

BOTTOM FISHING

5.1 The Commission noted the discussions and advice regarding bottom fishing and VMEs which had been provided by the Scientific Committee, WG-SAM, WG-EMM and WG-FSA (SC-CAMLR-XXIX, paragraphs 5.1 to 5.13). This included:

- (i) development of a glossary of terms and conceptual diagram;
- (ii) consideration of two alternative approaches to defining the term ‘Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem’;
- (iii) estimation of the cumulative impact of bottom longline fishing on benthic communities and VME taxa;
- (iv) review of preliminary impact assessments provided by Members who had notified their intention to participate in exploratory fisheries in 2010/11;
- (v) consideration of VMEs notified in accordance with CM 22-06 and potential encounters with VMEs notified in accordance with CM 22-07;
- (vi) development by WG-FSA of a Report on Bottom Fisheries and Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems.

5.2 The Commission noted that the preliminary impact assessments submitted in 2010 were more complete compared to those submitted in 2009. Most of these preliminary assessments provided detailed information and diagrams of gear configuration, proposed effort and anticipated impacts. Further review of the information requested in CM 22-06, Annex A, indicated that the pro forma used to facilitate Members’ preliminary impact assessments could facilitate comparisons if it was made more succinct and streamlined (SC-CAMLR-XXIX, paragraph 5.5).

5.3 The Commission endorsed the following aspects of the Scientific Committee’s work:

- (i) a glossary of terms and conceptual diagram relevant to the consideration and management of VMEs in the Convention Area (SC-CAMLR-XXIX, paragraph 5.2, Annex 8, Figure 3 and Appendix E, Attachment A);
- (ii) development of advice on precautionary management actions that can be taken to mitigate immediate risks to VMEs without the definition of a VME (SC-CAMLR-XXIX, paragraph 5.4);
- (iii) revision of CM 22-06, Annex A, in order to facilitate the work on the estimation of the spatial footprint and potential impact of notified fishing activities in forthcoming fishing seasons (SC-CAMLR-XXIX, paragraph 5.6);
- (iv) inclusion into the VME Register of two new sites which were identified during a fishery-independent trawl survey in Subarea 48.2 (SC-CAMLR-XXIX, paragraph 5.9).

5.4 The Commission noted the results from work by WG-FSA and the Scientific Committee to provide combined, cumulative fine-scale bottom fishing impact assessments for

all bottom fishing methods in all subareas and divisions included under CMs 22-06 and 22-07 (SC-CAMLR-XXIX, paragraph 5.7). To develop combined cumulative impact assessments for all bottom fishing methods that can be updated annually, the Scientific Committee had requested Members to complete method assessments for Spanish longlines, trotlines, pots and trawls comparable to the method assessment that has been done for autolines (SC-CAMLR-XXIX, paragraph 5.8).

5.5 The Commission endorsed the Scientific Committee's advice that notifications of encounters with VMEs during fishery-independent research activities should not be constrained by the format of CM 22-06, Annex B. Members were encouraged to provide additional supplemental information to support notifications under CM 22-06, and it was noted that each notification should be considered on its own merits. Members were also encouraged to use autonomous camera systems to map the distribution of vulnerable habitats and establish links between catch rates of bottom fisheries and organism density on the seafloor (SC-CAMLR-XXIX, paragraphs 5.10 and 5.11).

5.6 The Commission agreed that the review of Risk Areas, as required by CM 22-07, should reference all available information on the nature, abundance and ecological importance of VME taxa and benthic organisms in each Risk Area under review (SC-CAMLR-XXIX, paragraph 5.12).

5.7 The Commission noted the Scientific Committee's work plan on VMEs and related matters, most of which was scheduled for 2012 and 2013 (SC-CAMLR-XXIX, paragraph 5.13, Table 7) and agreed to review CM 22-07 in 2012.