

NEW AND EXPLORATORY FISHERIES

New and exploratory fisheries in 2006/07

12.1 In 2006 the Commission agreed to seven exploratory longline fisheries for *Dissostichus* spp. (Conservation Measures 41-04, 41-05, 41-06, 41-07, 41-09, 41-10 and 41-11). These exploratory fisheries were conducted in 2006/07 in Subareas 48.6, 88.1 and 88.2 and Divisions 58.4.1, 58.4.2, 58.4.3a and 58.4.3b. In most fisheries the number of vessels fishing was about half of the number notified, and the total reported catch of *Dissostichus* spp. was 4 582 tonnes (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, Annex 5, Table 6).

Notifications for new and exploratory fisheries in 2007/08

12.2 Twelve Members submitted paid notifications for exploratory longline fisheries for *Dissostichus* spp. in 2007/08 in Subareas 48.6, 88.1 and 88.2 and Divisions 58.4.1, 58.4.2, 58.4.3a and 58.4.3b. There were no notifications for new fishery areas, and no notifications were received for fisheries in closed areas. The number of vessels notified was substantially larger than for the 2006/07 fishing season, except in Division 58.4.3a and Subareas 88.1 and 88.2 (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, Annex 5, Table 7).

Progress towards assessments

12.3 The Commission noted the significant progress made by the Scientific Committee and WG-FSA in developing assessments for exploratory fisheries (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraphs 4.111 to 4.114). This work included:

- (i) further progress in assessing stocks of *Dissostichus* spp. in the Ross Sea (Subarea 88.1 and SSRUs 882A–B);
- (ii) review of a Leslie depletion analysis of Division 58.4.3b;
- (iii) reiteration of the urgent need to develop assessments for exploratory fisheries in Subareas 48.6, 58.4 and 88.2, and to ensure that appropriate data were collected to enable such assessments to be made as soon as practicable;
- (iv) examination of the power of current exploratory fishery research plans to deliver assessments of stock status;
- (v) identification of the need to review the design of research experiments that manipulate the distribution of fishing between SSRUs within exploratory fisheries, and to undertake methodological work on designing research experiments.

12.4 The Commission endorsed the Scientific Committee's advice in respect of the reporting of results from scientific surveys and research fishing on *Dissostichus* spp.

conducted under Conservation Measure 24-01. It agreed that Members complete these reports as soon as possible on completion of the survey, and submit their reports to WG-FSA (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraph 4.115).

Management advice

12.5 The Commission endorsed the Scientific Committee's discussion and advice on the requirements for fishery-based research in exploratory fisheries (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraphs 4.36 to 4.47 and 4.116 to 4.118), and agreed to revise Conservation Measure 41-01 in order to improve the collection of data in these fisheries (see also paragraph 13.53).

12.6 The Commission also noted the Scientific Committee's concern that some vessels operating in exploratory fisheries in 2006/07 had not achieved full compliance with the fishery-based research requirements for deploying research sets and the tagging program. Further, WG-FSA had noted large differences between the rates of recapture of tagged toothfish reported by vessels. The Scientific Committee advised that non-compliance with the fishery-based research requirements compromised WG-FSA's capability to develop assessments for exploratory fisheries (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraphs 12.6 and 12.7).

12.7 The Commission endorsed the Scientific Committee's proposal to amend Conservation Measure 33-03 in order to increase survivorship of discarded rajids and prepare for biological work to be conducted during the Year of the Skate (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraph 4.119; see also paragraph 13.51).

12.8 The Commission noted with great concern the high levels of IUU fishing in some exploratory fisheries, and the recent shift in IUU fishing activities from 'traditional' grounds in sub-Antarctic regions in Area 58 to higher latitude, high-seas areas and oceanic banks, such as BANZARE Bank in Division 58.4.3b. The Scientific Committee noted that Division 58.4.3b, and in particular the southern sector of that division, had been subject to a rapid and severe depletion, and that significant numbers of juvenile fish have still not been found.

12.9 The Commission also noted that the Scientific Committee was not able to conclude as to whether the presence of Members' vessels was likely to either increase or decrease the level of IUU fishing in exploratory fisheries (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraph 4.122). IUU fishing matters were considered in section 10 (see also paragraph 5.3).

12.10 The Commission endorsed the Scientific Committee's advice on exploratory fisheries, and agreed, *inter alia*, to:

- (i) *Dissostichus* spp. in Subarea 48.6 (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraphs 4.124 to 4.128):
 - subdivide SSRU 486A into two SSRUs along longitude 1°30'E
 - revise the precautionary catch limit for *Dissostichus* spp. and associated by-catch species;

- (ii) *Dissostichus* spp. in Division 58.4.1 (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraphs 4.129 to 4.133):
- allow research fishing under the 10-tonne research exemption of Conservation Measure 24-01 in SSRUs 5841D, F and H, which are currently closed to commercial fishing;
 - maintain the required tagging rate at at least three fish per tonne of green weight caught;
- (iii) *Dissostichus* spp. in Division 58.4.2 (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraphs 4.134 to 4.137):
- maintain the required tagging rate at at least three fish per tonne of green weight caught;
- (iv) *Dissostichus* spp. in Division 58.4.3a (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraphs 4.138 to 4.141):
- increase the required tagging rate to three fish per tonne of green weight caught;
- (v) *Dissostichus* spp. in Division 58.4.3b (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraphs 4.142 to 4.148):
- subdivide Division 58.4.3b into two SSRUs at latitude of 60°S;
 - close the SSRU south of 60°S (new SSRU B), given the rapid and unsustainable depletion seen in this area;
 - revise the precautionary catch limit for *Dissostichus* spp. and associated by-catch species;
 - increase the required tagging rate to three fish per tonne of green weight caught;
 - limit commercial fishing in the 2007/08 fishing season in order not to interfere with the notified Australian research survey in Division 58.4.3b in order for the survey to obtain the most scientifically useful data on the distribution of fish in the region;
- (vi) *Dissostichus* spp. in Subarea 88.1 (SC-CAMLR-XXVI, paragraphs 4.149 to 4.158):
- continue the three-year experimental system of closed and open areas implemented in 2005 for the duration of the experiment (from 2005/06 to the end of 2007/08);
 - revise the precautionary catch limit for *Dissostichus* spp. to 2 700 tonnes, and revise the precautionary catch limit for associated by-catch species;

- carry over the precautionary catch limit for *Dissostichus* spp. into the 2008/09 fishing season, subject to the conditions detailed in paragraph 4.57.

12.11 The Commission also noted:

- (i) the Scientific Committee's advice for the exploratory fishery for *Dissostichus* spp. in Subarea 88.1 applied to the Ross Sea (Subarea 88.1 and SSRUs 882A–B);
- (ii) the considerable progress by New Zealand in understanding the life cycle and distribution of toothfish in the Ross Sea;
- (iii) that the tagging rates and tag–recapture rates from some vessels fishing in the Ross Sea were not considered reliable enough to be used in the assessment, and WG-FSA's assessment was only based on the rates reported by New Zealand-flagged vessels;
- (iv) there was no new advice from which to revise the catch limits for *Dissostichus* spp. in Subarea 88.2;
- (v) Spain had withdrawn its notification for research fishing in SSRU 881A in 2007/08.

12.12 The Commission agreed to revise the conservation measures dealing with exploratory fisheries and associated fishery-based research requirements (see section 13).

Notification procedure

12.13 The Commission noted that all notifications and associated payments for new and exploratory fisheries in 2007/08 had been submitted by the deadlines.

12.14 The Commission reviewed the Secretariat's standard format for the notification of Members' intentions to conduct new or exploratory fisheries in the Convention Area. The Commission agreed to retain this format, noting that it captured all the requirements for notification and assisted Members in completing the information and the Secretariat in checking the contents of notifications.

12.15 The Commission agreed that all Members should use this standard format in future fishery notifications.