

# SouthMAC

**Sub-Antarctic Fisheries  
Management Advisory  
Committee**

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## MINUTES

### SouthMAC 21

18 November 2004, Hobart

## Attendance

### Members

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

### Permanent observers

Mr Grant Pullen, DPIWE  
Ms Tori Wilkinson, Department of the  
Environment and Heritage

### Observers

Mr Ian Cartwright, AFMA Board  
Dr Campbell Davies, AAD  
Mr Bob Stanley, AFMA  
Ms Liza Fallon, University of Tasmania

### Apologies

None

## Introduction

The twenty-first meeting of the Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC 21) was held in Hobart on 18 November 2004.

The primary objectives of the meeting were to:

- discuss the outcomes of the twenty-third meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR XXIII);
- recommend catch limits for the Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI) Fishery and New and Exploratory fisheries for the 2004/05 season;
- discuss bycatch management arrangements in the HIMI Fishery;
- discuss proposed amendments to the *Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan 2002*; and
- discuss the proposed Macquarie Island Fishery Toothfish Management Plan.

The annual public meeting of SouthMAC was also held on the afternoon of 17 November 2004. Fourteen people attended the meeting including Members of SouthMAC and the Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Assessment Group (SAFAG), and representatives from the CCAMLR Secretariat and the University of Tasmania.

Following the Chairman's Report to the public meeting presentations were made from:

- Mr Les Scott from Petuna Sealord Pty Ltd on the operations of the Australian longline vessel *Janas* in the HIMI Fishery; and
- Mr Bob Stanley from AFMA on a project to investigate the use of video technologies in monitoring fishing operations.

### **Agenda item 1 - Preliminaries**

SouthMAC 21 was opened at 8.40 am. The new Chair, Mr Peter Franklin, welcomed members and observers to the meeting. He welcomed Mr Grant Pullen who was attending his first SouthMAC meeting, as the State Government permanent observer.

SouthMAC noted the resignation of industry Member Mr David Williams from the MAC, and supported making the State Government permanent observer a Member. Mr Neave undertook to seek the AFMA Board's approval to this approach.

#### **Action arising**

The Chair noted the attendance of Mr Ian Cartwright from the AFMA Board and Dr Campbell Davies from the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD). 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*)'.

Mr Les Scott attended the meeting from 12.15 pm onwards. Dr Davies attended the meeting in the morning.

### **Apologies**

No apologies were received.

### **Declaration of interests**

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

### **Adoption of agenda**

SouthMAC adopted the agenda without change.

The order in which the agenda items were discussed was altered to accommodate the availability of Members and observers. The Minutes report on the items as they appeared in the agenda.

### **Agenda item 2 – Adoption of Minutes from SouthMAC 20**

The draft minutes from SouthMAC 20 were circulated to Members on 23 April 2004. Comments were received from Mr Exel and Ms Wilkinson and incorporated into the minutes presented to SouthMAC. The minutes were amended accordingly.

Ms Moore moved that the minutes from SouthMAC 20 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Mr Hay seconded this motion.

Mr Franklin commented on the meeting that some Members of SouthMAC had with the AFMA Board on 7 October 2004. He advised that it was a very useful exercise and enabled the MAC to report on strategic issues for Antarctic fisheries. Mr Exel endorsed this view. Mr Cartwright found the discussions very beneficial from the Board's perspective and it was seen as an important initiative to improve communications.

### **Agenda item 3 - Action arising from SouthMAC 20**

SouthMAC discussed the action arising from SouthMAC 20. Mr Neave reported that an update of actioned items had been provided to Members on 30 July 2004. The following items needed to be progressed further.

1. **Definition of an Australian boat** – Mr Scott advised SouthMAC 20 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 undertook to provide the latest draft of his paper to AFMA. Ms Shoulder undertook to look at the issue and discuss it within AFMA, and report back to SouthMAC.

#### **Action arising**

2. **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.

SouthMAC noted the AFMA Board were scheduled to consider this issue at their November 2004 meeting.

