

Annex 10

REPORT OF THE STATISTICS WORKING GROUP WORKSHOP

International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species
in the North Pacific Ocean

**July 18-19 and 21, 2008
Takamatsu, Japan**

1.0. Opening of the Meeting

Naozumi Miyabe, Chair of the STAT WG, opened the meeting at 14:30 on July 18, 2008, and welcomed 23 delegates to the 7th meeting of the STAT WG. Members from Canada, Chinese-Taipei, Korea, Mexico, Japan, and the United States were represented.

John Holmes was appointed rapporteur for the meeting.

Participants were asked for comments on the Agenda. No comments were received and the agenda was adopted as distributed by the group.

A list of documents was tabled and approved by the group.

One of the main tasks of the workshop was to review existing data that were migrated into the new ISC database and new data received as of July 1, 2008, and to identify gaps and discrepancies in submissions and data shown.

2.0 Review of Data Collection by Participants

The Chair introduced the tables containing the Category I, II, and III data currently archived in the ISC web database for review. Some of the tables show data by gear type, which may not be as detailed as the gear types used by species working groups. Participants were asked to submit specific comments or changes to the tables after the session rather than during discussion. These tables are considered preliminary, as most of newly submitted data were not fully verified yet. For example, data from the most recent fishing season may be preliminary estimates. Species WGs have their own catch tables that are used for stock assessments and are aware of the preliminary and finalized data.

The WG briefly reviewed the Category I data in ISC/08/STATWG/01. The simplified grand totals shown in this table should be a summary of the more detailed WG tables, but many differences were noted. It was also noted that some countries have submitted data time-series and gear types that are not reflected in the ISC database. This point was also noted in discussions of Category II and III data submissions. The WG discussed why the more detail WG tables do not match the tables in the ISC database.

The data administrator was requested to provide feedback to national data correspondents on data that countries have not provided yet.

The WG reviewed data submission procedures. The data submission date was unchanged (July 1). Category I data are submitted to the Data Administrator and the WG data managers. On receipt of data, Species WGs check and verify the accuracy of species data and any proposed revisions to current, and especially historical data, at their meetings. Category II and III data are submitted to WG data managers, who forward these data to the ISC database after verification by the WG. Chairs check their WG data in July before the Plenary session and confirm data submissions. Any revisions to the tables that go to the plenary are discussed and approved by species WGs during their meetings and so Chair should know about them. Changes submitted after a meeting are taken up at the next WG meeting.

The WG then discussed ISC/08/STATWG/02, which shows data by species by ISC country submitted to the SPC. Discussion of this document focused on the fact that catches of HMS in the North Pacific by countries that are not ISC members will not be shown because they do not submit data to the ISC. However, if these countries are members of the WCPFC, then they would submit these North Pacific data to the SPC. The WG suggested that the data administrator contact the SPC and IATTC and ask about forwarding data from non-ISC countries fishing for species covered by the ISC. The SPC produces a bulletin of catches by country so if a WG suspects that not all catches are accounted for in the ISC database, then a check of this bulletin should be made. In some cases, there may be discrepancies in data submitted to the ISC and other RFMOs because different reporting dates are used. If such discrepancies are found, then WG Chairs should contact the RFMO to determine the reason.

Lastly, the WG also reviewed ISC/08/STATWG/03, which documents the Category II and III data in the ISC database. Tables of catch by species and fishery and country summarizes catch records by fishery for each country, i.e., length of each time-series. Total fleet statistics are also summarized by year, country and gear. Category II data are summarized by period of record, country, area and gear, showing effort types, data, and quarters and months fished. Category III data in the database are summarized by country, gear and species. There was discussion of the spatial area codes because some participants had catch and effort records that were not specific with respect to catch location beyond indicating "North Pacific". Because these data must be accompanied by a valid area code when submitted to the database, some spatial catch and effort data have not been submitted. However, there was consensus that the ISC database should be as complete as possible, even if it is not possible to provide the fine temporal and spatial stratification. The WG noted that it is critical to know in what part of the Pacific Ocean specific catches were made and proposed that the database upload be modified to accept data without a spatial area code provided that the submitting country provide metadata that documents the broad area from which the data were collected. Any data submitted to the ISC database would be reviewed and approved by the WG before being incorporated into the database.

