

SouthMAC

**Sub-Antarctic Fisheries
Management Advisory
Committee**

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MINUTES

SouthMAC 20

25 March 2004, Canberra

Attendance

Members

Mr Bill Nagle – Chair
Ms Margaret Moore, Conservation Member
Dr Malcolm Haddon, Research Member
Mr Martin Exel, Industry Member
Mr Les Scott, Industry Member
Mr Stuart Richey, Industry Member
Mr Ian Hay, AAD Member
Ms Paula Shoulder, AFMA Member
Mr Peter Neave, Executive Officer

Apologies

Mr David Williams, Industry Member

Permanent observers

Mr Dennis Witt, DPIWE
Ms Tori Wilkinson, Department of the
Environment and Heritage

Observers

Mr Daryl Quinlivan, AFMA Board
Ms Viki O'Brien, AFMA
Mr Geoff Richardson, AFMA
Ms Sachi Wimmer, DAFF
Mr Christian Pyke, Industry
Ms Liza Fallon, University of Tasmania

Introduction

The twentieth meeting of the Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC 20) was held in Canberra on 25 March 2004.

The primary objectives of the meeting were to discuss:

- key aspects of the drafting instructions for the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery Management Plan;
- longlining in the Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI) Fishery in the current and 2004/05 seasons;
- minor changes to the *Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan 2002*; and
- the draft 2004/05 budgets for Antarctic fisheries.

Agenda item 1 - Preliminaries

The SouthMAC 20 meeting was opened at 9.10 am. The Chair, Mr Bill Nagle, welcomed members and observers to the meeting.

Mr Nagle welcomed Dr Malcolm Haddon as the new Research Member replacing Dr Keith Sainsbury. Dr Haddon is an Associate Professor at the University of Tasmania and is a resource modeller with the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute. He has been the Head of Fisheries at the Australian Maritime College and is a member of several fishery assessment groups, including the Northern Prawn Fishery Assessment Group and the Bass Strait Scallop Assessment Group.

The Chair noted the attendance of Mr Daryl Quinlivan, from the AFMA Board, Mr Christian Pyke, industry representative, Ms Sachi Wimmer from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Mr Geoff Richardson, AFMA's acting General Manager for Fisheries. The Chair approved a request from Ms Liza Fallon from the University of Tasmania to attend the meeting as an observer. Ms Fallon is currently undertaking a doctorate on 'The role of state and non-state actors in the management of Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*)'.

Apologies

An apology was received from Industry Member, Mr David Williams.

Declaration of interests

Messrs Exel, Richey and Scott declared their conflicts of interest on all agenda items.

Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without change.

Agenda item 2 – Adoption of Minutes from SouthMAC 19

The draft minutes from SouthMAC 19 were discussed. Messrs Exel and Scott provided some alternative wording under agenda 10 – Macquarie Island Fishery which were incorporated into the minutes. The amended paragraphs now read:

'Mr Exel advised the Policy was aimed at catching toothfish, and this should be the focus without making it a fishing method specific Plan. Mr Scott supported this view stating that all methods should be covered and that Austral Fisheries should receive at least the minimum 50% allocation of toothfish as outlined in the Policy.'

'Messrs Scott, Williams and Pyke expressed their desire to operate in the Macquarie Island Fishery under a Management Plan. Mr Williams stated a willingness to participate in a tender process for the remaining rights after a minimum 50% allocation to the existing operator. Mr Scott stated he was opposed to resource rents and therefore the remaining rights going to tender or auction. He suggested an Independent Allocation Panel approach be used to determine the allocation of rights. Mr Pyke expressed a desire to consider both the Independent Allocation Panel approach and the tender process before stating a preferred position.'

Mr Scott moved that the minutes from SouthMAC 19 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Ms Moore seconded this motion.

Agenda item 3 - Action arising from SouthMAC 19

SouthMAC discussed the action arising from SouthMAC 19.

1. **High seas data collection** - SouthMAC noted that Mr Exel was happy to provide AFMA with data collected by data collection officers (DCOs) from high seas operations. AFMA undertook to formally write to Mr Exel about accessing the data.

Action arising

2. **Bycatch limits** – Mr Exel sought adoption of a mechanism which would not shutdown the Fishery if a bycatch catch limit was reached. He undertook to prepare a paper for the next meeting of SouthMAC and consideration by the CCAMLR Consultative Forum and Inter-Departmental Committee.

