

Six-monthly bycatch action plan (BAP) progress report

MAC / Fishery: Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

BAP release date: September 2004

Report date: March 2007

Issue: Protected species and ecological communities		
Strategy (1): Take all reasonable steps to ensure that species listed under Part 13 of the EPBC Act 1999 are not killed or injured as a result of fishing.		
Performance Indicator (output):	Actions taken for output	Output achieved (y/n) and date
1) The BAP elements of the fishery data plan identified within 6 months of the commencement of the BAP. The plan will include data collection requirements for protected species	<p>Final data plan was endorsed by Eastern Tuna MAC at MAC 66 in October 2006 and included the elements of the BAP. AFMA provides an annual logbook catch and effort data summary and this includes interactions with TEP species. Observer data has been reported to the MAC and has been incorporated in the ERA for the fishery</p> <p>AFMA also assists in the preparation of Australia's Annual Report to the WCPFC, which contains this information</p>	Yes – this is part of regular logbook reporting and has been since the first Threat Abatement Plan introduced in 2001
2). A set of actions developed within six months to reduce the killing and injury of protected species and implemented where appropriate	The level of interactions has been assessed and MAC has recommended changes in management arrangements to reduce seabird interactions. Arrangements are being developed for turtle releasing devices to be placed onboard all ETBF vessels and the use of wire trace has been banned in the fishery	Yes and ongoing
3) Strategic research plans developed with actions to reduce the killing and injury of protected species	Specific research has been undertaken to reduce seabird interactions in the development of tori lines, underwater setting chutes and bait capsules. Research is also under way to assess circle hooks to reduce turtle impacts. A research project on a new device to mitigate seabird interactions has been submitted for consideration at Eastern Tuna MAC 71 in March 2008	Yes and ongoing
4) MAC assessment of the range of species caught, level of interactions and effectiveness of management arrangements	A steering group from Eastern Tuna MAC has been formed to address this issue and also AFMA's discards policy and will report to the MAC at its June 2007 meeting with options to address any high risk species requiring additional management as identified by the ERA	Ongoing

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<p>5) Efficacy of the industry codes of practice (CoP) assessed and reported by MAC.</p>	<p>A field trip in February 2007 by the MAC executive officer ascertained the level of awareness of the CoP by industry was low. Plans to review efficacy of the CoP have been overtaken by a study investigating if there are any voluntary actions in the BAP that are not now mandatory under fishing permit conditions.</p>	<p>Yes, efficacy of CoP ascertained as low although the voluntary actions in the CoP that related directly to the BAP are now mandatory under permit conditions</p>
<p>6) ERA completed and management arrangements for high risk species in place.</p>	<p>The final ERA is still to be provided to the MAC although several drafts have been considered over the past 3 years. This was considered at MAC 70 in November 2007. As a consequence of the residual risk assessment the original list of 34 high risk species has been reduced to 9. Management arrangements to mitigate interactions with most of these 9 species are already in place or being developed</p>	<p>No – The ERA and associated risk assessment is being considered at MAC 69 in June 2007. Yes, November 2007</p>
<p>7) A communication strategy developed and implementation progressed.</p>	<p>A series of workshops and port meetings were held in August and September 2005 where the importance of minimising interactions with TEPs was explained and the usage of dehookers demonstrated. Operators were provided with the materials and instructions to make up their own tori lines. Meetings were held in Mooloolaba (2), Coffs Harbour, Sydney, Ulladulla and Eden and were well attended by local operators. Follow up meetings have been held in 2006 and 2007 to ensure minimising interactions with TEP species remains in the forefront of operators minds. An additional port meeting was held in February 2008 to discuss management issues and remind operators of their obligations with mitigation measures to reduce interactions with TEP speicies</p>	<p>Yes and ongoing</p>
<p>8). Actions addressing fishery interactions reviewed by MAC</p>	<p>An update on the effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures is provided at each MAC meeting along with reports of any interactions with other TEP species. In addition the MAC has formed a discards steering committee to advise the MAC on measures to meet the objectives of AFMA's discards policy</p>	<p>Yes – since 1998 and ongoing at each MAC meeting</p>
<p>9). Monitoring and reporting procedures in place to ensure that there are minimal fishery interactions with protected species.</p>	<p>AFMA monitors interactions with TEP species via logbooks, a dedicated Observer program and specific trials such as seabird mitigation trials</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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10). The compliance plan reviewed to determine achieved compliance and appropriateness of program objectives.

The Compliance Operational Plan is reviewed as part of the draft budget and levybase at a MAC meeting in March/April of each year. In 2007 the MAC recommended an increase in funding for enforcement of seabird mitigation measures. [The Compliance Plan will be reviewed again at MAC 71 in March 2008](#)

Yes - annually

Desired outcome: All reasonable steps taken to minimise injury and deaths of species listed under Part 13 of the EPBC Act 1999.

Outcome achieved? Yes – the need to minimize interactions with TEP species is now a priority for industry and a focal point in their daily fishing operations

