



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC) Meeting 49

Meeting minutes

15-16 February 2023

Melbourne/MS Teams

South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC)

Meeting 49: 15–16 February

1.1 Agenda

Time (AEST): 09:30 hr

Location: Melbourne/MS Teams

Chair Name: David McGlennon

Day 1	Item	Purpose	Lead presenter
09:30 (30 min)	Agenda item 1. Preliminaries		
	1.1 Welcome and apologies	For action	Chair
	1.2 Declaration of interests	For action	Chair
	1.3 Adoption of agenda	For action	Chair
	1.4 Minutes from previous meeting	For noting	Chair
	1.5 Actions arising from previous meetings	For noting	Rebecca Jol
10:00 (15 min)	Agenda item 2. Fishery update		
	2.1 AFMA Management	For noting	AFMA
	2.2 Industry	For noting	Industry members
10:15 (15 min)	Break		
10:30 (30 min)	Agenda item 3. SESSF Climate Simulations Outcomes	For noting	Beth Fulton
11:00 (120 min)	Agenda item 4. SESSF TAC Recommendations for the 2023–24 fishing season	For advice	AFMA
13:00 (30 mins)	Break		
13:30 (120 min)	Agenda item 4. SESSF TAC Recommendations for the 2023–24 fishing season (contd.)	For advice	AFMA
15:30 (15 min)	Break		
15:45 (105 min)	Agenda item 4. SESSF TAC Recommendations for the 2023–24 fishing season (contd.)	For advice	AFMA
17:30	Close		

Day 2	Item	Purpose	Lead presenter
09:00 (90 min)	Agenda item 4. SESSF TAC Recommendations for the 2023–24 fishing season (contd.)	For advice	AFMA
10:30 (15 min)	Break		
10:45 (105 min)	Agenda item 4. SESSF TAC Recommendations for the 2023–24 fishing season (contd.)	For advice	AFMA
12:30 (30 min)	Break		
13:00 (120 min)	Agenda item 4. SESSF TAC Recommendations for the 2023–24 fishing season (contd.)	For advice	AFMA
14:30 (45 min)	5. Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF) TAC recommendation for the 2023–2024 fishing season	For advice	Steve Hall
15:15 (15 min)	Break		
15:30 (60 min)	6. Dolphin Strategy Review Update	For noting	Lara Ainley
16:30 (15 min)	Other Business	Noting/Questions	Chair
1645 (10 min)	Review of Action Items	For advice	EO
16:55 (5 min)	Meeting Close	For noting	Chair

The Chair opened the meeting at 09:30 hr AEST

Agenda item 1. Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome and apologise

1. Dr David McGlennon, the Chair, welcomed members and observers to the meeting and made an Acknowledgement of Country paying our respects to this country's First People and Traditional Custodians of the land throughout Australia. Acknowledging Australia's Traditional Custodians of Country and recognising their continued connection to land, waters and community. Paying our respects to them and their cultures and to Elders past present and emerging.
2. The SEMAC members noted the Acknowledgement of Country, that the meeting was being recorded and commenced proceedings.

Membership

Dr David McGlennon	Chair
Dr Paul McShane	Scientific member
Dr Sarah Jennings	Economic member
Ms Anissa Lawrence	Conservation member
Mr Simon Boag	Industry member
Mr Gerry Geen	Industry member
Mr Kyri Toumazos	Industry member
Mr Will Mure	Industry member
Mr John Harrison	Recreational member
Mr Daniel Corrie	AFMA member
Ms Rebecca Jol	Executive officer

Invited Participants

Geoff Tuck	CSIRO
Heath Folpp	NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI)

Observers

Fiona McKinnon	NSW DPI
Ewan Flannagan	Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA)
Frances Seaborn	Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (DNRET)
Kris Cooling (Day 1)	FRDC
Nathan Bicknell (Day 2)	FRDC
Phil Hough	Industry Representative
Brett McCallum	AFMA Commission
David Smith	AFMA Commission

Apologies

Gerry Geen	Industry member
John Harrison	Recreational Member Day 2
Daniel Corrie	AFMA Member Day 2

1.2 Declarations of interest

3. SEMAC reviewed the table of standing declarations by members. The Chair asked participants to declare any specific conflicts of interest with the agenda items that were not previously declared, to streamline discussions during the meeting.
4. An updated table of declared conflicts of interest is provided at [Attachment A](#).
5. Industry member Mr. Simon Boag, declared conflicts of interest for agenda items 4 and 5.
6. Industry participants Mr. Will Mure and Mr. Kyri Tomazos also declared conflicts with agenda items 4 and 5.
7. The Chair sought advice on how the SEMAC should manage these conflicts and, whilst members with a conflict left the room, the remaining members agreed that those members and invited participants with an agenda conflict will be allowed to participate in the discussion but would be excluded from the meeting for recommendations.

1.3 Adoption of agenda

8. AFMA proposed a new approach to streamline the TAC discussions for agendas 4 and 5 and provided the members with a paper prior to the meeting outlining the factors influencing the TAC decision making process. The members noted that discussions for species where there is no new information or management advice to consider a revised TAC or any management advice, then AFMA recommended taking the information 'as read' and would seek support for the recommended TAC without working through the species summary document.
9. SEMAC accepted this approach to the TAC agenda's and adopted the agenda as final.

1.4 Minutes of previous meeting

10. SEMAC noted that the minutes of SEMAC 48 (held in October 2022), are close to completion and will be made available on the AFMA website when finalised.

1.5 Actions arising from previous meetings

11. SEMAC noted the action items from the previous meetings and the updates provided by the Executive Officer at [Attachment B](#).
 - there were no unresolved actions.
 - Action 45.4 as described in [Attachment B](#) has been identified as a key priority in the 2023 AFMA workplan.

