



SPRFMO
South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

14th Scientific Committee Meeting

Tórshavn, Faroe Islands

7 to 12 September 2026

Meeting Report

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SC14 Meeting Report Executive Summary

The 14th Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC14) was held in Tórshavn, Faroe Islands, from 7 to 12 September 2026. The Scientific Committee (SC) reviewed the status of fisheries resources and ecosystems in the SPRFMO Convention Area, considered the outcomes of its extensive 2026 intersessional programme, and developed scientific advice and recommendations for consideration by the Commission. Key areas of work included jack mackerel, jumbo flying squid, deepwater fisheries and vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), marine ecosystems, exploratory fisheries, the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges area, and the Scientific Committee's multi-annual work programme. A compilation of all recommendations of the SC to the Commission is available in Annex 1 of this report.

Jack mackerel

SC14 considered the results of the 2026 jack mackerel benchmark process, the annual stock assessment and the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE). The 2026 assessment incorporated substantial revisions to data inputs and model configurations and resulted in changes in estimated stock scale and recent stock status compared with the assessment presented at SC13. Members expressed different views on the revised assessment. Chile raised concerns regarding the extent of the changes and sought further technical scrutiny and independent external review, while Australia, the Cook Islands, the European Union and the United States considered the benchmark scientifically defensible and the best available scientific basis for advice. The JMWG Chairperson noted that, notwithstanding the change in scale, the revised assessment retained a similar improving stock trend.

The SC also considered recent changes in the fishery and abundance indices. Total reported jack mackerel catch in 2025 was 1.42 million tonnes, 9.5% higher than in 2024. Catch during the first half of 2026 was substantially lower than during the equivalent period in 2025, while catches increased later in the year. The SC reviewed new information on CPUE, acoustic biomass, spatial distribution and size composition, including contrasting signals among abundance indices and evidence of changes in the spatial availability of jack mackerel.

Substantial progress was made on the jack mackerel MSE. Candidate management procedures (CMPs) were tested against a reference operating model and a structured set of robustness scenarios, incorporating alternative assumptions concerning recruitment, stock structure, movement, selectivity, abundance indices and annual TAC-change limits. SC14 recommended CMP29, CMP43 and CMP45 as a shortlist for the Commission to consider for implementation. Given the revised assessment, lower-than-expected catch and strong current and forecast El Niño conditions, the SC recommended a precautionary approach to setting catch levels for 2027.

If a management procedure is not used to determine the 2027 catch limit, most Members recommended abandoning application of the existing Annex K harvest control rule under the exceptional conditions and uncertainty affecting the fishery and adopting precautionary catch advice for 2027. Most of the SC supported a 2027 TAC at or below the range corresponding to status quo fishing mortality or up to 1.25 times that value, equivalent to approximately 964–1,152 kt. The SC also considered a two-year step-down option from the 2026 TAC, corresponding to a 2027 catch of 1,319 kt, while Chile presented catch advice of 1,424 kt from the application of CMP29 or CMP45 using the 2026 TAC as the basis. The report provides the associated risk table and jack mackerel advice for the Commission's consideration.

Deepwater fisheries and vulnerable marine ecosystems

SC14 continued its work on orange roughy stock structure, VME identification and modelling, bottom-fishing impacts and the management of VME encounters. The SC reviewed New Zealand's assessment of orange roughy stock structure, which synthesised evidence from fisheries, biological, genetic, and ecological studies. The SC noted that no single method provides definitive evidence and that the available literature remains inconclusive regarding whether the Westpac Bank and ORH7A management areas comprise a single straddling stock. The SC therefore recommended applying innovative techniques to samples collected from Westpac Bank and adjacent New Zealand EEZ areas during the same season to further assess stock structure.

The SC reviewed the temporary closure arising from the 2024 VME encounter in the Central Lord Howe Rise. In considering whether the encounter area should be reopened, the SC assessed the potential for significant adverse impacts at different spatial scales and considered available modelling and direct observational evidence. It recommended that the Commission take a precautionary approach by maintaining the current temporary closure of the Encounter Area, with the decision to be reviewed if further relevant information becomes available.

The SC agreed that work should continue to validate existing spatial models of VME indicator taxa abundance and develop updated models using additional historical imagery and improved environmental predictor variables. These models are expected, where possible, to inform the 2027 update of the New Zealand and Australian Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment.

SC14 also recommended that the Commission endorse the methods and handling and release guidelines for chondrichthyans contained in SC14-DW08_rev1 and consider further work to reduce chondrichthyan bycatch in bottom fisheries, including through gear selectivity and modifications.

Jumbo flying squid

SC14 reviewed substantial progress in the development of a stock assessment framework for jumbo flying squid. Candidate assessment models were evaluated using a common set of input data and diagnostics, and the SC considered new information on catch, CPUE, population structure and environmental effects, as well as progress in the Assessment Simulation Task Team (ASTT).

Two assessment models passed the statistical diagnostic test and indicated relatively low stock risk, including a 67.8% probability of the stock being in the Kobe green quadrant. However, the SC did not accept these models for quantitative management advice, principally because of their limited predictive ability and limited incorporation of environmental effects. The SC agreed that future assessments should continue to use common input data, consider statistical diagnostics alongside biological plausibility and fishery history, and further investigate environmental effects, population structure and temporal and spatial complexity.

Recognising that an accepted stock assessment had not been reached and that El Niño 1+2 conditions were occurring and forecast to be extraordinary during 2026-2027, the SC agreed on the need for a precautionary approach to management of the jumbo flying squid fishery in 2027 but could not reach consensus on specific precautionary management recommendations. It considered a range of possible measures, including catch limits, reductions in fishing days, limits on active vessels and gross tonnage, closures and maintenance of the status quo, but did not reach consensus on a specific precautionary management recommendation. Many Members supported catch limits and reductions in effort and/or capacity, while some Members supported maintaining the *status quo*, noting precautionary measures already implemented by key participants in the fishery. Members' proposals and their scientific rationales are provided in the report for consideration by the Commission.

The SC recommended that the Commission endorse the updated Terms of Reference for the ASTT and extend the Task Team for another year. Further work will focus on reducing assessment uncertainty through methodological improvements and better availability, quality and consistency of data.

Ecosystems

The SC reviewed progress from the Workshop on Species Distribution Data Information Inventory. The work identified harmonised data, robust validation and reproducible workflows as common requirements for regional species distribution modelling and highlighted the fragmentation of relevant information among Members, institutions and disciplines as a principal constraint. The SC supported continued development of collaborative regional species distribution modelling, interoperable datasets, shared environmental information and climate-ready applications.

The SC also considered the first 2025–2026 Ecosystem Status Report, which provided a preliminary integrated assessment of environmental conditions across five regional domains in the eastern and southeastern Pacific. This work forms part of the SC's continuing development of ecosystem-based scientific information and its capacity to evaluate environmental and climate-related influences on SPRFMO resources.

Exploratory fisheries

The SC reviewed ongoing exploratory fisheries and new or continuing proposals under Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 13-2024 (Exploratory Fisheries) and the applicable bottom-fishing requirements. It concluded that the proposals from the Cook Islands for exploratory trap fisheries for crabs and lobsters and an exploratory hapuka fishery in the Northern and Foundation Seamounts, and the European Union proposal for an exploratory demersal longline fishery for toothfish in the George V Fracture Zone, were scientifically acceptable under the relevant Convention provisions, CMM 13-2024 (Exploratory Fisheries), CMM 03-2025 (Bottom Fishing), and the Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment Standard (BFIAS).

The SC further recommended that SPRFMO consider establishing a formal decision-making process for setting toothfish catch limits, allowing precautionary limits where information is limited and increases as additional information becomes available. It also recommended interpreting the 10-year limit for exploratory fisheries under CMM 13-2024 as 10 years in which fishing occurs and data are collected, which need not be consecutive.

Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges

SC14 completed a major stage of the Scientific Committee's work on the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges (SGN) area, building on the scientific evaluation framework developed through the SGN Task Team (SGNTT). The SC evaluated available information on biodiversity, ecological importance, VMEs, fisheries interactions and scientific value and developed advice to support the Commission's consideration of conservation and management measures for the area.

The SC recommended restrictions on bottom-fishing activities within the assessed SGN area, including that SPRFMO not authorise bottom or midwater trawling and not authorise new bottom-contact fishing methods in the assessed area, subject to the provisions recorded in the report concerning existing exploratory fisheries. It also identified continuing scientific and monitoring requirements to assess fishing impacts and the effectiveness of future measures.

Recognising that additional collection and reporting of bycatch information would improve assessment of present and future fishing impacts, the SC recommended that the Commission task the SC to periodically evaluate monitoring information to assess the effectiveness of measures developed for the SGN area and inform future scientific advice. It also recommended that the Commission endorse the updated Terms of Reference for the SGNTT, enabling the Scientific Committee's work on the area to continue.

Scientific work programme, data and institutional matters

The SC reviewed the scientific datasets held by the Secretariat and continued work to identify the SC's data needs, data gaps and improvements to SPRFMO's scientific data infrastructure. It supported the parallel objectives of addressing immediate scientific data needs and developing an optimal dedicated scientific database with greater potential for automated processes and future analyses.

SC14 developed a new Multi-Annual Workplan for 2027–2029, aligning planned scientific activities and funding requirements more closely with the Organisation's financial cycle. The SC recommended that the Commission consider, amend as appropriate, and adopt the workplan and encourage Members to participate fully in SC activities. It also requested Commission guidance on the respective roles of the Data Working Group and Scientific Committee in relation to data standards.

The SC reviewed and revised the consolidated Guidelines for the Work of the SPRFMO Scientific Committee, bringing together the existing guidelines on the SC's work and structure, annual reports and submission of meeting papers. It recommended that the Commission adopt the consolidated Guidelines and remove the limit on the period of the mandates of SC Task Teams.

SC14 also considered ways to improve the organisation of the SC's work. It recommended that the Commission consider revising the timing of the annual SC meeting to increase the effective intersessional period, endorse three days of pre-SC preparatory sessions for SC15, and establish a recurring budget item for a professional rapporteur for future SC meetings. China confirmed its offer to host SC15 in Shanghai, while Ecuador expressed interest in potentially hosting SC16.

Overall

SC14 advanced several of SPRFMO's principal multi-year scientific workstreams and provided substantive advice for decisions at COMM15. In particular, the SC brought the jack mackerel MSE to the point of presenting the Commission with a shortlist of three candidate management procedures, while also providing precautionary catch advice for 2027; advanced the jumbo flying squid assessment framework while identifying the scientific work still required before quantitative management advice can be provided; recommended continued precautionary protection of the Central Lord Howe Rise VME Encounter Area; provided scientific advice on exploratory fisheries and future toothfish catch-limit setting; advanced ecosystem and data-related work; and completed a significant stage of the scientific evaluation of the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges area.

The SC also established its scientific priorities for 2027–2029 and identified the intersessional work required to address remaining uncertainties. The recommendations and scientific advice contained in this report provide the basis for the Commission's consideration of conservation and management measures and the future scientific work programme at its 15th Annual Meeting.

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SC14 Meeting Report

List of Acronyms

The following list of acronyms and abbreviations is provided to facilitate understanding of this report for the 14th Meeting of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) Scientific Committee (SC14). Many of these terms are specific to fisheries science, ecosystem management, and regulatory processes within the SPRFMO Convention Area. The list is organised alphabetically and includes the full term for each abbreviation used throughout the document.

Acronym	Full form
ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
ACAP	Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
ALDFG	Abandoned, Lost or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear
ANJ	Areas under National Jurisdiction
AR1	First-order Autoregressive Process
ASTT	Assessment Simulation Task Team
AUS	Australia
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction
BFIA	Bottom Fishery Impact Assessment
BFIAS	Bottom Fishery Impact Assessment Standard
Blim	Biomass Limit Reference Point
BMSY	Biomass at Maximum Sustainable Yield
BRP	Biological Reference Point
BTMA	Bottom Trawl Management Area
CCAMLR	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CHL	Chile
CJM	Chilean Jack Mackerel (<i>Trachurus murphyi</i>)
CMM	Conservation and Management Measure
CMP	Candidate Management Procedure
CNCP	Cooperating Non-Contracting Party
COK	Cook Islands
CPPS	Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur (Permanent Commission for the South Pacific)
CPUE	Catch Per Unit Effort
CTD	Conductivity, Temperature and Depth

CTC	Compliance and Technical Committee
CWP	Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics
DRI	Dispositivo de Registro de Imágenes (Image Recording Device)
DSCC	Deep Sea Conservation Coalition
DSF	Deep-sea Fisheries
DTIS	Deep-Towed Imaging System
DWG	Data Working Group
DWWG	Deepwater Working Group
EAFM	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management
EAFM-IMT	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management Implementation Monitoring Tool
E-BSP	Environment-dependent State-space Biomass Production Model
ECP	Exceptional Circumstances Protocol
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ELS	Electronic Logbook System
EM	Electronic Monitoring
EMS	Electronic Monitoring System(s)
ENSO	El Niño–Southern Oscillation
ESR	Ecosystem Status Report
EU	European Union
EWG	Ecosystems Working Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FL	Fork Length
FMA	Fishery Management Area
FOP	Fisheries Operation Plan
FV	Fishing Vessel
GAM	Generalised Additive Model
GLM	Generalised Linear Model
GVFZ	George V Fracture Zone
HCR	Harvest Control Rule
HoD	Head of Delegation
HSFG	High Seas Fishing Group
HSI	Habitat Suitability Index
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IFOP	Instituto de Fomento Pesquero (Fisheries Development Institute, Chile)

IMARPE	Instituto del Mar del Perú (Marine Institute of Peru)
INLA	Integrated Nested Laplace Approximation
IRD	Image Recording Device
JJM	Joint Jack Mackerel Model
JM	Jack Mackerel
JMWG	Jack Mackerel Working Group
KOR	Republic of Korea
LOI	Leave-One-In
LOO	Leave-One-Out
ML	Mantle Length
MP	Management Procedure
MRAG	MRAG (fisheries consultancy)
MSE	Management Strategy Evaluation
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NZ	New Zealand
OM	Operating Model
PA	Precautionary Approach
PER	Peru
PFA	Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association
PR2IWG	Second Performance Review Intersessional Working Group
PRODUCE	Ministerio de la Producción (Ministry of Production, Peru)
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
SAI	Significant Adverse Impact
SC	Scientific Committee
SCW	Scientific Committee Workshop
SDM	Species Distribution Model
SEAFO	South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation
SGNTT	Salas y Gómez and Nazca Task Team
SIBE	Sistema de Bitácora Electrónica (Electronic Logbook System)
SIOFA	Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
SPDE	Stochastic Partial Differential Equation
SPiCT	Stochastic Production Model in Continuous Time
SPRFMO	South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

SQWG	Squid Working Group
SSB	Spawning Stock Biomass
SSF	Scientific Support Fund
SSHA	Sea Surface Height Anomaly
SST	Sea Surface Temperature
SSTA	Sea Surface Temperature Anomaly
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
ToR	Terms of Reference
TT	Task Team
VC	Voluntary Contribution
VME	Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WG	Working Group
WP	Working Paper



Report of the 14th Scientific Committee Meeting

Tórshavn, Faroe Islands, 7 to 12 September 2026

SC14-Report

1. Opening of the Meeting

a. Meeting Arrangements

1. Mr Ólavur Dalsgarð from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Fisheries, Faroe Islands, welcomed participants to Tórshavn and to the 14th meeting of the SPRFMO Scientific Committee (SC14), and expressed the Faroe Islands' honour to be hosting the meeting. He also thanked the Secretariat and local professional support services for their assistance.
2. The Executive Secretary (Mr James Brown) and the Scientific Committee Chairperson (Dr Ricardo Oliveros Ramos) thanked the Faroe Islands for its warm welcome and for hosting the Scientific Committee meeting.
3. The Executive Secretary detailed the meeting arrangements, the streaming service and the local facilities available to in-person delegates.
4. The Chairperson officially opened the meeting and proceedings.
5. The Executive Secretary informed the SC that Russia was unable to attend the meeting in person as it was not issued a visa by Denmark, the visa issuing authority for the Faroe Islands. He explained that as the host of the meeting, and in light of the specific circumstances, the Faroe Islands had made arrangements for Russia to be able to participate in the meeting virtually, but Russia had not taken up this offer.
6. Chile made an opening statement. Chile reaffirmed its firm commitment to the management of straddling fish stocks in the South Pacific, grounded in the best available scientific evidence and in strict adherence to the Convention. Chile highlighted the important technical work to be conducted at SC14, namely finalising the recommended candidate management procedure (CMP) for jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*), consolidating progress on the stock assessment for jumbo flying squid (*Dosidicus gigas*), advancing the criteria for transitioning exploratory fisheries to established fisheries, validating vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) protection indicators, and advancing work to support the protection of the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges. Chile emphasised that multilateral scientific cooperation within a strictly technical forum such as the SC is indispensable for completing these objectives. Chile further emphasised that scientific cooperation must be safeguarded above geopolitical circumstances and that the non-participation of a Member actively fishing in the Convention Area compromises the robustness of the SC's scientific advice. Chile called for a practical solution to be found for this situation and invited the European Union to extend its good offices to this end. Chile's full statement is available in Annex 23a of this report.
7. The Faroe Islands expressed its deep regret regarding the situation pertaining to Russia's attendance and visas. It explained that Denmark is the visa issuing authority for travel to the Faroe Islands and that, while there were some restrictions on the issuance of visas to Russian nationals, the Faroe Islands had believed that participation in the SPRFMO SC would be a sufficiently satisfactory and justifiable reason for the Russian delegation to be issued with visas. However, the delegation's visa applications were not approved. In response, the Faroe Islands made every effort to secure visas for the Russian delegation, including providing letters of support and following up directly with the Danish authorities, but it was ultimately unsuccessful.



8. The European Union stated that although the Faroe Islands forms part of the Kingdom of Denmark, it is neither part of the European Union nor the Schengen Zone, and the responsibility for issuing visas to the Faroe Islands lies solely with the Faroe Islands as host of the meeting.
9. The Faroe Islands confirmed that the decisions regarding the visas of the Russian delegation were made by Denmark and that the European Union played no part in those decisions.
10. Ecuador expressed its disappointment at the lack of Spanish interpretation at the meeting, which may limit Spanish-speaking delegations' ability to participate fully in the meeting. Ecuador recognised that the Faroe Islands had tried to make arrangements for Spanish interpretation but had been unable to do so. Ecuador encouraged all Members to support the provision of voluntary funds to fund interpretation services and expressed its hope that such services would become a permanent budget item. If, in future, a host Member is unable to provide Spanish interpretation, Ecuador encouraged the Secretariat to notify Members, CNCPs, and associated organisations to invite them to provide voluntary interpretation support, if possible.
11. Ecuador also encouraged the SC to formulate advice and recommendations that ensure the sustainability of SPRFMO resources and are based on the best available scientific knowledge and the precautionary principle.
12. A compilation of all recommendations of the SC to the Commission is available in Annex 1 of this report. A list of participants is available in Annex 2 of this report.
13. Mr Alex Meyer was appointed as the independent rapporteur.

b. Adoption of the Agenda

14. The Chairperson presented the provisional agenda (SC14-Doc01) and opened the floor for any proposals for changes. The **SC adopted** the agenda without modification (Annex 3). The Chairperson presented the intended meeting schedule (SC14-Doc04_rev3, Annex 4).

c. Meeting Documents

15. The Executive Secretary explained the meeting documentation, location and access. The posted list of meeting documents (SC14-Doc03, Annex 5) and annotated agenda (SC14-Doc02) were made available and referred to throughout the meeting.
16. A number of documents were submitted late: SC14-Doc33, SC14-SQ07, SC14-Eco04, and SC14-Obs06. The SC agreed to accept these documents and include them in the discussions.
17. The Chairperson reminded SC participants of the importance of submitting papers by the designated deadlines to provide other delegations with sufficient time to read the papers and prepare for the meeting, while recognising that participants may sometimes have difficulties submitting papers on time.

2. Annual Reports Discussion

18. Annual reports were received from Australia, Belize, Chile, China, Cook Islands, Cuba, Curaçao, European Union, Faroe Islands, Korea, Liberia, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, United States of America and Vanuatu (SC14-Doc15 to SC14-Doc34). A working paper was created for questions and answers about the different annual reports (SC14-WP01, Annex 6).



