

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

EIGHTEENTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES  
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 4-8 August 1986)

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TUNA AND BILLFISH

(Paper prepared by the Secretariat)

BACKGROUND

Consequent to a proposal by the Sixth Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries in 1973, an Expert Committee on Tropical Skipjack was established with the dual role of assessing skipjack resources in the tropical Pacific and the exchange of information between the island communities and the larger fishing nations. Its membership was confined to a small group of tuna specialists from SPC member countries, as well as from other fishing countries as needed, together with SPC fisheries officers.

As the tuna fisheries programme of the SPC became more consolidated and with the implementation of the skipjack tagging programme, the work of the Committee concentrated more on the evaluation and maintenance of technical standards in the programme and advice on financial matters and data collection. The Committee meetings were held concurrently with the Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries (RTMF), to which it became an advisory body.

With the completion of the Skipjack Survey and Assessment Programme, and given the fact that the original mandate for the Committee was taken over by the RTMF, the Sixteenth Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries, held in August 1984, recommended that whereas the principle of an Expert Committee be retained it should only be convened as and when necessary.

The work of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme (TBAP) is hampered by the reluctance of distant-water fishing nations (DWFNs) to provide access to data required for accurate assessment of tuna stocks of the region. In an effort to find a mechanism to encourage participation by DWFNs in the work of the TBAP, the Third Meeting of CRGA in May 1985 authorised the recruitment of two consultants to review alternative institutional arrangements for the TBAP. In their report to the Fourth CRGA held in September 1985, the reviewers suggested that to enable those DWFNs that are not members of SPC to participate more actively in the work of the TBAP, and particularly in the provision of catch and effort data and finance, the Expert Committee be revitalised and opened to wider membership which might include both DWFNs and the FFA, and could be given the role of an advisory body to the SPC and the Tuna Programme.

The CRGA agreed with this view and recommended this to the Twenty-Fifth South Pacific Conference which decided to agree in principle that the Expert Committee resume its activities and requested the Secretariat to prepare a working paper on the terms of reference and composition of this Committee to be considered at the May 1986 session of the CRGA. The Conference further empowered CRGA to make a decision on these matters.

Given the broader responsibilities of the TBAP, the Secretariat suggested that the Committee be renamed the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish. The May 1986 CRGA approved the following terms of reference, composition and procedures for this Committee.

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE

The intended role of this Committee is purely advisory and consultative to the SPC RTMF. Its work will assist in the conduct of pelagic fisheries research through the provision of expertise, information, funds, and technical advice.

The Committee shall:

1. assist the SPC RTMF in conducting biological research on stocks which support oceanic fisheries for tuna and billfish in the SPC region by:
  - providing rigorous technical evaluation of the scientific work of the TBAP;
  - suggesting, on the basis of these technical evaluations, improvements to the research techniques used by the TBAP;
  - ensuring that the relevant data are available to the SPC, specifically including data from the high seas areas surrounding the EEZs of SPC member countries;
  - assisting the TBAP in the collection of data in the field through the return of tags, catch sampling programmes, and other appropriate activities;
  - arranging collaboration between SPC staff and outside workers on problems of mutual importance;
2. ensure that field work conducted within the SPC region by external agencies is efficient and consistent with the requirements of SPC members by:
  - acting as a clearing-house for information on research cruises in the region;
  - co-ordinating, where possible, the activities of these research cruises to provide maximum effect and to avoid duplication of effort;

3. develop an acceptable mechanism for organizing and funding oceanic fisheries research in the SPC region for the long term (to be completed by May 1989).

#### COMPOSITION

It is expected that the composition of the Committee would vary according to the specific tasks before it. In general, however, it shall consist of the following members:

- Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the SPC RTMF;
- Secretary-General and/or Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme Co-ordinator;
- Director of the Forum Fisheries Agency or his representative;
- technical experts nominated by the TBAP Co-ordinator, Forum Fisheries Agency Director, the RTMF and SPC Member Governments; and independent consultants invited by the Committee as and when necessary to assist in analysis of specific problems;
- representatives of governments or fishing associations of DWFNs with licences to fish in the SPC area, at the invitation of the Secretary-General in consultation with member governments.