Agenda item 2 – Fishery Updates

2.1 Managers Update

12. A written update was provided to SEMAC members on the key management issues arising since the last meeting on 27 October 2022.
13. The update was taken as 'read'.
14. The Committee members discussed the following points:

Closure Directions

- SEMAC noted that AFMA are in the process of drafting an amendment to the [Fisheries Management \(Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery and Small Pelagic Fishery](#)

[Closures\) Direction 2021](#) to bring the rebuilding closures for the trawl fishery into effect on 1 May 2023.

- SEMAC noted that AFMA have suggested the following names for the rebuilding closures:
 - i. Schedule 40 – Gabo Rebuilding Closure (formerly Closure A);
 - ii. Schedule 41 – Conran Rebuilding Closure (formerly Closure B);
 - iii. Schedule 42 – Horseshoe Rebuilding Closure (formerly Closure C);
 - iv. Schedule 43 – Flinders Rebuilding Closure (formerly Closure D);
 - v. Schedule 44 – Tasman Rebuilding Closure (formerly Closure E).

- An Industry member, raised the point that some of the names suggested for the rebuilding closures (Schedule 42 – Horseshoe Rebuilding Closure (formerly Closure C) and Schedule 43 - Flinders Rebuilding Closure (formerly Closure D)) share the same name as other marine closures and research zones in the SESSF.

- AFMA will consider amendments to the proposed names for the closures to avoid confusion¹.

2.2 Industry Update

15. Prior to the meeting, industry members were asked to provide an update in writing on any items that have arisen since the last meeting held in October 2022 (SEMAC 48).
16. The updates were taken as 'read'.
17. The members provided the following updates:

Will Mure (Mures Fishing P/L)

- Pink Ling catches have been excellent this year specifically in the west of Tasmania area from Sandy Cape right down to Low Rocky Cape.
- Pink Ling are more prolific further South than previously encountered and very solid in the East as in previous years.
- Just started on Blue Eye Trevalla. Catches have been O.K. but are continually hampered by Orcas.
 - Better fishing occurs in the North East of Tasmania, Eddystone, and St Helens. A possible reflection of closures off Flinders and /or lack of Orcas in that area.
- Gemfish catches have been a little slower this year compared to the previous two years. However, have not fished in the East much over winter which is when most are caught.
 - Still relatively slow even for summer.
- Prices have remained solid and stable throughout, even with larger quantities of Ling with only a short period where prices were depressed.

Kyriakos (Kyri) Toumazos – Shark Industry Representative

¹ Schedules 40- 44 have since been renamed in the closure direction and include the following titles:

- Schedule 40 – Gabo Trawl Closure
- Schedule 41 – Conran Trawl Closure
- Schedule 42 – Flounder/Kingfisher Trawl Closure
- Schedule 43 – Babel Island Trawl Closure
- Schedule 44 – South East Tasman Trawl Closure

The South Australian sector of the Shark fishery has performed extremely well over the last 12 months. Our company fished only with hooks using three vessels at different periods of the year. Western and Far western South Australia has been fished extremely light as the numbers of school shark distributed through those areas makes the targeting of Gummy Shark extremely difficult.

The status of the fishery in South Australia is in the best condition in our 25-year fishing history and the stock in this area can sustain a lot more catch. What is making our fishing operation challenging at different periods throughout the fishing season is the increasing prevalence of School Shark.

Historically South Australia was a School Shark fishery. The current Management arrangements means that many of the fishing areas are avoided masking the overall potential of the stock. The abundance of both Gummy and School Shark in South Australia is growing enormously. Over the last 25 years the rebuild of School Shark is noticeable on a yearly basis and Gummy Shark is constantly improving.

Quota availability in the Fishery is challenging at times and lease the cost per kilogram is continuing to increase. Currently Gummy Shark and School Shark quota is trading at \$3.75 to \$5.00 per kilogram.

Simon Boag (Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group)

18. Simon Boag spoke to the Industry update agenda item noting that SEMAC members were provided with it prior to the meeting and highlighted the following points:

MSC certification

- There is a growing perception amongst Industry that to sell fish they will require MSC certification and already, fisheries are lining up to become MSC accredited. The Small Pelagic Fishery, the scallop fishery and Blue Grenadier are next in line to be audited.
- MSC accreditation comes with additional costs to Industry and work for AFMA in the form of processing data requests and other legislative processes to change fishing regulations to meet MSC's condition requirements. Concerns raised by Industry suggest that AFMA are struggling to meet these requirements and may be delaying the accreditation process. Industry have suggested that a fee-for-service charging from AFMA might be appropriate for MSC accredited fisheries/stocks to ensure condition milestones are being met.

Danish Seiner Gear Modifications

- SETFIA is considering AFMA's response to gear modifications that will allow for Danish seiner access into closure D.
- SETFIA's aim is to ensure that the following points are addressed when considering potential gear modifications:
 - Low cost
 - Safe
 - Implement by May 1, 2023
 - Enforceable
 - Reduce juvenile discards
 - Stop future skulduggery

Windfarm Renewable Energy Zones (REZ)

- To meet national renewable targets and cut state carbon emissions, the Australian Government has committed to the development of Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) and has formally declared the Bass Strait off Gippsland as Australia's first offshore wind zone.

- SETFIA submitted into the renewable energy declaration (REZ) process to:
 - be a leader in the discussions about shared marine space;
 - be part of the solution and accept decarbonisation;
 - promote the North East corner of the REZ declared zone and open to look at data the for the West of Wilson’s Promontory as potential areas with little or no impact;
 - not support the Eastern area as it is a high fishing area (and there is no windfarm interest anyway); and
 - support compensation.
- AFMA have provided the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) with fishing information on the catching areas of the Commonwealth Trawl Sector (CTS) and the Gillnet Hook and Trap sector for the proposed Gippsland renewable energy zone (REZ).
- Despite AFMA’s data and SETFIA’s submission, Minister Bowen has declared the area South and East of the Prom as a REZ, noting that the low/no fishing western area (originally proposed) was removed presumably for reasons of visual impact on Bass Coast residents (refer to figures 1–4).
- The proposed locations for the windfarms will greatly impact the trawl fleet that is already set to decline by 600–700 tonnes on May 1 when rebuilding closures come into effect.

