



**The Commission for the Conservation and Management of
Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean**

**SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP (SPAMWS)
FIRST SESSION**

**Electronic Meeting
10:00 – 14:00, Pohnpei Time, 11-12 September 2025**

CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT

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1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. SC Chair Ms Emily Crigler and SPARM-IWG Chair Mr Moses Mataika welcomed the participants and outlined the background to the holding of a SPA management workshop as agreed at WCPFC21 (Summary Report, paragraphs 713-715). The Co-Chairs reviewed the objectives and expectations for the SPAMWS, in particular the development of candidate management procedures for South Pacific albacore (SPA), management arrangements for implementing the SPA management procedure, and consideration of the mixed fishery, including compatibility between management procedures for SPA and bigeye tuna.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. The Agenda was adopted.

3. OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

3. The Co-Chairs reviewed the aims of the SPAMWS, which are to support the timely implementation of the Indicative Workplan for adopting harvest strategies under CMM 2022-03 by facilitating technical and policy discussions in 2025. The workshop aims to advance the development of a management procedure CMM and associated implementation of CMM for South Pacific albacore, with the goal of their adoption at WCPFC22 to replace CMM 2015-02. Specifically, the workshop will focus on (i) candidate SPA management procedures, (ii) SPA management arrangements for implementing the management procedure, and (iii) considering mixed fishery issues.

4. Australia (James Larcombe) reviewed the Harvest Strategy Workplan and Commission decisions relating to the development of a management procedure for SPA and its implementing measure, which would replace CMM 2015-02.

5. Participants noted, and the Co-Chair confirmed, the need to prioritise the work of SPAMWS given the limited time available, with priority to be given first to the development of a shared understanding of candidate MPs; the preferred options; the areas of disagreement; and the ways in which these disagreements can be resolved prior to WCPFC22.

4. SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (MP)

6. The Co-Chair reviewed the discussion and recommendations from SC21 relating to the SPA management procedure, including on candidate MPs, contained in the SC21 Summary Report. The SPAMWS reviewed the latest results available for candidate management procedures for SPA, which were presented by the SSP (refer to SPAMWS01-WP-01 Evaluation of the candidate MPs for SP albacore). The candidate MPs are designed to ensure the SPA stock remains above the limit reference point (20% SBF=0) with at least 80% probability, while achieving either the interim target reference point (0.96 SB2017 2019/SBF=0) or one of the two other TRPs identified by the Commission for evaluation.

7. The key points from the discussion:

- Some participants expressed concern over the design of the SPA MP, particularly the exclusion of the area between the equator and 10° South.
- The SSP explained that the change had been driven by the mixed fishery framework and the Commission's request to develop in parallel MPs for SPA and bigeye tuna. The mixed fishery sought to consider activities in the tropical longline fishery between 20° N and 10° S and to avoid a clash of MPs in the same geographical area.
- Notwithstanding this explanation, some participants were not convinced of the desirability of limiting the scope of application of the SPA MP.
- Other participants strongly supported the revised MP design, especially the geographic area, as a logical and necessary step to implement the mixed fishery framework.
- Another participant noted their interest in managing the stock under the SPA MP up to the equator, however, given the importance of developing a SPA MP, they supported discussing this further with CCMs.
- The Co-Chair noted that there were clearly diverging views, with some participants preferring that the MP cover the area from the equator south, while others wished to exclude the area from the equator to 10° South.

8. Australia presented its delegation paper (SPAMWS-WP02 DRAFT – Conservation and Management Measure on a Management Procedure for South Pacific Albacore).

- Most of the text of the draft CMM was unchanged from the South Pacific Group and Australia proposal submitted to WCPFC21. It was based on HCR 7, with the EEZs of Tokelau and Tuvalu excluded (the albacore catch in these EEZs taken south of 10°S representing an annual average catch of approximately 600 mt) to reduce complexities for small administrations and avoid disproportionate burden in accordance with CMM 2013-06.
- Some participants noted that they had not had sufficient time to consider the revised proposal in detail, and various questions were posed.
- The draft CMM would be considered further at TCC21.

9. Various views were expressed regarding the results of the various analyses of candidate management procedures.

- A participant expressed concern over the process used to narrow the options for candidate MPs.

- Participants expressed different views on: the number of candidate MPs to be forwarded to the Commission; the use of 2017-2019 as the baseline reference period (instead of 2000-2004 or 2005 as in CMM 2015-02); and the maximum change constraints (e.g. +- 5% or +- 10%).
- Some participants supported forwarding four HCRs (HCR 7, HCR 10, HCR 13, HCR 9) to the Commission, some supported HCR 7 and HCR 13, while others also supported forwarding HCR 14, HCR 15, and HCR 16 to the Commission.
- The participants generally agreed that the MP would be based on a three-year management period with a two-year data lag.