#### **Action arising**

The other action arising items from SouthMAC 20 were discussed under specific agenda items and reported under those items.

### **Agenda item 4 – Correspondence**

SouthMAC noted the following correspondence:

- a letter dated 12 July 2004 from Richard McLoughlin to the SouthMAC Chair on the Cost Recovery Impact Statement Guidelines;
- a letter dated 4 August 2004 from Wendy Craik to the SouthMAC Chair on the outcomes of the MAC Chairs and Executive Officers meeting;
- a letter dated 13 September 2004 from Richard McLoughlin to the SouthMAC Chair on the acquittal of 2003/04 industry costs and calculation of the levy base for 2004/05. This issue was discussed under agenda item 14;
- a letter dated 24 September 2004 from Richard McLoughlin to the SouthMAC Chair on reviewing bycatch action plans. This issue was discussed under agenda item 16;
- a letter dated 27 September 2004 from Geoff Richardson to the SouthMAC Chair updating the Ecological Risk Assessments Project; and
- a note dated 27 September 2004 from Garry Collins on travel allowance rates.

SouthMAC discussed the self-assessment questionnaire and Members agreed to provide individual responses to Ms Shoulder who would collate a response for the AFMA Board.

**Action arising**

SouthMAC discussed the advice from the Remuneration Tribunal on the payment of sitting fees for MAC members. All non-Government Members agreed not to claim the sitting fee, provided meeting expenses continued to be covered. Mr Neave undertook to advise AFMA of this decision.

**Action arising**

**Agenda Item 5 – Report on fishing operations**

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

Mr Scott had outlined the operations in some detail at the annual public meeting of SouthMAC on 17 November 2004. He highlighted the very good success the operator of the vessel *Janas* has had in mitigating against seabird bycatch.

Mr Scott commented on the experiment being conducted by AAD on the longline vessel *Janas* which was comparing fish catch rates using integrated weight lines and unweighted lines. He stated that the use of unweighted lines on an experimental basis was not in the best interests of his Company as there was a greater prospect of catching seabirds, which he was looking to avoid, to maintain the zero seabird bycatch the vessel had achieved to date. However, he noted the importance of the work in being able to show the benefits of using weighted lines to other nations. He stated the experiment would continue in the new season.

Mr Exel outlined the trawl operations in the HIMI Fishery, stating his Company's two trawlers were fishing the last of the toothfish quota for 2003/04. He advised his Company was looking to introduce a longliner in the HIMI Fishery in 2006. He commented the random stratified trawl survey had gone well. SouthMAC noted the survey costs around \$1 million per annum to conduct, with SFR holders bearing the cost.

**CCAMLR XXIII**

**Agenda item 6 - CCAMLR XXIII outcomes**

CCAMLR XXIII was held in Hobart over the period 25 October to 5 November 2004. A report prepared by AFMA on the outcomes is provided at Attachment A.

Dr Davies reported the meeting was very successful from an Australian perspective. He reported that the total allowable catches (TACs) for toothfish and icefish were agreed, and Australian applications to operate in CCAMLR New and Exploratory fisheries were successful. For longline operations in the HIMI Fishery approval was given to allow day setting (subject to seabird bycatch limits) and continued use integrated weight lines.

Dr Davies also reported that Australia had also been successful in amending Conservation Measures relating to Statistical Divisions 58.4.1 and 58.4.2 (high Antarctic waters) where zero TACs were set in alternate 10° blocks of longitude.

SouthMAC noted the success in reducing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) toothfish removals had also reduced the estimates of seabirds killed in IUU operations to levels only slightly greater than the total estimated for all regulated fisheries in the CCAMLR area. No seabirds were killed during the season by Australian longliners.

SouthMAC also noted that CCAMLR had agreed to adopt a centralised Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). The eVMS measure adopted provides for dual reporting (via flag State and or direct from a vessel) of vessel location reports to the CCAMLR Secretariat in Hobart. Reporting is to be four-hourly in exploratory longline fisheries, or on departure from the CCAMLR area for other fisheries.

