

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION

(1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

## 1. Introduction

This annual report is published in accordance with Article 29 of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean, which provides that:

*“The Commission shall publish an annual report, which shall include details of decisions taken by the Commission to achieve the objective of this Convention. The report shall also provide information on actions taken by the Commission in response to any recommendations from the General Assembly of the United Nations or the FAO.*

*Copies of the report shall be publicly available and shall be provided to the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Director-General of the FAO”.*

This report also serves to respond to the request made pursuant to paragraph 377 of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 79/144 (2024), for contributions to the annual report of the Secretary-General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

## 2. Membership

As of 12 May 2025, the SPRFMO Commission comprised 17 Members: Australia, Belize, Republic of Chile, People's Republic of China, Cook Islands, Republic of Cuba, Republic of Ecuador, European Union, Kingdom of Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Republic of Panama, Republic of Peru, Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, United States of America, and the Republic of Vanuatu.

In addition, the status of Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CNCs) was held by Curaçao and the Republic of Liberia.

## 3. Key Developments

This section summarises the Organisation's key developments over the course of the reporting year. As the peak body, the annual meetings of the Commission are central to the delivery of outcomes. There are also a range of important developments and deliverables at the level of the subsidiary bodies, the Secretariat and the Membership.

### 3.1. Governance and Institutional Developments

The 13th Annual Meeting of the Commission (COMM13) was held in Santiago, Chile from 17–21 February 2025, with over 190 participants. The annual meeting of the Commission was preceded immediately by the 12<sup>th</sup> annual meetings of the Finance and Administration Committee and Compliance and Technical Committee.

A second Performance Review was undertaken in 2024 and presented to COMM13. An implementation Working Group was established, and its terms of reference were adopted by the Commission.

A new Executive Secretary, Mr James Brown, was also appointed following the adoption of updated recruitment procedures at COMM12.

### 3.2. Scientific Advancements and Conservation

In relation to an Ecosystem-Based Approach and VME Protection, SPRFMO continued implementation of measures to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) in the deep sea. A new protocol for reviewing bottom fishing footprints was tested, and several Members submitted updated benthic impact assessments.



Progress was made on climate change integration. The Climate Change Task Team became fully operational under the SPRFMO Scientific Committee, providing its first set of guidance to integrate climate considerations into jack mackerel assessments and squid fishery trends.

Further progress was made on observer programme accreditation under Conservation and Management Measure 16 (Observer Programme). An independent evaluator began a second cycle of reviews, and an additional independent evaluator was agreed to be engaged.

### 3.3. Compliance and IUU Fishing

While the SPRFMO Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Vessel List remained empty, COMM13 amended Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 04 to prohibit subsidies to listed vessels and operators. The Commission also reviewed its IUU fishing listing procedures.

### 3.4. Capacity-Building and Technology Transfer

SPRFMO remained active in relation to Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), data standards, and port inspection procedures. The 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC12) discussed the implementation and operations of the Commission VMS, as detailed in the Implementation and Operations Report prepared by the Secretariat. Additionally, the revision of CMM 07 on Port Inspections outlines the updated procedures and minimum standards for conducting port inspections, improving consistency and transparency in inspections across the SPRFMO Area.

A Working Group to develop Electronic Monitoring Standards operated during 2024 and COMM13 decided that it continue to operate throughout 2025.

The Commission continues to facilitate the effective participation of developing State Contracting Parties in the region through the Developing States Fund, established by and administered in accordance with the Financial Regulations. This fund has been used to support representatives of developing states to attend the meetings of the Commission and any of its subsidiary bodies. The Developing States fund also provides a mechanism for eligible Members to apply for funding for specific technical assistance and capacity building projects.

At its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, the Commission revised the Financial Regulations to create a Spanish Interpretation Fund to receive voluntary contributions to facilitate the effective participation of Spanish-speaking Contracting Parties in the work of the Commission.

SPRFMO also expanded intersessional cooperation with other regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) in areas such as electronic reporting (ER), with early discussions exploring alignment of observer data formats and inspection reporting tools.

### 3.5. Area-Based Management and Biodiversity Protection

Implementation of Decision 17-2024 to protect the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges continued with the development of a baseline monitoring plan and agreement with Chile and Peru on data-sharing for biodiversity indicators.

