



**Australian Government**

**Australian Fisheries Management Authority**

# **Great Australian Bight Management Advisory Committee (GABMAC)**

## **Meeting minutes**

**25 March 2021**

**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Agenda item	Purpose	Paper/Presentation	Time
<b>10:00am – 1:00pm</b>			
<b>1. <a href="#">Preliminaries</a></b>			<b>10:00 – 10:20</b>
1.1 Acknowledgement of Country <a href="#">Welcome and apologies</a>		Chair	5 mins
1.2 <a href="#">Declarations of interest</a>	For action	Chair	10 mins
1.3 <a href="#">Adoption of Agenda</a>	For action	Chair	5 mins
<b>2. <a href="#">Closure Direction Update</a></b>			<b>10:20-10:30</b>
	For information	Dan Corrie	10 mins
<b>3. <a href="#">Orange Roughy Rebuilding Strategy Review</a></b>			<b>10:30-11:30</b>
	For discussion	Mardi Albert	1 hour
<b>4. <a href="#">SESSF Strategic Research Plan</a></b>			<b>11:30-12:30</b>
	For discussion	Dan Corrie	1 hour
<b>5. <a href="#">Upper-slope Dogfish Management Strategy review – public consultation outcomes</a></b>			<b>12:30-1:00</b>
	For discussion	Sally Weekes	30 mins
<b>Meeting Close</b>			

The Chair opened the meeting at 10:19am (AEDT).

## Agenda Item 1. Preliminaries

### 1.1 Welcome and apologies

1. Mr Barry Windle (the Chair), welcomed members to the meeting and made an Acknowledgement of Country statement; acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia, recognising their continuing connection to land, waters and culture, and paying respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.
2. GABMAC (the MAC) Members noted the Acknowledgement of Country and commenced proceedings.

Membership	
Mr Barry Windle	Chair
Mr Lance Lloyd	Scientific Member (GABRAG Chair)
Ms Anissa Lawrence	Environment/Conservation Member
Ms Marcia Valence	Industry Member
Mr Neil MacDonald	Industry Member
Mr Jim Raptis	Industry Member
Dr Robert Gale	Economic member
Mr Daniel Corrie	AFMA member
Ms Kehani Manson	Executive officer

### 1.2 Declarations of interest

3. The MAC followed the conflict of interest declarations (as outlined in [‘Fisheries Management Paper 1’](#)). Members reviewed and updated the Declarations of Interest included at **Appendix A**.
4. No potential conflicts with Agenda Items were declared by Members.

### 1.3 Adoption of agenda

5. The MAC adopted the agenda (Page 2) as final; with one amendment made to the presenter for Agenda Item 5 (amended to Sally Weekes – AFMA).

## Agenda Item 2 – Closure Direction Update

6. The AFMA Member informed GABMAC that this Agenda Item was for information only and advised the MAC of an update to the *Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery and Small Pelagic Fishery (Closures) Direction 2016* (the Closure Direction). The MAC noted the following:

- Spatial closures in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) and the Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF) are primarily implemented through the [Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery and Small Pelagic Fishery \(Closures\) Direction 2016](#).
- The Closure Direction is due to self-repeal on 1 May 2021 and consequently needs to be remade.
- The *Fishery Management (Scalefish and Shark Fishery and Small Pelagic Fishery Closures) Direction 2021* (the Updated Closure Direction), will continue existing arrangements, with an amendment to the South East Trawl (SET) Deep Water Closure (Schedule 13).
- In [November 2020](#), the South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC) supported the amendment to the western boundary of the Deep Water Closure to more closely align with the 700m depth contour, based on bathymetry data collected by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). This amendment is captured in the Updated Closure Direction.

### Agenda Item 3 – Orange Roughy Rebuilding Strategy Review

7. Mardi Albert (AFMA) advised the MAC that the purpose of this Agenda Item was to update GABMAC on the submissions received during the public consultation process for the review of the 'Orange Roughy Rebuilding Strategy' (the Strategy) and the corresponding AFMA responses; and to seek GABMAC's support of the revised Strategy, in advance of seeking endorsement from the AFMA Commission in July 2021.
8. The MAC noted the following background information:
  - 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 ensures 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 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 also 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 Groups (RAGs) and Management Advisory Committees (MACs) 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 RAG and MAC advice, input from the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC), public consultation and then consideration and endorsement by the AFMA Commission.

