



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Tropical Tuna and Billfish Fisheries Management Advisory Committee TTMAC 26 Teleconference

Meeting Minutes

6 October 2021

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1. Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair opened the 26th meeting of the Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TTMAC), held as a teleconference via Microsoft Teams due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.
2. Apologies were received from David Ellis, Tuna Australia Industry member.

Table 1 Members, invited participants and observers in attendance at TTMAC 24

Members	
Ms Catherine Sayer	Chair
Mr Brodie McDonald	A/g AFMA Member
Mr Terry Romaro OAM	Industry Member
Mr Pavo Walker	Industry Member
Mr Gary Heilmann	Industry Member
Mr Grahame A Williams OAM	Recreational/Charter Fishing Member
Ms Alice McDonald	Environment Member
Dr Ash Williams	Research Member
Invited Participants	
Mr Ian Bladin	Recreational/Charter Fishing
Mr Phil Ravello	Tuna Australia
Mr Brian Jeffriess AM	Australian SBT Industry Association
Mr Josh Fielding	Manager, AFMA Tropical Tuna Fisheries
Observers	
Ms Ann Preece	CSIRO
Mr Mat Kertesz	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Mr Neil Hughes	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Mr Adam Whan	Industry Member
Executive Officer	
Ms Sara Murphy	AFMA

1.2 Adoption of agenda

3. TTMAC adopted the final agenda for the 26th meeting of Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TTMAC).
4. A draft agenda was sent to TTMAC on 16 September 2021.

The following agenda items were added to the agenda under Agenda item 5: Other business:

- 5.1 TTMAC membership and State government invited participants, and
- 5.2: Tuna Australia call for review of TTRAG

1.3 Declaration of interests

5. The Chair stated that as outlined in the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* and Fisheries Management Paper 1, all members, and invited participants of TTMAC must declare any interests in tropical tuna fisheries as they relate to specific agenda items at the commencement of the meeting (Table 2). TTMAC noted that if a member or invited participant discloses an interest in an agenda item, the person must absent themselves from the meeting while TTMAC makes a decision as to whether they can participate in the discussion and in the making of recommendations or remain absent from the meeting for the agenda item. The attendees declared their conflict of interests as follows:

Table 2 Declared interests of members, invited participants and invited observers at TTMAC 26

Name	Declared Interests	Agenda Items Relevant to Declared Interests
Members		
Ms Catherine Sayer	Chair TTMAC, CEO of Food South Australia. No pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries. Aquaculture Tenure Allocation Board member, Glenelg Football Club Board member. Chair of KIN Premium Seafood, Port Lincoln. Chair, SA Marine Scale Fishers Association and Director, Seafood Industry Australia Board.	Nil
Mr Brodie McDonald	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nil
Mr Terry Romaro OAM	Director of a company that owns Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) boat statutory fishing rights (SFRs), minor line SFRs, ETBF longline SFRs, Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) boat SFRs, WTBF longline SFRs, Western Skipjack Tuna Fishery (WSTF) purse seine permit, Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF) purse seine, mid-water trawl SFRs, and SPF quota SFRs. Director of Bite Fisheries PTY. Industry member on Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) MAC and industry representative at the Commission for the Conservation of SBT (CCSBT). Invited participant for squidRAG and squid concession holder. Alternate on the Board of Tuna Australia. Member of the Southern and Western Marine Park Advisory Committee. Currently has outstanding claim with Federal Government regarding structural adjustment in relation to marine park and recent IOTC decision on yellowfin tuna.	Agenda 3
Mr Pavo Walker	Owner of several ETBF boat SFRs, and ETBF quota SFRs for all five species. Holds a Coral Sea permit and minor line permit.	Agenda item 3
Dr Ashley Williams	Employee of CSIRO, undertakes research related to Tropical Tuna Fisheries. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nil