SouthMAC strongly endorsed the efforts of the Australian delegation at CCAMLR, and noted success with the centralised VMS, the dramatic drop in IUU activity, progress with the Mauritius acceding to the Convention and the implementation of practical Conservation Measures.

Mr Scott commented on the successful outcomes from CCAMLR XXIII, and suggested SouthMAC write to Dr Tony Press, the Head of the Australian delegation, expressing appreciation for the work done. SouthMAC endorsed this approach.

**Action arising**

### **Agenda item 7 - New and Exploratory fisheries**

SouthMAC noted that the proposals by the sole Australian operator to fish in CCAMLR New and Exploratory fisheries in 2004/05 were endorsed by CCAMLR XXIII.

SouthMAC recommended the catch limits outlined in the following table, which would apply to Australian flagged vessels in the 2004/05 season. No assessment of stocks in these areas has been undertaken and these limits are considered to be precautionary.

**Action arising**

Area	Method	Target species limits (tonnes)	By-catch limits (tonnes)		
			Skates & Rays (per region)	<i>Macrourus</i> spp. (per region)	Other species (per SSRU)
		<i>Dissostichus</i> spp			
58.4.3(a)	Longline	250	50	26	20
58.4.3(b)	Longline	300	50	159	20
88.1	Longline	3,250	163	520	20

SSRU means small scale research unit.

### **Rules for catch limits for by-catch species adopted by CCAMLR XXIII**

Skates and rays            5% of the catch limit for *Dissostichus* spp. or 50 tonnes, whichever is greater.

*Macrourus* spp.        16% of the catch limit for *Dissostichus* spp., except in Divisions 58.4.3a and 58.4.3b.

Other species            20 tonnes total per SSRU.

SouthMAC noted that for New and Exploratory fisheries, vessels from a number of other CCAMLR member countries were also given approval to operate in the various CCAMLR Statistical Divisions, and the catch limits for each Division will be on a competitive basis.

SouthMAC noted advice from Mr Scott that the Australian flagged longline vessel *Janas* would not be operating in CCAMLR sub-area 88.1 (Ross Sea) in 2004/05. Another Australian flagged vessel would be nominated to operate.

SouthMAC noted that 21 vessels had been given approval to operate in sub-area 88.1 in 2004/05. Ms Shoulder undertook to raise the participation issue at the post CCAMLR Inter-Departmental Committee meeting and CCAMLR Consultative Forum.

**Action arising**

## Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery

### Agenda item 8 - Setting catch limits for the HIMI Fishery

Catch limits for the HIMI Fishery are recommended annually to CCAMLR by Australia, following analysis of the results from the trawl survey. SAFAG reviewed these results prior to their submission to CCAMLR. WG-FSA met in Hobart from 11 to 22 October 2004 and reviewed the assessments and methods used.

CCAMLR prescribed the catch limits for the HIMI Fishery which were recommended by Australia, and shown in the following table. SAFAG 22 held on 16-17 November 2004 reviewed these limits and recommended to SouthMAC 21 that they be adopted for the 2004/05 season, commencing on 1 December 2004.

Target species (tonnes)		Bycatch Limits (tonnes)				
Patagonian toothfish	Mackerel icefish	Skates and rays	<i>Macrourus</i> spp.	Unicorn icefish	Grey rockcod	Each other species
2787	1864	120	360	150	80	50

SouthMAC noted the catch limit recommendations for toothfish, mackerel icefish and bycatch species are consistent with the biological reference points as required by *Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan 2002*.

In relation to the catch limits, SouthMAC noted:

**Patagonian toothfish** - the Scientific Committee reassessed the catch limit for Patagonian toothfish in Division 58.5.2 based on the final assessment provided by WG-FSA and recommended a TAC of 2,787 tonnes for the 2004/05 season, which was adopted by CCAMLR. This is a decrease of 86 tonnes from the 2,873 tonne TAC for the 2003/04 season. The change in TAC relative to the previous season, and the preliminary assessment submitted by Australia for 2004/05, resulted from revisions to the recruitment series agreed during WG-FSA aimed at providing consistency across surveys and cohorts. The assessment took into account an estimated IUU catch of 634 tonnes from the HIMI Fishery.

