

Outcomes of CCAMLR XXII

Governments and non-government organisations interested in the conservation of marine resources and the sustainable management of fishing in the Southern Ocean participate each year in the meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). The 22nd annual meeting took place in Hobart between 27 October and 7 November 2003.

The Australian Government took a number of initiatives to this meeting, including the key initiative of a centralised Vessel Monitoring System (cVMS). A cVMS would allow CCAMLR to independently verify and validate vessels' positions and movements against a common standard of monitoring. This system would track the position of vessels fishing for toothfish to assist in ensuring they are fishing lawfully.

This initiative was brought to the meeting through cooperation with like-minded nations interested in combating illegal fishing, namely New Zealand and the United States. The three nations worked together to develop the concept before and during the meeting and encouraged interest from South Africa, Argentina, Uruguay and the Ukraine. These nations will participate in an open trial cVMS over the next 12 months and will report to the 2004 meeting of the Commission.

The Commission also agreed to a 'black list' of vessels that have been implicated in illegal fishing. Parties cooperating with CCAMLR are encouraged to refuse these

vessels access to their ports, thus making it more difficult for illegal fishers to offload their catch. Eight vessels from Uruguay, Belize, Ghana and Seychelles were named on the list.



CCAMLR XXII, Hobart, November 2003

ANDREW JACKSON

Another goal at CCAMLR XXII was improvements to the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS). The CDS aims to track the trade in toothfish and verify the legality of catches. Australia participated with a number of interested Parties over the previous year on the pilot electronic scheme. Australia supported the United States' call for full implementation of the electronic CDS. However, it was agreed to continue the trial period of the e-CDS for another year.

There was a significant increase in the number of new and exploratory fishing applications received from CCAMLR Members in 2003. This will create a greater challenge to the conservation of the Southern Ocean toothfish stocks in the coming years.

In a positive move, CCAMLR also agreed that the development of avoidance and mitigation measures for by-catch species should be given high priority. As a result fishing vessels are encouraged to use integrated weighted lines that cause baited hooks to sink at a faster rate, reducing incidental mortality of seabirds. The estimated total number of seabirds killed by legal toothfish operators for the 2002–03 fishing season was 15, which represents the lowest estimated seabird by-catch in regulated longline fisheries yet reported for the Convention Area. This is seen as a huge achievement given the thousands of birds which were being killed only a few years ago.

The measures agreed to at the meeting such as the open trial cVMS & e-CDS, and the inclusion of the vessels on the black list were positive steps forward. Full implementation of these trials by the Commission in the future will further protect the Southern Ocean ecosystem. CCAMLR will continue to play an integral role in Southern Ocean conservation.

The Australian Antarctic Division will continue to work with other Government departments, as well as industry and environment representatives during 2004, so that Australia and like-minded nations can achieve the best possible outcome for the conservation of the Southern Ocean ecosystem at CCAMLR XXIII later this year.

ANTARCTIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY SECTION, AAD

Apprehensions of foreign fishing vessels for illegal fishing in Australian waters since 2001 (Heard and McDonald Islands zone)

Name of vessel	Date of apprehension	Tonnage of toothfish	\$value of toothfish	Outcome
<i>South Tomi</i>	29/03/01	ca. 100	\$1,400,000	Master convicted and fined a total of \$136,000. City of Geraldton preparing vessel for dive wreck
<i>Lena</i>	04/02/02	ca. 70	\$1,127,183	Master convicted and fined a total of \$50,000. Two crew members convicted and fined \$25,000 each. Vessel scuttled
<i>Volga</i>	07/02/02	ca. 127	\$1,932,579	Still subject to legal action
<i>Viarsa</i>	28/08/03	ca. 94	sold in excess of \$1,000,000	Still subject to legal action
<i>Maya V</i>	23/1/04	ca. 150	estimated worth of \$2,200,000	Still subject to legal action