



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Southern and Eastern Scalefish and
Shark Fishery
Great Australian Bight Resource
Assessment Group (GABRAG)**

Meeting minutes

Date: 20 June 2018

Teleconference

Attendees

Name	Membership
Mr Lance Lloyd	Chair
Mr Daniel Corrie	AFMA member
Mr Anthony Moore	Scientific member
Dr Malcolm Haddon	Scientific member
Mr Neil MacDonald	Industry member
Mr Jim Raptis	Industry member
Dr Giverny Rodgers	Ag Executive Officer
Dr Fay Helidoniotis	Invited participant
Dr Miriana Sporcic	Invited participant
Dr Geoff Tuck	Invited participant
Mr Ryan Keightley	Observer

Meeting Minutes

1 Preliminaries

1.1 Introduction and apologies

The Chair opened the meeting at 10:08 am and welcomed participants. Members were advised the meeting was being recorded to assist with the preparation of the draft minutes, there were no objections.

Apologies were recorded for Sandy Morison and John Tisdell.

The RAG acknowledged Ryan Keightley's presence as an invited participant for agenda item 2.

1.2 Declaration of interests

Members reviewed and updated the table of Declarations of Interest included at **Attachment B**.

The Chair asked participants to declare any interests in matters being considered, not limited to pecuniary gain. Such interests were declared by:

- Jim Raptis and Neil MacDonald due to commercial interests.

Each member left the call in turn while the RAG considered their interests.

In each case, the RAG noted the conflict of interest and, recognising the participant's knowledge and valuable contribution to the discussions, the RAG agreed they should

participate in the discussion and recommendation for all Agenda Items and the member re-joined the meeting.

1.3 Adoption of Agenda

The agenda **Attachment A** was adopted with no modifications.

1.4 Actions arising from previous meetings

- The RAG noted that actions arising from previous meetings would be taken on notice and would not be specifically addressed.
- The RAG noted that there are a significant number of action items to be progressed (**Attachment C**). Action items will be worked on before the next meeting at the end of the year.

2 Industry proposal on the Kangaroo Hill Closure.

- The GABIA member introduced the paper, outlining the industry submission to vary Kangaroo Hill Closure arrangements. The application relates to the re-opening of a small amount of ground to fish for a range of slope species, including an investigation into the presence of an orange roughy fishery in the area.
- AFMA noted that if the closure is amended, it would need to be considered in the context of the boarder review of the Upper Slope Dogfish Management Strategy (the Strategy).
- Mr Keightley provided an overview of the Strategy review process. The Strategy review was initially delayed until 2018 pending the outcomes of a research project (CSIRO and Dr Ian Knuckey) which will provide options for a cost effective monitoring program for upper slope dogfish stocks. The project report is due to be delivered in June 2018 and the review of the strategy will be conducted over the next six months (complete by the end of 2018). The primary objective of the review is to have an option accepted for the monitoring program.
- A range of other AFMA and industry projects and management changes will feed into the strategy review – these include;
 - the opening of closures to hydraulic hand reel fishing based on dogfish survivability;
 - the introduction of electronic monitoring (EM) in the gillnet, hook and trap (GHAT) sector;
 - Gulper Exclusion Device (GED) trials conducted by South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA) while fishing for royal red prawn;
 - the opening of waters deeper than 183 m to scalefish and shark hook fishing due to survivability of dogfish on line and the introduction of EM;
 - implementation of the Upper Slope Dogfish Research and Monitoring Plan;
 - automatic long-line conditions relating to de-hooking are being considered for review;
 - the 700m closure around St Helens has been amended to allow fishing, however this area did not contribute to the Strategy's percentage closure of dogfish habitat.

- Mr Raptis expressed concerns with marine protected areas closing large areas of fishing grounds.
- The AFMA member noted that in principal AFMA supports opening areas to fishing based on science and advice from the RAG. If data is available to support opening fishing grounds it should be provided and fed into the strategy review.
- The GABIA member outlined work conducted by line fishing boats which indicated that the area proposed for opening is not as critical for dogfish habitat as other areas further west.
- The Chair questioned whether the monitoring report due this month would provide data to assist in a decision on this issue. Mr Keightley clarified that the project will not include data analysis on stocks. The objective of the project is to provide options for a cost effective monitoring program for upper slope dogfish.
- The AFMA member noted that it will be critical to get data from the line fishing research referred to earlier to support a review of closures. Mr Keightley and the AFMA member noted that they are not familiar with this research.