It was noted that the ISC Operations Manual specifies that countries submit Category I data to the ISC Data Administrator and Species WG data managers and Category II and III data to the Species WG data managers on or before July 1 each year. **3.0 Review of Data Reporting Protocol and Development of Web Page**

3.1 Data Reporting Protocol

Koji Uosaki provided a short presentation on using the newly launched ISC Researchers Web page. The site was developed to upload catch statistics and other data by each data correspondent and it also has functions for each WG chair. A user name and password are required to log-on. Procedures for uploading and deleting data were demonstrated. Uploaded data must be coded correctly in a csv file in order for the procedure to occur successfully. Uploading has three steps: identify the data file to upload, submit the data to check for coding errors, then upload the data to the database. To delete data, a file containing the data to be deleted must be prepared and the three steps above followed. Users should note that current user names and passwords are temporary at present because the website is still in its developmental stages. Different levels of access privileges will be provided to data correspondents, WG Chairs, WG Data managers and the Data administrator. A database manual was distributed earlier to data correspondents and others. The manual provides illustrated instructions for all procedures. The Chair noted that the manual contains tables of data codes used by the database. Currently, codes for spatial areas that are 1° x 1° or greater are available. Participants were satisfied with the current level of spatial resolution and did not express a need for finer resolution, i.e., smaller area codes.

3.2 Web Page Development

Hitoshi Honda discussed the recent update of the existing ISC website homepage. The update included new information and functionality that will allow WG chairs, ISC Chair and Vice-Chair and Heads of Delegations to upload documents and announcements to the website – these files do not need to be in any particular format. The website administrator will be informed of new uploads via email and must approve those that go up on the website. This new development is designed to allow the ISC leadership to update and pass on information to the ISC. Discussion on the updated page (which is similar in look to the old page it replaced) focused on the fact that this page is the public face of the ISC and as such is too busy for the general public. A prototype for new top page was shown and briefly described. Participants were asked to keep the prototype confidential as it is based on conversation with the ISC chair only. The design approach was to simplify the design of the page so that the general public can easily navigate and find information. The prototype page has a graphic of the North Pacific and uses a button bar on the left for important linkages. However, this page is still under development and is not ready for public unveiling at this time. It was noted that the web page is the equivalent of an organizations business card. The ISC needs to move quickly to get a revamped and functional page online to showcase the ISC.

4.0 Review of Data Requirements for Stock Assessment and Fishery Monitoring

Datasets used for stock assessment purposes are managed by the WGs. The goal of this agenda item is to determine if WGs have additional data requirements or needs that the STAT WG can assist in fulfilling. In particular, the Chair asked WGs to identify fishery data held by other RFMOs (IATTC, WCPFC) that are needed for stock assessments. The STAT WG suggested the following protocol for data requests to other RFMOs: WG Chairs request the data they need

from SPC or IATTC individuals that are identified as members of the WG. If there is no response, then a blanket request for data will be made by the STAT WG Chair.

4.1 Species Working Group Reports on Data Availability, Timeliness and Problems

The Chair of the BILL WG, Gerard DiNardo, noted that the submission of data from countries to the WG is problematic. Some member countries have repeatedly ignored requests by the Chair for data, which impacts our ability to complete assessments. The proposed procedure is to submit data to the data administrator in July, at which point WG Chairs are notified of the submissions, seems like a reasonable solution. He asked about the content of the species tables presented at the plenary session in July, specifically what data are included? He also noted that the most recent fishing year data are always preliminary and that this has to be made clear in the tables presented to the plenary session. The BILL WG has compiled a catalogue of metadata that describe the data that are available for stock assessments, regardless of the level of spatial detail in those data. One problem for the BILL WG is that some north Pacific countries are catching billfish, but these data are not reported to the ISC because these countries are not members of the ISC. Thus, there is a need to get these data from the SPC.

John Childers spoke on behalf of the Chair of the ALB WG. The ALB WG is currently looking at the SPC database to determine if it contains ALB catches in North Pacific that are not presently in the ALB WG database. However, the SPC database often does not distinguish between north and south Pacific catches of ALB. The database records catches by month of landing so it was suggested that the ALB WG use this parameter to identify the catches since the fishing seasons differ in the north and south Pacific Oceans. John noted that the ALB WG also maintains a data catalogue (an inventory of available data) and suggested that a standardized catalogue format should be developed for all WGs.

Yukio Takeuchi, Chair of the PBF WG, explained that their assessments are complicated because of the complex nature of the fisheries. Since there are about 10 different fisheries catching this species, the necessary data compilation is far beyond the data covered by the official ISC database. The need to collaborate with the IATTC in obtaining data in the EPO (already underway) and the SPC/WCPFC for south Pacific data, was emphasized. The PBF WG Chair has contacted the SPC, but the requested data still have not been received so he asked for assistance from the STAT WG in obtaining these data. Similarly, requests have been made to the IATTC for data from EPO fisheries of countries that are not members of the ISC, but these requests have not been fulfilled perhaps because PBF is not an IATTC priority.

