



SIOFA | APSOI

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

Ref.: 2021-11-02-1/SIOFA- ES

La Reunion, Tuesday 2nd November 2021

SIOFA CIRCULAR n° 2021/35

SUBJECT: Implementation of the Williams Ridge fishery in the 2021/22 fishing season

Dear Heads of Delegation and Official Contacts,
Dear Colleagues,

In accordance with the CMM 2021-15 para 38 - footnote 4, please find below the arrangements for the 2021/2022 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.

Sincerely yours,

Thierry Clot

SIOFA
Executive Secretary



Implementation of the Williams Ridge fishery in the 2021/22 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 2021/22 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

During the period from 30 November 2021 until the close of the 2021/22 toothfish fishing season, the Secretariat business hours shall be from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm on weekdays¹.

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 notification.

During business hours and on-call hours, vessels may contact the Secretariat by phone to follow-up to 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.

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

Timeframe for response

During Secretariat business hours and 'on-call' hours (that is, every day 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.² The Secretariat staff are to divide those hours between them when the vessels are in the area.

Outside of Secretariat business hours and 'on-call' hours (that is, from 9:00 pm to 7:00 am all days), an advance notification process shall apply: vessels wishing to fish in those hours must provide entry notifications not 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.

SIOFA website updates

The colour-coded grid cells image on the SIOFA website 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 indicating current fishing by 'vessel fishing'.

The SIOFA website should show two tables, one for the past 2020/21 season for information, and a second for the 2021/22 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.

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.