



REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK

(No. 9) December 2013

Dear RSN family,

I think that the most exciting thing to happen in the 4th quarter of 2013 has been your amazing responses to the Global Oceans Commission (GOC) papers. It was difficult for me to ask RFBs for newsletter contributions after the time and effort that you gave to the GOC papers. Nevertheless, with the assistance of NAFO, CCSBT, NPAFC, GFCM, the IMO and UNDOALOS, I have managed to compile a final newsletter for the end of this year.

2014 is going to be a big year for RFBs, and the **RSN-5 meeting in Rome on Saturday 7 June** will be the highlight. Don't forget to mark the date on your 2014 calendars. The RSN Chair and I will be contacting you in the New Year to discuss the planning of the meeting. RFBs will also have a more prominent section in SOFIA, and hopefully a more prominent role in the COFI agenda which instead of Oceans Governance will now be dealing with "**Global and Regional Processes**". In early 2014, I will be making submissions on what content I believe should be included in the "Regional Processes" part of COFI. I am open to your suggestions if you have any. Meanwhile, I want to thank you for the astonishing amount of fabulous material you have sent to FAO (and each other) during the past 12 months, and I want to send the best of Christmas greetings to those RFBs which will be celebrating the season, and best wishes for the start of 2014 to all RFBs around the world.

Gail

NEWS FROM THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES ORGANIZATION (NAFO)



Vladimir Shibarov is retiring as Executive Secretary of NAFO on 31 December. Vladimir has a long association with NAFO in both the science and management spheres but is looking forward to spending more time with his family, especially his "diamond" grand-daughter and brand new baby grand-son. Vladimir has been an active and valuable member of RSN and we wish him all the very best as he continues the next chapter of his life back home in Russia.

NEWS FROM THE IMO

IMO Assembly adopts voluntary application of the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme to fishing vessels of 100 gross tons and above.

<http://www.imo.org/MediaCentre/PressBriefings/Pages/A-28-ends-.aspx>

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (GFCM)

Over 170 participants from Mediterranean and Black Sea governments, international organizations, scientists, NGOs, fishers and fishers' communities met from 27 to 30 November in Malta for the First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

The Mediterranean and Black Sea fishing fleets are comprised of about 90,000 vessels and the small-scale fleet represents **more than 80%** of the entire fleet. Yet small-scale fishworkers are often excluded from public policy processes and decision-making, they face difficulties in exploiting resources that are depleting and there is a lack of an integrated vision of the management of the sector. Moreover, issues related to the welfare of small-scale fishers and their communities, as well as their social protection and safety are insufficiently addressed and little is known about these aspects of the industry.

The main conclusions of the symposium included:

- The establishment of a Task Force aimed at supporting Mediterranean and Black Sea Countries in the implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines for securing sustainable fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication* facilitated by FAO;
- The launch of a regional project fostering knowledge on small-scale fisheries;
- The organization of a second Regional Symposium on small-scale fisheries; and
- The need to integrate small scale fisheries into marine protected areas.

The event was marked by the signing of the Malta Commitment to establish a cooperation platform at the regional and sub-regional level.

NEWS FROM THE NORTH PACIFIC ANADROMOUS FISH COMMISSION (NPAFC)

Vancouver, BC, Canada (November 22, 2013)–The North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) announced today that total Pacific salmon abundance in the North Pacific remains at near record high levels according to data compiled by its member countries during the NPAFC 21st Annual Meeting. The meeting took place during November 12-15, 2013, in an email format for the first time in the Commission's history. There were 71 participants from the five NPAFC member countries (Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States).



In 2013, NPAFC member countries continued their successful enforcement collaboration to deter and eliminate illegal high seas fishing. Patrols in the Convention Area included the use of approximately 10 aircraft and 21 surface vessels. Radar satellite surveillance was also used to support long-range aircraft and surface patrols. Regularly scheduled enforcement conference calls maintained real-time coordination among the member countries at the operational level throughout the high-threat season.

Past international collaborative high seas enforcement activities led to the seizure of an IUU (illegal, unreported, and unregulated) fishing vessel in both 2011 and 2012. Each vessel was transferred to the appropriate authorities, and in 2013 both vessels were destroyed. This year, efforts at deterrence of IUU salmon fishing in the Convention Area were successful as there were no vessels of interest engaged in driftnet or other types of illegal fishing activities detected in the Convention Area. The overall reduction in sightings of vessels engaged in illegal fishing activity in the North Pacific testifies to the effectiveness of the Commission's cooperative model of enforcement. Continued vigilance is crucial to the ongoing curtailment of the large-scale high seas driftnet threat and is a requirement for sustainable salmon fisheries management and conservation in the North Pacific.