#### Public Consultation

9. GABMAC noted the following points regarding the public consultation phase of the Strategy review process:
  - Following the five-year review of the 2014 Strategy, AFMA (in consultation with the relevant RAG and MAC) developed a summary of proposed changes to be included in the revised Strategy, and sought public comments over a four week period (15 January – 12 February 2021).
  - Submissions were received from the South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA) and the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS).
  - AFMA are not proposing to make any substantive changes to the revised Strategy in response to submissions received during the public consultation process.
10. The MAC noted that this Agenda Item was also considered by SEMAC on 24 March 2021.
11. The AFMA Member advised the MAC that the Environment/Conservation Member is also a SEMAC Member, and that they provided advice on the submissions at the March 2021 SEMAC meeting that will be captured in the SEMAC meeting minutes<sup>1</sup>.
12. GABMAC considered the submissions received during the public consultation process and the corresponding AFMA responses, and provided no further comment on these submissions.

#### Key changes to the Strategy

13. The MAC noted the following key changes to the Strategy:
  - Inclusion of overviews of both the [Great Australian Bight \(GAB\)](#) and [Western Orange Roughy](#) Research Programs, designed to facilitate a continued focus on monitoring and data collection to support future stock assessments.
  - Inclusion of guidance on how the data collected under each Research Program will be used to update our understanding of the status of relevant stocks.
  - Updated guidance around the process for the annual review of the Strategy.
14. Industry expressed concerns regarding the process that resulted in the orange roughy closures in the GAB, and the cost to Industry associated with collecting the data required to reopen these areas. Industry emphasised the need to explore other methodologies to demonstrate the status of the GAB stock, with a view to opening closed areas and recommencing commercial fishing for orange roughy in the GAB.
15. The AFMA Member advised the MAC that AFMA are liaising with CSIRO to identify further monitoring and assessment options to support management pathways out of rebuilding strategies for all SSSF orange roughy stocks, with a view to presenting these findings to the Great Australian Bight Resource Assessment Group (GABRAG) and the South East Resource Assessment Group (SERAG) later in 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> The SEMAC March 2021 meeting minutes were not publicly available at the time that the GABMAC March 2021 minutes were finalised.

Once endorsed, these findings will be included as an Appendix to the revised Orange Roughy Rebuilding Strategy 2021.

16. GABMAC supported the revised Orange Roughy Rebuilding Strategy 2021.

#### **Agenda Item 4 – SESSF Strategic Research Plan**

17. The AFMA Member advised the MAC that the purpose of this Agenda Item was to seek input from GABMAC to inform the research priorities outlined in the draft 'Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) Five Year Strategic Research Plan 2021-25' (the 2021-25 Research Plan).

18. The MAC noted the following background information:

- One of AFMA's functions is to establish priorities in respect to research relating to fisheries, and arrange for the undertaking of such research (s7 [Fisheries Administration Act 1991](#)).
- The '[SESSF Five Year Strategic Research Plan 2016-20](#)' (the 2016-20 Research Plan) provided a framework for identifying key research priorities in the SESSF and ensured that endorsed research projects fit within the strategic plan for the fishery.
- AFMA Management sought advice from the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery Resource Assessment Group (SESSFRAG) at its December 2020 Special Research Meeting, on the development of an updated 2021-25 Research Plan, with a particular focus on new and emerging issues in the SESSF, which may drive the need for research. AFMA will also seek final advice from SEMAC (March 2021) and SESSFRAG (August 2021).
- The 2021-25 Research Plan should align with the priorities and objectives outlined in the [AFMA Strategic Research Plan 2017-22](#), which identifies the research strategies that AFMA intend to pursue, and provides principles for undertaking research in Commonwealth fisheries.
- The AFMA Strategic Research Plan specifies four research programs, under which fishery-specific research priorities should be considered:
  - Fishery stocks, biology and the marine environment
    - Collect appropriate information to support stock assessments
    - Explore alternative species assessment methods and models
    - Assess the impacts of fishing on the marine environment
  - Economic and social
    - Development of underutilised fisheries resources
    - Develop the social and economic aspects of commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishing
    - Develop a coordinated approach on major fishery and cross fishery economic issues
  - Development
    - Management development to reduce complexity and promote economic certainty
    - Compliance methodologies to deter illegal fishing and invest in processes and technologies for more cost effective compliance arrangements.

