



MEDIA ALERT

12 April 2019

SOUTH AFRICA TO HOST THE ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF SOUTHERN BLUEFIN TUNA

The International Cooperation, Trade and Security (ICTS) Cluster has approved the hosting of the Annual Meetings of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) by the Republic of South Africa, in September and October 2019. The following annual meetings of the CCSBT will be held in Cape Town:

- Operating Model and management Procedure Technical Meeting, on 1 September 2019;
- 24th Meeting of the Extended Scientific Committee, from 2–7 September 2019;
- Compliance Technical Working Group Meeting, on 9 October 2019;
- 14th Meeting of the Compliance Committee, from 10–12 October 2019; and
- 26th Annual Meeting of the CCSBT, from 14–17 October 2019.

South Africa is a Cooperating Contracting Party Member of the CCSBT, having acceded to the CCSBT in 2015. The CCSBT is an intergovernmental organisation, which has the objective to ensure, through appropriate management, conservation and optimum utilization of the global Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) fishery, and is duly responsible for setting a total allowable catch (TAC) and its allocation among the members.

SBT is one of the world's high value fish species and its primary market is the Japanese Sashimi market. Subject to the high fat content of SBT flesh, premium prices are obtained in the Japanese Sashimi market. South Africa's SBT allocation for the 2018-2020 fishing seasons is 450 tons.

The SBT stock is in a rebuilding phase and the 2017 assessment indicated that the stock's spawning biomass level was about 13% of the initial spawning biomass. This is a significant improvement compared to the 5% level that the SBT stock was assessed to be at in 2011. The interim rebuilding target of 20% will likely be met long before the target year of 2035. The rebuilding of the stock has been guided by the CCSBT's Management Procedure (MP), which is due to be replaced in 2020.

The CCSBT meetings for 2019 are therefore of critical importance to finalise and adopt the new MP that will be designed to ensure full rebuilding of the stock and, once attained, maintain the stock at optimal sustainable levels. A major objective of the scientific meetings will be to finalise new candidate management procedures for recommendation to the Extended Commission to adopt a MP for the future. The current MP was adopted in Bali and as such is called Bali Procedure and given the past practice at CCSBT is for its Management Procedure, it is expected that the new MP will be given a proudly South African name.

A Local Organising Committee (LOC) will be constituted and will oversee the meeting arrangements in collaboration with the other Key Government Departments, as well as the CCSBT Secretariat. Further details will be provided once the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) has been established.

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