



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority



Sub-Antarctic Resource Assessment Group (SARAG)

MINUTES
SARAG 27
26 SEPTEMBER 2006

SUB- ANTARCTIC RESOURCE ASSESSMENT GROUP (SARAG)

CHAIR: Dr Malcolm Haddon

Date: 26 September 2006

Attendance

Members

Dr Malcolm Haddon – Chair
Ms Mandy Goodspeed, AFMA
Dr Andrew Constable, AGAD
Dr Dirk Welsford, AGAD
Dr Geoff Tuck, CSIRO
Dr Fred Pribac, CSIRO
Mr Martin Exel, Industry Member
Mr Les Scott, Industry Member

Apologies

Ms Trysh Stone, AFMA
Mr Stuart Richey, Industry
Mr Barry Baker, AGAD
Dr Graham Robertson, AGAD
Dr Rosemary Gales, DPIWE

Observers

Dr Steve Candy, AGAD
Mr Steve Paku, Austral Fisheries
Mr Graham Patchell, Petuna New Zealand
Ms Fay Helidoniotis, UTAS

Introduction

Agenda item 1 - Preliminaries

The twenty-seventh meeting of the Sub-Antarctic Resource Assessment Group (SARAG 27) was opened at 9.15 am by the Chair, Dr Malcolm Haddon.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms Trysh Stone (AFMA), Mr Stuart Richey (Industry), Dr Rosemary Gales (DPIWE), Mr Barry Baker (AGAD) and Dr Graham Robertson.

Declaration of interests

Messrs Martin Exel and Les Scott declared their interest on all agenda items. Mr Exel advised that his Company owns SFRs in the HIMI Fishery and holds a Fishing Permit for the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery and he was not aware of any investigation or prosecution action by AFMA against his Company nor of any legal action by his Company against AFMA. Mr Scott advised that his Company owns SFRs in the HIMI Fishery and he was not aware of any investigation or prosecution action by AFMA against his Company nor of any legal action by his Company against AFMA.

Adoption of agenda

SARAG adopted the agenda without change. The order in which the agenda items were discussed was altered to accommodate the availability of Members. The Minutes report on the items as they appeared on the agenda.

Agenda item 2 – Adoption of Minutes from SARAG 26

The Minutes from SARAG 26 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.



Agenda item 3 - Action arising from SARAG 26

SARAG discussed the actions arising from SARAG 26. Dr Haddon and Ms Goodspeed updated the meeting on the status of items.

1. **Taruman catch** – The court case commenced on 14 August 2006 and concluded on 25 September 2006. AFMA Compliance has prepared an assessment from the fishing logbooks which indicate that 23 tonnes of toothfish were taken from area 88.1 – noting AFMA Compliance’s advice that the Trauman’s system of recording catches data should be considered unreliable.

This information has been provided to CCAMLR’s Scientific Committee and the Commission’s Standing Committee on Inspection and Compliance.

Mr Exel understood that two tagged fish were recovered from the Taruman catch. Unfortunately no details were recorded the fishing logbooks not indicating where these tagged fish were taken other than in the general area of 88.1.

2. **Integrated HIMI stock assessment** – Dr Constable advised that the results of the 2006 RSTS will be used to update the integrated assessment for the 2006 CCAMLR meeting.
3. **Progress with the MITF stock assessment** - Dr Tuck advised that he and Dr Pribac ran the tag based model which was used in previous stock assessments for the Aurora Trough. SARAG considered the revised assessment out-of-session via a phone hook-up and recommended total allowable catches (TACs) for the 2006/07 fishing season. The TACs for both sectors of the fishery were determined by AFMA on 30 June 2006.
4. **Requirements of the Ministerial Direction** – At SARAG 26, Ms Stone advised that SARAG needed to document the target and limit reference points, the monitoring strategies and decision rules for the MITF due its international management component through CCAMLR). It was agreed this should be considered in a workshop scheduled for March 2007.

Action arising

5. **HIMI conservation zones** - SARAG held a 1 day forum, which ran in conjunction with SARAG 27, which discussed the fishery values of each nominated zone. Further discussion and assessment of the conservation values analysis will occur at SARAG 28 in November 2006.

Action arising

6. **Review of environmental interactions and gear loss** - Mr Scott reiterated his previous advice to SARAG that he undertook to discuss the implementation/development of specific “move on” strategies with Dr Rosemary Gales should the company encounter seals following or foraging their boat in the future.

Action arising

7. **Discarding of species under quota management and/or subject to a total allowable catch limit** - Discarding of target species will be illegal from 2007 onwards. The issue of discarding target species under tagging programs and the release of live and vigorous bycatch species will be considered at the October AFMA Board Meeting.

Action arising



Agenda item 4 – Correspondence

SARAG noted that no correspondence had been received to be distributed to member's since the last SARAG meeting, other than correspondence specifically relating to SARAG 27 meeting administration.

Stock Assessments

Agenda item 5 – Integrated HIMI stock assessment

Drs Andrew Constable and Dirk Welsford updated the meeting on progress with the integrated stock assessment for Patagonian toothfish in the Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI) Fishery.