Australia

19. Australia's annual report on 2025 fishing activities in the SPRFMO Convention Area is presented in SC14-Doc15. Two Australian-flagged vessels fished in the established fishery using demersal longline gears with 817,000 hooks deployed. Another Australian vessel fished in the exploratory fishery for toothfish using Auto Longline and a detailed report on this fishing is contained in Appendix B of the document. No Australian-flagged vessel fished using trawl gears. The total catch reported in logbooks was 135.6 t, comprising primarily yellowtail kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*), morwong (*Nemadactylus* spp.), blue-eye trevalla (*Hyperoglyphe antarctica*), ocean blue-eye trevalla (*Schedophilus velaini*) and other species. Australia achieved 15.9% observer coverage in 2025. Observers did not report any bycatch of seabirds, marine mammals, marine reptiles or other species of concern in non-trawl operations in the SPRFMO Area in 2025. Observers reported 111.3 kg of benthic bycatch from 28 separate fishing operations in 2025, comprising mainly gorgonian corals (19 kg), crinoids (14 kg), starfish (4 kg), and non-living 'benthos' (74 kg). The required annual data were submitted to the SPRFMO Secretariat in accordance with Australia's data confidentiality policies and the relevant Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs).

Belize

20. Belize's 2025 annual report is presented in SC14-Doc16. During the reporting period, Belize had no fishing-support vessels authorized to operate within the SPRFMO Convention Area and no vessels authorized to conduct direct fishing operations in the Convention Area. Consequently, no Belizean vessels operated within the SPRFMO Convention Area during 2025, and there were no fishing activities to report for the reporting period.

Chile

21. Chile's 2025 annual report for jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) is presented in SC14-Doc17. Since 2020, the fishing operations on Chilean jack mackerel have been conducted exclusively within the Chilean EEZ. During 2025, the industrial fleet targeting this resource comprised 41 fishing vessels using purse seines. Catches increased progressively during 2021–2025, reaching a maximum of 1,219,027 t in 2025. This trend is explained by increasing quotas allocated to Chile plus quota transfers from other SPRFMO Members. Since 2021, size-structured jack mackerel catches have ranged between 7 and 67 cm fork length (FL), with main modes fluctuating between 27 and 44 cm. In 2025, the size range included specimens between 17 and 58 cm in FL, with a marked mode of 32 cm in FL. Between 2021 and 2025, the jack mackerel catches ranged from age groups I to XII, with age group V consistently the main mode across all years. Despite some interannual variability, the overall age structure remained stable, with contributions from multiple cohorts in most seasons. As of January 2020, Image Recording Devices (DRI or EMS) have been implemented to monitor compliance with Bycatch Reduction Plans and fishery regulations across the entire industrial fleet. The mandatory use of Electronic Logbook Systems (SIBE) was also introduced in 2020 to report, on a set-by-set basis and in real time, total catches, bycatch and discards, and the spatial and operational characteristics of the fishing activity. To date, the implementation of these Electronic Monitoring Systems (IRD and ELS) in the industrial fleet has focused primarily on ensuring compliance with regulations related to discards and incidental catch of seabirds, marine mammals, sea turtles and chondrichthyans. Their potential as tools for scientific monitoring and the collection of fishery-dependent data is now also being explored, which is expected to complement human observer programs and support a more robust ecosystem-based fisheries management approach. In the jack mackerel fishery, observer data collected between 2015 and 2025 confirmed low levels of incidental mortality, with most cases including sea lions, seabirds and sea turtles being released alive using proper handling protocols. These outcomes reflect Chile's ongoing commitment to strengthen sustainable practices and ecosystem considerations in the management of jack mackerel.



22. Chile's 2025 annual report for jumbo squid (*Dosidicus gigas*) is presented in SC14-Doc18. Chile's jumbo squid fishery continues to operate under its domestic regulatory framework, which since 2020 has allowed directed fishing for jumbo squid exclusively using jigging gear or handline. Catches were taken within Chile's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), with the fishery conducted primarily by the artisanal fleet, while the industrial fleet caught the species only as bycatch. During 2025, a global catch quota was set at 200,000 t, without allocation between the artisanal and industrial sectors. Fishing activity followed the same pattern as previous years, with catches concentrated during the first half of the year and a marked decline in the second half. The fishery also continued to develop mainly between the Coquimbo and Biobío regions, with no incidental catch of marine mammals, seabirds, or turtles recorded. Indicators for the artisanal fleet show relatively stable fishing effort over the recent period, while catch per unit effort (CPUE) has shown an overall declining trend compared with the early years of the series. Regarding size structure, the catch continued to be dominated by individuals above the reference size at sexual maturity, with a mode of approximately 70 cm mantle length (ML) in 2025. Fishery monitoring was carried out by the Chilean Fisheries Development Institute (IFOP) through biological and fishery monitoring programs, providing the background information necessary for assessment of the resource and technical advice.

China

23. China's 2025 annual report is presented in SC14-Doc19. In 2025, a total of 576 Chinese squid jigging vessels operated in the SPRFMO Convention Area, harvesting 484,700 t of jumbo flying squid. The number of active vessels fluctuated monthly, ranging from a low of 297 in August to a peak of 503 in December, with total fishing effort reaching 111,151 days and an average catch rate of 4.4 t per day. During the 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 fishing seasons, an observer program was implemented, deploying 14 observers. In 2025 alone, 14 observers served onboard, with 12 having completed their assignments and returned to port by July 2026, while the remaining two continued their work at sea. The returned observers monitored 1,960 fishing days and 47 transshipment activities and measured over 100,000 squid specimens.

Cook Islands

24. The Cook Islands' 2025 annual report is presented in SC14-Doc20. The Cook Islands vessel, due to a change in vessel and a required vessel refit, was only able to complete one trip in 2025. The vessel primarily targeted deep-sea golden crabs (*Chaceon* sp.) and hapuka (*Polyprion oxygeneios*), some sets targeting lobsters (*Jasus caveorum*) were also made. The vessel is fishing under both CMM 14d and CMM 14g, the operations are overseen by two observers onboard the vessel and the vessel is monitored using VMS.
25. The observers collect size frequency data as well as sex, maturity and shell state data from all *J. caveorum* and *Chaceon* sp. For *P. oxygeneios* the observers collect otoliths, length and sex information. In addition, genetic samples from *J. caveorum* and *P. oxygeneios* are being collected for the evaluation of stock structure and to assess links between its two different fishing areas as well as between seamounts. The Cook Islands has recently built its own fish ageing laboratory and, as part of its capacity development work, will be undertaking its own analysis in-house and not outsourcing the work. The observers also collect catch and effort information as well as monitor VME indicator taxa interactions. The Cook Islands also has protocols in place to minimising interactions with marine mammals, reptiles and seabirds.
26. In the Cook Islands' single trip, hapuka was the dominant species by both weight and number, comprising 97.2% of total retained weight (13,996.5 kg) and 91.7% of total fish retained (986 fish). Trumpeter (*Latris lineata*) was the second most abundant species by weight (171.5 kg; 1.2%), followed by spiny dogfish (*Squalus* sp.); 137.5 kg; 1.0%).



27. In the trap fishery crabs were the primary target and 21,381.63kg were landed. Catch and biological sampling of *Chaceon* crabs in 2025 indicated a stable population with no evidence of decline in size structure across the exploratory fishery to date. The majority of crabs landed were in the 12–14 cm carapace width range, with most individuals exceeding the estimated 50% maturity threshold of approximately 10 cm. Reproductive data suggests a winter spawning period, supported by both berry state and shell state observations, though a sampling gap from July to October, coinciding with the lobster fishery closure, limits the completeness of seasonal biological information.
28. Fishing effort was directed at crabs with only minor bycatch including prawns, gastropods, teleosts, and a small number of VME indicator taxa, predominantly octocorals.
29. Crab CPUE was low but consistent with previous trips and slightly elevated in Trip 8, likely reflecting the targeted nature of this trip's fishing strategy rather than a change in population abundance. Trap fullness data indicates that saturation was not a significant factor, and the overall consistency of CPUE across trips suggests that current fishing effort levels are not producing a detectable stock response.

Cuba

30. Cuba's 2025 annual report is presented in SC14-Doc21. There were no Cuban vessels fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area in 2025 and there were therefore no fishing, research, or management data to report. Cuba reaffirmed its continued interest in SPRFMO-managed fisheries and indicated it may engage in fishing activities within the Convention Area in the future.

Curaçao

31. Curaçao's 2025 annual report is presented in SC14-Doc34. Curaçao currently has no vessels participating in the fisheries managed by SPRFMO. Therefore, Curaçao has no data or information to provide regarding Curaçao fisheries operating under SPRFMO jurisdiction in 2025 or 2026, nor information to provide regarding 1) catches, effort, and CPUE summaries; 2) fisheries data collection and research activities; 3) biological sampling and length/age composition of catches; 4) ecosystem approach considerations; and 5) observer implementation reports for fishing activities under SPRFMO jurisdiction.

European Union

32. The European Union's (EU) 2025 annual report is presented in SC14-Doc22. In 2025, three EU trawlers were active in the SPRFMO Convention Area, taking catches of jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) from June to December. Total catch in 2025 was 32,856 tonnes, of which 29,635 t were comprised of Chilean Jack Mackerel. Three scientific observers were deployed on two EU fishing vessels in the period from July to December 2025. Since 2015, a full self-sampling program has been initiated on all EU fishing vessels belonging to members of the Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association (PFA) and fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area. In 2025, nine PFA trips were self-sampled. During the Jack Mackerel Benchmark Working Group (SCW14) it was decided to develop a protocol for inclusion of self-sampling data for the EU fleet for those quarters where no observer trips were carried out. The EU's revised sampling protocol provides that 4–5 individual fish for each length class represented in the catch should be collected per trip, per quarter, per fishing area with the aim to have even representation for all length classes recorded. For SC12, it was proposed to only use the self-sampling data from 2021 and onwards and only for quarters for which no observer data is present. For 2025, there are samples for two of the quarters when there were active fisheries in the Convention Area. It is therefore proposed to use the self-sampling data for the second quarter of 2025. Exploratory fishing for toothfish has continued to be undertaken by the Spanish FV *TRONIO* in 2025 in accordance with CMM 14e-2024. In this campaign, effort was split across two research blocks: Block A, where all previous fishing (2021–2023) had taken place, and Block B, a previously unexplored section of the research block. In 2025, the total allowable catch (TAC) of 129 t in Block A and the TAC of 33 t in Block B were nearly reached after approximately five weeks of fishing. The European Union has compiled a detailed survey report of the second year's exploratory fishing, together with an updated stock assessment integrating data from all campaigns between 2021 and 2025.



Faroe Islands

33. The Faroe Islands' 2025 annual report is presented in SC14-Doc23. The Faroe Islands had no vessels fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area in 2025 and there were therefore no fishing, research, or management data to report. In 2025, the Faroe Islands transferred its quota of 15,853 t of *Trachurus murphyi* to Chile, subject to Chile's approval and without prejudice to future arrangements under CMM 01-2025. The Faroe Islands reiterated its continuing interest in SPRFMO fisheries and expressed the intention to provide full data and comply with relevant measures should Faroese-flagged vessels resume fishing activities in the future.

Korea

34. Korea's 2025 annual report is presented in SC14-Doc24. Following the resumption of Korean trawl operations in 2024 after a multi-year absence (2020–2023), one pelagic trawl vessel continued fishing operations in the Convention Area in 2025, targeting jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*). The trawl fishery reported catch of 95 t of jack mackerel, 6 t of chub mackerel, and minor bycatch of other species. No Korean jigging vessel operated in the Convention Area in 2025. Korea's exploratory bottom longline fishing for toothfish, initiated in 2025 under CMM 14h-2025, took place during the year and was reported separately in a dedicated progress report. Korea continues to implement an electronic reporting system for fisheries data collection and maintains a scientific observer programme, accredited by the SPRFMO in 2022. The observer coverage for the trawl fishery was 100% in 2025.

Liberia

35. Liberia's annual report is presented in Document SC14-Doc33. Liberia had no active fishing vessels in the Convention Area in 2025 and, therefore, had no catch or effort data to provide to the SC. Liberia also did not carry out any research activities relevant to SPRFMO fisheries in 2025.

New Zealand

36. New Zealand's 2025 annual report is presented in SC14-Doc25. In 2025, New Zealand had eight vessels permitted to fish in the SPRFMO Convention Area, of which three actively fished. Active bottom fishing comprised one orange roughy trawl vessel that fished on the Westpac Bank, one exploratory toothfish fishery bottom longline vessel, and one other bottom longline vessel that fished on the West Norfolk Ridge. Total reported catches in 2025 were 181 t for orange roughy landings, 51 t for other species, and 6.1 t from the exploratory toothfish fishery. Orange roughy catches were taken entirely from Westpac Bank. Commercial bottom trawl effort consisted of 17 trawl tows by one vessel. Non-exploratory bottom longline fishing involved one vessel undertaking three trips to the West Norfolk Ridge and setting approximately 48,000 hooks, resulting in 50 t of catch. For the exploratory toothfish fishery, one vessel completed a single exploratory trip, deploying 50,600 hooks and catching 6.1 t in total, comprising 0.1 t Antarctic toothfish, 1.1 t Patagonian toothfish, and small quantities of other species. Trawl fisheries achieved 100% observer coverage. Bottom longline fisheries achieved 55% coverage, with 17 of 31 fishing days observed. Observers monitored both trawl trips and two bottom longline trips (including the exploratory trip). Protected species interactions were low during 2025. No interactions with marine mammals, reptiles, or other species of concern were reported. One black petrel (*Procellaria parkinsoni*) interaction was observed in the bottom longline fishery on the West Norfolk Ridge. It was released alive and was observed flying away after release. Observers reported that all required seabird mitigation measures were being followed during the trip.



Panama

37. Panama's 2025 annual report is presented in SC14-Doc26. For the 2025 reporting period, Panama reaffirmed its full compliance with all SPRFMO CMMs. As in previous years, no fishing activities targeting SPRFMO-regulated species were conducted within the Convention Area. Panama's participation was limited to authorized logistical operations, including transshipments, port landings, and provision of fuel and supplies, in accordance with applicable regulations. There were no catch or effort records, no data collection or research activities, and no biological sampling. No interactions with seabirds or other species of concern were reported. Panama did not participate in the observer programme.

Peru

38. Peru's 2025 annual report for the SPRFMO Convention Area is presented in SC14-Doc27. As of June 2026, there are 1,148 Peruvian vessels authorized and registered in the record of vessels authorized to fish within the SPRFMO Convention Area. From January 2025 to June 2026, a total of 4,939.85 t of *Trachurus murphyi* catch and 624.94 t of *Scomber japonicus* catch were reported. Regarding *Dosidicus gigas*, a total of 408.7 t were reported for 2025, but there were no reported catches during the first half of 2026. The research activities in the Convention Area, monitored by a Peruvian onboard observer program, provided reliable information on fishing effort, catch volumes, species composition of the catches, fishing areas, and distribution of the target species. No observations of top predator bycatch (seabirds, marine mammals, and sea turtles) were reported during the fishing activities from January 2025 to June 2026.
39. Peru's 2025 annual report for its Areas under National Jurisdiction (ANJ) is presented in SC14-Doc28. The Peruvian marine environment is characterized by its high productivity and variability. It is particularly exposed to the effects of the El Niño and La Niña climatic patterns in the Pacific Ocean. Between 2013 and the first part of 2018, these changing environmental conditions caused a more dispersed distribution, reduced availability, lower abundance indexes, and consequently lower catches of jack mackerel. This has been followed by an expanded distribution in denser concentrations farther offshore, much higher abundance indexes, increased availability to the industrial and artisanal purse seine fleet, and higher catches of jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) from the second half of 2018 to 2022. In 2023, a Coastal Niño event was registered along the Peruvian coast, which led to a concentration of jack mackerel south of the Peruvian coast, where it was more accessible. In 2024, the catches initially decreased due to an initial dispersion of jack mackerel schools, but when the environmental conditions cooled, jack mackerel concentrated again south of the coast. During 2025, oceanographic conditions were generally characterized by the seasonal cycle, near-normal sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies, and relatively stable salinity. From February 2026 onward, SST increased progressively, and warmer waters expanded shoreward, generating positive temperature anomalies of up to +2 °C. These anomalies intensified from May onward, primarily within 100 nm of the coast, accompanied by a marked shoreward displacement of the Subtropical Surface Waters. Between January 2025 and June 2026, the fishery targeted a wide range of sizes, with the highest proportions of juveniles in October 2025 (93%) and November 2025 (87%); during the first half of 2026, the highest proportion of juveniles in the fishery occurred in February (52%) and June (54%). Research surveys in 2025 and 2026 also found younger and smaller juveniles. In December 2025, Instituto del Mar del Perú (IMARPE) updated the available 2025 jack mackerel assessment for the Peruvian (far-north) stock with the JJM model using the configuration agreed during SC13. IMARPE recommended three scenarios: (i) corresponding to approximately 80% of the catch associated with the fishing mortality at maximum sustainable yield (TAC = 175,000 t, the precautionary scenario), (ii) corresponding to approximately 90% of the catch associated with the fishing mortality at maximum sustainable yield (TAC = 195,000 t), and (iii) corresponding to the catch associated with the fishing mortality at maximum sustainable yield (TAC = 216,000 t). Based on this advice, in December 2025, PRODUCE established a regulatory measure for the jack mackerel to be caught in Peruvian jurisdictional waters. For the large-scale or industrial fleet with a hold capacity greater than 32.6 m³, the catch limit was set at 88,317 t. For the artisanal fishing vessels and purse seine vessels with a hold capacity of less than 32.6 m³, the total limit was established at 86,683 t, of which 34,427 t was allocated for the January–April 2026 fishing period. Subsequently,



the catch limit for the artisanal fleet for the same period was modified to 91,000 t. For the May–August 2026 fishing period, an additional catch limit of 45,659 t was established, increasing the allocation for artisanal fishing vessels using gillnets and purse seine vessels with a hold capacity of less than 32.6 m³. IMARPE has conducted an updated assessment with JJM based on the most recent information and data available up to June 2026. The recent observations and assessments confirm the increasing trend in the biomass estimates observed from 2016. Nevertheless, the model projection for 2026 shows a decrease in its trend. Despite this, the Peruvian jack mackerel stock is in an overall healthy situation based on the reference points.

Russian Federation

40. The Russian Federation's annual report is presented in SC14-Doc29. Russia did not fish in the SPRFMO Convention Area in 2025 and it therefore had no fishing, research, or management data to report.

Chinese Taipei

41. Chinese Taipei's annual report is presented in SC14-Doc30. Chinese Taipei's squid jigging fleet has targeted jumbo flying squid, which is widely distributed throughout the eastern Pacific Ocean, since 2002. However, the fishery was temporarily suspended from 2022 to 2024. During the 2025 fishing season, a single squid jigging vessel operated in the SPRFMO Convention Area, landing a total catch of 267 t. The major fishing grounds were located between 15°–20°S and 74°–81°W. Observer coverage reached 82.7% of fishing days.

United States

42. The United States' annual report is presented in SC14-Doc31. The United States currently has no vessels participating in the fisheries managed by SPRFMO. Therefore, the United States has no data or information to provide regarding U.S. fisheries operating under SPRFMO jurisdiction in 2025 or 2026, nor information to provide regarding 1) catches, effort, and CPUE summaries; 2) fisheries data collection and research activities; 3) biological sampling and length/age composition of catches; 4) ecosystem approach considerations; and 5) observer implementation reports for fishing activities under SPRFMO jurisdiction. The United States has a continuing interest in the fisheries managed by SPRFMO and may have vessels that enter these fisheries in the future. If U.S.-flagged vessels enter SPRFMO-managed fisheries, the United States would provide the Commission with all relevant data and information and abide by all relevant measures adopted.

Vanuatu

43. Vanuatu's annual report is presented in SC14-Doc32. Vanuatu had no active fishing vessels in the Convention Area in 2025 and, therefore, had no catch or effort data to provide to the SC. Vanuatu also did not carry out any research activities relevant to SPRFMO fisheries in 2025.