## 4. Activities of the Commission

The Commission met once during the reporting period, in its 13<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in February 2025, in Santiago, Chile from 17 to 21 February 2025. The Commission considered 21 proposals, resulting in decisions on Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs), Decisions and its Financial Regulations. This and other SPRFMO meetings during the reporting period are detailed in Annex 1.



## 4.1. Decisions taken by the Commission to achieve the objective of the SPRFMO Convention

All Commission decisions taken during the reporting period were taken during COMM13.

### 4.1.1 Conservation and Management Measures

The Commission amended eight existing CMMs:

- **CMM 01-2025:** CMM for *Trachurus murphyi* (Jack Mackerel)
- **CMM 02-2025:** CMM on Data Standards
- **CMM 03-2025:** Management of Bottom Fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area
- **CMM 03a-2025:** Management of Deepwater Species in the SPRFMO Convention Area
- **CMM 04-2025:** Establishing a List of Vessels Presumed to Have Carried Out IUU Fishing Activities in the SPRFMO Convention Area
- **CMM 07-2025:** Minimum Standards of Inspection in Port
- **CMM 16-2025:** Establishing the SPRFMO Observer Programme
- **CMM 18-2025:** Management of the Jumbo Flying Squid Fishery.

The Commission adopted two new CMMs:

- **CMM 14h-2025:** Exploratory Fishing for Toothfish by Korea in the SPRFMO Convention Area
- **CMM 14i-2025:** Exploratory Fishing for Toothfish by New Zealand in the SPRFMO Convention Area.

### 4.1.2 Decisions

The Commission adopted one new Decision:

- **Decision 19-2025** to Implement Regulations 6.6 and 6.7 of the Staff Regulations.

### 4.1.3 Other decisions

The Commission made a number of other key decisions:

- adopted the final **2025 IUU Vessel List**, which contained no vessels.
- renewed the **Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNCP)** status for Curaçao and Liberia.
- adopted amendments to the **SPRFMO Financial Regulations**.
- established an intersessional Working Group to approach the implementation of the **Second Performance Review** recommendations.
- endorsed the continuation of the Working Group on **Electronic Monitoring Standards**.
- confirmed the appointment of a **new Executive Secretary** following an open and transparent selection process.
- decided to create a **new Science Manager** position, with recruitment scheduled for the 2025-26 financial year.

## 4.2. Subsidiary Bodies

The Commission has three active subsidiary bodies that report, advise, and make recommendations to the Commission and contribute to regular reviews of the effectiveness of conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission. These subsidiary bodies are the Scientific Committee (SC), Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC), and the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC). There are also five Working Groups and four Task Teams reporting to the SC, and two Working Groups reporting to the Commission (refer to Figure 1).

