



**Australian Government**

**Australian Fisheries Management Authority**

## **South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC) Meeting 51**

### **Meeting minutes**

**25 October 2023**

**MS Teams**

# Contents

South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC) Meeting 51 .....	1
Draft Meeting minutes.....	1
South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC).....	3
Meeting 51 – 25 October 2023 .....	3
Agenda.....	3
Agenda item 1. Preliminaries.....	4
Agenda item 2 – Managers Update .....	5
Agenda Item 3 - Industry Update .....	6
Agenda item 4 – SSJF 2023 Fishing Season (TAE) .....	8
Agenda item 5 – Research Catch Allowance (RCA) for the South East Australian Marine Ecosystem Survey (SEA-MES) during the 2024–25 season .....	8
Other Business.....	9
Review of Action Items and Recommendations .....	9
Next Meeting.....	9
Close of meeting .....	9
Attachment A - Register of Interests.....	10
Attachment B- Action items.....	12

# South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC)

## Meeting 51 – 25 October 2023

### Agenda

**Time (AEST):** 09:30 -12:00

**Location:** MS Teams

**Chair:** David McGlennon

Time	Item	Purpose	Presenter
09:30	<b>1. Preliminaries</b> 1.1. Acknowledgement of Country, welcome and apologies Declarations of interest 1.2. Conflicts of Interest 1.3. Adoption of Agenda 1.4. Minutes from previous meetings 1.5. Actions arising from previous meeting	For Noting	Chair / Rebecca Jol (20 min) 09:30-09:50
09:50	<b>2. Managers Update (taken as read)</b>	Noting/questions	Sally Weekes (15 mins) 09:50-10:05
10:05	<b>3. Industry Updates</b>	Noting/questions	Industry All (15 mins) 10:05-10:20
10:20	<b>Break 15 mins</b>		
10:35	<b>4. SSJF 2024 Fishing Season (TAE)</b>	For Advice Steve Hall	AFMA (30 mins) 10:35-11:05
11:05	<b>5. SEA-MES Survey RCA</b>	For Advice	AFMA (15 mins) 11:05-11:20
11:20	<b>Other Business</b>	Noting/Questions	(20 mins) 11:20-11:40
11:30	<b>Review of action items</b>	For Advice	EO (10 mins) 11:40-11:50
11:40	<b>Next Meeting/Meeting Close</b>	For Noting	Chair (5 mins) 11:50-11:55
12:00	<b>End of Day</b>		

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 for SEMAC, welcomed members to the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country paying his respects to this country's First People and Traditional Custodians of the land throughout Australia.
2. The SEMAC members noted the Acknowledgement of Country, that the meeting was being recorded and commenced proceedings.
3. Participants and apologies:

#### Membership

DR DAVID MCGLENNON	CHAIR
DR SARAH JENNINGS	Economic member
MS ANISSA LAWRENCE	Conservation member
DR PAUL MCSHANE	Scientific 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
MS SALLY WEEKES	AFMA member
MS REBECCA JOL	Executive officer

#### Invited Participants

John Cull, Industry Member

#### Apologies

Mr Gerry Geen, Industry Member

### 1.2 Declarations of interest

- 1 SEMAC members noted the conflicts of interest requirements as outlined in [AFMA's Fisheries Management Paper 1](#). Members and participants updated their Declarations of Interest as shown in Table 1 of the Preliminaries paper and discussed specific conflicts of interest with agenda items (see **Table 1**).
4. An updated table of declared conflicts of interest is provided at [Attachment A](#).
5. SEMAC noted that the industry member, Kyri Toumazos and invited participant, John Cull declared a conflict of interest for the SSJF Fishing season TAE agenda, item 4.
6. The Chair sought advice on how the SEMAC should manage these conflicts.
7. The committee agreed that participants with a declared conflict would be permitted to contribute to discussions but would be excused from the meeting for any recommendation made by the MAC for these items.

Table 1. Declared conflicts by relevant members in relation to specific agenda items and SEMACs decision regarding participation for those items.

Agenda Item	Potential conflicts of Interest	Discussion Participation	Recommendation Participation
SSJF 2023 Fishing Season TAE	Mr Kyri Toumazos	Present	Absent
	Mr John Cull	Present	Absent

### 1.3 Adoption of agenda

8. SEMAC adopted the agenda as final.

### 1.4 Minutes of previous meeting

9. SEMAC noted that the minutes of the SEMAC 50, held in July 2023 have been completed but are still waiting on final comments from some of the members. The final draft will be available as soon as those comments are received.

### 1.5 Actions arising from previous meetings

10. A consolidated list of action items from previous SEMAC meetings was circulated to members prior to the meeting. Members noted progress against action items in the update provided by the Executive Officer.