Name	Declared Interests	Agenda Items Relevant to Declared Interests
Mr Grahame A Williams OAM	Past President of the Game Fishing Association of Australia, Treasurer and Records Officer of the NSW Game Fishing Association and Game Fishing Association Australia Executive Officer. No pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries. Member of the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust. NSW Minister for Fisheries Special Advisory Council – RFNSW.	Nil
Alice McDonald	No pecuniary interests.	Nil
Mr Gary Heilmann	Director of companies that hold a fish receiver permits in ETBF. Member of TTRAG.	Agenda item 3
Executive Officer		
Sara Murphy	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interests in Tropical Tuna Fisheries	Nil
Invited Participants or Regular Observers		
Mr Phil Ravello	Program Manager of Tuna Australia (industry association), which includes a salary paid by industry.	Agenda item 3
Ann Preece	Employee of CSIRO, undertakes research related to Tropical Tuna Fisheries. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nil
Mr Brian Jeffriess AM	CEO of Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association.	Nil
Mr Ian Bladin	President of the Game Fishing Association of Australia, Director Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation, former Queensland charter boat owner.	Nil
Mr Josh Fielding	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interests in Tropical Tuna Fisheries.	Nil
Observers		
Mr Mat Kertesz	Employee of Department of Agriculture, Water and Energy	Nil
Mr Neil Hughes	Employee of Department of Agriculture, Water and Energy. No pecuniary interest.	Nil
Mr Adam Whan	Owner of several ETBF boat SFRs, and ETBF quota SFRs for all five species.	Agenda item 3

6. The following members and invited participants declared interests under Agenda Items 3.1 to 3.4:
- i. Mr Terry Romaro OAM – as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Romaro left the teleconference. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Romaro should be allowed to return for all discussions but not for recommendations made under Agenda Item 3.3.
 - ii. Mr Pavo Walker – as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Walker left the teleconference. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Walker should be allowed to return for all discussions and recommendations made under Agenda Item 3.
 - iii. Mr Gary Heilmann – as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Heilmann left the teleconference. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Heilmann should be allowed to return for all discussions and recommendations made under Agenda Item 3
 - iv. Mr Phil Ravello – as per requirements as an invited participant who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Ravello left the teleconference. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Ravello should be allowed to return for all discussions and recommendations made under Agenda Items 3.

1.4 Adoption of minutes from TTMAC 25

7. The draft minutes from TTMAC 25 were circulated for comment on 6 April 2021.
8. Comments were received from:
- Catherine Sayer,
 - Ash Williams,
 - Rob Campbell and
 - Brian Jeffriess AM
9. The minutes were revised in light of comments received and finalised for adoption. The MAC adopted the minutes from TTMAC 25 held Tuesday 23 March 2021, as a face to face meeting in Sydney, as a true and accurate account of the discussions from that meeting.

1.5 Actions arising from previous meetings

10. The MAC discussed the action items arising from previous meetings and commented on the progress on each item in Table (3).

Item	Meeting raised	Action	Responsibility	Status	Comments from TTMAC 26 meeting
1	TTMAC 21 – action arising	Japanese catches in the WTBF during the 1990s to the WTBF indicators document.	CSIRO	Complete There is some data available from both Japanese and Taiwanese catch in the WTBF in the decades before 2000, some of this information has been included in the indicators document.	The MAC noted that the data had been added to the indicator document.
2	TTMAC 25 – action arising	AFMA to circulate protected species interaction rates that include multiple years/quarters to determine historically trends in species interactions. A first draft of the paper to be circulated to the environment member for comment prior to being circulated more broadly to the MAC.	AFMA	Complete Information was circulated to the MAC after the March meeting and there is a paper including the data at agenda item 2.2	Complete
3	TTMAC 25 – action arising	(a) TTMAC members to provide AFMA with feedback on what information would be useful to include in the FMS annual report (b) An agenda item for discussion on the FMS annual report to be added to the next TTMAC meeting in October.	AFMA	Ongoing	Discussion deferred– AFMA currently reviewing ERA/ERM framework across fisheries, outcomes to be reported to TTMAC during 2022.

ACTION 1: Circulate the CSIRO paper on Japanese catches after meeting.

1.6 Intersessional correspondence between TTMAC 25 and TTMAC 26

11. TTMAC noted the out of session correspondence which related to minutes from the previous meeting, organising the current meeting and the call for MAC members.

