



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority



Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC)

FINAL MINUTES
SOUTHMAC NOVEMBER TELECONFERENCE
9 NOVEMBER 2021

SUB-ANTARCTIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SouthMAC)

CHAIR: Dr Rachel Baird

Date: 9 November 2021

Venue: Teleconference

Attendance

Members

Dr Rachel Baird, Chair

Mr Rhys Arangio, Industry Member

Mr Malcolm McNeill, Industry Member

Dr Philippe Ziegler, Scientific Member

Ms Lihini Weragoda, Australian Antarctic Division

Ms Lyn Goldsworthy, Conservation Member

Mr Brodie Macdonald, AFMA Member

Ms Sarah Kirkcaldie (Executive Officer)

Introduction

A Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC) teleconference was held on 9 November 2021.

The primary objectives of the meeting were to:

- make recommendations on the total allowable catch (TAC) for Patagonian Toothfish, Mackerel Icefish as well as catch limits for bycatch species in the Heard Island and McDonald islands Fishery (HIMIF) for the 2021/22 season starting on 1 December 2021; and
- discuss the outcomes of the 40th meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).

The meeting met all requirements of Fisheries Management Paper 1, including the rules for dealing with conflicts of interest.

Agenda item 1 - Preliminaries

SouthMAC November 2021 teleconference was opened at 10.35 am on 9 November 2021 by the Chair, Dr Rachel Baird.

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

The Chair on behalf of all members and observers acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which we met today and paid our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

1.2 Declaration of interests

As outlined in the *Fisheries Administrations Act 1991* and AFMA Fisheries Management Paper No. 1, all members (but not permanent observers or invited participants) of SouthMAC must declare any pecuniary interest in the Fishery at the commencement of the meeting and also at the commencement of each agenda item. If a member discloses an interest in an item, the member must absent themselves from the meeting before the item is considered and the MAC must make a decision as to whether the member can participate in the discussion and in making of a recommendation or remain absent from the meeting for the item.

Mr McNeill advised he is the Managing Director of Australian Longline Fishing P/L which holds various fishing rights in, and operates vessels in the sub-Antarctic fisheries and New and Exploratory fisheries under the jurisdiction of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). Mr McNeill further advised he is a member on SARAG, Board member of the Coalition of Legal Toothfish Operators (COLTO) and Chair of the Ross Sea MSC client group. Mr McNeill was not aware of any investigation or prosecution action by AFMA against his Company or of any legal action taken by his Company against AFMA.

Mr Arangio advised that he is employed by Austral Fisheries P/L that owns Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) in the Australian sub-Antarctic fisheries and waters under the jurisdiction of CCAMLR. Mr Arangio further advised he is the Executive Officer of COLTO, as well as being a member of SouthMAC. He was not aware of any investigation or prosecution action by AFMA against his Company or of any legal action taken by his Company against AFMA.

Ms Weragoda advised that she is an employee of the AAD and her colleagues conduct the HIMI stock assessment. Ms Weragoda attends international meetings related to Antarctic fisheries and has no pecuniary interest in Antarctic fisheries and her salary is not dependent on AAD, industry and other research collaborations.

Dr Ziegler advised that he is employed by AAD and is the Fishery scientist responsible for HIMIF work including the HIMI stock assessments. Dr Ziegler has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic and his salary is not connected to any research grants noting that he is a co-investigator on a FRDC project and potentially future FRDC projects. Dr Ziegler informed members that he is also a member SARAG.

Ms Lyn Goldsworthy advised that she is currently completing a PhD through the Institute for Marine and Antarctic studies and the University of Tasmania. Ms Goldsworthy also conducts contract work for the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) and Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC). Ms Goldsworthy advised that she has no pecuniary interest in sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Mr Macdonald advised he is employed by AFMA and is the Manager for Antarctic fisheries and has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Ms Kirkcaldie advised she is employed by AFMA, is also the Executive Officer for SARAG and Southern Bluefin Tuna MAC and has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

1.2 Apologies

Members noted that no apologies were received.

1.3 Adoption of agenda

SouthMAC adopted the agenda with no changes

Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery

Agenda item 2 – TAC and bycatch recommendations

Mackerel icefish

Members noted that at its 18 August 2021 meeting, SARAG reviewed and supported the 2021 HIMIF Mackerel icefish stock assessment, noting that the assessment produced a recommended TAC of 1528 tonnes for the 2021/22 season and 1138 tonnes for the 2022/23 season. Members noted that the recommended catch limit was also supported by CCAMLR's Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment and Scientific Committee, where the stock assessment results were discussed in detail. The 40th meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR-40) agreed to the catch limits for Mackerel icefish in the HIMI fishery with very little discussion. Members noted that the Australian delegation proposed to revise the Conservation Measure from setting the catch limit from two years to one year only but this proposal was not supported by one member. SouthMAC noted that an updated Mackerel icefish stock assessment will be prepared in 2022.