NEWS FROM THE COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF SOUTHERN BLUEFIN TUNA (CCSBT)

CCSBT held its annual meeting from 14 to 17 October 2013. An important task of the annual meeting was to confirm the global southern bluefin tuna (SBT) Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for 2014 and to set the global TAC for 2015-2017 inclusive. In 2011, the CCSBT adopted a formal Management Procedure (MP) to guide the setting of future TACs. The MP is tuned to a 70% probability of rebuilding the stock to the interim rebuilding target reference point of 20% of the original spawning stock biomass by 2035. The annual Commission meeting agreed the annual TACs for 2014 and for 2015-2017 in accordance with the MP's recommendation, but with the TACs for 2016-2017 to be confirmed during October 2014. The annual TACs recommended by the MP for 2015-2017 are an increase of 2,198 tonnes over that for 2014. Additional information on the CCSBT's MP is available at: http://www.ccsbt.org/site/management_procedure.php

Other non-routine outcomes of the annual meeting of possible interest to RSN members include: a decision to conduct and complete the CCSBT's second performance review during 2014 (the independent performance review panel has since been agreed and appointed); modifying the Resolution that established the Extended Commission to allow Regional Economic Integration Organisations (such as the European Union) to become a Member of the Extended Commission; adoption of an IUU vessel list Resolution; and agreement to continue independent Quality Assurance Reviews (QARs) beyond an initial trial phase.

The QARs are an interesting and important development within the CCSBT. They are essentially independent audits of the systems of CCSBT Members in relation to specific CCSBT performance requirements. The purpose of QARs is to provide independent reviews to help Members identify how well their management systems function with respect to their CCSBT obligations and to provide recommendations on areas where improvement is needed.

QARs benefit the reviewed Member by giving them confidence in the integrity and robustness of their own monitoring and reporting systems. They also promote confidence among all Members as to the quality of individual Members' performance reporting.

Trial QARs were conducted with four CCSBT Members during 2013. The trials were conducted as desktop reviews, with no on-site visits. The trials were considered to be successful and CCSBT Members have embraced the QAR concept. Consequently, three Members will undergo QARs in 2014 (two of those with on-site visits which will involve verification and testing of systems where appropriate), another Members will undergo a QAR with on-site visits during 2015 and further QARs are planned after that.

NEWS FROM THE UNITED NATION DIVISION FOR OCEAN AFFAIRS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA (UNDOALOS)

Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its 68th session under the agenda item "Oceans and the law of the sea"

On 9 December 2013, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions addressing oceans issues: resolution 68/70, an omnibus resolution on oceans and the law of the sea, and resolution 68/71, on sustainable fisheries. The texts of these resolutions are available at www.undocs.org as documents A/68/L.18 and A/68/L.19, respectively.

These resolutions contain a number of important provisions of particular interest to regional fishery bodies:

The resolution on oceans and the law of the sea, *inter alia*, calls on the Secretary-General to convene a number of meetings on oceans issues under the auspices of the General Assembly. Of particular note, the 15th meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, to be held from 27 to 30 May 2014, will focus its discussions on "the role of seafood in global food security". Regional fishery bodies have been invited by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs to contribute to the report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to this meeting.

In relation to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, the General Assembly requested its Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to make recommendations to the General Assembly on the scope, parameters and feasibility of an international instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in order to prepare for the decision to be taken at the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly. To this end, it also decided that the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group would hold three meetings of four days each (1 to 4 April and 16 to 19 June 2014 and from 20 to 23 January 2015), with the possibility of the General Assembly deciding that additional meetings be held, if needed.

The fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects will be convened on 31 March 2014, with a view to assessing the ongoing work of the first cycle of the first global integrated marine assessment and to providing any recommendations to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. The

General Assembly requested the secretariat of the Regular Process to send the first draft of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (World Ocean Assessment) to Member States for comments from June to August 2014, and decided that the Group of Experts would revise the assessment in the light of the comments received and that, once revised, the draft would be presented to the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole for approval. The draft assessment would subsequently be transmitted for consideration by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole. A summary of the first global integrated marine assessment will be submitted as an official document of the General Assembly.

The sustainable fisheries resolution addresses, *inter alia*, implementation of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the conservation of sharks, including the need to implement science-based measures, the global ban on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its implementation through collaborative fisheries enforcement activities and efforts to assess and mitigate the by-catch of non-target species, particularly through the standardized reporting of relevant data. Following last year's meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on the impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment, the resolution recognizes the need to tackle the causes of ocean acidification and to implement strategies to minimize its impacts on marine ecosystems.

The resolution also recognizes important outcomes of other global and regional fora, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements. It further calls on States to initiate work within FAO to elaborate guidelines and relevant criteria relating to catch documentation schemes, including possible formats.

Pursuant to the resolution, the tenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement will be convened for two days in April 2014 (tentatively on 7 and 8 April) to consider, *inter alia*, regional, sub-regional and global implementation of the Agreement and initial preparatory work for the resumption of the Review Conference, which will be resumed at a date not earlier than 2015. As in the past, regional fishery bodies will be invited to participate in the Informal Consultations as observers.