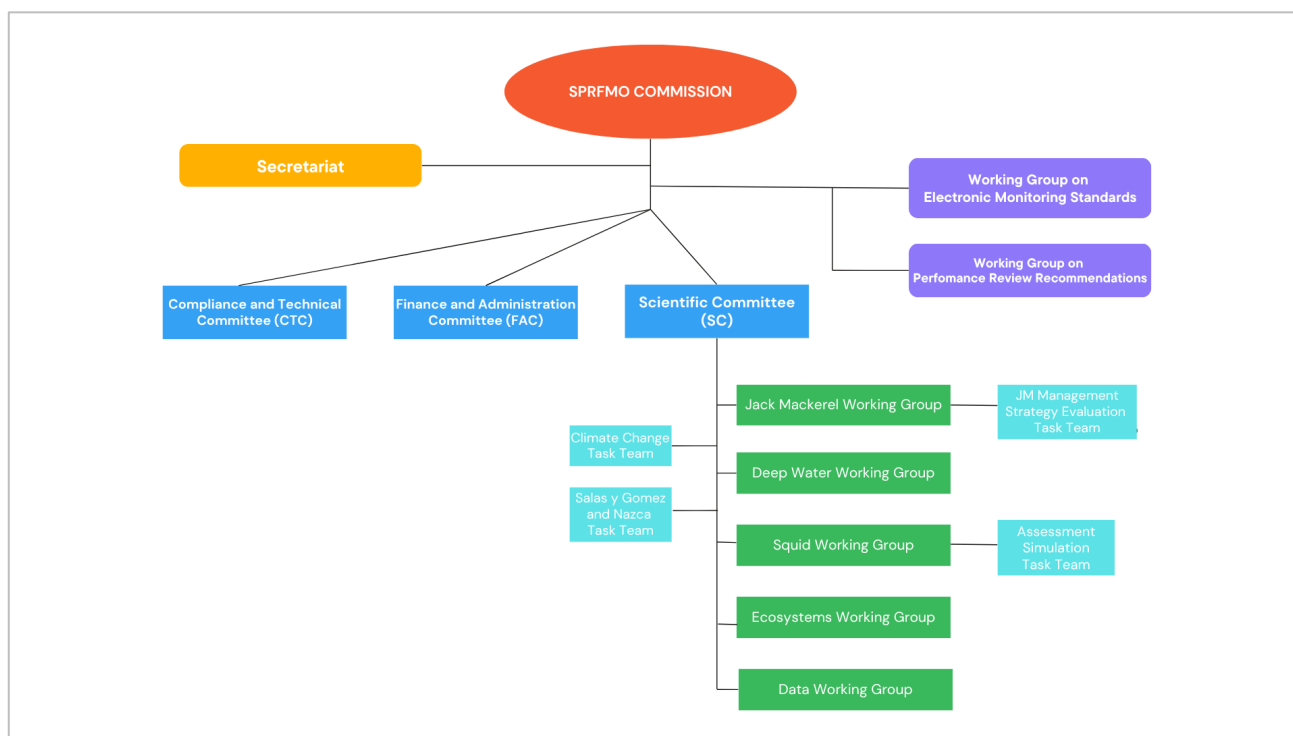


Figure 1 Diagram of the active structure of SPRFMO at 2025 (Source: SPRFMO Secretariat)

#### 4.2.1 Scientific Committee (SC)

The 12th meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC12) was held in Lima, Peru, from 30 September to 5 October 2024. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Ricardo Oliveros-Ramos (Peru) and attended by 125 participants from 14 SPRFMO Members, three intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), and nine non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including four invited experts and the Secretariat.

Key outcomes from SC12 included:

- **Jack Mackerel Assessment:** The SC reviewed the latest stock assessment and recommended maintaining the current total allowable catch (TAC) levels, considering the stock status and recent catch data.
- **Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment:** An updated quantitative impact assessment for bottom fisheries was presented and the SC recommended adopting the proposed Encounter Review Standard to enhance the assessment and management of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs).
- **Data Working Group:** The SC endorsed the establishment of a Data Working Group to improve data management within SPRFMO, focusing on standardisation and quality enhancement.
- **Climate Change:** The SC continued to address climate change impacts on fisheries and ecosystems, incorporating climate considerations into stock assessments and management advice.
- **Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges:** Following Commission Decision 17-2024, the SC included this area as a standing agenda item, compiling and reviewing relevant scientific information to inform potential conservation measures.

The Commission commended the SC and its Members for their work and endorsed the SC12 report and its recommendations.



#### 4.2.2 Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC)

The 12th meeting of the Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC12) was held in Santiago, Chile, from 11 to 14 February 2025. The CTC focused on reviewing compliance with SPRFMO measures and enhancing monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

Key outcomes from CTC12 included:

- **Observer Programme Accreditation:** The CTC noted that no Member observer programmes were evaluated during 2024 and encouraged Members to pursue accreditation in 2025.
- **Implementation Reports:** The CTC reviewed the implementation reports on Fisheries, Record of Vessels, Commission VMS, Inspections (in port and at sea), and Observer Programme.

#### 4.2.3 Finance and Administration Committee (FAC)

The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC12) was held in Santiago, Chile, from 13 to 15 and on 18 February 2025. The FAC reviewed the financial and administrative matters of the Organisation.

Key outcomes from FAC12 included:

- **Annual Financial Statements:** The FAC reviewed and recommended the adoption of the SPRFMO Annual Financial Statements for the year ending 30 June 2024.

### 4.3. International Cooperation

In alignment with Article 31 of the SPRFMO Convention, the Commission continued to foster consultation, cooperation, and collaboration with other organisations. As of 2025, SPRFMO has established nine Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and arrangements with various regional and international bodies, along with three separate agreements by the Secretariat to enhance its operational effectiveness.

