



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Tropical Tuna and Billfish Fisheries Management Advisory Committee TTMAC 28

HYBRID – Face to Face/Teleconference

Meeting Minutes

11 October 2022

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1. Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair opened the 28th meeting of the Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TTMAC), held in person at the Holiday Inn Express Sydney Airport and as a teleconference via Microsoft Teams for those who could not attend in person (Brian Jeffriess AM, Neil Hughes).
2. Mr Pavo Walker and Mr Gary Heilmann arrived at the meeting during Agenda Item 1.3 Declaration of Interests.
3. Mr David Ellis arrived during agenda Item 2.1 AFMA Update at 9.38am.
4. Mr Robert Wood joined the meeting as an observer for Agenda Item 3.1 onwards.
5. The Chair noted the current environment of air travel and requested for future MAC meetings with a 9am start, participants stay overnight to ensure attendance for a start time.
6. Apologies were received from Sara Murphy, AFMA employee and Executive Officer.

Table 1 Members, invited participants and observers in attendance at TTMAC 28

Members	
Ms Catherine Sayer	Chair
Ms Selina Stoute	AFMA Member
Mr David Ellis	Industry Member
Mr Pavo Walker	Industry Member
Mr Gary Heilmann	Industry Member
Mr Terry Romaro OAM	Industry Member
Mr Grahame A Williams OAM	Recreational/Charter Fishing Member
Dr Ashley Williams	Research Member
Invited Participants	
Mr Ian Bladin	Recreational/Charter Fishing
Mr Brian Jeffriess AM	Australian SBT Industry Association
Mr Chad Lunow	Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Observers	
Ms Kate Martin	Manager, AFMA Tropical Tuna Fisheries
Mr Neil Hughes	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Mr Lachlan Farquhar	AFMA – Tuna and International Team
Mr Max Bayly	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Mr Robert Wood	AFMA – Tuna and International Team
A/g Executive Officer	
Mr Nathan Jackson	AFMA – Tuna and International Team

1.2 Adoption of agenda

7. TTMAC adopted the final agenda for the 28th meeting of Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TTMAC).

1.3 Declaration of interests

8. The Chair stated that as outlined in the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* and Fisheries Management Paper 1, all members, and invited participants of TTMAC must declare any interests in tropical tuna fisheries as they relate to specific agenda items at the commencement of the meeting (**Table 2**). TTMAC noted that if a member or invited participant discloses an interest in an agenda item, the person must absent themselves from the meeting while TTMAC makes a decision as to whether they can participate in the discussion and in the making of recommendations or remain absent from the meeting for the agenda item. The attendees declared their conflict of interests as outlined in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Declared interests of members, invited participants and invited observers at TTMAC 28

Name	Declared interests	Role
Members		
Ms Catherine Sayer	Chair TTMAC, CEO of Food South Australia. No pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries. Aquaculture Tenure Allocation Board member, Glenelg Football Club Board member. Chair of the Seafood Innovation Steering Committee for the NSW DPI and Deputy Chair of Seafood Industry Australia (SIA) Board. Chair of KIN Premium Australian Seafood, Board member of Camp Quality	Chair
Ms Selina Stoute	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. Is the Senior Manager of the Tuna and International section. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	AFMA member
Mr Pavo Walker	Owner of several ETBF boat SFRs, and ETBF quota SFRs for all five species. Holds a Coral Sea permit and minor line permit.	Industry member
Mr Terry Romaro, OAM	Director of a company that owns Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) boat statutory fishing rights (SFRs), minor line SFRs, ETBF longline SFRs, Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) boat SFRs, WTBF longline SFRs, Western Skipjack Tuna Fishery (WSTF) purse seine permit, Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF) purse seine, mid-water trawl SFRs, and SPF quota SFRs. Director of Bite Fisheries PTY. Industry member on Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) MAC and industry representative at the Commission for the Conservation of SBT (CCSBT). Invited participant for SquidRAG and squid concession holder. Alternate on the Board of Tuna Australia. Member of the Southern and Western Marine Park Advisory Committee. Currently has outstanding claim with Federal Government regarding structural adjustment in relation to marine park and recent IOTC decision on yellowfin tuna.	Industry Member
Dr Ashley Williams	Employee of CSIRO undertakes research related to Tropical Tuna Fisheries. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	Scientific member

