

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL STOCK ASSESSMENT REVIEW WORKSHOP, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, MONDAY 1 TO FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER 2025

Over Monday 1 to Friday 5 December, the customary annual International Stock Assessment Workshop will be taking place at UCT (Mathematics Building, Room M212).

Three international scientists have confirmed acceptance to attend as members of the Review Panel: Jim Ianelli, Andre Punt and Michael Sissenwine.

TOPICS

The primary topics to be covered for various South African marine resources are as follows:

- 1) Sardine and anchovy – Review of progress on developing a new management procedure for setting catch limits in the pelagic fishery for sardine and anchovy
- 2) Consideration of appropriate harvest levels for lower trophic level species (such as sardine and anchovy) that take account of the need of dependent predators (such as seabirds) and the wider ecosystem
- 3) The value of/need for vessel-based surveys for pelagic and demersal resources in circumstances where their future is threatened by Government funding limitations
- 4) Squid – Review of progress on the development of a revised population model to assess this resource, based in particular, on the information provided by monthly commercial catch size structure data.

Furthermore, from 2 pm to 4-30 pm on the afternoon of Wednesday 3 December, there will be a Discussion session on **Improving scientific communication and media-reporting on marine resource management issues**. This will commence with about seven short presentations over the first hour, followed by general discussion and then a panel putting forward specific proposals for improvement. It is planned that the presenters and panel members will be drawn from scientists, lawyers, ENGOs, politicians and environmental reporters.

SCHEDULE

Discussion will commence at 9-30 am on Monday 1 December, and thereafter take place from 9 am to 5-30 pm each day, with two 30-minute breaks for tea at 10-30 am and at 3-30 pm, and a 90-minute lunch break at 12-30 pm – while the Thursday afternoon will be reserved for the Panel to prepare their report. A detailed schedule indicating which topics will be discussed at what times will be circulated in due course.

For the most part, discussions will be at a technical level, however on the final day (Friday 5th at **3-30 pm** in room M304 of the UCT Mathematics Building, the **International Review Panel will provide a summary of their recommendations at a level appropriate for a lay audience, and will be available to respond to questions** from the attending audience.

DOCUMENTATION AND ATTENDANCE

Likely commencing Friday 20 November (possibly before), documents for background and for discussion at the workshop will be posted on the following website for prior download, as they become available: <http://www.maram.uct.ac.za/maram/workshops/2025>.

Attendees are asked to bring their own copies of documents (as found on the website above) to the meeting as they will not be made available in other forms. However, for technical reasons, there may be some documents which cannot be made available in this way; if so, these will be emailed to those who advise attendance as requested below.

Because of the need to maintain a workshop type interaction, Chairs will limit discussion during each session primarily to panel members and selected key contributors who will sit at a central table. However, others are welcome to attend, with members of relevant DFFE scientific working groups especially encouraged to do so. Their interventions will be entertained in the discussions to the extent that time permits.

Inter alia for catering purposes, we need to know likely attendance. **Could those wishing to attend part or all of the event please send an email to Anthea Stain anthea.stain@uct.ac.za copied to doug.butterworth@uct.ac.za**, indicating the topics for which you wish to attend (this is **not** necessary for those who wish to attend the final Friday lay summary session only).

ANNOUNCEMENT

Discussion Session on Improving Scientific Communication and Media-reporting on Marine Resource Management Issues

When: Wednesday 3 December, 2-00 to 4-30 pm

Where: Lecture Theatre 2, John Day (Zoology) Building, University Avenue North, Upper Campus, University of Cape Town

The Departments of Biological Sciences and of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics at UCT are jointly hosting this discussion session. Though initially arising from concerns amongst scientists about the reporting of the local penguin-fisheries debate and associated litigation earlier this year, the issues involved arise frequently in marine resource management in various contexts locally and worldwide¹, and the event intends that wider focus. There are short-comings in communication from both sides – scientists and media – and the purpose of this discussion session is to seek to improve this situation locally.