Notable developments include:

- **Renewal of MoU with WCPFC:** On 22 May 2024, SPRFMO renewed its MoU with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). This MoU aims to facilitate cooperation between the two organisations, particularly concerning stocks or species of mutual interest.
- **Renewal of Arrangement with CCAMLR:** The Arrangement between SPRFMO and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) was renewed in 2024 for an additional three years.

These renewals underscore the ongoing collaboration between SPRFMO and other organisations on shared conservation and management goals. These cooperative efforts play an important part in delivering on SPRFMO's commitment to collaborative regional fisheries management and the sustainable use of fishery resources.

## 5. Office Holders

At COMM13 the following office holders were confirmed or elected:

- **Commission Chairperson:** Ms Jung-re Riley Kim (Republic of Korea) was confirmed to continue serving as the Chairperson of the Commission (2024-2026 term).
- **Commission Vice-Chairperson:** Ms Alexa Cole (United States) was re-elected to continue serving as the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission (2025-2027 term).
- **Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC):**
  - **Chairperson:** Ms Rebeca Espinoza (Ecuador) was confirmed to continue serving as the Chairperson of the CTC (2024-2026 term).
  - **Vice-Chairperson:** Mr Zhao Ming (China) was elected as the new Vice-Chairperson of the CTC (2025-2027 term), filling the vacant position.



- **Finance and Administration Committee (FAC):**
  - **Chairperson:** Mr Juan Santibañez (Chile) was elected as the new Chairperson of the FAC (2025-2027 term), replacing Mr Jimmy Villavicencio (Ecuador).
  - **Vice-Chairperson:** Ms María Sierra (Panama) was elected as the new Vice-Chairperson of the FAC (2025-2027 term), replacing Mr Andres Couve (Chile).
- **Scientific Committee (SC):**
  - **Chairperson:** Dr. Ricardo Oliveros-Ramos (Peru) was confirmed to continue serving as the Chairperson of the SC (2024-2026 term).
  - **Vice-Chairperson:** Mr. Ignacio Payá (Chile) was confirmed to continue serving as the Vice-Chairperson of the SC (2024-2026 term).

The full report of the Commission meeting and all related documents are available on the SPRFMO website at [www.sprfmo.int](http://www.sprfmo.int).

## 6. Implementation of UNGA Resolution 79/144

During the reporting period, SPRFMO undertook a range of actions that contribute to the implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 79/144 on “Oceans and the Law of the Sea,” including the priority theme of capacity-building and technology transfer addressed by the twenty-fifth meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process (ICP).

- **Protection of marine biodiversity**

CMM 03 on Bottom Fishing explicitly aims to prevent significant adverse impacts (SAIs) on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) by implementing spatial management measures. These measures include the establishment of Bottom Trawl, Mid-water Trawl, and Bottom Line Management Areas, where bottom fishing activities are regulated or prohibited to safeguard marine ecosystems. The CMM incorporates encounter protocols that require vessels to cease bottom fishing activities immediately upon encountering VME indicator species beyond specified thresholds. This protocol is designed to mitigate potential harm to VMEs by ensuring prompt responses to unexpected encounters.

CMM 03 mandates that Members and CNCPs submit annual reports detailing benthic bycatch data. This data supports the Scientific Committee's ongoing review of the effectiveness of spatial management arrangements and informs recommendations to ensure the measure meets its conservation objectives. In summary, CMM 03 establishes a comprehensive framework for the protection of VMEs through spatial closures, encounter protocols, and continuous scientific evaluation, thereby upholding the organisation's commitment to sustainable fisheries management and marine biodiversity conservation.

Additionally, the Commission Decision 17-2024 To Protect the Salas y Gomez and Nazca Ridges Area initiates a process to assess and potentially implement protective measures for the ecologically significant area. Decision 17-2024 tasks the Scientific Committee (SC) to include the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges as a standing agenda item. The SC is instructed to compile and review all relevant scientific information and data about the area and recommend possible measures to the Commission, based on an ecosystem-based approach that aims at preserving its biodiversity and SPRFMO fishing resources, as well as the sustainable use of marine resources. This decision reflects SPRFMO's commitment to the precautionary and ecosystem approaches outlined in its Convention, aiming to safeguard the unique biodiversity of the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges, which are recognised as global biodiversity hotspots with high levels of marine biological endemism.

