



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority



# AFMA UPDATE

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE AUSTRALIAN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Vol 2, Issue 14, 15 July 2005

## ENSURING FISH FOR THE FUTURE IN THE SESS FISHERY

Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) Management Advisory Committees (SETMAC, GHTMAC and GABMAC) will advise AFMA on a proposed approach to recover overfished species and maintain sustainable harvest levels for the long-term viability of the fishery.

The proposed harvest strategy framework would set the 'goalposts' for management of species in the SESSF through the establishment of agreed target and limit reference points and decision rules by which each species can be managed sustainably. It would also ensure the fishery fulfils its export approval requirements under the Australian government's Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and the requirements of the SESS Management Plan.

SESSF Resource Assessment Groups (RAGs) will trial the framework on individual species and develop specific decision rules before the next meeting of the joint-MACs in September 2005. The new framework and decision rules developed by the RAGs will be presented to MAC's to consider in recommending total allowable catches for all SESSF species for 2006.

## TIGER PRAWNS MAKE A COMEBACK

The AFMA Board was pleased to agree to an extension of the tiger prawn fishing season in the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF) for the first time in 6 years, after confirmation the stock has re-built to sustainable levels. This year, the season will commence in August, the time when tiger prawns are most abundant. AFMA agreed to extend the season after scientific assessments indicated that brown tiger prawn stocks in the NPF had rebuilt to target levels and the season extension would not put stock sustainability at risk.

The Board congratulated the Northern Prawn Management Advisory Committee, industry, AFMA managers and scientists on maintaining the management partnership that helped to bring about the recovery of the stocks, once considered overfished. The season will commence on 1 August and finish on 15 November.

## CHANGE TO EAST COAST TUNA PERMITS

ETBF permit holders are advised that condition number 5 (h) of their ETBF permit will be amended to allow transiting through the SBT core and buffer zones if:

- (a) the boat travels by the most direct route at a speed greater than 4 knots, and
- (b) at all times while transiting in the core and buffer zones all fishing gear remains stowed and secured.

This new condition will be included in the next SBT core and buffer zone variation. Permit holders can take advantage of this variation by emailing: [monitoring@afma.gov.au](mailto:monitoring@afma.gov.au).

[www.afma.gov.au](http://www.afma.gov.au)

 AFMADIRECT 1300 723 621

## ATTENTION SESS OPERATORS:

### Undercatch must be assigned to a SESS permit

Concession holders eligible for undercatch as part of the SESSF 2004 under/overcatch process are advised that they can not fish their undercatch unless it is assigned to a SESSF fishing permit. To assign this undercatch quota to a fishing permit please call Daniel Dal Piva on AFMADirect: 1300 723 621.

### SESS Quota *permits*

AFMA has received a number of enquiries from fishermen about purchasing SESSF quota *permits*. SESSF quota *permits* are not an ongoing access right but merely a tool that allows the holder to catch the permitted amount of shark and/or deepwater quota species. **For the purposes of transferring quota species, you do not need to purchase a SESSF quota permit.** Applicants purchasing shark and/or deepwater quota species are issued a SESSF quota permit automatically at the time of the transfer or lease of quota. For further information, please contact AFMA licensing on AFMADirect: 1300 723 621.

### AFMA BOARD MEETS IN EDEN

The AFMA Board met in Eden on 29-30 June. The Board considered a proposed approach to management of SESS species (see first story in this edition), agreed to the extension of the tiger prawn season in the NPF, appointed members of GHTMAC, SETMAC and SouthMAC for the next three years, selected the contractor for monitoring SBT farm catches and agreed funding for NPF stock surveys for the next year. The Board also decided to review AFMA's procedures for collecting overdue levies. Directors met informally with stakeholders and heard about current challenges and prospects for the region's fishing industry. The Board visited Southlands Fish Supplies on 30 June, and saw the work being done by the company to provide customers with quality fish and improve public awareness of the South East Trawl fishing sector. The next Board meeting is in Canberra on 16-17 August.

### AFMA'S FIVE YEAR PLAN GETS THE NOD

The Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, Senator Ian Macdonald has approved the new AFMA Corporate Plan for the five year period 2005-2010. The Plan outlines what AFMA considers to be the important issues that will have to be faced over the next few years, what it wants to achieve and what strategies will be used to deliver the objective of '*ecologically sustainable and economically efficient Commonwealth fisheries*'.

In the plan, AFMA's Chairman, the Hon. Tony Rundle, indicates that AFMA's focus over the next five years will be on '*ecologically sustainable and economically efficient Commonwealth fisheries*' and in particular, sustainable fishing practices, bycatch management, data gathering, resource sharing biodiversity conservation, cost efficient and effective fisheries management, and working with stakeholders. He also highlights the Government's priorities of reducing the number and scale of overfished stocks, developing fishery recovery plans and reducing foreign IUU fishing. The new Corporate Plan is now available on AFMA's website at [www.afma.gov.au](http://www.afma.gov.au) under 'publications'.

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