Name	Declared interests	Role
Mr Grahame A Williams OAM	Past President of the Game Fishing Association of Australia, Treasurer and Records Officer of the NSW Game Fishing Association and Game Fishing Association Australia Executive Officer. No pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries. Member of the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust. NSW Minister for Fisheries Special Advisory Council – RF NSW.	Recreational/charter fishing member
<i>Conservation member</i>	<i>Yet to be filled, no applications received. AFMA is convening a new application process, to be commenced soon.</i>	<i>Vacant</i>
Mr Gary Heilmann	Director of companies that hold a fish receiver permits in ETBF. Member of TTRAG.	Industry member
Mr David Ellis	CEO of Tuna Australia (industry association).	Industry member
Executive Officer		
Mr Nathan Jackson	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. Is a graduate in the Tuna and International section. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	A/g Executive officer
Invited participants		
Mr Brian Jeffriess AM	CEO of Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association.	Industry invited participant
Mr Ian Bladin	President of the Game Fishing Association of Australia, Director Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation, former Queensland charter boat owner.	Recreational/charter fishing invited participant
Mr Chad Lunow	Employee of Queensland Government, Fisheries Manager, Management and Reform	State Government Invited Participant
Observers		
Ms Kate Martin	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. Is the Manager of the tropical tuna fisheries. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	AFMA invited participant
Mr Neil Hughes	Employee of Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment	Department invited participant
Mr Lachlan Farquhar	Employee of AFMA which includes a salary, no pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries.	Executive officer TTRAG
Mr Max Bayly	Employee of Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, which includes a salary, has no pecuniary interest in Australian tropical tuna fisheries.	Department Observer
Mr Robert Wood	Employee of AFMA which includes a salary, no pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries.	AFMA Observer

9. The following members and invited participants declared interests under Agenda Items 3.1 to 3.3:
- i. Mr Terry Romaro OAM – as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Romaro left the meeting. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Romaro should be allowed to return for all discussions but not for recommendations made under Agenda Item 3.2.
 - ii. Mr Pavo Walker* – as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Walker was not in the meeting. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Walker should be allowed to return for all discussions and recommendations made under Agenda Item 3.
 - iii. Mr Gary Heilmann* – as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Heilmann was not in the meeting. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Heilmann should be allowed to return for all discussions and recommendations made under Agenda Item 3.
 - iv. Mr David Ellis* - as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Ellis was not in the meeting. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Ellis should be allowed to return for all discussions and recommendations made under Agenda Item 3.

**The MAC declared these interests on behalf of members who confirmed on arrival.*

1.4 Actions arising from previous meetings

10. The MAC noted the status of actions arising from previous meetings as detailed in **Table 3**.

Table 3 Declared interests of members, invited participants and invited observers at TTMAC 28

Item	Meeting raised	Action	Responsibility	Status
1	TTMAC 25	<p>(a)TTMAC members to provide AFMA with feedback on what information would be useful to include in the FMS annual report</p> <p>(b)An agenda item for discussion on the FMS annual report to be added to the next TTMAC meeting in October 2022.</p>	AFMA	<p>In progress.</p> <p>AFMA has not progressed this action due to competing priorities and noting that AFMA continues to report on performance in accordance with existing reporting obligations (as outlined in Table 6 of the FMS). The FMS annual report is designed to support these reporting requirements. Fisheries Management Strategy.</p> <p>Relevantly, AFMA is undertaking a review of <i>Fishery Management Paper Number 14 – AFMA’s Approach to Ecological Risk Management and its supporting Guide to AFMA’s Ecological Risk Management Framework</i>. The policy and guide have been updated through AFMA’s Ecological Risk Management Steering Group (ERMSG) to address criticism of performance, improve efficiency and be up to date with latest approaches in the implementation of risk management.</p> <p>The Commission approved release of a draft version of the policy and guidelines for consultation at its September 2022 meeting.</p> <p>The updated policy will likely guide the nature and extent of future reporting requirements.</p>
2	TTMAC 26	Circulate the CSIRO paper on Japanese catches after meeting.	AFMA	<p>Complete. Papers provided to TTMAC members and invited participants out of session 23 September 2022.</p>

Item	Meeting raised	Action	Responsibility	Status
3	TTMAC 26	TTMAC to ask TTRAG to undertake analysis to determine if the low catch to TACC constitutes exceptional circumstances in some way. TTMAC to also ask TTRAG to investigate the opportunity to collect and integrate additional data in to the CPUE standardisation around bait types and sizes, and to undertake discussions with industry if there are other data that could be useful but aren't included.	AFMA	Complete. Modified Broadbill Swordfish HS accepted by TTRAG and TTMAC. Presentation recapping developments will be presented under agenda item 3.1
4	TTMAC 26	Tuna Australia to provide a paper to the next meeting of the MAC regarding the mechanisms to establish a pulse fishing event working group	Tuna Australia	Ongoing. To be discussed under Agenda item 3.3.
5	TTMAC 27	AFMA will review EM discussion documents for reference to the amortisation of capital costs EM equipment.	AFMA	Ongoing. Not yet actioned.
6	TTMAC 27	AFMA to forward information explaining costings in the VMS draft budget to the MAC out of session.	AFMA	Complete. Costings provided to TTMAC members and invited participants out of session 23 September 2022.
7	TTMAC 27	AFMA will seek further information from DAWE regarding how nomination and delisting of a key threatening process occurs and provide this to the MAC out of session	AFMA	Complete. Information provided to TTMAC members and invited participants out of session 23 September 2022.