**Mackerel icefish** - the Scientific Committee reassessed the catch limit for mackerel icefish in Division 58.5.2, and agreed to recommend a TAC of 1,864 tonnes for the 2004/05 fishing season, for the area known as the Heard Island Plateau. This is a substantial increase from the 292 tonnes TAC prescribed for the same area in 2003/04. The large increase in the TAC is consistent with the preliminary assessment submitted to SAFAG and WG-FSA by Australia and is the result of a very strong cohort entering the fishery.

**Other bycatch species** - no new assessments were undertaken for other bycatch species and therefore catch limits prescribed by CCAMLR for grey rockcod (80 tonnes), unicorn icefish (150 tonnes), skates and rays (120 tonnes), macrourids (360 tonnes) and each other species (50 tonnes each) remain unchanged.

SouthMAC agreed to recommend to the AFMA Board that the catch and size limits prescribed by CCAMLR XXIII be determined for the HIMI Fishery for the 2004/05 season.

#### **Action arising**

Dr Haddon reported on the outcomes of the SAFAG meeting held on 16 – 17 November 2004. The key issues discussed were:

**HIMI stock assessment** - SAFAG had a good discussion with Dr Davies on the stock assessment processes and noted that AAD were planning to review and update parameters used in the current toothfish assessment and evaluate the robustness of potential alternative assessment methods. This would be done in conjunction with a review of stock assessments procedures for CCAMLR sub-area 48.3.

Dr Davies had provided SAFAG with details on why the expected TAC for toothfish had fallen slightly, which was a result of revisions to the recruitment series.

SouthMAC welcomed the undertaking by AAD to conduct a stock assessment for skates and rays prior to the 2005/06 season.

**Alternative harvest strategies for Macquarie Island** – SAFAG had agreed that Dr Geoff Tuck from CSIRO would undertake a Management Strategy Evaluation to investigate three ways to estimate available biomass. The available biomass was the basis of a decision rule which determined whether a commercial TAC was appropriate for the Fishery. Dr Tuck would provide a progress report to SAFAG in February 2005, with the results further discussed at the April 2005 SAFAG meeting.

For 2004/05 a research quota of 60 tonnes would apply to the Fishery.

**Costs of research** – it was noted that industry spent around \$1 million annually on research at HIMI, which included the random stratified trawl survey and tagging programs. SouthMAC agreed that research funding organisations should be made aware of these costs to highlight the level of industry funding being provided for research and monitoring.

#### **Action arising**

Mr Cartwright commented that the AFMA Research Committee were looking at innovative ways to access research funds, and noted a workshop was planned in February 2005 involving the Commonwealth Fisheries Association to discuss the issue. He also noted Commonwealth fisheries were well below what was expected back from the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC).

**Research priorities** - the research priorities for Antarctic fisheries were discussed. Mr Exel sought to access some funding to employ some external expertise to review the stock assessment methodologies. Other research issues identified were

- biology and assessment of shared stocks;
- allocation of resources for a shared stock;
- allocation for high seas fisheries; and
- management strategy evaluation of toothfish assessment methods.

Dr Haddon undertook to review the current 5 year strategic research plan for Antarctic fisheries, and incorporate the issues identified above. This would be circulated to SAFAG prior to going to SouthMAC.

**Action arising**

SouthMAC noted that a report on the ‘deleterious effects of longlining’ was required prior consideration being given to longlining as a prescribed method under the HIMI Fishery Management Plan. Ms Shoulder undertook to prepare a scoping document for the report, in consultation with Ms Wilkinson, and circulate it to SouthMAC for comment.

