



MINUTES SSC/2022/42

January 19th, 2022

10:00 AM EDT - Via Zoom Conference Call

Participants:

Dr Tammy Warren, Commission Acting Chair

Prof Stephen de Mora, Commissioner

Sen Wilfred Moore, Commissioner

Mr Mark Spalding, Commissioner

Dr Ana Colaço, Commissioner

Mrs. Rochelle Newbold, Commissioner

Dr David Freestone, Executive Secretary

Fae Sapsford, SSC Secretariat

Apologies – Dr. Howard Roe, Commissioner

1. Minutes of SSC/2022/42
 - Approved with minor typos fixed

2. The **Executive Secretary** congratulated Rochelle Newbold on her promotion to the Office of the Prime Minister of The Bahamas where she acts as special advisor on matters of climate change and the environment.

3. **Executive Secretary** presented an update of Work Programme implementation to-date:
 - 1.1. Commission
 - The **Executive Secretary** noted that this year the appointments of **Commissioner Rochelle Newbold** and **Commissioner Howard Roe** would be expiring. The **Executive Secretary** noted that the normal process involved him sending out invitations for nominations for the two vacancies at the end of March.
 - The **Executive Secretary** noted that the Hamilton Declaration envisaged Commissioners being able to serve for a maximum of three terms. This year would mark the end of **Commissioner Roe's** third term. The

Commission noted that this would be a major loss to their institutional knowledge and discussed ways in which that might be avoided.

1.2. Signatories

- The **Executive Secretary** noted that the next Signatories meeting would be in February, and that he would be prompting them to move forward with another draft of the Rules of Procedure.

1.3. Collaborating partners

- The **Executive Secretary** reported that Mission Blue had recently appointed Carl Gustaf Lundin (formerly of IUCN) as its new director and had gained Rolex as a sponsor. **Fae Sapsford** reported that Mission Blue would be relaunching the Sargasso Sea Hope Spot in March. This would be a digital relaunch for marketing and communications purposes. She invited the Commissioners to submit short quotes that could form part of the press release for the relaunch. The guidelines would be emailed to Commissioners.
- The **Executive Secretary** reported that the Bermuda Zoological Society had formally agreed to become a collaborating partner.

1.4. Fisheries

- **Commissioner Warren** reported that the annual ICCAT meeting went forward over Zoom in November. A resolution was agreed to ban the take of shortfin mako sharks after lengthy negotiations. The ban would be in place through 2022 and would be reassessed in 2023.
- She also reported that NAFO had tabled an MOU from ICCAT but that an SSC MOU was yet to be discussed.
- The **Executive Secretary** reported that the Miami office of the National Marine Fisheries Service had given the Commission access to some of their tagging data for analysis as part of the FFEM project. He expressed his gratitude to Brian Luckhurst for negotiating the use of the data.
- The **Executive Secretary** reported that Brian Luckhurst had agreed to attend, as the Commission delegate, a WECAFC meeting on fish aggregation devices (FADs), taking place February 14-16th. **Commissioner Warren** reported that she would also be attending the meeting because Bermuda was planning to pilot anchored FADs.
- The **Executive Secretary** also reported that comments on the NAFO MOU were expected from the NAFO secretariat soon.

1.5. Shipping

- Nothing noted.

1.6. Seabed

- **Commissioner Colaço** reported on the International Seabed Authority session in December – topics of discussion included the 2-year rule triggered

by Nauru and the revision of the regional environmental management plans (REMPs) over the Clarion Clipperton Zone. More REMPs were also going to be proposed. **Commissioner Colaço** also reported that the final meeting of the German Marine Research Consortium's mining impact project would take place on February 1st, and that she would share the link with the Secretariat.

1.7. Migratory species

- The **Executive Secretary** reported that the Secretariat had re-opened a dialogue with the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC) in order to pursue an MOU. An MOU had been discussed in 2014, but was thwarted for political reasons. SSC had already sent a letter of intention to the IAC Secretariat, and they had agreed to give the Commission time on the agenda at their upcoming Consultative Committee Meeting, taking place from March 3-4. The **Executive Secretary** noted that a draft MOU would be circulated to Commissioners and Signatories when completed.
- The **Executive Secretary** reported that the Secretariat would renew their efforts to meet with CMS this year.

1.8. Finance

- The **Executive Secretary** expressed his thanks to the Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation for a grant of \$25,000. This is the third year of their matching grant awarded to the SSC.
- The **Executive Secretary** also reported that the Secretariat had recently received final approval from FFEM for the last of the implementing partner contracts – the project support agreement for IUCN. This was the last agreement needed for disbursement, so receiving funding was imminent – though there was one more document to finalize with the implementing partner contract with Imperial.
- The **Executive Secretary** also reported that the “Big Data” project, funded by IUCN and the Swedish government, was progressing well. Nick Lambert Associates International completed their interim report in December, and a workshop would take place on March 2nd, to which Commissioners, Signatories and others would be invited.
- The **Executive Secretary** also reported that the GEF grant was progressing – after submission to the GEF CEO in December, the GEF Secretariat had now returned 35 pages of comments which Dr David Vousden, was addressing. He hoped to have completed these responses by February/March, and another round of comments may follow after that. The TORs for the Technical Advisor role had also been completed, and would be reviewed by IOC-UNESCO.
- The **Executive Secretary** also reported that the Senior Lead for International Waters at the GEF Secretariat would be stepping down, so the position was

being advertised. The job posting would be sent to Commissioners for them to share with their network.

- The **Executive Secretary** reported that IUCN had referred a donor opportunity to SSC. The Secretariat was considering a proposal.

1.7 Mapping and Monitoring

- The **Executive Secretary** reported that there would be a meeting in February of the board for COVERAGE as the project moved into phase C, operationalization. The **Executive Secretary** had been asked to speak at that meeting about the way that the SSC was utilizing the COVERAGE project.

1.8 Communications

- **Fae Sapsford** gave a communications update:
 - The last newsletter of 2021 was released in December, which had a 39% open rate
 - The Secretariat had recently shared posts about cahows, which are dependent on the Sargasso Sea for food, *Halobates*, the only known high seas insect, and the 2022 newsletter.
 - Over the past month, the SSC's follower count had increased by 3% on Instagram, reach had increased by 500%, engagement increased by 350%, and page views increased by 83% on Facebook, on linked in we appeared in searches 40% more, and our tweet impressions were up 66%.

3. Any Other Business/Date of Next Meeting

- **Commissioner de Mora** raised an email that Professor Mike Allen had sent to the Commission, asking for endorsement for his sargassum sinking project. This was decided to be out of scope for the Commission.
- **Commissioner de Mora** also reported that Global Testnet had just been awarded observer status as an NGO at IMO. This organization is concerned about pollution due biofouling and ballast water, and Commissioner de Mora was on the board of directors – and he noted that he would keep the Commission updated with anything that may be of interest from them.
- The date of next meeting will be agreed by email correspondence.