

DSCC Intervention to SPRFMO 8th SC Meeting – October 2

We have heard quite frequently the argument that the zonation model, though flawed, is the best available science. We believe this isn't the appropriate test. This intervention addresses this, and suggests a way forward.

First, some background. A BFIA is required by the 03-2020 measure, which also asked the SC (para 37) to advise on the ongoing appropriateness of the management measures in this CMM to ensure the measure continues to achieve its objective and the objectives of the Convention""

Second,, measure 03-2020 requires the BFIA reflects "appropriate best practice. " (para 24)

("24. The Scientific Committee shall update the SPRFMO BFIAS no later than 2019 and review every 5 years thereafter to ensure that it reflects, as appropriate, best practice.")

Third, the BFIA should be consistent with the Benthic Fishing Impact Assessment Standard (2019)

<https://www.sprfmo.int/assets/Fisheries/Science/SPRFMO-Bottom-Fishery-Impact-Assessment-Standard-2019.pdf>

The BFIAS notes the need to ensure that CMMs are based on and updated on the basis of the best available scientific information, noting in particular the need to improve effective implementation of thresholds and move-on rules.

In summary, as the underlying model and BFIA incorporating it clearly contains significant uncertainties[1] DSCC suggests the SC should advise that the management measure is not appropriate because it does not demonstrate that the bottom trawl fisheries can be managed to prevent SAIs on VMEs, due to its reliance on the Zonation model to the extent and in the way that it does, and that more precautionary measures should be adopted.

The SC could advise the Commission that pending the resolution of major uncertainties, closing all areas that the zonation model predicts may contain VMEs, and putting into place a move-on rule that is predicated on identifying when a VME is encountered could be appropriate management responses.

[1] Identified uncertainties include the potential level of over prediction of VMEs outside of the BTMAs, lack of information on connectivity, the protection of rare species, and catchability and impact on VME indicator species from trawling,