**Action arising**

**Agenda item 9 - Bycatch management arrangements in the HIMI Fishery**

SouthMAC discussed the bycatch management arrangements for the HIMI Fishery, particularly in relation to skates and rays. The skates and rays catch limit was maintained at 120 tonnes for 2004/05. The catch limit is a significant concern for Australian industry operators as the catch of skates and rays in the longline fishery was over 60 tonnes in 2003/04. With the increased mackerel icefish TAC in 2004/05 there is expected to be an increased catch of skates and rays as a bycatch in trawl operations. In 2002/03 when the icefish TAC was 2980 tonnes trawl operations took close to 30 tonnes. It was noted that should a bycatch limit be reached the entire HIMI Fishery would be closed.

SouthMAC noted that SAFAG 22 had discussed the issue the previous day and agreed on a set of protocols to be adopted to monitor the catch of skates and rays in the 2004/05 season. The new logbook format requires the skipper of a vessel operating in the HIMI Fishery to report on the catch and life status of bycatch species. This information from the 10 day reporting format will be used to monitor the catch from each sector on an ongoing basis. Mr Stanley undertook to consult with AAD to determine the suitable sample size to determine the weights to be used in calculating the catch.

It was also agreed to assume a mortality rate of 25% applies to skates and rays cut off at the water in line with the CCAMLR instruction. That is, the CCAMLR Scientific Committee recommended that vessels be advised that, where possible, they should cut all rajids (skates and rays) from their lines whilst the rajids are still in the water, except on the request of the scientific observer.

SouthMAC agreed if catches of skates and rays reached either 30 tonnes in the trawl sector, 60 tonnes in the longline sector or 60 tonnes total between sectors a review would be triggered which would examine procedures and practices, aimed at ensuring that one sector does not adversely impact on the other sector. The review group would comprise Paula Shoulder and SAFAG Members, Rosemary Gales and Barry Baker.

**Agenda item 10 – Collaborative research between Australia and France**

Dr Davies provided SouthMAC with an update of proposed joint research between Australia and France to investigate whether toothfish are a shared stock on the Kerguelen Plateau. He advised that AAD had met with the French delegation at CCAMLR, and there had been a generally positive response to the proposal, with further talks to follow the finalisation of the treaty process. It is envisaged the joint project would operate under the scientific annex of the Australian/French Cooperation Treaty which was scheduled to be finalised in the coming months.

Officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry had been and would continue to be involved in the process.

The elements identified for the joint project are:

- a joint trawl survey (similar to our annual RSTS) to estimate recruitment rates if toothfish across the whole Kerguelen Plateau.
- a collaborative tagging study to estimate the rate and direction of exchange of juvenile/adult toothfish on the Kerguelen Plateau.
- further genetic work to improve the power of the genetics analysis. This would involve additional samples from Crozet, Kerguelen and, ideally Prince Edward and Marion Islands.

Dr Davies envisaged the work would conclude around 2008, assuming it was possible to initiate the study in 2005/06. SouthMAC recommended that Australia should commence developing a negotiating position for dealing with the shared stock scenario, should the results of the study indicate this was the case. AFMA agreed to raise the issue at the next meeting of the CCAMLR Inter-Departmental Committee in December 2004.

**Action arising**

### **Agenda item 11 – Annual review of the Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan**

SouthMAC discussed the format for reporting against performance criteria specified in the *Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan 2002*, and agreed to maintain the format used in the 2003/04 AFMA Annual Report. Mr Neave undertook to prepare a similar table, around June 2005, for Members consideration for inclusion in the 2004/05 Annual Report.

**Action arising**

SouthMAC discussed a range of proposed amendments to the *Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan 2002* or associated legislation. The issues discussed were:

- making longline fishing a prescribed fishing method;
- examining increasing the number of vessels permitted to operate;
- amending the overcatch provisions to bring it into line with the proposed procedure under the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery Management Plan;
- allowing for transshipment;
- specifying the total number of Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs); and
- amending the date for finalising the Fisheries Assessment Plan.

SouthMAC noted the success to date of the operations of the longline vessel *Janas* in the HIMI Fishery and that no seabirds had been killed over the two seasons the vessel has operated. It was noted that Australian operators would be seeking to introduce new longliners in the Fishery, with a possible reduction in the trawl vessel numbers.