Trawl Fishery Future

- The proposed windfarm areas could remove approximately 2,000km² of fishing grounds, reducing catches further by an estimated 25–200 tonnes (a wide range of impact, dependent on micro-positioning). The impact on the gillnet fishery may be similar. With the additional impact of closures, the “inshore” catch (orange roughy, deepwater dories and grenadier) could be reduced to 3,000 tonnes.
- The step down of the range Roughy East TAC (due to change in *M*) removes another \$500,000 in revenue and wipes out \$5m in capital value increasing the ORS E levy by 10% per Kg.
- The Victorian Fishing Authority’s ambitions to close more seiner grounds hangs over the fishery.
- AMSA’s handling of vessel survey “grandfathering” is a significant risk given the age of (inshore) trawl vessels and threatens investment in catching capacity.
- SETFIA welcomes EM (and the benefits it might bring for Danish seine entry into closures) but notes:
 - the difficulties of implementing this in what will become a very small fishery.
 - EM may be complicated on foreign grenadier trawlers but perhaps they provide the critical mass required.
 - data collection required for stock assessments adds cost.
- Blue grenadier (levies increase 40%+) now pays \$1.4M (67%) of the CTS’ charged \$2.1M levies (net of \$1M subsidy). The blue grenadier levy is based on the previous three-year average for landed catch and the proportion of fish caught is due to factory freezer boats fishing the winter spawning aggregation. However, the fishery faces the risk of a hard economic downturn if the freezer boats stop catching and landed catch rates are not maintained, reducing the levies subsidised by the freezer boat catch.

Grandfathering

- A review of AMSA’s operations following the take over from States is underway.
- Grandfathering is the system under which the survey at the time a vessel is built, continues.
- The system is the same as the following examples:

- ANCAP car ratings which continue, for instance a 5-star rating in 2005 continues and cars remain legal but in reality, a car from 2005 would have lower safety standards compared with 2023 safety standards.
- Old buildings are not retro-fitted into new building standards.
- At the moment, grandfathering ends when major repairs/investments are made, there were issues with this with trawl vessels installing offal tanks to comply with no-offal-discharge-while-trawling rules.
- The scheme is for all classes of vessel not just fishing vessels.
- Data shows that old vessels are not “less safe” than newer ones.
- SIA and WAFIC are pushing for sensible solutions.
- If Grandfathering is removed, most of the inshore fleet will become obsolete so there is significant concern about this.
 - John Harrison (Recreational member) advised SEMAC that he was on the review panel commissioned by the previous government and noted that phase one of the review of domestic commercial vessel safety legislation is out for public consultation.

CSIRO By-catch paper

- SEMAC noted that discussions between CSIRO and AFMA continue via a dedicated working group. The core of the issue is which of the following categories will be counted as “by-catch”:
 - BFC: Bird flying, light contact with vessel or gear (including warp wires)
 - **BFH: Bird flying, heavy contact with vessel or gear (including warp wires), bird deviates from its flight path (no control)**
 - **OWH: Wildlife on/in water, heavy contact with vessel or gear, wildlife may be dragged under for a moment but reappears**
 - OWL: Wildlife on/in water, light contact
 - **OWS: Heavy contact with vessel or gear wildlife may be dragged under, does not reappear**
 - **WCF: Wildlife hooked, caught, or entangled in net**
 - **WSN: Wildlife snagged or entangled but not hooked**
 - WCN: Wildlife chasing, diving for non-target species
 - WCT: Wildlife chasing, diving for baits or target species
 - **DIV: Dived and took bait**
- The industry group’s view is that embolden categories should be classed as bycatch, whereas the other categories are being misinterpreted and should not be considered bycatch.
- The working group will continue to resolve the issues.

Agenda item 3 – Climate Simulations Outcomes

19. To better understand the impacts of climate change on the SESSF fishery, Dr Beth Fulton (Portfolio Lead Integrated Oceans Stewardship, CSIRO) presented modelled climate change simulation outcomes on the abundance of key SESSF stocks.
20. SEMAC noted:

- Atlantis is an ecosystem model that considers all parts of marine ecosystems – biophysical, economic and social. It uses interconnecting ecosystem interactions and measures the impacts on those connections.
- The model is a dynamic assessment tool and has representation of all the major metiers (fleets) in the fishery, including state and recreational fisheries.
- AFMA has been working with CSIRO to better understand the sensitivity of Commonwealth fisheries to climate change and the potential impacts on abundance of key stocks. Preliminary projections of abundance undertaken by CSIRO as part of the 'Guidance on Adaptation of Commonwealth Fisheries Management to Climate Change' project (completed in 2021) showed that all Commonwealth fisheries contain species that are sensitive to climate change, and in the SESSF the abundance of key demersal target species could decline by 20%.
- To better understanding the influence of climate change on current and future abundance of key SESSF species, CSIRO has used the Atlantis ecosystem model to simulate stock trajectories with and without climate change forcing. The model integrates ecosystem and biological parameters, as well as socio-economic conditions and management rules, to model stock trajectories for the period 1980–2030 with and without climate forcing. The results can then be compared against stock assessment results (where available) or CPUE time series, to see whether climate change or fishing best explains the stock trajectories.
- In summary, the modelling suggests that climate change has had a greater influence than fishing on the current stock status of Bight redfish, blue warehou, eastern gemfish and jackass morwong, and that the fisheries management mechanisms in place may have been sufficient to maintain sustainable stocks in the absence of climate change. The results suggest that both fishing and climate change have influenced the trajectories and current status of stocks of deepwater flathead, eastern and western pink link, redfish, blue-eye trevalla, silver warehou, western jackass morwong and eastern school whiting.
- The modelling was undertaken in late 2022 and is not yet published. However, AFMA is working with Dr Fulton to prepare the results for publication.