Some discussion of data catalogues occurred. Most WGs maintain internal catalogues which document data availability. There was a suggestion that these catalogues should be submitted annually to the ISC database and collated into a single catalogue. However, there were questions about who would be responsible for collating the WG catalogues and revising the catalogue based on feedback from ISC members. This data catalogue could also include data from SPC, which would capture north Pacific catch data by non-ISC countries. Non-member catch data are also collected by the IATTC. Discussion noted that it is best to ask

specific individuals in SPC and IATTC for relevant data rather than trying to get these from the relevant websites because it is sometimes unclear what the data on the website represent (operational estimates, verified monthly estimates, etc.). An individual can be queried on the nature and veracity of the data.

5.0 Future Work Plan

National data correspondents were identified as follows:

- Canada - John Holmes
- China - Dai Xiaojie
- Chinese-Taipei - Kuo-Nan Chung, Shyh-Jiun Wang
- IATTC – Alejandro Pérez, Michael Hinton
- Japan - Koji Uosaki
- Korea - Sun-Do Hwang
- Mexico - Michel Dreyfus and Luis Fleischer
- SPC – Tim Lawson
- United States of America - John Childers.

Working Group data managers are: ALB WG – John Childers, BILL WG – Gerard DiNardo, PBF WG – Yukio Takeuchi, and BWG – Chris Boggs.

Components of workplan item relating to other WGs have been placed in the conclusions and recommendations section and item has been modified to reflect STAT WG role.

Item 1: Assist WGs with data requests to other RFMOs if RFMOs do not respond to initial requests from WG Chairs. ACTION: STAT WG Chair and Data Administrator. Priority: High

Item 2: Develop procedures for the collection and storage of metadata. Four countries (Japan, USA, Korea, Chinese-Taipei) have provided metadata for this year to ISC Researchers Web page. ACTION: Database administrator to follow-up with countries that have not submitted metadata for this year or other years. ACTION: STATWG/database administrator will look at metadata as soon as possible to make sure complete and send queries to provider. Priority: High.

Item 3: Identify data coordinators from each WG and employ a permanent database administrator. This item is a carryover from ISC7 and is proving to be a challenging staffing problem for Japan. Last year, a database manager was hired for 10 months on contract so ensuring system maintenance and improvement plus data quality control is difficult under the circumstances. It is not clear when the staffing situation will improve so that Japan can hire a permanent data administrator. ACTION: Employ permanent database administrator (Far Seas lab). This is ongoing. Priority: High.

Item 4: All countries to continue to work on providing historical data. ACTION: Data correspondents. Priority: High.

Item 5: Data correspondents should attend STAT WG meetings. ACTION: Data correspondents. Priority: Medium.

Item 6: Provide oversight for the archiving of input, output, metadata, software for stock assessments and working documents in the ISC database. The ISC database can archive various types of files so this provides a central repository space. But Japan noted that they needed to determine how much electronic storage space was available to the ISC. ACTION: STATWG/Data Administrator and WGs. Priority: Medium.

Item 7: Monitor compliance with reporting requirements for Category II and III data to WGs. The STAT WG needs to know which countries have and have not complied so that follow-up can be initiated. ACTION: STATWG/Data Administrator, WG data managers and data correspondents. Priority: High.

Item 8: Procedures developed for communications between WGs and STATWG should be continued, including a one-page written report describing progress and any changes in historical data each time data are submitted. The written report should cover any changes resulting from WGs in the past year. ACTION: STATWG/Data Administrator and WG data managers. Priority: High.

Item 9: Assist the BWG with the development of protocols for the collection and handling of bycatch data and oversee bycatch data submissions for follow-up actions if necessary. Catch reports to STAT WG/Data Administrator do not require a listing of bycatch species and the data administrator is not asking for these data. However, these data are required in national reports (see operations manual – July 2008). It was noted that the quality of bycatch data is quite variable, which will hamper compilation and interpretation of data. Some guidance on short-term tasks to rectify the data quality issue is needed. ACTION: Assist BWG in protocol development. STAT WG has oversight role in submission process. Priority: Medium.

Item 10: Add information on data coverage (or raising) in either metadata or in the form of a new data code. This item speaks to data quality and refers to things like logbook coverage and the resulting certainty in expanded total catch estimates. Action: STATWG/Data Administrator. Priority: Medium.

Item 11: Continue the development of the ISC website, including new functionality and design. New functionality (e.g., WG Chairs can upload documents and announcements) has been added to the existing website and is undergoing testing at present. A prototype of a new top page design has been prepared and shown for feedback. ACTION: STATWG/Data Administrator. Priority: High.

Item 12: Improve communication between the STAT WG/Data Administrator and the BILL WG Chair on billfish data submissions and transfer data to the BILL WG. Data structures have been set up to collect data for all marlin, swordfish and other billfish species, but the BILL WG does not have data for species such as blue marlin and black marlin. Further, it is not clear whether countries are submitting these data to the data administrator. ACTION: STATWG/Data Administrator and BILL WG Chair. Priority: High.

Item 13: Communicate procedures for data reporting to the WGs and provide oversight to ensure compliance with the data reporting obligations of all ISC member countries. ACTION: STATWG/Data Administrator and WG Chairs. Priority: High.