The current longline season extends from 1 May to 14 September and industry members advised that the current three vessels permitted to operate (if all longliners) would be unable to take the toothfish TAC, if the TAC were at around current levels (2787 tonnes for 2004/05 season).

SouthMAC noted that:

- prior to the introduction of longlining as a prescribed method, a report on the deleterious effects of longlining needed to be prepared and considered;
- that if the proposal to longline and increase vessel numbers was supported a new Strategic Assessment for the Fishery would probably be required; and
- that AFMA would be raising these issues in writing with the Department of the Environment and Heritage.

**Action arising**

Ms Wilkinson raised the issue of longlining by Australian operators in that part of the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which falls in CCAMLR Statistical Divisions 58.4.3a (Elan Bank) and 58.4.3b (BANZARE Bank). She advised that because those waters fell under Commonwealth jurisdiction a Strategic Assessment would be needed prior to operations commencing.

Mr Scott confirmed his Company's intention was to operate within the EEZ in 58.4.3a and 58.4.3b in September 2005. Ms Shoulder and Ms Wilkinson undertook to discuss the issue further and report back to SouthMAC.

**Action arising**

SouthMAC noted an industry proposal to have consistency between the overcatch provisions in the HIMI Fishery and that proposed for the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery. It is proposed that any overcatch from 0 – 10 tonnes would come off the following season's quota on a one for one basis, and any overcatch from 10 - 20 tonnes would come off the following season's quota on a three for one basis. Any overcatch above 20 tonnes would be subject to the three for one reduction and possible prosecution.

SouthMAC noted that AFMA had no 'in principle' objections to transshipping provided the operation was supervised. Industry members advised that transshipping of catch potentially offered an economically efficient means to assist fishing operations, where considerable steaming time to and from the grounds could be avoided, particularly for longline operations where there is a restricted season length.

SouthMAC supported an industry proposal to include in the Management Plan an explicit reference to the maximum number of SFRs for toothfish and icefish (30,000 per species).

The HIMI Fishery Management Plan currently requires that the Fisheries Assessment Plan (FAP) for the season needs to be completed prior to the start of that season (1 December). SouthMAC noted this was proving to be impractical and, given that the research requirements specified in the FAP do not commence until around May, discussed altering the date the FAP needs to be finalised to around March.

SouthMAC agreed the issues, outlined above, would be further discussed at its next meeting.

**Action arising**

## **Agenda item 12 – Fisheries Assessment Plan 2004/05**

SouthMAC noted that SAFAG had discussed the Fisheries Assessment Plan (FAP) for the HIMI Fishery on the previous day, and that 30 days for research and monitoring were available in 2004/05, as a result of a carryover from 2003/04. It was recognised that the random stratified trawl survey (RSTS) was the key component which should be continued.

Mr Scott sought recognition of the research work carried out by the *Janas* in 2003/04 and how it could be integrated into the FAP in future. Dr Davies advised that the research transects were the best way for the *Janas* to contribute to HIMI research.

Dr Davies also advised there was merit in tagging smaller toothfish on the Plateau and trawling for juvenile toothfish in the shallower grounds.

SouthMAC requested that Dr Davies liaise with industry and AFMA on the number of days required to undertake RSTS, the survey using the IYGPT net, tagging and longline research transects. Dr Davies undertook to discuss the FAP with his AAD colleagues and circulate a proposal to industry and AFMA.

**Action arising**

Mr Neave undertook to circulate the draft FAP to Members following resolution of the number of days to be allocated to each research requirement.

**Action arising**

## **Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery**

### **Agenda item 13 – Management Plan update and timetable**

SouthMAC discussed the development of the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery Management Plan, which had been given Board approval in June 2003. SouthMAC noted the current draft Management Plan which would be progressed following consideration of a number of issues including the allocation of Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) and boat numbers.

SouthMAC noted that the Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) which was looking at the allocation of SFRs issue for the Fishery was scheduled to report prior to the AFMA Board meeting on 25–26 November 2004. Some Members expressed concern that the IAP had not issued a draft report for public consideration, but instead had prepared a ‘Statement of Issues’ which the IAP perceived to underpin its final advice to AFMA.

