SIOFA Ecological Risk Assessment Working Group

Terms of Reference

Chair: Australia

Objectives and background

Paragraph 6a of CMM 2016/01 actions the SIOFA Scientific Committee to provide advice and recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties on the status of stocks of principal deep-sea fishery resources targeted, and, to the extent possible, taken as bycatch and caught incidentally in these deep-sea fisheries, including straddling fishery resources by 2019.

The SIOFA Scientific Committee has proposed that ecological risk assessment is a practical approach for addressing the potential and current effects of fishing on target stocks and also those caught incidentally in SIOFA's deep-sea fisheries. The SC recommended that a working group be established under the SIOFA Scientific Committee to progress work related to ecological risk assessments required to address this action.

Initially, the working group will focus on an ERA for deepwater sharks in the SIOFA Agreement Area. This ERA could be used as a model for future ERAs, or for example, as a basis for the expansion of the deepwater sharks ERA to all relevant species across the SIOFA area (where data are available).

Such a model will be useful in promoting engagement of scientists in the ERA process, which is fundamental to success.

Under these Terms of Reference, participants will commit to involvement in the process. All 'rules' of the ERA WG will be consistent with the SC Terms of Reference, and so are not included here. The ERA-IWG ToR will be focused on the practical aspects of progressing work related to ERAs in SIOFA.

Terms of Reference

1. The ERA-IWG will be tasked with developing a research and review plan for implementation of ERAs and related processes for progressing the objectives of the SIOFA SC and Meeting of the Parties. In the short-term, the ERA WG will:
    a. Assist with the timely provision of data to support the implementation of the ERAs for deepwater chondrichthyans being undertaken by Australia and Japan.

    In the medium to long-term, the ERA-IWG will:
    b. Assist with review of methods and outputs used for the deepwater chondrichthyans ERAs and provide advice to the SC on the applicability of the methods to be used more broadly across SIOFA fisheries.
2. To facilitate timely development of ERA processes, participants agree to provide the necessary and available data within two months of a request, noting that appropriate data confidentiality protocols (as per CMM 2016/03 and domestic data and privacy policies) will apply
3. The requesting party will need to confer with the data custodian to ensure the appropriate data confidentiality agreements and other relevant processes are followed.
4. All other rules of the ERA-IWG will be consistent with the SC Terms of Reference.

Interim dates and other issues for deepwater sharks ERA

- Within two months of the close of SIOFA SC2, participants agree to provide the following data:

    - Fishing effort footprint for demersal and midwater trawl, line gears and gillnet gears for the period 2011–2016, where available, at a 20 minute (or finer) resolution (as shapefiles)
    - If finer scale data can be provided, the mid-point of a polygon will be selected and a 20 minute cell used for the first run (i.e. the 'worst case scenario')
    - Shark catch data for the aforementioned gears, to be used for 1) verifying the species list and 2) understanding the potential susceptibility of various sharks to certain gears
- The ERA-IWG will prepare and submit a working paper on the deepwater chondrichthyans ERAs to SC3 for review and consideration. The paper will be co-authored by the ERA WG/SIOFA SC.
- Provide advice to the SIOFA secretariat on the design needs of SIOFA data bases for the purposes of ecological risk assessment.
- This working paper will form the first draft of a scientific paper on the deepwater chondrichthyans ERAs for intended publication in a scientific journal. The paper will be co-authored by all contributing scientists to the ERA WG/SIOFA SC. Intended publication date will be late 2018.