1.5 Intersessional correspondence between TTMAC 27 and TTMAC 28

11. TTMAC noted correspondence provided by AFMA to members out of session since TTMAC 27 (Table 4).

Table 4. Out of Session Correspondence between TTMAC 27 and TTMAC 28.

Date	Communication Type	Item
15/6/2022	Email to TTMAC	Draft minutes of TTMAC 27 for comment.
21/07/22	Email to TTMAC	Finalised minutes sent to TTMAC and notification of changes to Remuneration Tribunal rates.
27/07/2022	Email to TTMAC	OOS TTMAC consultation: Review of Research related documents – Annual Research Statement and draft ATBF 5-year Research Plan.
28/07/2022	Email to TTMAC	OOS TTMAC consultation: additional document related to research documents forwarded to TTMAC – Research Scope form – Scientific Advice for management of Tropical Tuna and Billfish Fisheries.
1/08/2022	Email to TTMAC	Notification to TTMAC - welcome of new Senior Manager, Tuna and International Fisheries, Selina Stoute for 12 months.
04/08/2022	Email to TTMAC	Email from TTMAC EO proposing dates for TTMAC 28.
12/08/2022	Email to TTMAC	OOS TTMAC consultation: endorsement of TTRAG's Modified Broadbill Swordfish HS and CSIRO Work plan.
15/08/2022	Email to TTMAC	Notification to TTMAC – Finalisation and forwarding to the AFMA Research Secretary of two research documents - ATBF Annual Research statement 2022 and Research Priority Scope: Scientific advice for management of Tropical Tuna and Billfish Fisheries.
23/09/2022	Email to TTMAC	Email from TTMAC EO: notification of meeting venue, draft agenda and action items attached.
23/09/2022	Email to TTMAC	Email from TTMAC EO: Outstanding actions arising update. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Circulated the CSIRO paper on Japanese catches. ii. AFMA forwarded information explaining costings in the VMS draft budget to the MAC. iii. AFMA provided further information from DAWE regarding how nomination and delisting of a key threatening process occurs.

2. Member updates

2.1 AFMA Management Report

12. The MAC noted the written AFMA update provided in the agenda papers noting that on 17 August 2022, a delegate of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water approved the ETBF as a WTO until 19 August 2025, subject to 10 conditions under Part 13A (Table 1) and 2 conditions under Part 13 (Table 2) of the EPBC Act. The MAC also noted a brief update on catches in the ETBF and WTBF as at 23 September 2022.

13. The MAC noted further verbal updates from the AFMA member on the following:
- a) The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the Department) has released an updated AFMA application for the reassessment of the WTBF as an approved Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO). The updated application corrects inadvertent errors in the bycatch data and ERA information previously supplied. The Department has advised AFMA that due to the additional public consultation process required, a decision on the WTO reassessment may occur several weeks following the lapse of the current WTO approval (11 November 2022). MAC members raised significant concern and disappointment that the WTBF fishery may be left without an export approval given the low risks associated with the fishery. The MAC agreed to notify the AFMA Commission of industry concerns regarding the risk and potential consequence to the fishery. The AFMA member advised that AFMA is working with the Department to ensure all efforts are made to minimise the risk of the WTBF being left without approval to export fish caught in the fishery. The MAC noted this and requested to be advised on any progress.
14. AFMA, CSIRO and industry have formed a Working Group to provide advice on revisions to the Bycatch rates in fisheries largely driven by variation in individual vessel behaviour nature article;
15. The Threat Abatement Plan is due for review in 2023.
16. An Invited Participant sought information from AFMA on the proposed CITES Appendix 2 listing of Blue Sharks. AFMA agreed to provide an update to the MAC out-of-session.

ACTION ITEM 1: AFMA to provide TTMAC an update on the proposed CITES Appendix 2 listing of Blue sharks out of session.

ACTION ITEM 2: AFMA to notify the AFMA Commission of industry concerns regarding the WTBF WTO risk and potential consequence to the fishery.

2.2 International Meetings Update

17. The MAC noted a verbal report on relevant international meetings from Neil Hughes of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. In relation to the IOTC, he noted:
- the ITOC interim Yellowfin Tuna measure was reviewed earlier in the year however agreement could not be reached on any revisions. As a result, the interim measure remains in force without change.
 - there is a G16 coastal states meeting in Bangkok next month for coastal state positioning for allocation and another meeting in Kenya next year.
 - the next decision-making IOTC meeting will be in May 2023.
 - the IOTC agreed to a Bigeye management procedure (harvest strategy). The management procedure will be used to derive a TAC for the stock commencing in 2024. A process for allocating the TAC among members is yet to be agreed but is to be progressed external to the management procedure.
18. Following the report on the IOTC meetings, Industry members stated the Australian Industry is being unduly disadvantaged under the interim Yellowfin Tuna measure, despite fishing sustainably for the past 20 years. Industry is disappointed that Australia is subject to an ongoing TAC reduction in line with the interim measure, while other members of the IOTC have not supported the measure. Industry further noted that the interim measure was supposed to be for 12 months only, and that Australian catches have not contributed to the decline of the stock.

