



Implementation of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management

Prepared by the WCPFC Secretariat

INTRODUCTION

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) was established in 2004 to ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the Western Central Pacific Ocean in accordance with the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. Currently, the WCPFC has twenty-six (26) Members, seven (7) Participating Territories and eight (8) Cooperating Non-Members (CCMs). The WCPFC Convention Area tuna catch (2,716,396 mt) for 2018 represented 81% of the total Pacific Ocean catch of 3,373,512 mt, and 55% of the provisional 2018 global tuna catch of 4,930,621 mt.

The ecosystem approach to fisheries management is a universally accepted management concept for the management of fishery resources and its principles can be traced back to several international instruments. Although different definitions and designations were known to be associated with those management approaches like ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF), ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM), and ecosystem-based fisheries management (EBFM), they all carry the common characteristic of being a holistic approach to conservation and management that takes into consideration not only impacts on the target stocks but also impacts on the broader ecosystem associated with the fishing operations as well as other related social and economic outcomes, and the conditions that support achievement of pre-determined management objectives. One of the unique features of EAFM is that it has three (3) components namely; i) ecological well-being, ii) human well-being and iii) good governance that is anchored in the context of sustainable development.

The requests of the General Assembly are structured in accordance with the suggested areas in the Letter from Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel.

IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EAFM

1. Experience in the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, including in relation to:

a) assessing the impacts of fishing on the ecosystem, including on associated or dependent species;

Currently, the WCPFC is implementing the EAFM to the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) tuna fisheries through developing a holistic tuna management approach, called the WCPFC Harvest Strategy Framework, which incorporates biological, economic, social and ecosystem management objectives. In addition, the WCPFC has been covering several EAFM-related issues including research (such as the ecosystem indicators and assessments of risk

analyses of bycatch species) and applications of the individual EAFM elements (such as bycatch mitigation measures and protection of marine environment from marine pollution) since the start of the Commission.

The WCPFC Scientific Committee regularly conducts stock assessments and other analyses on target and non-target species. Based on the results of stock assessments, the Scientific Committee provides management advice and recommendations to the Commission to develop and adopt relevant conservation and management measures.

- Conservation and Management Measure for Sharks (CMM 2019-04)
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evaluation process. Some CCMs views that a specific Science-Management Dialogue meeting might be considered helpful in the future.

All these initiatives are important in moving towards the development of the WCPFC Harvest
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