

Dear WG-SAM participant,

This year, the mid-year working group meetings of SC-CAMLR are to be held in Punta Arenas, Chile, with the Working Group on Statistics, Assessments and Modelling (WG-SAM) scheduled to begin meeting on Monday, 30 June 2014, for five days.

At last year's SC-CAMLR meeting I was tasked to develop a list of topics and priorities for WG-FSA in consultation with the Scientific Committee Chair and to communicate the outcomes to Members, which is the purpose of this letter.

There are two standing agenda items for WG-SAM (SC-CAMLR-XXX, paragraphs 15.3 and 15.4):

- (i) evaluation of research plans from Members notifying to fish in new and exploratory fisheries in Subareas 48.6 and 58.4
- (ii) review of research proposals for closed areas, areas with zero catch limits and other areas not included in (i).

At their 2013 meetings, WG-FSA, the Scientific Committee and the Commission requested WG-SAM review several additional key topics and provide advice on these topics for the 2014 meetings of WG-FSA and the Scientific Committee. The Scientific Committee requested Members conduct these analyses during the intersessional period and present the results of this work for consideration by WG-SAM at its 2014 meeting. These topics include the following:

- (i) A review of progress towards updated integrated assessments of toothfish for the following subareas and divisions: *Dissostichus eleginoides* in Divisions 58.5.1 and 58.5.2 and in Subareas 58.6 (Crozet) and 58.6/58.7 (Prince Edward/Marion Is), and *D. mawsoni* in Subarea 88.2 SSRUs C–H (various paragraphs in WG-FSA and SC-CAMLR).
- (ii) A review of stock assessment methodologies used in CCAMLR's integrated toothfish assessments, including: data weighting and screening, comparison of MCMC and covariance resampling methods, alternative methods for estimating cryptic biomass, development of a standard set of diagnostics, CASAL version control, external review of assessments (WG-FSA-13, paragraphs 4.103 to 4.105; SC-CAMLR-XXXII, paragraphs 3.69 and 3.70 to 3.75).
- (iii) A review of mechanisms by which CCAMLR decision rules are implemented to improve the Commission's ability to meet the objectives of the Convention (SC-CAMLR-XXXII, paragraph 3.108; CCAMLR-XXXII, paragraph 5.20).
- (iv) A review of progress on an integrated stock assessment for krill (SC-CAMLR-XXXII, paragraph 3.32).
- (v) A review of potential stock linkages for toothfish stocks in Subareas 48.3 and 48.4; 88.1 and 88.2 and 88.3; 58.6 and 58.7; and Divisions 58.5.1 and 58.5.2 (WG-FSA-13, paragraph 4.100).

Given the large workload, I would like to give lower priority to (v) the review of potential stock linkages, unless they have a direct bearing on the revised stock assessments of those areas. Further discussion of these linkages could be delayed until the 2014 meeting of WG-FSA.

A number of other issues identified in 2013, including comparison of biomass estimates derived from local depletion versus Petersen tag estimators (WG-FSA-13, paragraph 3.33), evaluation of alternative lower catch limit reference points for icefish (WG-FSA-13, paragraph 4.6), recalculation of seabed areas (WG-FSA-13, paragraph 6.11), and review and revision of the Fishery Reports (SC-CAMLR-XXXII, paragraph 3.54) will also be given lower priority at the 2014 meeting.

It is clear that WG-SAM has a very full agenda and it is going to be a very busy meeting. Given the limited time available and the large number of priority issues it is important that the Working Group prioritise its time well during the meeting. WG-SAM has spent a considerable amount of time over the past two years in developing research plans for the data-poor fisheries, and my intention is to reduce the amount of time spent reviewing the plans at this year's meeting. I am also planning to deal with the research proposals entirely in Plenary this year and kindly request that participants from notifying Members provide very brief presentations (maximum 5 minutes) on the results and proposals for each of the relevant fisheries. Because most of the research plans are year 1 or year 2 of a multi-year program, priority will be given to reviewing new proposals and to proposals where there is a large discrepancy between the observed and expected numbers of tag recoveries from the 2013/14 season. As in previous years, I propose that we aim to complete substantive discussions by midday Thursday; this will allow 24 hours for report preparation followed by report adoption on Friday afternoon.

Please find attached a draft agenda and annotated agenda for comment. Please submit comments to me on the draft agenda and annotated agenda by 31 May 2014. A revised draft agenda and annotated agenda will be circulated at the start of the meeting following your comments and the final submission of papers. I look forward to seeing you all in Punta Arenas.

I also encourage all participants to register online as soon as possible (www.ccamlr.org/en/wg-sam-14/register). Please be aware that the deadline for submission of papers for consideration by WG-SAM is 0900h Hobart time (Australian Eastern Standard Time) on 16 June 2014.

Sincerely

Stuart Hanchet, Convener, WG-SAM