Item 14: Streamline and standardize data format by removing quarter information (month of catch is already available) and converting to units of metric tonnes (original units are hundreds of kg; change will maintain data precision but moves the decimal point). ACTION: STATWG/Data Administrator. Priority: High.

The new ISC database was launched in June 2008 so the catch tables reviewed in Section 2.0 of this report represent the first time that the STAT WG was able to view the contents of the database. Discrepancies and inaccuracies were noted. The work plan for the completion of the ISC database, with target dates for this work, is as follows:

- Data migrated to the new system and checked for accuracy (STAT WG noted some discrepancies with WG data tables, need to talk to SPC and IATTC for data) - December 2008
- Produce complete and accurate catch table – Prior to ISC9 plenary in July 2009
- Develop standardized plots of effort, catch, on an annual or quarterly basis for website download - December 2008

It may be difficult to complete all of these items by their target dates, given the amount of work required. Many of these items require further consultation among the WG chairs and data correspondents. Active participation of these parties is essential in completing these tasks in a timely manner.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The following recommendations conclusions and recommendations were developed based on discussions at the 7th STAT WG meeting.

WGs should investigate whether the IATTC, the WCPFC or the SPC have relevant data for stock assessments not reported to the ISC. If differences between ISC, IATTC, and WCPFC databases are detected (see discussion in Sections 5 and 6), then WG Chairs should contact the appropriate organization and request the relevant data. The STAT WG will assist if there is no response or the requested data are not provided.

WGs have the responsibility for archiving and documenting all input, output, metadata, and software used for stock assessments and working documents in the ISC database with oversight from the STAT WG/Data Administrator.

The STAT WG recommends that the BWG take primary responsibility for the development of protocols for the collection and handling of bycatch data (e.g., species lists and codes, development of data structures for recording discard data from logbooks and observers, etc.) with the assistance of the STAT WG.

The following procedure for data submission to the ISC database is recommended by the STAT WG: Countries will submit Category I data to the ISC database by July 1, the STATWG/Data Administrator will provide a copy of these data to the WG. Each WG (Chair) will assess the new submissions with respect to WG discussions at the most recent meeting and provide feedback to STATWG/Data Administrator on acceptance or rejection of the new data. Category II and III data are submitted directly to the WG data managers, with an oversight role for STATWG/Data Administrator to ensure compliance with the reporting obligations.

The STAT WG/Data Administrator was requested to provide feedback to national data correspondents on their compliance with annual data reporting obligations.

A recommendation was made to check the scientific name of striped marlin to make sure that it has not change recently. The current operations manual (July 2008) is believed to have the official scientific name from FAO correctly listed on page 4. (The name is mis-spelled in the accompanying Figure).

7.0 Administrative Matters

The next meeting will be held in advance of ISC9, at a time and place to be determined.

A draft description of the roles and responsibilities of the Data Administrator position was circulated by the ISC Chair via email in May. The data administrator will be responsible for: (1) managing end products from WG (oversight for archiving); (2) managing catch data for all HMS and associated bycatch species; and (3) supporting and maintaining the web site as a portal for WGs. The specific details of what needs to be accomplished for these responsibilities are not fully sketched out yet. Consolidating and fully describing the position and roles and responsibilities will greatly assist Japan in identifying and hiring the appropriate person when the opportunity to hire occurs. Participants should email comments on the draft statement of responsibilities to the ISC Chair and STAT WG Chair.

8.0 Adoption of Report

The draft meeting report was made available for review by the STAT WG at 09:30 Monday July 21, 2008.

9.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 on July 21, 2008.

Appendix 1.

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Appendix 2.

Adopted Agenda

International Scientific Committee for Tunas and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific

7th Statistics Working Group Meeting

July 18-21, 2007

Takamatsu, Japan

1. Opening of STATWG meeting
2. Appointment of chair and rapporteurs
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Tabling of Documents
5. Review of Data Collected by Participants and Updated Data Inventory and Depository
6. Review of Data Reporting Protocol and Development of Web Page
7. Review of Data Requirements for Stock Assessment and Fishery Monitoring - including a report from the Species Working Groups regarding availability, timeliness and problems with data in conducting their work
8. Future Work Plan
9. Conclusion and Recommendations
10. Administrative matters
11. Adoption of Report
12. Adjournment

Attachment 3.

List of Documents

ISC/08/STATWG/01. Catch Tables constructed from the ISC database for Albacore, Pacific Bluefin Tuna, Striped Marlin and Swordfish. Clearing House Staff.

ISC/08/ STATWG/02. Catch by Species for ISC associated countries submitted to the SPC. Clearing House Staff.

ISC/08/STATWG/03. Category 1, 2 and 3 data by fishery. Clearing House Staff.

Website Pages