Action Item 1: Neil MacDonald and Daniel Corrie

GABIA and AFMA to work together to locate the results of the hook survey mentioned in the GABIA submission and circulate to the RAG. Also to ensure that the data is made available to the committee conducting the review of the Strategy.

- Dr Haddon noted that the area that industry are proposing to open falls within the 300-600 m depth range where there is a high potential risk of capturing upper slope dogfish. For this reason it is important that data is available showing the area is not an important habitat.
- The GABIA member asked whether a synthesis of existing data is likely to be considered as a part of the dogfish monitoring project. Mr Keightley confirmed that this would be possible. Mr Raptis requested that commercial data be considered alongside the scientific data.
- Mr Keightley noted that the value of the habitat will also be considered as a part of the Strategy review. Even if data does not show significant catches, closed areas may be still be considered important habitat and additional data may not influence the decision to re-open closed areas.
- **Recommendation: Neil Macdonald to contribute to the steering committee reviewing the Upper Slope Dogfish Management Strategy.**
- Mr Raptis made an offer to put an observer on a boat if/when they fish the target closure area under current scientific permits as part of the orange roughy research program. The AFMA member noted that they need to check that the scientific permit allows fishing within this area.

Action Item 2: Jim Raptis and AFMA

AFMA to work with Mr Raptis to facilitate carrying of an observer if and when they fish within the Kangaroo Island Hill closure.

- Mr Raptis stated that any observers deployed to monitor fishing within the Kangaroo Island Hill closure should not be charged fee for service. The AFMA member stated that this would need further consideration as fishing would be conducted under an orange roughy research permit which are charged as fee for service.
- Dr Haddon noted that orange roughy is not traditionally caught in the area that industry is proposing be opened. Mr Raptis agreed that the area is not an important area for roughy fishing. The AFMA member noted that the part of the Kangaroo Hill closure proposed for opening is not typically orange roughy grounds and should not be targeted for the purpose of collecting dogfish data.

3 Western gemfish stock assessment

- The Chair introduced the agenda item. The AFMA member clarified that the agenda item is to discuss the most appropriate way forward with a stock assessment for western gemfish and not a discussion on harvest strategy or catch sharing arrangements at this stage.
- Tier 4 and Tier 1 assessments were last conducted in 2016. The tier 1 included zone 50 and 80 zones (GAB). Zone 50 was treated as a separate fleet to the GAB. The Tier 4 was for zone 50 and 40 (not 80 zones). The RAG was asked to consider the most appropriate approach, including a plan for data collection, for the 2019 stock assessment. See **Attachment D** for a map of SESSF ISMP scalefish spatial zones.
- Mr Moore noted that various iterations of these stock assessments have occurred with relatively poor data. The situation has not changed and assessments continue to be hindered by a lack of length frequency and age data.
- A combined Tier 1 stock assessment would require at least five years of good quality data. A Tier 4 assessment is not preferred because most of the effort is on the fringes of the stock and CPUE is not informative.
- Mr Moore suggested the RAG consider whether it is worth pursuing a Tier 1 in the future given the low catch and cost of data collection.
- Dr Haddon agreed that data from the GABT alone is not informative. There were four years where a large amount of catch was taken however since then catches have been small and not targeted. This is why there are issues with standardisation of catch rates. There hasn't been enough fishing to inform what a safe level of catch is. Further, a stock assessment relies on assuming the biology is similar to eastern gemfish and so classical life history biological studies may also be required – further adding to the potential cost of conducting a Tier 1.
- At the Chair's request, the AFMA member clarified that the RAG is being asked to provide advice on the best approach for an assessment and then consider what data is required.
- Mr Raptis noted the cost of the assessments and that obtaining the necessary data would require data collection/fishing outside of traditional fishing grounds. The Nordic Pearl did target gemfish previously and may provide the most useful data. Mr Raptis stated that data from boats that are market fishing should not be included in CPUE because market fishing occurs outside key gemfish habitat.
- Dr Haddon agreed that current fishing practices are not sufficient to provide information and will not be informative except for specific years where targeting occurred.