21. SEMAC noted:

- The modelled results show that the climate impact scenarios for Eastern Gemfish and Jackass Morwong (East) have similar outcomes (recovery is possible but even under ideal conditions it will be slow and limited).
- Even with no fishing pressure, many SESSF species are already being impacted by changing environmental conditions.
- The science shows that many marine species, including fished species, are facing threats due to climate change, including changes to water temperatures, ocean chemistry or habitat distribution.
- The combined pressures of climate change mean that fisheries are likely to become more variable in terms of when, where and how many fish are caught.
- The speed of climate change is increasing and the SESSF is a global hotspot for this phenomenon. It is also outpacing the evolutionary changes in resident fish stocks.
- Work under AFMA's Climate Adaptation program has been progressing, with a focus on integrating available information on climate impacts into fisheries decision-making processes. This has included introducing a standing agenda item on climate change into RAG, MAC and

Working Group meetings for key fisheries. Results of key research, including climate sensitivity analyses, and preliminary discussions on climate and ecosystem indicators were included in SERAG, GABRAG, SPFRAG and SquidRAG meetings (among others) in the second half of 2022.

- In addition, AFMA is producing a range of accessible materials on climate-change impacts on fisheries including an AFMA webpage (see www.afma.gov.au/climate-change-and-commonwealth-fisheries) and regional overview factsheets for stakeholders. The factsheet for 'Climate Impacts on South East Australian Fisheries' is provided at Attachment A and will be linked to the above webpage. AFMA is also planning to hold a series of workshops with stakeholders to discuss climate impacts on key fisheries and potential adaptation options. MAC members will be updated when plans for SESSF related workshops are confirmed.

Agenda item 4 – SESSF TAC recommendations for the 2023–24 fishing season

22. SEMAC discussions and recommendations are provided for each species in the 2023 SESSF species summaries on the [AFMA website](#)
23. SEMAC considered TACs for all SESSF species, excluding Bight redfish, deepwater flathead and orange roughy (Albany and Esperance).
24. SEMAC noted that of the 34 species requiring SEMAC TAC advice, there were:
 - six species with new stock assessments;
 - eight species classified as overfished that require bycatch TAC advice;
 - eight species with changes to TACs or management issues that need to be resolved; and
 - twelve species where no issues have been identified and no new information is available.
25. To streamline the process for 2023, AFMA prepared a table containing an overview of factors that influence the TACs each year (at [Attachment C](#)).
26. A considerable amount of time was spent discussing the recommended TACs for gummy shark, school shark, blue-eye trevalla and flathead. These deliberations informed the recommended TACs described in **Attachment C** and are described in more detail below:

School Whiting

27. Historically, catches (t) in State and Commonwealth waters have been close to equal (i.e. a 50:50 split of the landed catch). In the Commonwealth, all catches are controlled by setting the annual TAC, whereas in NSW the TAC does not apply to the Southern Fish Trawl Fishery (SFTF), and catches are only restricted in the Ocean Trawl Fishery, north of Barrenjoey Head.
28. Industry continue to raise concerns about the lack of catch sharing arrangements with NSW and would like to see a formal arrangement in place.
29. An Industry member noted that when modelled discards and NSW state catches are deducted from the 3-year average RBC, the sustainable catch to be shared between NSW and the Commonwealth could become negative if NSW catches were to rise.
30. In response to these concerns SEMAC noted that:
 - Catches in the NSW SFTF remain unrestricted, but there has been a large decrease in reported NSW catches in 2020 (802 t) and 2021 (492.2 t) compared to 2019 (1218 t).

- NSW have introduced a harvest strategy for School Whiting that incorporates AFMA's stock assessment recommendations and is consistent with Commonwealth harvest control rules.
- Genetic studies have identified that School Whiting throughout NSW and Victoria have strong genetic flow and are therefore managed as a single stock.
- Catches in NSW have almost halved – the catch in NSW and the TAC that we set represent about 50% of the RBC.
- Negotiations with NSW in relation to catch sharing arrangements are set to continue.

Gummy Shark

31. SEMAC noted that:

- All three gummy stocks are at or above the target reference points however the Bass Strait sub-stock is slightly under the 48% target and most of the catch is taken from the Bass Strait zone (CTS and GHAT).
- Gummy Shark is entering its third year of a three year MYTAC.
- When setting a global TAC, consideration must be given to spatial characterisation of historical catches for Gummy shark.
- Industry is reporting positive catch rates and economic conditions.
- Maintaining the TAC at 1,672 tonnes for the third year of the three-year MYTAC is unlikely to adversely impact the sustainability of the stock.

32. SEMAC were presented with a proposal from SSIA to maintain the TAC of 1,672 t for the 2023–24 fishing year. To support the proposal, SSIA proposed to reduce the catch of gummy shark in Bass Strait by at least 100 t through industry voluntarily moving catch into the South Australian and Tasmanian regions.

33. SEMAC recognised industry's demonstrated capacity to constrain catches of other species and was supportive of the proposal, subject to catches in Bass Strait being reduced to the level of the RBC for that zone and regular monitoring throughout the fishing year.

34. SSIA agreed to work with AFMA to quantify the catch reduction required and to establish a monitoring framework.

35. The SSIA proposal included two other components:

- In-principle support be given to a commercial Bass Strait longline trial provided the trial's catches are within industry's commitment to reduce eastern catch; and
- Strong consideration be given to increasing the school shark TAC in 2023–24 given that unavoidable school shark catch is expected to be higher in South Australia and Tasmania (see *School Shark* below).

