



Review Conference on the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (New York, 22 to 26 May 2006)

Contribution from the Secretariat of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

Introduction

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) was established by the *Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPF Convention)* which entered into force in 2004. The WCPF Convention is the second regional fisheries management agreement to be negotiated since the conclusion of the 1995 Agreement for Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10th December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA)¹.

The WCPF Convention largely reflects the provisions of UNFSA by reference while, at the same time, reflecting the special political, socio-economic, geographical and environmental characteristics of the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) region. Notable examples in this regard include a framework for the participation of fishing entities in the Commission which legally binds fishing entities to the provisions of the Convention, participation by territories and possessions in the work of the Commission, recognition of special requirements of developing States, cooperation with other RFMOs whose area of competence overlap with the WCPFC, recognition of unique geo-political circumstances relevant to the management of the stocks, and decision-making.

The WCPFC only commenced operations in late 2005. Although experience with practical development and implementation of the regulatory framework outlined in the WCPF Convention is limited, the WCPFC provides valuable material relating to the operationalization of the UNFSA.

This contribution to the Review Conference provided for at Article 36(2) of UNFSA, summarises the multilateral effort involved in operationalizing the UNFSA for the WCPO and reviews some of the challenges associated with implementation and lessons learnt to date. It profiles the status of fisheries for highly migratory fish stocks in the WCPO as a benchmark against which the success of efforts to implement the WCPF Convention will be gauged.

¹ The first was the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Fisheries Resources in the South East Atlantic Ocean (SEAFO) which was negotiated in 2001 and which entered into force in April 2003. The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) has recently completed a process to review the 1949 IATTC Convention to incorporate various provisions of recent international agreements including UNFSA. The resulting agreement is called the Antigua Convention.

Context Setting

For the most part fisheries for highly migratory fish stocks in the WCPO during the last 25 years have been undertaken with minimal formal attention to sustainable utilization or to the impact of those fisheries on associated and dependent species taken incidentally.

Between 1980 and 2000, principally operating under bilateral or multilateral negotiated fisheries access arrangements, the annual harvest of tunas in the WCPO increased from approximately 440,000 tonnes to 1.8 million tonnes - an increase of 300%. A significant proportion of this catch (approximately 50%) was, and continues to be, taken within the 200 mile zones of the Pacific island developing States.

The access arrangements that supported these fishing activities rarely contained measures for conservation and management. Instead, under the auspices of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), which was established in 1979, Pacific island States harmonized arrangements for the administration of foreign fishing fleets that operated within areas of national jurisdiction under license. At the same time, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) began to coordinate the collection and compilation of data from the fishery, undertake biological research on tuna stocks, carry out assessments of the stocks, and provide scientific advice to its members and to the FFA. While distant water fishing nations could not become members of FFA (or SPC), the 1979 Forum Fisheries Agency Convention establishing the FFA recognized that “additional international machinery” would eventually be necessary to promote conservation and management of target fisheries resources (FFA Convention Article III(2)).

The successful conclusions of the UNFSA and related international instruments such as the 1993 Compliance Agreement and the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries were the main catalysts for FFA member countries to start considering the form that the expanded institutional arrangements may take.

The vehicle to support discussions between FFA members and distant water fishing nations on future institutional arrangements was the Multilateral High Level Conference on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. The MHLC first convened at Honiara, Solomon Islands in December 1994.

After six years of negotiations in the MHLC, the *Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean* was opened for signature on 5th September 2000². The WCPF Convention

² Participants in the Conference were: Australia, Canada, China, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji Islands, France, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands,

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entered into force on 19 June 2004, six months after the deposit of the thirteenth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. The current status of the Convention is presented in Appendix I. A map of the WCPFC Convention Area is available at Figure 1. The depositary for the Convention is the Government of New Zealand.

Simultaneously with the adoption of the WCPF Convention, the participants in the MHLC adopted a resolution establishing a Preparatory Conference for the Establishment of the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

The Preparatory Conference met on seven occasions between 2001 and 2004. It established the organizational, administrative and financial framework for the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. It developed a structure and options for collecting and analysing scientific data and other necessary elements of a regulatory framework to support the effective implementation of the Convention, including compliance and enforcement. A summary of the work of the Preparatory Conference is available at www.wcpfc.org.