- Evaluation
  - Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of existing management strategies
- The draft 2021-25 Research Plan includes the four AFMA research programs outlined above, as well as fishery research priorities developed by SESSFRAG in December 2020.
- The research priorities included in the 2021-25 Research Plan considered the objectives and outcomes from recently completed research projects (and those underway), including:
  - SESSF Monitoring and Assessment – Strategic Review (SMARP, Completed)
    - Identified priorities, key concerns, shortcomings and opportunities for improvement in monitoring and assessments for the SESSF.
    - Reviewed the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of current monitoring, assessment and management arrangements for the SESSF.
    - Recommended revised, implementable and cost-effective monitoring, assessment and management arrangements for the SESSF.
  - Undercaught TACs, declining catch rates and failure to recover for SESSF species (Declining Indicators, Completed)
    - Identified and developed strategies to address the undercaught TACs, declining catch rates and non-recovering species, including options for assessing non-rebuilding species.
  - Multi-Species Harvest Strategy Project (Underway)
    - Develop and evaluate multi-species harvest strategies, including reference points and decision rules.
    - Evaluate future monitoring and assessment options identified by SMARP.
    - Develop a process and set of design principles for multi-species harvest strategies.
- Related to each of these projects, there is a need to focus research on priorities consistent with the following themes:
  - Identifying and responding to the effects of climate change;
  - Developing an independent fishery survey, which is both scalable and affordable; and
  - Alternative assessment approaches, including close-kin mark recapture, and catch and cost sharing across relevant jurisdictions.

19. GABMAC supported the research priorities identified by SESSFRAG, with the following additions recommended:

- Further development of the gear and technology priority, to specifically address Industry’s suggestion of ‘improving trawl as a method of capture.’
- Further develop the ‘Economic and social’ research priorities to explicitly include priorities relating to the ‘social’ aspect; to better capture social drivers, impacts, community concerns/perceptions and social benefits.

### Action Item 1

AFMA to liaise with their Policy, Environment, Economics and Research (PEER) team to further develop the social research priorities to be included in the 'Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) Five Year Strategic Research Plan 2021-25.'

- Include a research priority relating to understanding social and economic drivers and their associated influence on market demand.
- Rephrase 'Strategies to deter misreporting' to remove negative connotations, i.e. "Strategies to improve reporting accuracy.'

20. The MAC noted that the initial purpose of this Agenda Item was to support the revised plan, however given the extent of the feedback provided by both GABMAC and SEMAC (March 2021), and the updates required to be incorporated, the draft was currently not at a point where it could be supported. The MAC recommended recirculating the draft to Members, once the updates are incorporated.

### Action Item 2

AFMA to recirculate the draft 'Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) Five Year Strategic Research Plan 2021-25' to Members, once updates recommended by GABMAC and SEMAC have been incorporated.

## Agenda Item 5 – Upper-slope Dogfish Management Strategy Review Public Consultation Outcomes

21. AFMA introduced the Agenda Item, with the MAC noting the following:

- The Upper-slope Dogfish Management Strategy (the Strategy) was developed by AFMA in consultation with the fishing industry, scientific experts, conservation NGOs and other stakeholders.
- AFMA implemented the Strategy in 2012, to meet the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) relating to threatened species listings, and accreditation of the SESSF as a Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO).
- The Strategy was also developed as a management response to AFMA's 2007 Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) process that identified several species of dogfish as being at high ecological risk from the impact of fishing in the SESSF.
- The objective of the Strategy is to promote the recovery of Harrison's dogfish (*Centrophorus harrissoni*) and southern dogfish (*C. zeehani*), both of which are listed as 'Conservation Dependent' under the EPBC Act, and assessed as high risk through the ERA process.
- Management measures implemented under the Strategy also benefit endeavour dogfish (*C. moluccensis*) and greeneye spurdog (*Squalus chloroculus*), two species also identified as high risk through the ERA process.
- Noting that in 2020, greeneye spurdog was excluded from the 2020 priorities list under the EPBC Act, due to priority being given to bushfire affected nominations. The nomination for greeneye spurdog will be automatically eligible for consideration, for inclusion on the 2021 Proposed Priority Assessment List.
- Specifically, the Strategy is designed to rebuild the populations of Harrison's and southern dogfish above a limit reference point ( $B_{LIM}$ ) of  $25\%B_0$  (25% of unfished biomass), in line with the *Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy* (HSP).



