b)** the transshipment declaration.

*Direct Entry Scheme*

**6.** The NPFC Transshipment Record shall have a secure direct entry submission webpage to receive:

**a)** advance notifications;

**b)** authorizations from relevant coastal or port States;

**c)** transshipment declarations; and

**d)** observer transshipment reports.

**7.** The NPFC Transshipment Record shall not accept for submission any advance notification, transshipment declaration, or observer transshipment report that does not satisfy the required data and information.

*Integration with the NPFC Vessel Registry*

**8.** Each profile in the NPFC Transshipment Record shall have a link to the NPFC Vessel Registry for each fishing vessel involved in the transshipment, or other transfer activity.

**9.** Each profile for a fishing vessel in the NPFC Vessel Registry shall have a link to the NPFC Transshipment Record profile of each transshipment, or other transfer activity, that the fishing vessel was involved in.

**ANNEX V**

**INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE ANNUAL SUMMARY OF TRANSSHIPMENT**

Each Commission Member and Cooperating non-Contracting Party shall include in Part 1 of its Annual Report to the Commission:

**1.** The total quantities, by weight, of fish stocks covered by this measure that were transshipped by fishing vessels the Commission Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party is responsible for reporting against, with those quantities broken down by:

**a)** offloaded and received;

**b)** transhipped inside the Convention Area, within an EEZ, in port and high seas outside the Convention Area;

**c)** caught inside the Convention Area and caught outside the Convention Area;

**d)** species; and,

**e)** product form.

**2.** The number of transshipments covered by this measure by fishing vessels that it is responsible for reporting against, broken down by:

**a)** offloaded and received;

**b)** transhipped inside the Convention Area, within an EEZ, in port and outside the Convention Area; and

**c)** caught inside the Convention Area and caught outside the Convention Area.

**CMM 2025-17**

***(Entered into force 1 April 2026)***

# CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE ON NPFC TRANSSHIPMENT OBSERVER PROGRAM

*The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),*

*Noting* Article 7(2)(a) of the Convention which states that the Commission shall establish procedures for the regulation and monitoring of transshipment of fisheries resources and products of fisheries resources taken in the Convention Area;

*Noting further* Article 7(2)(b) of the Convention which states that the Commission shall develop and implement a North Pacific Ocean Fisheries Observer Program taking into account relevant international standards and guidelines;

*Recognizing* that paragraph 26 of the Conservation and Management Measure on Transshipment states that the Commission shall establish a regional observer program no later than its 9$^{th}$ Commission meeting;

*Adopts the following*:

**Definitions**

For the purpose of this CMM, the following definitions apply:

a) "Observer service provider" means an external, non-governmental and independent entity that provides observer services to receiving vessels
b) "Observer" means an individual employed by an observer service provider for the purpose of working as an observer aboard fishing vessels
c) "Authorized observer" means an observer on the list of authorized observers maintained by the NPFC Secretariat.

**General**

1. The Commission hereby establishes the NPFC Transshipment Observer Program, under Article 7, subparagraph 2(b) of the Convention, which shall be coordinated and administered by the Secretariat of the Commission, in accordance with this measure.

2. The objectives of the NPFC Transshipment Observer Program shall be to collect verified transshipment data, collect additional information related to the fisheries in the Convention Area, and to monitor the implementation of the conservation and management measures (CMM) adopted by the Commission.

3. To complement the Secretariat's annual report on the implementation of the CMM on Transshipment, the Secretariat shall also report annually to the Commission with regard to the implementation of the NPFC Transshipment Observer Program and on other matters relevant to the efficient operation of the Program. The Secretariat shall, upon request of a Member or Cooperating non-Contracting Party (CNCP) and in a manner consistent with any applicable confidentiality requirements, provide the requesting Member or CNCP any specific data in relation to transshipment activities conducted.

4. The Secretariat may enter into a contract with an observer service provider that demonstrate their capacity to meet the requirements of this measure and to provide authorized observers to support the administration of the NPFC Transshipment Observer Program including, inter alia, the provision, training, equipment, deployment, and recovery of observers. Such contracts shall be valid for up to three years and contain provisions authorizing the Secretariat to end contract services should the observer service provider not perform the duties of the contract completely, in a timely manner or

otherwise according to the responsibilities detailed in the CMM, but not before a new contract is in place.

5. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider to appoint the authorized observers, place them on board the authorized receiving vessels planning to or engaging in transshipment of NPFC fisheries resources or products of fisheries resources in accordance with the CMM on Transshipments and ensure that authorized observers have a designated contact point for deployed observers to implement this CMM. The observer service provider should appoint and deploy authorized observers in a manner to ensure cost effectiveness and avoid duplications, for example by sourcing trained and qualified observers from existing regional and Member and CNCP observer programs.

6. Members and CNCPs shall accept the deployment of authorized observers to their receiving vessels as required by this CMM and ensure that their vessels which carry observers are outfitted with appropriate safety equipment for the entirety of each voyage and are compliant with relevant international standards.

**Authorization and training of observers**

7. The Secretariat shall maintain a list of authorized observers for the NPFC Transshipment Observer Program, who meet the requirements of paragraphs 8, 10, and 11.

8. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider to ensure that authorized observers have the training, knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform all of their duties and functions. To this end, an authorized observer will, at a minimum, have:
   a) sufficient experience in identifying, or satisfactorily completed training to identify NPFC species and fishing gear;
   b) satisfactory knowledge of NPFC conservation and management measures;
   c) the ability to observe and record information accurately; and
   d) sufficient training in technical matters and safety.

9. In addition to the requirements under paragraph 8, the terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall encourage the observer service provider to ensure that authorized observers have a satisfactory knowledge of the language of the flag of the vessel to which they are deployed.

10. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer

service provider to ensure that all authorized observers are independent and impartial. To this end, an authorized observer shall:

a) be neither part of the crew, nor have any employment or family or business relationship to the ownership or operator of a fishing vessel included in the NPFC Vessel Registry;
b) to the extent possible not be deployed on consecutive fishing trips on the same vessel;
c) not have a direct financial interest with vessels, processors, agents and retailers involved in the catching, taking, harvesting, transporting, processing or selling of fish or fish products, other than the provision of observer services, including but not limited to ownership, or business links; and,
d) not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gratuity, gift, favour, entertainment, inordinate accommodation, loan or anything of monetary value from anyone who either conducts activities that are regulated by a Member or CNCP connected with its services or the Commission, or has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the observer's official duties.

11. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider to ensure authorized observers receive proper safety training and equipment to perform their duties. To this end, an authorized observer shall:
    a) receive safety training that meets the International Maritime Organization (IMO) safety training standards, before they are deployed on a vessel for the first time and at appropriate intervals thereafter;
    b) be equipped with appropriate safety equipment that is in good working order, routinely checked and renewed to carry out their duties on board a vessel. Safety equipment includes but is not limited to each observer being equipped with a lifejacket or personal flotation device, personal locator beacons (PLBs), immersion suits, hard hat, proper deck working boots or shoes, gloves and protective glasses (including sunglasses), and other safety equipment appropriate to the specific fishing operations and activities, including ocean area and distance from shore; and
    c) be equipped with, and have control and sole use of an independent two-way satellite communications device capable of sending and receiving voice or text communications suitable for use when the vessel is at sea.

**Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS)**

12. The Commission shall endeavor to develop and adopt minimum standards for EMS to monitor transshipment at sea and a list of Secretariat responsibilities in relation to an EMS. Once EMS standards are adopted by the Commission, the Commission will determine how to incorporate EMS into the NPFC Transshipment Observer Program,

including whether to use EMS to complement and/or replace any of the duties of an observer outlined in this CMM.

**Observer Responsibilities**

13. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider to ensure that authorized observers perform their duties completely, in a timely manner, and otherwise according to the responsibilities detailed in this CMM. Observer service providers shall monitor the performance of authorized observers, and may recommend to the Secretariat the removal of an authorized observer from the authorized observer list.

14. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider to ensure that authorized observers monitor and collect information on each transshipment and, to the greatest extent possible, monitor whether each transshipment is conducted in a manner consistent with the CMM on Transshipment. In particular, an authorized observer shall verify the quantities of transshipped fisheries resources, the species of transshipped fisheries resources, including bycatch and unregulated species, and the form of product transshipped.

15. To fulfill paragraph 14, an authorized observer shall:
    a) collect information to monitor the receiving vessel's compliance with the CMMs, including:
        i. the date, time and the position of the vessel when engaged in transshipping;
        ii. their own estimation of the quantities of products by species, including bycatch and unregulated species, transshipped by vessel;
        iii. the name of the offloading vessel concerned, and its registration number; and
    b) acknowledge the transshipment declaration and compare the data collected as per 15(a) with the data reported by the vessel in the advance notification and transshipment declaration;
    c) compile the information in an observer transshipment report, as per Annex I, immediately after each transshipment;
    d) keep the observer transshipment report onboard and provide the report, as soon as possible, but no later than 10 days from the disembarkation, to the observer service provider responsible for the NPFC Transshipment Observer Program, for subsequent transmission to:
        i. the Commission Member, or CNCP, of the flags of the receiving vessel and the offloading vessel;
        ii. the Coastal Members, if applicable; and

iii. the Secretariat.

e) exercise any other functions as defined by the Commission.

16. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider to ensure that authorized observers shall treat as confidential all information with respect to the fishing operations of the receiving vessels and of their owners and accept this requirement in writing as a condition of employment as an authorized observer.

17. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider to ensure that authorized observers, while on board a receiving vessel, comply with the applicable laws and regulations of the Member or CNCP exercising jurisdiction over the receiving vessel to which the observer is deployed.

18. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider to ensure that authorized observers respect the hierarchy and general rules of behavior which apply to all receiving vessel personnel, provided such rules do not interfere with the duties of the observer under this measure.

19. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider to ensure that authorized observers not unduly interfere with the lawful operations of the vessels and in carrying out their duties shall give due consideration to the operational requirements of the vessels.

**Observer Rights**

20. To facilitate the performance of their duties specified in paragraph 15, and to ensure their safety, Members and CNCPs shall take necessary measures to ensure that the masters of the vessels to which authorized observers are deployed provide the authorized observer with:

a) full, unobstructed, and safe access to each fishing vessel involved in the transshipment, including, inter alia,

i. reasonable assistance from the crew;

ii. gear;

iii. equipment;

iv. records, including electronic records;

v. communication equipment;

vi. fish holds;

vii. satellite navigation equipment;

viii. radar display viewing screens when in use;
ix. VMS; and
x. scale used for weighing transshipped product.

b) accommodations on the receiving vessel, including lodging, food, potable water, medical facilities and adequate sanitary facilities, equal to those of officers;
c) adequate space on the bridge or pilot house of the receiving vessel for clerical work, as well as space on deck adequate for the performance of their duties;
d) the ability to determine the most advantageous location and method for viewing transshipment operations and estimating species and quantities transshipped. The master of the receiving vessel, giving due regard to safety and practical concerns, shall accommodate the needs of the authorized observer, including, upon request, temporarily placing product on the receiving vessel deck for inspection by the observer and providing adequate time for the observer to perform their duties. Observations shall be conducted in a manner that minimizes interference and avoids compromising the quality of the products transshipped;
e) freedom from physical, psychological, or sexual abuse or harm, assault, resistance, opposition, impedance, harassment, sexual harassment, intimidation, interference with, influence, bribery or attempted bribery;
f) freedom from undue obstruction in the discharge of their duties as specified under this measure;
g) freedom from performing duties normally performed by crew members;
h) access to verify safety equipment on board the receiving vessel (through a safety orientation tour provided by officers or crew) before the vessel leaves the dock;
i) access to communicate at any time the occurrence of safety issues to the vessel captain, service provider, the Secretariat, and flag Member or CNCP, as appropriate;
j) internet connectivity, when available;
k) observer data, records, documents, equipment and belongings not being accessed, harmed, or destroyed; and
l) notification at least 1 hour prior to a transshipment that is scheduled to commence to allow sufficient time for the observer to be prepared.

21. Members and CNCPs shall ensure that an authorized observer be allowed to visit the offloading vessel in a transshipment and have access to the offloading vessel in accordance with paragraph 22 in this CMM.

22. Members and CNCPs shall ensure that the master of the offloading vessel and master of the receiving vessel provide all necessary assistance to an authorized observer to ensure safe transport between the receiving and offloading vessel. Should conditions present an

unacceptable risk to the welfare of the observer such that a visit to the offloading fishing vessel is not feasible prior to the start of a transshipment operation, the transshipment may still be carried out.

23. Members and CNCPs shall ensure that observer rights and emergency procedures applicable to authorized observers on receiving vessels also apply to the authorized observers when they are fulfilling their obligations on offloading vessels during the transshipment, including while transferring on and off the offloading vessel.

24. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider ensure that authorized observers are informed that should they experience physical, psychological, or sexual abuse or harm, assault, obstruction, harassment, sexual harassment, intimidation, or otherwise unsafe working conditions, they are highly encouraged to document the incident and report it to the observer service provider. Upon receiving a report, the observer service provider shall immediately inform the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall then transmit the report to the flag Member or CNCP of the vessel involved. Per paragraph 37 of the CMM on Transshipment, the flag Member or CNCP shall conduct an investigation into the incident. The flag Member or CNCP shall report any findings and/or relevant actions taken to address the issue without delay to the observer service provider and the Secretariat, for transmission to all Members and relevant CNCPs. The observer service provider has discretion to not deploy an observer on a vessel because of concerns about risk to the observer's health, safety, or welfare if an investigation is ongoing.

25. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider to notify all authorized observers of any ongoing investigations, and the findings and/or relevant actions taken of any completed flag Member or CNCP investigation pursuant to paragraph 24.

26. The terms of any such contract entered into under paragraph 4 shall require the observer service provider to ensure that authorized observers may refuse a deployment to a receiving vessel for justified reasons, including when a safety issue has been identified on the receiving vessel. The observer service provider shall document and provide the reason for refusal to the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall forward the documentation to the relevant Member or CNCP for investigation.

**Procedure in the Event of an Emergency**

27. If an observer is missing or is presumed to have fallen overboard, the Member or CNCP

whose flag the receiving vessel is flying shall ensure that the vessel:

a) immediately ceases fishing operations and commences search and rescue and searches for at least 72 hours, unless the observer is found sooner, or unless instructed by the Member whose flag the vessel is flying to continue searching longer;
b) immediately notifies the flag Member or CNCP and observer service provider;
c) immediately alerts other vessels in the vicinity by using all available means of communication;
d) cooperates fully in any search and rescue operation;
e) whether or not the search is successful, returns to the nearest port, as requested by the Member or CNCP whose flag the vessel is flying, for further investigation;
f) provides a report to the Secretariat, observer provider and appropriate authorities on the incident; and
g) cooperates fully in any and all official investigations, and preserves any potential evidence and the personal effects and quarters of the missing observers before the new observer is on board.

28. In the event that an observer suffers from a serious illness or injury that threatens his or her health or safety, the Member or CNCP whose flag the receiving vessel is flying shall take necessary measures to require that the receiving vessel:

a) immediately ceases fishing operations, as long as practicable, and takes all reasonable actions to care for the observer and provide any medical treatment available and possible on board the vessel;
b) immediately notifies the flag Member or CNCP and observer provider of the situation, including to advise if a medical evacuation is warranted, and where appropriate seeks external medical advice;
c) facilitates the disembarkation and transport of the observer to a medical facility equipped to provide the required care, as soon as practicable; and
d) cooperates fully in any and all official investigations into the cause of the illness or injury.

29. In the event that an observer dies, the Member or CNCP whose flag the receiving vessel is flying shall ensure that the receiving vessel:

a) immediately ceases fishing operations;
b) immediately notifies the flag Member or CNCP and the observer service provider;
c) immediately returns to the nearest port, as requested by the Member or CNCP whose flag the vessel is flying, for further investigation;
d) provides a report to the Secretariat, observer service provider and appropriate authorities on the incident; and

e) cooperates fully in any and all official investigations, and preserves any potential evidence and the personal effects and quarters of the deceased observer before the new observer is on board.

30. Members and CNCPs shall take and implement necessary steps, as a matter of due diligence, to prevent incidents causing serious harm or death to observers on board vessels flying their flag, and, if appropriate, to sanction or punish those involved, including through criminal investigation and prosecution. The Members and CNCPs shall cooperate to that end and ensure results of investigations conducted and any actions taken related to observer assault or harassment will be provided promptly to the observer provider and the Secretariat, for transmission to all Members and the relevant CNCPs.

**Observer fees**

31. The costs of implementing this program shall be financed by the flag Member or CNCP of offloading vessels wishing to engage in transshipment operations. The fee shall be calculated on the basis of the total costs of the program. This fee shall be paid into a special account of the Secretariat and the Executive Secretary shall manage the account for administering the program.

32. Members and CNCPs shall not allow their fishing vessels to engage in a transshipment unless they have paid their fees, as required under paragraph 31.

33. This CMM shall enter into force on 1 April 2026.

**ANNEX I**

**OBSERVER TRANSSHIPMENT REPORT**

INSTRUCTIONS

In completing the observer transshipment report, the observer shall ensure that:

1. the information is as **accurate** as possible, and legible; and
2. the information is provided in **clear, legible print** in accordance with the clarifications below (either by hand or electronically).

The observer must provide the completed transshipment declaration with the completed observer transshipment report. It is the responsibility of the observer to provide sufficient reasoning in order to effectively explain any non-compliance.

CLARIFICATIONS

To assist in the accurate completion of the observer transshipment report:

- use the DD-MM-YYYY format to specify the date (e.g. 01-11-2022);
- use the HH:MM format, and the 24-hour clock (UTC, or specify time zone) to specify the time (e.g. 23:15);
- use the Degrees (°) Minutes (′) format to specify the latitude and longitude (e.g. 40° 26′ N, 79° 58′ W);
- "Interruptions" refers to any stoppage in observation of the transshipment by the observer.
- for "FAO CODE", utilize the FAO 3-alpha codes found at www.npfc.int/priority-species, or Fisheries and Aquaculture - All Information Collections - ASFIS List of Species for Fishery Statistics Purposes (fao.org);
    - the Codes for major NPFC species are; SAP (Pacific saury), MAS (chub mackerel), MAA (blue mackerel), JAP (Japanese sardine), OFJ (neon flying squid) and SQJ (Japanese flying squid).
- for "STATE OF FISH", state whether the fisheries resource, or product of fisheries resource, is: (1) fresh (FRS), or (2) frozen (FRZ)

| OBSERVER TRANSSHIPMENT REPORT (1/3) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Per the NPFC's CMM on the NPFC Transshipment Observer Program, this form shall be completed by the authorized observer for each transshipment activity and submitted to the observer service provider as soon as possible, but no later than 10 days following the disembarkation of the observer.*** | | | | |
| **PART I – TRANSSHIPMENT INFORMATION** | | | | |
| **1** | **Date of Transshipment** | | | |
| **2** | **Time of Transshipment** | | | |
| **3** | **Location of Transshipment** | □ High Seas | □ National Waters | □ Port |
| **4** | **Longitude and Latitude** | | | |
| **5** | **Receiving Vessel:**<br>• **Vessel Name**<br>• **NPFC Vessel ID**<br>• **Name of Vessel Master** | | | |
| **6** | **Offloading Vessel:**<br>• **Vessel Name**<br>• **NPFC Vessel ID**<br>• **Name of Vessel Master** | | | |
| **PART II –TRANSSHIPMENT INFORMATION** | | | | |
| **7** | **Observed** (Y/N) | | | |
| **8** | **Total Hours Observed** | | | |
| **9** | **Interruption(s) in Observation** (Y/N) | | | |
| **10** | **Number of Interruptions** | | | |
| **11** | **Total Time Interrupted** | | | |