The Commission's secretariat was established at Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia in late 2005 immediately prior to the Second Regular Session of the Commission. It plans a staffing complement of no more than 10 by the end of 2006. The Commission supports three subsidiary bodies: the Scientific Committee, the Technical and Compliance Committee and the Northern Committee (responsible for stocks north of 20°N). Subsidiary bodies and the Commission meet once annually.

Stocks

The WCPF Convention is concerned with all highly migratory fish species listed in Annex 1 of UNCLOS occurring in the Convention Area and such other species of fish that the Commission may decide, except saurians.

At its first meeting in August 2005 the Scientific Committee reviewed the status of WCPO tuna stocks. These assessments used information that was available to the end of 2004. The results of the 2005 assessments for target tuna stocks are summarised at Appendix II.

Republic of Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Republic of Palau, Independent State of Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Independent State of Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in respect of Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands, United States of America and Republic of Vanuatu.

Progress in Implementation

The decade required to complete the negotiations for the establishment of the Commission, and the resulting detail in the Convention text itself, reflects the diversity of interests in highly migratory fish stocks in the WCPO and the evolving standards for such agreements. As such, operationalizing the provisions of the Convention will take additional time during which progress on some matters can be expected to be relatively quick while other matters will take considerable effort to resolve.

Adoption of measures

At its second regular session in December 2005, taking into account the advice of the Scientific Committee, the Commission adopted binding measures relating to the conservation and management of target bigeye, yellowfin, south Pacific albacore and north Pacific albacore tuna. In addition, non-binding resolutions directed at sea-bird and sea turtle bycatch, over-capacity, and the catch of non-target fish species were also adopted.

The first regular session of the Technical and Compliance Committee in December 2005 developed procedures for reporting to the Commission. The Annual Report provides guidelines for reporting relevant information on fishing activities of members and cooperating non-members during the preceding calendar year, and management and compliance issues during the present year. Beginning in 2006, the Commission will consider the effectiveness of the reporting obligations as a means to monitor the application of measures adopted.

Over-fishing and capacity management

Capacity concerns, mainly in relation to for the status of bigeye and yellowfin tuna, were first addressed in 1999 during the Multi-lateral High Level Conference. In 2002, the Preparatory Conference reiterated its concerns over continuing capacity increases in WCPO tuna fisheries and urged constraint from all participants in the Conference. At its second session in December 2005, the Commission adopted a resolution requiring a reduction in capacity in WCPO tuna fisheries created since 1999. The resolution does not adversely affect the coastal processing and transshipment facilities and associated vessels of developing island coastal states and territories.

Effects of fishing on the marine ecosystem

One of the six working groups of the Scientific Committee, the Ecosystem and By-catch Specialist Working Group (EB-SWG), provides information to the Commission in respect of Articles 5 (d) and (e) of the WCPF Convention. The EB-SWG will review the impact of fishing on components of the ecosystem not targeted by

fisheries; the interactions between climate and environmental factors and the target and non-target species; and the development of ecosystem-based models to assist the Commission with the development of management decisions.

Data collection and sharing

The Commission's data is currently based on an extensive database administered by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Oceanic Fisheries Programme (SPC OFP) covering the period 1950–2005 for tuna and billfish. Estimates of average annual catches in recent years of major non-target fish species, determined from observer data, are also available.

Coverage by operational catch and effort data held by the SPC OFP for 2003 (the latest year for which complete data is available) was 51.2% (percentage of catch of target tuna species in the Convention Area), the highest level ever achieved for the region. Coverage by port sampling data for 2003 was 5.1% and coverage by observer data for 2003 was 4.8%, while coverage for 2004 is slightly higher, 5.8%.

The principle gaps in coverage in the Convention Area by operational level catch and effort data (log sheet data) currently held by SPC OFP include the domestic fisheries of the Philippines and Indonesia, the distant-water longline fleets of Korea and Chinese Taipei, and the longline, pole-and-line and purse-seine fleets of Japan on the high seas.

