

## Second Quarter 2009

The second quarter commenced with the activation of the Commission VMS on 1 April, with 280 authorized fishing vessels reporting high seas positions directly to the Commission VMS. By the end of June there were 1,424 authorized fishing vessels being tracked by the Commission VMS. To assist the Manager VMS with the day-to-day management of this system a VMS Operations Officer, Mr Milo Abello, commenced work at the Secretariat on 1 April. A second VMS Operations Officer will be recruited in early July.

The Regional Observer Programme (ROP) continued to expand as more national and sub-regional observer programmes received interim authorization. By 30 June the ROP included the following observer programmes: China, Federated States of Micronesia, Federated States of Micronesia Arrangement (through the FFA Secretariat), Japan, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Chinese Taipei, USA, US Multilateral Treaty (through the FFA Secretariat) and Vanuatu. From 25 May to 5 June the Observer Programme Coordinator assisted the Philippines Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in the implementation of an observer training course held at Manila.

Submissions by CCMs for the draft WCPFC IUU Vessel List were due on 3 June, 120 days before the fifth regular session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC5). Marshall Islands, New Zealand, French Polynesia and the USA submitted lists of vessels presumed to be carrying out IUU activities in the Convention Area totaling 15 vessels, including one vessel that was included on two separate lists. The Executive Director will incorporate these lists into a draft WCPFC IUU Vessel List for transmission to all CCMs, as well as to non-CCMs with vessels on the list, at least 90 days before TCC5.

In March and April Ms Rhea Moss (USA) undertook a five-week internship at the Secretariat in relation to the Commission's Charter Arrangements Scheme and a separate project in relation to the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels. The Secretariat greatly appreciates Rhea's highly successful input to its work program.

During the quarter the Executive Director attended the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission held at Bali, Indonesia, the 70<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC70) at Alofi, Niue, the 80<sup>th</sup> Session of the IATTC at La Jolla, USA and the Second Meeting of the tuna RFMOs at San Sebastian, Spain. He also visited French Polynesia to discuss arrangements for the annual session of the Commission which will be held at Papeete in December 2009. The Commission Chair, Ambassador Satya N. Nandan (Fiji), also participated in the FFC70 and San Sebastian meetings.

In June the Secretariat was advised that the Global Environment Facility had approved funding support for the West Pacific East Asia Oceanic Fisheries Management Project. This project, which will build on the Indonesia-Philippines Data Collection Project supported with voluntary contributions to the Commission over the last four years, will be implemented in Vietnam, Indonesia and Philippines over the coming three years. Additional funding support has been offered from AusAID, the Government of Japan (through the Japan Trust Fund administered by WCPFC), the US National Marine Fisheries Service and the Commission itself.

The audit of the 2008 Financial Accounts was completed during this quarter. The independent external auditor's opinion was that the financial statements provided a fair and reasonable representation of the Commission's financial position as at 31 December 2008, and found the statements to be in accordance with the required Accounting Standards and Financial Regulations. The audit reports and 2008 financial statements have been posted on the WCPFC website.

To recognize World Ocean Day on 8 June the Secretariat, in partnership with the National Oceanic Resources Management Agency of FSM, organized an essay competition for Elementary School, High School and College students on the theme “The Ocean around us: what it means to the Federated States of Micronesia and what it means to us as individuals”. The competition was well supported with winners receiving their prizes at a ceremony in the Commission Headquarters Building, Pohnpei on 8 June.

By mid-May, following approval by the Executive Director of the ‘ICT Strategic Plan 2009-2011’ and associated 2009 Work Plan, the Secretariat’s new network servers were successfully commissioned. A standard set of software applications for the use of all staff was also adopted and implemented.

The Commission’s redeveloped website was officially launched on 19 June, the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the WCPFC Convention. The redeveloped website enables Secretariat staff to directly administer and manage website content. The SPC’s Oceanic Fisheries Programme is commended for its excellent maintenance of the website during the past five years and for assisting the Secretariat during the migration phase. The second major project, enhancement of the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels, is expected to be fully operational early in the third quarter.

In April the Science Manager represented the Secretariat at a pre-stock assessment workshop held at the SPC headquarters, Noumea, New Caledonia. The objective of this workshop was to explore issues to be considered in subsequent work associated with the 2009 assessment of yellowfin tuna, South Pacific albacore and an update of bigeye tuna assessment as requested by the Commission. In early May, the Science Manager participated in the World Ocean Conference at Manado, Indonesia, where he gave a presentation on tuna fisheries management by Pacific small island States. In late May he participated in a Workshop on the Implementation of a Logbook Programme for the Fisheries of Indonesia: Review of Issues and Considerations, that was held at Jakarta, Indonesia. This workshop focused on the design of logbook forms for Indonesian tuna fisheries, the scope of the logbook programme and implementation issues.

In early May the meeting information and a provisional agenda for the **fifth regular session of the Scientific Committee (SC5)** were posted on the WCPFC website. SC5 will be held at Port Vila, Vanuatu from 10-21 August 2009. In June a set of WCPFC Guidelines for the Handling of Sea Turtles was also posted on the WCPFC website, further refinements of which may be discussed at SC5.