19. Mr Hughes also informed the MAC that the next WCPFC meeting will occur in December 2022 in Vietnam.

2.3 Industry and Scientific members Update

20. The MAC noted a written update provided by the SBT Invited Participant (Attachment 1) and the following verbal updates from Industry members;

- The on-going issues of fuel and bait costs are continuing to increase operation costs. An Industry member noted a reduction in bait from 100% squid use historically, to approximately 25% squid use.
- The decrease in the Japanese YEN value is having a significant effect.
- Freight costs are still expensive with the ceasing of International Freight Assistance Mechanism. This is hindering Industry's ability to export; however, freight costs are slowly coming down, this highlights the need for AFMA to progress US import rule procedures to ensure Industry can utilise the export market.
- There are ongoing issues for Industry sourcing and retaining crew. The Industry member noted the fishery is experiencing labour retention issues largely relating to complicated visa application processes. Sourcing international crew and strict visa constraints is both an ETBF and WTBF issue. The MAC heard this has resulted in multiple vessels not being able to go fishing. This may need consideration in the development of the NER policy.
- Tuna Australia highlighted on-going negotiations with the Commonwealth Government regarding crew sourcing and supporting business as major priorities.
- The MAC heard the reduction in ability to export due to the high costs has resulted in a reduction in Swordfish targeting within the fishery.
- The season is starting later into the calendar year than what is usual, reducing the length of the season significantly. This due to a mixture of factors including operational factors.
- Tuna Australia updated the MAC regarding on-going Tuna Australia research projects.

21. The MAC noted a verbal update from the Recreational Member and Invited Participant.

- The Queensland heavy tackle Marlin season has begun, and bookings are strong with a lot of international interest.
- The MAC heard an update from the FRDC Shark depredation project and the continuing research being undertaken.
- The MAC heard the season in NSW finished early mainly due to poor weather conditions. The first tournament is scheduled to start in November and a written report will be provided at the next meeting.
- Fuel costs are hindering the recreational sector.

22. The MAC noted a verbal update from the Research Member.

- The MAC heard that CSIRO is leading a close-kin mark-recapture design study for yellowfin tuna in the IOTC region. The design study is the first step in preparing for the

ACTION ITEM 3: AFMA to notify the AFMA Commission highlighting the difficulty in sourcing and recruiting crew.

implementation of close kin mark-recapture for yellowfin tuna, which will reduce the uncertainty in the assessments for this stock..

3. DISCUSSION AND ADVICE

3.1 ETBF TACCs for 2023 and over/under catch

23. TTMAC was provided with the paper 'Consideration of Total Allowable Commercial Catches (TACCs) for the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF)' in the meeting papers. This document outlines the various considerations required in setting TACCs under the ETBF Management Plan.

Quota Species	Total Allowable Commercial Catch (t)
Albacore tuna	2,500
Bigeye tuna	1,056
Yellowfin tuna	2,400
Broadbill swordfish	1,047
Striped marlin	351

Table 5 - Tropical Tuna Resource Assessment Group (TTRAG) ETBF TACC Advice

24. The MAC noted that TTRAG 36 met on 13 September 2022 and made recommendations for TACCs for the five quota species to remain unchanged (Table 5) for the 2023 fishing season. TTMAC was provided with the details of these recommendations in the document 'TTRAG Advice for the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery for the 2023 Season' which formed Attachment 3.1a of the meeting papers.

25. The MAC received a presentation from the Research Member recapping the process used to arrive at the Modified Swordfish Harvest Strategy which included below.

- i. A modification to the HS was applied during the extreme under-catch period.
- ii. Under the revised HS, if the HS recommends a decrease in the RBCC, the following rules apply:
 - If current catches are further below the RBCC than the RBCC is below the current TACC, no change is recommended;
 - If current catches are not further below the RBCC than the RBCC is below the TAC, the residual difference is discounted from the TAC reduction;
 - If the RBCC is below current catches, then the full TAC decrease is applied.
 - No alterations are made in the event of a TAC increase.

The review of the HS will commence 2023 and this extreme under catch period will be considered during the review. MAC members discussed the wording surrounding exceptional circumstances and noted that exceptional circumstances no longer apply to the low catch to TACC ratio as this has been accommodated in the modified HS. MAC members recommended the *no additional* exceptional circumstance have been identified. AFMA to work of documents and wording on futures updates to the Swordfish HS.

