Report by the CCAMLR Observer to the Forty Third Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting

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CCAMLR-38 (October 2019)

1. The 38th Annual Meeting of CCAMLR (CCAMLR-38) was held in Hobart, Australia, from 21 October to 1 November 2019 and was chaired by Mr Fernando Curcio Ruigómez (Spain).

2. The Report of the Meeting is in the public domain (<https://www.ccamlr.org/en/ccamlr-38>).

3. Australia, as the Depositary State, reported that the Netherlands became a Member of the Commission on 8 October 2019. The Commission welcomed the Netherlands to its first meeting as a Member.

Implementation and compliance

4. The Commission endorsed a new non-Contracting Party (NCP) Engagement Strategy and Action Plan for 2020–2022 and agreed to extend the compliance evaluation process to Acceding States as a trial for 2020.

5. The Commission noted that the number of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) vessel sightings in the Convention Area had shown a steady decline over time with the last reported sighting in 2016. No additional vessels were added to the CCAMLR IUU lists.

Administration and Finance

6. The Commission agreed to changes in the formula used to calculate the fees that accompany notifications to fish for krill, toothfish and other species in the Convention Area, including notifications to undertake research fishing.

Management of marine resources

7. The Commission noted that up to 13 September 2019 the total catch of krill reported for the 2018/19 fishing season was **381 922 tonnes**. Five Members and 11 vessels fished.

8. The Commission noted that a multi-Member synoptic krill survey undertaken in the austral summer of 2018/19 assessed the biomass of krill in Area 48 to be 62.6 million tonnes. (Note for ATCM: This is similar to the biomass estimated by the last synoptic survey undertaken in 2000.)

9. The Commission noted the progress of the Scientific Committee to develop a new management strategy for krill, and emphasised the importance of providing advice on the new strategy by 2021. The strategy will be based on the following key priority elements:

(i) a stock assessment to estimate precautionary harvest rates

(ii) regular updates of biomass estimates, initially at the subarea scale, but potentially at multiple scales

(iii) a risk assessment framework to inform the spatial allocation of catch.

10. In 2018/19, 13 Members fished for Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) and/or Antarctic toothfish (*D. mawsoni*)*.* Members also conducted research fishing for toothfish in closed areas. The reported total catch in the Convention Area of *D. eleginoides* to 13 September 2019 was **8 340** tonnes and that of *D. mawsoni* was **4 097** tonnes.

11. The Commission agreed catch limits for toothfish and icefish. However, it was unable to reach consensus on research proposals in Division 58.4.1, which therefore remains closed.

12. The Commission noted that the 103 seabirds estimated killed in the 2018/19 season was the third-lowest mortality figure on record.

Spatial management

13. The Commission agreed to give its prior approval to the draft management plans for new Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPA) at the Rosenthal Islands and at Inexpressible Island. **ATCM should note this approval which has also been transmitted to the CEP**.

14. The Commission noted that in May 2019, the UK notified all Members that the area of the Pine Island Glacier had reduced by 15.1% since 2017, thus meeting the criteria for designation of a Special Area for Scientific Study. The Pine Island Glacier area became a Stage 1 designation on 1 June 2019. Under Conservation Measure (CM) 24-04, paragraph 24, **the attention of ATCM is drawn to the details of the Stage 1 designation,** and ATCM is encouraged toconsider whether to take any appropriate steps to complement and facilitate scientific study within the area.

15. The South Orkney Islands southern shelf marine protected area (MPA) was adopted by CCAMLR in 2009 (CM 91-03). In line with the requirement of CM 91-03, the EU and its member States presented the second 5-yearly review of the MPA. There was no consensus in the Commission to endorse the review. CM 91-03 will remain in its current form until the next review due in 2024.

16. The Commission also discussed the Ross Sea region MPA research and monitoring plan, and proposals for an East Antarctica MPA, a Weddell Sea MPA and an Antarctic Peninsula Region MPA. There was no consensus on these items.

Climate change

17. The Commission noted the importance of climate change considerations in its procedures and discussed a range of suggestions for an increased inclusion of its implications in its management approaches.

Implementation of Convention objectives

18. The Commission welcomed the Prague Declaration made by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties on 8 July 2019.

19. The Commission agreed to establish a General Capacity Building Fund (GCBF) to support specific projects, activities or travel support, or to address special needs of Members if the Commission so decides, aimed at enhancing Members’ capacity to better achieve the objective of the CAMLR Convention. Applications to the fund are open to all Members, and to Acceding States or NCPs cooperating with the CDS where an application has the support of a Member.

