

2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION

(March 2023 – March 2024)

Paragraph 1 of Article 29 of the **Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean** provides that:

“The Commission shall publish an annual report, which shall include details of decisions taken by the Commission to achieve the objective of this Convention. The report shall also provide information on actions taken by the Commission in response to any recommendations from the General Assembly of the United Nations or the FAO.

Copies of the report shall be publicly available and shall be provided to the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Director-General of the FAO”.

1. Membership

As of 31 March 2024, the SPRFMO Commission had 17 Members: Australia, Belize, Republic of Chile, People's Republic of China, Cook Islands, Republic of Cuba, Republic of Ecuador, European Union, Kingdom of Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Republic of Panama, Republic of Peru, Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, United States of America, and the Republic of Vanuatu.

In addition, 2 countries held the status of Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CNCs): Country of Curaçao, and the Republic of Liberia.

2. Outcomes from the 2024 Commission Meeting

The 12th Meeting of the Commission (COMM12) of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation was held in Manta, Ecuador from 29 January to 2 February 2024.

Over 180 participants (from 16 SPRFMO Members, 1 CNC, 1 Observer State, 5 IGOs, and 11 NGOs) attended the meeting. The Commission reviewed and accepted recommendations made by the preceding meetings of its subsidiary bodies, including the 11th meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC11), the 11th meeting of the Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC11) and the 11th meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC11).

During the Commission meeting, 26 proposals were discussed and, as a result, seven Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) were amended, two new CMMs were adopted (on exploratory fisheries), two decisions were taken (to protect the Salas y Gomez and Nazca ridges area, and on Labour Standards), two decisions were amended (SPRFMO Performance Review, and Recruitment of a new Executive Secretary), a Working Group on Electronic Monitoring Standards was created, and a call for proposals for an observer programme accreditation evaluator was agreed.

2.1. Subsidiary Bodies

The Commission has three active subsidiary bodies that report, advise, and make recommendations to the Commission and contribute to regular reviews of the effectiveness of conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission. These subsidiary bodies are the Scientific Committee (SC), Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC), and the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC).



The 11th meeting of the Scientific Committee was held in Panama City, Panama, from 11 to 16 September 2023. The 11th meetings of the Compliance and Technical Committee and the Finance and Administration Committee were held immediately prior to the Commission meeting between 23 and 30 January 2024 in Manta, Ecuador.

The report of the 11th Scientific Committee¹ was presented to COMM12, and the Chairperson of the SC reviewed progress against the 2023 SC multi-annual workplan, summarised the SC11 recommendations for the Commission, and introduced a proposed 2024 SC multi-annual workplan. The Chairperson of the SC noted that the following highlights:

- The SC recommended a 15% increase in jack mackerel TAC to a maximum of 1,242 kt.
- The SC accepted the Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment by Australia and New Zealand, recommending an update in 2024
- The SC advised against increases in squid fishing effort levels
- Within the habitat monitoring task, the SC recommended adopting the ICES metadata convention and supported large-scale ecosystem surveys
- The SC endorsed proposed exploratory fisheries, advised considering stocks affected by fishing for future assessments, and suggested any future targeted fishery for redbait be undertaken as part of an agreed exploratory fishery
- The SC addressed Climate Change and has included the subject as a permanent agenda item, pursuant to the SPRFMO Commission Decision 13-2023 on Climate Change.

The Commission commended the SC and its Members for their work. The Commission accepted and endorsed the SC11 report, with the exception of two recommendations, for which there was no consensus; Section 5.3 (titled *VME Encounters and benthic bycatch* – bullet point two related to “70 percent protection of suitable habitat”) and Section 5.5 (*Advice to the Commission on Deepwater* – bullet point one related to the protection of “70% of suitable habitat for each modelled VME indicator taxon”).

The Chairperson of the Finance and Administration Committee presented the FAC11 report² and highlighted that they had been unable to reach a consensus on a number of issues, including the Scientific Support fund and the Secretariat Staffing Strategy.

The Commission adopted the recommendations of the FAC. The Commission decided to create a new Science Manager position, but to delay the recruitment to the 2025-26 financial year. The Commission also decided to maintain the Coordination and Communications Officer, but should the current jobholder be unable to continue in the job, the post shall be redeployed in the General Services category with the same functions. The Commission also adopted amendments to the Staff Regulations, agreed to launch the Second Performance Review, and to launch the process for the recruitment of a new Executive Secretary.

The report of the 11th Compliance and Technical Committee³ was presented by the Chairperson of the CTC, who highlighted the CTC discussions and corresponding recommendations on proposals to introduce a new decision and to amend existing CMMs, Provisional IUU Vessel List, Provisional Compliance Report, renewal of CNCP status for Curaçao and Liberia, and the implementation reports presented by the Secretariat, including the accreditation of observer programmes.

The Commission accepted the CTC11 Report and adopted all its recommendations, including granting accreditation to the EU observer programme, extending the contract of the current observer programme accreditation evaluator while also seeking an alternative provider, accepting proposals for 2 new exploratory fisheries, seeking advice on climate change and broadening the inspections implementation report to include information pertaining to boardings and inspections at sea.

In addition, the Commission adopted a Final (2024) Compliance report, the 2024 final IUU Fishing Vessel List (containing no vessels) and accepted and renewed the CNCP status for Curaçao and Liberia.