- **Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing**

SPRFMO has taken significant steps to strengthen its monitoring, control, and surveillance framework. This includes enhancements to the CMM 04 SPRFMO IUU Vessel List and ongoing collaboration with other RFMOs and international organisations to share data on vessel activity. These measures support effective deterrence and enforcement against IUU fishing activities in the Convention Area.



- **Sustainable fisheries management and climate change**

The Scientific Committee continues to integrate environmental and climate variables into stock assessments for key species, including jack mackerel and jumbo flying squid. SPRFMO has established a Climate Change Task Team under the SC Ecosystems Working Group to guide climate-resilient management approaches. These activities reflect SPRFMO's commitment to adaptively managing fishery resources in response to climate change impacts, as called for in the Resolution.

In particular, SPRFMO's actions in 2024-2025 reflect the theme of the twenty-fifth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea - "Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology: New developments, approaches and challenges." These include the expansion of observer programme accreditation to additional Members, advancement of electronic monitoring and reporting standards, cooperation with other RFMOs on inspection protocols, and adoption of updated CMMs supporting regional technology use for the monitoring and control of fishing activities.



## Annex 1 SPRFMO meetings and working group activities during the reporting period (April 2024 – March 2025)

Activity/meeting	Format	Date
Habitat Monitoring WG coordination session	Virtual	4 April 2024
Scientific Committee session 1	Virtual	25 April 2024
Jack mackerel WG (MSE Session 3)	Virtual	30 April 2024
WG on Electronic Monitoring Standards	Virtual	29 May 2024
Jack mackerel WG (MSE Session 4)	Virtual	4 June 2024
Squid WG (Assessment Simulation) session 1	Virtual	10 June 2024
Scientific Committee session 2	Virtual	20 June 2024
Jack mackerel WG (MSE Session 5)	Virtual	9 July 2024
WG on Electronic Monitoring Standards	Virtual	10 July 2024
Jack mackerel WG (SC preparations 1)	Virtual	16 July 2024
Jack mackerel WG (Connectivity)	Virtual	18 July 2024
Squid WG preparatory session	Virtual	22 July 2024
Habitat Monitoring WG biases of analysis methods	Virtual	24 July 2024
WG on Electronic Monitoring Standards	Virtual	7 August 2024
Jack mackerel WG (SC preparations 2)	Virtual	20 August 2024
Deepwater WG (SC preparations 1)	Virtual	27 August 2024
Deepwater WG (SC preparations 2)	Virtual	3 September 2024
Jack mackerel WG (MSE Session 6)	Virtual	4 September 2024
Deepwater WG (SC preparations 3)	Virtual	10 September 2024
Scientific Committee session 3 (SC preparations)	Virtual	12 September 2024
Jack mackerel WG Connectivity	In person	26 September 2024
Squid WG Workshop Simulated Assessment	In person	27 September 2024
Squid WG preparatory session: Stock Assessment	In person	29 September 2024
12 <sup>th</sup> Scientific Committee (SC12)	In person	30 September to 5 October 2024
Jack mackerel WG (MSE)	Virtual	13 November 2024
Jack mackerel WG (MSE)	Virtual	19 November 2024
Jack mackerel WG (MSE)	Virtual	4 December 2024
SC Salas y Gomez and Nazca Task Team	Virtual	12 December 2024
WG on Electronic Monitoring Standards	Virtual	18 December 2024
SC Climate Change Task Team	Virtual	14 January 2025
Jack mackerel WG (MSE)	Virtual	28 January 2025
12 <sup>th</sup> Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC12)	In person	11 to 14 February 2025
12 <sup>th</sup> Finance and Administration Committee (FAC12)	In person	13-15 & 18 February 2025
Jack mackerel MSE workshop with scientists and managers	In person	15 February 2025
SC Salas y Gomez and Nazca Task Team	In person	15 February 2025
13 <sup>th</sup> SPRFMO Commission (COMM13)	In person	17 to 22 February 2025
Scientific Committee session 1 (2025)	Virtual	27 March 2025