3. Commission Guidance and Inter-Sessional Activities

a. Secretariat SC related activities

44. The Executive Secretary presented SC14-Doc07, which summarised the science-related activities the Secretariat engaged in intersessionally. The Executive Secretary also highlighted the appointment of the new SPRFMO Science Manager, Dr Jessica Fuller.
45. The SC thanked the Executive Secretary for the report and noted the document.
46. The SC also noted document SC14-Doc06, which collates the report summaries of intersessional web meetings of the SC and its working groups and task teams.



b. Update on data held by the Secretariat

47. The Secretariat presented a pre-recorded presentation by the Data Manager, Mr Bernard Vigga, of SC14-Doc11, an update on the datasets held at the Secretariat. The Secretariat receives and manages a range of standardised datasets under the CMMs. The Data Manager highlighted the datasets relevant to the work of the SC: namely the datasets for the Record of Vessels; annual catch and operational catch and effort; observer bycatch and length-frequency information; landings; transshipment notifications and declarations; port inspections; manual VMS position reports; VME encounter notifications; abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) events; and data for SC assessments such as age-length keys and jack mackerel survey data.
48. The SC noted the overview of the datasets held by the Secretariat.
49. The SC created a working paper with questions on, and suggested improvements to, the overview of the datasets (SC14-WP04).

c. Review of the Scientific Support Fund

50. The Executive Secretary presented SC14-Doc08_rev1, which outlined the outstanding 2026–2027 SC activities and the funds available in the Scientific Support Fund (SSF) and science-related Voluntary Contributions (VCs). The paper also invited the SC's input to the review of the SSF, including what works well, what could be improved, and how the SSF can best support planning the multiannual work of the SC.
51. The SC noted the funding currently available for SC activities and the review of the SSF as described in SC14-Doc08_rev1.

d. SC multi-annual workplan

52. The Chairperson presented the SC multi-annual workplan for 2026–2028 in SC14-Doc05.
53. The SC discussed planned activities and associated funding for the SC, its working groups, and its task teams for 2027–2029 under agenda item 12b.

e. Observer Programme accreditation process and progress

54. The SC noted the Executive Secretary's oral update regarding the accreditation process and progress. COMM14 accredited the observer programmes of three further Members: the Cook Islands, the Russian Federation, and Panama (in respect of transshipment). This year, accreditation assessments are being carried out by MRAG for the observer programmes of Ecuador and Panama (for scientific observation more broadly). The accreditation of the observer programmes of Australia, Chile, and New Zealand are up for renewal in 2029 and assessment for accreditation will commence in 2028. The full extent of observer programme accreditation can be found on the SPRFMO website under the CMM 16 webpage.

f. Review and Update on Data Standards

55. The SC reviewed CMM 02-2026 but did not have any comments or suggestions for potential amendments.
56. The SC **agreed** to continue to review CMM 02-2026 for potential amendments at SC15.



g. Cooperation with Other Organisations

57. The Executive Secretary reported that SPRFMO is continuing its cooperation with several organisations, highlighting a number of examples of particular relevance to the SC. SPRFMO has continued to collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on a range of Deep-sea Fisheries Project activities. With CCAMLR, the two Secretariats have held their annual cooperation meeting, and cooperation is ongoing in areas including data-sharing, tagging, and exploratory fisheries. The SPRFMO Secretariat has also been in communication with the *Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur* (Permanent Commission for the South Pacific; CPPS), and CPPS has identified regional governance developments, the El Niño effect on fisheries, and sustainable squid management as possible areas of cooperation. Regarding the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), the Commission has directed the Secretariat to work with ACAP and Members on further analysis of seabird bycatch data, and the Secretariat invited further direction from Members. SPRFMO has also successfully applied to join the FAO Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP).
58. The FAO presented SC14-Obs01, which provided an overview of the Deep-sea Fisheries Project, a component project of the FAO's Common Oceans Programme, from 2022–present. Project activities of relevance to the SPRFMO SC include a review of the implementation of the Deep-sea Fisheries Guidelines; development of the E-learning Course “Strengthening deep-sea fisheries management in areas beyond national jurisdiction”; establishment of the Deep-sea Fisheries Technical Forum (DGroups community); various workshops and symposia, particularly a workshop on deepwater sharks and follow-up work, a workshop on cross-sectoral interactions with deep-sea fisheries, a workshop on developing guidance on the implementation of ecosystem approaches to fisheries management (EAFM) for deep-sea regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), and an online workshop on data and knowledge sharing in toothfish longline fisheries; support for conducting and improving data-limited stock assessments; and mapping of deep-sea fisheries in the ABNJ. Based on the successes of the Common Oceans Programme Phases I and II, FAO and its partners are assessing the possibility to develop a third phase of the Programme.
59. The FAO invited the SC to support ongoing engagement with the Deep-sea Fisheries Project, and in particular to:
- Nominate experts to engage in an online consultation on SPRFMO-specific guidance to improve catch reporting of deepwater sharks;
 - Consider relevant sectors in the SPRFMO area which may interact with deep-sea fisheries and any data gaps which may need to be addressed in the context of the implementation of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement);
 - Consider whether SPRFMO would benefit from defining how it is implementing EAFM, the precautionary approach and climate change implications, and the usefulness of the FAO ecosystem approach to fisheries implementation monitoring (EAFM-IMT) tool to facilitate reflections;
 - Consider proposed ways to improve data and knowledge sharing on toothfish longline fisheries with CCAMLR, SEAFO, SIOFA, and SPRFMO;
 - Consider nominating additional experts to engage in the work with ICES on the assessment of data-limited stocks.
60. Several Members expressed support for continued collaboration with the Deep-sea Fisheries Project and considered concrete activities for operationalising such collaboration in the SC Multi-Annual Workplan.



4. Commission Working Groups

a. Working Group on 2nd Performance Review Recommendations

61. The SC reviewed SC14-Doc13, which provided the outcomes of the Intersessional Working Group tasked with assigning and prioritising the recommendations derived from the second SPRFMO performance review (PR2IWG). The SC reviewed the 16 recommendations assigned to the SC and the comments from PR2IWG. The SC created a working paper with further comments on the recommendations, including milestones, notable work items in the SC multiannual workplan related to that recommendation, and estimated completion date (SC14-WP08, Annex 9).

b. Data Working Group

62. The Chairperson of the Data Working Group (DWG), Ms Karolina Molla Gazi, presented SC14-Doc14, which outlined the DWG's plans to consult the SC and its Working Groups, through a questionnaire, about the SC's data needs and potential data gaps. The DWG would advance work based on the results, the outputs of which could include a set of data submission templates, or revision and/or improvement of existing templates for jack mackerel and for squid, and potential development of a dedicated scientific database for certain data types.
63. The SC noted the importance of working to refine the current SPRFMO database with the parallel goals of 1) addressing immediate needs of the SC that could be resolved with comparative ease, and 2) establishing an optimal, dedicated scientific database, including automatable processes, that would facilitate further scientific analyses in the longer-term.
64. The SC encouraged Working Group Chairs and Members to complete the questionnaire from the DWG (SC14-WP11, Annex 10) for identifying the SC's data needs, potential data gaps, and potential improvements to the SPRFMO database, and return responses to the Secretariat by the agreed deadline of 9 October 2026.
65. The SC **requested** that the DWG consider the SC's data needs, potential data gaps, and potential improvements to the SPRFMO database based on Members' responses to the questionnaire when developing its workplan.

5. Jack Mackerel

a. Review of inter-sessional activities

66. The Chairperson of the Jack Mackerel Working Group (JMWG), Dr Jim Ianelli, outlined the primary jack mackerel inter-sessional activities, which included the 2026 assessment benchmark workshop (SCW16), the management strategy evaluation (MSE) workshop (SCW17), intersessional working-group and task-team meetings, and an independent desk review of the jack mackerel MSE. Working papers, assessment results and supporting analyses for SC14 are available through the jack mackerel wiki at sprfmo.github.io/SC14_JM.
67. The JMWG Chairperson drew attention to the following recommendations from the benchmark workshop (SC14-JM02, paragraphs 11–12 and 63), the MSE workshop (SC14-JM03, Recommendations and Conclusions and paragraphs 58–65) and intersessional work. The recommendations were to:
- a. use the agreed benchmark index set for the candidate base-model configuration, including the new Chilean and Peruvian CPUE series;
 - b. replace the previous Peruvian acoustic-index treatments with the benchmark-agreed seasonal availability indices, noting that these indices were later excluded;
 - c. retain the design-based Chile Acoustic North biomass treatment for assessment use;



- d. apply the updated Far North length-composition bins from 10 cm fork length, with a 50 cm plus group; and
 - e. accept the benchmark-derived model set for MSE conditioning, with explicit documentation of recruitment autocorrelation and innovation variance.
68. These benchmark recommendations informed the model and data refinements used in the 2026 assessment and MSE conditioning. The final annual assessment configuration, including subsequent index choices, is described below.
69. The SC also noted the following priorities arising from intersessional activities and submitted papers:
- a. evaluate the feasibility of a synoptic acoustic survey spanning northern to southern Chile to help distinguish abundance trends from spatial redistribution and changes in availability, if possible;
 - b. improve documentation of index coverage, increasing sampling, expansion methods and uncertainty, and resolve discrepancies in age–length–key sample-size reporting; and
 - c. present near-term sensitivities and diagnostics reflecting the 2026 acoustic and catch information.

b. Assessment data review and evaluation

70. SC14-JM02, the SCW16 JMWG benchmark meeting report, was taken as read. The report recorded SCW16's main decisions, agreed recommendations, unresolved technical issues and follow-up tasks required for the June MSE workshop and subsequent SC review. SCW16 focused on assessment inputs, abundance-index evaluation, biological data and assumptions, assessment-model simplification, operating-model conditioning, and priorities for the MSE work programme.
71. The JMWG Chairperson presented the catch history of jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) as described in SC14-JM01. Total reported jack mackerel catch in 2025 was 1,419,640 t, 9.5% higher than 2024. By the end of June 2026, cumulative catch was 434,203 t, 49.1% lower than at the same point in 2025 and 56.6% of the 2021–2025 January–June average. No Secretariat projection for total 2026 catch was provided because of data limitations. In 2025, Chilean Fleets 1 and 2 accounted for 85.9% of total catch, Peru/Ecuador coastal Fleet 3 for 12.0%, and offshore Fleet 4 for 2.1%. Catch timing has also shifted later: cumulative catch reached 70% of the 2025 annual total in August, the latest in the 2010–2025 series.
72. Chile presented SC14-JM10, which provided a standardisation of commercial CPUE from 1994 to 2026 for Chilean jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) in central-southern Chile using a hierarchical Bayesian spatio-temporal framework implemented through INLA. Models allowing spatial CPUE patterns to vary annually substantially outperformed a temporally constant spatial model. The standardised index was relatively high in the mid-2000s, reached a minimum around 2011, and recovered to predominantly above-average levels after 2019. Retrospective performance was stable (Mohn's $\rho = 0.025$). The framework demonstrates the importance of accounting for annual spatial redistribution and fishing operations when interpreting CPUE.
73. The SC noted the unusually high level of catch so far in the third quarter of 2026.
74. The SC noted that longer time was spent searching for aggregations of fish above the minimum legal catch size in the 2026 fishing season compared to previous years and that this increased search time should be taken into account when incorporating commercial data in the stock assessment.



75. Chile presented SC14-JM11, which provided the results of a hydroacoustic assessment of Chilean jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) in the northern zone of Chile. A hydroacoustic survey conducted over 33 transects and 35 midwater hauls estimated 3.262 billion jack mackerel and 642,244.1 t biomass. Fish ranged from 11–54 cm FL and showed a multimodal length distribution, with the primary mode at 23 cm. Jack mackerel occurred between Arica and Valparaíso, with the great majority of biomass concentrated within the first few nautical miles from shore.
76. Chile presented SC14-JM16, which provided the results of a study of the spatio-temporal dynamics of the Chilean jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) fishery off central-southern Chile during 2020–2026. The central-southern Chilean fishery changed substantially in spatial distribution, size structure and fishing performance. Fishing was relatively coastal through much of 2020–2023 but expanded northward and offshore during 2024–2025 as availability declined in traditional grounds. Early 2026 saw sharply reduced landings and catch rates and increased occurrence of juveniles. The results indicate a recent shift in Chilean jack mackerel spatio-temporal dynamics potentially associated with changes in availability and/or environmental variability, with implications for management and sustainable exploitation.
77. Chile presented SC14-JM19, which provided an update to alternative CPUE indices using electronic logbook data through the first semester of 2025. Chile compared spatio-temporal approaches using vessel hold capacity and year/month effects. Indices predicted using a regular spatial mesh were similar to those based on the year fixed effect; consequently, Chile recommended the year-effect index. Because of sample-size limitations, the series should be used from 2000 onwards.
78. Peru shared information from its jack mackerel fisheries so far in 2026. Peru informed the SC that catch and CPUE have seen large declines compared to 2025. Peru has two fleets, an industrial fleet and an artisanal fleet. The industrial fleet has had limited activity this year, while the artisanal fleet has moved closer to the coast. The jack mackerel fishing grounds are part of an upwelling ecosystem full of cold, nutrient-rich waters, but when El Niño occurs the upwelling almost stops and there is an intrusion of warm waters from the west and the north. This may have produced a strong change in the spatial distribution of jack mackerel. Moreover, the waters off Peru are still warm, while the waters off Chile are getting colder, which may be why there has not been a rebound in catch in Peruvian waters like there has been in Chile.
79. Chile presented SC14-JM13_rev1, which provided an evaluation of methodological improvements for the hydroacoustic assessment of Chilean jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) in northern and central-southern Chile. Chile evaluated improvements to acoustic survey sampling and spatial modelling using INLA-Stochastic Partial Differential Equation (SPDE) models and simulated survey designs. Spatial coverage strongly affected uncertainty. In northern Chile, the existing survey design provided an appropriate balance of coverage and precision, although a 16-transect design could be viable under operational constraints. In central-southern Chile, a 16-transect adaptive design concentrating additional effort offshore achieved uncertainty comparable to a more intensive design.
80. The SC expressed its appreciation to Chile for conducting this evaluation, noting its value for future work towards developing a Chile-wide understanding of the stock.
81. The SC noted that the results produced by the alternative modelling presented in SC14-JM13_rev1 seemed to correspond well to the results of the traditional hydroacoustic assessments for northern and central-southern Chile.
82. The SC noted that Chile's hydroacoustic survey follows a fixed survey design that does not account for environmental variability. The SC suggested that as future work, Chile could investigate the efficiency of the survey by using habitat mapping to account for changes in spatial distribution.



83. Chile presented paper SC14-JM14, which described a framework to standardise biomass indices for Chilean jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) from the northern (2006–2026) and central-southern (1997–2023) Chilean acoustic surveys using a common delta-Gamma spatio-temporal framework using sdmTMB. Prediction over fixed spatial domains reduced effects arising from changing survey coverage. Standardised indices reproduced the main long-term patterns of conventional indices but differed in annual biomass magnitude when survey coverage changed. The approach provided an alternative standardised relative-biomass series for consideration alongside the acoustic indices currently used in the SPRFMO assessment.
84. Chile's paper SC14-JM15 was taken as read. It provided the Chilean jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) CPUE index based on the fishing trip database and acoustic biomass estimates updated with data up to June 2026. The central-southern Chilean CPUE index fell sharply (60%) during March–June 2026, which Chile attributed to reduced availability associated with heatwaves and El Niño 2026; the fleet subsequently moved south in July and obtained high CPUE. Northern acoustic biomass also declined sharply (80%) in 2026. Alternative CPUE modelling produced broadly similar indices, but Chile recommended a precautionary approach because the CPUE index may overestimate recovery in central-southern Chile.
85. Chile's paper SC14-JM17 was taken as read. It provided the results of a study to investigate approaches for incorporating changes in fleet efficiency ("effort creep") into the Chilean CPUE index. Fisher survey responses were used to estimate perceived changes in efficiency and their timing. Adding the creep factor directly as a dummy variable caused multicollinearity and aliasing, while using creep-corrected CPUE as the GLM response produced a pattern similar to the uncorrected index. Chile proposed further work, potentially including an additional survey, to improve robustness.
86. Chile's paper SC14-JM18 was taken as read. It provided the results of a study using sdmTMB spatio-temporal models to reconstruct the historical northern-zone acoustic-density series despite changes in survey extent and sampling design. The preferred model included year, oxygen concentration, AR1 spatio-temporal covariance and anisotropy. Its acoustic-density trend was consistent with conventional density and total-biomass trends. Chile suggested that the acoustic-density index may be particularly informative where trawl-haul numbers are low or spatio-temporal length sampling is biased.
87. The EU's paper SC14-JM20 was taken as read. It described PFA fisheries in the SPRFMO Area during 2019–2026 and its vessel self-sampling programme, which records haul information, species composition, lengths, temperature and depth. Sampling provides information on the spatial/temporal evolution of fisheries and biological composition. No PFA fishing occurred in 2020; two PFA vessels operated in 2025 and three were present during the first half of 2026. For jack mackerel, the 2019–2026 programme covered 62 trips, 2,675 hauls, 175,563 t of catch and 184,645 individual length measurements.
88. The EU's paper SC14-JM21 was taken as read. It provided an update to the standardised offshore CPUE index originally developed at SC07 using haul-by-haul data from China, European Union, Korea, Vanuatu and Russia. The standardisation followed the procedure agreed at the 2018 benchmark. The final GAM includes year, vessel, month and El Niño effect, together with a smoothed latitude-longitude interaction. The standardised series begins in 2008, the first year for which haul-level data were available.

c. Jack mackerel assessment

89. The 2026 annual assessment (Model 1.06) used six abundance indices: the two Chilean acoustic series, Chilean CPUE, separate Peruvian artisanal and industrial CPUE, and offshore CPUE. The seasonal Peruvian acoustic availability indices examined during benchmark development were omitted from this annual configuration.



90. Sensitivity analyses for the 2026 base model (1.06) examined the influence of four recent abundance-index groups: Chilean CPUE, offshore CPUE, the two Peruvian CPUE series together, and the North Chile acoustic survey. Leave-one-out (LOO) runs strongly downweighted each group in turn, while leave-one-in (LOI) runs retained one group at its base weight and downweighted the other three. Downweighting was implemented by multiplying index errors by 100. Other data retained their base treatment.
91. The results showed substantial differences in estimated recent spawning biomass. The LOI runs retaining North Chile acoustics or Peruvian CPUE produced the highest estimates, while retaining Chilean CPUE produced the lowest. In the LOO runs, downweighting Chilean CPUE increased estimated 2026 spawning biomass by 93% relative to the base, whereas downweighting North Chile acoustics reduced it by 30% and produced a declining trajectory in recent years. Downweighting offshore or Peruvian CPUE produced smaller increases. The influence of Peruvian CPUE therefore depended on which other indices remained influential, demonstrating the importance of considering the contrasting signals jointly.
92. The SC noted the need to improve size- and age-composition sampling for acoustic surveys.
93. China and Chile expressed concern about the substantial changes in estimated stock scale and condition relative to SC13.
94. Chile expressed its disagreement with the 2026 stock status presented to SC14, noting that the substantial revision in stock scale and perceived trajectory warrants further technical scrutiny before being consolidated as an agreed benchmark. Specifically, after more than a decade in which successive assessments demonstrated a sustained rebuilding trajectory from the 2010–2012 historical depletion into a consolidated status within the green quadrant of the Kobe diagram, the candidate assessment abruptly shifts the terminal phase-plane coordinates into the yellow or red quadrants, depending on whether equilibrium versus dynamic biological reference points (BRPs) and historical selectivity averaging windows are applied. In Chile's view, this revised perception stems primarily from cumulative structural and input modifications introduced during the 2026 benchmark and post-benchmark process, during which substantial scientific efforts were concurrently dedicated to conditioning operating models for the MSE. Given the compressed timeframe and the intensity of work required across both processes, Chile considers that, consistent with international best assessment practices, a formal independent external peer review is essential to resolve outstanding methodological questions regarding input configurations, data weighting, and their collective influence on estimated stock status. Specifically, further technical evaluation should address at least: the treatment of Far North CPUE series, survey selectivity parameterization, and examining the trade-offs among goodness-of-fit, model parsimony, retrospective stability, and biological plausibility, particularly where subtle parameter shifts fundamentally alter perception relative to reference points. Consequently, Chile recommended retaining the stock status baseline reported by SC13 for 2026 while a comprehensive, independent scientific review is completed to provide full technical assurance to the Commission (see Chilean full statement in Annex 23b).
95. The JMWG Chairperson explained that the revised assessment retained a similar improving stock trend despite the change in scale, following extensive model development and testing through the benchmark and MSE workshop process.
96. The European Union and Australia recalled that earlier sensitivity analyses shown at SC13 had demonstrated considerable uncertainty in stock scale and considered the model improvements responsive to those findings.
97. Australia, the Cook Islands, the European Union and the United States considered the benchmark scientifically defensible and the best available science for advice, emphasising consistent application of sound scientific processes.
98. The Cook Islands was not opposed to an external review but opposed making such a review a condition for accepting the benchmark results.