Patagonian Toothfish

Members noted that the 2021 HIMI Patagonian toothfish stock assessment was consistent with the 2019 assessment, and indicated that the current SSB has further decreased since 2019– the stock was estimated to be at 45% of B0 in 2021 compared to 51% of B0 in 2019. The scientific member explained that the estimate is below the target reference point of B50 and that under the catch limit which satisfies the CCAMLR decision rule the stock is projected to continue to decline to B37 over the next seven years before recovering to the target level at the end of the projection period. This decline in spawning biomass is also likely to deplete available biomass leading to reduced future commercial catch rates meaning the fishery may need an increased effort to catch the same level of catch. Additional fishing effort would lead to more environmental impacts from the fishery and deteriorating economic conditions. The long-term projected recovery also assumes a more optimistic pattern of recruitment compared to that seen in the fishery for the last 20 years. If recruitment does not return to pre-1996 levels then the current decision rule is unlikely to achieve the management objective.

SouthMAC noted that in May 2021, SARAG discussed the need to develop a strategy with explicit targets to be implemented immediately to support the recovery of SSB to target sooner than the CCAMLR decision rules and that a more conservative domestic TAC be set for 2021/22 and 2022/23 before a longer term strategy is developed. In August 2021, SARAG considered a number of different stock targets and resulting catch scenarios and supported the adoption of scenario that recovers the stock to 50% of B0 at the end of a 20-year projection period. SARAG endorsed a 50% step down approach, recommending a TAC of 2760 tonnes in 2021/22 and 2510 tonnes in 2022/23. SouthMAC supported the step-down approach allowing industry to transition over two years noting that the last few years have been very difficult due to COVID.

Members noted that SARAG had further recommended that HIMIF Patagonian toothfish TAC of 3010 tonnes for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 seasons should be presented to CCAMLR-40 as representing the best scientific advice available, and that CCAMLR-40 endorsed this recommendation.

SouthMAC noted that at the August meeting SARAG was also asked to consider the bycatch limits for the fishery for the 2021/22 season. As there was no new advice on bycatch limits, SARAG recommended that bycatch limits from the current fishing season be rolled over to the coming fishing season. Members noted that it is anticipated that a stock assessment for skates and rays will be presented to SARAG in 2022 and a strategy would need to be developed to progress any changes to bycatch limits at CCAMLR.

Industry members left the teleconference and SouthMAC supported the following TAC and bycatch recommendations for 2021/22:

Target species:

Patagonian Toothfish (<i>Dissostichus eleginoides</i>)	2760 tonnes
Mackerel Icefish (<i>Champsocephalus gunnari</i>)	1528 tonnes

Bycatch Species:

<i>Macrourus Caml</i> and <i>M. whitsoni</i>	409 tonnes
<i>M. halotrachys</i> and <i>M. carinatus</i>	360 tonnes
Unicorn Icefish (<i>Channichthys rhinoceratus</i>)	1 663 tonnes
Skates and Rays (<i>Bathyraja spp.</i>)	120 tonnes
Grey Rockcod (<i>Lepidonotothen squamifrons</i>)	80 tonnes
All other species (each)	50 tonnes

CCAMLR New and Exploratory Fisheries

Agenda item 3 – Outcomes of CCAMLR; and

Agenda item 3.1 – Exploratory fisheries proposals for 2021/22

SouthMAC noted that due to COVID-19 restrictions CCAMLR-40 was held virtually in October 2021 with a condensed agenda focused on critical business. The Australian delegation was led by the Australian Antarctic Division of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and included representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Agriculture Water and the Environment, Australian Fisheries Management Authority, Attorney- General’s Department, conservation NGOs, a member of academia, and the fishing industry.

Members noted that the Commission endorsed the HIMIF Patagonian Toothfish and Mackerel icefish catch limits as recommended by the stock assessments but for the first time CCAMLR could not reach consensus for the South Georgia toothfish fishery in Statistical subarea 48.3. Members noted that a lot of the discussion at CCAMLR focused on South Georgia and SouthMAC expressed its disappointment that a catch limit could not be set against the scientific advice for Statistical subarea 48.3.

SouthMAC further noted that the Commission endorsed exploratory fishing in Division 88.1 and 88.2 with revised catch limits. CCAMLR also endorsed fishing in Division 58.4.2 including a new research block, however, consensus could not be achieved again for fishing in Division 58.4.1 for the fourth consecutive year. Members noted that the research plan ends next year

so there will be intersessional work to develop a new research plan and a best strategy for success which will be discussed at the CCF.

SouthMAC noted that there was little discussion on Marine Protected Areas at CCAMLR-40 but that during the intersessional period more co-sponsorship of the Weddell sea and East Antarctica proposals had been achieved. The Commission also agreed a Declaration on the occasion of the 40th meeting, reaffirming its commitment to upholding the objective of the CAMLR Convention.

Members noted that agreement was reached to extend Conservation Measure 51-07 for one more year, which spatially distributes the krill catch in Statistical Area 48 to Subareas to reduce adverse impacts on predator species. A more comprehensive management arrangement is expected for consideration at CCAMLR 2022.

