



Ref.: 2025-11-28-1/SIOFA-ES-CMOP

La Reunion, Friday 28th November 2025

SIOFA CIRCULAR n° 2025-26

SUBJECT: Implementation on Williams Ridge fishery in the 2025-2026 fishing season

Dear Heads of Delegation,

For your information in accordance with paragraph 35 of CMM 15 (2025), an arrangement has been done between the CCPs with fishing vessels fishing for *Dissostichus* spp; in Williams Ridge and the Chair of the MOP in consultation with the Secretariat.

Please find below the Implementation of the Williams Ridge fishery in the 2025-2026 fishing seasons.

Feel free to contact the Secretariat if you need any clarification.

Sincerely yours

Mrs Anaïd PANOSSIAN

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anaïd PANOSSIAN', is written over a thin, slightly curved horizontal line.

Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties



Implementation of the Williams Ridge fishery in the 2025-2026 fishing season

Introduction

The 12th Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to SIOFA adopted CMM 15 (2025) (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, based on a grid cell system. CMM 15 (2025) replaces previous versions of the CMM adopted by the Meeting of the Parties in 2024 CMM 15 (2024), 2023 CMM 15(2023), 2021 (CMM 2021/15) and 2019 (CMM 2019/15).

Paragraph 35, footnote 4 and 5 of CMM 15(2025) define the process for entry notifications for vessels intending to fish in any grid cell, as follows:

"35. CCPs shall ensure that their fishing vessel inform the Secretariat at least 72hrs prior to entering the Williams Ridge area with information on the intended grid cells the vessel intends to fish using the entry notification at Annex V. The Secretariat will inform the vessel within 60 hours of the notification whether the nominated grid cells have already been fished."

"4. For the avoidance of doubt, a vessel that ceases hauling a line in a grid cell in order to mitigate depredation in accordance with paragraphs 46 and 47 is still fishing in that grid cell until it hauls the line.

5. 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 timeframes 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 2025/26 toothfish fishing season in Williams Ridge, as agreed among Australia and the European Union and the Chairperson of the MOP, in consultation with the Secretariat.

Secretariat business hours

The 2025-2026 fishing season on Williams Ridge shall commence on 1st December 2025 at 00:00 UTC (4:00 am Réunion time (UTC+4)).

During the period from 30 November 2025 until the close of the 2025-2026 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.

Outside office hours and where two or more fishing vessels are in the area, the secretariat operates an on-call system on weekdays between 16:00 and 21:00, and on weekends and public holidays from 7:00 to 21:00. On-call means that the secretariat must be able to receive and process notification requests by e-mail and update the image of the colour-coded grid cells on the SIOFA website within 10 hours of the notification. During on-call hours, the following member of the Secretariat can be contacted by e-mail (secretariat@siofa.org) or by telephone, according to the on-call schedule below from 1 December 2025:

- From 30 November to 4 December inclusive: Mr Pierre PERIES (+262 692 37 63 95)
- from 5 to 11 December inclusive: Mr Pierre PERIES (+262 692 37 63 95)
- from 12 to 18 December: Mr Thierry CLOT (+ 262 693 44 44 95)
- from 19 to 25 December: Mr Thierry CLOT (+ 262 693 44 44 95)
- from 26 December to 1st January: Dr Marco MILARDI (+262 693 40 40 10)
- from 9 January to 15 January: Mr Johnny LOUYS (+262 693 44 35 35)
- from 16 to 22 January: Dr Marco MILARDI (+262 693 40 40 10)
- from 23 to 30th January 2025. Mr Johnny LOUYS (+262 693 44 35 35)

The Executive Secretary will inform the CCPs concerned and the captains of any change in this on-call schedule. In case of any issue when contacting one of these numbers, please contact by phone or by txt to the WhatsApp Executive Secretary phone number (+ 262 693 44 44 95) which is operational 24 hours a day. The Executive Secretary will provide advance notification in the event this number is temporarily unavailable (i.e. when the Executive Secretary is travelling), in which case, the alternative contact is Pierre Peries on + 262 692 37 63 95).

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.

For courtesy vessels may inform the Secretariat of their fishing intentions. This will enable the Secretariat to know when vessels are expected to be in the area and to plan accordingly.

Timeframe for response

According with the paragraph 35 above, fishing vessels inform the Secretariat at least 72 hrs prior to entering the Williams Ridge area with information on the intended grid cells the vessel intends to fish using the entry notification at Annex V. The Secretariat will inform the vessel within 60 hours of the notification whether the nominated grid cells have already been fished."

According with the paragraph 37 of the CMM 15 (2025) where two or more fishing vessels notify that they are entering Williams Ridge, the daily reporting requirements in para 38 and 39 apply.

When two or more vessels are in Williams Ridge, 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 CMM 15(2025) and the Secretariat shall respond to vessel entry notifications as soon as possible. ¹

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 advance notifications as soon as possible. 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 2025, may only send an advance notification on 30 November 2025 between 4:00 pm (UTC+4) and 9:00 pm (UTC+4). Notifications received before 4:00 pm (UTC+4) on 30 November 2025 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://siofa.org/management/demersal-stocks>) shall be updated as the fishing season progresses, informing vessels of the status of grid cells in accordance with paragraphs 34-43 of CMM 15(2025) (i.e., 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 2025/26 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 2024/25 season for information, and a second for the 2025/26 season. A note shall be added to the webpage to indicate that the grid cells image 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.

Daily Report

An Excel template has been prepared to improve the processing of daily notifications of longlines setting in Williams Ridge areas, which refer to CMM 15(2025) para 20 and 34. Please try to use the attached XLS template for the next Toothfish fishing season (from 1 Dec 2025).

¹ 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.