## OBSERVER TRANSSHIPMENT REPORT (2/3)

### PART III – OBSERVER ESTIMATION OF PRODUCTS TRANSSHIPPED

| FAO Code | State of Fish | Type of Product | Unit | Kg per unit | Number of Units | Total (kg) | Consistent with transshipment declaration? (Y/N) (Note any discrepancies in Part V below) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

### PART IV – OBSERVATION OF OFFLOADING VESSEL

| | |
|---|---|
| **12** | **Boarded Offloading Vessel ?** □ **Yes** □ **No** |
| **13** | **Product Remaining on Offloading Vessel Following Transshipment (if applicable):** |

| FAO Code | State of Fish | Type of Product | Unit | Kg per unit | Number of Units | Total (kg) | Consistent with transshipment declaration? (Y/N) (Note any discrepancies in Part V below) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

**Source:** □ Hold Inspection □ Verbal Report from Vessel Master

# OBSERVER TRANSSHIPMENT REPORT (3/3)

## PART V - COMMENTARY

**In this section, the authorized observer shall note for both the offloading and receiving vessels:**

- **any discrepancies between their estimation of product transshipped and what was declared on the advance notification and transshipment declarations, not to exclude estimates of bycatch and unregulated species, and the form of products transshipped.;**
- **any other observed non-compliance with CMM *on Transshipments***
- **any observed non-compliance with the NPFC Convention or other NPFC CMMs**

## PART VI – OBSERVER SIGNATURE

| **14** | **Observer** | |
|---|---|---|
| | Name | |
| | Nationality | |
| | Signature | |

**CMM 2025-08**

***(Entered into force 1 May 2025)***

# CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR PACIFIC SAURY

*The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),*

*Reaffirming* the General Principles, Article 3 of the Convention, in particular, paragraph (b) stipulating that measures are adopted, based on the best scientific information available, to ensure that fisheries resources are maintained at or restored to levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield, and paragraph (f) stipulating that preventing or eliminating overfishing and excess fishing capacity and ensuring that levels of fishing effort or harvest levels are based on the best scientific information available and do not exceed those commensurate with the sustainable use of the fisheries resources;

*Gravely concerned* that, according to the latest stock assessment provided by the 9th meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC9) in December 2024, stock biomass of Pacific saury remains at low levels in recent years,

*Recognizing* that SC8 recommended that the Commission consider the advice, in particular "a reduction to the TAC for 2023-24 would increase the probability of higher long-term biomass and catch levels in the Pacific saury stock";

Recognizing further that the SC8 recommended adopting interim harvest control rule (HCR) from the list to be provided by the 5th meeting of the Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS05);

*Further recognizing* the urgent needs to take responsible actions to prevent further degradation and to ensure recovery of the Pacific saury stock;

*Adopts* the following conservation and management measure in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention:

## EFFORT MANAGEMENT

1. Members of the Commission, not described under paragraph 2, and that are currently fishing

for Pacific saury shall refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for Pacific saury from the historical existing level.

2. Members fishing for Pacific saury in areas of their jurisdiction that are adjacent to the Convention Area shall refrain from rapid expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for Pacific saury from the historical existing level.[1]

3. Members of the Commission participating in Pacific saury fisheries in areas under national jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area are, in accordance with relevant provisions of Article 3 of the Convention, requested to take compatible measures in paragraph 2.

4. Each Member of the Commission participating in Pacific saury fisheries shall implement either of the following measures:

   a) to reduce the number of fishing vessels flying its flag and fishing for Pacific saury in the Convention Area by 10% from the number of its fishing vessels that fished for Pacific saury in the Convention Area in 2018; or

   b) to prohibit fishing vessels flying its flag from engaging in fishing for Pacific saury in the Convention Area outside its designated fishing period of no longer than 180 consecutive days each year.

   Each Member shall notify the Secretariat of the measure it implements and its designated fishing period in case of b. above no later than May 1st each year. The Secretariat shall summarize the notifications from Members and make it available to all Members and CNCPs. This Paragraph does not apply to Members whose fishing vessels that fished for Pacific saury in the Convention Area in 2018 were less than five (5).

**CATCH MANAGEMENT**

5. The interim harvest control rule (HCR) for Pacific saury is as attached in Annex I.

[1] Paragraph 2 applies to Russia and Japan

6. The interim HCR is applied until the establishment of a management procedure to be recommended through an MSE process by the Joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS), or unless otherwise decided by the Commission. The SWG MSE PS and the SC shall review the performance of the interim HCR every year based on the best scientific information available, particularly the latest stock assessment results, and provide a recommendation for the Commission, as necessary.

7. For 2025, Members of the Commission agreed that the annual catch of Pacific saury in the entire area (the Convention Area and the areas under their jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area) should not exceed 202,500 metric tons, as calculated using the interim HCR in Annex I.

8. In 2025, the annual total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific saury in the Convention Area shall be limited to 60% of the annual catch limit in the entire area in paragraph 7[2].

9. As a provisional measure until the Commission decides allocation of the TAC, each Member of the Commission shall reduce the annual total catch of Pacific saury by the fishing vessels entitled to fly its flag in 2025 by 55% from its reported catch in 2018 (Annex II), and shall take necessary measures so that the total catch in the Convention Area will not exceed the TAC set out in paragraph 8. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that discards of Pacific saury count against their catch limits.