2. Background and discussion items

2.1 AFMA Management Report

12. The MAC noted a verbal management report from the AFMA Tropical Tuna Manager, the major points of which were:
 - Noting change in membership, thanked prior members, welcomed to new members
 - Reported on AFMA Commission outcomes:
 - SBT over/undercatch provisions adopted by Commission, in line with CCSBT management measure.
 - International meetings:
 - IOTC meeting will be held in November 2021 to progress allocation work;
 - WCPFC due to hold a Commission meeting in December 2021. Planned to have an updated Tropical Tuna Measure (Yellowfin Tuna and Bigeye Tuna) but it is unclear how these discussions will progress, as it is still difficult virtually.
 - Coral Sea Zone trial paper for information: Subgroup to meet late October/November to review outcomes of 2021 part of trial.
 - AFMA Reconciliation Action Plan – launched recently, development of internal communication.

2.2 Fishery Catch Data – 2020/21 to date

13. The MAC noted the fishery catch data provided by AFMA in the Fishery Catch Data Report at agenda item 2.2. The meeting discussed aspects of the paper and the AFMA Tropical Tuna Fisheries Manager suggested that the rather than AFMA calculating the nominal CPUE using raw log data for the paper, that attendees would be provide with the accurate analysis undertaken by CSIRO each year.

ACTION 2: AFMA catch data will not in future provide nominal CPUE information (calculated by AFMA from logbooks) as the data produced by CSIRO as part of their annual data summaries is the most accurate. In future CPUE information will be reported from the CSIRO work.

2.3 Verbal Report from Tuna Australia

14. The MAC noted a verbal update from the Tuna Australia invited participant.

2.4 General update from members, invited participants and observers

15. TTMAC noted the written updates provided by some members provided at Attachment 1.

3. Consideration / Decision items

3.1 – Striped Marlin MSE and Harvest Strategy development

16. The MAC was provided an update on the Striped Marlin Harvest Strategy including TTRAG advice. The MAC noted the work of CSIRO in this work and in particular acknowledged Ann

Preece, for the continued high standard of work, over a number of years, in developing this Harvest Strategy.

17. The MAC was asked to:

- **Note** the background information (below) summarising the key TTRAG decisions on progressing the ETBF harvest strategy.
- **Note** the discussion and advice from TTRAG32, including the appended Striped Marlin Management Strategy Evaluation.
- **Review** TTRAG32 key outcomes and advice summary regarding the ETBF harvest strategy for Striped Marlin.
- **Recommend to the AFMA Commission** not to implement a domestic harvest strategy for Striped Marlin
- **Recommend** that AFMA adopt a constant TACC approach to Striped Marlin and monitor indicators each year
- **Recommend** that this approach be reviewed after the next WCPFC stock assessment of south western Pacific Striped Marlin

18. The MAC noted CSIRO advice that the stock assessment is very uncertain, however the operating model used to evaluate harvest strategies captures the full range of this uncertainty and includes additional uncertainty in future projections to ensure that harvest strategies are robust to a wide range of potential future uncertainty.

19. The MAC noted that two of the harvest strategies and a constant catch projection all performed well with respect to building the spawning stock biomass and maintaining a low probability of breaching the reference point. It was noted, however, that adopting constant catch will not perform as well as the harvest strategies against criteria of maximising catch because a constant catch scenario is not a harvest strategy so cannot respond to changes in the dynamics of the stock.

20. Industry advice was that Striped Marlin is now only a bycatch to targeted Yellowfin Tuna fishing with little interest in maximising catch of Striped Marlin. However, Industry does not want a scenario where the Striped Marlin TACC influences their ability to fish for other species because the TACC is set so low that does not allow a bycatch of Striped Marlin while they target other species. (choke species).

21. The MAC discussed the AFMA recommendation that the HS is not adopted but that the yearly management processes continue to monitor indicators for this species with a constant TACC for Striped Marlin, while maintaining various other triggers including: the next WCPFC stock assessment of south western Pacific Striped Marlin, any changes in targeting practice, increased take of TACC on a regular basis, industry desire to increase catch. Any of which could trigger revisiting the MSE and HS work.

22. Having noted the information provided in relation the striped marlin HS, the MAC agreed that at this stage a constant striped marlin TACC is a precautionary and practical way to manage this species and supported AFMA's recommendations.

Mr Adam Whan was welcomed to the meeting as an observer for agenda item 3.2 at 11:38am.

3.2 EBTF TACCS and over/undercatch

23. TTMAC were provided an overview of 'Consideration of Total Allowable Commercial Catches (TACCs) for the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF)' Paper which outlines the various considerations required in setting TACCs under the ETBF Management Plan.