A list of individuals in the last two categories who will be invited by the SPC to the first meeting is attached.

#### PROCEDURES

Costs of attendance (travel and per diem) by SPC sponsored participants (Chairman and Vice-Chairman of RTMF, TPC, and SPC nominees) will be met out of Programme funds. Costs of other participants will be met by their agencies.

The findings of the Committee will be summarized and presented to the Nineteenth Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries as part of the Tuna Programme Co-ordinator's annual report.

The Secretariat considered that an August date was too early to convene a meeting at which meaningful discussions could occur. The first meeting of the Committee is therefore proposed for April 1987 in Noumea. Subsequently, regular meetings would be held annually with supplementary meetings as required. The purposes of the first meeting are to acquaint DWFN scientists with the general scope of TBAP research and then to examine in detail research on tuna movement and fisheries interaction. These reviews will clearly identify the data required to productively conduct the TBAP research programme. The expected results are that the scientists concerned will seek to participate in the research and attempt to influence their respective agencies to find a mechanisms for more meaningful co-operation.

Draft agenda for the first meeting:

1. Preliminaries (election of Chairman, hours of work, drafting committee, etc.)
2. Background of Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish
3. Overview of TBAP research
4. Analysis of movement and fisheries interaction
5. Data requirements in support of analysis of movement and fisheries interaction
6. Data sources
7. Mechanisms for providing data
8. Other business
9. Adoption of report

LIST OF INVITEES FOR FIRST MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEERepresentatives of  
Governments or Fishing  
Associations of DWFNs

Mr Ki Hiok Barng  
National Fisheries Administration  
Namaemoonro 5 Ga  
Daewoo Bldg 19F  
Chung-ku  
SEOUL  
Korea

Mr Guillermo Gomez Sanchez  
Ministry of Fisheries  
Av. Alvaro Obregon  
C.P. 06700  
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Mexico

Dr Shuichi Takehama  
Assistant Director  
Resources Division  
Fisheries Agency  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry  
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TOKYO  
Japan

Dr Po Wei Yuan  
Director  
Fisheries Department  
Council of Agriculture  
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Mr Julius Zolezzi  
Zolezzi Enterprises, Inc.  
1050 Rosecrans  
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Technical Experts

Monsieur Alain Fonteneau  
Office de la Recherche Scientifique et  
Technique Outre-Mer  
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Dr Sigeiti Hayasi  
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Dr James Joseph  
Director of Investigations  
Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission  
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LA JOLLA, California 92093  
United States of America

Monsieur Jacques Marcille  
Marine Resources Service  
Fishery Resources & Environment Divisio  
Food and Agriculture Organization  
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CORRIGENDUM

Page 3, lines 12 to 15:

- technical experts nominated by the TBAP Co-ordinator, Forum Fisheries Agency Director, the RTMF and SPC Donor Member Governments; and independent consultants invited by the Comittee as and when necessary to assist in analysis of specific problems;

COMMISSION DU PACIFIQUE SUD

DIX-HUITIEME CONFERENCE TECHNIQUE REGIONALE DES PECHEES  
(Nouméa, Nouvelle-Calédonie, 4-8 août 1986)

COMITE PERMANENT DES THONIDES ET MARLINS

(Document présenté par le Secrétariat général)

CORRIGENDUM

Page 3, lignes 13 à 15 :

- des experts techniques désignés par le coordonnateur du Programme thonidés, le directeur de l'Agence des pêches du Forum, la Conférence technique régionale des pêches et les gouvernements membres donateurs de la CPS, ainsi que des consultants indépendants invités, en tant que de besoin, par le Comité pour aider à l'analyse des problèmes particuliers;