SouthMAC supported an AFMA proposal that the IAP report be released for a further period of public comment once considered by the Board. Mr Neave undertook to circulate the IAP Report to Members if Board approval was given.

**Action arising**

SouthMAC discussed the boat number issue and noted the discussions from SAFAG the previous day. It was agreed a key principle was to protect the high environmental values of Macquarie Island and its surrounds. It was recognised that the stringent environmental requirements on fishing authorisations and the standard of operations on fishing vessels were fundamental to this issue, particularly given that the fishing rights would be tradeable.

It was noted that SouthMAC, at its previous meeting on 25 March 2004, agreed that more than one boat operating in the Fishery was acceptable as long as appropriate measures to minimise environmental impacts were in place. A mechanism to limit the number of vessels at any one time was recognised as an issue for further consideration.

Ms Wilkinson and Ms Moore advised that consideration should be given to limiting boat numbers given the environmental risks. Ms Shoulder was of the view that the TAC would limit effort and that the standards on the boat to be able to meet the strict environmental requirements was a key factor.

Ms Shoulder undertook to write to the Department of the Environment and Heritage to clarify their position on the boat numbers issue and agreed to advise SouthMAC of the outcomes out-of-session.

**Action arising**

SouthMAC discussed the overcatch provisions in the draft Management Plan. Industry proposed that any overcatch from 0 – 10 tonnes should come off the following season's quota on a one for one basis, and any overcatch from 10 - 20 tonnes would come off the following season's quota on a three for one basis. Any overcatch above 20 tonnes would be subject to the three for one reduction and possible prosecution.

Mr Exel suggested a number of changes to the draft Plan as presented to SouthMAC. He advised the Plan needed to have reference points and TACs for each region (Aurora Trough and the area outside the Aurora Trough), some minor changes to the reporting requirements for gear loss.

AFMA undertook to circulate a further draft of the Management Plan once the above issues had been progressed.

**Action arising**

## **Finance report**

### **Agenda item 14 – 2004/05 levy base**

SouthMAC noted the levy bases for the HIMI Fishery, the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery and CCAMLR New and Exploratory fisheries. The levy base for 2004/05 is:

<b>Fishery</b>	<b>2004/05 levy base</b>
Heard Island and McDonald Islands	\$391,262 (including \$66,315 research levy)
Macquarie Island	\$121,647 (including \$3,240 research levy)
CCAMLR New and Exploratory	\$102,374

SouthMAC noted that AFMA had agreed to defer some of the levy collected while the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery Management Plan was being developed. Mr Neave advised that the costs of the Plan development would be collected by SFR holders once the Plan had been finalised. AFMA agreed to investigate the level of the deferred costs and report back to SouthMAC at its next meeting.

**Action arising**

Industry members agreed to maintain the 50/50 costing split between Patagonian toothfish and mackerel icefish SFRs in the HIMI Fishery for 2004/05.

SouthMAC noted that the levy calculation for New and Exploratory fisheries would be reduced to account for the lower than anticipated number of applications received for 2004/05.

### **Agenda item 15 – Expenditure report**

SouthMAC noted the expenditure report for Antarctic fisheries for the three months ended 30 September 2004.

## **Environment**

### **Agenda item 16 – Bycatch Action Plan update**

Mr Neave advised SouthMAC that a progress report on the Antarctic Fisheries Bycatch Action Plan was reviewed by the Environment Committee and it was agreed to adopt the format as a template for other fisheries.

SouthMAC noted that the AFMA Environment Committee will be meeting in March 2005 and a further progress report will be required by February. Mr Neave advised a draft progress report will be sent to Members out-of-session for consideration around that time.

**Action arising**

## **Other**

### **Agenda item 17 - Other business**

No other business was discussed.

### **Agenda item 18 - Next meeting**

The next meeting of SouthMAC was tentatively scheduled for March 2005, but would be dependent on progress with the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery Management Plan.

The meeting closed at 2.50pm.