99. Australia recognised that there were uncertainties in the stock assessment model, just as there were in the model presented to SC13. Many Members disagreed with Chile's suggestion that benchmark introduced new uncertainties in the model. Australia emphasised that the JMWG undertook extensive work through workshops and the benchmark process over the last 12 months, a number of decisions were made in that process in accordance with the normal rules and processes in SPRFMO, and these decisions were incorporated in the stock assessment model. Australia believed that the benchmark incorporates several improvements compared to the SC13 model and should be adopted and treated as the best scientific basis for management advice on the status of the stock.
100. The European Union added that periodic benchmark review is a routine, necessary feature of stock assessment in every major international fisheries body and that revising input data is itself standard scientific practice. The European Union further emphasised the importance that the scientific process must not be prejudged by a preferred outcome. The EU agreed that independent external review is valuable and should be a routine feature of the benchmark process, but there was ample opportunity to request an external review from May 2026 when the benchmark took place until the SC14 meeting, but no such request was made. The lack of an external review is not grounds for setting aside the results of the current assessment. The European Union's full statement is attached as Annex 23c.
101. Ecuador supported the assessment and agreed with advancing the management framework for jack mackerel during the next annual cycle, 2027. This entails provisionally maintaining the quantitative parameters and allocation key of CMM 01-2026 (TAC), pending the implementation of the MSE plan, which should provide the recommendation for 2028. Ecuador emphasised the need to consider the performance of the current year, 2026, which began with low catches; however, from the second half of the year onward, catches increased significantly. Ecuador's statement is available in Annex 23d.
102. China noted that the large differences in model estimates for 2025 and 2026 stemmed largely from changes in input data. China also noted that any update of indices may result in a large change in the stock assessment results. The Commission should consider such a possibility.
103. Members clarified that the sensitivity analyses demonstrated the impact of different indices and could be helpful to Commissioners to understand the advice.
104. Peru stated that the jack mackerel benchmark workshop and any stock assessment workshop are spaces where data are presented in a very transparent way, discussed, accepted or rejected for being included in the assessment.

d. Management Strategy Evaluation update

105. The JMWG Chairperson presented SC14-JM03, which provided the SCW17 JMWG MSE workshop report. SCW17 advanced the MSE programme toward a final set of operating models (OMs), candidate management procedures (CMPs), performance statistics, robustness scenarios and supporting documentation for SC14. Model 0.16 was treated as the primary reference for OM conditioning, with model 0.00 and the SC13-era configuration retained as robustness tests. The group agreed on a steepness of 0.65 for the base case, with 0.8 retained as a robustness case and recruitment-regime and El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) effects identified for robustness testing. Recruitment and index simulation were identified as important technical issues because of their influence on projections and CMP performance.
106. The SC thanked Wageningen University for hosting the workshop, the participants for their contributions, the external reviewers and invited experts for their advice, and the Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) for its participation and assistance in facilitating the participation of independent MSE experts Blue Matter Science at the workshop.



107. The JMWG Chairperson presented SC14-JM07, which reported the progress on the jack mackerel MSE work. The MSE has progressed from a broad workshop design to a narrower comparison of CMPs against a reference OM and structured robustness OMs. The design incorporates interpretable empirical rules, correlated errors among five abundance indicators, dynamic reference points, explicit robustness testing, multiple performance measures and an exceptional-circumstances protocol. Post-SCW17 work refined the leading rule families and tested them against one- and two-stock hypotheses, recruitment stress, movement, selectivity and alternative TAC-change limits. Hockey-stick and power-ramp designs emerged as the principal families for SC14 consideration.
108. Further working comparisons prepared during SC14 examined recruitment-crash and recruitment-cycle scenarios, near-term catch and stock-status outcomes, and alternative annual TAC-change limits. One comparison focused on CMP29 (HS+20), CMP45 (HSSym) and CMP43 (HS-20). These were discussion sets for evaluating biological performance and catch trade-offs, with any selection to be recorded in the advice to the Commission.
109. The SC noted that the MSE provides a way to test catch rules against plausible stock dynamics and observation changes. Empirical rules still depend on survey and fishery indices, so their performance must be demonstrated across the relevant scenarios. Any recommendation on catch safeguards, a new independent assessment review or adoption of a management procedure requires explicit consideration by the SC and, where appropriate, the Commission.
110. SCW17 recommended focusing on simple, interpretable harvest control rules (HCRs) and ranking/selecting a concise set of distinct CMPs for SC consideration. Workshop trials used the agreed h1_0.16 for tuning and evaluated performance under h2_0.16, retaining the SC13 configuration as a robustness test. The workshop called for recruitment autocorrelation and correlated index deviations to be represented, with ENSO and regime effects examined through robustness testing. It strongly recommended calculating dynamic B_{MSY} from within-draw MCMC estimates of B_{MSY}/B_0 and dynamic B_0 and using SSB/dynamic B_{MSY} in Kobe-plot and reference-point summaries. CMP comparisons should cover safety, yield and catch stability over short- and long-term periods, with six headline performance metrics and supporting diagnostics. Banking and borrowing should be evaluated as a sensitivity for the final CMP set.
111. The SC discussed presenting a narrower set of CMPs to the Commission. Discussions centred on selecting/ranking a few top performing CMPs from the 8 CMPs using a scorecard approach. This scorecard and summary of results could form the basis of a decision-guide for the Commission to help select and adopting an MP.
112. The SC discussed how an adopted management procedure (MP) would respond if one of its indices became unavailable. The SC noted that this could constitute an exceptional circumstance, as in other RFMOs. A procedure using the remaining indices could be evaluated through simulation and reviewed against the agreed performance criteria before any revision to the adopted MP.
113. Chile pointed out that, for its stakeholders, it would be important to maintain a certain degree of stability or low variability in catches between years. In that regard, Chile suggested that it would be useful to see not only long-term performance statistics but also short-term ones.
114. Australia emphasised that the SC's task is to provide the Commission with a set of CMPs that could be implemented in the long term. Therefore, Australia highlighted the importance of considering CMPs from a long-term perspective and cautioned against allowing short-term metrics to influence the SC's advice. Australia suggested that, if the Commission wished to ensure low variability in catches between years, one approach would be to introduce a meta-rule to that end.
115. The SC began development of an exceptional circumstances protocol (ECP) for implementation alongside an adopted MP (Annex 11). Potential triggers included survey, fishery, environmental or distributional observations outside the conditions represented in the MSE. The SC agreed to develop the detailed protocol further as CMP selection advances.



116. The SC noted that:
- a. the MSE approaches in SC14-JM07 provide valid combinations of the available information for application in the tested HCRs;
 - b. the MSE work evaluates annual TAC-change variants informed by polling of Commission members;
 - c. the CMPs use five abundance indices, with fishery-dependent CPUE series and the fishery-independent North Chile acoustic series providing complementary information from different parts of the stock's range;
 - d. northern and southern indicators should continue to be tracked separately, alongside the combined CMP indicator, through the annual assessment process;
 - e. evaluation of potential exceptional circumstances should become part of the SC's annual activities; and
 - f. the independent desk review (SC14-JM04) and the response (SC14-JM09) provided an adequate basis for progressing the MSE work.
117. The jack mackerel MSE workshop report noted that the updated 500-iteration banking-and-borrowing runs retain explicit transaction tracking. The banking-and-borrowing simulations also removed annual TAC-change limits, so a matched comparison retaining the same limits is needed to quantify the additional effects of banking and borrowing.
118. Chile presented SC14-JM12_rev1, which summarised the results of the MSE for the South Pacific jack mackerel fishery, developed in Chile (2025–2026) under the FIPA2024-27 project. The study evaluated MPs under low-, medium- and high-recruitment OM using both shortcut and full MSE approaches. A simplified assessment model reduced parameters by 89% and convergence time by 94% while maintaining >90% correlation with the original JJM. Ten MPs based on four HCRs were evaluated. MP4 and MP8 performed best in the medium and long term, with MP4 providing the strongest balance between biological conservation and fleet stability. MP1 and MP3 were among the poorest overall performers, while constant-catch MP10 performed well under historical productivity but was unsustainable under low productivity.
119. The SC appreciated this work and noted that it contributed to the specification and evaluation of HCRs during SCW17.

e. Advice to the Commission on jack mackerel

120. Many Members considered that the stock assessment reflected the agreements and outcomes of the recent benchmark and that the revised stock assessment after the benchmark represents the best available science. The SC noted that, while the stock assessment has substantially decreased the estimates of absolute abundance compared to previous assessments, the relative trends in biomass remain similar (Figure 1). Further, the SC noted that TAC utilisation for 2026 is projected to be far lower than previous years and there is currently a large El Niño event impacting the eastern Pacific Ocean.

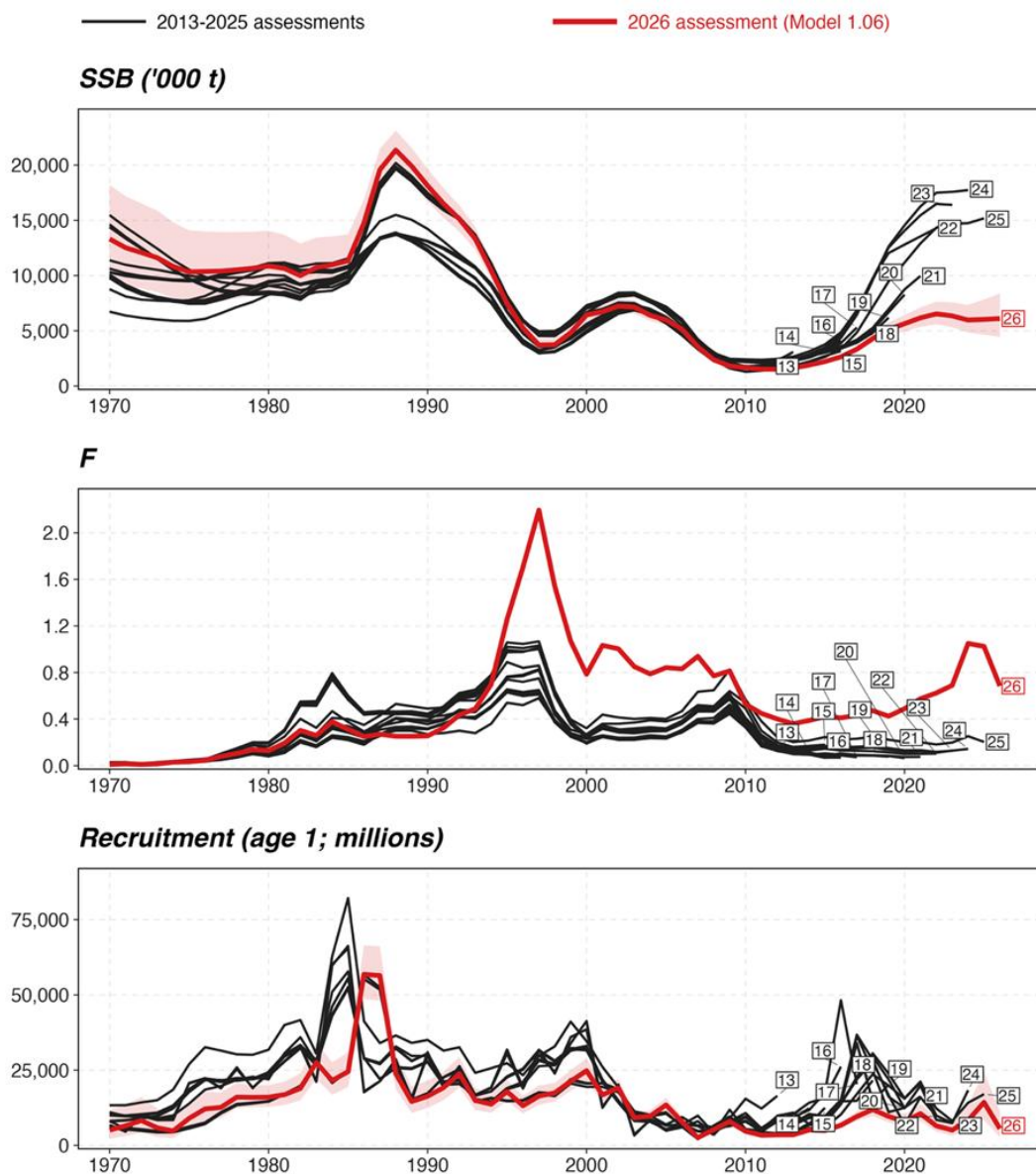


Figure 1. Comparison of successive single-stock assessments of spawning stock biomass (SSB), fishing mortality (F) and recruitment. Changes between the 2021 and 2022 assessments reflect the 2022 benchmark; changes between the 2025 and 2026 assessments reflect the 2026 benchmark.

121. Given the revised assessment, lower than expected catch and strong current and forecasted El Niño, the SC **recommended**:

a precautionary approach to setting catch levels for 2027. The SC **recommended** a shortlist of CMPs (CMP29, CMP43, CMP45) for the Commission to consider for implementation. Should the Commission adopt one of these CMPs, it may be appropriate to use that MP to set the 2027 catch limit.



122. In the case that an MP is not used to set the 2027 catch limit, most Members of the SC **recommended** that the Commission:

- acknowledge the exceptional conditions and uncertainty impacting the present status of the jack mackerel fishery and abandon the application of the Annex K harvest control rule, which would have a very low probability achieving the management objective of B being above B_{MSY} in the short term and the medium term (2032).
- acknowledge that, to meet the management objective for jack mackerel in the medium term (2032) and long term (2036), fishing needs to be restricted to the fishing mortality similar to that of 2026.
- adopt precautionary catch advice for 2027.

123. Most of the SC **recommended** that the Commission:

set the 2027 TAC at or below an acceptable range spanning status quo fishing mortality or up to 1.25 times that value. This gives 964–1,152 kt.

124. Vanuatu recognized that these values represented a very large change from the 2026 TAC and requested that a two-year step-down approach from the TAC for 2026 to status quo fishing be analysed and included in the risk table. This gave a value of 1,319 kt. These values are based on support from risk table below (as shown in past years; note that for the scenarios with specified catch in the first projection year, the fishing mortality that gives that catch is used for subsequent years).

Multiplier of F_{2026}	B_{2028}	$P(B_{2028} > B_{MSY})$ %	B_{2032}	$P(B_{2032} > B_{MSY})$ %	B_{2036}	$P(B_{2036} > B_{MSY})$ %	Catch 2027 (kt)	Catch 2028 (kt)
0	7,884	77	11,695	97	14,110	98	-	-
0.75	6,503	39	7,253	57	7,391	58	760	857
1	6,188	30	6,561	44	6,603	46	964	1,026
1.25	5,910	23	5,999	33	5,975	34	1,152	1,169
FMSY	5,774	17	5,740	26	5,688	28	1,247	1,236
TAC26 *.85	5,508	15	5,237	19	5,139	19	1,424	1,362
Step-down	5,937	24	6,498	43	6,577	45	1,319	925

125. Chile noted that implementing CMP29 or CMP45 on the basis of the 2026 TAC would result in a catch limit recommendation for 2027 of 1,424 kt.
126. The summary jack mackerel advice sheet is included as Annex 12. The jack mackerel technical annex will be uploaded to the SC14 meeting page as Annex 13 when it becomes available.



6. Deepwater

a. Review of inter-session activities

127. The Chairperson of the Deepwater Working Group (DWWG), Mr Trent Timmiss, reported that there had been three online sessions of the DWWG and a dedicated toothfish workshop in preparation for SC14. The reports from these meetings were presented to the SC and are covered under the relevant parts of agenda items 6 and 9.

b. Deepwater assessments (Orange roughy, stock structure, ecological risk, data)

128. The SC noted SC14-DW15, which New Zealand presented to the DWWG. The paper outlined New Zealand's work on orange roughy stock structure. The Scientific Committee Multi-Annual Plan 2026–2028 (COMM14-Report, Annex 4a) identified a priority task to investigate the stock structure of orange roughy on Westpac Bank and within the adjacent New Zealand EEZ (COMM14-Report, Annex 4a, item 2.2.3). To date, only one peer-reviewed study, Smith et al. (2002), has specifically examined stock structure in the eastern Tasman Sea, evaluating orange roughy stock structure using five complementary approaches: life-history characteristics, population length-frequency analysis, otolith shape analysis, genetic markers, and comparisons of spawning locations. To place these into a broader context, New Zealand undertook a comprehensive review of the available literature, including studies published since 2002, that have investigated orange roughy stock structure using a range of methodologies and analytical techniques. New Zealand synthesised evidence from fisheries, biological, genetic, chemical, and ecological studies to evaluate current knowledge of stock structure in orange roughy and provided a description of the orange roughy fisheries in the eastern Tasman Sea to support interpretation of the available stock identification evidence.
129. The SC noted that:
- a. no single method is likely to provide definitive evidence of orange roughy stock structure.
 - b. despite the application of a range of techniques to investigate orange roughy stock structure, there remains no consensus regarding the level of connectivity among populations.
 - c. the review of all available literature on orange roughy population structure was inconclusive in regard to whether the stock structure in the Westpac Bank and ORH7A management areas comprise a single biological straddling stock owing to their close geographic proximity.
130. The SC **recommended:**

that innovative techniques be used to analyse orange roughy samples collected from Westpac Bank and adjacent areas of the New Zealand EEZ during the same season, in order to assess the stock structure within these areas.

c. Benthic bycatch ID and catchability

131. There were no papers or discussions under this agenda item.



d. Encounters with VMEs

132. The SC noted SC14-Obs04, which Greenpeace presented to the DWWG. The paper reported on Greenpeace's 2025 expedition to the Central Lord Howe Rise and described the drop-tow camera systems and the imagery equipment used to collect direct observational data from the seafloor. Direct observational data collected during the Greenpeace Seamount Expedition in 2025 from three transect dives were analysed using a standardised protocol to identify VMEs from imagery. The Baco et al. (2023) protocol was applied to operationalise the five FAO Deep-sea VME criteria. Greenpeace noted that according to the FAO Guidelines, only a single criterion needs to be met for an area to be designated as a VME and that the results confirm that the study area meets multiple FAO VME criteria, specifically Criterion 3 (fragility), Criterion 4 (life-history traits) and Criterion 5 (structural complexity), confirming the presence of VMEs within the 2024 bottom fishing encounter area within the Central Lord Howe Bottom Trawl Management Area.
133. The SC noted SC14-DW16, which New Zealand presented to the DWWG. The paper provided an update of SC13-DW09, which contained New Zealand's review of a VME encounter that occurred in 2024 on a New Zealand-flagged vessel that was bottom trawling in the Central Lord Howe Rise Fishery Management Area. New Zealand emphasised the limitations of relying on individual images and the need for broader spatial sampling before using imagery to support area closures. It noted that some individual corals and sponges might exceed an approximate 100-year age benchmark, but their rarity and site-level uniqueness remained debatable. New Zealand concluded that the combined evidence supported the presence of several VME indicator taxa but did not provide a definitive conclusion that a VME was present. It pointed out that the analysis presented in SC13-DW09 showed that habitat suitability modelling indicated moderate to high suitability for deep-water coral habitat, while abundance modelling predicted medium to low coral abundance and did not establish VME presence.
134. The SC noted that as required by the SPRFMO Convention Article 3, para. 2(a) the SC must apply the precautionary approach when considering the encounter review.
135. The SC noted that direct footage of the encounter area has been collected, and that the analysis undertaken demonstrated the presence of VME indicator taxa in the encounter area.
136. The SC noted that this supports the finding in SC13-DW09 that suggested the potential presence of a VME.
137. The SC noted that analysis of the available data (including SC13-DW09, SC14-DW16, Commission papers and SC14-Obs04) is not conclusive as to the occurrence of, or the degree of likelihood of, a VME in the encounter area, noting:
- a. that the Scientific Committee Multi-Annual Workplan is tasked with developing a standard to identify a VME eligible to be listed in Annex 9 of CMM 03-2025 (including the relevant scale at which VMEs should be considered) (COMM14-Report, Annex 4a, item 2.4.4).
 - b. that for the purposes of providing advice on management actions following a VME Encounter, CMM 03-2025, para. 33(d)(i) requires the Scientific Committee to determine if a VME is known or is likely to occur within the encounter area.
138. The SC noted that, consistent with the application of a precautionary approach given uncertainty of VME presence, SC13-DW09 and SC14-DW16 considered the potential for significant adverse impacts on any VMEs that might be present, if the encounter area was reopened, in line with CMM 03-2025 para. 33(d)(ii).
139. The SC noted that the analysis in SC13-DW09 relating to significant adverse impacts, which was supported by alignment between the abundance and habitat suitability modelling outputs and direct observations collected by Greenpeace (SC14-Obs04), remains the best available scientific information for considering whether reopening the encounter area will expose potential VMEs to significant adverse impacts.