At its first regular session in 2005, the Scientific Committee established a task group to consider data confidentiality and data sharing protocols for the Commission. The work of this group will be coordinated with the Technical and Compliance Committee in respect of compliance information.

Fishing activity by non-Members

Similar to the situation confronting other RFMOs there is limited information for the extent of fishing by Non-members of the Commission in the WCPF Convention Area. At the request of the second regular session of the Commission efforts to address this have commenced through initiatives such as extending invitations to non-Members (such as Thailand and Vietnam) to collaborate with the WCPFC and encouraging efforts by others, such as Belize, to complete the process to be considered for cooperating non member status.

Functioning of the Commission

The functions of WCPFC (Article 10) are modeled on those provisions of Articles 10–12 of UNFSA and provide for the determination of total allowable catch, collaboration on conservation and management measures for highly migratory fish stocks and non-target and species dependent or associated with target species, the collection and exchange of fishery data and statistics, the provision of scientific

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advice, criteria for allocation, responsible fisheries operations, monitoring, control and surveillance, the use of economic and other fisheries-related data, new entrants, and administrative functions.

Although only operational for 12 months, three subsidiary bodies held their inaugural meetings during 2005 – the Scientific Committee, the Technical and Compliance Committee and the Northern Committee.

Each of the Commission's three subsidiary bodies reported separately to the annual session of the Commission which met in December 2005. The Commission was able to make progress in reviewing available scientific information relating to target species, non-target species and the marine environment, consider gaps in the current knowledge base, adopt binding conservation and management measures concerning target tuna resources and non-binding resolutions relating to non-target species and commence work on developing the regulatory framework to support the Commission's future work. At that time approximately 47% of assessed contributions had been remitted by Members.

Interim scientific advisory services were being provided to Members by the SPC OFP and a Commission secretariat was established at the start of the fourth quarter 2005. The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific (ISC) currently provides scientific advice to the Northern Committee.

All meeting documents and the decisions of the Commission are made available in the public domain through a website and observers from other multilateral agencies and non-government organizations have participated in meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

Participatory rights

At its second annual session in December 2005, the Commission adopted effort limits for the purse seine fishery and a bigeye catch restriction for longline. In addition there is a fishing vessel restriction for vessels targeting albacore north of the equator and south of 20°S. Pending further work on allocation these conservation and management measures do not apply to developing coastal States or participating territories seeking to develop their own domestic fisheries.

At the same session, Members endorsed a proposal to examine issues associated with allocation of tuna resources within the WCPO as provided for at Article 10 (3) of the WCPFC Convention. This work will commence in 2006.

Implementation of flag State duties

Vessel registry and authorizations: Commencing in the 4th quarter of 2005 Members began to provide details of vessels authorized to fish in waters beyond national

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jurisdiction in the Convention Area. At the Commission's inaugural session, Members adopted procedures to implement the FAO Standard Specifications for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels for the Commission. In early 2006 the secretariat commenced work on a consolidated vessel registry that will eventually be posted on the Commission's website. The design of the Commission's vessel registry will take into account elements required to promote compatibility with the vessel registries of other tuna RFMOs.

Vessel monitoring system: The 2005 annual session of the Commission recommended that a review of technical and financial issues associated with the design and implementation of a Commission's vessel monitoring system, provided for under Article 24 of the WCPF Convention, be undertaken. The results of this review will be presented to the 2006 session of the Technical and Compliance Committee with a view to recommending a system for adoption by the third session of the Commission in December 2006.

Regional Observer Program: The 2005 annual session of the Commission recommended that the implementation of the Commission's regional observer programme, provided for at Article 28 of the WCPF Convention, be fast tracked. Feasibility studies, design and implementation will commence in 2006. The regional observer programme will be further considered at the 2006 session of the Technical and Compliance Committee with a view to recommending a framework for operations of the Commission's regional observer programme to the third session of the Commission in December 2006.