26. TTRAG's advice is based on the application of:

- a) An indicators-based and 'whole of Government position for Bigeye tuna, Yellowfin tuna and Albacore tuna.
- b) Amendments to the Swordfish Harvest Strategy (HS) which were adopted following the triggering of exceptional circumstances under the Harvest Strategy in 2021. The amendments were assessed through Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) analysis undertaken by CSIRO. The modified harvest strategy was endorsed by TTRAG and then by TTMAC out of session and has been used for calculating the TACC for Swordfish for 2023. AFMA Management will table the final Modified Harvest Strategy together with TTMAC's TACC recommendations at the AFMA Commission meeting on 9 & 10 November 2022.
- c) A constant catch harvest strategy for Striped Marlin. The constant catch harvest strategy approach was endorsed by TTRAG in July 2022.

27. The MAC noted that TTRAG is scheduled to commence a review of the Swordfish HS in 2023.

28. The review will include the key inputs to the HS which are the catch data and the standardised Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) indices. The CPUE indices are to be reviewed and tested after 3 years of implementation, to assess if the HS is functioning in a manner consistent with the results of the MSE and Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy 2018 requirements and at the same time providing settings that meet AFMA's objectives and industry's preferences of stability.

29. During discussion, Industry Members were concerned that the CPUE standardisation fails to represent all fishing activity accurately. The research member explained how the CPUE standardisation did adjust the nominal CPUE in most years, including recent years when fishing activity has declined. The MAC noted the review process will commence in 2023.

30. An Industry Member raised concern about the nominated Swordfish catch weights for WCPFC CMM. The member noted a concern that the wrong weights have been submitted. AFMA noted that they will check the Swordfish catch data for submission to WCPFC.

31. There were no further comments from participants regarding the TACC recommendations.

TTMAC noted the recommended TACC's for ETBF quota species for the 2023 fishing season in Table 5 and recommended these TACC's for consideration by the AFMA Commission.

TTMAC supported the recommended overcatch and undercatch of 10% and a determined weight of 2,000kg for all quota species in the ETBF for the 2023 season.

ACTION ITEM 4: TTMAC recommended that the terminology used in the HS reports should be changed to no *additional* exceptional circumstances have been identified

ACTION ITEM 5: AFMA to check the Swordfish catch weights submitted for WCPFC to ensure weights are accurate.

3.2 WTBF TACCS for 2022/23 and over/under catch

32. The MAC noted the recommended TACCS for WTBF quota species for 2023 fishing season given by the TTRAG in table 6.

Table 6 - Tropical Tuna Resource Assessment Group (TTRAG) WTBF TACC Advice.

Quota species	TACC
Bigeye tuna	2,000t
Yellowfin tuna	2,000t
Broadbill swordfish	3,000t
Striped marlin	125t

33. The MAC noted both Striped marlin and Yellowfin tuna are classified by the IOTC as overfished and subject to overfishing. Bigeye tuna is classified as not overfished but subject to overfishing.
34. The MAC noted an interim rebuilding plan agreed by the IOTC for the Indian Ocean Yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence took effect from 1 January 2022 (Resolution 21/01). The interim rebuilding plan applies to all contracting parties and co-operating non-contracting parties.
35. The MAC noted under the plan, Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) such as Australia, with a reported catch of yellowfin tuna in 2014 of less than 5000 t and an average catch over the period 2015-2019 below 2000 t then that state should limit their seasonal no more than 2000 t.
36. The MAC noted that currently Bigeye tuna has no specific measures to limit catches, however, at the Commission meeting in 2022 the IOTC adopted a management procedure (MP – HS) for Bigeye tuna (Resolution 22/03). Under the resolution, the first TAC derived from the MP shall apply in 2024 and 2025.
37. The MAC heard that the Industry Members are supportive of Electronic Monitoring use across the region. Industry Members raised concerns the Australian Industry is not on a level playing field with other countries.
38. The MAC supported industry involvement in the development of Australia’s strategic negotiation position at the regional level.
39. The industry member raised concern with the resources allocated to assess the WTBF for 1 fishing vessel and suggested the advice remains the same for a period of 3 years unless significant more fishing effort occurs in the fishery.

TTMAC supported the recommended TACC’s for WTBF quota species for the 2023 fishing season in Table 6 and recommend these TACC’s for consideration by the AFMA commission.

TTMAC supported the recommendation overcatch and undercatch of 10% and a determined weight of 2,000kg for all quota species in the WTBF for the 2023 season.