CCAMLR-39 (October 2020)

1. The 39th Annual Meeting of CCAMLR (CCAMLR-39) was held online from 27 to 30 October 2020 and was chaired by Mr Fernando Curcio Ruigómez (Spain).

2. The Report of the Meeting is in the public domain ([www.ccamlr.org/node/107598](http://www.ccamlr.org/node/107598)).

3. The Standing Committee on Implementation and Compliance (SCIC) and the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance (SCAF) had informal virtual meetings and did not adopt a report, however, the Chair (SCIC) and Acting Chair (SCAF) presented summaries of the e-group discussions to the Commission for consideration.

4. Australia, as the Depositary State, reported that on 7 May 2020, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) made a declaration that in accordance with the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the PRC, the Government of the PRC decides that the Convention will apply to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the PRC from 1 July 2020.

5. The Commission remembered Professor Denzil Miller who died on 30 November 2019, and who played a central role in CCAMLR and Antarctic affairs for over forty years.

***Implementation and compliance***

6. The Commission added the vessel *Nika* to the Contracting Party IUU list. Panama subsequently informed the Commission that the *Nika* had been removed from the Panamanian shipping vessel register.

7. The Commission considered the recommendation from New Zealand to include the Russian-flagged vessel *Palmer* on the Contracting Party IUU list, but could not reach consensus on including it on the List in 2020.

8. Due to the fact that SCIC had only informal virtual meetings in 2020, the Commission concluded that it was not possible to adopt the 2020 Compliance Report.

Administration and Finance

9. The Commission approved the recommendations of the General Capacity Building Fund Panel and agreed to fund two capacity building projects, from Ukraine and Uruguay. The Commission noted that the terms of reference for the General Science Capacity Fund (GSCF) will be finalised for presentation in 2021.

10. The Commission reappointed Dr Agnew as Executive Secretary for 2022–2026.

Management of marine resources

11. The Commission noted that up to 1 October 2020 the total catch of krill reported for the 2019/20 fishing season was **446 783 tonnes**, and that this was the largest catch ever reported in Area 48. The total catch of *Dissostichus eleginoides* was **11 924 tonnes** and of *Dissostichus mawsoni* was **4 399 tonnes**.

12. The Commission welcomed the significant amount of focussed work that has been undertaken by the Scientific Committee and its working groups in 2020 on developing the revised krill management strategy.

13. Norway presented the preliminary results of a trial of measures to mitigate seabird interactions with net monitoring cables on krill fishing vessels. A dedicated correspondence group has been organised in the 2020/21 intersessional period to address issues regarding seabird strikes on net monitoring cables and warps.

14. The Commission renewed all the conservation measures that were due to lapse in 2020. The revised schedule is available at: [www.ccamlr.org/node/112002](http://www.ccamlr.org/node/112002).

Other business

15. Due to the constraints of the online meeting, several items that would normally be considered in the main agenda of the Commission were discussed instead under other business.

16. The Commission agreed to establish an e-group aimed at facilitating discussions on reinforcing the objective of the Convention, to pave the way for the Commission’s 40th meeting.

17. The Commission noted that the designation of the newly exposed marine area adjacent to Pine Island Glacier as a Stage 1 Special Area for Scientific Study (see paragraph 14 in the report of CCAMLR-38 above) will expire on 31 May 2021. The Commission could not reach agreement on a proposal to extend this deadline by one further year or to designate the area as a Stage 2 Special Area for Scientific Study.

18. The Commission noted revised proposals to establish MPAs in Domain 1 (Antarctic Peninsula), the East Antarctic and in the Weddell Sea region.

19. The Commission also noted the development of new terms of reference for the climate change e‑group in order to further the development of mechanisms to ensure the latest climate change research is integrated into the work of the Scientific Committee and considered in the development of management advice for the Commission.

Next meeting

20. Sweden (Dr J. Granit) will Chair the Commission for the 2021 and 2022 meetings. Argentina (Mr M. Gowland) will continue to serve as Vice-Chair. Ms M. Engelke-Ros (USA) was elected to the Chair of SCIC and Ms S. Langerock (Belgium) to the Chair of SCAF for the years 2021–2022.

21. The 40th Meeting of the Commission will be held in Hobart, Australia, from 18 to 29 October 2021, unless the Commission decides otherwise. The Commission asked that planning for the meetings begin early, and include planning for formal meetings of SCIC and SCAF.