Measures on Transshipment: The first regular session of the Technical and Compliance Committee in 2005 noted that the fisheries and fleets operating in the Convention Area have different characteristics that need to be taken into account in regulating transshipment in accordance with Article 29 of the WCPF Convention. It was noted that transshipment vessels operating in the WCPO are often not flying the flag of a Member of the Commission and, as such, this activity is inconsistent with the Commission's procedures for the record of fishing vessels and authorization to fish. The Commission, at its annual session in 2005, agreed developing procedures to regulate and monitor transshipment were a priority task. In accordance with Article 32, the secretariat was requested to approach non-parties to the WCPF Convention whose vessels fish in the Convention Area, including by conducting transshipment activities, to cooperate fully with the Commission.

Boarding and Inspection Scheme: At its annual session in December 2005 the Commission became the first RFMO to adopt the default provisions of UNFSA for high seas boarding and inspection. Noting that the practical application of Articles 21 and 22 of UNFSA would require additional measures, such as development of appropriate domestic legislation, authorization of high seas boarding inspectors,

notification of credentials of inspectors, notification of procedures to flag States, development of procedure for the certification inspectors and training of inspectors, the Commission decided that the boarding and inspection procedures in Article 21 and 22 of the Agreement should not be utilized until these matters have been discussed inter-sessionally and resolved at the Third Regular Session of the Commission scheduled for December 2006.

Investigation, penalization of violations

The first opportunity for Members to report on investigations relating to violations will be at the second regular session of the Technical and Compliance Committee which is scheduled for September 2006.

Use of port State measures

The first regular session of the Technical and Compliance Committee recommended that the 2005 FAO Model Scheme on Port State Measures to Combat Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing serve as the basis for developing a port State Scheme. To assist with this task Members were invited to provide a report to the Commission, in advance of the second regular session of the Technical and Compliance Committee, that describes existing port State and/or port inspection schemes, and how these schemes correspond with the FAO Model Scheme.

International cooperation

Article 22 of the WCPF Convention provides for cooperation with other organizations with related competence and which can contribute to the objectives of the Convention, as well as those where the WCPFC Convention Area overlaps with the area under regulation by another RFMO for the purposes of avoiding duplication. Although only operational for a relatively short time, the WCPFC has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. A MoU is under development with IATTC and the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific. Consultation and exchanges of information occur with other tuna RFMOs electronically.

Special requirements of developing States

To facilitate effective participation, and give effect to Article 30 of the WCPF Convention, the Financial Regulations of the Commission provide that support for a representative from developing State Members to the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies be provided from assessed contributions of Members.

The WCPF Convention also establishes a Special Requirements Fund to receive voluntary contributions provided for the purposes of facilitating effective participation by developing State Members. In addition, the annual catch component that is

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factored into the calculation of the annual assessed contribution of developing State Members is discounted by 0.4 as an additional measure to relieve the financial burden associated with their effective participation in the Commission.

To give further effect to Article 30 of the WCPF Convention, Members have established a special project to support improved data and information collection and monitoring in the Philippines and Indonesia.

Lessons and guidance

Although the WCPFC has effectively only been operational since mid-2005, a number of lessons have been learnt which can provide some useful guidance to the issues that are relevant to the Review Conference in its efforts to improve the implementation of the UNFSA and the role of RFMOs in this endeavor.

Cost of effective participation in the Convention

Formal ratification/accession of the UNFSA and the WCPFC is yet to translate into the necessary supporting domestic legislative and administrative measures to support the implementation of the Conventions. Some members of the WCPFC are not only concerned about the financial commitment required to effectively implement their obligations under the UNFSA and the WCPFC, but also the costs of internal re-assignment of administrative functions (operational, legislative and administrative changes and the time to achieve this) required to give practical effect to their obligations. It is worth noting that although this is an issue of particular concern to developing State members of the WCPFC, some developed State members face similar challenges.

Given the large number of developing States in the WCPFC and their importance to the fishery, financial support for their participation in the work of the Commission and implementing the decisions of the Commission is essential.

Financial support needs to be backstopped by capacity building including human resource development, technical support and advisory services. Some developing State Members of the WCPFC, notably the Pacific Island countries, are served by established sub-regional arrangements providing technical and policy advisory services. However, WCPFC members such as the Philippines and Indonesia, who are not Members of these bodies, do not currently have access to similar well established services.