36. SEMAC agreed in-principle that catches under a longline trial should not be in addition to those committed to in Bass Strait. Members did not consider the trial to be an exclusive component of the proposal to constrain catches in Bass Strait. SEMAC has previously supported the trial and were comfortable that AFMA would consider a trial proposal independent of the proposal to constrain catches in Bass Strait. AFMA has not received a proposal for this trial.

37. When discussing the final TAC recommendations, an Industry member noted a recent delay with AFMA finalising RAG meeting minutes and Industry recommendations making it difficult for Industry to prepare management proposals for subsequent management forums.

School Shark

38. SEMAC noted:

- In the absence of a metier analysis or an update to the school shark CKMR assessment, SharkRAG (Nov 2021) recommended setting the incidental catch TAC based on the minimum unavoidable catch, including the discards associated with that minimum catch, as well as reflecting the estimated 3 per cent per annum rate of increase in the population, and the proposed 13 per cent reduction in the gummy shark TAC for the 2022–23 fishing year.
- At its March 2022 meeting, the AFMA Commission accepted the proposed approach. However, given the decision to maintain the gummy shark TAC at 1,672 t, it did not apply the 13 per cent decrease. A bycatch TAC of 250 t was determined for the 2022–23 fishing year.
- SharkRAG (Dec 2022) considered a metier analysis for school shark based on assumed TACs for companion species in 2023–24, which estimated a median value of 218.8 t (95%CI ranging from 183.6–260.1 t) if the gummy shark TAC (1,672 t) was maintained, or 202.5 t (95%CI ranging from 170.3–202.5 t) if the annual step-down MYTAC was adopted. SharkRAG also considered the approach adopted in 2021, referred to as the ‘logbook’ approach, which estimated the level of unavoidable bycatch in 2023–24 would be 251 t if the gummy shark TAC is maintained or 223.3 t if the step-down MYTAC is adopted.
- Given the similar values produced by each method, SharkRAG recommended continuing to use the ‘logbook’ approach to recommend bycatch TACs for school shark, with periodic metier analyses to ensure the outputs do not diverge over time.

39. SEMAC discussed the following:

- Unavoidable bycatch would likely increase with a shift of gummy shark catch and effort into South Australia and Tasmania and that there was a potential for increased discarding with this shift in effort.

40. SEMAC noted the abovementioned point and recommended maintaining the school shark bycatch TAC at 250 t for the 2023–24 fishing year. However, it also requested that regular monitoring be undertaken with a view to redistributing effort to areas of low school shark catch if the catches are expected to exceed the RBC.

41. SEMAC also recommended that the determination of the school shark bycatch TAC should be considered alongside the application of the school shark live release rule, noting that the extent to which removing the rule will influence discarding is unclear and will be influenced by quota availability and possible changes to avoidance behaviour.

Blue-eye trevalla

42. SEMAC noted:

- While the updated 2021 Tier 4 assessment resulted in an increase to the RBC, SEMAC (2022) recommended maintaining the TAC from 2021-22 due to concerns about ongoing declines in CPUE across the fishery.

- The Tier 4 assessment was updated again in 2022 and produced an RBC of 249 t, corresponding to a 100 t decrease compared to the 2021 assessment. The decrease can be mostly attributed to the use of the new standardised CPUE series and a continued decline in the CPUE.
- SEMAC noted several concerns from industry regarding the utility of a Tier 4 assessment for such a dynamic stock. There were mixed views from industry regarding the status of the stock – one operator suggested catch rates in the west were increasing whereas another noted decreasing catch rates in the east, consistent with the trend in the Tier 4 assessment.
- While SERAG and SEMAC have recognised the potential issues with using standardised CPUE for blue-eye trevalla, both committees agreed that the trend was concerning and recommended setting the TAC based on the outputs of the 2022 Tier 4 assessment.

43. SEMAC discussed the following points:

- Industry proposed to increase the blue-eye trevalla TAC by 102 t (half of the RAG recommended TAC for 2021–22) on the basis that for the 2021–22 SESSF fishing year, the AFMA Commission determined a TAC for blue-eye trevalla which was less than that recommended by SERAG.
- Industry noted that the decline in CPUE and stock status in 2021 could be attributed in part to natural fluctuation and reported that fishing has improved since 2021. Industry also noted that the 20/21 fishing season was a COVID-19 lock down year which could also explain a decrease in CPUE.
- Industry further raised issues regarding catch and CPUE of blue-eye trevalla in the west. Industry noted the difficulty in obtaining quota for the west which has pushed fishing activity into other areas and fishing for other species.
- Orca predation remains an issue affecting the CPUE.

44. Recognising the dynamics of the fleet, SEMAC agreed that a better assessment is needed (CKMR) but acknowledged that it is several years away.

45. SEMAC noted that the CSIRO will be presenting at the SESSFRAG Chairs meeting in April about alternative assessment options

46. Co-management arrangements are in place to try and spread the catch. AFMA intends to establish a workplan to try and resolve some of the issues with the assessment process for blue-eye trevalla in 2023.

47. SEMAC supported AFMA's TAC recommendation of 238 t, noting that further work is being done to improve the assessment.

Flathead

48. SEMAC noted:

- SERAG (Nov 2022) considered an updated Tier 1 flathead assessment and recommended a 2023 RBC of 2,831 t using three-year average, an increase of 295 t from the previous three-year average of 2,536 t. This reflects a model-estimated increase from 33%B₀ in 2020 to 40%B in 2023. In making its recommendation, SERAG recognised that an increase in flathead catch would likely result in an increase in catches of companion species such as jackass morwong, John dory and redfish.

