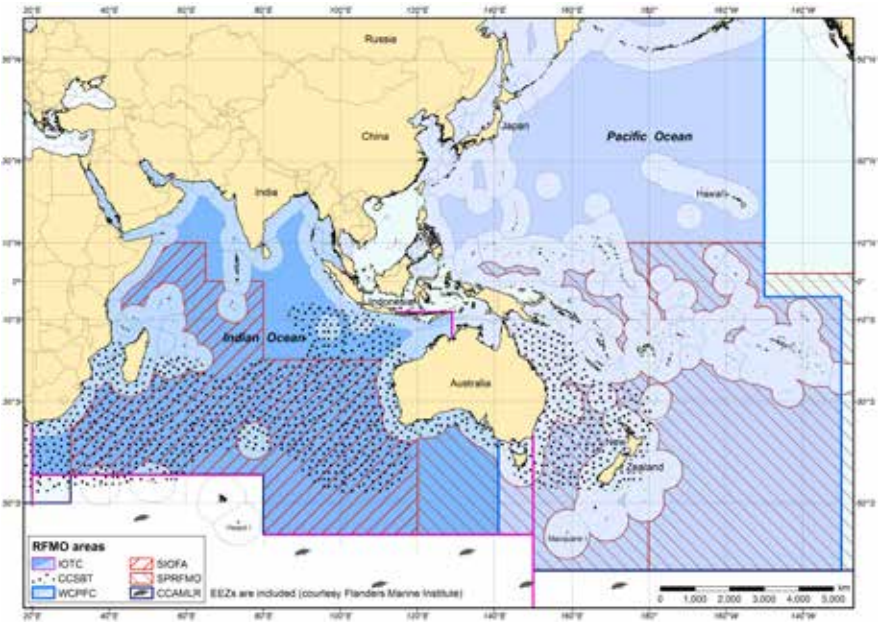


Chapter 20

International fishery management arrangements

H Patterson

FIGURE 20.1 Areas of competence for regional fisheries management organisations



Notes: **CCAMLR** Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. **CCSBT** Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna. **EEZ** Exclusive Economic Zone. **IOTC** Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. **RFMO** Regional fisheries management organisation. **SIOFA** Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement. **SPRFMO** South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (see Chapter 28 for full extent). **WCPFC** Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. IOTC and WCPFC areas of competence include EEZs.

Several fish stocks of commercial importance to Australia have ranges extending outside the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) into the high seas and the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of other countries. These stocks are important for Australia in providing a source of economic benefits for the Australian fishing industry, and require regional cooperative action for effective management. Management responsibility is shared by multiple governments through international instruments (conventions and agreements), which are often implemented through a regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO) or other international body (Figure 20.1). As a party to these international instruments, Australia implements measures agreed by the relevant body in managing its domestic fishery; in a number of cases, Australia's domestic standards exceed those agreed internationally. Australia's continued engagement in international fisheries processes is critical to supporting access for the Australian fishing industry, and promoting responsible management to ensure sustainability of the fisheries and the ecosystems that support them.

This chapter provides an introduction to international fisheries arrangements to which Australia is a party. Status reports of the domestic fisheries involved are provided in Chapters 21–28. Although the fisheries of Torres Strait are also managed under an international agreement, they differ substantially from the fisheries described here and are therefore addressed separately in Chapters 15–19.

Through participation in RFMOs and other international fisheries bodies, Australia aims to implement its commitments and obligations under overarching international instruments, including the:

- 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
- 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UNCLOS relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UN Fish Stocks Agreement)
- 1995 United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
- 1995 Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas
- 2006 and 2009 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolutions on Sustainable Fisheries (UNGA 61/105, UNGA 64/72)
- 2009 Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

Globally, the species targeted on the high seas vary by area and fishing fleet. Some of the most extensive high-seas fisheries are pelagic fisheries catching highly migratory tunas, billfishes and sharks (defined under UNCLOS Annex 1). Currently, five conventions or agreements have been established to manage such species and species groups; Australia is party to three of these:

- Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean
- Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
- Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission.

Australia has also participated in the development of newer agreements where there are gaps in the international management of other non-highly migratory stocks in the high seas. Australia is party to the:

- Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)
- Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean.

Arrangements for demersal species in Antarctic waters, and for the AFZ of Heard Island and McDonald Islands, are implemented through the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). The AFZ of Macquarie Island is adjacent to the CCAMLR convention area, rather than within it. However, for consistency, the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery is managed in line with CCAMLR arrangements.

The Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy (HSP; DAFF 2007) requires that harvest strategies be developed for all Commonwealth fisheries, apart from those that are managed under the joint authority of the Australian Government and another Australian jurisdiction, or an international management body or arrangement. However, the policy notes that the Australian Government will advocate the principles of the policy when negotiating with these bodies. The Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) adopted a management procedure in 2011, which is analogous to a harvest strategy (Chapter 23). There has also been considerable progress in the adoption of harvest strategy principles and revised reference points in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) over recent years. The scientific committees of some RFMOs report against reference points for biomass and fishing mortality when providing advice on stock status. These may be defined differently from those in the HSP, although in the case of the WCPFC and the IOTC the limit reference points adopted are the same as prescribed in the HSP. For jointly managed stocks, ABARES determines stock status in light of the limit reference points described in the HSP and considers the impacts of fishing mortality from all fleets on the stocks.

20.1 Regional fisheries management organisations

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

The WCPFC is responsible for the world's largest and most valuable tuna fishery. In 2015, the total tuna catch of the fishery was worth more than US\$4.8 billion and constituted about 56 per cent of the global tuna catch. The WCPFC area of competence includes the EEZs of many developing Pacific island states (Figure 20.1), for which tuna fishing is a significant source of income. The WCPFC has a specific mandate to manage fishing impacts on all highly migratory fish species listed in UNCLOS Annex 1, except sauries (Scomberesocidae). See Chapter 21 for more information.

Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna

The Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, which established the CCSBT, originated from discussions between Australia, Japan and New Zealand in the mid 1980s, following an observed decline in stock biomass. The convention applies to southern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) throughout its range, rather than within a specified geographic area. Therefore, it covers areas of the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific oceans (Figure 21.1), overlapping with the areas of competence of the CCAMLR, the WCPFC and the IOTC. The CCSBT's primary management measure is a global total allowable catch (TAC), which is allocated to members and cooperating non-members. Currently, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and the Fishing Entity of Taiwan hold the majority (93 per cent) of the global TAC. See Chapter 23 for more information.

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

The IOTC is an intergovernmental organisation established under the Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, and is an article XIV body of the FAO. It is mandated to manage tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas (Figure 21.1). The IOTC's area of competence covers a large number of countries, and both artisanal and industrial fishing vessels. Membership of the IOTC is open to Indian Ocean coastal countries, and countries or regional economic integration organisations that are members of the United Nations or one of its specialised agencies that actively fish for tunas in the Indian Ocean. The IOTC is responsible for the world's second-largest tuna fishery in terms of both volume and value. The Indian Ocean differs from other oceans in that small-scale or artisanal fisheries take around the same quantity of tuna as industrial fisheries; much of this catch is neritic (inshore) tuna-like species, which are under IOTC management. See Chapter 24 for more information.

Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources

The CCAMLR was established to conserve and manage the Southern Ocean Antarctic ecosystem, mainly in high-seas areas. It originated from concern over the effects of fishing for krill (*Euphausia superba*) on the broader Antarctic ecosystem. The objective of the CCAMLR is the conservation and rational use of Antarctic marine living resources. In managing fisheries within its area of competence, the CCAMLR uses harvest strategies that specifically incorporate ecological links in setting TACs. Such an approach views the entire Southern Ocean as a suite of interlinked ecological systems—this distinguishes the CCAMLR from the other multilateral fisheries conventions. The strategies result in conservative TACs that aim to reduce the potential effects of fishing on other species, such as predators of the target species. There is also a focus on mitigating impacts on the benthic environment and bycatch, particularly seabirds. Fisheries in the CCAMLR convention area are required to have high levels of observer coverage, data collection and reporting, and there are specific requirements for new or exploratory fisheries. See Chapters 25 and 27 for more information.

Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement

The SIOFA entered into force on 21 June 2012. The objectives of the agreement are to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the non–highly migratory fisheries resources in the SIOFA area of competence through cooperation among the parties. The agreement promotes the sustainable development of fisheries in the area, taking into account the needs of developing states bordering the area that are parties to the agreement—in particular, the small-island developing states. See Chapter 28 for more information.

South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

The Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean entered into force on 24 August 2012. The convention, which is implemented by the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, covers non–highly migratory fisheries resources in the southern Pacific Ocean. The area has been fished by vessels from numerous countries, using both pelagic and demersal gear. The largest fisheries focus on pelagic species in upwelling areas of higher productivity off the west coast of South America. Other fisheries target demersal species found on seamounts and ridges in the central and western areas of the southern Pacific Ocean. See Chapter 28 for more information.

20.2 References

DAFF 2007, *Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy: policy and guidelines*, Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra.



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