Effective Conservation and Management Measures

The WCPFC has made substantial progress in the development of management and conservation measures. However, the long term impact of conservation and management measures adopted by the WCPFC will be determined by the extent to

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which the measures are applied to the stocks throughout their range - within areas under national jurisdiction and on the high seas. The application of conservation and management measures within areas under national jurisdiction will be monitored through national reports submitted to the Commission's subsidiary bodies. States who fish on the high seas are required to report on the application of adopted measures by vessels flying their flag. Assessments undertaken by the Scientific Committee will determine the effect of these measures on the status of stocks throughout the Convention Area.

Challenges for the Commission include maximizing economic and social benefits from increased utilization of the skipjack resource in the WCPO without impacting adversely on the sustainability of the yellowfin and bigeye resources taken in association with fishing operations that principally target skipjack.

It is too early to assess the impact of the Convention on the sustainable utilization of highly migratory fish stocks in the Convention Area. The Commission is at early stages in developing procedures to monitor the response of members to implementation of conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission on both the high seas and in areas under national jurisdiction. A key issue that will determine the success of measures adopted by the Commission will be the extent developing coastal States supporting significant fisheries are able to implement measures within areas under national jurisdiction.

The WCPF Convention provides for Members to adopt conservation and management measures for fish stocks listed in Annex 1 of UNCLOS, and such other species of fish as the Commission may determine. This effectively addresses issues associated with the omission of some highly migratory fish stocks present in the Convention Area that are not cited in Annex 1.

Special Requirements of Developing States

In accordance with Article 30 of the WCPF Convention a Special Requirements Fund to ensure the effective participation of developing States and territories and possessions in the work of the Commission has been established. Article 25 of UNFSA has similar requirements. Discussion is required on the relationship, if any, between a fund established under the UNFSA and under a RFMO such as the WCPFC. WCPFC developing State members have not yet accessed the UNFSA Part VII Fund.

Need for Adequate Scientific Data

The WCPFC, through the SPC OFP, has the benefit of almost 30 years of accumulated scientific capacity in relation to highly migratory fish stocks in the WCPO. Nevertheless, gaps exist. These are associated with inadequate data,

uncertainty (including in respect to identification of species), IUU fishing and non-highly migratory fish species.

The successful implementation of the conservation and management measures adopted by the WCPFC will be partly dependent on improving the timeliness of scientific advice – addressing the problem created by framing management action on scientific advice that is based on fishery information that is between one and two years old.

Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries

The effective protection of marine biodiversity and the implementation of the precautionary approach are global challenges for all tuna RFMOs. In the WCPFC Convention Area, these are particularly challenging given capacity building requirements in developing coastal States, the significant socio-economic importance of tuna, the size of the fishery (in terms of the quantity of fish and the geographic area covering a diversity of ocean environments) and funds and expertise to be able to address issues both within the Commission secretariat and among Members.

The extent of the IUU fishing in the WCPO

The extent of the problems of IUU fishing is not known in the WCPFC Convention Area. A key implementation challenge for the WCPFC is going to be addressing the data gaps on IUU fishing and how to engage non-members whose vessels operate in the Convention Area and others processing or providing markets for WCPO tuna.

Participatory Rights

The UNFSA requires RFMOs to, among other responsibilities, agree on participatory rights such as allocations of allowable catch or levels of fishing effort. This issue will be one of the more complex tasks to be addressed by the WCPFC. The complexity partly relates to the different legal regimes with the Convention Area (territorial sea, archipelagic waters, EEZ and high seas), the historical fishing patterns in the region and the requirement to accommodate new entrants.

