

**9th Scientific Working Group of the Multilateral Meeting on
Management of High Seas Fisheries in the North Pacific Ocean**

**Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia
4 September 2010**

Meeting Report

1. Opening

The 9th Scientific Working Group of the Multilateral Meeting on Management of High Seas Fisheries in the North Pacific Ocean (SWG9) was opened at 9:20 am on Friday, 4 September 2010 by Dr. Vladimir Radchenko from Russia. Dr. Radchenko welcomed all participants and gave opening remarks. He then invited all delegations to make introductions. A list of meeting attendees is contained in Attachment 1.

2. Appointment of Facilitator and Rapporteur

Dr. Radchenko was elected Facilitator of the Scientific Working Group (SWG9) and Ms. Maggie Rabb (United States) agreed to serve as Rapporteur.

3. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and adopted (Attachment 2) and a document list was provided to the participants (Attachment 3).

4. Follow-up of the Outcome of the 8th Meeting of the Scientific Working Group

a. Updated footprint data

The Interim Secretariat (I.S.) presented the updated footprint data provided by the meeting participants. The I.S. confirmed that this was the most current information provided to date. Russia explained that they were still working with fishermen to obtain past fisheries data but it was not certain that they would be able to get retrospective data. They committed to share any further information that they do obtain.

b. Historical and current fishing data in Northeast Pacific

Dr. Takeshi Hayashibara (Japan) presented an overview of the historical fishing data in the Northeast Pacific.

The U.S. recalled that Russia presented a preliminary report on research activities by the vessel Tiburon in the Northeast Pacific at SWG8 and inquired as to the status of further data from that research. Russia presented updated results of this research survey and distributed the data to other delegations (SWG9/WP8/R).

The United States highlighted a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) research log from a 2002 expedition to Warwick seamount that highlighted the unique nature of the ecosystems in this area. In light of this report the U.S. stressed the importance of adopting

interim measures for the Northeast Pacific to protect unique marine deepwater environments.

Japan expressed doubt about the use of fishing gear as the best way to assess possible adverse impacts on VMEs and suggested that visual surveys are more effective. Canada and the United States supported this view.

c. Ad Hoc Working Group on VME

The United States reminded the meeting of its proposal to create an ad hoc working group on VMEs to try to develop a scientific basis for the definition of encounters with VMEs.

Japan suggested setting aside a day for the SWG to discuss encounter protocols instead of setting up an ad hoc working group. Other participants supported this approach and agreed that the SWG should begin to work to develop the following information:

1. Determine the distribution of encounters in fishing and survey operations with the four orders of corals identified in the NWPO interim measures as primary indicators of VMEs.
2. Estimate catch rates of corals brought up by the fishing gear
3. Estimate catch rates of corals encountered but not brought up by the fishing gear
4. Estimate catch rates encountered in directed fisheries on corals and catch rates of encounters not brought up by the fishing gear
5. Compare the estimated catch rates with those rates encountered in the NAFO area and the scientific literature, taking into account differences in physical characteristics of the ecosystems and differences in fishing gear dynamics.

The United States volunteered Dr. Loh-Lee Low (U.S.) to work on these issues and coordinate with other delegations intersessionally. The Chairman requested that each delegation identify its point of contact through the I.S. (Attachment 4).

5. Discussion of Definition of Encounter with VME

Delegations discussed this issue and reiterated their previous positions in respect of development of an encounter protocol for the North Pacific Ocean. In light of the agreement to further discuss this work within the SWG as noted in paragraph 4c above the meeting decided that allowing this work to progress was the best way forward.

Canada presented an overview of research done in NAFO that could contribute to developing threshold levels and an encounter protocol for the North Pacific Ocean (SWG/WP3/CA).

6. Discussion on the Interim Measures on VMEs

Dr. Takeshi Hayashibara (Japan) presented an overview of the preliminary results of the bottom environmental survey of the Emperor Seamount Chain (SWG/WP4/J).

The United States recalled that it had earlier proposed the closure of the southern portion of the Koko seamount beyond the more limited closure that was implemented and that the data supplied by Japan could be interpreted to support closure of a larger area.

Japan brought attention to the photographs of the bottom and expressed its view that the results of the survey do not indicate the presence of a VME.

7. Other Matters

Canada suggested that the plan of work for the next SWG meeting should be discussed later in the week when there is a better idea of how much progress has been made on the Draft Convention Text and how much work there is still to accomplish at the next meeting.

The United States recalled that the issue of the SWG's mandate was raised at SWG8 but was not addressed at NPO8. The United States suggested that this issue once again be referred to the plenary.

Japan announced the Stock Assessment Workshop for Pelagic Armorhead 8-10 December 2010 (SWG/WP7).

8. Adoption of the Record of the Meeting

The report of the meeting was adopted by consensus at 5:00 pm on 4 September 2010.

9. Closing of the Meeting

Participants thanked the Facilitator, the Rapporteur, the Interim Secretariat, and the host government for their preparations, arrangements, and running of the meeting.