- In the absence of reliable biomass estimates for these species, habitat has been used as a proxy for biomass for the purpose of implementing closures. Consequently, to achieve its objectives, the Strategy relies on a network of spatial closures aimed at protecting suitable habitat:
  - o 25 per cent of the carrying capacity weighted core habitat of the continental slope stock of Harrison's dogfish;
  - o 16.2 per cent of the eastern stock of southern dogfish; and
  - o 24.3 per cent of the central stock of southern dogfish in AFMA managed waters.
- Spatial closures are supplemented by a range of operational measures, including regulated handling practices, increased monitoring in certain areas, move-on provisions and no retention of dogfish.
- The five year review of the Strategy was due in 2017, however it was postponed to allow new research on monitoring options (Williams et al 2018)<sup>2</sup> to be completed. This project was finalised in November 2018, and resulted in a preferred option being identified by stakeholders.
- Over the past two years, AFMA have received requests from sectors of the fishing industry to review aspects of the Strategy. These requests have been considered by AFMA, along with the advice received through the recent call for public comment (14 December 2020-14 January 2021), and have not resulted in any material changes to the Strategy.
- The Strategy has however, been revised to improve clarity and readability, and take account of recently completed research that recommended a program for monitoring the recovery of these species.
- A copy of the revised Strategy will be considered by the TSSC in March 2021, before being considered by the AFMA Commission.

22. Industry raised concerns regarding the listing of southern dogfish in the GAB as 'Conservation Dependent' and made the following points:

- A survey<sup>3</sup> undertaken in 2005 on the Ceduna Plateau, deployed 100,000 hooks and did not catch a single southern dogfish.
- The southern dogfish population which resides in the 60-mile closure in the GAB is separate from the rest of the central stock, and should not have been included in the rebuilding strategy. Industry believe that the GABTS has been disproportionately disadvantaged under the rebuilding strategy because of historic overfishing in the eastern part of the SESSF.
- An apparent discrepancy in CSIRO advice was detected between the report 'Developing and applying a spatially-based seascape analysis (the "habitat proxy" method) to inform management of gulper sharks' (Williams et al., 2013) and advice provided at SharkRAG 2006:
  - o Williams et al., (2013) estimated the decline for the central stock of southern dogfish to be 89 per cent east of Kangaroo Island Hill and 79 per cent on the western side.

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<sup>2</sup> Williams, Alan; Green, Mark; Althaus, Franzis; Knuckey, Ian; McLean, Dianne; Koopman, Matthew. Research to support the upper slope dogfish management strategy: options for monitoring the recovery of Southern Dogfish and Harrison's Dogfish. Hobart: CSIRO; 2018. <http://hdl.handle.net/102.100.100/142840?index=1>

<sup>3</sup> CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research unpublished data, 2005.

- CSIRO's presentation at SharkRAG (2006) noted an estimated abundance of southern dogfish to probably be 80 per cent of virgin biomass or higher between 135° and 135°30.'

23. AFMA advised the MAC of the following:

- The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (the Department) are responsible for the 'Conservation Dependent' listing of southern dogfish.
- The Department considered all available information when determining the listing of southern dogfish.
- When developing the initial Strategy, to minimise the number of closures, AFMA utilised existing closures that covered ideal habitat where possible. This resulted in the Racetrack/Hamburger and Kangaroo Island Hill orange roughy closures being utilised to afford protection to southern dogfish in the GAB.

24. GABMAC noted that, following advice provided by both GABRAG and GABMAC in 2020, Industry are able to undertake research fishing for orange roughy in both the Racetrack/Hamburger and Kangaroo Island Hill closures (beyond 700m) under scientific permit.

25. Industry Members raised concerns that the Strategy states that a monitoring plan would be implemented to gain insight into rebuilding stocks across their habitat ranges. To date, no monitoring has been undertaken in the GAB to evaluate the current status of the southern dogfish stock.

26. AFMA advised the MAC that a project to undertake dogfish surveys had just received funding, and GAB sites will be included in the survey design. The project proposal was circulated to GABMAC for advice in early 2021.

