



**MINUTES SSC/2017/14**

**4 December 2017**

**10:30 am EST - Via Zoom Conference Call**

**Participants:**

Dr. Tammy Warren, Commission Acting Chair

Mr. Frederico Cardigos, Commissioner

Mr. Mark Spalding, Commissioner

Prof. Stephen de Mora, Commissioner

Sen. Wilfred Moore, Commissioner

Dr. David Freestone, Executive Secretary

(Apologies, Prof. Howard Roe and Dr. Billy Causey, Commissioners)

1. Revised Minutes of 7 November 2017 Meeting (MOS/SSC/2017/14)

**APPROVED.**

2. **Executive Secretary** presented an update of Work Programme implementation to-date:

- 2.1 Signatories

- None.

- 2.2 Commission

- The **Executive Secretary** will renew a request for comments from the Signatory Governments on the Stewardship Agenda in 2018. **Commissioner Spalding** has offered to gather outside legal support to assist.
    - The United Nations Second World Ocean Assessment is underway and has requested Commission input as it embarks on a revised process and format for the second version. **Commissioner Roe** and the **Executive Secretary** will continue their involvement in the process on behalf of the Commission.

- 2.3 Collaborating Partners

- The **Executive Secretary** noted that there are a total of 29 Collaborating Partners currently, and he will follow up outstanding invitations.

## 2.4 Fisheries

- **Commissioner Warren** and Dr Brian Luckhurst attended the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) 25<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting in Marrakech in November. Nine recommendations were approved this year, compared to twenty-three at the previous year's ICCAT meeting.
- **Commissioner Cardigos** noted that the Azores presented a declaration supporting the sustainability of pole-and-line fisheries at ICCAT, which he distributed to the Commission. He invited the Sargasso Sea Commission to formally sign the Declaration in support, and the Commissioners unanimously agreed.
- Dr Laurie Kell, who recently retired from ICCAT, will be assisting the Commission's ICCAT focus group on an ecosystem-based fisheries management assessment of the Sargasso Sea.

## 2.5 Shipping

- The **Executive Secretary** will visit Bermuda in 2018 to meet the new Minister and to pursue the issue of how to engage with the cruise ship industry in Bermuda.

## 2.6 Sea Bed

- The **Executive Secretary** also attended a luncheon at Pew Charitable Trusts in Washington, DC, where the International Seabed Authority (ISA) Secretary General Mr Michael Lodge gave a presentation. Mr Lodge recognized the Commission for their collaboration with the ISA, and encouraged continued discussions with the Legal Office of the ISA of a draft Memorandum of Understanding with the ISA.

## 2.7 Migratory Species

- A second CMS European Eel Range State meeting is planned for 15-16 May 2018. The president of the World Maritime University, Dr Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, agreed to host the meeting at the University in Malmo, Sweden. Dr Ronan Long has agreed to act as a focal point. The Secretariat is currently working to encourage attendance from range states in North Africa.
- The Helsinki Commission invited the Commission to co-sponsor a workshop on the European eel, which the **Executive Secretary** attended and gave a presentation in Stockholm, Sweden at the end of November.
- The Commission was approached by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Canadian Department of Fisheries & Oceans to facilitate an American eel workshop in the Dominican Republic. The Commission is currently working on finalizing the sole-source contract and contribution agreements with each respective funder, and the preliminary logistics for the workshop.
- **Commissioner Cardigos** noted that the UK Environment Protection Agency and the University of the Azores are collaborating on a tag-and-release

project on eels. He will request a summary from the project leads and distribute to the Commission.

#### 2.8 Finance and Fundraising Report

- Ms Liz Parker recommended inviting notable supporters to become honorary ambassadors for the Commission. Dr Sylvia Earle, Mr JP Rouja, and Mr James Prosek have all agreed to become Sargasso Sea Ambassadors. **Ms Tess Mackey** is working on creating a webpage to showcase the new Ambassadors on the Sargasso Sea Commission website.

#### 2.9 Mapping and Monitoring

- The proposal to NASA for a series of two workshops in 2017-2018 related to the COVERAGE project has been submitted.
- The Secretariat continues to explore potential sources of funding to commission a study on fishing pressure and shipping traffic in the Area of Collaboration from OceanMind or a similar organization such as ExactEarth in Canada. The UK Foreign Office suggested the Belmont Forum as a funding source, and Dr Alex Rodgers at Oxford University is also interested in becoming involved.

#### 2.10 Communications

- The **Executive Secretary** was the opening speaker for Sea Stories 2017 at the Explorers Club in November. There were seven speakers in total and approximately 140 attendees. The Commission has received several notes of support from attendees, and continues to make connections with contacts from this event. There is also a National Geographic article about the Sargasso Sea in the final stages of development.
- The Secretariat Marine Research Fellow, **Ms Tess Mackey**, reported that the Sargasso Sea Commission continues to be active on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and will release a newsletter this month with a new mobile-responsive template.
- **Commissioner Cardigos** previously suggested that the Commission create a pamphlet for outreach. **Ms Tess Mackey** is coordinating with a graphic designer to develop it. The Secretariat was also approached by publisher Scientia, who the Commission hired to develop a four-page article about the Sargasso Sea Commission.

### 3 Any Other Business

None.

### 4 Date of Next Meeting

- The next SSC meeting call has been tentatively scheduled for 17 January at 9 AM EST, and will be confirmed with the Commissioners via email.