

## OTHER BUSINESS

### US AMLR Research and Monitoring Program

15.1 Dr Holt informed the Scientific Committee of challenges facing the US AMLR Research Program. Continuation of the program is contingent on availability of a research vessel and future budget decisions. The US Government is currently operating under a continuing resolution that caps funding at FY06 levels. The USA is evaluating all options for continuing land- and ship-based research that would enable it to continue its predator-prey ecosystem-based research program. Dr Holt noted that the USA had submitted to CCAMLR the extensive time series of predator-prey data from the Antarctic Peninsula region (including Subarea 48.1) from research over the past 18 years, and is looking at all options to continue this in the future.

15.2 The US AMLR Program has developed long-term collaborations with Chile, Germany, the Republic of Korea and others, and Dr Holt advised that the closure of the program may adversely impact on these Members' research efforts.

15.3 The Scientific Committee expressed grave concern at the diminishing effort in CCAMLR-orientated research (paragraphs 13.24 to 13.34).

15.4 The Scientific Committee thanked the USA for establishing the US AMLR Research and Monitoring Program which was specifically developed and designed to assist CCAMLR in meeting its objectives in the Antarctic Peninsula region. This program has been integral to the development of population models for krill in the southwest Atlantic and in assisting with the planning and undertaking of the CCAMLR-2000 Survey, which led to a revision of the precautionary catch limits for krill in the region.

15.5 The US AMLR Program has provided fundamental data and expertise that underpinned the subdivision of this area into SSMUs. This program now provides a comprehensive time series for predator populations, krill and fish across all SSMUs in Subarea 48.1 for a long period with low fishing by comparison to the precautionary catch limits.

15.6 The Scientific Committee agreed that the likely termination of this field program, at a time when the krill fishery is expanding, is potentially a major problem because it will deprive CCAMLR of an opportunity to monitor the effects of fishing on krill and its predators in SSMUs. This question has been of paramount importance to CCAMLR, as indicated in its many reports and publications. The decision to initiate the US AMLR Program in Subarea 48.1 has placed CCAMLR in a unique position in being able to effectively implement an ecosystem-based management procedure.

15.7 The Scientific Committee could now face great difficulty in finding ways to maintain CCAMLR's progress for this region at a time that is most critical when, as the Scientific Committee also noted elsewhere in this report (paragraph 4.4 and Table 4), the krill fishery is rapidly expanding.

15.8 The Scientific Committee agreed that it is essential to maintain the US AMLR Program because:

- (i) the program has annual observations over the long term in an ecosystem that can vary greatly from one year to another, and this time series overcomes the difficulties of many programs that cannot distinguish between interannual variation and long-term change;
- (ii) the program provides a time series that can be used as a benchmark for determining in future whether the ecosystem is undergoing long-term change;
- (iii) with continued annual monitoring, the attributes of this time series provide a unique capability for contributing to a feedback management procedure to achieve sustainable krill harvesting in SSMUs as well as at the larger scale in Area 48.

15.9 The Scientific Committee agreed that, if a decision was indeed taken to terminate the field program, at the very least, it was desirable to enable the US AMLR field operations to continue until such time as the management procedure for the krill fishery in Area 48 has been fully developed and a thorough understanding of the field requirements for the future management of the fishery is achieved.

#### Vanuatu-flagged vessels in the krill fishery

15.10 During the meeting, the Scientific Committee was informed that Vanuatu was considering deploying five 'super-trawlers' in the krill fishery in 2006/07 (CCAMLR-XXV/BG/46).

15.11 The Scientific Committee recalled that the Vanuatu-flagged vessel *Atlantic Navigator* had operated in the krill fishery in Area 48 in 2003/04 and 2004/05, and had been the first vessel to use the new continuous fishing system (SC-CAMLR-XXIV, paragraph 4.8 and Tables 2 and 3). However, there was no information on what type of operations these vessels would carry out.

15.12 The Scientific Committee also noted that the FV *Feolent*, mentioned in the limited information provided by Vanuatu, had fished for krill under the Ukrainian flag in 2004/05 (Annex 4, paragraph 3.1; WG-EMM-05/5).

15.13 The Scientific Committee noted that the information provided by Vanuatu was insufficient to determine whether this additional fishing effort and resulting catches could trigger the limit of 620 000 tonnes of krill agreed in Conservation Measure 51-01. However, it was noted that notifications for 2006/07 contained notifications with expected catch levels of 100 000 tonnes per vessel (Table 4).

15.14 The Scientific Committee recommended that the Commission seek assurance from Vanuatu, prior to fishing, that its vessels will comply with all conservation measures in force.

15.15 The Scientific Committee drew the Commission's attention to the potential increases in krill catches that had been notified to the meeting. If all these notifications proceed as planned, the krill fishery could escalate from its current low level to a level approaching the trigger level in Conservation Measure 51-01 in a single year. The possibility of such a rapid increase in the krill catch further emphasised the necessity of obtaining sufficient information

from the current fishery to ensure future management needs. This would be particularly problematic if the fishery was concentrated in certain regions or subareas.

15.16 The Scientific Committee reiterated the importance of obtaining fishery and observer data from all vessels operating in the krill fishery.

#### Change to the Rules of Procedure

15.17 The Scientific Committee adopted the change in its Rules of Procedure which was proposed in SC-CAMLR-XXV/5. This change is consistent with that of the Commission agreed last year (CCAMLR-XXIV, paragraph 20.6), and is in accordance with the Scientific Committee's decision regarding extending invitations to observers to attend meetings of its working groups (SC-CAMLR-XXIV, paragraphs 13.45 to 13.57).

15.18 The Scientific Committee agreed to insert a new rule between current Rules 19 and 20. The new rule states that:

'Each observer invited in accordance with Rule 19 above shall notify the Executive Secretary as early as possible before any meeting of the name of its representative and before or at the beginning of the meeting the names of its experts and advisers'.

15.19 The Scientific Committee noted that this new rule will also apply to meetings of any subsidiary body of the Committee.