- Mr Raptis noted that gemfish is not commercially viable due to low market prices and is therefore unlikely to be heavily targeted into the future. He recommended that any assessment above a Tier 4 is not appropriate. Dr Haddon agreed that a Tier 4 is probably the best option and will provide an indicator of changes to biomass and allow management to be reactive to stock status at the time of assessment.
- **The RAG agreed that until fishing for western gemfish in the GABT becomes more targeted, that the current Tier 4 approach to stock assessment is appropriate and meets fishery needs.**
- The GABIA member asked Mr Moore for more information on an FRDC project which showed via DNA work that eastern gemfish biomass is likely lower than modelled and that western gemfish biomass is likely to be more than what is modelled.
- Mr Moore noted that these are very preliminary results and that more work is currently being done. Historical samples were compared to contemporary samples and found that allele frequencies in both populations had changed. This is unusual for large populations and further investigation showed that this discontinuity was driven primarily by east coast populations. From this work models predicted a smaller population on the east coast than would have been predicted. The population was however still quite large despite the overfished state of the stock. The model predicted a larger biomass for the western stock.
- Mr Moore suggested that if the decision is made not to proceed with a Tier 1 assessment for the entire western stock, there still may be a value in collecting some basic biologicals for use in the event that a Tier 1 assessment is deemed appropriate in the future, particularly if this data collection can be incorporated into the observer program. This needs to be balanced with the cost of data collection.
- Mr Raptis noted that there are currently sampling requirements in the Boat Operators Manual requiring biological samples to be taken if catches over a certain size are taken. Mr Raptis suggested reviewing collection protocols for on board sampling as an option for collecting additional data such as length frequencies. Mr Raptis noted however that these samples would not be representative.
- Dr Haddon agreed that the data being collected based on current fishing operations is not representative of the population given low catches and lack of targeting. Representative data would require a targeted sampling program.
- The AFMA member stated that for the time being focussing on crew collected data may be appropriate. Port based samples are not currently being collected because catches are not triggering collection protocols.
- The AFMA member asked the RAG to clarify their advice that the current approach to stock assessments is appropriate given the level of fishing in the GABT. Mr Moore agreed, noting there exists research based guidance regarding what data needs to be collected for future stock assessments.
- Research shows that the western population of gemfish is a single stock and that the boundary between the eastern and western gemfish stocks is different to what was originally thought. Mr Moore clarified that zone 40 comprises of east coast fish and should not be included in a western gemfish stock assessment. Zone 50 and all of the GABT zones are western stock.
- The GABIA member suggested that the boundary between the eastern and western stocks needs to be reviewed via the MAC process based on latest research.

- **RECOMMENDATION: Eastern and western gemfish stock divisions (between zones 40 and 50) need to be considered by the MAC.**

Action Item 3: AFMA

GABMAC and SEMAC to consider advice regarding delineation of eastern and western gemfish stocks between zone 40 and 50 prior to the 2019 assessment.

- GABT zones and zone 50 have been shown to be the same stock but are currently managed separately (zone 50 is currently managed as part of the CTS). Dr Haddon suggested that separate stock assessments are appropriate for the GAB and zone 50 until management can be adjusted to appropriately reflect the stocks (by the MAC). Assessing zone 50 separately isn't the best approach however it allows for setting a TAC under current management arrangements.
- **RECOMMENDATION: The RAG recommended that the current approach to stock assessments should remain the same until management of the western stock between the CTS and GABT is considered by the MAC.**

Mr Raptis left the meeting at 11:52 am.