¹ https://www.sprfmo.int/assets/Meetings/02-SC/11th-SC-2023/SPRFMO-SC11-Report_rev1-17-Oct-b.pdf

² <https://www.sprfmo.int/assets/Meetings/04-FAC/11th-FAC-2024/FAC11-Report-Final-26Feb24.pdf>

³ <https://www.sprfmo.int/assets/Meetings/03-CTC/11th-CTC-2024/CTC11-Report-Final-26Feb24.pdf>



Chile offered to host the 13th Annual Meetings in Santiago, Chile from 11 to 21 February 2025. The Commission also welcomed and accepted Panama's offer to host the 2026 Annual Meetings.

2.2. Decisions taken by the Commission to achieve the objective of the SPRFMO Convention

COMM12 amended 7, and adopted 2 (new), Conservation and Management Measures including:

- CMM 01-2024, Conservation and Management Measure for *Trachurus murphyi*;
- CMM 12-2024, Conservation and Management Measure for the regulation of Transshipment and Other Transfer Activities;
- CMM 13-2024, Conservation and Management Measure for the Management of New and Exploratory Fisheries in the SPRFMO Convention Area;
- CMM 14b-2024, Conservation and Management Measure for Exploratory Trap Fishery in the SPRFMO Convention Area (CK);
- CMM 16-2024, Conservation and Management Measure Establishing the SPRFMO Observer Programme;
- CMM 18-2024, Conservation and Management Measure on the Management of the Flying Jumbo Squid Fishery;
- CMM 14e-2024, Conservation and Management Measure for Exploratory Fishing for Toothfish by the European Union in the SPRFMO Convention Area;
- CMM 14f-2024, Conservation and Management Measure for Exploratory Fishing for Toothfish by Australia in the SPRFMO Convention Area;
- CMM 14b-2023, Conservation and Management Measure for Exploratory Fishery for Hapuka in the SPRFMO Convention Area.

In addition, COMM12 amended 2, and adopted 2 (new), Decisions being:

- Decision 05-2024 Procedure for Recruitment of an Executive Secretary;
- Decision 06-2024 on the SPRFMO Performance Review;
- Decision 17-2024 to protect the Salas y Gomez and Nazca ridges area;
- Decision 18-2024 Labour Standards in SPRFMO.

1.1. International Cooperation

The 11th Meeting of the Commission continued to make suitable arrangements for consultation, cooperation, and collaboration with such other organisations by noting that SPRFMO has eight arrangements and/or MoUs in place as well as the three Secretariat separate agreements. Furthermore, the Commission noted the newly signed MoU with the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) and agreed to support the renewal of the MoU with the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

1.2. Office Holders

The Commission elected Ms Jung-re Riley Kim (Korea) as the new Chairperson of the Commission and confirmed that Ms Alexa Cole (United States) would continue in her position as Vice-Chairperson of the Commission.

The Commission confirmed the election of Ms Rebeca Espinoza (Ecuador) as the new Chairperson of the Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC), and Ms Elizabeth O'Sullivan (United States) as the new Vice-Chairperson of the CTC.



The Commission confirmed that the Chairperson of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC), Mr Jimmy Villavicencio (Ecuador), will continue to serve in his position for another year. The Vice-Chairperson of the FAC, Mr Andres Couve (Chile), was re-elected to serve another term

The Commission elected Dr Ricardo Oliveros-Ramos (Peru) as the new Chairperson of the Scientific Committee (SC), and Mr Ignacio Payá (Chile) as the Vice-Chairperson of the SC.

The full report of the Commission and all related documents are available on the SPRFMO website at www.sprfmo.int.

SPRFMO meetings and working group activities during the previous period

(March 2023 – March 2024)

Activity/meeting	Format	Date
Habitat monitoring working group	virtual	16 March 2023
Data working group	virtual	12 April 2023
Jack mackerel working group (MSE)	virtual	9 May 2023
Squid working group (Assessment)	virtual	21 June 2023
Jack mackerel working group (MSE)	virtual	14 June 2023
Jack mackerel working group (MSE)	virtual	11 July 2023
Habitat monitoring working group	virtual	13 July 2023
Jack mackerel working group (SC preparations)	virtual	18 July 2023
Squid working group (Genetics and connectivity)	virtual	19 July 2023
Squid working group (Assessment)	virtual	26 July 2023
Jack mackerel working group (MSE)	virtual	1 August 2023
Deepwater working group (Exploratory fisheries)	virtual	3 August 2023
Squid working group (SC preparations)	virtual	17 August 2023
Jack mackerel working group (MSE SC preparations)	virtual	21 August 2023
Deepwater working group (SC preparations)	virtual	22 August 2023
Jack mackerel working group (SC preparations)	virtual	29 August 2023
Scientific Committee (meeting preparations)	virtual	31 August 2023
11 th Scientific Committee (SC11)	In-person	11 to 16 September 2023
11 th Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC11)	In-person	23 to 26 January 2024
12 th Finance and Administration Committee (FAC11)	In-person	25 to 27 and 30 January 2024
Jack mackerel MSE workshop with Commissioners	In-person	27 January 2024
12 th SPRFMO Commission (COMM12)	In-person	29 January to 2 February 2024