10. The Workshop participants requested the SSP to undertake additional analyses prior to WCPFC22. These requests were identified and circulated to SPAMWS participants at the end of Day 1. Given the available SSP resources, the participants narrowed down the requests through a ranking process. The six requests with the highest rankings were referred to the SSP for further work.

11. The **Annex A** contains four tables:

- The list of six requests that were ranked and forwarded to SSP.
- The list of requests that were ranked but were not forwarded to the SSP.
- Essential SSP activities prior to WCPFC22.
- Additional Requests to SSP that were removed from ranking will be requested following decisions at WCPFC22.

12. The SSP noted for the benefit of participants that there was a potential for confusion arising from the overlap of the naming of HCR last year and this year. The SSP would therefore need to adjust the naming of the HCRs.

13. Following the SC21 recommendation encouraging the continued application of Open Science principles to produce transparent and reproducible science accessible to all, the SPAMWS recommends that WCPFC22 agree that all outputs from the SSP MP evaluations be made publicly available on a website or GitHub repository.

5. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SPA MP

14. The South Pacific Group (SPG) explained that the draft Outline for a South Pacific Albacore CMM that Implements the Management Procedure (WCPFC21-2024-DP12_Rev01), which was discussed at WCPFC21, outlines principles for a draft CMM. A proposal was expected to be presented to WCPFC22.

15. Participants welcomed the progress made in the development of the management procedure for SPA and the accompanying implementing arrangements.

- Some participants noted the importance of adopting zone-based management arrangements and ensuring compatible management measures for the high seas. The importance of the recognition of the rights and interests of coastal States, the particular importance of albacore to many SIDS and territories, and the special requirements of SIDS were emphasised.
- FFA members noted that they had recently agreed at the annual FFC Ministerial meeting a binding agreement on a proportional in-zone allocation for the 15 Members catching South

Pacific albacore south of the equator. They propose a two-step approach to allocation: agreement on an overall proportional split between EEZ and high seas areas; then a proportional allocation of the high seas component.

- Some participants noted that an implementing arrangement for SPA should encompass zone-based limits and accompanying high seas limits; provide for both catch and effort-based management; strengthen coastal State rights; provide flexibility to account for variability in the SPA fishery; and strengthen monitoring in regional longline fisheries, including through electronic monitoring.
- Some participants noted the importance of progressing allocation and referred to the key allocation criteria in Article 10.3.d, 10.3.g and 10.3.j in the WCPF Convention, as well as Article 30, which gives full recognition of requirements to the special requirements of SIDS.
- Participants expressed the desire to engage with others in the lead-up to WPCFC22 to progress the implementation of the SPA MP, and emphasised the importance of progress on this issue.

6. CONSIDERATION OF MIXED FISHERY ISSUES AND COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN BET AND SPA MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

16. The SSP provided a presentation on mixed fishery issues, where the same fleets target bigeye, yellowfin, and albacore. The presentation considered the overlap of the tropical longline fishery and the South Pacific albacore longline fishery, the spatial separation between which indicates that SPA and bigeye objectives can be achieved independently, and the implications for yellowfin.

- Some participants supported the separation of the tropical longline from the SPA longline fishery. As the great majority of albacore catch is taken south of 10 degrees South and the southern longline fishery has a limited impact on the bigeye stock, the management of SPA can be achieved through the MP.
- There was also concern that the mixed fishery framework was a new concept and the Commission had not taken a decision on it. As this is a workshop for SPA MP, it was not appropriate to discuss bigeye and yellowfin.
- In response to a question, the SSP noted that recently, 5% of the bigeye longline catch had been taken in the region south of 10° South. Under the SPA MP, the bigeye catch in that area would be defined through that SPA MP within the mixed fishery framework.

7. REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES AND WORKPLAN

17. It was noted that there was a fair amount of work that had been requested of the SSP, and more consultations between interested CCMs and participating territories would be needed prior to WPCFC22.

18. Participants therefore agreed:

- To hold a one-day, four-hour virtual SPAM workshop on 5th November.
- To focus the discussion at the workshop on HCRs and any proposals for a CMM that would implement the SPA MP.

8. WORKSHOP WRAP-UP

19. The Co-Chairs briefly summarised workshop progress.

9. OTHER MATTERS

No other matters were raised.

10. SUMMARY OF KEY AGREEMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

20. Participants agreed that a Co-Chairs' Summary Report with attached tables would be circulated after the workshop.

11. CLOSING OF THE WORKSHOP

21. The workshop concluded at 2 pm on September 12, 2025.

The tables below include a list of requests for the SSP to undertake additional analyses prior to WCPFC22. Given the available SSP resources, SPAMWS participants prioritized these requests through a ranking process.

Table 1 below includes those requests which were ranked the highest, as well as those which did not require ranking, which will be undertaken by the SSP in advance of WCPFC22. Also included is an estimate of the SSP time (points) required to deliver each of the work items, based upon the assumptions provided in the 'Notes' section of the table. It was determined that work up to a maximum total of 14 points can be feasibly undertaken by the SSP between SPAMWS and WCPFC22. A point score of '0' means that the request will be done and does not need prioritisation.

