

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to invite you to participate in the 15th meeting of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish, to be held in Honolulu, Hawai'i, from Thursday 18th to Saturday 27th July 2002 inclusive. This 15th SCTB will be hosted by the Pelagic Fisheries Research Programme (PFRP), with the assistance of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Honolulu Laboratory. It follows the recent second Preparatory Conference for the Establishment of the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the WCP, held in Madang February 25th - March 1st 2002, and will immediately precede the first meeting of a Scientific Coordinating Group established by the PrepCon.

A provisional agenda for SCTB 15 - plenary sessions from Monday 22nd to Saturday 27th July, plus two days prior to the meeting for preparatory meetings - is attached for your consideration (Attachment 1). This agenda provides for a day to cover introductory and overview issues, leaving more than four days for the activities of the Statistics Working Group, the five Species Research Groups (skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye, albacore and billfish/by-catch), and the Methods and Fishing Technology Working Groups. A final day has been set aside to consider summary statements from research groups on status of stocks, assignments from the WCPFC Preparatory Conference, and to clear the meeting report.

Thursday July 18th and Friday July 19th have been set aside for preparatory meetings, with the Statistics WG, the Methods WG and the Fishing Technology WG likely to meet during this time. The plenary meetings will be held at the Hawai'i Conference Center, with preparatory meetings to be held at the Imin Conference Center on the University of Hawai'i campus.

More detailed information regarding the organization of the meeting, including details of available accommodation options, will be posted in the near future on the SCTB mail list and website which will be maintained by the PFRP from Honolulu in the lead-up to the meeting.

At this stage, it is hoped to obtain an indication of your interest in attending the meeting, and any comments that you may have on the proposed agenda. Your response by fax or email to John Sibert (jsibert@soest.hawaii.edu) or Dodie Lau (dlau@soest.hawaii.edu) would be appreciated.

The very useful national fisheries reports should continue to be prepared for presentation on the first day of SCTB 15, according to the existing guidelines provided in Attachment 2.

No external funding support has been confirmed at this stage to support the participation of scientists and interested parties from Pacific Island countries, and efforts will continue to locate such funding support with good prospects of success.

Finally, I would note that the report of the 14th meeting of the SCTB is available on the SPC/OFP website (<http://www.spc.int/oceanfish/>) and will be distributed in hard copy before the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Thoulag
SCTB Chairman

Attachment 1 - Provisional Agenda

Attachment 2 - Guidelines for the Preparation of National Tuna Fishery Reports



Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish

July 18 — 27, 2002

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

(4/05/2002)

General working hours

Sessions: 8:30AM through 5:00PM.

Lunch: 12:00 – 1:30.

Morning and afternoon breaks: 10:00 – 10:30 and 3:00 – 3:30.

Thursday, July 18 — Friday, July 19

Preparatory meetings/small working groups including Methods Working Group,
Statistics WG, Fishing Technology WG.

Imin Conference Center, University of Hawaii campus.

Details to be advised.

Monday, July 22 — Saturday, July 27

Plenary sessions, Hawaii Convention Center

Thursday, July 18

Statistics Working Group

Methods Working Group

Friday, July 19

Fishing Technology Working Group

Methods Working Group (continued)

Monday, July 22

1. REGISTRATION; DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION – 8:30 AM
2. PRELIMINARIES
 - a. Opening Address – 9:30 AM
 - b. Group photo – 10:00AM
 - c. Break
 - d. Confirmation of chairman and appointment of rapporteurs – 10:30AM
 - e. Adoption of the report of the 14th meeting of the SCTB

3. OVERVIEW OF WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC TUNA FISHERIES
 - a. Introduction
 - b. National tuna fishery reports
 - c. Economic condition of the fishery
4. REPORTS BY ORGANIZATIONS
5. RECEPTION – to be announced

Tuesday, July 23

6. WORKING GROUPS
 - a. Statistics Working Group (Coordinator - Tim Lawson, SPC/OFP)
 - b. Methods Working Group (Coordinator - John Sibert, PFRP/UH)
 - c. Fishing Technology Working Group (Coordinator - David Itano, PFRP/UH)
 - d. Skipjack Research Group (Coordinator - Gary Sakagawa, NMFS)

Wednesday, July 24

- e. Yellowfin Research Group (Coordinator - Rob Campbell, CSIRO)
- f. Albacore Research Group (Coordinator - Regis Etaix-Bonnin, New Caledonia)

Thursday, July 25

- g. Bigeye Research Group (Coordinator – Chi-Lu Sun, NTU)
- h. Billfish and By-catch Research Group (Coordinator - Paul Dalzell, WPRFMC)

Friday, July 26

7. Directives to SWG
8. Assignments from the WCPFC Preparatory Conference.
9. Consideration of summary statements from RGs on status of stocks

Saturday, July 27

10. Preparation/clearance of reports.
11. Other matters
12. Close.
13. BBQ

Contacts:

John Sibert: jsibert@soest.hawaii.edu
Dodie Lau: dlau@soest.hawaii.edu

Attachment 2

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL TUNA FISHERY REPORTS

The national tuna fishery reports will be presented at SCTB 15 (brief verbal presentation), and each presenter will be asked to summarize his/her presentation in written form for inclusion in the report of the meeting. Tabling of the national tuna fishery report in a background paper would be desirable.

The report should present catch statistics for year 2001 and the four previous years, if possible; recent developments in each fishery for tropical tunas (skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye and albacore) should be highlighted, and where important, fisheries for small tunas and billfish. National fishery reports by SPC members should give highest priority to information concerning their domestic fleets, whereas reports by distant water fishing nations should present information concerning the activities of their fleets within the Western and Central Pacific (to 1500 W) and the entire Pacific, where appropriate.

The catch statistics should consist of annual catches (metric tonnes), by species, for the 2001 calendar year (by gear - longline, pole-and-line, purse seine, multi-gear domestic fisheries of Indonesia and Philippines) or the 2000/2001 season (troll fishery for albacore). If possible, preliminary statistics for the 2001/2002 albacore season would be of interest. Where possible, the number of vessels by gear type should be included. As well as information on catches of the main tuna species, information on catches of billfish and other by-catch species, including species of special interest (sharks, marine reptiles, marine mammals and birds) should be included where possible.

Possible headings to assist in the preparation and presentation of the national reports are as follows:

1. Brief introduction/background to the fishery/fisheries
2. Total catch, for all species and all gears combined - 1997-2001
3. Fleet structure
4. Catch by species, for each gear type
5. Final market destination of catches / disposal of catch
6. Onshore developments (transshipment, processing etc)
7. Future prospects and developments