Action arising

3. **Definition of an Australian boat** – Mr Scott advised SouthMAC that he had prepared a paper on the definition of an Australian boat under Section 4.2 of the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*. Following some preliminary discussion he undertook to incorporate some examples and the potential areas of difficulty in the deeming process. Mr Scott would provide members with a hard copy of the paper out-of-session.

Ms O'Brien advised that AFMA is proceeding with processing deeming applications subject to the lawful importation of the vessel.

Action arising

4. **Macquarie Island export approval** – SouthMAC discussed the issue of requiring export approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* (EPBC Act) for a range of scenarios for Antarctic fisheries, including high seas and Macquarie Island catches. Ms Wilkinson advised that the matter was to be considered by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage shortly, and she would advise members of the outcome out-of-session.

Action arising

5. **Data management** - SouthMAC sought clarification of the status of data collected under MAC initiated research fund (MIRF) programs, and in particular why there was not joint ownership of data. AFMA agreed to raise the matter with the AFMA Board to seek their advice on the joint ownership issue, noting it is also an issue for other Commonwealth-managed fisheries.

Action arising

6. **Change to HIMI Fishery Management Plan** - this issue was discussed under agenda item 11 – Changes to Management Plan.

7. **Collaborative research** - SouthMAC noted that some discussions had taken place between Australian and French scientists on collaborative work to determine whether the HIMI toothfish stocks were a straddling stock with the French EEZ. The issue is to be discussed at the next SAFAG meeting and will be an agenda item for SouthMAC 21.

Action arising

8. **Seabirds** - SouthMAC noted an article had appeared in AFMA's monthly publication 'Fishing Future' which reported on the record low number of seabirds which had been taken by legal longliners across the CCAMLR Convention Area during the 2002/03 season, that is 15 seabirds. No seabirds were killed during the season by Australian longliners.

9. **New and Exploratory fisheries research requirements** - SouthMAC discussed the requirement under some CCAMLR Conservation Measures to conduct 20 research sets five miles apart when longlining in the small-scale research units. Australian industry expressed serious concern at this requirement, which may force operators to conduct research in potentially dangerous conditions of ice and rough seabed terrain. Ms O'Brien advised that the 'Eldfisk' had met its research requirements.

Ms O'Brien advised that attempts had been made to amend the research requirements but Australian was unable to get a consensus at CCAMLR XXII, so the relevant Conservation measure remained unchanged.

Mr Exel advised that Mr Williams, as the operator was in the best position to advise on what measures are practical but there is a need to consider reducing the imposition of costs, research and expectations for fishing in what are high seas CCAMLR areas. He also raised the concern that the data collected was being used by IUU vessels to determine the most productive areas to fish.

SouthMAC agreed that the issue should be raised at the CCAMLR Consultative Forum (CCF) and Inter Departmental Committee in the lead up to CCAMLR XXIII in November 2004. AFMA should take a lead role in the development of a strategy to address the research issue as it is AFMA's responsibility for licensing the vessels and placing conditions on the Fishing Permits.

Action arising

10. **Access to Elan and BANZARE Banks** – SouthMAC noted that Industry had reached agreement on one Australian flagged vessels operating at Elan Bank and BANZARE Bank at any one time.
11. **Extension of longline season at HIMI** – this issue was discussed under agenda item 9 – Expansion of longline fishing.
12. **CCAMLR notification for vessel nominations** – SouthMAC noted the requirement to give the CCAMLR Secretariat three months notice for nominated boats to operate in New and Exploratory fisheries within the CCAMLR Convention Area. Mr Hay advised a letter had been sent by AAD to the CCAMLR Secretariat. He undertook to provide a copy of the letter to Members out-of-session.

Action arising

13. **HIMI catch limits** - SouthMAC noted that the catch and size limits prescribed by CCAMLR XXII and endorsed by SouthMAC were determined by the AFMA Board for the HIMI Fishery for the 2003/04 season.
14. **Information for the AFMA Annual Report** - SouthMAC noted that reference to the level of IUU catch from the Fishery and the possibility of the HIMI stock being a shared or straddling stock with adjacent waters would be included in the AFMA Annual Report.
15. **Further longlining in the HIMI Fishery** - this issue was discussed under agenda item 9 – Expansion of longline fishing.
16. **Fishery Assessment Plan** - this issue was discussed under agenda item 10 – Fishery Assessment Plan 2003/04.
17. **Macquarie Island Fishery Management Plan** - this issue was discussed under agenda item 7 – Macquarie Island Fishery Management Plan.
18. **Macquarie Island Strategic Assessment Report** - this issue was discussed under agenda item 8 – Draft Strategic Assessment Report.

