



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Tropical Tuna and Billfish Fisheries Resource Assessment Group (TTRAG) 28

Minutes

30 July 2020

Video Conference

1 Preliminaries

1.1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, Dr Cathy Dichmont, welcomed members to the meeting, opening the meeting at 1.00pm. The following participants were present at the meeting:

Present	
Dr Cathy Dichmont	Chair
Dr Don Bromhead	AFMA member
Dr Rich Hillary	Scientific member, CSIRO
Mr Gary Heilmann	Industry member
Mr Pavo Walker	Industry member
Dr Julian Pepperell	Recreational fishing member
Dr Ian Knuckey	Scientific member
Dr Rob Campbell	Scientific member, CSIRO
Mr James Larcombe	Scientific member, ABARES
Mr David Mobsby	Economics member
Invited Participants	
Mr Terry Romaro	Industry invited participant (July meetings)
Mr David Ellis	Industry representative invited participant, TTRAG and TTMAC
Observers	
Mr Phil Ravenello	Tuna Australia, Project Manager
Executive Officer	
Ms Darci Wallis	TTRAG Executive Officer

Apologies were received from Mr James Larcombe prior to the meeting. Mr Larcombe provided written comment on agenda item 2 prior to the meeting.

1.2. Declaration of Interest

The Chair asked all participants present at the meeting to declare any conflict of interest with the agenda items. Each participant with a declared conflict of interest was asked to leave the teleconference while the remaining members discussed their individual claims. All industry members declared conflicts with agenda items 2 and 3 and all scientific and economic members on agenda item 3.

Member/participant	Declared Interests
Dr Cathy Dichmont (Chair)	Has a consulting company, but has no pecuniary interests in the tuna fisheries. <i>No conflict of interest declared.</i>
Dr Don Bromhead	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. Is the Manager of the tropical tuna fisheries. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries. <i>No conflict of interest declared.</i>
Ms Darci Wallis	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. Executive Officer for TTRAG, but has no pecuniary interest in Australian tropical tuna fisheries. <i>No conflict of interest declared.</i>
Mr David Ellis	David is CEO for Tuna Australia, and is the managing director of a Fisheries and Aquaculture consultancy company. <i>Declared an interest in Agenda item 2 and 3.</i>

Mr Gary Heilmann	Industry member, director of a processing company, no longer holds ETBF boat or quota SFRs. <i>Declared an interest in Agenda item 2 and 3.</i>
Dr Rich Hillary	Employee of CSIRO, no pecuniary interest in Australian tropical tuna fisheries. Is the PI for the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) project for the tropical tuna and billfish species. <i>Declared an interest in Agenda item 3.</i>
Dr James Larcombe	Employee of ABARES, involved in fisheries research, primarily through engagement with the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. Has no pecuniary interest in the Australian Tropical Tuna Fisheries. <i>Declared an interest in Agenda item 3.</i>
Dr Robert Campbell	Employee of CSIRO, no pecuniary interest in Australian tropical tuna fisheries. Is actively engaged in research on the Eastern and Western Tuna and Billfish Fisheries. PI of the following research project: “ <i>Data management, provision of fishery indicators and implementation of the harvest strategies for Australia's tropical tuna fisheries</i> ”. <i>Declared an interest in Agenda item 3.</i>
Dr Ian Knuckey	Has a consulting company with interests in electronic monitoring in the tuna fisheries, and is a member on several other AFMA Committees. <i>Declared an interest in Agenda item 3.</i>
Mr David Mobsby	Employee of ABARES, involved in fisheries research, as it relates to TTRAG primarily through the economic survey of the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery. Has no pecuniary interest in the Australian Tropical Tuna Fisheries. <i>Declared an interest in Agenda item 3.</i>
Dr Julian Pepperell	Independent fisheries consultant and representative of the recreational fishing sector. Is currently undertaking research into gamefishing. Is involved in projects including the monitoring of fish landed at game fishing tournaments and pop-up satellite tagging on juvenile Black Marlin. <i>Declared an interest in Agenda item 3.</i>
Mr Pavo Walker	Owns several ETBF boat SFRs, and ETBF quota SFRs for all species. Holds a Coral Sea permit and minor line permit. <i>Declared an interest in Agenda item 2 and 3.</i>
Mr Terry Romaro	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. Shareholder of a company that owns shares in a proposal to fish with foreign longliners in the WTBF. Industry member on Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) and Tropical Tuna MAC, Invited participant for TTRAG, and industry representative at the Commission for the Conservation of SBT (CCSBT) & IOTC. Invited participant for squidRAG and squid concession holder. Director of a company who owns a fish processing facility in Port Lincoln. <i>Declared an interest in Agenda item 2 and 3.</i>
Mr Trent Timmiss	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. Is the Senior Manager of the Tuna and International section. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.