24. The Tropical Tuna Fisheries Manager gave a brief background on some considerations in the TACC setting process for the 2022 ETBF Fishing season, based on the TTRAG advice.

Albacore Tuna

25. TTMAC noted AFMA Management's recommendation that the Albacore TACC remain at 2500t for 2022. The MAC discussed the history of albacore catches, noting that through the Tokelau agreement Australia was limited to 2526t, which represents the historical high reached in 2006 and forms the basis for current government position.

26. Albacore Tuna continues to be an important species in the fishery, as displayed in the tough economic conditions of 2020, during which catches reached 1,177t their highest point since 2009.

27. TTRAG advice on the status of Albacore Tuna has not changed with the South Pacific Albacore stock continuing to be not overfished and not subject to overfishing following a new assessment conducted in 2021 (not signed off by Commission yet, reviewed by the Scientific Committee). The Assessment noted that model runs exhibited a significant drop in the stock over the recent period, with the stock estimated to have dropped below the interim target reference point in 2021.

28. It was noted that:

- The WCPFC estimated the stock to be below the interim target reference of $56\%B_{F=0}$, meaning catches across the Pacific will need to be reduced in order for the TRP to be achieved.
- The albacore TACC reflects the 2006 catch. Fleet size, economic conditions and the stock biomass have all significantly reduced since 2006 and therefore one member suggested they believe that AFMA management should consider a TACC that better reflects the current conditions of the stock and the fishery.
- There are potential economic benefits in having a TAC that is closer to actual catches as TACCs that are consistently under-caught will devalue the SFRs and reduce their marketability.

29. In response, Industry noted:

- Albacore has not consistently been targeted in ETBF, but it has been an important species economically when availability of other species reduces. A key element of the ETBF is the flexibility to pivot between different species.
- The industry position was that the TACC is conservative and there is no reason in to reduce the TACC for Albacore when catches from the Australian fleet represent a small proportion of the South Pacific catches.
- Australia only takes a very small portion of the catch of Albacore in the South Western Pacific Ocean (1.7% in 2020 and 8.3% of the catch in region 5). It was suggested that any reduction from Australia is not going to be of value until agreement is reached in the Western and Central Pacific region on catch sharing.
- Reducing a TAC based only on previous catch for a species such as Albacore Tuna will inflate the value of SFR's by creating demand and doing this without a strong sustainability and scientific basis is outside of AFMA's remit.

30. The majority of TTMAC supported AFMA Management's recommendation noting; TTRAG advice that the Albacore TACC remain at 2500t for the 2022 fishing season, while one TTMAC member had reservations regarding this recommendation.

Bigeye Tuna

31. TTMAC noted the following:

- WCPFC stock assessment was undertaken in 2020. The stock was assessed as unlikely to be overfished and unlikely to be subject to overfishing.
- Standardised and nominal CPUE's in the ETBF for Bigeye tuna (recruits or small fish and adults) have been on a downward trend generally since 2015.
- WCPFC (and FFA) are having ongoing workshops on development of Tropical Tuna Measure which may have implications for catch limits on Bigeye tuna. Intended to be finalised in 2021 but thus far not a lot of movement (agreement).
- TTRAG advice has not changed.
- There is uncertainty around Bigeye tuna stock structure still being investigated through ETBF oceanography project.

32. TTMAC noted AFMA management advice in relation to the Bigeye tuna TACC recommendation and agreed that while it would be necessary to continue to monitor the regional stock assessment, the MAC supported management advice to keep the Bigeye tuna TACC at its present level of 1,056t for the 2021 fishing season.

Yellowfin Tuna

33. TTMAC noted the following:

- WCPFC stock assessment was undertaken in 2020. The stock was assessed as highly unlikely to be overfished and highly unlikely to be subject to overfishing.
- Since 2010, the ETBF has taken less than 0.5% of the total WCPFC catch and 7-20% of the annual catch in Region 5 (ETBF and adjacent areas).
- Domestic CPUE indicators in recent years show a decrease in adult CPUE and an increase in sub-adult CPUE but no trend in overall CPUE.

34. TTMAC supported the recommendation that the Yellowfin Tuna TACC remain at its present level of 2,400t for the 2022 fishing season.

