



## Orange roughy rebuilding strategy review – key points

### Purpose

The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) has undertaken a five-year review of the [Orange Roughy Rebuilding Strategy 2014](#) (the current Rebuilding Strategy) and is now seeking feedback from the public to help inform the development of a revised Rebuilding Strategy.

### Background

The implementation of rebuilding strategies for overfished species/ stocks is specified under the [Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy 2018](#) (HSP) and associated [Guidelines](#).

When a species/ stock is assessed as being below the designated limit reference point, AFMA directs that targeted fishing ceases and then in consultation with the AFMA Commission, industry and key stakeholders, develops a rebuilding strategy with the aim to rebuild the species/ stock back to above the limit reference point within a specified rebuilding timeframe. Once implemented, a rebuilding strategy is maintained until the species/ stock is assessed to be above the limit reference point with a reasonable level of certainty.

The ongoing implementation of a rebuilding strategy is required where a species/ stock has been listed as 'Conservation Dependent' under the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#) (EPBC Act). If a species/ stock has been assessed as being above the limit reference point, but continues to be listed as conservation dependent, the rebuilding strategy must remain in place until such time as the listing category has been revised.

AFMA is required to implement and review management arrangements, including monitoring and data collection programs, to support future assessments and to monitor rebuilding to satisfy requirements of the EPBC Act.

Each year, AFMA, in consultation with the relevant Resource Assessment Group (RAG) and Management Advisory Committee (MAC), reviews progress against the rebuilding strategies with a particular focus on catch and effort data to ensure that targeted fishing is not occurring, and reviews other key fishery indicators to monitor the rebuilding of the stock. The review also informs whether any additional management or monitoring requirements are necessary.

Every five years, AFMA undertakes a formal strategic review of each rebuilding strategy. Following the five-year review, AFMA considers the outcomes and may develop a revised rebuilding strategy which is subject to public consultation and then endorsement by the AFMA Commission.

Following the review of the current Rebuilding Strategy, AFMA, in consultation with the relevant RAG and MAC, have proposed changes to be included in the revised Rebuilding Strategy. The revised Rebuilding Strategy will be implemented for the period 2021 to 2025.

### Orange roughy

For key information about the management of orange roughy, please refer to the [AFMA website](#).

The primary objective of the Rebuilding Strategy is to return all orange roughy stocks to levels where they can be harvested in an ecologically sustainable manner, in line with the objectives of the HSP; and ultimately, to maximise the economic returns to the Australian community from the management of this species. The current Rebuilding Strategy outlines management arrangements to rebuild orange roughy stocks and manage

those stocks, eastern zone and Cascade Plateau, which have been assessed as being rebuilt and are open to commercial fishing in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF).

The current Rebuilding Strategy replaced the Orange Roughy Conservation Program (ORCP); which was implemented in 2006 when orange roughy was listed as 'Conservation Dependent' under the EPBC Act. In line with the EPBC Act, the objective of the ORCP was to conserve orange roughy to ensure its long-term survival in nature and recover the species to ecologically sustainable levels.

#### *Five-year review in 2019*

In 2019, AFMA completed the [five-year review](#) of the current Rebuilding Strategy with a focus on progress against the rebuilding objectives and consideration of any changes required.

#### *Proposed changes*

The continuing focus of the revised Rebuilding Strategy will be to prevent targeted fishing of overfished stocks, and to promote the collection of data to support future stock assessments. Note that the eastern zone and Cascade Plateau stocks of orange roughy have been assessed as being above the limit reference point, and as such are managed as targeted stocks under the [SESSF Harvest Strategy](#).

The relevant RAGs and MACs agreed that the current management arrangements remain effective and the revised Rebuilding Strategy should continue to focus on monitoring and data collection to enable future stock assessments to be completed. This will include ongoing implementation of the Great Australian Bight (GAB) Orange Roughy Research Program (developed in 2007) and the Western Orange Roughy Research Program (developed in 2020) which allow the holder of an AFMA-issued scientific permit to fish for orange roughy under carefully monitored conditions.

In summary, the proposed changes in the revised Rebuilding Strategy will include:

- adding an overview of the GAB and Western Orange Roughy research programs;
- including guidance on how the data collected under each program will be used to update our understanding of the status of the relevant stocks; and
- updating the guidance around the process for the annual review of the Rebuilding Strategy.

#### **Relevant documents**

[Orange Roughy Stock Rebuilding Strategy 2014](#)

[Orange Roughy Stock Rebuilding Strategy 2014 - Five Year Review report 2019](#)