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Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
Accord relatif aux Pêches dans le Sud de l'Océan Indien

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La Reunion, Thursday 24th November 2022

SIOFA CIRCULAR n° 2022/52

SUBJECT: Implementation of the Williams Ridge fishery in the 2022/23 fishing season

Dear Heads of Delegation and Official Contacts,

Dear Colleagues,

In accordance with the CMM 2021-15 para 38 - footnote 4, please find enclosed the arrangements for the 2022/2023 season between the CCPs that engage in the *Disostichus* spp. fishery on Williams Ridge.

This circular will enter in force on 30th November 2022 and will replace the circular 2021-35.

Sincerely yours,

Thierry Clot

SIOFA
Executive Secretary



Implementation of the Williams Ridge fishery in the 2022/23 fishing season

Introduction

The 8th Meeting of the Parties (MoP) adopted [CMM 2021/15](#) (Management of Demersal Stocks). The CMM incorporates templates and clarifications regarding the implementation of the Williams Ridge fishery where a fishing effort limitation regime is in effect, on the basis of a grid cell system.

Paragraph 38 and footnote 4 of the CMM define the process for entry notifications for vessels intending to fish in any grid cell, as follows:

*38. CCPs shall ensure that their fishing vessels inform the Secretariat as soon as they enter a grid cell to fish for *Dissostichus* spp., using the entry notification template at Annex V. Outside Secretariat business hours, an advance notification process will apply. The Secretariat shall inform the vessel as soon as possible⁴ of the number of lines that have been set in that grid cell during that season and whether it is currently being fished by another vessel, using the template at Annex VI. Where the Secretariat receives notifications from multiple fishing vessels for a given grid cell, the Secretariat will respond to the notifications in the order that they were received.*

*4. In accordance with any arrangements agreed ahead of each fishing season between the CCPs with fishing vessels fishing for *Dissostichus* spp. in Williams Ridge and the Chair of the MoP in consultation with the Secretariat. The arrangements could include procedures and expected time frames for the Secretariat's response to prevent unreasonable operational disruption to fishing outside Secretariat business hours. Once agreed, the Secretariat should circulate the arrangements to all CCPs before the beginning of the season.*

Purpose

The purpose of this note is to lay down the arrangements that will apply to the 2022/23 toothfish fishing season in Williams Ridge, as agreed between Australia and the European Union and the Chairperson of the MoP, in consultation with the Secretariat.

Secretariat business hours

The 2022/23 fishing season on Williams Ridge shall commence on 1st December at 00:00 UTC (= 4:00 am Réunion time (UTC+4)).

During the period from 30 November 2022 until the close of the 2022/23 toothfish fishing season, the Secretariat business hours shall be from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm on weekdays¹. During business hours, the Secretariat can be reached via email (secretariat@siofa.org) or by phone (+ 262 692 376 395).

Outside of business hours and when vessels are in the area, the Secretariat shall implement an 'on-call' duty system on weekdays between 4:00 pm and 9:00 pm, and on weekends and public holidays from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm. 'On-call' means that the Secretariat must be able to receive and treat notification requests via email and will then update the colour-coded grid cells image on the SIOFA website within 10 hours of

¹ All times mentioned in this note are Réunion time (UTC+4).

notification. During 'on-call' hours, the Secretariat can be contacted by email (secretariat@siofa.org) or by phone, as follows for each month starting on 1st December 2022:

- from the 1st to 10th December included: Thierry Clot: + 262 693 444 495
- from the 11th to 21st December included: Pierre Peries: + 262 692 376 395
- from the 22nd to 31st December included: Marco Milardi: + 262 693 40 40 10

During business hours and on-call hours, vessels may contact the Secretariat by phone to follow-up and draw attention to requests submitted by email. The Secretariat shall ensure that all notifications and their treatment are properly documented.

If the Secretariat so requests, vessels shall inform it of their fishing intentions. This will enable the Secretariat to know when vessels will be in the area and to plan accordingly.

Time-frame for response

During Secretariat business hours and 'on-call' hours (that is, from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm all days), vessels will provide entry notifications as soon as they enter a cell to fish as per the CMM and the Secretariat shall respond to vessel entry notifications within 1 hour of their receipt by the Secretariat.²

Outside of Secretariat business hours and 'on-call' hours (that is, from 09:00 pm to 07:00 am all days), an advance notification process shall apply: vessels wishing to fish in those hours must provide entry notifications no more than 12 hours in advance. The Secretariat shall respond to vessel entry notifications within 1 hour. Only 1 advance notification for 1 grid cell shall be accepted per vessel per calendar day.

As advance notifications may not be made more than 12 hours in advance, any vessel wishing to start fishing before the Secretariat's working hours on 1 December 2022, may only send an advance notification on 30 November 2021 between 4:00 pm (UTC+4) and 9:00 pm (UTC+4). Notifications received before 4:00 pm (UTC+4) on 30 November 2022 shall not be taken into account. Notifications shall relate only to one grid cell and notifications to also fish other grid cells shall be disregarded by the Secretariat.

SIOFA website updates

The colour-coded grid cells image on the SIOFA website (<https://apsoi.org/management/demersal-stocks>) shall be updated as the fishing season progresses, informing vessels of the status of grid cells in accordance with paragraphs 38-40 of the CMM (the number of lines that have been set in the cell during the season and whether the cell is currently being fished by another vessel).

The Secretariat shall use the following coding: green (no lines), amber (1 line) and red (2 lines) and indicate current fishing by 'vessel fishing'. At the commencement of the 2022/23 fishing season, all grid cells in the image on the SIOFA website shall be green, indicating the status of the toothfish fishery is 'open' for fishing.

The SIOFA website should show two tables, one for the past 2021/22 season for information, and a second for the 2022/23 season. the grid cells image on the website is designed to be a useful resource to assist with operational planning, but that it is guidance only; it is not determinative and does not replace the confirmation from the Secretariat required under the CMM before a vessel may commence fishing in a cell.

² For the avoidance of doubt, to start the season, a vessel may provide an entry notification during business hours or 'on call' hours on the 30th November, to fish that cell on the 1st December.