140. The SC noted that reopening the area is unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts at the scale of the Fishery Management Area (FMA), Bottom Trawl Management Area (BTMA) or the 5 nm Buffer Area surrounding the encounter area but could lead to additional impacts at the scale of the encounter area or the UTF polygon.
141. The SC noted that in developing management advice, New Zealand considered the low fishing effort since 2008 within the encounter area, the assumption that similar fishing patterns continue in the future, the concentration of historical impacts within the encounter area, and the risk of displacing that fishing effort to other areas which may not have been previously subject to benthic impacts if the area remains closed.
142. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:
- a. agree to take a precautionary approach by maintaining the current temporary closure of the Encounter Area; and

b. note that this decision should be reviewed by the SC if further relevant information is received.
143. Greenpeace stated its view that expedition findings from Central Lord Howe and the Northwest Challenger confirm that VMEs are known or are likely to occur at all undersea features surveyed and recommended that all surveyed seamounts should be listed on Annex 9 as they meet one or more of the internationally agreed FAO criteria to identify VMEs, as required under CMM 03-2025. Greenpeace also suggested that its findings could be used as case studies for advancing the SC's work to develop a standard to identify a VME eligible to be listed in Annex 9 of CMM 03-2025 under workplan item 2.4.4 (COMM14-Report, Annex 4a).
144. The DSCC emphasised the importance of the encounter area scale under the encounter review standard and the importance of applying the precautionary approach, mandated by the Convention and the standard. The DSCC emphasised that the direct and indirect evidence strongly suggested the presence of VMEs and likely continued trawling in the area indicated a significant risk of significant adverse impacts if the area was reopened. The DSCC also considered that the Greenpeace image analysis of Lord Howe and Northwest Challenger undertaken provides adequate information and meets the FAO Deepwater Guidelines criteria to recognise these areas as VMEs and add them to Annex 9 of CMM 03-2025.
145. New Zealand re-iterated the statement made by the High Seas Fishing Group (HSFG) to the DWWG where HSFG expressed its disappointment that the SC had been unable to recommend reopening the encounter area, noting that the encounter event was from a trawl at the edge of an established trawl lane that had been fished for many years without impact, and expressed particular concern that the recommendation to keep the area closed is because of concern about impacts at the scale of the encounter area (one trawl track), even though there is agreement on no impact at the level of BTMA, FMA or even to the buffer area.

e. CMM 03 request regarding encounters with VMEs

146. The SC noted SC14-DW12, which New Zealand presented to the DWWG. The paper outlined progress on improving particle dispersal modelling for validation of the South Pacific VME Bioregionalisation that was previously presented at SC13 (SC13-DW10). The improved dispersal model has been updated from a relatively coarse-resolution (10 km x 10 km grid) global ocean reanalysis product to a finer resolution (5 km x 5 km). This higher resolution model was then used to investigate the impact of realistic biological behaviour, in particular vertical swimming, on particle dispersal through a number of dispersal scenarios. Preliminary results indicated that the connectivity matrices for the different dispersal scenarios generally indicated higher levels of self-connectivity than connectivity among different bioregions. The biologically realistic larval behaviours incorporated into the dispersal modelling have a significant impact on dispersal patterns and connectivity, with greater dispersal for particles advected near the surface for extended periods. The next phase of work will include developing a higher



resolution model for part of the Louisville Seamount Chain and examining dispersal patterns in more detail, with a particular emphasis on particle transport from different parts of the same bioregion and evaluating a broader range of pelagic larval durations while incorporating biological constraints on survival, such as depth thresholds. Together, these refinements will improve the biological realism of the dispersal modelling and ensure that its outputs are more relevant to VME indicator taxa.

147. The SC noted that the particle tracking approach developed to contribute to validation of the South Pacific VME bioregionalisation has been improved by incorporating a higher-resolution regional model and the impact of biological behaviour.
148. The SC noted that the approach presented can resolve baroclinic instabilities and the resulting mesoscale eddy field.
149. The SC noted that the approach incorporates several biologically realistic scenarios of VME indicator taxa larval behaviours, such as vertical swimming and depth of dispersal, which have been shown to substantially influence larval dispersal pathways and connectivity patterns.
150. The SC **agreed** that, while results are still preliminary, incorporating behaviour and finer-scale processes has improved upon the modelling previously used as one of several approaches to validate the bioregionalisation of VME indicator taxa.
151. The SC **agreed** that the particle tracking model should be progressed to include a higher resolution ocean model for part of the Louisville Seamount Chain to resolve fine-scale dispersal patterns within Bioregions 6 and 7 in this region.
152. The SC **agreed** that the dispersal patterns should be examined in more detail, with a particular emphasis on particle transport from disparate and fragmented areas, within the same bioregion.
153. The SC **agreed** that the analysis should evaluate a broader range of pelagic larval durations, while incorporating biological realism in constraints on survival, and that a broader literature review be conducted to identify the larval behaviour scenarios that best reflect the ecology of VME indicator taxa in the South Pacific.
154. The SC noted SC14-DW17, which New Zealand presented to the DWWG. The paper provided an update on progress made towards validation of existing spatial models of VME indicator taxa abundance, and the development of updated models through the addition of abundance data from unprocessed historical video imagery and a review of available environmental predictor variables for modelling. This work is reflected in item 2.5.2 of the SC Multi-Annual Plan 2026–2028 (COMM14-Report, Annex 4a): “For VME taxa potentially at risk of SAI, improve and validate abundance models, using independent data”. Nine additional Deep-Towed Imaging System (DTIS) stations were selected from locations expected to provide the greatest benefit to the predictive power of the abundance models. A multiple-lines-of-evidence approach was agreed upon for validating and evaluating the existing models, and for updating and improving the abundance models. While it was not possible to complete these tasks prior to SC14, agreements were reached in meetings of the Fisheries New Zealand South Pacific Working Group (SPACWG) on the prioritisation of available seafloor imagery sample data required for analysis and models, the potential replacement of critical predictor variables with updated versions, and details of methods to be applied for validation.
155. The SC noted that additional imagery data is currently being analysed for further development and validation of abundance models for VME indicator taxa.
156. Greenpeace pointed out that all of the footage from its expeditions is still available to all Members, including New Zealand. Greenpeace also noted that the direct observations from these expeditions have highlighted the limitations with the current VME indicator taxa modelling as there were multiple examples at each site where the VME indicator taxa modelling did not identify species that were directly observed. Greenpeace encouraged the SC to incorporate these findings to improve and validate the VME indicator taxa modelling.



157. The SC **agreed** that while it was not possible to complete these tasks prior to SC14, work should proceed towards validation of existing spatial models of VME indicator taxa abundance, and the development of updated models through the addition of abundance data from unprocessed historical video imagery and incorporation of updated environmental predictor variables where they are available for modelling.
158. The SC **agreed** that following the validation of the new abundance models, they should, if time allows, replace the transformed habitat suitability models for VME indicator taxa in the relevant components in the New Zealand and Australian BFIA 2027 update, including assessments of SAIs and protection levels of VME indicator taxa afforded by current spatial management measures.

f. Bottom Fishery Impact Assessment

159. The SC noted that a revised BFIA was due to be presented to SC15 (COMM14-Report, Annex 4a, item 2.5.4) and that this would incorporate the results of updated VME indicator taxa abundance modelling.

g. CMM 03 request regarding marine mammals, seabirds, reptiles and other species of concern

160. The SC noted SC14-DW08, which Australia presented to the DWWG. The paper described Australia's shark handling and release protocol for SPRFMO bottom fisheries. The protocol addresses crew safety, trawl and longline handling practices, in-water and onboard release procedures, post-release survival, fishing-related injuries, bycatch reduction, and commonly encountered sharks, skates, rays, and chimeras. FAO requested that the FAO species codes be included in the report's species table and offered coordination support through the Deep Sea Fisheries Project. The DWWG supported this and recommended endorsement of its handling guidelines and considering further bycatch-reduction work; Australia will issue a revised version with the requested additions of the FAO codes.
161. In response to the request from the DWWG, Australia submitted a revised paper (SC14-DW08_rev1) to the SC with FAO codes added to the table of chondrichthyan species in SPRFMO bottom fisheries (Annex 14).
162. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. endorse the methods, handling and release guidelines in SC14-DW08_rev1 (Annex 14); andb. consider further work on reducing chondrichthyan bycatch in bottom fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area, including gear selectivity and modifications. |
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163. The SC noted that the annual reports from Australia and New Zealand indicated there were no interactions reported with species of concern.
164. SC14-Doc10 was taken as read. The paper summarised the bycatch of marine mammals, seabirds, reptiles and species of concern reported across the SPRFMO fisheries through to 2025. In 2025, bycatch of two porbeagle sharks (*Lamna nasus*) was reported in the trawl fishery, with no reported bycatch in other fisheries. Recorded totals reflect observer coverage and reporting practice as much as underlying interaction rates and should not be read as an index of relative fishery impact.
165. The SC noted the bycatch of marine mammals, seabirds, reptiles and species of concern reported across the SPRFMO fisheries through to 2025, as described in SC14-Doc10.



h. CMM 03 request regarding ongoing appropriateness

166. There were no papers or discussions on this agenda item.

i. Advice to the Commission on Deepwater

167. The SC **recommended**:

that innovative techniques be used to analyse orange roughy samples collected from Westpac Bank and adjacent areas of the New Zealand EEZ during the same season, in order to assess the stock structure within these areas.

168. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:

- a. agree to take a precautionary approach by maintaining the current temporary closure of the Encounter Area; and
- b. note that this decision should be reviewed by the SC if further relevant information is received.
- c. endorse the methods, handling and release guidelines in SC14-DW08_rev1 (Annex 14); and
- d. consider further work on reducing chondrichthyan bycatch in bottom fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area, including gear selectivity and modifications.

7. Squid

a. Review of inter-sessional activities

169. The Chairperson of the Squid Working Group (SQWG), Dr Gang Li, reported that the SQWG had held one workshop and a pre-SC14 preparatory session, focusing on the stock assessment and simulated assessment of jumbo flying squid (*Dosidicus gigas*) in the SPRFMO Convention Area.
170. The SQWG Chairperson presented SC14-SQ02, which provided the report of the SPRFMO SC Third Squid Workshop (SCW18). SCW18 advanced the development of a common scientific framework for the assessment of jumbo flying squid (*Dosidicus gigas*) in the SPRFMO Convention Area. It reviewed the available data and assessment inputs for the squid stock assessment. SCW18 distinguished two potential pathways through which environmental variability could be reflected in the assessment: 1) through CPUE standardisation, 2) integration within the assessment model or examination through complementary analyses. SCW18 also reviewed candidate production-model approaches presented by China (E-BSP) and Chile (SPiCT) and agreed to establish a common stock assessment framework for the next phase of model testing. In addition, it identified seven principal decision axes for the comparative assessment, which provided the basis for constructing the model-testing framework. SCW18 also developed a model-configuration table and agreed that candidate configurations should be evaluated using a common set of diagnostics. Moreover, it developed the model-testing framework and identified the reference configuration, targeted sensitivity analyses, structural alternatives, exploratory cases and any runs assigned for completion.
171. The SC thanked China for hosting the meeting and the SCW18 participants for their contributions.
172. The SC **endorsed** the holding of a dedicated data workshop during the 2026–2027 inter-sessional period, ideally during the first semester of 2027, in coordination with the Ecosystem Working Group, for the primary objective of reviewing CPUE standardisation methods, with particular emphasis on spatio-temporal models incorporating environmental effects and considering relevant environmental indices and ecological interactions.
173. The SC encouraged Members to provide the fishery and operational data required to support the proposed data workshop.



174. The SC noted the progress made in developing the operating model (squidSim) and the updated simulated assessment workplan and timeline for the 2026–2027 inter-sessional period, including model convergence, residual patterns, consistency between fitted and observed indices, retrospective behaviour, retrospective analysis, and comparison between prior and posterior parameter distributions.
175. The SC encouraged all Members, particularly those participating in the jumbo flying squid fishery, to contribute actively to the scientific work of the SQWG and to participate in the workshops proposed for the 2026–2027 inter-sessional period.
176. The SQWG Chairperson reported that at the pre-SC preparatory session, the SQWG reviewed the available data and assessment inputs for the squid stock assessment, including the catch database, abundance indices, and outstanding data issues, and used a common assessment framework to examine alternative model structures and key assumptions. The SQWG then reviewed the two principal modelling approaches developed by China and Chile, while agreeing that it was premature to identify a single preferred model, and that the alternative models should instead be considered as an additional source of uncertainty. The SQWG also endorsed new diagnostic criteria developed by Members. In addition, the SQWG discussed data availability and data provision procedures and considered the suitability of the assessment approaches for providing management advice, particularly given the short-lived nature of squid and the difficulty of conducting effective in-season assessments and management.

b. Assessment Simulation Task Team

177. The SQWG Chairperson reported that SCW18 reviewed the simulation plan and the biological and fishery hypotheses to be represented in squidSim, including various population scenarios and alternative fishery structures. It also reviewed the scenarios representing uncertainty in data collection and availability, distinguishing a perfect-information case from scenarios approximating current and potential future data availability. SCW18 also noted the progress made in developing squidSim and updated the ASTT workplan and timeline for the 2026–2027 inter-sessional period.
178. The SC Chairperson reminded the SC of the background to the establishment of the Assessment Simulation Task Team (ASTT) and outlined the ASTT's role, workplan and expected outputs. The ASTT's core mandate is to test the robustness of potential assessment models to uncertainty in population structure, squid life history and data availability. This mandate combines an immediate assessment-test product with a longer-term operating model for MSE. Work on these two aspects is to be advanced in parallel, and it represents both a model-evaluation task and the bridge towards squid MSE. To date, the ASTT has advanced design and parameterisation of the simulation framework, while the main cross-model simulation experiment is still outstanding. The ASTT is expected to report its main results at SC15.
179. The European Union suggested that it would be important to develop a standalone long-term plan for the MSE work with intermediate steps, such as joint meetings with managers and stakeholder participation, and the timeframes for these steps. The European Union pointed out that SPRFMO has learned many lessons from the jack mackerel MSE work and that these should be incorporated into the jumbo flying squid MSE work.
180. Chile pointed out the need to focus, at this stage, on the development of the simulation model, given the complicated biological characteristics of jumbo flying squid, and suggested that stakeholder engagement should be considered at a later stage.

c. Assessment data review and evaluation

181. China presented SC14-SQ03, which provided the results of a study on the impacts of ENSO (divided into the El Niño, ENSO-neutral and La Niña events) on the jumbo flying squid (*Dosidicus gigas*) habitats off Peru. China assessed the relationship between the habitat pattern of *D. gigas* and ENSO from 1950 to 2015 using a habitat suitability index (HSI) modelling approach including two crucial environmental variables: sea surface temperature (SST) and sea surface height anomaly (SSHA). On the basis of cross-



correlation analysis, it showed that both SST anomaly (SSTA) and SSHA were significantly positively related to the ENSO index. Moreover, a significantly negative association was found between the HSI values and the ENSO index. Due to El Niño events, SST in waters off Peru became warmer and sea level rose, resulting in contracted areas of suitable SST and SSHA; consequently, suitable habitats for *D. gigas* dramatically decreased. In contrast, during the ENSO-neutral and La Niña years, the extent of suitable SST and SSHA increased due to the colder water and lower sea level, and suitable habitats for *D. gigas* expanded. Moreover, the latitudinal gravity centre of HSI (LATG_HSI) was significantly positively associated with the ENSO index. Relative to the ENSO-neutral and La Niña years, a southward movement of the monthly preferred SST isotherm for *D. gigas* during the El Niño years could explain the occurrence of more suitable habitats in southern waters off Peru. These findings suggested that the ENSO event played an important role in regulating environmental conditions off Peru and further affected the spatio-temporal distribution of *D. gigas* habitats.

182. Chile noted that, as the study focused on the September–December period and high seas off Peru, it is likely to be focused on larger squid. Chile suggested that as future work, China should consider accounting for squid size and the potential time lag for environmental effects to manifest for larger-sized squid.
183. Chile's paper SC14-SQ05 was taken as read. The paper provided the preliminary fishery and biological information for the Chilean jumbo squid fishery for the period January–July 2026, including landing records from the artisanal and industrial fleets, as well as length-frequency structures of the catch sampled by *Instituto de Fomento Pesquero* (IFOP) scientific observers. Total landings amounted to 104,476 t, a value higher than that recorded for the same period in 2024 (91,313 t). A total of 104,174 t were landed by the artisanal fleet as the target species, while 302 t were landed by the industrial fleet as bycatch. Compared with the same period in 2025, a recovery was observed in the records from the central-southern area (36–37°S), an area that historically accounts for the largest proportion of landings; however, these values are still not comparable with historical records. Lengths ranged from 40 to 105 cm ML, with the largest values recorded in April and May in the artisanal fleet. CPUE showed a trend similar to that observed in the previous year. Artisanal CPUE reached minimum values during the first weeks, while both fleets showed a trend towards stable values after the analysis period.
184. The Executive Secretary presented the catch history of jumbo flying squid (*Dosidicus gigas*), as described in SC14-SQ01. The SC reviewed the document and requested a number of revisions. Peru provided additional information and clarified that the catch data for other countries that Peru had authorised to fish in those waters, such as Japan, were not double counted in the data reported by Peru. The Executive Secretary prepared a revised paper incorporating the requested changes and new data (SC14-SQ01_rev1).
185. Chile caught 105,911 t of jumbo flying squid within the Chilean EEZ in 2025, compared with 139,145 t in 2024, a decrease of 23.9%. Of the 2025 total, 105,250 t (99.4%) was taken by jigging gear and 661 t (0.6%) by other gears. As in previous years, the Chilean series is compiled on an all-gear basis. For China, 576 jigging vessels operated in the SPRFMO Convention Area in 2025, against 528 jigging vessels in 2024, an increase of 9.1%. Reported catch was 484,700 t, compared with 273,900 t in 2024, an increase of 77.0%. Total effort was 111,151 fishing days, against 114,475 fishing days in 2024, a decrease of 2.9%, giving a catch rate of 4.4 t per vessel per day compared with 2.4 t per vessel per day in 2024, an increase of 83.3%. For Chinese Taipei, one vessel recorded 267 t over 58 fishing days in 2025, with activity in October, November and December, the first such jigging since 2021. Observer coverage reached 82.7% of fishing days. From the European Union, a single record of 181 t on the high seas was submitted for 2025. Korea recorded no jigging activity in 2025. Korea submitted a single record of 1 t taken by midwater trawl gear in 2025.
186. The SC requested that future iterations of the paper include observer coverage information and also an annual catch plot that separates out bycatch of squid taken from other fisheries.
187. The SC welcomed the offer from Chinese Taipei to provide updated historical data for 2007–2010 and the offer from Ecuador to share additional historical data.



d. Jumbo Flying Squid assessment

188. China presented SC14-SQ04, which provided an assessment of jumbo flying squid (*Dosidicus gigas*) in the Southeast Pacific Ocean using an environment-dependent state-space biomass dynamics model (E-BSP). To account for regional variation in fishing operations, this assessment combined CPUE series from the Peruvian and Chilean fleets with a gamma-distribution standardised CPUE series from the Chinese squid-jigging fleet to construct relative abundance indices for *Dosidicus gigas*. Six environment-dependent scenarios were implemented within a Bayesian state-space surplus production model. All scenarios were evaluated using CPUE residual diagnostics and retrospective analysis, with no evidence of residual autocorrelation or a systematic retrospective pattern. The results indicated that, from 2012 through 2025, the Southeast Pacific stock was neither overfished nor subject to overfishing.
189. Chile presented SC14-SQ06, which provided the results of the updated stock assessment of jumbo flying squid (*Dosidicus gigas*) in FAO Area 87 using Stochastic Production Model in Continuous Time (SPiCT). The 2025 stock assessment estimated a depleted stock status produced by a strong decrease in whole catch and main CPUE indices in 2024. Chile updated the assessment by incorporating data up to 2025 and conducting additional sensitivity analyses. A total of five CPUE abundance indices were used in the SPiCT model: an updated Chilean CPUE index, an updated Chinese CPUE index, Korea and Chinese Taipei nominal CPUEs updated based on their national reports, and the Peruvian CPUE until 2024 obtained from *Instituto del Mar del Perú* (IMARPE) reports as no 2025 CPUE was available. The whole catch in 2025 was 1,296,000 t, which was 2.1 times the 2024 whole catch. Peruvian, Chinese and Chilean catches in 2025 were 3.8, 1.8, and 0.8 times the catches in 2024, respectively. The Chinese CPUE index level recovered in 2025, while the Chilean CPUE index remained at a similar level to 2024. The different model scenarios estimated a similar general decreasing biomass trend until 2024 with a quick recovery in 2025, driven by the strong recovery of catches and the CPUE index in 2025. Therefore, stock location in the Kobe plot moved from the red area in the 2024 stock assessment to the green area in the current stock assessment. In all cases the current stock status had large uncertainty (95% confidence interval). The maximum sustainable yield (MSY) estimated by the different cases ranged from 1,026,000 t to 1,306,000 t. Several alternative harvesting control rules produced TACs that ranged from 950,000 t to 1,306,000 t. Further analyses are needed on abundance indices, phenotypic effects, and environmental effects on productivity variability.
190. The SC noted that the candidate stock assessment models are not currently able to run projections that account for environmental uncertainty, but that work is ongoing to test various models that may be able to explicitly include environmental variables and run such projections. The SC reaffirmed the importance of continuing such work.
191. The European Union noted that the E-BSP model seemed exceedingly stable compared to the SPiCT and suggested that this was likely due to the different model configurations, particularly the prior constraints in the environment-dependent state-space biomass dynamics model. The European Union pointed out the importance of clearly communicating the differences between the two model settings to ensure a meaningful comparison of their results.
192. Chile highlighted the importance of continuing to study variability in the population dynamics of jumbo flying squid associated with its short-lived nature.
193. The SC created a working paper documenting agreed diagnostics for the evaluation of jumbo flying squid stock assessment models (Annex 15).
194. The SC **agreed** to apply the diagnostics in this working paper (Annex 15) when evaluating jumbo flying squid stock assessment models.



e. Management Strategy Evaluation planning

195. The SC Chairperson recalled that in past meetings, the SC has noted that even if it is successful in conducting a stock assessment of jumbo flying squid, there is no guarantee that the model would be able to produce management advice that would be suitable for this fishery. This is why the SC has also discussed the development of an MSE framework, which could test how the SC could develop a framework for providing management advice to the Commission, while also being robust to all the uncertainties associated with this species.
196. China highlighted the importance of developing an OM that can account for the unique characteristics of jumbo flying squid, such as the species' tendency to die shortly after reaching maturity, and its short-lived nature.
197. The SC **agreed** that it would be valuable to seek the support of external experts for the jumbo flying squid MSE, noting the significant contributions made by external experts in the jack mackerel MSE.
198. Pew informed the SC about an available Pew project opportunity, with funding, for independent expertise for the development of common and open-source tools for RFMOs and countries to undertake MSE for squid species. Pew is funding independent experts at Blue Matter Science to develop a suite of MSE tools that could be suitable for squids in the OpenMSE package in R and is inviting RFMOs and countries to collaborate with Blue Matter to build a useful tool that can meet general and/or RFMO- or country-specific needs. Funding has been set aside for 2026 to September 2028 and could be used for up to two squid MSE case studies. Pew invited SPRFMO to consider this opportunity and offered to give a presentation at a future SC meeting on how such work could fit in with the existing SPRFMO SC and SQWG processes.
199. The SC welcomed the offer from Pew.
200. Several Members expressed their intention to share their expertise and assistance in developing the jumbo flying squid MSE work.
201. The SC noted the need to map out the different steps of a jumbo flying squid MSE and incorporate them in a workplan, noting that it involves a significant amount of work and various tasks that need to be carried out in sequence or in parallel.
202. The SC also noted the importance of stakeholder engagement based on experiences from the jack mackerel MSE.
203. Ecuador emphasised that the jumbo flying squid MSE work should result in precautionary recommendations and scientific advice.
204. The SC created a working paper outlining the roadmap and key considerations for jumbo flying squid MSE work (SC14-WP13, Annex 16).

f. Development of precautionary recommendations and review of relevant CMMs

205. The SC considered the development of precautionary recommendations as part of its discussions on advice to the Commission on squid under agenda item 7g below.

g. Advice to the Commission on Squid

206. The SC **agreed**:
- that a common catch dataset should be maintained by the Secretariat and continuously updated as the basis for all jumbo flying squid stock assessment models.
 - that both the original catch data submitted by Members and the reconstructed catch series used for assessment purposes should be retained until improved information becomes available.



207. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:

- a. request Members that participate, or have participated, in the jumbo flying squid fishery to provide any missing historical catch information, and
- b. task the Secretariat with seeking additional historical catch information from Japan to complete and validate the dataset.

208. The SC **agreed**:

- to maintain, within the SQWG, a common inventory of available CPUE abundance indices, including their spatial and temporal coverage and resolution, effort units, standardisation methods and known limitations, and report progress to SC15.
- to develop a template for the technical information to be communicated in a standardised way along with the CPUE indices.

209. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:

request Members to provide standardised CPUE abundance indices, where available, together with the relevant technical information.

210. The SC further **agreed**:

- to research and, where possible, develop a joint CPUE index for the High Seas fishery, particularly using information from China, Korea and Chinese Taipei.
- that the available CPUE indices should undergo a dedicated review, by the SQWG, covering the underlying data, model assumptions, prediction procedures and resulting indices.

211. The SC noted that additional information relevant to the jumbo flying squid stock assessment may be available from Members.

212. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:

request Members to provide the Secretariat with metadata describing such available information.

213. The SC noted that only two stock assessment models passed the diagnostic test, indicating that the stock is at relatively low risk, with a 67.8% probability of being in the Kobe green quadrant, an 8.8% probability of being in the Kobe red quadrant, and a 23.3% probability of being in the Kobe orange quadrant. However, these stock assessment models were not accepted by the SC due to their limited predictive ability arising from a limited inclusion of environmental effects in the model, and they cannot be used to provide quantitative advice.

214. The SC **agreed** to continue using a common set of input data to compare candidate stock assessment models.

215. The SC further **agreed** that statistical diagnostics should be interpreted together with biological plausibility, the history of the fishery and the assumptions underlying each model and noted that satisfactory statistical diagnostics alone would not be sufficient to determine model acceptance (see SC14-WP12).

216. The SC **agreed** that future assessment work should explore models capable of explaining the population dynamics throughout the time series and investigate how uncertainty is affected by the temporal resolution of the models.

217. The SC further **agreed** that, should additional data become available for assessment purposes, more complex models should be explored where appropriate to better represent population structure and/or spatial complexity.

218. The SC acknowledged that significant progress has been made in the stock assessment process, both in data sharing and modelling.



219. The SC recognised that the best-performing stock assessment models currently do not have the capacity to incorporate environmental effects in the population dynamics. However, the SC further recognised that current best-performing models incorporate environmental effects through catchability, but not directly through productivity. El Niño conditions may affect productivity and phenotypic composition, adding uncertainty to future stock dynamics.
220. The SC noted that all assessment models currently considered for jumbo flying squid are subject to substantial uncertainty. The SC therefore agreed that further efforts should focus on reducing this uncertainty through both methodological improvements to the assessment models and improvements in the availability, quality and consistency of the data used to inform them.
221. The SC recognised that an accepted stock assessment was not reached and that El Niño 1+2 conditions are currently occurring and are predicted to be extraordinary during 2026–2027. The SC agreed on the need to apply a precautionary approach to the management of the jumbo flying squid fishery in 2027 but could not reach consensus on specific precautionary management recommendations. Members therefore provided proposals for precautionary measures, together with their respective scientific rationale, for consideration by the Commission.
222. The SC discussed options for precautionary management advice for jumbo flying squid. These included the status quo, catch limits, reductions in fishing days, limits on the number of active fishing vessels and total gross tonnage, and fishing closures. Following several rounds of in-depth consultations, the SC was unable to reach consensus on specific recommendations for precautionary management measures.
223. Many Members supported recommending catch limits and reductions in fishing effort and/or capacity as precautionary management measures for consideration by the Commission, particularly in light of the anticipated strong El Niño event in 2027. At the same time, these Members opposed a recommendation to maintain the status quo, emphasising that this option does not constitute a precautionary management approach.
224. Some Members, however, supported retaining the status quo. They noted that key participants in the squid fishery had already implemented a set of precautionary management measures, including catch limits and closure measures. On this basis, they advocated retaining the status quo as a valid alternative option. Furthermore, those Members stressed that Members with relatively few registered vessels and limited actual fishing days should not be subject to a catch limit or further reductions in fishing effort.
225. During the discussions, the SC examined different management options and requested Members to submit duly substantiated proposals. Ecuador submitted two proposals for precautionary measures to be applied in 2027, one for a precautionary catch limit and the other for precautionary regulation of fishing effort. However, as there were no substantive comments on the proposals, the SC did not provide recommendations or advice on them. Ecuador therefore requested that its proposals and accompanying statements be included as an annex to the SC report (Annex 23e).
226. China made a statement regarding precautionary management advice for jumbo flying squid. The full statement is attached as Annex 23f.
227. Chinese Taipei expressed its disappointment that neither of the options proposed for precautionary management took into consideration the limited impact of small-scale fleets, noting that the low level of fishing effort by small-scale fleets in recent years is unlikely to have a significant impact on squid resources, even under the forecast El Niño event. Chinese Taipei emphasised the importance of the SC considering the level of impact associated with different fleet sizes when developing management advice.
228. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:
- a. endorse the updated Terms of Reference for the ASTT (Annex 17).
 - b. extend the ASTT for another year.



8. Ecosystems

a. Review of inter-sessional activities

229. The Chairperson of the Ecosystem Working Group (EWG), Mr Sebastián Vásquez, reported that the EWG held the first Ecosystems Workshop (SCW19), focused on species distribution modelling and environmental data harmonisation for ecosystem and climate applications in the South Pacific Ocean, and a pre-SC14 preparatory session. The SCW19 report was presented under section 8c below.
230. Peru presented SC14-Eco03, which provided an updated analysis of the habitat conditions of jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) and chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*) in the Peru Current during 2024–2026, with emphasis on observations between 2023 and 2026. Thermal conditions over recent years have favoured increased jack mackerel availability, except during 2026 under the developing El Niño. Adult jack mackerel catches have occurred especially in the southern zone, including during the warm year in 2023. Chub mackerel has likewise tended towards predominantly southern distribution in recent years. The observations since the first workshop in 2011 indicate a changing habitat that conditions the distribution and concentration of jack mackerel, chub mackerel and other species in the Peruvian sea. The 2024–2026 observations reinforce that the jack mackerel and chub mackerel habitat in the Peru Current is highly dynamic. Recent years show a marked southern tendency, with distributions linked to fronts and specific combinations of temperature, salinity, chlorophyll and sea-level structure.
231. Peru presented SC14-Eco02, which provided an update of its analysis on changes in the habitat of jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) and chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*), with emphasis on observations between 2023 and 2026, in addition to aspects of the abundance of *Vinciguerria lucetia*. Due to El Niño, a negative trend has been observed in the biomass of jack mackerel. However, catches in the analysed period (1983–2026) show, in general, better fishing yields in the years when biomass has been higher. The highest abundance of jack mackerel, through geostatistical methods since 2024, was estimated during March 2024 with 215,000 t. El Niño events are usually favourable for mackerel, but this year mackerel catches and their abundance have been minimal. However, catches in the period studied (1983–2026) show, in general, better yields in the years when the biomass has been higher. The highest abundance of chub mackerel, through geostatistical methods, since 2024, was estimated during March 2024, with 80,000 t. The results obtained from the fish size analysis of 886,287 jack mackerel individuals sampled between 2011 and 2025 reveal a fishery structured on well-differentiated cohorts, with a relatively clear modal progression throughout the study period. This episodic recruitment pattern, whereby one annual class dominates the fishery for several consecutive years before being replaced by a new one, is a recognised feature of Southeast Pacific jack mackerel biology and has been documented in continuous monitoring by the industrial fleet. Since 2021, the expansion of the range of caught sizes reflects the overlap of several jack mackerel cohorts. 2024 and 2025 presented the highest modes of the entire series (48 cm and 50 cm) and percentages of juveniles below 0.1%, indicating a fishery operating on the 2022 cohort. However, the detection in 2025 of a new cohort with a 38 cm mode suggests a transition in the composition of catches in the next two to three years, which warrants continuous fisheries monitoring.

b. Special Issue of the Habitat Monitoring Symposium

232. The EWG provided an update on development of the special issue arising from the Habitat Monitoring Symposium and the work of the editorial group. The special issue originated from the former habitat monitoring working group and a symposium held in Concepción, Chile, in 2023. It brought together 19 contributions exploring how marine species and fisheries can be monitored, modelled and managed in dynamic and changing ocean environments. To date, three articles have been published, three articles have been accepted, and 13 articles are under review.
233. The SC expressed its appreciation for the extensive work done on the special issue and looked forward to seeing the full list of papers generated by this work at SC15.



c. Report on the Workshop on Species Distribution Data Information Inventory

234. The EWG Chairperson presented SC14-Eco01, the SCW19 meeting report. SCW19 focused on two complementary components: advancing the development and application of species distribution models (SDMs) for habitat characterisation, ecosystem monitoring, and the generation of spatio-temporal abundance indices; and advancing the harmonisation of biological, fisheries, environmental, and metadata standards to establish a coordinated SDM framework supporting climate-ready ecosystem applications across the SPRFMO Convention Area. SCW19 reviewed available resources, reviewed relevant case studies and experience, and advanced work to build interoperability, prepare climate-ready applications, and foster regional collaboration. SCW19 moved from identifying information sources to defining how they can be used collaboratively. Based on its review of various case studies, SCW19 noted that the case studies converged on the following common needs: harmonised data, robust validation and reproducible workflows. SCW19 noted that the SC already possesses much of the scientific expertise, information and technical capacity needed for developing collaborative regional SDMs and that the principal limitation is the fragmentation of information across Members, institutions and disciplines. SCW19 identified a regional SDM framework, interoperable data, shared environmental data, common workflows, and climate-ready applications as priority collaborative applications.
235. The SC thanked China for hosting the meeting and the participants for their contributions.
236. The SC noted the value of this work, and several Members expressed their intention to contribute to advancing it further.
237. Australia noted that the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) is advancing related work and suggested that SPRFMO explore opportunities for information-sharing and collaboration and the WCPFC-SPRFMO Memorandum of Understanding.

d. Report on ecosystem status profile

238. The EWG Chairperson presented SC14-Eco04 (Annex 18), the 2025–2026 Ecosystem Status Report (ESR). The ESR provided a preliminary integrated assessment of environmental conditions across the eastern and southeastern Pacific, based on five regional domains spanning the Equatorial High Seas, Northern Humboldt, Northern Chile, Central-Southern Chile, and the Oceanic Southeast Pacific. The reporting period covered September 2025 to August 2026, with longer historical records used to place recent conditions in context. The indicators showed that the 2025–2026 ecosystem state was characterised by a rapidly developing large-scale warm event superimposed on strong regional heterogeneity. Temperature and sea level provided the clearest and most spatially coherent expression of the developing El Niño, whereas coastal upwelling, chlorophyll-a, marine heatwaves, and subsurface conditions exhibited more region-specific responses. These findings highlight the importance of evaluating ecosystem conditions through multiple complementary indicators rather than assuming a uniform response to basin-scale climate forcing. Importantly, August 2026 represents the developmental phase rather than the culmination of the current El Niño event and there is a very high probability of El Niño persisting through the remainder of 2026 and early 2027, with strong-to-very-strong conditions expected during late 2026. Consequently, environmental and ecosystem responses may continue to develop beyond the present ESR reporting period. Continued monitoring will be particularly important for assessing subsequent changes in upper-ocean temperature and sea level, coastal upwelling, oxygen conditions, marine heatwaves, and primary productivity.
239. The SC thanked the EWG and its Chairperson for advancing this comprehensive work and noted that several Members expressed their intention to contribute additional information and indicators to further complement and expand the ESR in future iterations. New Zealand recommended finding the right balance to ensure usability for managers, avoiding setting an excessive number of indicators.
240. The DSCC encouraged the SC to consider regularly updating the ESR and making a public version of it available on the SPRFMO website.



e. Advice to the Commission on Ecosystems topics

241. The SC noted:

- a. The development of the first Ecosystem Status Report (ESR) for the Southeast Pacific, covering the SPRFMO Convention Area and adjacent EEZs, providing a basis for progressively developing a broader assessment of ecosystem conditions and variability.
- b. The need to strengthen collaboration between the EWG and other SC Working Groups and Task Teams to ensure that ecosystem-related work addresses the broader range of species, fisheries and ecosystems considered by the Scientific Committee.
- c. The outcomes and recommendations of the First Ecosystems Workshop on Species Distribution Modelling and Environmental Data Harmonisation (SCW19), including the development of a regional SDM framework, harmonisation and interoperability of biological, fisheries and environmental information, common analytical workflows, and progressive regional SDM applications.
- d. The progress made in the use of acoustic information from scientific surveys and fishing vessels to characterise jack mackerel distribution and relative abundance, while recognising that integration of information across areas remains an important regional challenge.
- e. The need to translate the priority jack mackerel connectivity topics previously identified—genetics, tagging, early life stages and reproduction—into practical and achievable sampling activities before progressing towards larger-scale implementation.

242. The SC **agreed**:

- a. To continue the Ecosystem Status Report (ESR) as a recurring EWG product and progressively expand its scope through additional biological, fisheries and ecosystem indicators, with contributions from Members and relevant Scientific Committee Working Groups.
- b. To strengthen collaboration with other Scientific Committee Working Groups by identifying ecosystem-related information needs and opportunities for jointly developing indicators, analyses and research activities.
- c. To incorporate the outcomes and implementation roadmap of SCW19 into the EWG section of the SC Multi-Annual Workplan for 2027–2029 (Annex 7), including progressive regional SDM applications initially focused on priority species such as jack mackerel and jumbo flying squid, supported by harmonised datasets, common workflows and environmental information.
- d. To convene a second technical Workshop on Species Distribution Modelling (SDM) in 2027, focusing on the implementation and evaluation of regional SDM applications using harmonised datasets and workflows, including applications under climate change scenarios.
- e. To advance the harmonisation, interoperability and discoverability of ecosystem-related datasets and metadata in collaboration with the Data Working Group and the Secretariat, building on the SDM TT inventory and developing practical mechanisms for accessing and using Member-provided information.
- f. To progress work towards the regional integration of acoustic information for jack mackerel, including existing scientific survey information and acoustic data collected from fishing vessels, and to explore methodological approaches for their combined use.
- g. To progress jack mackerel connectivity research through a stepwise approach, initially defining practical sampling and technical requirements and identifying opportunities to use existing national surveys, monitoring programmes and fishing operations as a basis for subsequent small-scale implementation.



- h. To explore the development and application of ecosystem indicators and metrics that could support the progressive implementation of ecosystem-based fisheries management within SPRFMO, in collaboration with relevant SC Working Groups and, where appropriate, external scientific and technical partners.
 - i. To adopt the updated EWG section of the SC Multi-Annual Workplan for 2027–2029 (Annex 7), providing a progressive and achievable pathway for advancing these ecosystem-related activities within the Scientific Committee.
243. The SC **endorsed** the updated EWG section of the SC Multi-Annual Workplan for 2027–2029 (Annex 7) and **agreed** to support its implementation in collaboration with Members and relevant SC Working Groups.
244. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:
- authorise the use of relevant data held by SPRFMO for ecosystem-related scientific analyses, including the development and evaluation of regional species distribution models (SDMs), subject to applicable data access, confidentiality and attribution requirements.
245. The SC **endorsed** the organisation of a second technical Workshop on Species Distribution Modelling in 2027 and encouraged Members and delegations, as well as relevant external organisations, to explore opportunities to provide financial or in-kind support for its implementation.
246. The SC **agreed** to allocate available funds to support a technical activity on jack mackerel connectivity (Item 4.5 of the SC Multi-Annual Workplan for 2017–2029 in Annex 7), aimed at defining practical sampling requirements and implementation options for progressing research on genetics, tagging, early life stages and reproduction.

9. Exploratory Fisheries

a. Exploratory Fishery updates (AUS, COK, EU, KOR, NZ)

247. The SC noted SC14-DW09, which Australia presented to the DWWG. The paper provided an update on its 2025 exploratory toothfish fishery for the Macquarie Ridge Continuation Research Block. The Australian FV *ANTARCTIC DISCOVERY* conducted the second year of exploratory fishing under CMM 14f-2024 in the Macquarie Ridge Continuation Research Block (MR-CRB) from 15–18 July 2025. Seven lines of approximately 5,000 hooks each were set. A total of 2.5 t of Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) were caught, and no Antarctic toothfish (*Dissostichus mawsoni*) were caught. Ten Patagonian toothfish were tagged and released (four tags per tonne). Otolith and length frequency data were collected. No tagged fish were caught. No other catch was discarded or released. The major other species caught were hake and grenadiers. There was 0.4 kg of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME) indicator taxa caught. There were no interactions with marine mammals, marine reptiles, seabirds or other species of concern.
248. The SC noted SC14-DW10, which the European Union presented to the DWWG. The paper provided an update on its exploratory fishing. In 2025, the European Union conducted the second year of its 3-year exploratory fishing campaign for Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) in the George V Fracture Zone (GVFZ; CMM 14e-2024). Fishing was conducted aboard the Spanish longliner FV *TRONIO* using Spanish-style bottom-set static longlines from 9 October–13 November 2025. The GVFZ was split into two research blocks, A and B, where Research Block A has now had five years of exploratory fishing and Research Block B two years of exploratory fishing. Two observers collected standard information on catch and effort, length, and maturity of toothfish as well as non-target bycatch, made seabird and marine mammal interaction observations, collected seabed video capturing species and habitat data, deployed a CTD, and continued tagging at a rate of 5 fish/tonne. A total of 128.8 t of toothfish was taken from Block A and 32.8 t from Block B, from 56 and 16 longline sets respectively, achieving the TAC in both blocks. Non-target bycatch was low and dominated by *Macrourus* spp. (1,405 kg) and



Antimora rostrata (417 kg), with no elasmobranchs or other species of concern recorded and no seabird mortalities observed. There were very low catches of VME indicator taxa, totalling 2.44 kg across all groups. Seabed video indicated low densities of VME indicator taxa as found in previous years, but there are indications that benthic habitats may be different in Block A compared to Block B. A total of 649 fish were tagged in Block A and 171 in Block B, with tagging overlap of 71.5% and 79.3%, respectively. Nine fish previously tagged within the GVFZ were recaptured, together with one fish that had moved between seamounts while at liberty. Four additional recaptures were fish originally tagged in the Macquarie Ridge fishery between 2010 and 2022, providing potentially valuable information on regional connectivity. In terms of stock structure, CPUE and length-frequency data indicate uniformity in abundance and size structure between blocks A and B. The European Union will continue collecting catch, effort and biological data, tagging, undertaking otolith ageing and genetic work, and deploying a benthic camera and CTD. These combined data will contribute to development of biomass estimation and potential for a sustainable toothfish fishery and understanding of broader regional connectivity.