49. SEMAC noted the recommended increase in the RBC for flathead. However, it agreed that an increase to the flathead TAC for the 2023–24 fishing year would likely result in higher catches of companion species and undermine the effectiveness of the closures to be implemented 1 May 2023 to constrain catches of at-risk species in the trawl sector. SEMAC recommended maintaining the flathead TAC at 2,333 t for the 2023–24 fishing year.

Blue grenadier

50. SEMAC noted:

- The assessment has been updated and includes recent acoustic estimates of spawning biomass. The acoustic indices are largely dependent on the NZ freezer boats returning to Australian waters. An Industry member noted that the combination of levy subsidies for the inshore fleet, and the declining trend in catches of the inshore components of the fishery relative to blue grenadier, levy costs have increased for holders of blue grenadier quota, including the New Zealand Factory freezer companies – approximately 65 percent of the industry’s levies are covered by these companies.

51. SEMAC noted the value of this species, and consistent with risk-catch-cost principles, supported ongoing annual surveys to support future stock assessments.

52. SEMAC supported AFMA’s recommendation based on the comprehensive advice provided by AFMA.

Orange Roughy Western Zone

53. SEMAC noted:

- the Western Orange Roughy stock is still considered as an overfished stock and there is little targeting or bycatch. The eastern stock has rebuilt from a low biomass, however it is unclear if the same is true of the Western stock.
- The Western Orange Roughy Research Plan (WORRP) was introduced in 2020 with the aim to assess the status of the Western Orange Roughy stock and determine sustainable harvest levels for commercial fishing under the Harvest Strategy Framework for the SESSF.
- The data requirements of the WORRP are being met and AFMA will seek advice from SERAG on the timeframe required to assess the status of Western Orange Roughy stock and determine sustainable harvest levels.
- There was no observer coverage in 2022 due to logistical constraints. This will be a focus of the 2023-24 fishing year.

Action 49.1: As part of developing the Western Orange Roughy Research Plan (WORRP), AFMA to seek advice from SERAG on the timeframe required to obtain sufficient data to assess the status of Western Orange Roughy stock and determine sustainable harvest levels.

54. SEMAC noted that due to member absentees and conflicts of interest, the committee did not have a quorum on Day 2. Refer to [Table 5](#) of Attachment B for a list of recommendations made on Day 2 without a quorum.

Agenda item 5 – SPF TAC recommendations for the 2023–2024 fishing year

55. Steve Hall (AFMA) introduced the agenda item seeking SEMAC to provide TAC recommendations for the SPF 2023–24 fishing year.

56. SEMAC noted:

- TACs for six of the seven SPF stocks remain consistent with the TACs set for the previous fishing season with only relatively small differences arising from changes in quantities deducted with the exception of Jack mackerel.
- Jack mackerel will fall to Tier 2 for the 2023/24 season as the last DEPM for this species was undertaken in 2017. No new DEPM surveys were undertaken for SPF stocks in 2022.
- All stocks apart from Jack Mackerel West remain at the same Tier level as 2022/23.

57. SEMACs discussions and recommendations are provided for each species in 2023 SPF species summaries on the [AFMA website](#).

Agenda item 6 – Dolphin Strategy Review

58. Dr Lara Ainley (AFMA) introduced the agenda item and provided an update on the review of the Gillnet, Hook and Trap (GHaT) and SPF Dolphin Strategies (the Strategies).

59. SEMAC noted:

- The review of the Strategies is ongoing;
- The SPFRAG and SEMAC, at their meetings in December 2021 and February 2022, respectively, recommended that in the SPF, the dolphin interaction rate be used as a performance indicator, rather than triggering a management response, and that these interim arrangements remain in place and until the review of the Strategies are complete; and
- Consultation has commenced with the gillnet fishing industry seeking feedback on the Strategy in the GHAT. AFMA expects to consolidate this feedback in early 2023 and develop a discussion paper to address current issues, review available data and review management arrangements.
- Consultation with broader industry, RAGs and MACs will continue throughout 2023.

60. SEMAC discussed the following:

- Some members expressed concern that the separate fishery-based strategies were not consistent with the Commonwealth's broader bycatch mitigation strategies (including other State's policies) in terms of managing all bycatch species prioritised by their conservation status. A lot of resources are being placed on ad-hoc issue-based management arrangements in the GHAT and SPF fisheries.
- The committee discussed the need for taking a more holistic approach and encompass high risk species (including dolphins) as part of an overarching bycatch mitigation management plan with sub-sections tailored for high-risk species for each fishery.
 - Industry noted that by taking a more holistic approach such mitigation strategies would be more consistent across the sectors and simpler to implement.
 - Fishers fear the end of their business and expulsion from the fishery and are not clear on what is expected of them.

- AFMA noted that the criteria for developing such strategies is issue-based but also in circumstances where a species has been identified as high risk in the fishery via the ecological risk assessment process.
- The committee noted that the review process is intended to raise such issues and improve the strategy's efficiency and consistency across all fisheries.