Agenda item 4 – Correspondence

SouthMAC noted correspondence:

- a note dated 24 November 2003 from Martin Exel to SouthMAC Members on IUU catch estimates in HIMI;
- a letter dated 22 December 2003 from Glenn Hurry, General Manager DAFF, to the SouthMAC EO on proposed amendments to the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*;
- a letter dated 8 January 2004 from David Kemp, the Minister for the Environment and Heritage to Wendy Craik, Chair of AFMA, on accreditation under the EPBC Act;
- a letter dated 28 January 2004 from Wendy Craik, Chair of AFMA, to Chair of SouthMAC on proposed Board meeting dates and meeting with Members.

SouthMAC agreed that Bill Nagle, Margaret Moore, Martin Exel, Peter Neave and possibly Les Scott should attend the meeting in October 2004 with the AFMA Board.

- a letter dated 13 February 2004 from Bill Nagle to Glenn Hurry in support of the marine cooperation Treaty between Australia and France.

Agenda item 5 – SouthMAC Research Member

SouthMAC noted the appointment of Dr Malcolm Haddon to replace Dr Keith Sainsbury as the SouthMAC Research Member.

Agenda Item 6 – Report on fishing operations

SouthMAC noted the verbal reports from Messrs Exel and Scott on operations in sub-Antarctic waters.

Macquarie Island Fishery

Agenda Item 7 – Macquarie Island Fishery Management Plan

SouthMAC discussed the development of the Macquarie Island Fishery Management Plan which had been given AFMA Board approval to proceed on 20 June 2003. The Fishery is currently managed under Macquarie Island Fishery Interim Management Policy, October 1999 – June 2001, which has been extended until 30 June 2004.

At SouthMAC 19 in November 2003 it was agreed:

- to recommend to the AFMA Board that the current Policy, which expires on 30 June 2004, be rolled over for a further two years or until the Management Plan was implemented;
- that the allocation issue be fully discussed at the next SouthMAC meeting scheduled for March 2004, and that any views members have on the allocation issue be provided to AFMA in the meantime; and
- that the scope of the draft Management Plan be consistent with the current Policy and should incorporate relevant parts of the more recent *Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan 2002*, in particular the objectives, performance measures, performance criteria and the environmental requirements.

SouthMAC noted that the new AFMA Board was unable to consider these recommendations at its March 2004 meeting. The Board is scheduled to consider the Macquarie Island Fishery Management Plan, and in particular the allocation of Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) issue at its meeting on 17-18 May 2004. The key issues in relation to allocation are the percentage of ongoing rights in the Fishery to be allocated to the existing operator and how the balance of ongoing rights is to be distributed.

The Macquarie Island Fishery Interim Management Policy states:

12.1.3 At the conclusion of the proposed interim policy, if it is decided that fishing in the region should continue, it is AFMA's intention that a Statutory Management Plan will be put in place. Under the Statutory Management Plan the following access arrangements would apply:

- *a **minimum** of 50 per cent of the ongoing rights in the fishery will be set aside to be allocated amongst those who had participated in the fishery, and complied with all Permit conditions and policy requirements, up to that point. Each operator will receive a share of the on-going rights based on that operator's participation in the fishery. The share allocated to an operator will be in proportion to the total number of calendar years or part calendar years during which that operator held a fishing concession and actually undertook fishing in the Fishery from, and including, 1994;*
- *if, under the Statutory Management Plan, there is a limit on the number of boats in the fishery each operator will also receive a boat concession. However, if the limit on the number of boats in the fishery is less than the number of operators that participated up until that point and successfully complied with all the Permit conditions and requirements, then the boat concession(s) will be allocated by a ballot; and*
- *the balance of the ongoing rights in the fishery will be available to be distributed by an auction or competitive tender. The tender or auction may be restricted to those people who can meet conditions set under the Statutory Management Plan. Those who are allocated rights may participate in the tender or auction if they can meet any conditions set under the Statutory Management Plan.*

Messrs Scott and Richey advised that it was important that the history of applications and the timelines be accurately documented. This should include when applications were called for and the processes that subsequently occurred. Mr Richey stated that the Administrative Appeals Tribunal had made some statements on the allocation process in 1996, and that these should be included when documenting the history.

Mr Pyke reiterated some points he made in his Company's (A Raptis and Sons Pty Ltd) letter provided to SouthMAC 20. He saw the benefits for new participants as security of access, increased investment viability, allowing for long term planning and increasing the collection of verified data.

