

**Echebatar Sustainability Working Group**  
**Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, July 6 2021**  
**10.00 h (CET)**  
**Minute**

**Attendance**

**Echebatar:** José Luis Jauregui, Ian Scott, Pablo Gonzalez  
**AZTI:** Ane Iriondo, Marga Andrés

**1. Welcome Pablo Gonzales to ESWG**

PG has joined the team to gain experience.

**2. Second Annual Surveillance Audit including PI 3.2.2 SIb**

The outcome of the second annual surveillance audit will be available before the end of the month. Echebatar noted its disagreement with a new condition related to 3.2.2 SIb resulting from harmonisation with the now certified CFTO fishery. The auditors are considering the Echebatar submission arguing that para PB 1.3.6. that allows for differences in scoring when there are exceptional circumstances. Echebatar has presented its analysis of exceptional circumstances and also argues that the MSC process for harmonisation was not followed by the CFTO fishery. The submission will be sent for the consideration of the auditors involved in the 4<sup>th</sup> annual assessment /recertification of the Maldives P&L skipjack fishery and the AGAC assessment team.

**3. SIOTI PMT 29 June**

The PMT meeting had been postponed until July 6 (and subsequently to July 8)

**4. SIOTI – 4<sup>th</sup> year audit**

With the agreement of SIOTI Scott held an extended virtual meeting with the auditor where he made a number of points for consideration in the final draft.

**5. The outcome of SS25**

JLJ expressed the disappointment of Echebatar that SS25 had not been able to agree to many substantive changes to the management of the yellowfin and skipjack fisheries.

Highlights, from the point of view of Echebatar were (i) the different reductions required for Spanish and Seychelles flagged purse seiners; (ii) Reg 21/01 applying to the majority of active vessels / fleet segments and (iii) the apparent healthy status of the bigeye stock.

Echebatar will continue to maintain the reduced number of dFADs (275) compared to the IOTC allowance and will further reduce to 250 in 2022 (notwithstanding a lower limit being defined by IOTC. Echebatar agreed that a decision on the number of dFADs and their activation should be based on scientific analysis.

In the context of agreeing harvest control tools for skipjack, Echebatar supports the Spanish approach that uses a vessel quota on yellowfin with a permitted catch as a proportion of total catch of 28 % leading to this being a choke species that reduces annual effort on skipjack.

**6. Current status coral project**

On June 28, AZTI presented a progress report on the implementation of the coral project. This was shared with SIOTI.

Currently, AZTI has analysed Echebatar buoy data corresponding to years 2016-2020 in order to research dFAD drift to understand the dynamics with identification of possible beaching location by region. In the next weeks, buoy data will be applied to develop a risk matrix assessment based on Productivity Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) approach to identify the areas/regions affected by beaching of dFADs. The matrix will incorporate different parameters e.g., dFAD losses, deactivation, densities and beaching.

**7. Current status silky shark project**

The purchase of mini pats is proceeding and their actual deployment is planned for October.

**8. SIOFI project proposal – Options analysis for harvest control tools**

The finalised ToR was waiting for approval by SIOFI PMT. In the meantime, efforts were being made to identify a suitable consultant.

The importance of arriving at a SIOFI consensus on the issue was emphasised by the publication of IOTC–2021–TCAC08–04\_Rev1[E] on a Draft Allocation Scheme.

**9. Bigeye**

Echebaster noted with interest the current status of bigeye and wondered if the species would be suitable for certification with an extension of the skipjack certificate. It was decided that any consideration should depend on the outcome of the on-going AGAC assessment.

**10. Work priorities for July thru December 2021**

Consideration to await receipt of second annual surveillance report.

**11. Data**

MA informed the meeting that data collection and processing was proceeding as normal.

**12. Any other business**

There was some discussion of the implications of the outcome of SS25 on the market, specifically the reaction of environmental groups and major buyers.

**13. Next meeting**

Provisionally July Tuesday July 27 at 09.30 CET