Close of meeting

61. The Chair thanked the MAC for their contribution and closed the meeting at 12:15 PM.

Attachment A - register of interest

Members	Declarations of Interest
Dr David McGlennon	SEMAC Chair - No interest pecuniary or otherwise
Ms Anissa Lawrence	<p>No pecuniary interest</p> <p>Director of TierraMar Ltd</p> <p>Independent consultant</p> <p>Undertakes contracts for a number of Conservation NGOs, government departments, non-government agencies and the private sector on a range of fishery related matters</p> <p>Conservation member on SharkRAG, SPFRAG, SEMAC, Spencer Gulf Prawn RAC and the South Australian Rock Lobster MAC</p> <p>Chair of Ocean Future Fund Inc.</p>
Mr Gerry Geen	No pecuniary interest.
Mr Will Mure	<p>Sole Director of Mures Fishing P/L</p> <p>Commonwealth fish receiver permit</p> <p>Tasmania fish processing licence</p> <p>Scalefish hook boat SFR, SEQ Quota Holding Permits, Auto longline fishing permit</p> <p>High Seas permit</p> <p>Blue eye trevalla SFRs, Ling SFRs, Ribaldo ITP</p> <p>Mixed species Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) and SFRs</p> <p>Member of various fishing related associations including Seafood Industry Australia (SIA), South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA), Southern Shark Industry Alliance (SSIA), Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC)</p> <p>Industry member on SERAG</p>
Dr Paul McShane	<p>Chair of SERAG and a member of SEMAC and SESSFRAG.</p> <p>No pecuniary interest in the SESSF.</p> <p>Principal of Global Marine Resource Management Pty Ltd.</p> <p>Adjunct Professor (Fisheries and Aquaculture) College of Science and Engineering, James Cook University.</p>
Dr Sarah Jennings	<p>Economics member on SERAG and SESSFRAG.</p> <p>Economics coordinator, FRDC Human Dimensions Sub-Program.</p> <p>Member of AFMA Economics Working Group.</p> <p>Independent economics consultant.</p> <p>No pecuniary or other interest.</p>
Mr John Harrison	Panel Member of the Independent Review of the Domestic Commercial Vessel Safety Legislation and Cost and Charging Arrangements.
Mr Simon Boag	<p>Industry member on SERAG.</p> <p>Executive Officers to SETFIA, SSIA and SPFIA.</p> <p>SETFIA and SSIA receives funding from AFMA to complete projects under co-management agreements.</p> <p>Undertakes contracts as an independent consultant.</p>
Mr Kyriakos Toumazos	Director of Southern Sea Eagles Pty Ltd

	<p>Director of Southern Fisheries Pty Ltd</p> <p>Board Member of South Australian Boating Facility Board</p> <p>Executive Officer of South Australian Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association</p> <p>Board Member of Southern Shark Industry Alliance</p> <p>Industry Member on Shark Resource Assessment Group</p> <p>Industry Member of AMSA Regional Safety Committee</p> <p>Director of Health Balance Pharmacies</p>
Mr Daniel Corrie	AFMA Demersal and Midwater Senior Manager – AFMA SEMAC member – no interest pecuniary or otherwise.
Invited participant	
Mr James Woodhams	<p>Employed by ABARES.</p> <p>On behalf of ABARES, has a minor financial stake in the project '2019-036: Implementation of dynamic reference points and harvest strategies to account for environmentally-driven changes in productivity in Australian fisheries'.</p> <p>Non-financial roles on the steering committee for the Multi species harvest strategy project led by CSIRO, the Reviewing biological parameters project led by CSIRO and Alternate indicators for the SESSF (working group reporting to SESSFRAG).</p>
Dr Geoff Tuck	<p>Employed by CSIRO and involved in stock assessments.</p> <p>Interest in obtaining funding for future research.</p> <p>Principal investigator on SESSF stock assessment project.</p>
Dr Beth Fulton	Employed by CSIRO, ecosystem and climate scientist, Portfolio Leader for Integrated Marine Management. Adjunct with the University of Tasmania (Deputy Director for the Centre of Marine Socioecology). Acquiring funding for research purposes
Mr Heath Folpp	Mr Heath Folpp NSW DPI (Fisheries)– no interest pecuniary or otherwise
Executive Officer	
Ms Rebecca Jol	AFMA – Senior Management Officer, Demersal and Midwater Fisheries. No interest pecuniary or otherwise.
Observers	
Mr Ewan Flanagan	Employed by VFA, Fisheries Manager– no interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Ms Fiona McKinnon	Employed by NSW DPI, Senior Fisheries Manager - no interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Ms Frances Seaborn	Employed by DNRET, Senior Fisheries Management Officer - no interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Mr Denis Brown	<p>NSW and Commonwealth SFR and permit holder.</p> <p>Consultant and business associate of Hagfish Australia Pty Ltd.</p>
Mr Kris Cooling	Employed by FRDC. No pecuniary or other interest
Mr Nathan Bicknell	Employed by FRDC. No pecuniary or other interest
Mr Phil Hough	Vessel Manager/Skipper (Perter and Una fishing Co). Industry Representative.
AFMA Attendees	

Dr Mark Grubert	Employed by AFMA, South East Trawl & Great Australian Bight Trawl Manager – no interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Dr Lara Ainley	Employed by AFMA, Manager-Gillnet, Hook and Trap (GHAT) and High Seas (SPRFMO) Fisheries, – no interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Ms Sally Weekes	Employed by AFMA Manager-Gillnet SPF, Scallop and Squid – no interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Mr Steve Hall	Employed by AFMA, A/ Manager-Gillnet SPF, Scallop and Squid – no interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Roshan Hamanseth	Employed AFMA, Senior Management Officer for the GHAT sector. EO of SharkRAG. No pecuniary or other interest.
Nastaran Mazloumi	Employed by AFMA, Senior Management Officer for the GHAT sector. EO of SESSFRAG. No pecuniary or other interest.
Yvette Lamont	Employed by AFMA, Senior Management Officer – no interest pecuniary or otherwise.
Michelle Henriksen	Employed by AFMA, Senior Management Support Officer, SET and GAB Trawl sectors. EO of GABRAG and GABMAC. No pecuniary or other interest.
Ms Alice McDonald	Employed by AFMA, Climate Adaptation Senior Program Manager – no interest pecuniary or otherwise.
Ms Anna Willock	Employed by AFMA, Deputy Chief Executive Officer. No pecuniary or other interest.
Mr Todd Spencer	Employed by AFMA, Senior Manager, National Compliance Strategy Fisheries Operations Branch. No pecuniary or other interest.