- Mr Moore suggested providing advice to the AFMA Commission to say that currently the delineation of eastern and western gemfish in the middle of zone 40 is incorrect, and that this has implications for stock assessment and TAC setting.
- All future western gemfish stock assessments should exclude zone 40.
- The GABIA member asked for clarification as to whether an area of mixing in western Bass Strait needs to be addressed with a management response. Mr Moore clarified that there isn't much fishing in this area, and the delineation between stocks is clear. The area of overlap is small and is unlikely to have implications for management.
- Mr Moore noted ongoing issues with discards of western gemfish impacting on the assessment. The RAG noted that there is a current GABRAG action item being progressed to address this.
- The RAG noted that biological data is currently being collected (otoliths) via the ISMP but may not necessarily be processed unless required.
- Dr Haddon asked if a Tier 4 assessment is required this year given that we now know that zones 40 and 50 contain different stocks. Mr Moore suggested that low fishing effort means that assessment would be unlikely to change. The AFMA member agreed that risk is low and therefore it is unnecessary to move the assessment forward from 2019.

4 Other business and Close of Meeting

A survey will be distributed shortly to set a date for the next meeting.

The meeting was closed at 12:07pm.

Signed (Chairperson):

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Lloyd', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Date:

24 July 2018

Attachments

Attachment A: GABRAG annotated agenda

Attachment B: GABRAG declared conflicts of interest

Attachment C: Action item status

Attachment D: Map of SESSF ISMP scalefish spatial zones

ATTACHMENT A: ANNOTATED AGENDA

Great Australian Bight Resource Assessment Group (GABRAG) Agenda – Teleconference, 20 June 2018

Agenda

Date 20 June 2018
Time 10:00am – 12:00pm
Location Teleconference
Chair Lance Lloyd

Agenda Item	Description	Purpose	Presenter	Allocated Time
1	Preliminaries			10:00am – 10:15am
1.1	Welcome and apologies		Chair	
1.2	Declarations of Interest		Chair	
1.3	Adoption of Agenda		Chair	
1.4	Action Items		EO/Chair	
<i>Action items will be taken on notice and not considered in this meeting. They will be addressed in the next full GABRAG meeting.</i>				
2	Industry proposal on the Kangaroo Hill Closure			10:15am – 11:00am
2.1	Industry to present research to support their proposal to re-open the Kangaroo Hill Closure.	For Recommendation	GABIA	45 mins
3	Western gemfish stock assessment			11:00am – 12:00pm
3.1	Western gemfish 2019 stock assessment and data collection.	For Advice	AFMA	60 mins
- Close of Meeting -				

ATTACHMENT B: DECLARED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Member	Declared Interest
Mr Lance Lloyd	GABRAG Chair. Member of GABMAC and SESSFRAG. Director; Lloyd Environmental Pty Ltd. Research Fellow; Federation University Australia
Dr Malcolm Haddon	CSIRO stock assessment scientist. Member of GABRAG, Northern Prawn RAG, sub-Antarctic RAG and sub-Antarctic MAC.
Mr Andy Moore	GABRAG Scientific Member Employed by ABARES - Interest in sources of funding for research purposes, involved in the Gemfish stock structure project and the Western gemfish Tier 1 assessment, senior research fellow at University of Queensland, no personal pecuniary interest.
Mr Jim Raptis	GABRAG Industry Member Shareholder and managing director for Raptis and Sons, Adelaide division. Operates two boats in the GABTF fishery and owns four GAB SFRs as well as quota in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery.
Mr Neil MacDonald	Executive officer of the Great Australian Bight Industry Association. Executive officer of Surveyed Charter Boat Owners and Operators Association South Australia. Executive officer of Southern Fishermen's Association. Executive officer of Saint Vincent Gulf Prawn Boat Owner's Association. Executive officer of South Australian Blue Crab Pot Fishers Association. Executive officer of Marine Scale Net Fishers Association. Director NMAC(SA) P/L.
Mr Daniel Corrie	AFMA, Trawl Manager, Coral Sea Fishery Manager. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Dr Giverny Rodgers	AFMA, A/Executive Officer of SESSF RAG, GAB RAG and GAB MAC. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Invited Participant	Declared Interest
Dr Fay Helidoniotis	ABARES. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Dr Miriana Sporcic	CSIRO, assessment scientist. Interest in obtaining funding for future research.
Dr Geoff Tuck	CSIRO, assessment scientist. Interest in obtaining funding for future research. Principle investigator on the SESSF stock assessment project.
Mr Ryan Keightley	AFMA, Executive Officer of SharkRAG. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.

