

Update on the special project for hiring an expert to assist the SWG NPA-SA to conduct an assessment for Splendid Alfonsino and North Pacific Armorhead and funding request for 2025

Abstract: The intention of this document is to provide a progress report on the implementation of the project to assess the Splendid Alfonsino and North Pacific Armorhead stocks endorsed by COM08 in 2024 and request funding for 2025.

Progress report

In April 2024, COM08 endorsed the proposal from SC08 to hire an expert in the use of data limited methods in stock assessment to assist the SWG NPA-SA to conduct an assessment of the Splendid Alfonsino (SA) and possibly the North Pacific Armorhead (NPA) stocks in the Emperor Seamounts. For this project, SC08 requested 2,172,500 JPY from the Special Project Fund.

The Secretariat hired two experts recommended by Members, Drs. Maite Pons and Ricardo Amoroso. The invited experts participated in three virtual meetings of the SWG NPA-SA and worked intersessionally in collaboration with Members as described in the workplan below. They drafted two reports on [Life history parameters for Splendid Alfonsino \(*Beryx splendens*\) in the North Pacific](#) and [Yield per recruit and spawning biomass per recruit analyses for Splendid Alfonsino \(*Beryx splendens*\) in the North Pacific](#), and one of the experts, Dr. Pons, presented them to SSC BF-ME05 in Tokyo, Japan on 9-11 December 2024.

Date	Task
May 2024	Review SSC BF-ME reports and other relevant documents
May	Attend the 1 st SWG NPA-SA intersessional meeting (virtual)
May-Jun	Guide the SWG lead in preparing the appropriate data and models that will allow production of Spawner-per-recruit (SPR) and Yield-per-recruit (YPR) models for SA
Jun	Provide code for model fitting, displaying model outputs and specific advice to the SWG lead that can be used to parameterize the SPR and YPR models for SA, as well as to estimate the variability of the model outputs.
Jun-Jul	Attend the 2 nd SWG NPA-SA intersessional meeting (virtual) to review progress and collect feedback
Aug-Sep	Assist the SWG in developing these models into management advice for SA.

Oct	Attend the 3 rd SWG NPA-SA intersessional meeting (virtual) to review progress and collect feedback
Nov-Dec 2024	Prepare a consultancy report and present it to SSC BF-ME05 (in person)

The SSC BF-ME reviewed the reports and provided the science advice on SA to SC/COM ([Annex I of the SSC BFME05 report](#)). The SSC BF-ME developed a stock status summary and identified uncertainties and future work on stock assessment for SA. The SC Chair will present to COM09 the SA stock status and a recommendation from SSC BF-ME to continue to hire external experts to support the work of the SWG NPA-SA in 2025.

Requested funding for 2024: 2,172,500 JPY.

Expenditures: 2,089,793 JPY, including 1,522,500 JPY consultancy fee and 567,293 JPY travel costs to attend SSC BF-ME05.

Funding request for 2025

The SWG NPA-SA assessed the SA stock using YPR and SPR models but was unable to conduct an assessment of the North Pacific Armorhead stock (which was a lower priority task) due to time constraints and limited resources. Additionally, SSC BF-ME05 recommended to use an integrated model for SA to improve stock assessment.

Following the recommendation from SSC BF-ME05, SC09 recommended COM09 continue to hire invited experts to support the SWG NPA-SA meetings with the SA and NPA stock assessments (Scientific Projects, Annex AA).

The **purpose** of this 2nd phase of the project is to conduct, with the support from an invited expert(s), an assessment of the North Pacific Armorhead stock and improve the assessment of Splendid Alfonsino stock.

Project Lead: Dr. Kota Sawada

Commencement and Completion Date: May – December 2025

Project Budget Summary: 2,142,700 JPY, including
consultancy: 1,500,000 JPY (20 days)
travel costs: 642,700 JPY (SSC BF-ME06 meeting in Nagoya)

The funding is proposed to come from the Special Project Fund.

The **Terms of Reference** (TOR) for an invited expert(s) will be to:

- 1) Guide the SWG lead in preparing the appropriate data (e.g. standardized CPUE data) and models that will allow development of an integrated stock assessment model (e.g. Stock Synthesis or alternative) for SA.
- 2) Provide code for model fitting, displaying model outputs and specific advice to the SWG lead that can be used to parameterize the integrated model for SA, as well as to estimate the variability of the model outputs.
- 3) Assist the SWG in developing these models into management advice for SA.
- 4) Assist the SWG in developing and applying alternative assessment methods, such as individual based models and depletion estimates for NPA stocks.

Form of results: The expert will present a report to SSC BF-ME06 which addresses the above Terms of Reference including code for model fitting and displaying model outputs.

Risks of project not achieving Project Objectives: Low for the priority TOR #1,2 and 4. TOR #3 may not be achieved this year, as integrated modeling is a new project for the SWG NPA-SA, and developing this model into management advice for SA may require more time.

Milestones and costs:

Date	Task	Costs
May 2025	Review SSC BF-ME reports, SWG NPA-SA meeting summaries and other relevant documents	75,000 JPY (1 day)
May	Attend the 1 st SWG NPA-SA intersessional meeting (virtual)	75,000 JPY (1 day)
May-Jun	Guide the SWG lead in preparing the appropriate data (e.g. standardized CPUE data) and models that will allow development of an integrated stock assessment model (e.g. Stock Synthesis or alternative) for SA	362,500 JPY (4 days)
Jun-Jul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide code for model fitting, displaying model outputs and specific advice to the SWG lead that can be used to parameterize the integrated model for SA, as well as to estimate the variability of the model outputs Assist the SWG in developing and applying alternative assessment methods, such as individual based models and depletion estimates for NPA stocks 	362,500 JPY (8 days)
Jun-Jul	Attend the 2 nd SWG NPA-SA intersessional meeting (virtual) to review progress and collect feedback	75,000 JPY (1 day)
Aug-Sep	Assist the SWG in developing these models into management advice for SA.	362,500 JPY (4 days)

Oct	Attend the 3 rd SWG NPA-SA intersessional meeting (virtual) to review progress and collect feedback	75,000 JPY (1 day)
Nov-Dec 2025	Prepare a consultancy report and present it to SSC BF-ME06 (in person)	642,700 JPY (travel costs)
		Total: 2,142,700 JPY

Project staff: Dr. Kota Sawada, SWG NPA-SA members, Secretariat (Science Manager and Data Coordinator).