



Vol 2, Issue 1, 14 January 2005

NEW YEAR, NEW CHALLENGES

Welcome to the first edition of AFMA Update for 2005. We trust you all had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

2005 is expected to be another busy year for AFMA, with a number of important issues on the agenda. This includes the planned finalisation and implementation of three new fisheries management plans. AFMA will also be significantly advancing its 'ecosystem-based' approach this year through ecological risk assessments (ERAs) to better manage the impacts of fishing on target, non-target species and the broader environment. Illegal fishing will also continue to be a focus to protect our fish stocks.

You will notice that AFMA will also be taking further steps to improve the way it does business with industry and all its stakeholders, with a clear commitment to greater 'co-management' of Commonwealth fisheries, minimising costs, and easier access to information from AFMA.

LICENCE TRANSFERS NEARING COMPLETION

With the recent move to Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) in the SESS Fishery, AFMA's Licensing section has been busy processing applications for transfers.

A small number of transfers lodged could not occur until SFRs were issued on 1 January, and in addition, some transfers have been delayed by operators not providing the required information or payments. At the time of writing, all outstanding transfers are being processed urgently. We encourage all applicants to ensure that any outstanding paperwork and payments are submitted to enable your transfers to be finalised. AFMA remains committed to processing transactions within seven business days in accordance with its client service charter.

SESS FISHERY BOATS: KEEP YOUR EXTRACT OF REGISTER ON BOARD!

Under the terms of the new Southern and Eastern and Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) Management Plan, all SESSF SFR holders are now required to carry a copy of their *extract* of the SESSF Register on board their boat at all times. This extract details your access to the SESSF, your nominated boat and distinguishing symbol, and all quota SFR (if any) also nominated to that boat. If inspected by a fisheries officer, it must be presented for examination. Your SFR *Certificate* does NOT need to be held on board your boat.

NEW STRATEGY TO REDUCE DOLPHIN INTERACTIONS

AFMA will implement a long-term strategy aimed at reducing interactions between dolphins and fishing trawlers operating in the Small Pelagic Fishery. AFMA, in consultation with the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH), conservation groups and fishing operators, developed the strategy in response to recent accidental captures of dolphins by a fishing vessel.

A Bycatch Mitigation Group will be formed immediately to lead the further development and implementation of the strategy. Underwater video cameras will be employed to gather more information on dolphin interactions with fishing gear and to help determine what further measures may be required. A national and international review of potential mitigation measures is also being conducted, along with an increase in the levels of observer coverage on vessels operating in the fishery. The full media release and report on the incident is available on AFMA's website: www.afma.gov.au

COMMERCIAL FISH SPECIES NOMINATED AS THREATENED

AFMA has been advised that the Southern Bluefin Tuna, Orange Roughy, Eastern Gemfish and the School Shark have been nominated for listing as threatened species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). In addition, the eligibility of listing three shark species; the Harrison's Deepsea Dogfish, Southern Dogfish and Endeavour Dogfish are being considered by the Threatened Species Scientific Committee of the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH). (cont.)

Each nomination is assessed to determine whether it meets the criteria for listing and then the Committee's advice and subsequent recommendations are forwarded to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage for final decision. The Committee has substantially progressed its assessment of these nominations and is currently seeking comment. These nominations are currently available for viewing on the DEH website for a **two-month public consultation period, which closes on 28 February 2005** at: <http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/nominations/public-comment/index.html>.

NEW ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE FOR SCALLOPS

The final grant of Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery took place on 21 December 2004. Boat SFRs and quota SFRs were issued to all eligible stakeholders in the fishery, and took effect from 1 January 2005. Until 2007, a boat SFR must be held by operators in addition to quota SFRs. Quota SFRs in the fishery will take the form of commercial scallop quota SFRs and doughboy scallop quota SFRs. These rights are fully tradeable.

A booklet explaining the 2005 management arrangements for the scallop fishery was sent to all SFR holders in December 2005 and is available on the AFMA website: <http://www.afma.gov.au/fisheries/bass/mgt/default.php>. AFMA plans to undertake a series of visits in early 2005 to explain these arrangements directly to industry. Operators will be advised of the dates of these visits as soon as they are confirmed. For further information contact Ryan Murphy, Manager Licensing and Quota Management, on (02) 6272 5358 or Dave Johnson, Manager Scallop Fishery, on (02) 6272 3274.

AUSSIE FISH GET FREE RIDE TO US MARKET

The United States Free Trade Agreement commenced on 1 January 2005, making the unprecedented entry of Australian seafood to the US market completely free of tariffs, which were previously as much as 35%. The Australian Seafood Industry Council has welcomed the move, saying it will help to pave the way for new growth of Australia's \$190m seafood sales into a \$34 billion seafood market.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR WEBSITE?

To help improve our online services, AFMA invites you to take part in our anonymous website survey. The survey consists of 12 questions and should take approximately five minutes to complete. The results of this survey will help us to design a brand new website to be launched later this year. You can take part in the survey by visiting [Latest News](#) on the AFMA website, www.afma.gov.au. Thanks in advance for taking part.

HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE FUTURE!

In our last edition of *AFMA Update*, we let you know about a project which is identifying the issues which small to medium sized fishing operators in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery, the South East Trawl, and Gillnet, Hook and Trap Fishery will face over the next 5 to 10 years, and suggesting the types of activities that will help operators manage these changing circumstances. The consultants undertaking the work (ACIL Tasman), and the industry and government Steering Committee, have now identified the following priority areas:

- Improved understanding and adoption of technology
- Labour/skills shortages,
- Communication and knowledge management
- Supply chain efficiency
- Industry image
- Marketing- including value adding
- Fishing industry engagement in development of fishing and non-fishing regulations
- Operators ability and capacity to participate in industry decision making processes
- Skill development/education/training of operators
- Succession planning/exiting and entry to the industry

The next phase of the project is to review the types of activities that could be funded by industry or from existing Australian Government programs that could be useful in these priority areas. The consultants are keen to receive further input from industry. Please contact Peter Crowley, ACIL Tasman, on (02) 6249 8055, or p.crowley@aciltasman.com.au.

AFMA UPDATE MAILING DETAILS

Name _____

Contact phone _____

Please FAX this page back on (02) 6272 5036 or phone 1300 723 621

Please remove this number from the AFMA Update fax list → Fax _____

I would prefer AFMA Update emailed to me, not faxed → Email _____

 AFMADIRECT 1300 723 621