There is an assumption that the estimation method (EM) will need to be run before WCPFC22 in line with the WCPFC harvest strategy work plan. That activity is included in Table 2.

Table 3 includes those requests that were discussed and ranked by participants during SPAMWS, but will not be undertaken by the SSP in advance of WCPFC22.

Table 4 includes additional requests to SSP that were removed from ranking and will be requested following decisions at WCPFC22.

Table 1: The list of six requests that were ranked highest, and requests which did not require ranking, which will be undertaken by the SSP prior to WCPFC22.

Request to SSP	CCM/Observer	Points	Notes
Additional MPs			
Include MPs that reflect the implementation of the MP from the equator southward	Japan	0	Results presented to WCPFC21 in WCPFC21-2024-30 meet this request, noting the EPO assumption was 22,500mt, not 18,000mt in runs performed for SC21 Points represent work level to re-tune 10 MPs with specific constraints using the current EPO baseline.
Re-tune all 7 candidate MPs operating south of 10S with exclusion of TK and TV catches that are south of 10S.	FFA	5	
Perform sensitivity analyses on re-tuned MPs in #2		3	
Develop additional MPs based on the current modified HCR 7 proposal (AU proposal) and HCR 13, which treat troll catch as an assumed and constant "external catch" in the MP. These MPs	US	2	Equates to 4 new MPs Assume <u>ONLY</u> HCR7 is excluding TK/TV catch south of 10S here; #2 will need to be done first

would be tuned to achieve the appropriate associated TRP. In developing these MPs, the “external troll catch” could be set at 2000-2004 average troll levels (in line with the baseline referenced in CMM 2015-02)			
Develop an MP equivalent to HCR 14 (EPO at 22,500) but with 0-10S on fixed effort (2014-2023) instead of catch, and that achieves the iTRP in the long-term.	CN	1	
Additional sensitivity analyses			
Run HCR7 with no constraint	US	1	If the new baseline excludes TK and TV, #2 will need to be done first
Update SPAMPLE to include full suite of considered MPs	US	2	
Other work			
SPC paper to be revised for WCPFC22 include catches in the modelled area of the application of the SPA MP, south of 10 S in the same figure presenting the SPA catches from the equator to 10 S and in the EPO	Japan	0	
The reference in the paper to “all” fisheries for SPA be clarified	Japan	0	SSP will tighten the text up.
		14	

Maximum ‘points’ available for the selection from the options listed in the above = 14.

Table 2: Essential SSP activities prior to WCPFC22

Request to SSP	CCM/Observer	Points	Notes
Run the estimation method using data up to 2023 and calculate the output from all candidate MPs		(4)	This needs to be done to meet the harvest strategy workplan timetable.

Table 3: The list of requests that were ranked but were not forwarded to the SSP.

Request to SSP	CCM/Observer	Points	Notes
Additional MPs			
Develop additional MPs based on the current modified HCR 7 proposal (AU proposal) and HCR 13, which treat longline fisheries targeting southern bluefin tuna with an annual average bycatch of South Pacific albacore less than 2500mt as an assumed and	JP	3	

constant “external catch” in the MP. These MPs would be tuned to achieve the appropriate associated TRP			
Other work			
Catch composition of LL catches in Tokelau and Tuvalu EEZ between the equator and 10 degrees south and south of 10S	New Caledonia	1	Assume as an average over 2020-2023. Note plots are available in the TK Part 1 report.
Proportion of domestic and foreign catches in Tokelau and Tuvalu EEZ between the equator and 10 degrees south and south of 10S	New Caledonia	-	To be advised by TV (TK responded during SPAM1). Some details are available in Part 1 reports.

Table 4: Additional Requests to SSP that were removed from ranking and will be requested following decisions at WCFPC22

Request to SSP	CCM/Observer	Points	Notes
Use a baseline of 2000-2004 or 2005 within MPs, as in CMM 2015-02	Japan		SPC noted that this has no material impact on the performance or outputs of the MPs. Changing the baseline of the MP does have implications when developing the CMM for an MP, and would require sufficient notification to, for example, update the HCR parameter table and plot.
In considering proposed robustness testing of the MP7 to EPO catch levels outside of historical observations, test a level of 27,000 mt, which is approximately 10% higher than the largest observed catch level in 2021 of 24,700 mt	US		In the absence of guidance, catch in 0-10S is assumed to be 12,000 mt. If the new baseline excludes TK and TV, #2 will need to be done first. Robustness testing is usually performed only on those MPs most likely to be adopted.
Perform additional robustness testing on subset of candidate MPs			Effort creep and TLL levels Needs to be on a defined subset of MPs, with an agreed geographic scope. Suggesting this is unlikely to be feasible until after decisions are made at WCFPC22