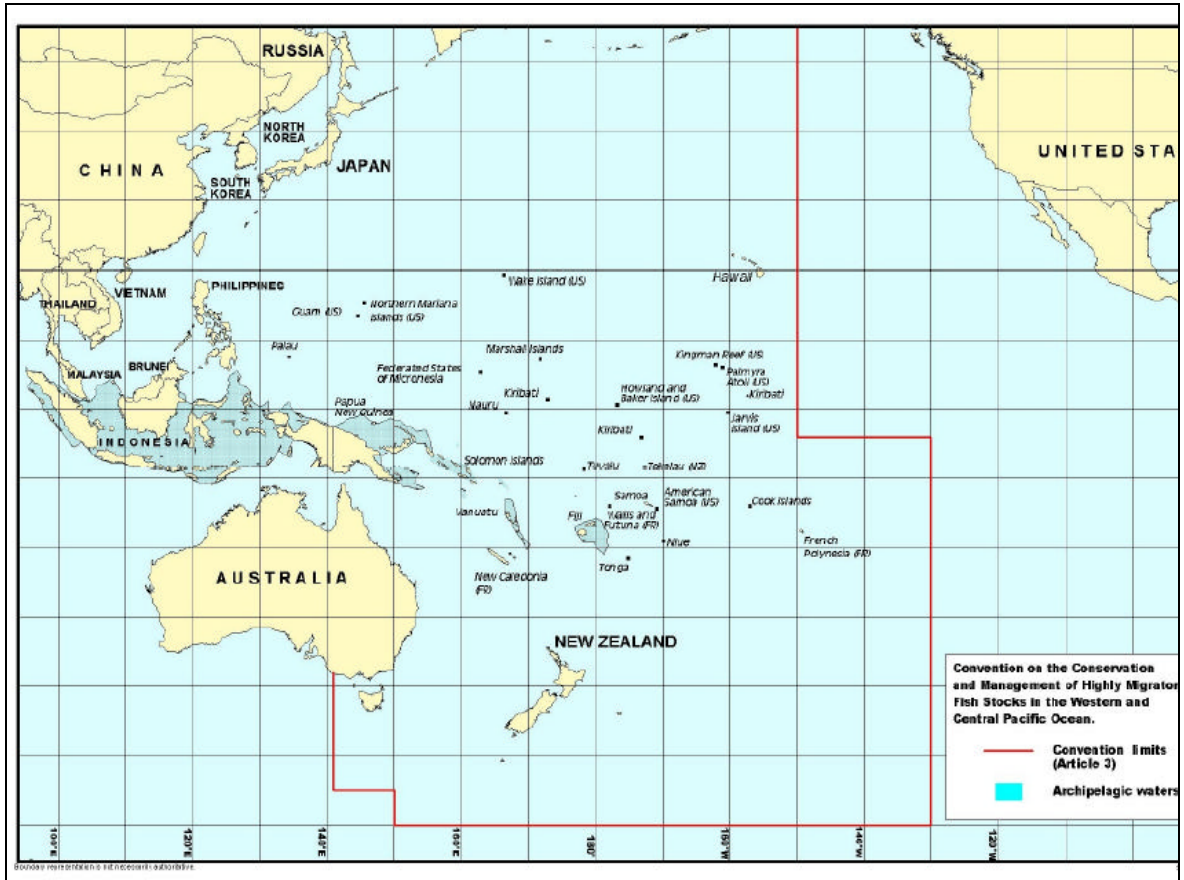
Recognition of special requirements

The area of competence of the WCPFC overlaps or adjoins with those of other RFMOs (IATTC, CCSBT and CCAMLR and IOTC). Progress has been made through negotiation of memoranda of understanding with RFMOs adjacent to the WCPFC Convention Area. Partly as a result of the relatively large numbers of WCPFC members that are also members of neighboring RFMOs compatibility is being encouraged in respect of conservation and management measure, sharing of vessel data and collaboration on MCS measures (observer programmes, VMS, transshipment verification schemes, stock assessment, etc.). The Commission considers there is considerable value in adapting the lessons of other RFMOs to suit the WCPO and so consultation and exchange for practical benefit is encouraged.

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Figure 1: The WCPFC Convention Area



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Appendix I

Parties to the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean and the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement as at 31 March 2006.