3.3 Proposed Pulse Event Arrangements

40. The MAC noted Tuna Australia (TA) has requested management arrangements to be developed and included in the management arrangements booklet to enable real-time decision making to utilise 'pulse' abundance events of stocks in Australian waters in the ETBF.
41. The MAC heard this was derived from many events involving different target fish species. However, the 2015/16 season, resulted in higher than usual catch rates of Yellowfin tuna which led to many operators catching all their quota and ceasing fishing before the end of the season.
42. The MAC noted that one industry member did not consider this to be a priority for the fishery at this time. The number of boats has reduced significantly in the fishery so there is less risk of the fishery being limited by the TAC.
43. The MAC noted that AFMA will create a Working group and report back to the MAC. The working group will meet with the aim of:
 - i. examining the likely nature and extent of pulse abundance events in the ETBF;
 - ii. developing potential management options, outlining any specific decision rules, information (economic and scientific), monitoring and assessment needs to support each option;
 - iii. evaluating each option against legislative and policy obligations; and
 - iv. integrating the preferred option if relevant, into management arrangements for the fishery.

ACTION ITEM 6: AFMA to convene a working group to discuss management possibilities of utilising pulse events within the fishery.

4. Other Business

44. The MAC was presented with a demonstration from Tuna Australia showcasing ongoing FRDC research into flyback rates, causes, and impacts.

5. Date and venue for next meeting

45. The MAC decided the next meeting will be in April with the exact details to be decided out of session. This date is to fit in with the RAG meeting dates.
46. The Chair thanked all participants and members for their contributions and closed the meeting.

ATTACHMENT 1: Written Updates from members (Agenda Item 2)

A template was provided for TTMAC members and invited participants wishing to submit a written general update for inclusion in record of meeting. These were taken as read during the teleconference meeting.

Agenda Item 2 Update from members

Template for TTMAC members and invited participants wishing to submit a written general update for inclusion in record of meeting.

Provided by: Brian Jeffriess. Australian Southern Bluefin Industry Association (ASBTIA)

Position on TTMAC: Invited Participant

General Update: Main stock, catch and market developments since the April 2022 Brief for TTMAC.

SBT Stock:

- a. Global SBT stock is now assessed by ABARES (Status Reports), and by AFMA (see www.afma.gov.au) as “not overfished,” “no overfishing” taking place and now as “sustainable.”
- b. The 2022 CCSBT Scientific Committee report will be released after the October 2022 CCSBT meetings. The 2021 CCSBT stock review (see www.ccsbt.org/ESC) found stock growth continues in line with Harvest Strategy targets. This target, and the quota setting are based **solely** on a scientific formula (Management Procedure). Quotas are set to achieve B30 (MSY) by 2035. The stock has recovered as follows:

	% of original spawning biomass (in 1932)
2011	5.5
2014	9.0
2017	13.0
2020	20.0

Source: www.ccsbt.org

- c. In September 2021, IUCN only downlisted SBT from “critically endangered” to “endangered” despite the above information. In contrast, IUCN downlisted Pacific Bluefin Tuna (PBT) from “endangered” to “near threatened” despite PBT being at less than 5% of virgin Spawning Biomass, and the stock declining (see www.iucn.org/red list).
ASBTIA appreciates that the major part of these contradictions is due to the IUCN relying largely on terrestrial life history criteria rather than the stock status and management. However, ASBTIA has formally requested IUCN to review the SBT situation, based on changes in SBT since the IUCN assessment in January 2021.
- d. In October 2021, SBT was included in the list of species to be considered for delisting from the EPBC Act. It is currently listed as Conservation Dependent.

- e. There has been no **“overfishing”** since 2009, and the SBT stock has continued to increase by 5% pa (Source: CCSBT) since then. As a result, the quotas have increased (in whole tonnes):

	Total global quota	Australian quota
1991	11,935	5,265
2009-2011	9,449	4,015
2013	10,949	4,698
2015-2017	14,647	5,665
2018-2020	17,336	6,165
2021-2023	17,642	6,273
2024-2026	To be finally decided in Oct. 2022	

Source: www.ccsbt.org

Catch: Catches in the GAB have been heavily influenced by continuing La Nina conditions, with highly variable weather restricting catching to approx. one fishing day to every four days at sea. The Australian catch (whole tonnes) for farming and longlining has been:

	Farms	Longline	Total
2017	4,683	650	5,333
2018	5,130	1,035	6,165
2019	5,308	783	6,091
2020	4,586	861	5,447
2021	4,592	1,053	5,645
2022	4,942	930*	5,872*

Source: CCSBT (2017-2021), ASBTIA (2022)

Note: Catches for farming have been restricted in recent years by the limits on the area and tonnage (growout maximum) which is allowed to be farmed in the Tuna Farming Zone (TFZ). From 2023 these are changed to:

	Maximum tonnes in Zone	Max. stocking rate (t/ha)
Until 2022	10,500	5.8
From 2023	17,000	8.0

Markets: Main issues are:

- a. East Coast longliners have done a very good job diversifying markets from Japan to the US, as has Mexico with farmed Pacific Bluefin to the US:

	East Coast (t)		Mexico (t)	
	Japan	US	Japan	US
2020	492	48	1,913	1,017
2021	287	270	2,388	2,602

- b. Prices in Japan in 2022 are much higher, but this will largely/totally be cancelled

out by extreme Yen weakness and by much higher transport costs and less availability of transport. For example – the Yen is at the weakest against the \$US for 20 years and against the \$A for 7 years (see Industry Indicators attached).