Mr Phil Ravello	Is currently the program manager of the industry association, Tuna Australia. Salary from industry. <i>Declared an interest in Agenda item 2 and 3.</i>
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In all cases where a member, invited participant or observer declared a conflict of interest, the participant left the teleconference. The remaining members unanimously agreed they were permitted to participate in the item of discussion, noting the expertise of the individuals and benefits of these members contributing to discussions.

2 Swordfish Harvest Strategy

2.1. TTMAC Outcomes

TTRAG noted the summary of the key decisions and recommendations on the Swordfish Harvest Strategy from the recent TTMAC meeting including:

- A standardised CPUE based harvest control rule base on CPUE for age 3 and 4 fish using a four-year rolling average CPUE,
- A TRP based on the recent average CPUE for the period 2012-2015,
- A buffer zone of $\pm 20\%$,
- A 1-year total allowable commercial catch (TACC) setting cycle with TACC changes to be limited to a maximum of 10 percent per year,
- A full review and re-tuning of the Harvest Strategy after 3 years (cycles), and
- Harvest strategy meta-rules will house the rules directing this review.

TTMAC also requested that a full technical specification of the Swordfish Harvest Strategy is developed for consideration by TTRAG and TTMAC (**Attachment A**).

TTRAG noted that the Swordfish Harvest Strategy document will be updated to incorporate the discussions of this meeting and provided to TTRAG for comment prior going to TTMAC on 26 August and then to the AFMA Commission on 7/8 September.

2.2. Draft Technical Description of Harvest Strategy

TTRAG reviewed the draft Swordfish Harvest Strategy developed by AFMA and CSIRO presented by the AFMA member. TTRAG noted the following points:

- A lot of context that's usually included in Harvest Strategy document is included in the commercial species chapter of the Fishery Management Strategy (FMS) and has therefore not been duplicated within the Swordfish Harvest Strategy which will sit within the FMS. However, TTRAG agreed that further consideration of the issue of the ETBF catch shares (relative to international catch) should be included in the draft HS, including aspects of the Harvest Strategy that relate to the requirements of the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy.
- Within the earlier stages of the Harvest Strategy review, TTRAG considered the data collected to support the CPUE standardisation, with a number of setting changes recommended. These changes will be considered at the upcoming TTRAG meetings which will recommend required changes within the logbooks. TTRAG agreed that the usefulness of the data is linked to how correctly the information is entered into the logbooks and therefore what is achievable and realistic for industry to provide. This quality can be affected by changing the consistency of data fields and this potential impact should be considered as part of the discussion at this meeting.