Four papers were provided prior to the meeting (draft in confidence):

1. Review of the use of survey data and length-at-age models in the assessment of *Dissostichus eleginoides* in the vicinity of Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI);
2. An integrated assessment of *Dissostichus eleginoides* in the vicinity of Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI) using data from research surveys, a mark-recapture program and fisheries in the CASAL assessment software;
3. Preliminary assessment of mackerel icefish, *Champscephalus gunnari*, in the vicinity of Heard Island and McDonald Islands (Division 58.5.2), based on a survey in May-June 2006, using the generalised yield model; and
4. Report on a random stratified survey to estimate distribution and abundance of *Dissostichus eleginoides* and *Champscephalus gunnari* conducted in the Heard Island region (Division 58.5.2) May-June 2006.

SARAG 26 discussed the papers and the parameters used in the assessments. These papers will be used to update the integrated assessment for the 2006 CCAMLR meeting.

Agenda item 6 – Update on progress with the MITF stock assessment

Dr Geoff Tuck updated members on progress with the integrated stock assessment and the Management Strategy Evaluations being conducted for the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery (MITF).

Agenda item 7 – Review of environmental interactions and gear loss

SARAG noted the tables provided by AFMA which summarised seabird interactions, marine mammal interactions, gear loss and gear recovered.

Mr Scott reiterated his previous advice to SARAG that he undertook to discuss the implementation/development of specific “move on” strategies with Dr Rosemary Gales should the company encounter seals following or foraging around their boat in the future.

Action arising

Mr Exel requested, in future, that tables provided to describe environmental interactions and gear loss should be formatted by area and by fishing method.

Action arising



Agenda item 8 – Seabird bycatch mitigation

SARAG noted the written advice provided by Mr Baker on possible seabird bycatch limits for HIMI trawl fisheries. Mr Exel noted that his recollection of discussions concerning the implementation of seabird bycatch limits was that the limits would relate only to mid water trawling not to demersal trawl operations as specified in Mr Baker's advice.

Unfortunately, contrary to the agreed undertaking made at SARAG 25 concerning attendance, none of the SARAG members with seabird expertise was available to attend the meeting. This resulted in a situation where there was no one available to speak directly to the Mr Baker's paper, with the added concern that papers relating seabirds submitted to IMAF were not available to SARAG.

Dr Constable agreed to distribute all seabird papers that had been submitted to the CCAMLR Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing (IMAF) to SARAG members.

Action arising

Mr Scott raised the issue of seeking an exemption from CCAMLR for the need to apply for access to the season extension for the toothfish fishery in the Australian EEZ in Division 58.5.2, since his company had operated successfully for 3 years in the area without any seabird deaths. Only one bird has been injured in that time after flying into the ship's gantry and falling in the water and becoming hooked on the line.

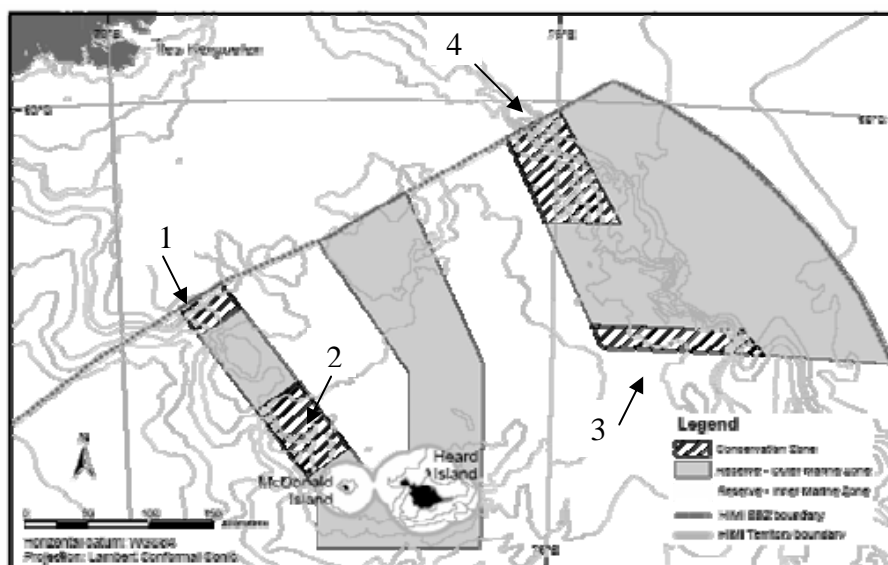
SARAG recommended that AGAD pursue the exemption through IMAF.

Action arising

Agenda item 9 – Other business

HIMI Conservation Zones

Mr Steve Paku, Skipper, Southern Champion discussed recent trawl fishing activity undertaken in the four nominated conservation zones. He made a number of points concerning ongoing fishing activity in the nominated zones. He noted that the 4 nominated areas had been chosen prior to commencement of longline fishing in the HIMI and that while operators could fish untrawlable ground this would not necessarily result in increased effort because of the reduced fishing year available to them.



He suggested moving the closed area off the western boundary of area 2, eastwards to allow continued fishing by all methods in the waters from the 500 to 1,000 metre mark.

Area 4 could be closed to trawl fishing due to the rough ground.

Mr Scott noted that longline fishing in areas 1 and 2 had captured spawning fish.

The status quo should remain in area 3.

Agenda item 10 – Next meeting

The next meeting of SARAG was scheduled for 14 and 15 November 2006. Issues to be discussed include the Level 2 ERA and HIMI Conservation Zones. The meeting would be followed directly by SouthMAC 25 and the Annual General Public Meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm.