Broadbill Swordfish

35. TTMAC noted the following:

- The WCPFC stock assessment was undertaken in 2021 (not signed off by Commission yet, reviewed by the Scientific Committee). The stock is assessed as highly unlikely to be overfished and unlikely to be experiencing overfishing.
- TTRAG recommended that:
 - The ETBF harvest strategy for Swordfish adopted in 2020 should guide TACC setting of the 2022 TACC. The TACC recommendation from the Harvest Strategy (HS) is 1,047t.
 - As defined in the HS, no exceptional circumstances were considered to have been triggered.
- The catch to TACC proportion has been very low over the last two years, driven mainly by economic conditions rather than stock availability issues.
- This scenario of low total catch by the fishery proportional to the TACC was not well tested in the MSE for Swordfish and if it continues this may constitute exceptional circumstances. CSIRO and the RAG will investigate this over the coming year.
- The actual level of the CPUE would have required a greater reduction in the TACC to around 27% but a buffer in the harvest control rule limits the change to the TACC to a maximum of 10% to minimise large fluctuations in the recommended TACC.

36. Industry: members, invited participants and observers raised the following issues in relation to the Swordfish TACC recommendation:

- Industry believe the CPUE index used this year is flawed due to changed behaviour, including due to the COVID situation, and should not be used:

- they base this on use of different bait types and sizes (mainly due to high cost of squid bait over recent years) and purposeful avoidance of capturing Swordfish due to lack of markets.
- Industry believes that the recommendation for the TACC delivered by the HS should be rejected and the 2021 TACC be retained for 2022 while TTRAG reviews whether the current external drivers in the fishery constitute exceptional circumstances, or if the HS is adequately factoring in economic drivers and other inputs such as bait size
- Industry is concerned that this HS will do the same as the last one and will continue to reduce the TACC and not allow sufficiently for increases.

37. TTMAC further noted through the scientific member:

- Standardising the CPUE is very technical and considers all available information on targeting practices.
- Not all size classes of Swordfish show a decreasing trend in the CPUE indices. Historic data did show there was low recruitment of small fish to the fishery, so it is not surprising that the CPUE of mid-size fish has been low while there has been little recruitment.
- This consistency in different data sets is also mirrored in wider regional data, giving confidence that our CPUE standardisation is accurate.
- It was reiterated that the HS has been MSE tested and the harvest control rule includes both the application of a 10% buffer (without which the actual decrease in the recommended TACC would be much higher i.e. 27%) and also the ability to increase the TACC recommendation in years when this is indicated by the HS.

38. The MSC certification gained by the ETBF in 2020 requires that a harvest strategy be implemented for stocks considered to have a domestic catch high enough (as a proportion of regional catch) to warrant application of such a measure. It is not clear if not adopting outputs of the Harvest Strategy this year will impact the MSC certification, although industry believe in having adopted the HS in 2020 they have met all conditions of the MSC accreditation.

39. Advice sought from MSC by industry and provided to the MAC confirmed that as long as there were well documented reasons as to why the harvest strategy recommendations were not adopted (e.g. due to concerns raised by industry under point 39), then this would have no adverse implications for meeting the MSC condition on Swordfish.

40. With the exception of the three industry MAC members present, the remaining 4 MAC members supported the AFMA management recommendation of a 1,047t TACC for the 2022 fishing season.

ACTION 3: TTMAC to ask TTRAG to undertake analysis to determine if the low catch to TACC constitutes exceptional circumstances in some way. TTMAC to also ask TTRAG to investigate the opportunity to collect and integrate additional data in to the CPUE standardisation around bait types and sizes, and to undertake discussions with industry if there are other data that could be useful but aren't included.

Striped Marlin

41. TTMAC noted the following:

- The most recent stock assessment in 2019 indicated that Striped Marlin was likely overfished (very close to B20) and very close to overfishing.
- AFMA Management has noted that the stock assessment indicates a trend of declining fishing mortality since about 2010 and indicates a slight increase in spawning biomass in recent years.
- Additionally, it is noted that Striped Marlin is typically not targeted.

42. Given that the MAC had already considered the draft Striped Marlin HS and decided to adopt a constant TACC there was no discussion during this agenda item and the MAC unanimously supported the AFMA Management recommendation to maintain the current TACC of 351t for the 2022 fishing season.

Overcatch and undercatch

43. AFMA management recommended an overcatch and undercatch of 10% and a determined weight of 2,000kg for all quota species in the ETBF for the 2022 season and TTMAC supported this recommendation.

3.3 WTBF TACCs and over/undercatch

44. TTMAC noted the recommendations in the MAC paper.

45. Under the Western Tuna and Billfish Management Plan 2005, AFMA is required to set TACCs for each quota species in the fishery prior to the season commencing on 1 February each year.

46. AFMA sought advice from the Tropical Tuna Resource Assessment Group (TTRAG) on the WTBF. TTRAG did not make Recommended Biological Commercial Catches (RBCC) advice due to the low level of catch in the Australian area of influence (the Australian Fishing Zone and adjacent high seas where our boats fish). TTRAG has provided an indicators paper with relevant information about the current TACCs.

47. TTMAC noted that with the exception of Yellowfin tuna recommendations for TACCs remain the same as set for the 2021 fishing season as follows:

Quota species	TACC
Bigeye tuna	2,000t
Yellowfin tuna	2,000t
Broadbill Swordfish	3,000t
Striped marlin	125t

48. It is Australian Government policy to support catch level decisions made at regional fisheries management organisations/arrangement negotiations. In the absence of an agreement, Australia's domestic catch allocation decision is to be consistent with the agreed whole of government position.

49. IOTC stock assessment of Yellowfin tuna has determined that the stock remains overfished and subject to overfishing

50. At its special meeting in June 2021, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) agreed to an interim management measure (21/01) which sets out conditions stipulating that Australia should not increase the take of Yellowfin tuna to greater than 2,000t effectively establishing a maximum catch limit.

51. Industry members stated that any cut to the Yellowfin tuna TACC will impact on their future catching potential and penalise them unfairly for not catching the TACC in previous years. They also reiterated the importance of setting WTBF TACCs at a level that allows for future sustainable expansion of the fishery and stated that the current fishing levels in the fishery do not reflect the availability of the resource within Australia's EEZ.

52. TTMAC noted that the IOTC process included consideration of catch history and it was a difficult negotiating position for Australia, where there was a genuine need to reduce the overall take (and potential take) of Yellowfin tuna in the Indian Ocean for sustainability reasons.
53. The MAC also noted the IOTC will be using Harvest Strategy's to set total catches when developing allocation criteria. Allocation process is to allocate this total catch among members for the key tuna species in the Indian Ocean in the future and that the current measure is an interim measure and is not to prejudice future.
54. Industry raised the option of maintaining the YFT TACC at 5000t and agree to limit catches to less than 2000t through some other mechanism such as a change to permit condition, determination etc. This would effectively meet the intent of the IOTC temporary measure while ensuring the 5000t remained in place for future years and would not be a permanent cut.
55. Industry noted that there were previous examples where industry had voluntarily agreed not to catch quota to fulfill policy driven requirements (e.g. recreational quota set aside for SBT)
56. Following MAC discussion of the Yellowfin tuna issue, the WTBF Industry member left the room while the remaining MAC members addressed the TACC recommendations.
57. With the exception of the two remaining industry members (and the Tuna Australia invited participant) TTMAC supported the TACC recommendation for Yellowfin tuna.
58. All TTMAC members supported recommendations in relation to Bigeye tuna, Broadbill Swordfish and Striped Marlin.

Overcatch and undercatch

59. AFMA management recommended an overcatch and undercatch of 10% and a determined weight of 2,000kg for all quota species in the WTBF for the 2022/23 season and TTMAC supported this recommendation.

3.4 Potential revisions to seabird and SBT Zone conditions

60. The Tropical Tuna Fisheries Manager provided an explanation of AFMA recommendations following a review of Seabird management arrangements in the SFR conditions. He noted that the proposed revisions simplified administrative requirements for the benefit of both operators and management.
61. Industry members did not accept this assurance and questioned the need for ongoing seabird management arrangements. They noted the upcoming TAP Workshop and were concerned about agreeing to any changes to arrangements prior to participating in the Workshop.

ACTION 4: TTMAC EO to provide ABARES Seabird management publication to TTMAC members out of session.

TTMAC Industry members did not support the proposed revisions to the current ETBF seabird SFR conditions and AFMA agreed that if the current package of revisions change vastly with more development work then they will be returned to the MAC for further comment.

4. Information Papers

4.1. Policy, Environment, Economics and Research Section (PEER) Update

62. TTMAC Members noted a written update Paper provided prior to the meeting.

4.2. Electronic Monitoring Update

63. TTMAC Members noted a written update Paper provided prior to the meeting.

5. Other business

5.1. State government invited participants

64. TTMAC appointments lapsed in June 2021 and a process has now concluded.
65. The position of state representative (invited participant) on the MAC was not filled and the MAC was consulted on several issues in relation to this based on recommendations from the process and the AFMA Commission:
- Necessity: Does TTMAC require a state invited participant?
 - Which state/s: Only one state or invites to all/some states?
 - Which meetings: Every meeting or only meeting that the Chair/AFMA consider have issues potentially requiring state input/interesting to state/s?

ACTION 5: AFMA to contact both NSW and Queensland regarding attendance at future TTMAC meetings.

5.2. Tuna Australia request for review of TTRAG

66. Tuna Australia (TA) submitted a paper to TTMAC seeking support for a review into the operation of TTRAG in the management of Australia's Tropical Tuna Fisheries.
67. TTMAC heard from the TA invited participant that their rationale for this review of TTRAG is to reduce management costs. The example of the SBT Fishery was used where there is no RAG and simply a MAC, largely due to an RFMO sitting above domestic management arrangements, where much of the science and stock assessments are conducted. TA's view is that it is a similar arrangement for the ETBF.

ACTION 6: AFMA to provide a paper to the next MAC meeting outlining possible ways of reviewing RAG operations (mainly meeting logistics) to reduce management costs.

5.3. Other business

ACTION 7: Tuna Australia to provide a paper to the next meeting of the MAC regarding the development of options for quota pooling for the fishery to lease out uncaught quota to international operations to be caught as part of Australia's WCPFC allocation on the high seas.

68. The AFMA Fisheries Manager thanked Dr Ash Williams and Ann Preece for all their work in providing stock assessments and indicators which underpin the RAG and MAC meetings and for their recent work in streamlining the analysis process.

6. Date and venue for next meeting

69. TTMAC discussed setting a date for the first meeting of 2022, noting that TTRAG is in second week of March. The meeting agreed that the next TTMAC meeting date will be decided in January 2021 in consultation with participants, to identify a date between the end of March and April, observing the need to avoid the Easter long weekend.
70. The Chair thanked participants and members for their contributions and closed the meeting at 3:35pm.

ATTACHMENT 1: Written Updates from members (Agenda Item 2.5)

A template was provided for TTMAC members and invited participants wishing to submit a written general update for inclusion in record of meeting. These were taken as read during the teleconference meeting.

Agenda Item 2.4 Update from members

Template for TTMAC members and invited participants wishing to submit a written general update for inclusion in record of meeting.

A)

Provided by: Grahame Williams, OAM

Position on TTMAC: Recreational/Charter Member

General Update:

The last report I gave was the NSW game fishing season from September 2020 through to end February 2021.

This update is from March through to end of season which in NSW is end May.

6th March out of Gosford was the Central Coast GFC 1 day Skins Shootout where 13 marlin were tagged and released and captured were two makos and a mahi mahi.

The N&PSGFC Garmin-d'Albora Port Stephens Classic held out of Port Stephens was next with 97 boats fishing for 2 days. 134 striped marlin were tagged and released as were 23 blacks and 6 blues. Captures were 2 blue marlin, largest being 210kg, 7 yellowfin tuna, largest 64kg.

On 13th March, Jervis Bay GFC held a 1 Day Shootout. Results were 43 fish tagged and released, 17 striped marlin, 24 black marlin and 2 mahi mahi.

The Broken Bay GFC Invitational was cancelled due to weather.

The Sydney GFC Peter Goadby Memoria Tournament was held out of Watsons Bay on the 17th-18th April. 30 boats entered with goodweather but unfortunately the fish did not cooperate with the results only being 10 tagged and released fish, nine marlin and a mahi mahi. Captures were two blue marlin of 145.4kg and 187.3kg.

The Anzac Day weekend of 24th and 25th April was the timing for the Newcastle GFC AIBT/East Coast Classic. 30 boats fished with 24 tag & released fish made up of seven blue marlin, 14 striped marlin two whalersharks and a mahi mahi. Captures were two tiger sharks of 215.3kg and 403.4kg

The last tournament for this report was the Port Hacking GFC 100 held out of Port Hacking on the 1st and 2nd May. 59 boats entered with 17 fish tagged and released and 12 captures, ten yellowfin tuna from 38 - 68kg so plenty of fresh tuna was distributed. Other captures were a blue marlin of 208kg and a tiger shark of 206.5kg.

The Canberra Yellowfin Tournament was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions and since then all game fishing has been stopped due to the NSW lock-down.

Agenda item 2 Background Information

Agenda Item 2.4 Update from members

Template for TTMAC members and invited participants wishing to submit a written general update for inclusion in record of meeting.

B)

Provided by: Brian Jeffriess. Australian Southern Bluefin Industry Association (ASBTIA)

Position on TTMAC: Invited Participant

General Update: Main stock and catch developments:

- (1) August 2021 SBT stock review found stock growth continues in line with Harvest Strategy targets. This target is set by the scientific formula (Management Procedure). Quotas are set to achieve B30 (MSY) by 2035. Stock has recovered as follows:

	% of original spawning biomass (in 1932)
2011	5.5
2014	9.0
2017	13.0
2020	20.0

Source: www.ccsbt.org

- (2) There has been no **“overfishing”** since 2009, and the SBT stock has continued to increase by 5% pa (Source CSIRO) since then. As a result, the quotas have increased:

Total global quota Australian quota*

1991	11,935	5,265
2009-2011	9,449	4,015
2013	10,949	4,698
2015-2017	14,647	5,665
2018-2020	17,336	6,165
2021-2023	17,642	6,273

Source: www.ccsbt.org

- (3) The Australian catch (whole tonnes) for farming and longlining has been:

	Farms	Longline	
2017	4,683	650	5,334
2018	5,130	1,029	6,159
2019	5,308	766	6,074
2020	4,586	844	5,430
2021	4,592	984 (at 24/9)	5,576

Source: AFMA

Outlook

Overriding issue is that the stock status is on track for MSY. Other issues:

- (1) The lower farm catches in 2020 and 2021 were driven by Covid in both years and by La Nina in 2021.

- (2) The last La Nina was 2010-2012 – and the effect was the same. We anticipated the 2021 La Nina and went fishing early but it was not enough to offset the change in fish aggregations and movements.
- (3) The BOM predicts a 50% chance of La Nina continuing into 2022.
- (4) Farm mortalities in 2021 were 0.3% - so the challenge is how to maintain that low level.
- (5) Japanese market recovering slowly as follow:

	\$/kg fob	
2018	14.67	
	2019	16.61
2020	11.57	
	2021	12.52

Source: ABS – for Australian frozen farmed

(6) Chinese market hit by geopolitical issues.

(7) Charter/recreational catch: The SBT Management Plan was amended in 2021 to formally and automatically issue 95% of Australia’s CCSBT National Allocation to the commercial sector and 5% to the recreational sector. This means that the charter/rec sector is covered by:

Whole tonnes

- 2018 250 (set aside by ASBTIA to not catch)
- 2019 250 (set aside by ASBTIA to not catch)
- 2020 250 (set aside by ASBTIA to not catch)
- 2021 308 (5% of Australia’s national allocation)

(8) The SBT quota for 2024-2026 will be set by the CCSBT in October 2022.

- (9) There has not been any seismic/drilling in GAB for 5 years.
- (10) A project to launch space rockets from Port Lincoln has started operations. The test rockets resulted in large air and sea closures – and if sustained, would seriously disrupt SBT spotting, catching and towing operations in the GAB.
- (11) SBT has been prioritized by the TSSC for delisting from the EPBC Act.
- (12) The ERA for SBT purse seine catching was very positive for the SBT stock and its impact on the environment, but raised the issue of any wider ecosystem effect of the sardine catch. This is taken into account in the sardine quota setting. The 2020 sardine stock assessment showed the highest spawning biomass ever (1995-2020) of 318-439,000t, compared with the upper reference point in the Management Plan of 190,000t. The TAC is 12% of the SSB (Source: www.pir.sa.gov.au)

ASBTIA – 29/9/2021
