

Echebatar Sustainability Working Group
Monthly Meeting: Friday, October 1 2021
10.00 h (CET)
Minutes

Participants: Echebatar: J. L. Jauregui, Ian Scott. AZTI: Ane Iriondo, Marga Andres

1. Data

The number of sets in 2021 up until late September has been posted on the Echebatar MSC web page. There are more sets than for the same period in 2020 when operations were affected by covid restrictions. In addition, there have been more sets on free schools.

From the information available, the number of observed sets has reduced to 37 % but given the delay in reporting this proportion is expected to increase and that the year end figure will be in the order of 50% to 55 %. As reported previously, this reduced observer coverage is due to the impact of covid.

This should be sufficient to continue to meet Condition 1, especially due to improved trend in the second half of the year. Efforts will be strengthened by the full time presence of AZTI in Seychelles from October. Available data shows the trend of interactions with ETP species is down, including silky shark.

Data indicates a higher availability of bigeye.

2. IOTC FAD WG

The IOTC FAD working group will be on October 4 – 6 and Jauregui and Scott will attend as observers.

It is noted that a special session of IOTC could be held in January, 2022 to consider Reg 21/02.

3. SIOTI PMT (including HS and HCT)

The PMT was held on Sept 30. No consultants had expressed interest in the HCT project.

4. FADWATCH

Progress continues to be slow with the resignation of Seychelles representative and chairman of the steering group anticipated to introduce further delays. It was noted that there had been a number of changes in the Seychelles fishery related administration.

5. Coral project

Progress has been made in gaining the interest of the Foundation of one island in participating in the field work. A virtual meeting will be held at a mutually convenient time to confirm the process. If positive, permission to undertake the work will be requested from the appropriate Seychelles government departments.

It is expected that the progress report on the desk research project will be shortly received from AZTI.

6. Silky shark project

The vessel Euskadi Alai that is hosting the second phase of the project is at sea. It is expected that it will return to port in the final week of October.

7. AGAC

Publication of the Final Report is awaited. The fishery was divided into by the four oceans.

8. Bigeye

The AGAC report should confirm the potential to certify the big eye fishery in the Indian Ocean.

9. MSC OSF

The final report of activities has been sent to MSC and comments are awaited.

10. Cumulative Impacts

A report on cumulative impacts will be completed once the AGAC report is available.

11. FAD Management Plan

Following completion of the IOTC WG, Scott will up-date the Echebatar FAD management plan.

12. TASA

TASA is programmed for May 2022.

13. The Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard (RFVS)

Scott will review the options presented by this standard and other standards that cover issues separate from the MSC

14. Work plan October 2021 - April 2022

For the next meeting, Scott will prepare a draft work plan to meet the condition milestones that will be reviewed by TASA.

15. Any other business

There was some discussion of the Echebatar use of their two supply vessels, Alakrantxu and Txori Bat,

The next meeting will be on November 5.