

NEW AND EXPLORATORY FISHERIES

New and exploratory fisheries in the 2003/04 season

9.1 The Commission noted that 10 conservation measures relating to 12 exploratory fisheries were in force during the 2003/04 season, but fishing only occurred in respect of five fisheries (SC-CAMLR-XXIII, paragraphs 4.116 to 4.124):

- (i) Fishing occurred in Subarea 48.6 north of 60°S, Divisions 58.4.2 and 58.4.3b, and Subareas 88.1 and 88.2.
- (ii) In most of these fisheries, the fishing effort was low and the catches reported were relatively small.
- (iii) As has been the case for the last few years, the notable exception was the exploratory fishery for *Dissostichus* spp. in Subarea 88.1 where a total of 2 166 tonnes of *Dissostichus* spp. was taken against a catch limit of 3 250 tonnes.
- (iv) The total catch limit of 375 tonnes was taken by three New Zealand-flagged vessels in the exploratory *Dissostichus* spp. fishery in Subarea 88.2.
- (v) The exploratory fishery in Division 58.4.2 was undertaken by one Australian-flagged vessel which caught 20 tonnes of *Dissostichus* spp. against a catch limit of 500 tonnes.
- (vi) An exploratory fishery was undertaken in Division 58.4.3b for the first time by one Australian-flagged vessel which caught 7 tonnes of *Dissostichus* spp. against a catch limit of 300 tonnes.
- (vii) The exploratory fishery in Subarea 48.6 (north of 60°S) was undertaken by one Japanese-flagged vessel which caught 7 tonnes against a catch limit for *Dissostichus* spp. of 455 tonnes.

9.2 The Commission noted that the Secretariat had encountered significant difficulties in monitoring fisheries in 2003/04. This had resulted in eight instances where catches exceeded their catch limits, and most of these instances occurred in exploratory fisheries. The difficulties were outlined in CCAMLR-XXIII/38, and a number of changes and improvements were proposed. This matter was discussed in section 10.

9.3 The Commission also noted that Dr L. Pshenichnov (Ukraine) had presented a proposal to amend a number of conservation measures that related to the exploratory fisheries for *Dissostichus* spp. (SC-CAMLR-XXIII/7). The intention of the proposal was to ensure that these conservation measures met the requirements of paragraph 2 of Conservation Measure 41-01, to ensure the spread of fishing throughout the geographic and bathymetric range of the stock (SC-CAMLR-XXIII, paragraph 4.155). This matter was discussed in section 10.

Notifications for new and exploratory fisheries in the 2004/05 season

9.4 The Commission noted that 13 Members had submitted a total of 26 notifications for exploratory longline fisheries for *Dissostichus* spp. in Subareas 48.6, 88.1, 88.2 and Divisions 58.4.1, 58.4.2, 58.4.3a and 58.4.3b in 2004/05 (summarised in SC-CAMLR-XXIII/BG/3). In addition, one notification had been made for an exploratory bottom trawl fishery for *C. gunnari* in Subarea 48.3 (CCAMLR-XXIII/16). No notifications had been made for new fisheries.

9.5 The Commission noted with concern that (SC-CAMLR-XXIII, paragraphs 4.136 to 4.138):

- (i) there was a large number of notifications for fishing in Subareas 88.1 (10 notifications for up to 21 vessels), 88.2 (five notifications for up to 10 vessels) and Subarea 48.6 and Divisions 58.4.1, 58.4.2 and 58.4.3b (between 7 and 11 vessels);
- (ii) depending on the size of the precautionary catch limits, this implied that if all vessels operated simultaneously, the available catch per vessel could be lower than that required for economic viability, especially for those vessels operating in high latitudes where fishing imposes considerable operational difficulties;
- (iii) if a large number of vessels actually undertake exploratory fishing, this may lead to problems with the standardisation of CPUE data for assessments and it may also reduce the effectiveness of the move-on rule for by-catch;
- (iv) it is likely that there will also be additional administrative problems in determining closure dates for fishing in SSRUs when many vessels are fishing simultaneously in a subarea or division (CCAMLR-XXIII/38).