Other issues

This includes only items which may be relevant to TTMC:

- a. ERS issues: Eight ASBTIA Members participated in the CCSBT ERS Working Group in March 2022. Given the continuing resistance of High Seas and NZ longliners to concrete mitigation packages and compliance measures – we are concerned not just for the seabirds, but also that the CCSBT’s legacy is not the great science, but the poor performance on seabirds. The Australian Government did its best at the ERS meeting.
- b. CCSBT Market Study: The CCSBT has contracted another study of the Japanese and other SBT markets, to assess whether there is any overcatch. ASBTIA has made a major submission. This study coincides with prosecutions in Japan for breaches of Pacific Bluefin quotas – which one Japanese Government official calls “the tip of the iceberg” – see:
<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/01/30/national/bluefin-tuna-management/>
- c. EPBC licence renewal: Under Part 13A of the EPBC Act, the current 3-year SBT Export “Licences” expire in December 2022. The Commonwealth advertised widely for submissions on the renewal, but received no submissions.
- d. MSC: ASBTIA is considering the final application for MSC certification of the SBT purse seine fishery in the GAB. The delay is the final publication of the revised MSC Standard in October 2022. ASBTIA has made direct submissions to MSC on their current review of the MSC Standard, and also was part of joint submissions.
- e. Impact of La Nina: Previous La Nina events have been relatively short and moderate compared with the 2021-2023 La Nina now entering its third successive year. Combined with the recovery of the SBT stock, and the weather effect reducing the number of possible fishing days, it has a significant impact on catch, towing and growout.
- f. National Fisheries Plan: ASBTIA welcomes the long-debated clause in the final Plan – commitment 9.1:
9.1 “Engaging in international fisheries management through cooperation to protect Australia’s access to shared stocks, promotion of sustainable fisheries management and ensuring a level regulatory playing field for Australian operators.”
- g. Adoption of the CCSBT Harvest Strategy by other RFMOs: In a PEW virtual on Atlantic Bluefin in September 2022, the EU announced that it would be pushing for the world’s largest Bluefin fishery (Atlantic Bluefin – see www.iccat.int) to adopt the CCSBT Management Procedure (MP), including the Decision Rule which uses scientific data to set the quota.

- h. Oil and gas exploration: There is now only one remaining exploration licence in SA – a dormant one granted under the EPBC Act over 15 years ago. However, a consortium has applied to do a 3D survey 2023-2027 on the Victoria/SA border east, and apply for future licences in SA.
- i. Exit of major quota owner from tuna industry: The second largest SBT quota owner, Tonys Tuna International (TTI) has announced its intention to sell all its tuna farming assets. This reflects not just the stock recovery leading to more demand, but also the long supply chain of moving parts in the business. This chain includes getting catch quota, catching the fish, feeding the tuna, the 4-6 month growout before any income, and then selling the tuna from the farms.
- j. Resource sharing: SBT is the only Commonwealth fishery with a formal legislated resource shares – based on a major study of the actual shares. The future issues include how the charter/recreational share of 5% of the Australian CCSBT allocation will be allocated/shared between States/regions, administration of the charter/recreational fishery and any cost recovery.
- k. Desalination plants: Climate change is likely to worsen the existing shortage of water on Eyre Peninsula. This means finding sites to build desalination plants at Port Lincoln and near Whyalla. The debate is over the salinity effect in Spencer Gulf, and the impact on fisheries and aquaculture. On the southern plant options – the opportunity is to build it to draw and disperse into the GAB, and have a capacity to feed water back into the Murray but it is higher capital cost.
- l. Research: ASBTIA continues with a major farm research program – especially in fish health. In-farm mortalities over the 4-6 month growout period are below 0.25% of fish into farms. How to underpin that, how to improve feeds and maintaining a government environmental monitoring program are the major projects.

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Industry Indicators

Quota

If the MP is finally implemented from Dec 2023-24, then the history of the Australian quota is:

Tonnes (whole)

1984	14,500
1991-2008	5,265
2009-2011	4,015*
2013	4,698
2015-2017	5,665
2018-2020	6,165
2021-2023	6,238
2024-2026*	7,305**

*Low point of TAC following revised data showing Japan's overcatch.