Attachment B- action items



Table 2. Progress of action items from previous meetings

	Meeting	Agenda Item	No.	Action Item	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe	Progress
	SEMAC 45	9. GHAT ERAs	4	Action item 5: (Discussed during GHAT ERA agenda item) When developing a bycatch and discarding workplan for the hook sector of the GHAT, AFMA to note the lack of monitoring in the manual longline sector and the potential influence on the outcomes of the ERA, and develop an action to implement representative monitoring in this sector.	GHAT manager		SEMAC noted that the work on the GHAT bycatch and discard workplan has not yet commenced but has been identified as a key priority in the 2023 AFMA workplan.

Table 3. Actions from meeting 49

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
4	1	As part of developing the Western Orange Roughy Research Plan (WORRP), AFMA to seek advice from SERAG on the timeframe required to obtain sufficient data to assess the status of Western Orange Roughy stock and determine sustainable harvest levels.	AFMA	

Table 4. Recommendations from meeting 49

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
4	1	To include a catch to date column in the 2024/2025 species summaries.	AFMA	

Table 5. Recommendations from SEMAC without a quorum (Day 2)

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
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4	2	<p>SESSF TAC Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hagfish: 80 (t) • Oreo Basket: 137 (t) • Blue Warehou: 30 (t) bycatch • Deep Water Shark (East): 24 (t) • Deep Water Shark (West):235 (t) • Gemfish East: 100 (t) bycatch • Jackass Morwong:60 (t) • Redfish:30(t) bycatch • John Dory:60 (t) 		
5	3	<p>SPF TAC Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian sardine: • Blue mackerel east: • Blue mackerel west: • Jack mackerel east: • Jack mackerel west: • Redbait east: • Redbait west: 		

Attachment C- Table 1: Summary of AFMA Management TAC advice for the 2023–24 fishing year

Species	Assessment Tier (year)	Economic value	MYTAC status in 22–23	MYTAC maintained by SESSFRAG?	Stock status	Climate projections	Change in TAC from 2022-23 (t)	Requires MAC input?	Issues
Alfonsino	3 (2013)	Byproduct	8 th of 3-year	Yes			0	No	
Blue eye trevalla	4 (Slope, 2022) 5 (seamount, 2021)	Primary	New assessment	N/A			-3	Yes	Declining CPUE
Blue grenadier	1 (2022)	Primary	New assessment	N/A			-1,191	Yes	
Blue warehou	4 (2013)	Bycatch	Single year TAC	N/A			-20	Yes	High (though uncertain) discards
DW Shark (East)	5 (2021)	Secondary	Single year TAC	N/A		N/A	0	Yes	Outdated stock assessment

DW Shark (West)	5 (2021)	Secondary	Single year TAC	N/A		N/A	0	Yes	Outdated stock assessment
Elephant fish	WoE (2020)	Byproduct	2 nd of 3-year	Yes			0	No	
Flathead	1 (2022)	Primary	New assessment	N/A			0	Yes	Proposal to constrain TAC – bycatch issues
Gemfish (East)	1 (2009)	Bycatch	Single year TAC	N/A			0	Yes	
Gemfish (West)	4 (2022)	Secondary	New assessment	Yes			-160	Yes	
Gummy shark	1 (2020)	Primary	2 nd of 3-year	Yes			TBC	Yes	Step-down MYTAC to be considered
Jackass morwong (East)	1 (2021)	Bycatch	Single year TAC	N/A			+40	Yes	
Jackass morwong (West)	1 (2018)	Byproduct	Single year TAC	N/A					

John dory	5 (2021)	Bycatch	Single year TAC	N/A			0	Yes	
Mirror dory	4 (2022)	Secondary	New assessment	N/A			-8	Yes	
Ocean perch	4 (2020)	Secondary	2 nd of 3-year	Yes		N/A	+13	No	
Orange roughy (Casc)	1 (2009)	Primary	Single year TAC	N/A			0	Yes	Outdated stock assessment
Orange roughy (East)	1 (2021)	Primary	1 st of 3-year	Yes			-99	Yes	
Orange roughy (Sth)	1 (2021)	Primary (Pedra B)	1 st of 3-year	Yes			-8	Yes	
	1 (2000)	Bycatch (Sth)	Single year TAC	N/A					
Orange roughy (West)	N/A	Bycatch	Single year TAC	N/A			0	Yes	RCA to be allocated

Oreo, basket	4 (2020)	Byproduct	2 nd of 3-year	Yes		N/A	TBC	Yes	Discard estimate to be resolved
Pink ling	1 (2021)	Primary	1 st of 3-year	Yes			-3	Yes	Eastern nominal TAC to be determined
Redfish	1 (2020)	Bycatch	Single year TAC	N/A			0	Yes	
Ribaldo	4 (2020)	Byproduct	2 nd of 3-year	Yes			-4	No	
Royal red prawn	4 (2020)	Secondary	2 nd of 3-year	Yes			-23	No	
Sawshark	4 (2020)	Secondary	2 nd of 3-year	Yes			+6	No	
School shark	1 (2018)	Secondary	Single year TAC	N/A			0	Yes	Bycatch TAC is dependent on gummy shark TAC
School whiting	1 (2020)	Primary	2 nd of 3-year	Yes			-3	No	
Silver trevally	4 (2022)	Secondary	New assessment	N/A			TBC	Yes	

Silver warehou	1 (2021)	Primary	1 st of 3-year	Yes			0	No	
Smooth dory (Cascade)	WoE (2022)	Byproduct	Single year TAC	N/A			0	No	
Smooth dory (other)	WoE (2022)	Byproduct	Single year TAC	N/A			0	No	
Hagfish	N/A	Primary	Single year TAC	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	Data collection and management update
Orange roughy	N/A	Bycatch	Single year TAC	N/A	N/A		No	No	
Boarfish	N/A	Byproduct	Single year TAC	N/A	N/A		No	No	