249. The SC noted SC14-DW11, which the European Union presented to the DWWG. The paper provided the results of a stock assessment of Patagonian toothfish based on the first fishing campaigns (2021–2023), and the first two years (2024–2025) of the second campaign of exploratory fishing at GVFZ. The TAC of 129 t and 33 t set for Research Block A and Research Block B under CMM14e-2024 was reached in the 2025 fishing campaign. This is approximately 1% of the estimated biomass. However, there is still a great deal of variability around the biomass estimate. Moreover, there appears to be a strong influence of varying tag recoveries. In terms of the spatial discrimination of the stock in the GVFZ, it is unclear how stocks in Block A and Block B are connected and future fishing in both areas may find fish mixing between areas indicated by mixing of tag recoveries. Connectivity to the wider region may also be greater than previously thought, as indicated by two recaptures in the GVFZ that were originally released on the Macquarie Ridge as recently as 2022. Better understanding of immigration/emigration rates will enable better interpretation of estimated biomass. Examination of other stock characteristics between 2021–2025 also indicates that some caution should be given to setting the TAC in the future. CPUE varies widely between years, and size-frequency analysis showed variation in the shape of the length-frequency curve as well as variation in modal size classes fished. This may be due to natural variability between years or some spatial structuring at this time of year and further research would be required to elucidate interannual patterns of CPUE and stock structure.
250. SC14-DW11 also contained preliminary TAC advice, which the European Union derived by applying the CCAMLR Tag-recapture Chapman estimates (CCAMLR SC-XXXV, Annex 5) and decision tree rules to Research Block A where sufficient tags have been recovered. Based on those decision rules, an appropriate annual TAC for Block A would be based on the biomass estimate $\times$ 0.04 (4%) exploitation rate. However, recognising in the GVFZ that 1) there has been a limited number of fishing years, 2) new areas are now being explored, 3) the observed variability in CPUE and length-frequency distributions, and 4) questions around immigration/emigration of fish in the GVFZ, a biomass $\times$ 0.03 (3%) exploitation rate of the lowest CI (7,269.7 t) of the mean biomass estimate (12,149 t) might be considered a more precautionary approach. This suggests a provisional annual TAC in Block A for 2027–2029 of 218 t per year. Due to lack of tag recoveries in Block B, the EU used an alternative method to estimate biomass by using a seabed area-proportional scaling of the TAC of Block A. This is not dissimilar to the CCAMLR CPUE-by-seabed area analogy method. This resulted in a TAC of 188 t per year. The European Union will conduct a closer examination of CPUE and estimated biomass after the final year of exploratory fishing is completed (November 2026).
251. The SC noted SC14-DW13, which New Zealand presented to the DWWG. The paper described its 2025 exploratory bottom-longline work under the first year of a three-year programme. Thirty-one toothfish were retained (30 Patagonian (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) and one Antarctic (*Dissostichus mawsoni*), including 13 fish from NZSWRB1 averaging 10.9 kg and 18 larger fish from Research Block A averaging 46.6 kg. All retained fish were biologically sampled, and five toothfish (four Patagonian and one Antarctic) were successfully double-tagged and released, with no recaptures recorded. Bycatch comprised 844 non-target individuals, dominated by blue antimora and basketwork eel. Most were



discarded dead, although numerous specimens were retained for research by Earth Sciences New Zealand, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and Auckland Museum. VME indicator taxa material totalled only 0.41 kg and no encounter thresholds were reached. There were no seabird captures or gear interactions and no marine mammals or turtles observed. New Zealand recommended continuing the programme in 2026–2027, including further tagging, biological sampling, bathymetric mapping, environmental observations and monitoring of bycatch, VME indicators and protected species, while balancing the scientific value against substantial operating costs.

252. Korea presented document SC14-DW18, which describes its exploratory bottom-longline fishing in the Convention Area in 2025 and 2026 under CMM 14h-2025. The FV *Greenstar* completed 42 sets comprising 162,180 hooks from 14 May–22 June 2025, and the FV *Sunstar*, replacing FV *Greenstar*, completed seven sets comprising 25,560 hooks from 11–16 February 2026. The retained toothfish catch was 19,067.2 kg in 2025 and 40,749 kg in 2026. The 2025 catch comprised Antarctic toothfish (*Dissostichus mawsoni*) and a smaller quantity of Patagonian toothfish (*D. eleginoides*), while only Antarctic toothfish was recorded in 2026. Toothfish catch was concentrated in Research Block N, while the other blocks sampled produced little or no catch. Because the 2026 operation was shorter and covered only Research Blocks L and N, the relatively high catch rate that year should not be interpreted as evidence of an increase in stock abundance or as representative of the whole block. In 2025, 65 toothfish were successfully tagged and released, comprising of 56 Antarctic toothfish and nine Patagonian toothfish, and two previously tagged toothfish were recaptured. In 2026, 125 Antarctic toothfish were successfully tagged and released, the tagging rate was 3.07 fish per tonne, tag overlap was 87%, and no tagged toothfish were recaptured. Biological measurements were available for 71 Antarctic toothfish and six Patagonian toothfish sampled in 2025, and for 140 Antarctic toothfish sampled in 2026. Otoliths and tissue samples were collected for subsequent age and stock-structure analyses. Non-target species and VME indicator taxa were recorded during both seasons.
253. The European Union noted that the reported catch of 40,749 kg in Research Block N in 2026 exceeded the TAC of 40,000 kg for a research block. Korea explained that this was due to operational issues and that it would take steps to prevent recurrence going forward.
254. The DSCC noted the information in SC14-DW18 related to interactions with VME indicator taxa and asked if Korea had examined the potential presence of VMEs in the areas in which it is fishing. Korea responded that it has not yet undertaken any spatial analyses of the presence of VMEs and may consider conducting such analyses in the future as it accumulates more information.
255. The SC noted SC14-DW19, which the Cook Islands presented to the DWWG. The paper described a Cook Islands 2025 fishing trip targeting hapuka (*Polyprion oxygeneios*) in a dropline and jig fishery and golden deep-sea crabs (*Chaceon* sp.) in a trap fishery. This is the eighth trip under the Cook Islands exploratory fishery programme, but the first under CMM 14g-2024 using dropline and jigging. In the hapuka fishery, hapuka dominated the catch, comprising 97.2% of total retained weight (13,996.5 kg) and 91.7% of total fish numbers (986 fish), which was within the FOP trip and seamount limits of 15 t. Dropline sets (n = 25) produced the highest CPUE at 37.44 fish/set and 536.56 kg/set, dropline-B sets (n = 3) achieved 16.33 fish/set and 193 kg/set, and a single jig set caught one hapuka (3.6 kg). No VME interactions were recorded in the dropline or jig fishery. A total of 954 hapuka were biologically sampled, with length, weight, maturity, sex, otolith, genetic tissue, and stomach content data collected. Genetic samples were obtained from 101 fish. Stomach contents were analysed for 238 fish, with fish and cephalopods as the dominant prey items. In the trap fishery, catch and biological sampling of *Chaceon* crabs during Trip 8 indicates a stable population with no evidence of decline in size structure across the exploratory fishery to date. The majority of crabs landed were in the 12–14 cm carapace width range, with most exceeding the estimated 50% maturity threshold of approximately 10 cm. Reproductive data suggest a winter spawning period, supported by both berry state and shell state observations, though a sampling gap from July to October, coinciding with the lobster fishery closure, limits the completeness of seasonal biological information. Fishing effort was directed at crabs with only minor bycatch, including a small number of VME indicator taxa, predominantly octocorals. Crab CPUE was low but consistent with previous trips and slightly elevated in Trip 8, likely reflecting the trip's



targeted fishing strategy rather than a change in population abundance. Trap fullness data indicate that saturation was not a significant factor, and the overall consistency of CPUE across trips suggests that current fishing effort levels are not producing a detectable stock response.

256. The SPRFMO Science Manager presented SC14-DW01, which provided an overview of SPRFMO exploratory fisheries based on information compiled under CMM 13-2024 (Exploratory Fisheries). Six exploratory fisheries are currently authorised: toothfish fisheries of Australia, the European Union, Republic of Korea and New Zealand; and the Cook Islands trap fishery for lobster and crab, and dropline and jig fishery for hapuka. All six authorising CMMs expire between 30 September 2027 and the 16th Commission meeting in 2028. The European Union reported that the TACs of 129 t and 33 t for its two research blocks were reached; Korea reported 19.07 t, Australia 2.54 t, New Zealand 1.02 t, and the Cook Islands 14.0 t of hapuka and 21.4 t of crab and lobster. Catch in 2025 was at the limit in the European Union fishery and below the limit for others. Korea and the Cook Islands both fished in 2026. Those catches fall outside the 2021–2025 reporting period. The overview also included a mapping of the data specified in each approved Data Collection Plan, and the data the Secretariat holds against it.
257. The Cook Islands requested a minor correction to the paper, and the Secretariat was instructed to correct this in the paper to be submitted to COMM15.
258. The SC noted that a number of cells in the table of annual reported toothfish catch in exploratory fisheries were marked with a ‘–’. The SC requested that in future versions of the paper, the Secretariat clarify whether that means there was no fishing/catch recorded or that the data were not submitted.

b. New exploratory fishery proposals (AUS, COK, EU)

259. The SC noted SC14-DW02, a proposal that Australia presented to the DWWG for exploratory toothfish fishing on the Macquarie Ridge during 2027–2029. Fishing in 2025 consisted of one mid-July trip with two observers (100% observed sets), ~35,000 hooks deployed, ~2.5 t Patagonian toothfish caught, 10 fish tagged (~4 tags/t), ~1.5 t bycatch dominated by hake and grenadiers, and ~0.5 kg of VME indicator sponges recorded. The 2027–2029 plan proposes continuation at the same Macquarie Continuation research block targeting Patagonian toothfish across seamounts (600–2,500 m depth), using automatic longline gear up to 5,000 hooks with updated line spacing, a total catch cap of 40 t, retention of the 2023 risk assessment noting seabirds as highest risk but proposing proven mitigations, chondrichthyans released alive, and data collection comprising at least one observer, electronic monitoring, tagging at ≥3 fish/t with 60% overlap, and regular reporting to SPRFMO SC.
260. The SC noted the Australian proposal and its Fisheries Operation Plan for an exploratory demersal longline fishery for toothfish in the Macquarie Ridge Continuation Research Block.
261. The SC recognised the cautious, exploratory nature of the proposal.
262. The SC recognised the scientific benefits of the proposed data collection, especially for understanding the connectivity of toothfish species with surrounding areas and to establish population estimates of toothfish in the area and approved the Data Collection Plan included in the proposal.
263. The SC **advised** the Commission:

that Australia’s proposal for exploratory toothfish fishing on the Macquarie Ridge during 2027–2029 is acceptable in terms of Convention Articles 2 and 22, CMM 13-2024 (Exploratory Fisheries), CMM 03-2025 (Bottom Fisheries) and the Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment Standard (BFIAS).



264. The SC noted SC14-DW04_rev1, a proposal that the Cook Islands presented to the DWWG to continue an exploratory fishery with traps to test crab and lobster potential and collect scientific data in the Northern and Foundation Seamount target areas. To date the Cook Islands has successfully completed eight trips with new and important biological information collected for lobster (*Jasus caveorum*) and crab (*Chaceon* sp.). The most recent trip (Trip 8) focused primarily on crabs. These trips provided information on populations present as well as information on target stocks and marine ecosystems. Information collected during these first trips has guided revisions of the Cook Islands Fisheries Operation Plan (FOP), which has assessed the effectiveness of existing mitigation measures, to ensure that the bottom trap fishery is developed through a precautionary and gradual process, in accordance with the best available scientific information. To maximise the value of future data collection for the Cook Islands and its flagged vessel, the Cook Islands has screened the collected material and analysed all available data to ensure relevant adjustments are made to current exploratory methods, in accordance with the CMMs in force at the time.
265. The SC noted the Cook Islands proposal and its FOP for an exploratory trap fishery for crabs and lobsters in the Northern and Foundation Seamounts.
266. The SC recognised the cautious, exploratory nature of the proposal.
267. The SC recognised the scientific benefits of the proposed data collection, especially for testing the crab and lobster fishery potential and collecting scientific data associated with the fishery and approved the Data Collection Plan included in the proposal.
268. The SC noted that in accordance with paragraph 28 of CMM 13-2024, once an exploratory fishery has been fished for 10 years pursuant to the CMM, any further fishing in that fishery shall be managed as part of an established fishery. The SC noted that if the Cook Islands exploratory trap fishery for crabs and lobsters were authorised for another three years, the authorisation period would exceed 10 years, but the SC also noted that the Cook Islands has not conducted fishing in this fishery in every year that fishing was authorised and that total fishing years would not exceed 10 years. The SC **agreed** that, in its interpretation, “fished for 10 years” in paragraph 28 of CMM 13-2024 refers to the total number of years in which fishing actually occurred, not the total number of years in which fishing was authorised.
269. The SC **advised** the Commission that:
- the Cook Islands proposal for an exploratory trap fishery for crabs and lobsters in the Northern and Foundation Seamounts is acceptable in terms of Convention Articles 2 and 22, CMM 13-2024 (Exploratory Fisheries), CMM 03-2025 (Bottom Fisheries) and the Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment Standard (BFIS).
270. The Cook Islands presented SC14-DW03, a proposal to extend its exploratory fishing for hapuka for three years (from July 2027 to June 2030). This fishery is conducted as an adjunct to the Cook Islands’ existing exploratory lobster trap fishery, and the inaugural hapuka trip results indicate that hapuka dominated the catch by weight and number while bycatch was minimal. The FOP applies a precautionary, ecosystem-based, and staged approach consistent with SPRFMO CMMs. Fishing will proceed under a proposed total allowable catch of 500 t of *P. oxygeneios*, plus a 100 t allowance for retained teleost and cephalopod bycatch, with catch spread across seamounts via annual (25 t) and trip (15 t) limits to ensure that the fishery is truly exploratory. The FOP is designed to generate scientific data supporting future SPRFMO management measures, including the target species’ geographic range, depth distribution, and stock density; its biology (age, size, maturity, spawning, and genetic stock structure); the composition of associated bycatch; and the location of any VMEs encountered. Combined lobster-hapuka trips will also test the economic viability of concurrent boutique fisheries.
271. The SC noted the Cook Islands proposal and its FOP for an exploratory hapuka fishery in the Northern and Foundation Seamounts.
272. The SC recognised the cautious, exploratory nature of the proposal.



273. The SC recognised the scientific benefits of the proposed data collection, especially for hapuka fishery potential and collecting scientific data associated with the fishery and approved the Data Collection Plan included in the proposal.

274. The SC **advised** the Commission that:

the Cook Islands proposal for an exploratory Hapuka fishery in the Northern and Foundation Seamounts is acceptable in terms of Convention Articles 2 and 22, CMM 13-2024 (Exploratory Fisheries), CMM 03-2025 (Bottom Fisheries) and the Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment Standard (BFIAS).

275. The European Union presented SC14-DW05_rev1, a proposal for a third exploratory fishing programme for toothfish for the SPRFMO Convention Area, specifically GVFZ, covering 2027–2029. The programme is intended to further explore the presence and distribution of toothfish in the Convention Area; collect and provide information and data contributing towards the sustainable management of potential toothfish stocks in specific, data-poor zones; assess the potential for a future sustainable toothfish fishery in specific zones; provide occurrence information on species of concern; better understand patterns of seabirds and marine mammals and their potential for interactions with fishing vessels; evaluate the potential impacts of longlines on non-target associated or dependent species, and VMEs; and undertake toothfish tagging activities for future studies on the migration of toothfish and a preliminary stock assessment. The operational plan requests roughly 60–80 fishing days per year between 1 May and 15 November with likely offload/refuel in Hobart, and sets limited to 5,000 hooks or less with 3 nm spacing between sets and no repeated lines within a calendar year. The proposed fishing area, GVFZ, is divided into two Research Blocks (A and B) and based on preliminary stock assessments, a TAC of 218 t has been requested for Research Block A and a TAC of 188 t for Research Block B.

276. The SC noted the EU proposal and its FOP for an exploratory demersal longline fishery for toothfish in the George V Fracture Zone.

277. The SC recognised the cautious, exploratory nature of the proposal.

278. The SC recognised the scientific benefits of the proposed data collection, especially for understanding the connectivity of Patagonian toothfish with surrounding areas and to establish population estimates of toothfish in the area and approved the Data Collection Plan included in the proposal.

279. The SC **advised** the Commission that:

the European Union's proposal for an exploratory demersal longline fishery for toothfish in the George V Fracture Zone is acceptable in terms of Convention Articles 2 and 22, CMM 13-2024 (Exploratory Fisheries), CMM 03-2025 (Bottom Fisheries) and the Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment Standard (BFIAS).

c. Transition to Established Fisheries

280. The DWWG Chairperson provided an update on the toothfish exploratory workshop held on 5 September. The workshop noted the development of toothfish exploratory fisheries since 2016 and that no individual area had currently been fished for more than six years. It was noted there were currently four exploratory fisheries for toothfish in SPRFMO being conducted by Australia, the European Union, Korea and New Zealand. The workshop also considered a range of issues common to all exploratory fisheries such as data collection, observer coverage, biological data collection, tagging and catch limit setting.

281. The SC discussed the interpretation of the 10-year limit on exploratory fisheries outlined in CMM 13-2024 and **recommended** to the Commission:

that this be interpreted as 10 years where fishing occurs and data are collected, which do not necessarily have to be consecutive.



282. Based on the outcomes of the Toothfish workshop, the SC:

- a. Noted that no changes are required to data collection in CMM 02-2026 or CMM 03-2025.
- b. **Recommended** all boats be required to complete catch and effort data for toothfish fisheries on the CCAMLR C2 forms.
- c. **Recommended** that two scientific observers be appointed in accordance with CMM 16-2025¹.
- d. **Recommended** that SPRFMO should require scientific observers be from CCAMLR accredited programmes.
- e. **Agreed** to consider whether some data currently collected by observers could be collected through e-monitoring in the future.
- f. **Recommended** that SPRFMO should require toothfish otoliths be collected from each shot, ensuring the full range of the length distribution of the catch is sampled.
- g. **Recommended** that age estimation from toothfish otoliths be conducted with the relevant CCAMLR aging protocol.
- h. **Recommended** that SPRFMO should adopt the CCAMLR toothfish tagging protocols and implement them in CMMs for either exploratory or established toothfish fisheries.
- i. Noted that CCAMLR has produced videos on best practice tagging procedures that could be a valuable resource to assist tagging.
- j. **Recommended** that tagging rates in exploratory fisheries for Patagonian toothfish fisheries should be five fish per tonne and that three fish per tonne is appropriate for established fisheries and recommends that tagging three fish per tonne for Antarctic toothfish exploratory and established fisheries is appropriate.
- k. **Recommended** that SPRFMO require a minimum tagging overlap of 60% for toothfish and encourage higher tagging overlap statistics where this is possible
- l. Noted that current seabird mitigation measures are appropriate, but these could be reviewed if interactions occur.
- m. **Recommended** to the Commission:

that SPRFMO should consider adopting a formal decision-making process for setting toothfish catch limits. This system should allow precautionary catch limits where information is low and increase catch limits as more information is available.