11. SEMAC noted that:

- There were no unresolved actions.
- Action 49.1 is underway. Sampling targets for the 2023-24 fishing season are on track. Discussions are ongoing with CSIRO and the data team to determine an appropriate sampling timeframe. The Western Orange Roughy Research Plan (WORRP) has been extended for another 2 years as part of the 2023-25 SETFIA co-management contract.
- Action 45.4 is yet to start but will be addressed once work on the Gillnet, Hook and Trap (GHAT) bycatch and discard workplan is progressed. The committee noted that this work has been identified as a key priority in the 2023-24 AFMA workplan.
- The Industry member, Mr Simon Boag, noted that an item discussed at SEMAC 50 was not reflected as an action in the minutes and requested that AFMA provide an update on the depth analysis work to be undertaken for the proposed revision to the eastern boundary of the rebuilding closures.

Action 1: AFMA to provide SETFIA with an update on the depth analysis work to be undertaken by AFMA to revise the eastern boundaries of the rebuilding closures.

## Agenda item 2 – Managers Update

12. A written update was provided to SEMAC members on the key management issues arising since the last meeting in July 2023.

13. The update was taken largely as ‘read’ with the following key points identified:

- In relation to AFMA’s work on climate change, Industry member, Kyri Toumazos, noted that new data presented on the gummy shark preliminary assessment at SharkRAG (October 2023) (that

stock status may not be as favourable as initially thought) contradicted the findings of the climate sensitivity assessment (which shows Gummy Shark is not a cause for concern), leaving the industry confused and worried.

- AFMA noted that the stock assessment and climate sensitivity assessments use different models and that a data gap (missing lengths on larger adult sharks) is being investigated as a possible cause of the draft outcomes from the Gummy Shark stock assessment. CSIRO will provide more information at SharkRAG 2.

14. The Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery Research Advisory Group (SESSFRAG) supported an interim approach to recast the stock assessment and data analysis schedule under what is known as the 'SMARP Alternative' approach. The aim being to reduce costs associated with stock assessments and data management (across the SESSF) and direct these savings into strategic research and internal data analysis and reporting.

- SETFIA expressed support for this work, pointing out that profitability in the South East Trawl fishery is plummeting and that there has never been less money available to pay levies as fishing grounds become less accessible and fuel costs rise.
- The committee noted that AFMA is engaging in the next stage of this work, which will investigate options for a new multispecies harvest strategy that considers climate change and is affordable.
- In relation to the list process for Redfish under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, the conservation member (Anissa Lawrence) noted that, there are a number of shark and ray species that will also be considered by the Threatened Species Commission in 2024, and if listed, will have implications for fishing avoidance. These species include: Eastern angel shark, Green eyed spurdog, Swell shark, Long neck skate and Gray skate.

### Agenda Item 3 - Industry Update

15. The Chair asked industry members to provide an update on any items arising since the last meeting in February 2023. SEMAC noted the following updates:

**Will Mure** (Mures Fishing P/L) noted:

- Pink ling catches, market price and demand have been good.
- There is a potential that Industry will focus more fishing effort on ling (whilst conditions are so good) and this may have flow on effects on Blue eye trevalla CPUE and potential reductions in quota.

**Kyri Tourmazos** noted:

- Catches and fishing conditions have been good.

**Simon Boag** (Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group) discussed:

SPF:

- Dolphin interactions are at their lowest.
- Catch rates have been great.
- There is only one MSE requirement to maintain accreditation and that condition is now on track.
- Oil yields have declined through winter.
- Research undertaken by UTAS has been funded directly by Industry for Blue mackere. ARC process speed meant that the MSC condition would not be met otherwise.

- MSC accreditation is required to maintain the only current market.

**Trawl:**

- The trawl fishery is on the verge of collapse with only a few grounds remaining.
- The gillnet fishery has lost 90 percent of its grounds and the trawl fishery has lost 85 percent of its grounds. Previous CSIRO work is that only about 5 percent of the grounds in coastal waters (3 nm from land to 1000 meters deep) are fished.
- Trawl fleet is down to 36 boats from 140.
- Rebuilding closures are having a significant impact.
- Blue Grenadier fishery is doing great.
- Proposals for wind farm and seismic surveys are consuming the majority of SETFIA's resources; during the next year, approximately 20,000 square kilometres will be zoned as offshore windfarm zones.
- Two seismic surveys are planned in Western Victoria which will significantly reduce catch for a year for the trawl fishery.
- Fuel prices are increasing and is restricting where fishing activity can viably occur.
- The South-east Marine Parks Network management plan is under review and the Minister of Environment is considering expanding the marine parks network, further threatening available fishing grounds for the gillnet and longline fisheries.