27. GABMAC provided no further comments on the response to public submissions or the revised Strategy.

## Other Business

28. An Industry Member advised the MAC that on the morning of the meeting, their supplier was advised by a large supermarket chain, that they would no longer be accepting ocean jackets caught by trawl methods. At the time of the meeting, the reasoning behind this decision was unclear. Industry will provide further information to the MAC as it becomes available.

29. The MAC stated that this further emphasised the importance of including priorities in the SESSF Strategic Research Plan relating to the 'social' aspect; to better capture social drivers, impacts, community concerns/perceptions and social benefits.

30. The Chair raised concerns regarding the use of 'Out of Session' to refer to additional, formally constituted MAC meetings undertaken throughout the year, and requested that AFMA carefully consider the classification of future meetings (i.e. teleconference, in person) and 'out of session' items.

## Close of meeting

31. The Chair thanked GABMAC Members for their contribution and closed the meeting at 12:51pm (AEDT).

## Appendix A - Register of interest

Members	Declared Interest – Last updated February 2021
Mr Barry Windle	No interest in the fishery, pecuniary or otherwise
Mr Lance Lloyd	<p>No interest in the fishery, pecuniary or otherwise.</p> <p>GABRAG Chair</p> <p>Member of GABMAC and SESSFRAG</p> <p>Board Member, AwF – Aquaculture without Frontiers (Australia)</p> <p>Director – Lloyd Environmental Pty Ltd.</p> <p>Research Fellow – Federation University Australia</p>
Ms Anissa Lawrence	<p>No pecuniary interest</p> <p>Director of TierraMar Ltd</p> <p>Independent consultant</p> <p>Undertakes contracts for a number of Conservation NGOs, government departments, non-government agencies and the private sector on a range of fishery related matters</p> <p>Chair of Ocean Future Fund Inc.</p> <p>Conservation member on GABMAC, SPFRAG, SEMAC and the South Australian Rock Lobster MAC</p>
Mr Neil MacDonald	<p>Director NMAC (SA) P/L</p> <p>Executive Officer of the Great Australian Bight Industry Association (GABIA)</p> <p>Executive Officer of Surveyed Charter Boat Owners and Operators Association South Australia</p> <p>Executive Officer Southern Fishermen’s Association</p> <p>Executive Officer of Saint Vincent Gulf Prawn Boat Owner’s Association</p> <p>Executive Officer of Marine Scale Net Fishers Association</p> <p>Committee support services South Australian Rock Lobster Management Advisory Committee &amp; Research Sub-Committee</p> <p>Chair – CGG Gippsland MSS Scientific Advisory Committee</p> <p>Great Australian Bight Management Advisory Committee (AFMA) - Member</p> <p>Great Australian Bight Research Advisory Committee (AFMA) - Member</p> <p>Gulf St Vincent Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee (SVGPBOA) - Member</p> <p>Gulf St Vincent Prawn Fishery Research Sub-Committee (SVGPBOA) - Member</p> <p>Lakes &amp; Coorong Fishery Management Advisory Committee (LCFMAC) - Member</p> <p>Australian Council of Prawn Fisheries - Director</p>
Mr Jim Raptis	<p>GABRAG Industry Member</p> <p>Operates two boats in the GABT Fishery and owns four GAB SFRs as well as quota in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery</p>
Ms Marcia Valente	Consultant for Silver Phoenix Holdings who hold two GAB SFRs
Dr Robert Gale	Director – Next Level Sustainability

	Independent reviewer of the 2018 SA State of the Environment Report for the SA Environmental Protection Authority
Mr Dan Corrie	Employed by AFMA. Manager of Southern Trawl, Scallop and Squid Fisheries. No pecuniary or other interest in the SESSF.
Ms Kehani Manson	Employed by AFMA. GABMAC Executive officer. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.

## Appendix B - Action Items

	Recommendation
1	AFMA to liaise with their Policy, Environment, Economics and Research (PEER) team to further develop the social research priorities to be included in the 'Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) Five Year Strategic Research Plan 2021-25.'
2	AFMA to recirculate the draft 'Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) Five Year Strategic Research Plan 2021-25' to Members, once updates recommended by GABMAC and SEMAC have been incorporated.