



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Small Pelagic Fishery Annual Research Statement 2024-25

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Small Pelagic Fishery Annual Research Statement 2024/25

This Annual Research Statement was developed by AFMA, in consultation with the Small Pelagic Fishery Resource Assessment Group (SPFRAG) and South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC). It identifies areas of high priority research for both AFMA and potential FRDC funding in the 2024/25 financial year and will be presented to the AFMA Research Committee (ARC) and Commonwealth Research Advisory Committee (ComRAC) for consideration as part of the 2024/25 funding rounds.

Evaluation key:

Cost	Priority categories	Feasibility categories
High: >\$200,000	Essential	High
Medium: \$100,000 - \$200,000	High	Medium
Low: <\$100,000	Medium	Low
	Low	

AFMA funded projects in 2024/25

Title	Objectives and component tasks	Evaluation		
		Total cost (approx. only)	Priority/rank	Feasibility
Currently funded projects				
Monitoring & assessment of SPF quota species under the SPF Harvest Strategy 2022-23 to 2024/25.	1. Conduct annual monitoring and assessment of key target species (requirement of harvest strategy);	2022-23 ~\$78,000 2023-24 ~\$52,000 2024-25 ~\$131,000	Essential	High

	<p>2. Identify potential stock status indicators and evaluate the costs/benefits of a range of sampling protocols;</p> <p>3. Evaluate catch, effort, size and age data for evidence of localised depletion of target species (requirement of harvest strategy);</p> <p>Provide the RAG with information needed to establish a reliable and cost-effective monitoring and assessment program for the SPF.</p>			
Annual monitoring, reporting and assessment of marine mammal interactions, including effectiveness of mitigation measures	<p>When there is fishing effort in the SPF, there is a need to ensure that marine mammal bycatch data are collected and assessed. This should include:</p> <p>1) Synthesis of existing information on marine mammal interactions in the SPF to examine how operational and environmental factors influence interaction rates.</p> <p>2) Development of appropriate reporting protocols for marine mammal interactions, including key operational and environmental factors, for observers and industry to support on-going assessment and reporting of interactions.</p> <p>3) Analysis and comparison between different data sources (i.e. EM, observer data and logbook data) to determine</p>	2023-24 \$40,000	High	High

	<p>congruence of multiple monitoring strategies.</p> <p>These analyses are intended to provide the basis for recommended modifications to fishing practices and the design or improvement of Marine Mammal mitigation devices.</p>			
Daily Egg Production Method Surveys (DEPM) (Jack mackerel east)	The objective of a DEMP survey is to estimate the spawning biomass of an SPF stock to underpin the determination of Recommended Biological Catches (RBC) using the agreed SPF Harvest Strategy. Stocks that are of commercial value or those that were surveyed more than five years ago, should be prioritised for surveying.	<p>2023-24 ~\$416,000</p> <p>2024-25 ~\$243,000</p>	Essential	High
Estimating spawning fraction of Blue Mackerel off eastern Australia: Stage 2. Spatio-temporal variability in spawning patterns and implications for future DEPM surveys	This project builds from the Stage 1 component of this project and is needed to inform the design, delivery and completion of the DEPM survey of Blue mackerel that needs to be done by 2025 to maintain stock at Tier 1 under the SPF Harvest Strategy. Stage 2 will estimate the spawning fraction of Blue Mackerel off eastern Australia and assess the need for additional adult sampling in future DEPM surveys as well as investigate the latitudinal variation in spawning season of Blue mackerel and identify implications for the design of future DEPM surveys.	<p>2023-24 ~\$129,000</p> <p>2024-25 ~\$159,000</p>	Essential	High

Newly identified research priorities for 2024/25 (to seek further RAG/MAC support and submission to ARC in August 2023)				
Daily Egg Production Method (DEPM) Surveys (Blue mackerel east)	The objective of a DEMP survey is to estimate the spawning biomass of an SPF stock to underpin the determination of Recommended Biological Catches (RBC) using the agreed SPF Harvest Strategy. Stocks that are of commercial value or those that were surveyed more than five years ago, should be prioritised for surveying.	High	Essential	High
Development of harvest control rules (HCRs)	Under the current Harvest Strategy, at Tier 1, there are no explicit harvest control rules to reduce exploitation rates if the point of recruitment impairment (the limit reference point), is approached. This was an issue raised by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) during the certification process for the fishery.	low	Essential	High

FRDC funding in 2024/25 (to be presented to ComRAC)

Title	Objectives and component tasks	Evaluation		
		Total cost (approx. only)	Priority/rank	Feasibility
Currently funded projects				
Newly identified research priorities for 2024/25				
Information on the distribution, population size and potential productivity of the unfished	The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) in partnership with FRDC and the Institute of	2023-24 ~\$280,000 2024-25 ~\$120,000	N/A	High

<p>south-eastern stock of Australian sardine and provision of recommendations to facilitate harvesting in the new Tasmanian Sardine Fishery.</p>	<p>Marine and Antarctic Studies of University of Tasmania (IMAS) are proposing to undertake research to gain further knowledge about the distribution, population size and potential productivity of this unfished stock to inform the development of management arrangements for a new Tasmanian Sardine Fishery. The proposed research will go through TasRAC for funding consideration. The SPFRAG Chair has written to Tim Ward (PI for this project) expressing SPFRAG's support for the project providing it does not result in costs to AFMA.</p>			
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Key Documents

- Framework for delivering cost effective research for AFMA
- RAG research scope form
- AFMA research cycle and timetable
- FRDC research cycle and timetable