- An industry member stated that the length of the longline is more important than the number of hooks in regards to identifying what type of fishing is occurring (i.e. indicator of target species) rather than the overall number of hooks. Dr Campbell confirmed that this is accounted for in the CPUE standardisation through density of hooks per kilometre.
- There is another potential gap within the logbooks regarding accurate size monitoring of discards. The proportion of discards (by weight/size class) is an important consideration for the CPUE standardisation so acquiring accurate data to support this is needed. TTRAG agreed that this would be further discussed at the September meeting as part of the agenda item on fishery indicators. A scientific member noted that there is a size structure project currently underway in the gillnet, hook and trap fishery (GHATF) which would be useful to consider as part of this discussion.
- The use of tournament and monitoring data from catch and release programs within the recreational sector should be considered as part of the annual TACC advice provision process. While this information doesn't need to be explicitly included within the model, it can be presented annually with the other fishery indicators.
- TTRAG agreed that some additional detail on the 3-year review processes should be included in the final Harvest Strategy document.
- Additional information on the extensive review to improve the CPUE standardisation process undertaken in 2017/18 should be included in the final Harvest Strategy document.
- While there isn't a specific economic indicator included in the Harvest Strategy, some economic indicators will be presented alongside other fishery indicators in the TTRAG advice paper to TTMAC as part of the annual TACC setting process.

Action Item 1: AFMA to include changes to the logbook on the agenda for the September TTRAG meeting, and seek an update on the GHAT size monitoring project to determine if there are any learnings to be transferred from that.

Action Item 2: AFMA to incorporate the agreed changes to the Harvest Strategy and provide an updated draft to TTRAG for approval.

TTRAG accepted a range of editorial changes suggested by members to clarify technical aspects of the draft Harvest Strategy document, noting that AFMA would provide an updated version for final endorsement post meeting.

3 Research

3.1. Research processes and priorities for 2021-22

The AFMA member advised that the purpose of this item is to identify priorities for 2021/22 and populate the research gap scope forms. TTRAG noted that the priorities will be considered by TTMAC out of session as these need to be with provided to the AFMA research section by 17 August in time for the ARC meeting on 26 August.

TTRAG discussed the draft annual research plan and research gap scopes, noting the following points:

- Two priorities identified in the previous year's process weren't funded: the understanding of the depth of fishing and stock structure scopes. TTRAG agreed that the stock structure project remains a priority, however, including this as a priority should be delayed until the final results of CSIRO genetic stock structure project are available.
- TTRAG agreed that the project to better understand fishing depths should be included as a priority for 2021-22, as better understanding of this will meet two management needs: improving understanding of the depth data that is used in CPUE standardisation process and better understanding interactions with protected species.

- TTRAG agreed there is value within this research on fishing depth for protected species, noting advice from Tuna Australia that there may be some scope within the current proposals up for funding through marine parks and FRDC to complete some of this work, however, this depends on what level of funding is provided to these projects.
- Following a suggestion from the recreational member, TTRAG supported the development of a project to improve the available recreational fishing data collection to better understand the contribution of the recreational fishery to overall fishing impacts. This information could be used to support resource sharing and TACC decisions as well as local abundance indicators. While TTRAG agreed this is a high priority gap that should be recognized in the Annual Research Statement, TTRAG considers that the appropriate expertise and funding should come from State Government and Recreational sectors or possibly FRDC or the Department and not be cost recovered from industry.
- That there are two new PhD projects for billfish commencing looking at:
 - The connectivity and genetics of Sailfish in northern Australia and the indo-pacific region, and
 - Analysing all movement data on Blue Marlin throughout the pacific which includes a stable isotope component and possibly a genetic study.

TTRAG supported the updating and development of the understanding fishing depths and the recreational fishing projects by AFMA (in consultation with Tuna Australia and the recreational member) as priorities for 2021-22.

Action Item 3: AFMA to work with Tuna Australia (fishing depths) and Julian Pepperell (recreational fishing data) to update research scopes for TTRAG approval.

4 Meeting Close

AFMA advised that the next TTRAG meeting will be held in September, with the date to be confirmed.

Action Item 4: AFMA to confirm the date and style (face to face or remotely) of the next meeting out of session.

TTRAG noted that the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Scientific Committee will be holding an e-meeting from 11-19 August with daily 4 hour long sessions. All documents are available on Commission's website.

The Chair closed the meeting at 4.00pm and thanked members for their attendance and contributions to the Harvest Strategy for Swordfish.