ATTACHMENT C: GABRAG ACTION ITEMS

- Complete/Redundant

- Underway/Not yet complete

- Not complete or need GAB RAG advice

ACTION ITEMS EMERGING FROM THE NOVEMBER MEETING 2016

No.	Agenda Item/ Meeting Date	Action Item	Agency/ Person	Timeframe	Progress as of Aug Teleconference 2017	Progress as of Nov Meeting 2017
1	1.4 / Nov 2016	AFMA and Dr Knuckey to transfer orange roughly otoliths from 2006 onwards from Fishwell to Fish Ageing Services.	AFMA and Dr Knuckey		Related to SESSFRAG – need costings from Kyne	AFMA to get costs from FAS.

ACTION ITEMS EMERGING FROM THE DECEMBER MEETING 2016

No.	Agenda Item/ Meeting Date	Action Item	Agency/Person	Timeframe	Progress as of Aug Teleconference 2017	Progress as of Nov Meeting 2017
4	4 / Dec 2016	Investigate the proportion of western gemfish discarded as whole shots to inform the CPUE standardization.	AFMA/CSIRO	Before 2017 CPUE standardization	Still being considered; it may be biased as it is difficult to separate out changed behaviour when observers on board.	Refer to agenda item 6.
6	4 / Dec 2016	AFMA and GABIA to review GABTF development strategy species triggers for western gemfish in the SESSF Harvest Strategy Framework.	AFMA/GABIA	Prior to 2017/18 season	To be examined over the course of the 2017-18 season	To be examined over the course of the 2017-18 season

ACTION ITEMS EMERGING FROM THE AUGUST 2017 TELECONFERENCE

No.	Agenda Item	Action Item	Agency/Person responsible	Timeframe	Progress
2	3.1 / Aug 2017	Dr Knuckey to review the logbook data for consistency in discard reporting since the implementation of e-logs and discard grouping changes.	Ian Knuckey (Fishwell Consulting)	As soon as practicable	
6	3.3 / Aug 2017	OLRAC to provide some instructional screengrabs to provide GAB skippers on how to complete e-logs with the new discard report changes.	Ian Knuckey (OLRAC)	As soon as practicable	
13	5.2 / Aug 2017	AFMA Observer section to examine the current vessel sampling plan for the GABTS and provide advice on an efficient way forward to potentially reduce the frequency of biological data collection without compromising the temporal spread of the data and ensuring the data is collected evenly across different vessels.	Nick Mammides AFMA Observer section	As soon as practicable	Need to start.

ACTION ITEMS EMERGING FROM THE NOVEMBER MEETING 2017

No.	Agenda Item	Action Item	Agency/Person responsible	Timeframe	Progress
1	1.4/Nov 2017	Follow up on alternative options to Fish Aging Services for storage of orange roughy otoliths from 2006 onwards so that transfer from Fishwell can occur.	Christian Pyke	As soon as practicable	
2	1.4/Nov 2017	If still archived, check original data sheets for 2014-15 crew collected data for deepwater flathead to see if the data contains a combination of flathead and redfish.	AFMA	As soon as practicable	

3	1.4/Nov 2017	Follow up August 2017 action item 6 with Matt Koopman when arrives at meeting: OLRAC to provide some instructional screengrabs to provide GAB skippers on how to complete e-logs with the new discard report changes.	GABRAG	21 Nov 2017	Link to online tutorials provided to the RAG. Need to be provided to GAB skippers.
4	1.4/Nov 2017	GABIA to engage with contact (Rochelle Prattley) to follow up on the current list of approved species into the Chinese market through the Australia/China Free Trade Agreement.	GABIA	As soon as practicable	
5	3/Nov 2017	Mr Pyke to put together a paper outlining research which shows that the area of the Kangaroo Island 700 m closure proposed to be opened is not an important dogfish habitat.	Christian Pyke	As soon as practicable	
6	3/Nov 2017	RAG to consider the paper developed under action item 5 out of session and make a recommendation to GABMAC.	GABRAG		
7	3/Nov 2017	Notify GABMAC of the GABIA proposal for the opening of part of the Kangaroo Island 700 m closure and the suggested process for moving forward with this proposal in other business at the GABMAC meeting on 22 November 2017.	AFMA	22 November 2017	Complete.