Issue: High risk and other bycatch species		
Strategy (2) : Take all reasonable steps to reduce the bycatch of high risk and other species		
Performance Indicator (output):	Actions taken for output	Output achieved (y/n) and date
1. Develop and implement management strategies for species identified as high risk from the ERA process	The final ERA is still to be provided to the MAC although several drafts have been considered over the past 3 years. Sharks and numerous seabirds have been identified as high risk in the draft ERA so AFMA has banned the use of wire trace and implemented mitigation measures in the fishery to reduce the respective risk. This was considered at MAC 70 in November 2007. As a consequence of the residual risk assessment the original list of 34 high risk species has been reduced to 9. Management arrangements to mitigate interactions with most of these 9 species are already in place or being developed	Yes – ongoing although wire traces banned in 2005 and seabird mitigation developed and implemented on the past few years.
2. The BAP elements of the Data Plan will be identified within six months and includes data collection requirements for all bycatch species	AFMA monitors interactions with high risk and other species via logbooks, a dedicated Observer program and specific trials such as seabird mitigation trials. A revised ALO5 logbook is being developed that will continue to require reporting of bycatch species	Yes and ongoing. New logbook by end of 2007
3. Strategic research plans developed which focus on high risk species	Projects have been supported for mitigation of seabird interactions, including recent line weighting trials conducted by Australian Antarctic Division scientists. Funding has been provided to address turtle interactions. Mitigation projects are also rated 5 in the MAC's research priority list	Yes - ongoing
4. Jurisdictional arrangements addressed.	AFMA has held discussions with QLD and NSW on bycatch/jurisdiction issues and these are ongoing. Discussions are ongoing but nothing has been finalised as yet.	Continuing

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<p>5. Communication strategy developed and implementation progressed.</p> <p>6. Through monitoring and reporting ensure that accepted measures are in place to minimise fishery interactions with high-risk species.</p> <p>7. ERA completed and risks to all species characterised.</p>	<p>A series of workshops and port meetings were held in August and September 2005 where the importance of minimising interactions with TEPs was explained and the usage of dehookers demonstrated. Operators were provided with the materials and instructions to make up their own tori lines. Meetings were held in Mooloolaba (2), Coffs Harbour, Sydney, Ulladulla and Eden and were well attended by local operators. Follow up meetings have been held in 2006 and 2007 to ensure minimising interactions with TEP species remains in the forefront of operators minds.</p> <p>An additional port meeting was held in February 2008 to discuss management issues and remind operators of their obligations with mitigation measures to reduce interactions with TEP species.</p> <p>AFMA monitors interactions with high risk and other species via logbooks, a dedicated Observer program and specific trials such as seabird mitigation trials.</p> <p>The final ERA is still to be provided to the MAC although several drafts have been considered over the past 3 years</p>	<p>Yes – started in 2005 and ongoing</p> <p>Yes – refer annual data summary and observer reports</p> <p>No – should be considered at MAC 69 in June 2006</p>
<p>Desired outcome: Greater knowledge of and reduced bycatch of high risk and other species.</p>		
<p>Outcome achieved? Yes – reduced bycatch of high risk and other species. Knowledge level has also increased in terms of interaction levels</p>		

<p>Issue: Broader marine ecosystem</p>		
<p>Strategy (3): Take all reasonable steps to minimise the impact of the fishery on the broader marine ecosystem</p>		
<p>Performance Indicator (output):</p>	<p>Actions taken for output</p>	<p>Output achieved (y/n) and date</p>
<p>1. The BAP elements of a fishery data plan identified.</p> <p>2. Observer sampling regime for ecosystem research developed – component of data plan.</p>	<p>Final data plan was endorsed by Eastern Tuna MAC at MAC 66 in October 2006 and included the elements of the BAP</p> <p>The observer program is currently designed to provide catch and effort data to validate interactions with by-product and bycatch species and does not include a specific sampling regime for ecosystem research. The Observer program is being reviewed by the ETBF RAG in April 2008 so this can be considered during that review.</p> <p>Some sampling is undertaken on an ad-hoc basis or when specifically requested by researchers</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No - sampling is done on an ad hoc basis where possible but unlikely to be part of observer program due to cost.</p>

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<p>3. Management recommendations progressed on results of ecological indicator project.</p> <p>4. Strategic research plans developed which focus on ecosystem research.</p>	<p>The final ERA is still to be provided to the MAC although several drafts have been considered over the past 3 years. Once this is available explicit management arrangements to address negative ecological impacts will be developed - No negative ecological impacts were identified in the ERA.</p> <p>Ecosystem research has been a priority on the ETBF research priority list for the past 5 years</p> <p>CSIRO are undertaking the project” Determining ecological effects of longline fishing in the eastern tuna and billfish fishery”</p>	<p>Not yet</p> <p>Yes, ecosystem research is a priority within the ETBF research plan.</p>
<p>Desired outcome: Greater knowledge of and decreased impact on the broader marine ecosystem by the tuna fisheries.</p>		
<p>Outcome achieved? Yes – knowledge base has improved and continues to develop</p>		

Issue: Communication strategy		
Strategy (4): Communicating the Bycatch Action Plan to industry.		
Performance Indicator (output):	Actions taken for output	Output achieved (y/n) and date
1. Education and awareness programs on bycatch.	A series of workshops and port meetings were held in August and September 2005 where the importance of minimising interactions with TEPs was explained and the usage of dehookers demonstrated. Operators were provided with the materials and instructions to make up their own tori lines. Meetings were held in Mooloolaba (2), Coffs Harbour, Sydney, Ulladulla and Eden and were well attended by local operators. Follow up meetings have been held in 2006 and 2007 to ensure minimising interactions with TEP species remains in the forefront of operators minds. An additional port meeting was held in February 2008 to discuss management issues and remind operators of their obligations with mitigation measures to reduce interactions with TEP species.	Yes – started in 2005 and ongoing
2. Industry extension.	See above. Also regular field trips undertake by MAC executive Officer and AFMA staff to discuss current issues in the fishery and remind operators of the need to be fully cognisant of their impact on the wider eco-system. Also need to reduce bycatch or innovative ways of doing so regularly reported in AFMA news and fishing futures	Yes and ongoing
Desired outcome: Increased industry awareness about BAPs, their objectives and actions as well as increased awareness about the impact fisheries have on the ecosystem and how to minimise this impact.		
Outcome achieved? Yes – industry now has heightened awareness of the impact of fishing on the wider ecosystem.		