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Draft Plan on the research cruise of China for 2024-2025 survey year

China

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Abstract	<p>As a contracting party to SIOFA, China intends to engage in the scientific research on the SIOFA managed species for better understanding associated ecosystem and marine environment. This paper introduced the basic information for the research cruise to be carried out in 2024-2025 survey year. Based on the 2023 high seas resource survey, China will continue to conduct scientific surveys in the SIOFA area from October 2024 to March 2025 in the area of 9°S-10°N and 59°E-68°E.</p> <p>The purpose of the survey is to obtain preliminary scientific data on the species composition and quantity distribution of swimming organisms, plankton, fish eggs, and juvenile fish; grasp the physical marine environmental feature; and analyse the components of the pelagic marine ecosystems.</p>

¹ Restricted documents may contain confidential information. Please do not distribute restricted documents in any form without the explicit permission of the SIOFA Secretariat and the data owner(s)/provider(s).

² Documents available only to members invited to closed sessions.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the MoP:

- **understand** the purpose and plan of China's fisheries independent survey in the high seas of the SIOFA area, which is to collect scientific data for the research of SIOFA species and its environment and marine ecosystems.
- **set** it as a precedent for other scientific research in the future in the Competence Area

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Introduction

According to the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement states, the functions of the SC shall be to encourage and promote cooperation in scientific research in order to improve knowledge of the state of the fishery resources [ARTICLE 7 - SUBSIDIARY BODIES 1 (a) (ii)].

As a contracting party to SIOFA, China is consistently committed to sustainable use of fishery resources on the high seas and conservation of associated ecosystem. Fishery independent survey is the key activity currently being undertaken by China in the SIOFA area.

The purposes of the survey are to:

- obtain a preliminary understanding of the species composition and quantity distribution of swimming organisms, plankton, fish eggs, and juvenile fish
- gain the physical marine environmental characteristics
- analyse the composition of the pelagic marine ecosystems
- analyse the environmental drivers and resource status of the biomass fluctuations of major fisheries species

Relevant background information

China has for the first time conducted a scientific research cruise in SIOFA area in the late of 2023, and also reported the survey in its national report. It is noted that there was currently no conservation and management measure in place to guide fishery independent research survey in SIOFA. In the last SC meeting, a recommendation for this matter was raised, as follows:

105. The SC recommended that the MoP develop a specific “research cruise CMM” that is separate from the process that is proposed for exploratory fisheries. This would ensure that these activities are appropriately sanctioned prior to the activity being undertaken and subsequently reported. This process should ensure that:

- a. all research cruises require SIOFA authorisation.
- b. a research cruise plan is submitted to the SIOFA SC for approval prior to conducting the cruise.

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Considering there is still no CMM on scientific research, China considered to submit this research survey plan to MoP for discussion.

Schedule to survey

China informs the MoP about the plan of scientific survey to undertake following subject:

(1) The survey content mainly includes:

- 1) research on pelagic fishery resources;
- 2) biological environment research;
- 3) non biological environmental research;
- 4) study on the impact of pollutants on marine life.

(2) The planned survey period is from October 2024 to March 2025, with approximately 100 survey stations arranged at equal intervals of $1 \times 1^\circ$. Survey area locates in the sea areas of 9°S - 10°N and 59°E - 68°E in the SIOFA Convention area (SIOFA area 8).

(3) The vessels are to be decided. It is expected to have a total capacity of 60 people.

(4) Each vessel is intended to engaged in three fishings: pelagic trawling, squid jigging, and longlining.

Note on Appendix A

The draft work plan has been undergone an expert consultation and authorised by the fishery authority of China.

The research cruise of China
Draft work plan
(2024-2025 survey year)

Lead Country

China will complete this research cruise.

Research Vessel (preliminary)

The vessels planned for research cruise have not been determined yet. The following information and parameters are for the 2023-2024 survey vessels:

Last year, Lanhai 101 and Lanhai 201 conducted the research (Figure 1). These two vessel parameters are the same. The total length of the vessel is 84.50 meters, with a total tonnage of 2883 tons, a range of 10000 nautical miles, self-sustaining capacity of 60 days, wind resistance of 12 levels, economic speed of 12 knots, maximum speed of 15 knots, and a total capacity of 60 people (27 crew members and 33 scientific researchers). The main engine power is 2720 kilowatts. Each vessel is able to engaged in three types of fishings: pelagic trawl, squid jigging fishing, and longline fishing.



Figure 1 Scientific survey vessel "Lanhai 101"

Both vessels are scientific research vessels, Lanhai 101, belonging to Yellow China Sea Fisheries Research Institute and Lanhai 201 to East China Sea Fisheries Research Institute respectively. These two institutes are both subordinates to Chinese Academy of Fishery Science.

Survey Period

October 2024 to March 2025 (preliminary)

Survey Location

Survey locations will be in the areas of 9°S-10°N and 59°E-68°E in the SIOFA Convention area (SIOFA Area 8).

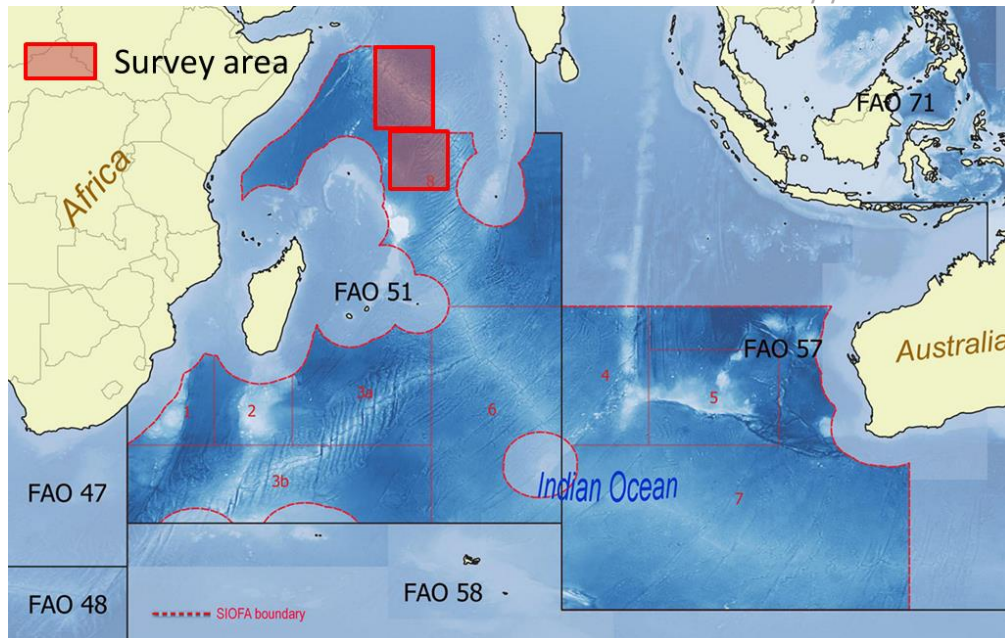


Figure 2 Sketch map (red square frame) for the survey area in the SIOFA Area 8

Other Issue

In the 2024 Annual National Report of China, it was mentioned that the China has carried out fisheries research activities for the SIOFA area using these two scientific research vessels in 2023, and reported on the research at the SC9 meeting. The main survey data in 2023 has been submitted to the secretariat at the end of May 2024. The relevant survey results are scheduled to be reported in the next year's China national report. And a comprehensive scientific report about this survey will be submitted to SC as a working paper in the next year.