8	4/Nov 2017	AFMA and Dr Haddon to develop a research project outline for age frequency sampling project to evaluate the uncertainty in stock assessments caused by reducing the frequency of age sampling for deepwater flathead and circulate to the RAG.	AFMA and Malcolm Haddon	As soon as practicable	
9	4/Nov 2017	AFMA to investigate the progress of the currently funded project looking at how the profitability of the fishery could be improved and what main drivers are behind economic efficiency of the fishery.	AFMA	As soon as practicable	The project has been funded however is not currently progressing due to a perceived lack of industry support. Fishwell were contacted and encouraged to contact GABIA to discuss progression of the project.
10	4/Nov 2017	Write to primary investigators (Fishwell) of the currently funded project looking at how the profitability of the fishery could be improved, outlining that the RAG supports the project and wishes to be involved with the project on the provision that a steering committee be formed with industry and economic member from the GAB.	Jim Raptis and John Tisdell	As soon as practicable	
11	4/Nov 2017	A guidance committee (Mr Raptis and Prof Tisdell) to be formed from the RAG to review the existing project objectives and inform further development of the project. The guidance committee will assist in making the project a collaborative approach with industry.	Jim Raptis and John Tisdell	As soon as practicable	
12	4/Nov 2017	GABIA and Prof. Tisdell to develop a research project outline for quota review project and circulate to the RAG and economics working group. Dr Kerrigan to email a template/copy of past application.	GABIA and John Tisdell	As soon as practicable	

13	4/Nov 2017	Dr Kerrigan to circulate updated GAB draft research plan to the RAG.	Brigid Kerrigan	As soon as practicable	Circulated with finalised meeting minutes.
14	4/Nov 2017	Prof Tisdell to work with AFMA and provide guidance on cost/benefit analysis for the Bycatch Research and Development Plan when developing the full project proposal.	AFMA and John Tisdell	As soon as practicable	
15	4/Nov 2017	GABIA, Mr Raptis and Mr Lloyd to assist in drafting a full project proposal for the Bycatch Research and Development Plan as co-investigators.	GABIA, Jim Raptis and Lance Lloyd	As soon as practicable	
16	5/Nov 2017	Investigate what orange roughy otoliths (number and location per year) have been collected for Albany/Esperance zone and determine the cost of aging additional otoliths.	AFMA and GABIA	As soon as practicable	
17	6/Nov 2017	Finalise a specific sampling plan for western gemfish for approval by GABRAG and circulation to industry.	GABIA	As soon as practicable	

18	7.1/Nov 2017	GABIA to explore alternative options for observer provisions to the GABTF.	GABIA	As soon as practicable	
19	10/Nov 2017	GABIA to write to TGS stating the importance of the timing of the FIS and the importance of it being run independently of seismic testing, taking into consideration the research presented by DR Haddon to the RAG.	GABIA	As soon as practicable	

ACTION ITEMS EMERGING FROM THE JUNE MEETING 2018

No.	Agenda Item	Action Item	Agency/Person responsible	Timeframe	Progress
1	2.1/June 2018	GABIA and AFMA to work together to locate the results of the dogfish hook survey mentioned in the GABIA submission and circulate to the RAG. Also to ensure that the data is made available to the committee conducting the review of the Strategy.	AFMA and GABIA	As soon as practicable	
2	2.1/June 2018	AFMA to work with Mr Raptis to facilitate carrying of an observer if and when they fish within the Kangaroo Island Hill closure.	Jim Raptis and AFMA	When practicable	
3	3.1/June 2018	GABMAC and SEMAC to consider advice regarding delineation of eastern and western gemfish stocks between zone 40 and 50 prior to the 2019 assessment.	AFMA	ASAP, but prior to the 2019 assessment	

ATTACHMENT D: MAP OF SESSF ISMP SCALEFISH SPATIAL ZONES

SESSF ISMP SCALEFISH ZONES