- n. **Recommended** that if SPRFMO adopts a framework similar to that employed by CCAMLR, decisions will need to be made on the following:
 - i. Choose seabed area depth range/s (600–1,800 m, 600–2,000 m and 600–2,500 m)
 - ii. Choose which CPUE metric/s (kg per km of fishing line or kg per hook) should be used and how to handle hook clusters
 - iii. Evaluate the application of either the CCAMLR or SIOFA trend analysis decision rules
 - iv. Consider formalising catch limits and/or management measures for bycatch species

¹ Includes observers employed through accredited third-party providers



- o. **Recommended** that if SPRFMO adopts a framework similar to that employed by CCAMLR;
 - i. The latest GEBCO grid data be used for calculating seabed areas
 - ii. The Ross Sea and Macquarie Island fisheries be used as reference areas for Antarctic and Patagonian toothfish respectively
 - iii. There is no need to apply a 5 km buffer to the area currently
- p. **Recommended** that for assessments using the Chapman mark recapture method, adopt and utilise the methods set out in SC14-DW11.

d. Advice to the Commission on Exploratory Fisheries

283. The SC **advised** the Commission:

- a. that Australia's proposal for exploratory toothfish fishing on the Macquarie Ridge during 2027–2029 is acceptable in terms of Convention Articles 2 and 22, CMM 13-2024 (Exploratory Fisheries), CMM 03-2025 (Bottom Fisheries) and the Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment Standard (BFIAS).
- b. the Cook Islands proposal for an exploratory trap fishery for crabs and lobsters in the Northern and Foundation Seamounts is acceptable in terms of Convention Articles 2 and 22, CMM 13-2024 (Exploratory Fisheries), CMM 03-2025 (Bottom Fisheries) and the Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment Standard (BFIAS).
- c. the Cook Islands proposal for an exploratory Hapuka fishery in the Northern and Foundation Seamounts is acceptable in terms of Convention Articles 2 and 22, CMM 13-2024 (Exploratory Fisheries), CMM 03-2025 (Bottom Fisheries) and the Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment Standard (BFIAS).
- d. the EU's proposal for an exploratory demersal longline fishery for toothfish in the George V Fracture Zone is acceptable in terms of Convention Articles 2 and 22, CMM 13-2024 (Exploratory Fisheries), CMM 03-2025 (Bottom Fisheries) and the Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment Standard (BFIAS).

284. The SC **recommended** to the Commission:

- 285. that the 10-year limit on exploratory fisheries outlined in CMM 13-2024 should be interpreted as 10 years where fishing occurs and data are collected, which do not necessarily have to be consecutive.
- 286. that SPRFMO should consider adopting a formal decision-making process for setting toothfish catch limits. This system should allow precautionary catch limits where information is low and increase catch limits as more information is available.

10. Climate Change

e. Review of inter-sessional activities

- 287. There were no papers or discussion under this agenda item.
- 288. The SC Chairperson encouraged Members to submit papers for this standing agenda item at SC15.

f. Advice to the Commission on Climate Change

- 289. The SC considered future work priorities related to climate change when reviewing the SC Multi-Annual Workplan for 2017–2029 (Annex 7).



11. Research in the Salas y Gomez and Nazca Ridges Area

a. Review of inter-sessional activities

290. The Coordinator of the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Task Team (SGNTT), Mr Jordi Tablada, reported that the SGNTT held one task team meeting and one pre-SC14 preparatory session. Inter-sessional activities were focused on compiling and evaluating the scientific information relevant to the SGN area, pursuant to CMM 17-2024. The evaluation organised available scientific information according to the agreed evaluation criteria, reviewed fishing activity and associated data, evaluated potential impacts, and developed recommendations for consideration by the SC.
291. A summary of the SGNTT's discussions during the pre-SC preparatory session, as well as the breakout sessions on the margins of SC14, is provided in SC14-WP15 (Annex 19).

b. Updates of the SGN Task Team

292. The SGNTT Chairperson presented SC14-SGN01_rev1, which provided the SGNTT's draft evaluation of available information for the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges (SGN) area. Overall, the weight of evidence indicates that the SGN system is a globally significant seamount province that combines exceptional biodiversity, high endemism, VMEs, remarkable geomorphological diversity, substantial scientific value, and relatively high ecological integrity. While uncertainties remain for some mobile pelagic species and unsurveyed portions of the ridge system, the scientific evidence consistently identifies the area as one of the most distinctive and ecologically important marine regions within the South Pacific. Current fishing activity within the area is relatively limited compared to the wider southeastern Pacific, with most effort concentrated along the eastern portion of Nazca Ridge. Jumbo flying squid is the dominant contemporary fishery, while tuna and swordfish fisheries contribute comparatively small proportions of their overall catches from within the broader area. Historical bottom-contact fisheries have occurred on some seamounts and provide evidence of the long-term ecological consequences that can result from disturbance of vulnerable deep-sea habitats.
293. The SC thanked the SGNTT and its Coordinator for their efforts to prepare the draft evaluation.
294. The SC reviewed and finalised the evaluation of available information for the SGN area (SC14-WP03_rev1, Annex 20).
295. The SC **adopted** objectives for the SGN area (SC14-WP14, Annex 21).
296. When discussing SC14-WP14 (Annex 21), the SC noted that "endangered, near threatened, or vulnerable species" referred to species listed as such in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
297. Regarding objective 4 of SC14-WP14, Chile expressed its preference for the wording 'important habitats' rather than 'critical habitats', explaining that Evaluation Criteria 6 (Area is of Special Significance for Threatened or Important Species or Ecosystem Properties) refers to 'special importance for life history stages', and pointing out the need to ensure coherence between the objectives and these criteria. The Cook Islands and Peru pointed out that 'critical habitat' has a specific meaning that they wished to capture in the objectives. In the spirit of flexibility, Chile agreed to accept the wording 'critical habitats.'

c. Advice to the Commission on the Salas y Gómez and Nazca area

298. The SC discussed advice and recommendations to the Commission based on the evaluation of available information for the SGN area (SC14-WP03_rev1, Annex 20) and the proposed objectives for evaluating proposals for possible measures in the area (SC14-WP14, Annex 21).
299. The SC noted that the SGNTT has provided a compilation and review of available relevant scientific information and data about the SGN area, as requested by the Commission in Decision 17-2024.



300. The SC noted that the SGNTT has completed an assessment of the compiled available relevant scientific information and data against the SC's 2025 Evaluation Criteria as a basis for assessing possible measures for the SGN area.
301. The SC **agreed** that the SGNTT highlighted the critical importance of strengthening scientific data collection (including bycatch) within the SGN area and noted the SGNTT's encouragement to review whether current data reporting formats and collection standards are fully optimised in scale, resolution, and quality to support a robust, ecosystem approach to fishing assessments.
302. The SC **agreed** that the compilation and review of available relevant scientific information and data presented by the SGNTT provide a sound basis for the SC to formulate advice to the Commission, as requested by the Commission in Decision 17-2024.
303. The SC **agreed** that the results of the SGNTT assessment of information against the Evaluation Criteria indicate that overall, the Evaluation Criteria for the SGN area have been met, and said assessment provides a sound, evidence-based basis for consideration of proposed measures.
304. The SC encouraged Members and CNCs to continue strengthening scientific data collection, observer coverage and/or electronic monitoring, bycatch reporting, habitat mapping, ecosystem monitoring, and research within and adjacent to the assessed area.
305. Given the multiple criteria met regarding benthic habitats within the SGN area, including occurrence of VMEs, their vulnerability to disturbance, and their ecological importance (evaluation criteria 1.a, 1.b, 2.a, 2.b, 3.1, 3.b, 4.a, 5.a, 7.b), and given that bottom trawling and midwater trawling targeting benthopelagic species (e.g., alfonso) are not currently permitted within the SGN area, the SC **recommended** that:

SPRFMO not authorise bottom and midwater trawling (as defined in para 2.a and para 2.b of CMM 03-2025, respectively) to fish in the SGN area until measures for the area are established.

306. Given that other bottom-contact fishing activities (e.g., bottom longlining, potting) could present a risk of disturbance to those benthic habitats, and noting that the level of risk to benthic habitats from bottom longline and trap fisheries is yet to be fully evaluated in the SGN area, the SC **recommended** that:

SPRFMO not authorise other new bottom-contact fishing methods to fish in the SGN area, with the exception of existing Cook Islands exploratory fisheries (CMM 14b-2024 and CMM 14g-2024), including any possible renewals of these Cook Islands exploratory fisheries or their possible progression to established fisheries.

307. The SC **agreed** to extend the SGNTT for an additional year, in order to undertake the tasks outlined in the SC Multi-Annual Workplan for 2027–2029 (Annex 7).

308. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:

consider at its next meeting and endorse the SC's recommendations for the SGN area.

309. Given that additional data collection and reporting of bycatch information within the SGN area could improve the assessment of current and future fishing impacts in the area, the SC **recommended** that the Commission:

task the SC to periodically evaluate the monitoring information to assess the effectiveness of any measures developed for the SGN area and to inform future scientific advice to the Commission.

310. The SC recommended that the Commission:

endorse the updated Terms of Reference for the SGNTT (Annex 22).



311. Pew and Oceana expressed their support for the recommendations put forward by the SGNTT to protect the unique ecosystems present in the assessed area. They expressed their belief that there are precautionary grounds for including restrictions on pelagic fishing within these recommendations but acknowledged that further work is required to reach consensus on this. Pew and Oceana also supported the extension of the SGNTT to allow for the continuation of these discussions. In addition, they noted that the continuation of this work represents an important opportunity for SPRFMO to demonstrate leadership in the application of the precautionary approach and the fulfilment of its obligation to safeguard marine ecosystems, as well as an opportunity to contribute to the targets and goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
312. Oceana wished to highlight two issues that it believed should be reflected in the SGNTT's work moving forward. First, there is a need for measures that address the area's role as a migratory corridor and nursery area for numerous pelagic species, including both endangered species and commercial fish stocks. Second, Members should take steps to identify and address data gaps mentioned in the report and brought up during the SGNTT discussions, in particular with regard to bycatch. Improving such data is essential and observer coverage of fishing activities within SGN can be too low to ensure adequate data quality and comparability to inform appropriate measures.
313. The DSCC and Greenpeace thanked the SGNTT and the SGNTT Chairperson for their work on this important area and expressed their support for the adoption and implementation of measures based on the best available science.

12. Other Matters

a. Crosscutting issues (as necessary)

314. The SC Chairperson presented SC14-Doc12, the consolidated Guidelines for the Work of the SPRFMO SC (Annex 8). The Guidelines consolidate three existing SC guidance documents into a single reference document for the SC: Guidelines for the Work and Structure of the Scientific Committee (2024); Scientific Committee Guidelines for Annual Reports (2019); and Scientific Committee Protocol for Papers to be Submitted to the SC (2019).
315. The SC reviewed and revised the consolidated Guidelines for the Work of the SPRFMO SC (SC14-WP09, Annex 8), elaborating the role of the Science Manager and clarifying the process for the engagement of invited experts and meeting organisation.
316. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:

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| <p>a. adopt the consolidated Guidelines for the Work of the SPRFMO SC in SC14-WP09 (Annex 8), which will supersede the Guidelines for the Work and Structure of the Scientific Committee (2024); Scientific Committee Guidelines for Annual Reports (2019); and Scientific Committee Protocol for Papers to be Submitted to the SC (2019), and</p> <p>b. remove the limit on the period of the mandates of the SC's Task Teams.</p> |
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b. Planned activities and funding

317. The Executive Secretary informed the SC that he has been communicating with Members to seek feedback on the structure of the SC Multi-Annual Workplan, explaining that the Secretariat and the SC Chairperson have been working to refine the workplan structure based on the performance review recommendation to make it multi-annual.
318. The Executive Secretary further explained that one of the changes to the workplan has been to realign the year to the financial year to enable the SC to make clear recommendations about its funding needs to the Commission. He explained that the funding sought each financial year from the Organisation's budget was the total cost of planned activities minus unspent appropriations accrued from the previous year and voluntary contributions.



319. The SC reviewed its list of tasks, considered improvements to the workplan format, and developed a SC Multi-Annual Workplan for 2027–2029 (SC14-WP05, Annex 7) to be presented to the forthcoming Commission.
320. When reviewing the jack mackerel sections of the SC Multi-Annual Workplan, the SC considered several items related to jack mackerel assessment and MSE.
321. The SC **agreed** to develop Terms of Reference for major jack mackerel-related items in advance of COMM15 to assist the Commission in prioritising activities.
322. The SC **requested** that the Commission:
- consider the prioritisation and appropriate timelines for items related to jack mackerel assessment and MSE in the SC Multi-Annual Workplan.
323. Ecuador and China both expressed their interest in hosting the squid workshop under workplan item 3.1.2 of the workplan. The SC thanked both Members for their interest and **agreed** to communicate intersessionally to determine the recommended workshop venue.
324. Chile offered the use of its NZ\$24,000 voluntary contribution (originally for jack mackerel as reported in SC14-Doc08_rev1) for the ecosystems workshop under workplan item 4.1.2. The SC thanked Chile for the offer.
325. The SC **agreed** to remove two workplan items on reviewing and updating data standards and providing input to the Secretariat in developing improved data management infrastructure (Items 5.1.1 and 5.1.3 in the SC Multi-Annual Workplan adopted at COMM 14; COMM14-Report, Annex 4a), noting that these tasks are conducted by the DWG, which is now no longer part of the SC.
326. The SC **requested** that the Commission:
- provide guidance on the division of roles and responsibilities between the DWG and the SC in relation to data standards.
327. The SC **agreed**:
- to task the leads for each proposed project in the workplan to provide a detailed terms of reference for each project prior to the SC, and at a reasonable time before the close of the SC meeting for those projects developed within the SC meeting.
 - to task the Secretariat to develop a template for project terms of reference in consultation with the SC Chairperson.
328. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:
- consider, amend as appropriate, and adopt the SC Multi-Annual Workplan for 2027–2029 (Annex 7), and
 - encourage Members to fully participate in the activities of the SC.
329. The European Union suggested that, in advance of future SC meetings, it would be useful to have an indication of any potential workshops that the SC is considering holding so that Members are better able to potentially make an offer, during the SC meeting, to host them.



330. Greenpeace offered comments on several aspects of the VME-related items in the workplan. Greenpeace noted SRFMO has failed to implement VME protection measures within its bottom fishing footprint for the last three consecutive years, and the SC has made no progress on populating CMM 03-2025 Annex 9, yet VME encounters continue to occur within the Convention Area. Greenpeace pointed out that its independent research has found VME taxa in areas where they had not been predicted. Greenpeace supported workplan item Code 2.4.4 on the development of a VME identification standard and encouraged Members to work with Greenpeace and use the Northwest Challenger direct observation data and the Baco et al. (2023), framework as a case study to develop and test a standard to be presented to the SC in 2027. Greenpeace noted that the Greenpeace direct observational data are available and could support workplan item 2.5.2 on improving and validating abundance models for VME taxa potentially at risk of SAI using independent data and encouraged New Zealand to take up this offer made at SC13. Greenpeace noted that at SC13 (SC13 Report, paras 159–162), New Zealand agreed to conduct an independent analysis on Greenpeace observational data related to the 2024 New Zealand VME encounter, but that New Zealand has not implemented the task set out in item 2.6.3 of the 2026–2028 SC Multi-Annual Workplan agreed at COMM14 (COMM14-Report, Annex 4a), which has since been removed from the current version of the workplan.
331. The DSCC associated itself with the Greenpeace statement on workplan item 2.4.4 and urged Members to use the Greenpeace research as a case study to develop standards and populate Annex 9 of CMM 03-2025.
332. The DSCC and Greenpeace considered that aspects of the work programme could be extended to look at deep-sea fisheries interactions and benthic impacts across the full SPRFMO Convention Area. They encouraged a wider group of Members to engage in this work, especially given the applicability to other fisheries.
333. The DSCC welcomed the SC's further work on the stock structure of orange roughy as this is crucial for the development of sustainable catch limits and in protecting the only remaining spawning aggregation found in recent surveys at Westpac Bank in the Southwest Challenger fisheries.
334. The DSCC and Greenpeace welcomed the SC's engagement, under item 6.5.4, with the BBNJ process and considered it important to the SC's work. The DSCC informed the SC that it has reported to previous SPRFMO meetings, including COMM13, with suggestions on making SPRFMO BBNJ-ready.

c. Appointment of officers

335. The SC Chairperson announced the open Chairperson roles that needed to be filled, namely, the DWWG, the EWG, and the JMWG.
336. Mr Trent Timmiss agreed to continue to serve as Chairperson of the DWWG. The SC thanked Mr Timmiss for his commitment.
337. Mr Sebastián Vásquez agreed to continue to serve as Chairperson of the EWG. The SC thanked Mr Vásquez for his commitment.
338. The SC noted that Dr Jim Ianelli's term as interim Chairperson of the JMWG has concluded. The SC thanked Dr Ianelli for his longstanding contributions and dedicated leadership to the SC and the JMWG.
339. There were no nominations to fill the vacated JMWG Chairperson position. The SC requested that Contracting Parties provide potential nominations and that the Commission consider the nominations and appoint a new JMWG Chairperson at COMM15.



d. Next meeting venue and timing

340. The SC noted that there is currently a gap of around 5–6 months between the annual meetings of the SC and the Commission and that during the period between the two meetings, the SC is not able to progress any new work, which is often work of an urgent or critical nature, as new work requires the approval of the Commission.
341. The SC attempted to identify a date for the next SC meeting that could be closer to the Commission meeting but was unable to find a date that accommodated all Members' needs, due to the schedule of other RFMO meetings or domestic commitments. Some Members expressed a preference for later in September. Some other Members expressed a preference for November. It was suggested that if the meeting were in November, the document submission deadline for the Commission should be shortened to give Members time to prepare proposals and other documents based on the SC outcomes. For the same reason, it was suggested that the SC and the Commission meeting should be at least 90 days apart. One Member indicated that it would be difficult to change the current timing.
342. The SC noted that most Members considered early November could be a workable option, pending avoiding clashes with other international commitments and taking into account Members' domestic processes.
343. The SC requested the Secretariat to prepare a paper documenting the dates of other international commitments that could potentially clash with the SPRFMO SC, as well as other Member constraints on changing the SC meeting date, to facilitate the Commission's discussions.
344. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:
- a. note the potential need to reduce the duration of the period between the SC and the Commission, so as to increase the SC's effective intersessional period, and
 - b. consider revising the timing of the annual SC meeting.
345. The SC noted that, due to the heavy technical workload of the SC and its working groups and task teams this year, it was necessary to hold some breakout sessions concurrently with the SC plenary. The SC noted the difficulties that this poses for Members, especially those with smaller delegations, and noted that this should be avoided in the future.
346. The SC noted the value of the pre-SC preparatory sessions for advancing the SC's technical work and facilitating fruitful discussions at the SC. The SC **agreed** that, depending on the SC's technical workload and tasks, in some years, the SC should hold three days of pre-SC preparatory sessions instead of the conventional two days, provided it is possible to find a timing that accommodates Members' needs.
347. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:
- endorse the holding of three days of pre-SC preparatory sessions for SC15 and potentially in other years as well, depending on the SC's technical workload and tasks and the ability to find a timing that accommodates Members' needs.
348. The SC thanked China and Vanuatu for their voluntary contributions for hiring a professional rapporteur for SC14, noted that this reduced the burden on Members during the meeting and improved the efficiency of the report drafting and adoption process, and **recommended** that the Commission:
- adopt a recurring budget item for hiring a professional rapporteur for future meetings of the SC.
349. China confirmed its offer to host the 15th SC meeting in Shanghai in September 2027 or at a later date if the Commission so decides. The SC thanked China for its generous offer.
350. Ecuador expressed its interest in possibly hosting the 16th SC meeting in 2028, subject to confirmation at COMM15. The SC thanked Ecuador for its interest.



e. Other business

351. Chile made a statement regarding the compatibility of conservation measures in straddling jack mackerel fisheries and minimum size and its implementation in SPRFMO. Chile's statement is attached as Annex 23g.
352. The European Union pointed out that, considering that a juvenile is defined as an individual that has not reached sexual maturity, in the jack mackerel assessment model, maturity-at-age for age-1 jack mackerel is 50% and for age-2 it is 100%, and almost all fleets have varying proportions of age-1 individuals throughout the years.
353. The SC agreed that it could discuss how to incorporate any relevant research on this matter in its workplan at SC15.

f. Advice to the Commission on cross cutting issues

354. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:

consider, amend as appropriate, and adopt the SC Multi-Annual Workplan for 2027–2029 (Annex 7).

355. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:

- a. adopt the consolidated Guidelines for the Work of the SPRFMO SC in SC14-WP09 (Annex 8).
- b. remove the limit on the period of the mandates of the SC's Task Teams.

356. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:

- a. note the potential need to reduce the duration of the period between the SC and the Commission, so as to increase the SC's effective intersessional period.
- b. consider revising the timing of the annual SC meeting.

357. The SC **recommended** that the Commission:

- a. endorse the holding of three days of pre-SC preparatory sessions for SC15 and potentially in other years as well, depending on the SC's technical workload and tasks and the ability to find a timing that accommodates Members' needs.
- b. encourage Members to fully participate in the activities of the SC.

358. The SC noted that the hiring of a professional rapporteur for SC14 reduced the burden on Members during the meeting and improved the efficiency of the report drafting and adoption process, and **recommended** that the Commission:

adopt a recurring budget item for hiring a professional rapporteur for future meetings of the SC.

13. Report Adoption and Meeting Closure

359. The report of the 14th SPRFMO SC meeting was adopted on 12 September at 20:04 hrs., local time.
360. The meeting was closed at 20:06 hrs.