10. To comply with the TAC, the following measures shall be in place in 2025:
    a) Members of the Commission shall report to the Executive Secretary, in the electronic format, weekly catches of Pacific saury in the Convention Area by fishing vessels flying their flags by Wednesday of the next week. The Executive Secretary shall make publicly available the compiled catch of Pacific saury in the Convention Area on the Commission's website as well as share each Member's catch of Pacific saury in the Convention Area on the Member's page of Commission's website without delay; and
    b) In the event that the total reported catch of all Members reaches 90% of the TAC set out in paragraph 8, the Executive Secretary shall notify all Members without delay. Those

[2] 121,500 metric tons in 2025

Members with more than 10,000 mt of catch limits shall close the fishery within 72 hours from the receipt of the notification. Those Members with less than 10,000 mt of catch limits may continue operations, but their total catch shall not exceed 90% of their catch limits.

c) If any Members commit to reduce its annual total catch of Pacific Saury by fishing vessels entitled to fly its flag in 2025 by 65.5% from its reported catch in 2018, it shall be exempted from the requirements stipulated in Paragraph 10 (b). In case of that, the TAC for the rest of the member referred in the paragraph 10 (b) shall be 121,500 metric tons minus the catch limit of member(s) that make such commitment. Such commitment shall be submitted to the Secretariat no later than May 1st, 2025, and be circulated to all Members, as well as TAC applied to those Members subject to paragraph 10 (c).

11. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag that fish for Pacific saury in the Convention Area record their catches, including incidental catches of other NPFC species, and any discards and report them to the relevant flag state authorities in accordance with their national data recording and reporting requirements.

12. In the event that a Member reaches 70% of its catch limit set out in paragraph 9, the Executive Secretary shall inform that Member of that fact, with a copy to all other Members. That Member shall close the fishery for its flagged vessels when the total catch of its flagged vessels is equivalent to 100% of its catch limit. Such Member shall notify promptly the Executive Secretary of the date of the closure, except as described in paragraph 13. Upon receipt of the notification, the Executive Secretary shall circulate it to all the Members.

13. Notwithstanding paragraph 9, 10 b) and c), Members fishing for Pacific saury in areas of their jurisdiction[3] that are adjacent to the Convention Area may divert part of their catch limit for areas under their jurisdiction to their own catch of Pacific saury in the Convention Area by vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for Pacific saury[4]. Such Members shall annually report the catch limit that they diverted in accordance with this paragraph in their Annual Report.

[3] Paragraph 13 applies to Russia and Japan

[4] The diverted portion used in the Convention Area shall count toward the Members' catch limits within the EEZ, both for future discussions and for calculating TAC utilization in the Convention Area.

**OTHER MEASURES**

14. Development of new fishing activity for the Pacific saury fishery in the Convention Area by Members without documented historical catch for Pacific saury in the Convention Area shall be determined in accordance with relevant provisions, as appropriate, including but not limited to Article 3, paragraph (h) and Article 7, subparagraphs 1(g) and (h) of the Convention.

15. Members of the Commission shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flags operating in the Convention Area to fish Pacific saury be equipped with an operational vessel monitoring system that is activated at all times.

16. In order to prevent discards and contribute to the proper stock assessment, Members of the Commission shall take necessary measures to ensure that fishing vessels flying their flags in the Convention Area fishing for Pacific saury retain all the catch of Pacific saury on board.

17. In order to protect juvenile fish, Members of the Commission shall take measures for fishing vessels flying their flags to refrain from fishing for Pacific saury in the areas east of 170°E from June to July. The SC and its subsidiary Small Scientific Committee on Pacific Saury will submit to the Commission relevant scientific information on geographical distribution of juvenile fish in the Convention Area, and its migration patterns.

18. The SWG MSE PS shall endeavor to consider the establishment of a management procedure to be formulated through an MSE process by the 11$^{th}$ Commission Meeting in 2027. The Commission shall continue to fund an external expert to support the process.

19. This CMM shall in no case be a basis for any future CMM for Pacific saury.

20. The Commission shall review and revise, as appropriate, this CMM based on the advice and recommendations from the SC and the SWG MSE PS, at its every Commission meeting.

21. Consideration should be given to development aspirations of small island developing States in

accordance with international law in revising this CMM.

22. This CMM shall enter into force on May 1st, 2025, replacing CMM 2024-08 and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

**Annex I**

## Interim Harvest Control Rules (HCR) for Pacific saury

### 1. Management Objectives for the Pacific saury fisheries

*Interim Management Objectives*

*(a) Recovery of the stock (prioritized objective):*

*i. The stock biomass is rebuilt to $B_{tar}$ within 5 years with 50% probability;*

*ii. The stock biomass is maintained above the $B_{tar}$ level in each of years 6-10 with 50% probability.*

*2. Avoiding unsustainable state of the stock (secondary objective):*

*i. The annual probability in each of years 6-10 that the stock drops below $B_{lim}$ should not exceed 10%;*

*ii. The annual probability in each of years 6-10 that fishing mortality is above $F_{lim}$ should not exceed 10%.*

*3. Achieving high and stable catch (tertiary objective):*

*i. Average catch over years 6-10 is as high as possible;*

*ii. Catch in each of years 6-10 is as stable as possible.*

*Interim Biological reference points*

Interim biological reference points used the interim HCR for Pacific saury are as follows:

| Reference point |
|---|
| $B_{tar} = B_{MSY}$ |
| $B_{lim} = 0.35B_{MSY}$ |
| $F_{tar} = F_{MSY}$ |
| $F_{lim} = 1.35F_{MSY}$ |

### 2. Interim Harvest Control Rules (HCRs)

Based on the latest base-case results of stock assessment of Pacific saury, annual catch level in the entire area $_y = a_{y-1}*F_{MSY}*\hat{B}_{y-1}$, where $a_{y-1}=\min(1, \hat{B}_{y-1}/\hat{B}_{MSY})$

(as shown in Figure 1).

It reduces fishing intensity at biomass levels below $B_{MSY}$. Maximum allowable change of the annual catch level in the entire area is restricted to 10%.

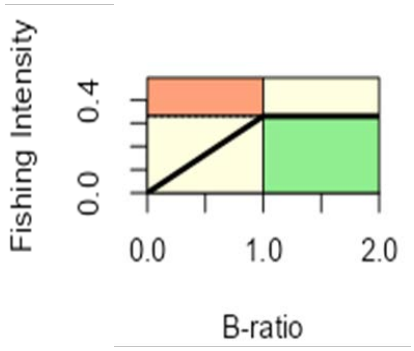


Figure 1. Illustration of the interim HCR.

**3. Management cycle**

The SC annually advises the Commission of the calculated annual catch level in the entire area of Pacific saury for the following year in accordance with the interim HCR as described in paragraph 2, based on the latest stock assessment results.