The AAD member noted that no consensus could be reached on a proposal from the European Union on climate change. SouthMAC noted that the Working Group of Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing (WG-IMAF) was also re-established to address bycatch in krill fishery.

Industry thanked the Australian delegation and scientists for getting a HIMIF TAC agreed and appreciated the amount of work required to achieve this.

Agenda item 4 – Summary of revised Conservation measures

SouthMAC noted that only conservation measures (CMs) lapsing were considered at CCAMLR-40. The following CM were revised at CCAMLR-40:

10-05 – Catch Documentation Scheme for *Dissostichus* spp. Members noted that the changes were only small but had implications for the *Dissostichus* Catch Document (DCD).

33-02 – Limitation of by-catch in Statistical Division 58.5.2 in the 2021/22 season.

33-03 - Limitation of by-catch in new and exploratory fisheries in the 2021/22 season.

41-01 - General measures for exploratory fisheries for *Dissostichus* spp. in the Convention Area in the 2021/22 season.

41-05 - Limits on the exploratory fishery for *Dissostichus mawsoni* in Statistical Division 58.4.2 in the 2021/22 season.

41-08 -Limits on the fishery for *Dissostichus eleginoides* in Statistical Division 58.5.2 in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 seasons.

41-09 - Limits on the exploratory fishery for *Dissostichus mawsoni* in Statistical Subarea 88.1 in the 2021/22 season.

41-10 - Limits on the exploratory fishery for *Dissostichus mawsoni* in Statistical Subarea 88.2 in the 2021/22 season.

42-02 - Limits on the fishery for *Champscephalus gunnari* in Statistical Division 58.5.2 in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 seasons.

51-07 – Interim distribution of the trigger level in the fishery for *Euphausia superba* in Statistical Subareas 48.1, 48.2, 48.3 and 48.4. SouthMAC noted that this was an extension of krill trigger limit.

Agenda item 5 - Other

The AFMA manager noted that Mr Trent Timmiss had left AFMA to take up a position at the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences and that a recruitment process was underway to replace him as the Senior Manager of Antarctic fisheries. SouthMAC thanked Mr Timmiss for all his hard work and dedication to the Committee. Additionally the AAD member thanked Mr Timmiss on behalf of the Australian Antarctic Division noting that he was always knowledgeable and professional.

The AFMA member further noted that the HIMI Statutory Fishing Rights conditions were currently being revised for the 2021/22 season and AFMA welcomed any feedback. Members heard that AFMA received advice from the CCAMLR Secretariat that only one vessel was required to provide a transshipment notification, however Members further noted that under CM 10-9, para 4, both vessels undertaking transshipment are each required to provide a transshipment notification (Annex 10/09 A) to the Secretariat.

The AFMA member noted that the Antarctic fisheries electronic monitoring working group had a meeting in June and there was a plan to meet again soon and invite Paul Burch from CSIRO to discuss the use of data collected through electronic monitoring in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery. Members noted that the working group would report back to SouthMAC.

Members noted that CCAMLR comm circ relating to exploratory fisheries are provided by CCAMLR to industry from other countries but not Australia. It was agreed that AFMA and AAD would discuss this issue and it would be raised at the next CCAMLR Consultative Forum (**Action arising 1**). Industry requested that they receive all CCAMLR comm circs and members supported them receiving comm circs that are relevant to their operations.

The AFMA member provided an update on fishing in the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) area noting that Australia and the European Union have agreed to protocols for access to fishery when it opens on 1 December 2021. The protocols have been agreed by Secretariat and distributed to SIOFA. Members noted that protocols for Patagonian Toothfish data exchange between SIOFA and CCAMLR will be discussed at a meeting from 29 November – 1 December. The scientific member agreed to report back the outcomes of this meeting (**Action arising 2**).

Agenda item 6 - Next meeting

SouthMAC agreed to hold the next SouthMAC meeting on Thursday 5 May 2022 in conjunction with SARAG.

The Chair closed the meeting at 12:13pm.

Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC) – Teleconference 5 November 2020

Agenda

Thursday 5 November 2020

10:30 am – 12:30 pm (AEDT)

Introduction

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|----|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Preliminaries | | |
| | 1.1 | Declaration of interests | Chair For Information |
| | 1.2 | Apologies | AFMA For Information |
| | 1.3 | Adoption of Agenda | Chair For Decision |

Heard Island and McDonald islands Toothfish Fishery

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|----|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 2. | TAC and bycatch recommendations | | |
| | 2.1 | Mackerel Icefish | AAD For Recommendation |
| | 2.2 | Bycatch limits | AFMA For Recommendation |

CCAMLR

- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 3. | Summary of outcomes of CCAMLR | AAD | For Information |
| | 3.1 | Exploratory Fisheries update | AAD For Information |
| 4. | Summary of revised Conservation Measures | AAD | For Information |

Other

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 5. | Other Business | Chair | For Discussion |
| | 5.1 | Three trawler limit | AFMA For Recommendation |
| 6. | Next Meeting | Chair | For Decision |