9.6 The Commission expressed concern that the Scientific Committee had been unable to develop management advice based on assessments of yield and was therefore unable to provide any new advice on catch limits for any of the exploratory fisheries (SC-CAMLR-XXIII, paragraphs 4.140 and 4.141). However, the Scientific Committee made progress in the development of methods for monitoring abundance and estimating precautionary yields (SC-CAMLR-XXIII, paragraphs 4.141 and 4.152; see also WG-FSA-04/36 and WG-FSA-SAM-04/8).

9.7 The Commission noted that the Scientific Committee had reiterated the urgent need to develop a means for estimating abundance and providing assessments of stock status for all exploratory fisheries (SC-CAMLR-XXIII, paragraph 4.168).

9.8 Some Members recalled the Commission's view that it would take at least 10 years before a precise estimate of abundance could be obtained for *D. mawsoni* in Subarea 88.1 (CCAMLR-XXII, paragraph 9.25).

9.9 In relation to the assessment of stocks in Subarea 88.1, New Zealand stated that there was a slight misconception over progress made towards assessment of the exploratory fishery in Subarea 88.1. New Zealand had presented three papers to the WG-FSA-SAM meeting investigating various approaches including the development of an integrated assessment model of *D. mawsoni* using CASAL. New Zealand had also presented three stock assessment

related papers to this year's WG-FSA meeting including further development of the CASAL stock assessment model. New Zealand has been deliberately cautious about trying to use the stock assessment results for providing advice this year. This is because there are issues with data quality and tag mixing assumptions and New Zealand did not want to present preliminary results and provide advice that may be substantially changed next year (the results are presented in WG-FSA-04/36). The assessment is based primarily on New Zealand tagging data – New Zealand has tagged 2 582 *D. mawsoni* over the past three years (1 262 tags by New Zealand-flagged vessels in 2003/04) and has recaptured 28 of those fish so far. New Zealand noted that it had submitted its entire tagging database to the Secretariat during CCAMLR-XXIII.

9.10 New Zealand noted that it is committed to the continued development of this work over the coming intersessional period. By the time of the WG-FSA-SAM meeting in 2005, New Zealand intends to have a stock assessment for *D. mawsoni* in Subarea 88.1 available. The results will probably have wide confidence intervals but will provide the first independent assessment of this stock and will include yields based on CCAMLR decision rules. New Zealand also intends to carry out simulation work to progress the evaluation of the stock assessment model.

9.11 The Commission endorsed the Scientific Committee's recommendations that (SC-CAMLR-XXIII, paragraphs 4.162 to 4.167):

- (i) Members fishing in exploratory fisheries ensure that the required research sets are completed in accordance with Conservation Measure 41-01 and submitted to the Secretariat in a timely and accurate format;
- (ii) the existing depth limit should be retained in high-latitude areas with narrow continental shelves in order to avoid impact on benthic communities in shallower waters, and that this approach be extended from Division 58.4.1 into Division 58.4.2;
- (iii) large numbers of vessels notified in 2004/05 may lead to difficulties with the standardisation of CPUE data for assessments and may also reduce the effectiveness of the move-on rule to limit by-catch in exploratory fisheries;
- (iv) additional administrative problems in determining closure dates for fishing in SSRUs may occur when many vessels are fishing simultaneously in a subarea or division;
- (v) for Subarea 88.1, the current SSRU by-catch limits should remain unchanged and the 2003/04 catch limits for *Dissostichus* spp. east of 170°E be retained in 2004/05.

9.12 In agreeing with the above, the Commission reiterated its concern that the number of vessels participating in the Subarea 88.1 toothfish fishery had increased substantially in the 2003/04 season, and that this fishery now had the largest number of vessels fishing in any of the CCAMLR statistical areas.

9.13 The Commission noted the Scientific Committee's consideration of the notification for the exploratory bottom trawl fishery for *C. gunnari* in Subarea 48.3 (SC-CAMLR-XXIII, paragraphs 4.127 to 4.134 and 4.170). The Scientific Committee had been unable to reach consensus on its views.

9.14 The Commission noted the advice on incidental mortality of seabirds in relation to exploratory fisheries notified for 2004/05 (SC-CAMLR-XXIII, paragraph 5.23).