Annex II

**Reported Pacific saury catch in 2018**

| Member | Catch (metric ton) |
|---|---|
| China | 90,365 |
| Japan | 46,859 |
| Korea | 20,759 |
| Russia | 5,459 |
| Chinese Taipei | 180,466 |
| Vanuatu | 8,231 |

North Pacific Fisheries Commission

# 6th Meeting of the Joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS) REPORT

13–14 February 2025

February 2025

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# North Pacific Fisheries Commission
# 6th Meeting of the Joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS)

**13–14 February 2025**
**(Virtual)**

## REPORT

Agenda Item 1. Introductory items

*1.1 Opening of the meeting*

1. The 6th meeting of the joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS) was held online via WebEx on 13–14 February 2025. The meeting was attended by Members from Canada, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, the United States of America, and the Republic of Vanuatu. The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) attended as an observer. Dr. Larry Jacobson participated as an invited expert. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Derek Mahoney (Canada) and Dr. Toshihide Kitakado (Japan), the co-Chairs of the SWG MSE PS.

2. Mr. Mahoney opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

3. Mr. Alex Meyer was selected as rapporteur.

*1.2 Adoption of agenda*

4. The agenda was adopted without revision (Annex A). The List of Documents and List of Participants are attached (Annexes B, C).

*1.3 Meeting logistics*

5. The Science Manager, Dr. Aleksandr Zavolokin, outlined the meeting arrangements.

Agenda Item 2. Overview of the outcomes of previous NPFC meetings

*2.1 SWG MSE PS05*

6. Dr. Kitakado (hereafter “co-Chair”) presented the outcomes and recommendations from the SWG MSE PS05 meeting.

*2.2 COM08*

7. The Science Manager presented the outcomes from the 8th Commission meeting of relevance

to the SWG MSE PS. He highlighted the adoption of Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2024-08 for Pacific Saury, including the adoption of the interim HCR and interim biological reference points, and the setting of the total allowable catch (TAC).

*2.3 SSC PS13 and 14*

8. The co-Chair presented the outcomes and recommendations from the 13th and 14th meetings of the Small Scientific Committee on Pacific Saury (SSC PS).

Agenda Item 3. Overview of MSE

*3.1 Roles of SWG MSE PS in the NPFC process*

*3.2 Basic principles of MSE*

9. The co-Chair presented an overview of the management strategy evaluation (MSE) process (NPFC-2024-SWG MSE PS05-IP01), including the role of the SWG MSE PS, the basic principles of an MSE, the merits of an MSE, and the need to define meta-rules to deal with exceptional circumstances in the future.

Agenda Item 4. Review of results of the adopted HCR

*4.1 TAC for 2024*

10. The SWG MSE PS noted the TAC set for 2024 in CMM 2024-08.

*4.2 HCR-generated TAC for 2025*

11. The co-Chair presented the TAC for 2025 computed by the SSC PS by applying the interim HCR for Pacific saury adopted by NPFC in April 2024 under CMM 2024-08. Based on inputs from the assessment, TAC2025 = ($B2024*F_{MSY}*(B_{2024}/B_{MSY})$ 75,741 mt. Based on the adopted HCR, the TAC will be constrained to change by no more than 10% from one year to the next. The constrained 2025 TAC would be 0.9 x 225,000 = 202,500 mt.

12. The SWG MSE PS reviewed the application and endorsed the TAC calculation.

13. China expressed concern about the potential uncertainty in the long-term stock projections caused by scaling issues in the BSSPM model, which influences the outcomes of the interim HCR. China noted that, in the hypothetical case the biomass of Pacific Saury estimated by the stock assessment stays at its current level and/or if the scaling issue cannot be resolved in future stock assessments, then based on the adopted interim HCR, the calculated TAC with a 10% MAC will be progressively reduced to 78,453 mt by 2034. After this point, it will begin to increase, as the calculated TAC with the 10% MAC will become smaller than the unconstrained TAC (75,741 mt). This TAC trend significantly differs from the simulation testing results based on the base case scenario presented during the SWG MSE PS05 meeting, which could substantially influence the expectations of fishery managers and stakeholders regarding stock

status and management measures.

14. Other Members noted the analysis from China was not reviewed by the SSC PS and is premature to be used as the basis of management advice. It was pointed out that the TAC calculated for 2025, as well as the trends in the hypothetical case presented by China, were not substantially different from the simulation testing robustness case where there was reduced stock productivity due to persistent unfavorable environmental conditions.

Agenda Item 5. Discussion toward development of management procedures (MPs) as a mid-term goal

*5.1 Management objectives*

*5.2 Operating models*

*5.3 Management procedures*

*5.4 Performance indicators and simulation*

15. The SWG MSE PS held initial discussions on additional elements that could be considered when developing a full MP and compiled them into a table (Annex D). The table needs to be continuously refined as the full MP development progresses.

Agenda Item 6. Other matters

16. No other matters were raised.

Agenda Item 7. Timeline and future process

*7.1 Timeline*

*7.2 Future process with assistance of SSC PS*

*7.3 Workplan till SSC PS15&16 and SWG MSE PS07 meetings*

17. The SWG MSE PS developed a timeline, with future tasks, for 2025–2027 (Annex E).

18. The invited expert noted the intensive workload planned for the SSC PS and the SWG MSE PS and encouraged them to simplify their work to develop a full MP to the extent possible.

Agenda Item 8. Recommendations to the Commission

19. The SWG MSE PS recommends that the Commission note the TAC calculated for 2025 (paragraph 11).

20. The SWG MSE PS recommends that an invited expert be invited to the next SWG MSE PS meeting.

21. The SWG MSE PS recommends that the Commission endorse the holding of SWG MSE PS07 for one or two days between SC10 and COM10 in a virtual or hybrid format (Annex E).

22. The SWG MSE PS recommends that the Commission reaffirm the importance of including scientists, managers, and stakeholders at future meetings to facilitate communication and completion of this important work.

Agenda Item 9. Adoption of report

23. The SWG MSE PS06 Report was adopted by consensus.

Agenda Item 10. Close of the meeting

24. The co-Chairs thanked the participants for their cooperation, the Secretariat for organizing the meeting, the rapporteur for his support, and the invited expert for his advice.