State	Date of Signature	Date of Ratification/Accession	UNFSA
Australia	30 Oct. 2000	22 September 2003	23 December 1999
Canada	02 Aug. 2001	1 November 2005	3 August 1999
China		2 November 2004	
Cook Islands	5 Sept. 2000	1 October 2004	1 April 1999
European Community		20 December 2004	19 December 2003
Federated States of Micronesia	5 Sept. 2000	20 December 2002	23 May 1997
Fiji	5 Sept. 2000	13 March 2001	12 December 1996
France (extends to New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna)		12 May 2005	19 December 2003
Indonesia	31 Aug. 2001		
Japan		8 July 2005	
Kiribati		9 June 2003	15 Sept. 2005
Korea		26 October 2004	
Marshall Islands	5 Sept. 2000	23 April 2001	19 March 2003
Nauru	18 Aug. 2001	26 August 2003	10 January 1997
New Zealand	5 Sept. 2000	19 December 2003	18 April 2001
Niue	30 Oct. 2000	17 December 2003	
Palau	5 Sept. 2000	2 November 2005	
Papua New Guinea	17 Jan. 2001	17 October 2001	4 June 1999
Philippines	5 Sept. 2000	17 June 2005	
Samoa	5 Sept. 2000	9 Feb. 2001	25 October 1996
Solomon Islands	23 April 2001	9 June 2003	13 February 1997
Tonga	23 April 2001	13 October 2003	31 July 1996
Tuvalu	5 Sept. 2000	13 April 2004	
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (for Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno islands)			10 December 2001
United States of America	5 Sept. 2000		21 August 1996
Vanuatu	5 Sept. 2000	6 October 2005	

Appendix II

Summary of recent assessments of the status of WCPO tuna stocks

Bigeye

Overfishing is likely occurring ($F_{\text{current}}/F_{\text{MSY}} > 1$). The assessment confirmed 2004 analysis that indicate the stock is presently not in an overfished state ($B_{\text{current}}/B_{\text{MSY}} > 1$) because of high levels of estimated recruitment since 1990 but cautioned that, if future recruitment declines to levels closer to the long-term average, a further decrease in total catch and effort is likely to be necessary in order to maintain the stock at sustainable levels.

Yellowfin

The 2005 assessment for yellowfin was more pessimistic than the 2004 assessment, the Scientific Committee concluding overfishing is probably occurring in the yellowfin stock in the WCPO ($F_{\text{current}}/F_{\text{MSY}} > 1$), but the stock is probably not in an overfished state ($B_{\text{current}}/B_{\text{MSY}} > 1$). The Scientific Committee recommended that fishing mortality for yellowfin tuna be reduced from F_{current} in order to maintain the stock at sustainable levels.

Skipjack

Noting that the 2004 harvest was the highest on record, the 2005 stock assessment for skipjack tuna indicated that overfishing is not occurring in the WCPO ($F_{\text{current}}/F_{\text{MSY}} < 1$), that the stock is not in an overfished state ($B_{\text{current}}/B_{\text{MSY}} > 1$) and that exploitation is modest relative to the stock's biological potential. The Scientific Committee considered that high catches are sustainable unless recruitment falls persistently below the long-term average. The Committee did caution that increases in purse-seine catches of skipjack may result in a corresponding increase in fishing mortality for yellowfin and bigeye tunas.

South Pacific albacore

Catch trends in 2005 indicated that total catches of south Pacific albacore were relatively stable over the period from 1960 to 1995, although they increased in recent years. The Scientific Committee concluded that overfishing is not occurring for south Pacific albacore ($F_{\text{current}}/F_{\text{MSY}} < 1$) and the stock is not in an overfished state ($B_{\text{current}}/B_{\text{MSY}} > 1$). The Committee considered that fishery impacts on the total biomass are low (10%), although considerably higher impacts occur for the portion of the population vulnerable to longline. Current catch levels from the South Pacific albacore stock were considered sustainable and yield analyses suggest increases in fishing mortality and yields are possible. Given the age-specific mortality of the longline fleets, the Scientific Committee considered that any significant increase in effort would reduce CPUE to low levels with only moderate increases in yields.

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North Pacific albacore

The stock assessment for northern albacore suggests a need to avoid increases in fishing mortality, the management of which will require will require complementary measures by the IATTC and the WCPFC. The estimated spawning stock biomass is at or below the A_{MSY} level.

Other tuna-like species

In relation to other species only preliminary work has been carried out towards an assessment for swordfish and striped marlin in the south-western Pacific and swordfish and northern bluefin tuna in the north Pacific. Assessments will be periodically updated.