**Australia's tonnage based on the MP and allocated share.

Market

Price movements in the last decade for frozen farmed (all paid in Yen) have been:

	Y/kg landed Japan	Fob ex-Aust \$/kg	End-Aug \$A=Yen	Farm harvest Tonnes gg
2011	2,064	21.10	81.85	7,164
2012	1,818	19.81	80.82	7,437
2013	1,527	15.09	87.84	7,365
2014	1,625	14.99	97.07	8,759
2015	1,377	13.50	86.60	8,409
2016	1,339	14.00	77.48	8,665
2017	1,335	13.99	87.27	7,823
2018	1,368	14.67	80.58	8,723
2019	1,369	16.61	71.46	8,665
2020	1,063	11.57	77.46	7,813
2021	1,199	12.50	80.55	7,424
2022	1,711**	15.27*	95.55	7,500***

*Based on total CY2022 shipments – frozen farmed was 100% all farm exports.

**Based on 60% of imports expected to land in Japan.

***All years 2011-2021 (Source: AFMA). Estimate for 2022 based on SA actual exports of 7,437t plus some domestic sales.

Sources: Landed Japan – www.customs.go.jp

Fob ex-Australia – www.frdc.com.au

\$A=Yen – Reserve Bank – www.rba.gov.au

ATTACHMENT 2: TTMAC 28 Agenda

Tropical Tuna Fisheries
Management Advisory Committee
Meeting 28
11 October 2022, 9:00am to 4:00pm (EST)
Holiday Inn Express Sydney Airport
2-12 Sarah Street, Mascot NSW 2020

AGENDA

1. Preliminaries

- 1.1. Welcome (including acknowledgement of Country) and apologies
- 1.2. Adoption of agenda
- 1.3. Declarations of interest
- 1.4. Actions arising from previous meetings
- 1.5. Intersessional correspondence between TTMAC 27 and TTMAC 28

2. Member updates

- 2.1. AFMA update
- 2.2. International meetings update
- 2.3. Industry and scientific members update

3. For discussion and advice

- 3.1. ETBF TACCs for 2023 and over/under catch – *including a presentation to TTMAC recapping the Modified Broadbill Swordfish Harvest strategy.*
- 3.2. WTBF TACCs for 2022/23 and over/under catch
- 3.3. Proposed pulse events arrangements

4. Other business

5. Date and venue for next meeting

ATTACHMENT 3: TTMAC 28 outcoming action items

Item	Meeting raised	Action	Responsibility	Status	Comments from TTMAC 28 meeting
1	TTMAC 25 – action arising	<p>(a)TTMAC members to provide AFMA with feedback on what information would be useful to include in the FMS annual report</p> <p>(b)An agenda item for discussion on the FMS annual report to be added to the next TTMAC meeting in October 2022.</p>	AFMA	<p>In progress.</p> <p>AFMA has not progressed this action due to competing priorities and noting that AFMA continues to report on performance in accordance with existing reporting obligations (as outlined in Table 6 of the FMS). The FMS annual report is designed to support these reporting requirements. Fisheries Management Strategy.</p> <p>Relevantly, AFMA is undertaking a review of <i>Fishery Management Paper Number 14 – AFMA’s Approach to Ecological Risk Management and its supporting Guide to AFMA’s Ecological Risk Management Framework</i>. The policy and guide have been updated through AFMA’s Ecological Risk Management Steering Group (ERMSG) to address criticism of performance, improve efficiency and be up to date with latest approaches in the implementation of risk management.</p> <p>The Commission approved release of a draft version of the policy and guidelines for</p>	AFMA will continue to update the MAC on this item as it progresses through next year.

Item	Meeting raised	Action	Responsibility	Status	Comments from TTMAC 28 meeting
				<p>consultation at its September 2022 meeting.</p> <p>The updated policy will likely guide the nature and extent of future reporting requirements.</p>	
3	TTMAC 27	AFMA will review EM discussion documents for reference to the amortisation of capital costs EM equipment.	AFMA	Ongoing. Not yet actioned.	<i>Nil</i>
4	TTMAC 28 – action arising	AFMA to notify the AFMA Commission of industry concerns regarding the WTBF WTO risk and potential consequence to the fishery.	AFMA	Ongoing. Not yet actioned.	
5	TTMAC 28 – action arising	AFMA to provide TTMAC an update on the proposed CITES Appendix 2 listing of Blue sharks out of session.	AFMA	Ongoing. Not yet actioned.	
5	TTMAC 28 – action arising	AFMA to notify the AFMA Commission highlighting the difficulty in sourcing and recruiting crew	AFMA	Ongoing. Not yet actioned.	

Item	Meeting raised	Action	Responsibility	Status	Comments from TTMAC 28 meeting
6	TTMAC 28 – action arising	TTMAC recommended that the terminology used in the Harvest Strategy reports should be changed to no additional exceptional circumstances have been identified.	CSIRO	Ongoing. Not yet actioned.	
7	TTMAC 28 – action arising	AFMA to check the catch weights submitted for WCPFC to ensure weights are accurate.	AFMA	Ongoing. Not yet actioned.	
8	TTMAC 28 – action arising	AFMA to convene a working group to discuss management possibilities of utilising pulse events within the fishery.	AFMA	Ongoing. Not yet actioned.	