25. The SWG MSE PS thanked the co-Chairs for their leadership.

26. The invited expert expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to work with the NPFC.

27. The meeting closed at 10:40 on 14 February 2025, Tokyo time.

Annex A – Agenda
Annex B – List of documents
Annex C – List of participants
Annex D – A draft table of elements that could be considered when developing a full MP in the MSE for Pacific saury
Annex E – Timeline and tasks for developing a full MP for the Pacific saury MSE

Annex A

**Agenda**

Agenda Item 1. Introductory items
- 1.1 Opening of the meeting
- 1.2 Adoption of agenda
- 1.3 Meeting logistics

Agenda Item 2. Overview of the outcomes of previous NPFC meetings
- 2.1 SWG MSE PS05
- 2.2 COM08
- 2.3 SSC PS13 and 14

Agenda Item 3. Overview of MSE
- 3.1 Roles of SWG MSE PS in the NPFC process
- 3.2 Basic principles of MSE

Agenda Item 4. Review of results of the adopted HCR
- 4.1 TAC for 2024
- 4.2 HCR-generated TAC for 2025

Agenda Item 5. Discussion toward development of management procedures (MPs) as a mid-term goal
- 5.1 Management objectives
- 5.2 Operating models
- 5.3 Management procedures
- 5.4 Performance indicators

Agenda Item 6. Other matters

Agenda Item 7. Timeline and future process
- 7.1 Timeline
- 7.2 Future process with assistance of SSC PS
- 7.3 Workplan till SSC PS15&16 and SWG MSE PS07 meetings

Agenda Item 8. Recommendations to the Commission

Agenda Item 9. Adoption of report

Agenda Item 10. Close of the meeting

Annex B

**List of Documents**

## MEETING INFORMATION PAPERS

| Document Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-SWG MSE PS06-MIP01 | Meeting Information |
| NPFC-2025-SWG MSE PS06-MIP02 | Provisional Agenda |
| NPFC-2025-SWG MSE PS06-MIP03 | Annotated Indicative Schedule |

## INFORMATION PAPERS

| Document Number | Title |
|---|---|
| NPFC-2025-SWG MSE PS06-IP01 | Overview of the outcomes of previous NPFC meetings |

Annex C

## List of Participants

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Annex D

**A draft table of elements that could be considered when developing a full MP in the MSE for Pacific saury**

| Items | Development of interim HCR | Development of full MP |
|---|---|---|
| Management objectives | • Primary (recovery)<br>• Secondary (avoid risk)<br>• Tertiary (catch) | The three main objectives will be used as previously agreed.<br>Members may also consider additional objectives relating to the following.<br>• Categories: Stock Status (e.g. B, PGK, Abundance), Safety (Avoiding Blim), Yield (catch) stability, socio-economic (incl. consideration of aspirations of SIDS) and ecological/ecosystem<br>• Achieve robustness under climate changes. |
| Operating models | BSSMP<br>• Age: aggregated over life<br>• Space: combined over EEZ & CA<br>• Time: annual | Age-structured models (SS3, other state-space models)<br>• Age: 0/1<br>• Space: so far combined<br>• Time: so far annual (seasonal/monthly)<br>• Include key uncertainties (M, S-R, selectivity…)<br>May consider some spatial elements (i.e. distribution shift) for investigating spatial management (depending on progress on new modelling) |
| HCRs and MPs | • Set an annual TAC<br>• Just HCR assuming availability of unbiased estimates | • Set an annual TAC<br>• Model-based (incl. assessment) or empirical MPs or combined<br>• May need to consider spatial allocation particularly for juvenile protection<br>• Evaluate advantages and disadvantages of constraints such as existing MAC and a minimum TAC (particularly in light of scale and climate uncertainties) |
| Main input (incl. assessment) | • Estimates of key reference points from BSSPM analyses | • Estimates of key reference points from BSSPM or others<br>• Address uncertainty in estimates |
| Time lag btw data & implementation | • 1-yr (survey)<br>• 2-yrs (fisheries CPUE) | • Use the most recent CPUE and survey information from the current fishing year?<br>• Consider the use of an in-season adjustment if possible |
| Climate impacts | • Considered as robustness case | • Routinely use as part of reference models or robustness testing<br>• Explicitly link climate effects and biological parameters that affect stock size & productivities |
| Meta rules and others | • No definition of exceptional circumstances | • Develop definition of exceptional circumstances |

Annex E

**Timeline and tasks for developing a full MP for the Pacific saury MSE**

| Meeting | Date | Task | Note |
|---|---|---|---|
| COM09 | 24-27 Mar 2025 | Review outcomes and recommendations from SWG MSE PS 06 | In-person (hybrid) |
| Intersessional work (SSC-PS) | April-June 2025 | Development of age-structured models (as a part of work on conditioning of OMs) | Virtual |
| WG NSAM (SSC-PS) | July 2025 | Review further progress on age-structured modelling | In-person (hybrid) |
| SSC PS15 | Sep 1-5, 2025 | • Review abundance indices etc.<br>• Review progress on new assessment models<br>• Review progress on review of HCR works (specifically issues on the retrospective patterns and scale uncertainty in BSSPM)<br>• Prepare for demonstration of empirical HCRs (if possible) | Virtual |
| Intersessional work (SSC-PS) | Oct-Nov 2025 | • Review further progress on age-structured modelling<br>• Review further progress on evaluation of HCRs (specifically issues on BSSPM) | Virtual |
| SSC PS16 | Dec 11-14, 2025 | • Update BSSPM analyses and update HCR-generated TAC for 2026<br>• Review progress on new assessment models and finalize a set of models and specification (relevant to the mid-term MSE work as conditioning of operating models)<br>• Try to finalize specification of OMs for meeting the mid-term tasks on MSE | In-person (hybrid) |
| SWG MSE PS 07 | Jan/Feb 2026 | • Prepare for simple demonstration of MPs including empirical one<br>• Review OMs and develop list of candidate MPs<br>• Dialogue between managers, scientists and stakeholders | ? |
| COM10 | 2026 | Review outcomes and recommendations from SWG MSE PS 07 | In-person (hybrid) |
| SC PS17-18, WG NSAM | 2026 | Conduct technical works | |
| SWG MSE PS 8-9 | Summer 2026 Winter 2027 | • Finalize evaluation of performance of candidate MPs<br>• Recommendations of a few MPs to COM11 | In-person (hybrid) |
| COM11 | 2027 | Adoption of CMM on MP? | In-person (hybrid) |

**NPFC 2025/2026 List of Chairs and appointment duration (As of COM09)**

The attached tables outline the Chair and Vice-Chair positions for the Commission and related subsidiary bodies (Table 1) and the bodies created under the auspices of the subsidiary bodies (Table 2).

