

Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources

CCAMLR

Contribution on the topic of “Sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change” to the seventeenth round of informal consultations pursuant to paragraph 72 of UNGA resolution 78/68

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The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources is an international agreement established to conserve Antarctic marine living resources and is an integral part of the Antarctic Treaty system. The Convention applies to all marine living resources within the Antarctic marine ecosystem. The objective of the Convention, set out in Article II, is the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources, where the term ‘conservation’ includes rational use. The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) gives effect to the Convention’s objective and its principles of conservation. Information on the Commission’s activities is available on www.ccamlr.org.

CCAMLR applies precautionary ecosystem approaches to management. These have been previously communicated to UNDOALOS in respect of the fifteenth round of Informal Consultations pursuant to paragraph 66 of UN General Assembly resolution 76/71 on the topic of “Implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management” and include monitoring of harvested resources and the ecosystem and consideration of ecosystem impacts in setting precautionary catch limits.

CCAMLR has noted the potential impact of climate change on Antarctic marine ecosystems since the 1990s. Climate change has been included as a standing agenda item for the Commission since 2008. CCAMLR has adopted two resolutions regarding management in the face of climate change, [Resolution 30/XXVII](#) in 2009 and [Resolution 36/41](#) in 2022. These set out high-level commitments to integrate climate change science across all CCAMLR activities and include consideration of climate change impacts to better inform CCAMLR management decisions. Specific actions consistent with these resolutions are identified in the following paragraphs.

In 2011 CCAMLR adopted [Conservation Measure \(CM\) 91-04 \(2011\)](#): “General framework for the establishment of CCAMLR Marine Protected Areas”. This identifies that the objective of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) shall be to contribute to the achievement of, *inter alia*, the protection of areas to maintain resilience or the ability to adapt to the effects of climate change (CM 91-04 paragraph 2 (vi)). Existing and proposed MPAs include objectives such as the provision of scientific reference areas to monitor for the effects of climate change in areas where fishing activities are not permitted (for example [Conservation Measure 91-05 \(2016\)](#): “Ross Sea region marine protected area”) as well as providing climate refugia for species whose environmental niche may become more compressed towards the Continent over time.

In 2017 CCAMLR adopted [Conservation Measure 24-04 \(2017\)](#): “Establishing time-limited Special Areas for Scientific Study in newly exposed marine areas following ice-shelf retreat or collapse in Statistical Subareas 48.1, 48.5 and 88.3”. This provides an opportunity for scientific research following ice-shelf collapse or retreat, particularly to understand ecosystem processes in relation to climate change.

CCAMLR’s 2021 [Declaration](#) on the occasion of its 40th Meeting reaffirmed, *inter alia*, the Commission’s commitment to ensure that the challenges and impacts on Antarctic marine living resources arising from global environmental change, including climate change, are duly considered and addressed in Commission decisions.

In 2022, the Scientific Committee revised its strategic workplan including the terms of reference for all five of its scientific working groups (Working Group on Ecosystem Monitoring and Management (WG-EMM), Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment (WG-FSA), Working Group on Statistics, Assessments and Modelling (WG-SAM), Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing (WG-IMAF), and Working Group on Acoustic Survey and Analysis Methods (WG-ASAM). The terms of reference for each working group now explicitly include the mandate to consider the effects of climate change in the development of their advice to the Scientific Committee on managing marine resources in the Convention Area.

In 2023, CCAMLR held a climate change workshop ([WS-CC-2023](#)), which examined how CCAMLR currently accounts for climate change in its management, how the effects of climate change could be monitored and how CCAMLR might respond to climate change in the future. Workshop discussions included the importance of considering a) different life history stages to better understand climate change effects on species; b) appropriate climate variables and metrics to monitor in assessing the status of Antarctic marine living resources; c) potential range shifts and changing commercial interests due to climate change. Approaches from other regions were highlighted and the need to communicate with other bodies on issues of mutual relevance was acknowledged.

The Scientific Committee considered the workshop recommendations and identified a number of short-, medium- and long-term actions to continue to progress this work ([SC-CAMLR-42](#) Tables 6a-c), including specific actions for its Working Groups. For example, to integrate climate change considerations into toothfish stock assessments, a list of parameters and processes was developed (including growth, mortality, stock structure) which may be influenced by environmental variability or climate change, together with a workplan to monitor and evaluate these for change ([WG-FSA-2023](#) Table 5). Furthermore, the Scientific Committee recommended a similar action for all its fisheries. Updates on progress will be discussed at the 2024 meetings of the Working Groups and Scientific Committee.