Ms Shoulder advised that the allocation formula had been outlined in the Interim Policy and it would be useful to get some advice on the appropriate levels of allocation. She sought advice on what considerations should be given to the Board when they considered whether the current operator should get greater than 50% of the ongoing rights to the Fishery.

Mr Pyke was of the view that the current operator should be allocated no more than the 50% of ongoing rights, and the opportunity should be given to other operators to enter the Fishery.

Mr Exel advised that the allocation in all fisheries had been based on investment and catch history, and that independent allocation panels had been convened to determine what weighting should be given to these two criteria in each fishery. He advised that consideration should be given to the number of times for public calls to operate in the Fishery, the number of times there has been a zero TAC and the requirement to undertake research, and that his Company (Austral Fisheries Pty Ltd) had found and located the Fishery. He also believed consideration should be given to the contents of AFMA's Fishery Policy Papers which have been in place since commercial fishing began.

Ms Moore advised she would like to see recognised catch history, the periods of research when the TAC was zero, the proven operational record of the current participant and the ability for applicants to meet environmental criteria. She expressed concern at the size of the fishery and the variability from year to year.

Mr Quinlivan advised an orderly structured process was required and the MACs observations on an allocation panel approach may be useful. He thought that a paper on the strengths and weaknesses of the allocation process adopted for the HIMI Fishery may be valuable to the AFMA Board.

Some industry Members opposed the use of a competitive allocation mechanism citing it as a mechanism for collecting resource rent tax. Mr Quinlivan stated that he saw no relationship between the auction/tender allocation issue and a resource rent tax. He stated that the auction/tender was the sale of a community resource rather than a tax in any form.

Mr Witt advised he was not averse to an auction or tender mechanism to allocate any of the remaining ongoing rights above that allocated to the current participant.

SouthMAC could not agree on a basis for the allocation of any additional rights that may exist if the Board decides to allocate more than 50%, but less than 100%, of the available rights in the fishery to participants. It was agreed that the Board should consider the appointment of an Independent Allocation Panel to determine:

- whether more than 50% of ongoing rights should be allocated to the current participant; and
- if auction and tender were not to be used, a formula for the allocation of any remaining rights.

SouthMAC discussed the drafting instructions for the Macquarie Island Fishery Management Plan that had been sent to the Office of Legislative Drafting (OLD). Members noted that the draft was based on the *Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan 2002* and that there would be several opportunities to discuss the draft as it is being prepared.

SouthMAC reiterated its view of the previous meeting that the Interim Policy should be rolled over for a further two years or until the Management Plan is implemented. It was agreed to include this in the Macquarie Island Fishery paper for the May 2004 Board meeting.

Action arising

SouthMAC noted that longlining would not be permitted in the Fishery initially. It was accepted that this would be dependent on the success of seabird mitigation measures being trialed in other demersal longline fisheries and be subject to consideration by the 'Longline Fishing Threat Abatement Plan' (TAP) team.

In 2001 the TAP team recommended that *'If longline fishing without seabird by-catch can be demonstrated in extensive mitigation trials elsewhere, consideration could be given to longline fishing in this area in the future. The conditions which would apply to such a fishery would need to be determined at that time.'* SouthMAC noted that the issue of longline fishing around Macquarie Island was on the agenda for the next meeting of the TAP team on 22 April 2004.

The issue of limiting boat numbers in the Fishery was discussed. There were concerns raised by Ms Moore and Ms Wilkinson that by not limiting the number of boats the environmental impacts of fishing could become significant. Ms Wilkinson advised that the number of boats in the Fishery was likely to be a significant consideration, amongst other things, in the Strategic Assessment of the Fishery.

Ms Moore stated that management of the Fishery should be approached with caution and there will be considerable public interest as the Plan is developed. She was of the view that two vessels may be appropriate provided they did not operate at the same time. She advised she was opposed to longlining but did not discount it was a method they may be approved in the future.

Ms Shoulder was of the view that it was the TAC that determined the amount of fishing effort that occurred and therefore the possible impact on the environment. This was independent of the number of boats. Consequently it was important to focus on managing environmental risks directly. The emphasis should be on vessel operational requirements rather than boat numbers, given that SFRs will be transferable. This view was supported by Mr Exel and Mr Scott.

The current high environmental standards applying under the Interim Management Policy were recommended by SouthMAC to be maintained under the Plan.

