

TRAFFIC and WWF Opening Statement

20th Annual Meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, incorporating the Extended Commission.

14 - 17 Oct 2013: Adelaide, Australia.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

TRAFFIC and WWF thank the Commission for the opportunity to participate as observers to meetings of the Commission, Extended Commission and its other subsidiary bodies. We look forward to contributing to these critical deliberations.

We recognize the work by the Commission in implementing the management procedure adopted in 2011 which has an interim rebuilding target of 20% of the original spawning biomass by 2035 and sets out to achieve that with a 70% probability.

As we have noted previously, this is an interim target and we ask the Commission as a matter of urgency to remind itself of the precautionary principle and define the long-term biologically safe target of rebuilding for the Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) stock, as the current discussions we will have this week around the next three years of Total Allowable Catch (TAC)s, allocations etc. are all based around an interim target.

From an outside perspective looking in at this Commission, it is hard to ignore decisions being prioritized around increasing the TAC every year based on an interim target, with no apparent effort at looking to set a long-term target, and managing the catch to reach that target in the shortest possible timeframe. The generous offerings of increases in the TAC being discussed by the Commission now may in fact be tempered if we had our long-term target on the table.

In regard to Ecologically Related Species (ERS), we welcome the progress made in the ERS working group this year, particularly in relation to sharks on the progress on determining the stock status of the Southern Hemisphere population of Porbeagle shark.

As we are all aware, the recent listings under CITES of a number of important commercially fished shark species is highly relevant to CCSBT. These listings will come into effect in September 2014, at which time a Flag State will only be able to issue a permit for trade if it can demonstrate that the provenance of the catch is both sustainable and legal.

More broadly on ERS, we encourage the members to adopt the draft Resolution before this meeting so as to mitigate the impact on ERS species while fishing for SBT.

We urge Members to make the necessary decisions, with the required sense of urgency, to conserve effectively SBT and other ecologically related species, especially sharks, seabirds and marine turtles. We believe that the right balance of conservation interventions made at the appropriate time will not only benefit SBT and ecologically related species, but also help ensure the ongoing sustainability of this commercially important fishery.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.