The format of the event is set as follows:

- The first hour will comprise short presentations from about seven speakers on aspects of the issue
- Following a brief break, the floor will be opened to the audience for comments and questions to the speakers
- A panel will then be asked to put forward specific suggestions for improving the situation.

Both the presenters and the panel are planned to be drawn from amongst marine scientists, lawyers, ENGOs, politicians and environment reporters.

The event has been timed to coincide with the presence in Cape Town that week of some world-leading scientists for a local fisheries assessment review workshop, so that they can contribute to this event and assist in bringing an international perspective. The proceedings will be chaired by Associate Professor Colin Attwood, Head of the UCT Department of Biological sciences.

The Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Dion George. has indicated that he sees this discussion session, aimed at improving scientific communication and media-reporting on marine management issues, as an important initiative. He is, however, unfortunately unable to participate in the session because of a clashing commitment in Europe.

For further information contact:

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Colin Attwood, Dept Biological Sciences, UCT: colin.attwood@uct.ac.za

¹ Note for example Cochrane et al. (2024): Errors and bias in marine conservation and fisheries literature: their impact on policies and perceptions. *Marine Policy* 168 (2024) 106329, as well as some scientists' reservations about certain aspects of the recent David Attenborough-narrated film *Ocean*.

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ROOM M212, MATHEMATICS BUILDING, UCT - SCHEDULE

Discussion will take place from 9 am to 5-30 pm each day, with 30 minutes breaks for tea at 10-30 am and 3-30 pm, and 90 minutes for lunch at 12-30 pm, unless otherwise indicated below.

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| Monday 1: | 09-00 | Sardine and Anchovy Management Procedures |
| | 14-00 | Harvest levels for sardine and anchovy taking account the need of dependent predators (EBFM) |
| Tuesday 2: | 09-00 | Sardine and Anchovy Management Procedures |
| | 14-00 | Harvest levels for sardine and anchovy taking account the need of dependent predators |
| Wednesday 3: | 9-00 | The need for vessel-based surveys for pelagic and demersal resources |
| | 14-00 | Discussion session on <i>Improving scientific communication and media-reporting on marine resource management issues</i> (LT2 John Day Building) |
| Thursday 4: | 9-00 | Development of a new assessment approach for squid |
| | 14-00 | Reserved for report preparation by Panel |
| Friday 5: | 9-30 | Possible final discussions |
| | 14-00 | Review of Panel Recommendations |
| | 15-30 | Review Panel layperson summary/questions (Maths Room M304) |

DOCUMENTATION AND ATTENDANCE

Documents for background (BG) and for discussion (P) at the event have already been and for the next few days will continue to be posted on the workshop website: <https://science.uct.ac.za/maram/2025-workshop>. Attendees should download beforehand, as hard copies will NOT be provided at the event.

Could those (thanks to those who have already) **wishing to attend part or all of the event please send an email to Anthea Stain** (anthea.stain@uct.ac.za) indicating the topics for which they wish to attend (this is not necessary for attendance at the final Friday lay summary session). Note that, for various reasons (e.g., copyright), some documents cannot be placed on the workshop website; these will be emailed to (only) those advising their intent to attend for the topic concerned. Kindly provide such information to Anthea **no later than 6 pm on Wed 26 Nov**.

It is probable that virtual (by Teams) attendance may be possible for all events including the final layperson summary. More details in that regard will be circulated soon (likely on Thur 27 Nov) if such arrangements prove to be successful.

Note that, excepting as regards the possibility of virtual attendance, no further general circulars about the event will be widely distributed in this manner. **Further information, as appropriate, will be emailed ONLY to those who have advised their intent to participate.**

Those who wish to attend only the layperson summary session at 14-00 on the afternoon of Friday 5 December need not email Anthea Stain to so advise, unless they wish also to be included in further circulation.

Note regarding the Discussion session on the afternoon of Wednesday 3 – Minister's video statement

The recently appointed Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Minister Willem Aucamp, had hoped to attend this Discussion session. However, he now has to travel on that day with President Ramaphosa for a meeting in Mozambique. In the circumstances, he will kindly be providing a video statement on the discussion topic and future national fisheries research issues for presentation during this session.