Mr Hay advised there was high public interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries with high conservation values. He was of the view that overcapitalisation may be a risk if vessel numbers were not limited. He supported allowing a small number to operate in the Fishery. Ms Wilkinson supported this view.

Mr Exel suggested given the limited area of the fishing grounds that a mechanism such as allowing three boats to operate, but not at the same time, in the Fishery could be considered.

Mr Scott advised if boat limits were to be implemented the transfer provisions adopted in the HIMI Fishery where caught and uncaught quota could be used when leasing should be adopted. He advised a boat permit and SFRs were the preferred method for industry.

SouthMAC agreed that more than one boat operating in the Fishery was acceptable as long as appropriate measures to minimise environmental impacts were in place. Although an exact number was not recommended, it was thought that up to three boats at any one time could be acceptable.

SouthMAC discussed a range of other issues and recommended that the Management Plan:

- be called the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery Management Plan, as the Plan would have the one target species, Patagonian toothfish.

The catch of bycatch species using trawling is considered to be minimal and no other species are considered to be available in commercial quantities.

- have two sets of SFRs – one for Aurora Trough and the other for all other waters. The outcome of the allocation process would apply to each set of SFRs;
- have two total allowable catches (TACs) set - one for Aurora Trough and the other for all other waters;
- cover all fishing methods for toothfish, with Scientific Permits issued for non-trawl methods as is the case for the HIMI Fishery. However, the Fishery would initially be limited to trawling;
- provide for consideration to be given to TACs being set for more than one year at a time. This issue is to be considered by the Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Assessment Group (SAFAG) on 28 April 2004.

This option is being examined to see if additional flexibility can be given to industry. For instance, if the TAC for the Fishery was set at a low level eg: 50 tonnes/year, would it be feasible for a 2 year TAC of 100 tonnes to be set.

- provide for more stringent carryover provisions to apply than under the current policy, where up to 50 tonnes could be carried over to the following season, with penalties being applied above 20 tonnes. SouthMAC recommended SAFAG advice be sought on an approach where, from 0 – 20 tonnes there would be no penalty provision ie: the amount taken would be deducted from the following season's quota. If greater than 20 tonnes were taken the amount above 20 tonnes would be taken from the following years quota on a two for one basis, up to a maximum 50 tonnes. For example if 25 tonnes above the TAC were taken, 30 tonnes would be deducted from the following year's quota. If over 50 tonnes was taken, it would result in direct prosecution action.

This option is being examined to provide flexibility and to cover situations where the TAC is being approached and the amount in the net may result in the TAC being exceeded.

Agenda Item 8 – Draft Strategic Assessment Report

SouthMAC discussed progress with the preparation of the Macquarie Island Strategic Assessment Report and noted that the assessment of the Fishery under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) would have to be completed by 1 December 2004.

Ms Wilkinson advised SouthMAC that if the Management Plan was not finalised in time to be put out for public comment at the same time as the draft Strategic Assessment, approval could be given on the draft Plan or the Interim Policy. The draft Strategic Assessment Report would have to go out for public comment by July to meet the requirements of the Department of the Environment and Heritage.

Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery

Agenda Item 9 – Expansion of longline fishing

SouthMAC discussed:

- the expansion of longline trials in the HIMI Fishery; and
- a two week extension to the 2003/04 HIMI Fishery season for longlining.

Ms O'Brien advised the meeting she had written to the Chair of the TAP team, Mr Barry Baker, seeking out-of-session consideration of the above issues. A letter of support was received from the TAP team Chair. SouthMAC support was provided to allow a second vessel to longline in the 2004/05 season, and an extension by two weeks to the current season, in line with the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) Conservation Measure 41-08 (Limits on the fishery for *Dissostichus eleginoides* in Statistical Division 58.5.2 in the 2003/04 Season).

SouthMAC agreed that the data collected to date from the longline trials was insufficient to seek approval for longlining to become an accepted fishing method under the HIMI Fishery Management Plan at this stage. SouthMAC noted that one vessel would be longlining in the HIMI Fishery during the period 1 May to 14 September 2004, and would collect further data for the trial evaluation. Mr Scott advised that his company was planning to conduct two fishing trips during this period, and the integrated weighted line trials would continue.

SouthMAC also noted that a report on the deleterious effects of longlining on the environment was required before general approval of longlining under the statutory Management Plan could be given. SouthMAC anticipated this report being prepared before the start of the longline fishing season in the HIMI Fishery on 1 May 2005.

Mr Hay undertook to investigate whether approval is required from the Minister for the Environment and Heritage (for the two week season extension for longlining and participation by an additional vessel in the 2004/05 season).