**John Harrison (Recreational Member):**

- Noted that there have been no updates/comments/information received from the recreational fishing industry sectors regarding SEMAC discussions, minutes or action items so there was nothing to report.

**John Cull (SSJF Industry Invited Participant):**

- Industry had a good year operating in Tasmanian waters also.
- Catches were up from previous years.
- Noticing deeper fishing (approximately 10 to 15 meters deeper) than traditionally fished and Tuna are moving into the shallower waters.
- Occasionally, fish were caught during the day which is unusual.
- Historically, El Nino weather conditions bring good fishing in Tasmanian waters and so Industry are anticipating another good fishing year.
- Prices are stable. However, if the Falkland Islands or NZ have a good fishing year, they tend to ship a lot of product to Australia which drops the market price domestically.
- There is a lot of latent effort in this fishery as it is very expensive to get set up (~\$400,000 to buy the squid fishing equipment).
- There is less fishing effort in Australia compared to other countries (Japan has ~2530 boats)

## **Agenda item 4 – SSJF 2024 Fishing Season (TAE)**

16. SEMAC noted the background provided by Steve Hall on the 2024 SSJF fishing season TAE and SEMAC noted the following points:
- SquidRAG and SEMAC supported the inclusion of a lower catch and effort trigger into the SSJF Harvest Strategy at their meetings in 2022, which was subsequently approved by the AFMA Commission and implemented for the 2023 SSJF fishing season;
  - Catch and effort of Gould’s squid in the SSJF for the 2023 fishing year is 642 tonnes across 367 fishing days as at the end of September 2023. This catch and number of fishing days has reached the end of year lower catch and effort trigger of 360 tonnes and 213 days but is well below the intermediate and limit catch triggers of 3,000 and 5,000 tonnes, respectively. Trawl catch was approximately 230 tonnes, with 185 tonnes being caught by CTS and 45 tonnes caught by GABTS, as of end September 2023, which is also below the 2,000 tonnes trawl catch limit trigger. Combined jig and trawl catch was approximately 872 tonnes, well below the combined catch limit trigger of 6,000 tonnes.
  - There were eight active SSJF vessels in 2023, which did not exceed the effort trigger of ‘30 standard vessels’ in the fishery.
  - The RAG did not identify any sustainability issues for the fishery with the latest ABARES report assessing the fishery as not overfished nor subject to overfishing.
  - No bycatch has been reported in 2023.
17. The MAC discussed the fact that there is a lot of latent effort in the fishery but that this is due to economic reasons rather than any concern for sustainability. Further, that the capacity in the fleet allows it to respond should the abundance of squid increase suddenly. The MAC did not identify any concerns with the proposed TAE recommendation provided by the RAG.
18. The MAC supported the SquidRAG recommendation for maintaining the SSJF TAE at 550 standard squid jig machines for the 2024 fishing year, commencing on 1 January 2024.

## **Agenda item 5 – Research Catch Allowance (RCA) for the South East Australian Marine Ecosystem Survey (SEA-MES) during the 2024–25 season**

19. The AFMA member provided SEMAC with a report on the SEA-MES survey activities by the RV Investigator during its first voyage noting that a second and third voyage is due to be undertaken. As part of the research activities, a small amount of research catch allowance for SESSF quota species for the second and third trips was being requested, similar in volume to that provided for the first voyage.
20. SEMAC noted:
- Dr Little (CSIRO Environment, Principal Investigator), has requested that the same RCA be granted for the second and third SEA-MES voyages (both of which fall in the 2024–25 SESSF season);
  - The South East Resource Assessment Group (SERAG) supported this request when it met on 26–27 September 2023;
  - RCA is deducted from the Recommended Biological Catch as part of the annual Total Allowable Catch (TAC) setting process, or granted in addition to bycatch TACs.
  - Industry supported the 10 t RCA of mixed Commonwealth quota species for the SEA-MES journey. Additionally, industry believed that since this research is not just for the purpose of managing fisheries, if this allowance were to increase substantially, then industry would expect the project would need to source the quota through the commercial quota market.



21. SEMAC supported the recommended RCA of 10 t of mixed quota species (relevant to the SESSF and Small Pelagic Fishery; SPF) for each SEA-MES voyage planned for 2024.

## **Other Business**

22. There were no other business items reported.

## **Review of Action Items and Recommendations**

23. The Executive Officer presented the action items from the meeting and revised them after addressing the MAC's comments.
24. Action items and recommendations arising from this meeting are outlined in [Attachment B](#).

## **Next Meeting**

25. The next meeting is scheduled for 6-8 February 2024 at the Radisson on Flagstaff gardens. More details will be sent out to the committee closer to the date.

## **Close of meeting**

26. The Chair thanked the MAC for their contribution and closed the meeting at 11:10 AM.

## Attachment A - Register of Interests

Declared interests - Last updated: July 2023	
Members	
Dr David McGlennon	Chair - No interest pecuniary or otherwise
Ms Anissa Lawrence	No pecuniary interest Director of TierraMar Ltd Independent consultant Undertakes contracts for a number of Conservation NGOs, government departments, non-government agencies and the private sector on a range of fishery related matters Conservation member on SharkRAG, SPFRAG, SEMAC, Spencer Gulf Prawn RAC and the South Australian Rock Lobster MAC Chair of Ocean Future Fund Inc.
Mr Gerry Geen	No pecuniary interest. Industry member of SPFRAG
Mr Will Mure	Sole Director of Mures Fishing P/L Commonwealth fish receiver permit Tasmania fish processing licence Scalefish hook boat SFR, SEQ Quota Holding Permits, Auto longline fishing permit High Seas permit Blue eye trevalla SFRs, Ling SFRs, Ribaldo ITP Mixed species Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) and SFRs 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) Industry member on SERAG
Dr Paul McShane	Chair of SERAG and a member of SEMAC and SESSFRAG. No pecuniary interest in the SESSF. Principal of Global Marine Resource Management Pty Ltd. Adjunct Professor (Fisheries and Aquaculture) College of Science and Engineering, James Cook University.
Dr Sarah Jennings	Economics member on SERAG and SESSFRAG. Economics coordinator, FRDC Human Dimensions Sub-Program. Member of AFMA Economics Working Group. Independent economics consultant. No pecuniary or other interest.
Mr John Harrison	Panel Member of the Independent Review of the Domestic Commercial Vessel Safety Legislation and Cost and Charging Arrangements.
Mr Simon Boag	Industry member on SERAG. Executive Officers to SETFIA, SSIA and SPFIA. SETFIA and SSIA receives funding from AFMA to complete projects under co-management agreements. Undertakes contracts as an independent consultant.

Mr Kyriakos Toumazos	<p>CEO (South Australian Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishermen’s Association Inc.);</p> <p>Director of Southern Sea Eagles Pty Ltd;</p> <p>Director of Southern Fisheries Pty Ltd;</p> <p>Director Health Balance Pharmacies Pty Ltd;</p> <p>Member South Australian Boating Facility Board;</p> <p>Member of SharkRAG and SEMAC (AFMA);</p> <p>Member of AMSA Regional Safety Committee;</p> <p>Director Southern Shark Industry Alliance;</p> <p>Director PACK Investments Pty Ltd;</p> <p>Director Cruickshank’s Corner Developments Pty Ltd;</p> <p>Director Cruickshank’s Corner Commercial Pty Ltd;</p> <p>Director Seafood Industry Australia;</p>
Ms Sally Weekes	<p>AFMA Demersal and Midwater Senior Manager (Acting) – AFMA SEMAC member – no interest pecuniary or otherwise.</p>
<b>Invited participants</b>	
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>
Ms Fiona McKinnon	<p>NSW DPI (Fisheries)– no interest pecuniary or otherwise</p>
<b>Executive Officer</b>	
Ms Rebecca Jol	<p>AFMA – Senior Management Officer, Demersal and Midwater Fisheries. No interest pecuniary or otherwise.</p>
<b>AFMA Attendees</b>	
Dr Mark Grubert	<p>Employed by AFMA, South East Trawl &amp; Great Australian Bight Trawl Manager – no interest, pecuniary or otherwise.</p>
Dr Lara Ainley	<p>Employed by AFMA, Manager- Gillnet, Hook and Trap (GHAT) and High Seas (SPRFMO) Fisheries, – no interest, pecuniary or otherwise.</p>
Mr Steve Hall	<p>AFMA – Manager SPF, Scallop and Squid – no interest, pecuniary or otherwise.</p>
Yvette Lamont	<p>AFMA – Senior Management Officer, Demersal and Midwater Fisheries – no interest, pecuniary or otherwise.</p>

## Attachment B- Action items

Table 2. Actions from meeting 51

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
1.5. Actions arising from previous meetings	1.	AFMA to respond to SETFIA in relation to its request to revise the eastern boundary of the rebuilding closures.	AFMA	As soon as information is available

Table 3. Recommendations from meeting 51

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation
4. SSJF 2024 Fishing Season (TAE)	1.	Maintain the SSJF TAE at 550 standard squid jig machines for the 2024 fishing year, commencing on 1 January 2024.
5. Research Catch Allowance (RCA) for the South East Australian Marine Ecosystem Survey (SEA-MES) during the 2024–25 season	1.	SEMAC supported a 10 t RCA of mixed quota species (relevant to the SESSF and Small Pelagic Fishery; SPF) for each SEA-MES voyage planned for 2024.