**Table 1: Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission and subsidiary bodies (March 2024)**

| Body | Officers | 1st term (2 years) | 2nd term (2 years) | Further Terms where allowed | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| COM | Chair (Ota, Japan) | 2024-2025 (COM08/09) | 2026-2027 (COM10/11) | | Selected in Mar 2023 **Select a new Chair in 2027** |
| | Vice-Chair (Kim, Korea) | 2024-2025 (COM08/09) | 2026-2027 (COM10/11) | | Selected in Mar 2023 **Select a new Vice-Chair in 2027** |
| SC | Chair (Curtis, Canada) | 2020-2021 (SC05/06) | 2022-2023 (SC07/08) | 2024-2025 (SC09/10) | Selected in Apr 2019. **Recommend a new Chair in Dec 2025** |
| | Vice Chair (Cao, China) | 2020-2021 (SC05/06) | 2022-2023 (SC07/08) | 2024-2025 (SC09/10) | Selected in Apr 2019. Extended in 2022 and 2024. **Recommend a new Vice-Chair in Dec 2025** |
| TCC | Chair (Falberg, USA) | 2024-2025 (TCC07/08) | 2026-2027 (TCC09/10) | | Selected in Mar 2023 **Recommend a new Chair in 2027 or extend for another 2 years.** |
| | Vice-Chair (Linstedt, Canada) | 2024-2025 (TCC07/08) | 2026-2027 (TCC09/10) | | Selected in Mar 2023 **Recommend a new Vice-Chair in 2027 or extend for another 2 years.** |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FAC | Chair (Tominaga, Japan | 2026/2027 (FAC08/09) | | | Selected in 2025. **Recommend a new Chair in 2027 or extend for another 2 years.** |
| | Vice-Chair Blazkiewicz (EU) | 2026/2027 (FAC08/09) | | | Selected in 2025. **Recommend a new Vice-Chair in 2027 or extend for another 2 years.** |
| SWG MSE PS | Co-Chair (Kitakado, Japan) | 2022-2025 | | | Selected in 2021. **At pleasure** |
| | Co-Chair (Mahoney, Canada) | 2023-2025 | | | Selected in March 2023. **At pleasure.** |

**Table 2: Bodies created by Subsidiary bodies and other roles**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SSC BF-ME | Chair (Rooper, Canada) | 2020-2021 | 2022-2023 | 2024-2025 | Select a new Chair in 2025 or extend for another 2 years |
| | Vice-Chairs (Sawada, Japan) | 2025-2026 | | | Select a new vice-Chair in 2026 or extend for another 2 years |
| SSC PS | Chair (Kitakado, Japan) | 2020-2021 | 2022-2023 | 2024-2025 | Select a new Chair in 2025 or extend for another 2 years |
| | Vice-Chair (Dai, China) | 2024-2025 | | | Select a new Vice-Chair in 2025 or extend for another 2 years |
| SSC NFS | Chair (Xu, China) | 2024-2025 | | | Select a new Chair in 2025 or extend for another 2 years |
| | Vice-Chair (Nishizawa, Japan) | 2024-2025 | | | Select a new vice-Chair in 2025 or extend for another 2 years |
| TWG CMSA | Chair (Oshima, Japan) | 2023-2024 | 2025-2026 | | Select a new Chair in 2026 or extend for another 2 years |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Vice Chair (Ma, China) | 2023-2024 | 2025-2026 | | Select a new Vice-Chair in 2026 or extend for another 2 years |
| TCC SWG OPS | Co-Lead (DeMille, Canada) | Jan 2023-Mar 2025 | | | Selected in January 2023 |
| | Co-Lead (Willmann, USA) | Jan 2023- Mar 2025 | | | Selected in January 2023 |
| TCC SWG PD | Co-Lead (Lindstedt, Canada) | 2019-2021 | 2021-2023 | 2023-2025 | Selected in July 2019 |
| | Co-Lead (Tanoue, Japan) | 2023-2025 | | | Selected in July 2023 |
| SC SWG NPA-SA | Lead (Sawada, Japan) | | | | Selected in 2021 |
| SC SWG VME | Lead (Rooper, Canada) | | | | Selected in 2024 |
| SC SWG JS | Lead (Rooper, Canada) | | | | Selected in 2021 |
| SC SWG JFS | Lead (Matsui, Japan) | | | | Selected in 2023 |
| SC SWG BM | Lead (Higashiguchi, Japan) | | | | Selected in 2023 |
| SC SWG NSAM | Lead (Dai, China) | | | | Selected in 2023 |
| SC SWG Data | Lead (Molla Gazi, EU) | | | | Selected in 2024 |

Canada (8), China (5), EU (1), Japan (9), Korea (1), United States (3)

Press Release

# Ninth (9th) Commission Session Concludes Hybrid Meetings in Osaka, Japan

For Immediate Release: 27 March 2025

The 9th Meeting of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (COM09) took place from 24-27 March 2025, in-person and by video conferencing. The Commission meeting was chaired by Mr. Shingo OTA (Japan). It was preceded by the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC07) meeting on 22 March and the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC08) meeting from 18-21 March. The event was attended by over 130 participants from nine Members, and 13 observer groups. Acknowledged this year was the 10-year anniversary of the creation of the NPFC in 2015. The significant progress made to date to develop regional management of key fisheries, supported by the provision of robust science advice, was acknowledged.

The Commission Meeting has achieved the following:

- Revised the Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for Pacific saury including applying the interim harvest control rule and reducing the total allowable catch by 10% to help improve the status of the stock
- Updated the CMM for chub mackerel including a 29% reduction in catch for the fishing year starting in June 2025
- Adopted a new Conservation and Management Measure for a transshipment observer program for the NPFC Convention Area to come into effect on 1 April 2026
- Amended the Transshipment and Vessel Monitoring System CMMs for greater clarity and reporting enhancements,
- Amended CMMs for bottom fisheries in the north-west and north-east Pacific Ocean for better clarity and protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems
- Enhanced reporting requirements for bycatch in pelagic fisheries (Pacific saury, chub mackerel, Japanese sardine, neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid)
- Adopted Rules of Transparency for the Technical and Compliance Committee
- Adopted the 2025 NPFC Compliance Monitoring Report, and
- Adopted the 2025 NPFC IUU vessel list with no additional vessels added in 2025, and
- Agreed to seek deeper cooperation with other regional bodies such as the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

The next Commission meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place 14-17 April 2026 in Japan.

*For more information, please contact the Executive Secretary of NPFC.*
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**Attachment: Photo of NPFC 9th Commission Chair, Heads of Delegation and Executive Secretary**