Action arising

Mr Scott raised the issue of transshipping in the HIMI Fishery. Ms O'Brien undertook to investigate the matter and report back to SouthMAC. Mr Hay raised the need to have a continuity of evidence to meet the catch certification requirements adopted by CCAMLR.

Action arising

Agenda Item 10 – Fishery Assessment Plan 2003/04

SouthMAC noted that the Fishery Assessment Plan for 2003/04 would be discussed at the next SAFAG meeting in late April 2004. Mr Exel advised that discussions were taking place with AAD on the nature of the work to be undertaken and finalising the design of the random stratified trawl survey.

Agenda item 11 - Changes to Management Plan

SouthMAC noted, in line with their advice provided at SouthMAC 19, that on 19 December 2003 the acting Managing Director of AFMA made a Temporary Order to extend the area of waters in the HIMI Fishery from 55°S to 56°S. Ms O'Brien advised that the Temporary Order is valid until 23 June 2004 and it was recommended this be extended to the end of the current season or until the statutory Management Plan was revised, whichever is earliest.

Additionally, SouthMAC noted that AFMA is in the process of formally amending the Management Plan for the area and also changing the words 'holds' and 'held' to 'owns' and 'owned' respectively under Section 22 of the Plan.

Ms Wilkinson advised that advice of the amendments, their purpose and resulting outcome would need to be provided to the Department of the Environment and Heritage as a change to the Management Plan voids existing declarations made under the EPBC Act. New declarations would have to be sought by AFMA and tabled by the Department of the Environment and Heritage along with the full amended Management Plan.

Action arising

SouthMAC agreed that the proposed amendments should be released for public comment.

Action arising

Ms O'Brien advised SouthMAC that AFMA was preparing new Directions for the HIMI Fishery to replace the existing Directions. AFMA had received legal advice that Directions cannot be put in place indefinitely as is currently done and that they need to have a defined period of application. All the new Direction will apply for five years.

Action arising

Mr Exel sought to have the total number of SFRs specified for the HIMI Fishery. Ms O'Brien undertook to investigate having this information included on extracts of the SFR Register.

Action arising

Agenda item 12 – Conservation Zones

Mr Exel stated that on each trip his company's boats must fish in the Conservation Zones. He stated there was one more year of the program to run.

Ms O'Brien advised that SAFAG would be looking at the issue and examine observer reports from the trips at its next meeting.

Action arising

Agenda item 13 – Bycatch management

SouthMAC noted the final bycatch figures for the 2002/03 season at HIMI, and noted that none of the 'review triggers' for any species had been reached.

Finance Report

Agenda item 14 - Draft 2004/05 budget

SouthMAC discussed the draft budgets for Antarctic fisheries for 2004/05, and noted the 'Cost Recovery Impact Statement – February 2004' which outlined changes to AFMA's Cost Recovery Policy.

Industry Members expressed concern at the high costs associated with New and Exploratory fisheries citing Australian vessels, with the high costs associated with observers, management and research, were competing along side IUU vessels without those costs. Given these costs industry advised there would be limited interest in operators entering New and Exploratory fisheries. AFMA advised that the draft budget could be altered depending on the level of interest and activity in New and Exploratory fisheries.

There was general support for the draft budgets with the following issues being discussed.

- SouthMAC was not opposed to an AFMA proposal to defer the 2004/05 costs of developing the Management Plan for the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery, which would mean that the applicant(s) which are granted SFRs would pay for the development costs applicable for 2004/05, but not the costs of development already paid for by the current participant;
- some concerns were expressed at the increased compliance costs from 2003/04 associated with New and Exploratory fisheries and how these were presented in the budget. AFMA undertook to investigate the matter and report back to SouthMAC; and
- SouthMAC recommended that processes be implemented to streamline the management of data for CCAMLR, particularly standardising the data collection format requirements. Currently, AFMA spends several weeks in ensuring data supplied from the boats operating in Antarctic fisheries is in a CCAMLR compatible format.

Mr Neave agreed to prepare a response to the draft budgets on behalf of SouthMAC. He undertook to circulate a draft response for Members comments before submitting it to AFMA.

Action arising

Agenda item 15 – Expenditure report

SouthMAC noted the expenditure for Antarctic fisheries for the eight months ended 29 February 2004.

Other

Agenda item 16 - Other business

No other business was discussed.

Agenda item 17 - Next meeting

The next meeting of SouthMAC was tentatively scheduled for 22 June 2004.

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm.