



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Northern Prawn Management Advisory Council (NORMAC)

Meeting minutes

20 May 2022

[View Hotel - Brisbane](#)

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Meeting participants

| Position | Participant |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair | John Glaister |
| NORMAC members | Gregory Albert, Industry member Ilan Boot, Industry member David Carter, Industry member Michael O'Brien, Industry member Arthur Raptis, Industry member Ilan Knuckey, Research member Jo McCrea, Environment / Conservation member Brodie Macdonald, AFMA member |
| Invited participant | Annie Jarrett, NPF ¹ |
| AFMA Employees | Cate Coddington (Executive officer) Anna Willock (Deputy CEO, online) Darci Wallis Elissa Mastroianni |
| Observers | Beau Anderson, NPF Rik Buckworth, NPRAG member Josh Cahill, NPF (online) Roy Deng, CSIRO Ron Earle, NPF Chair Gary Fry, CSIRO Rob Kenyon, CSIRO Sean Pascoe, CSIRO Norm Peovitis, NPF Éva Plagányi, CSIRO Andy Prendergast, Austral Phil Robson, NPF Darren Roy, Qld Fisheries Scott Spencer, AFMA Commissioner |
| Apologies | |
| Shijie Zhou, CSIRO Ilan Boot, Austfish | |

Agenda item 1. Preliminaries

a. Welcome and apologies

The Chair opened the meeting at 8.00 am (EST) at the Riverview Hotel in Brisbane on 20 May 2022. Apologies were noted from Shijie Zhou and Ilan Boot.

b. Declarations of interest

The Chair requested that NORMAC members consider the standing table of declared interests (see **Attachment A**) and individually declare whether the stated interests are accurate, and if not, provide an update. No updated

¹ Northern Prawn Fishery Industry

interests were declared, and it was agreed that any potential conflicts of interest would be addressed by the meeting if/when they arose.

c. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without change (see **Attachment B**).

d. Minutes from previous meetings

It was noted that the Minutes from the 22 February 2021 meeting were accepted out-of-session and are published on the AFMA website.

e. Correspondence sent/received

The MAC noted correspondence sent and received since the last meeting, including:

- An opportunity for NORMAC to comment on proposed recommendation regarding broodstock supply (23 February 2021).
- AFMA advised NORMAC that the 2022/23 ARC call for research had opened (17 September 2021).
- AFMA requested comments on the draft Co-management policy (18 October 2021).

Agenda item 2. Actions arising from previous meetings

NORMAC noted the list of action items and progress that had been made against each of the items.

Agenda item 3. Outcomes of out-of-session items

The MAC noted and endorsed the items that were considered out-of-session since the February 2021 meeting. The five items which were considered were:

- NPF Bycatch Strategy 2020-24.
 - NORMAC provided comment and endorsed the strategy in March 2021.
 - The strategy was finalised in June 2021 and is available on the AFMA website.
- Developmental Fishing Policy: Preliminary, Exploratory and feasibility Fishing – Fisheries Management Paper 5.
 - Distributed in April 2021, no specific comments were received from members.
 - The AFMA Commission agreed to implement the policy in July 2021 and this is now available on the AFMA website.
- Update to NPF Harvest Strategy for red Endeavour prawns.
 - NORMAC provided endorsement for the updated strategy in August 2021.
 - The AFMA Commission endorsed the updated harvest strategy in September 2021.
- Fishing Capacity Determination.
 - In December 2021 NORMAC provided endorsement for making a new legislative instrument that reinstated the fishing capacity as per the instrument that had sunset on 21 October 2021.
 - The new instrument came into force on 21 December 2021 and will automatically repeal on 1 April 2032.
- Strategic research proposal – *All Commonwealth Fisheries: Scoping studies to address four key strategic research needs*.
 - Feedback was sought from NORMAC in December 2021.

- Responses were received from two members and provided as an individual comment, rather than as a consolidated MAC response.

Agenda item 4. Reports/Update

a. Industry update

Industry provided an update on operations in 2022 with NORMAC noting the following key points:

- The 2022 banana prawn season has been poor. The main issues identified were high operating costs (especially fuel), crew availability, and poor catches. With most stock destined for the domestic market, it is not guaranteed that higher prices will be able to offset the higher operating costs.
- Only 10 broodstock trips have been scheduled for 2022 (down from 26 in 2021), continuing a downward trend in supply requirements. NPFI has contracted one vessel to fish for broodstock in 2022 and recommended that AFMA schedule two SO trips this year, to meet the 20% coverage target.
- Thirteen CMOs collected TEP and at-risk species data during the 2021 fishing seasons, three in the banana prawn season and ten in the tiger prawn season. The CMOs monitored 3,392 shots, exceeding the annual target of 2,350 shots. Three CMOs are currently collecting data in the 2022 banana prawn season. NPFI will run a recruitment process for CMO participation in the 2022 tiger prawn season as normal, with several of the current CMO's indicating interest in participating in the tiger prawn season.
- There was significant difficulty encountered by NPFI when reconciling logbook data from the 2021 tiger prawn fishing season and finalising the 2022 banana prawn season data. Key issues included:
 - Catch-Log program updates which allowed skippers to skip reporting days
 - AFMA database update/systems changes which initially could not link different data streams in a usable format,
 - late returns of paper logs, and
 - new AFMA and NPFI personnel.
- The finalised data set has now been provided to CSIRO, although this was much later than usual. The significant effort of NPFI (especially in working with skippers to cross-reference personal diaries with e-logs), Margaret Miller, Matthew Duncan, Anne Sheppard, CSIRO and Catchlog in finding solutions for the various problems was acknowledged. Key learnings from this experience are the need for robust documentation of data management processes, the risk of changes to AFMA IT systems and E-logs programs being made at the same time, and risks posed by personnel changes.
- The next MSC re-assessment of the NPF is scheduled to commence in October/November 2022. At this stage it has not been confirmed what MSC standard will be used, although V1.3 will not be available to the NPF. It was noted that as the new standards become more ambitious inclusivity in the program (for fisheries of varying complexity and development) may be stretched, and accompanied by an increase in cost with this process. Conditions pertaining to the red leg banana prawn fishery have been met and work is underway to address conditions pertaining to red endeavour prawns. The requirements of the MSC Principles and Criteria and the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy can be misaligned, especially in a multi-species fishery, and this has been taking up some RAG consideration and time.
- Josh Cahill has decided to pursue an unexpected opportunity, so the NPFI Projects Manager position will be vacant. NPFI will be considering options for recruitment and expressed appreciation to Josh for his contribution while with NPFI.

b. AFMA management update

The MAC noted the following updates from the AFMA management team:

- The updated NPF Harvest Strategy was considered by the RAG in February and May of 2022. AFMA management are proposing consideration by NORMAC for mid-August, (following final RAG discussion in July) to allow the HS to be considered by the AFMA Commission in September 2022. Key changes to the Harvest Strategy are the required updates to the Redleg Banana prawn section to incorporate the new Harvest Control Rules, updates to the byproduct section, general updates to modernise and improve readability, and a review against the current Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy.
- Development of the NPF Fisheries Management Strategy (FMS) has been progressed through work on the updated harvest strategy, data plan, finalisation of the bycatch strategy, and completion of the research plan component. At this stage progress on all key elements will be continued, noting that there has been some internal discussion on the format of the FMS. While no decision has been made, it is likely to be a simpler document.
- The ARC will be considering research priorities for the 2023/24 year in August 2022. The 2023/24 NPF Annual Research Statement will be provided to NORMAC for endorsement in July 2022.
- The CSIRO project *“Monitoring interactions with bycatch species using crew-member observer data collected in the Northern Prawn Fishery: 2017 – 19”*, was completed and approved by AFMA in 2021, and should be publicly available soon. 14 of the 40 TEPs and species were assessed, with no decline in catch rate identified for any species. There has been an improvement in accuracy and reliability of CMO data, validated against SO data, with the trends of both datasets being statistically similar. AFMA recommends continuing monitoring of TEPs, with the current bycatch sustainability project already underway and on track.
- In November 2021, AFMA established a new branch, the Fisheries Information and Services Branch (FISB) headed by Claire van der Geest, to deliver the existing Fisheries Services program (observer, data management, licencing, electronic monitoring, etc.) and to administer the Data Transformation and Electronic Monitoring Program (DT&EM). AFMA will work closely with NPFI, NPRAG and NORMAC over the next four years to establish the key program objectives for the NPF and their implementation.
- AFMA is intending to make e-logs mandatory in all Commonwealth Fisheries from 1 July 2022.

c. NPRAG Report

The NORMAC Research Member provided a verbal update on the key RAG discussions over 2021 and 2022.

- The Harvest Strategy has been updated and considered by the RAG with conditions relating to MSC certification explicitly addressed in the creation of the Redleg Harvest Strategy and implementing the first season closure of the JBG.
- Red Endeavour prawns, and how to bring them into the assessment and Harvest Strategy, were also discussed by the RAG. The RAG has not identified any biological concern for the stock, but due to the multispecies nature of the fishery this stock is currently sitting below MSY, which may be an issue for MSC certification.
- The ERA has now been finalised and signed off. Noting that the data used in the assessment is now over 5 years old, the RAG has discussed the need to improve the speed and automation of this process particularly with the MSC re-assessment for the fishery in mind.

- Sawfish continue to be recognised by the RAG as a critical issue. There are several projects underway looking to address this issue. As the highest priority issue in the NPF sawfish continue to be a focus of the fishery and the RAG as a standing item.
- The RAG reviewed the banana prawn MEY in-season catch trigger calculations for 2021 and concluded that the model and triggers are performing well. Industry predictions were within 5% of actual figures, with less than 1% difference in outcomes (breakeven catch rate and MEY trigger). However, industry advised that the predictions for the current year are unlikely to be as accurate due to the volatility of the current economic climate/fuel prices.

d. Jurisdictional update

The MAC noted the update provided by Darren Roy regarding the Queensland East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery:

- There have been significant changes in the management of the fishery with the introduction of Harvest Strategies and establishment of five management regions.
- An increase in stock assessment investment has driven a lot of the change currently going on in QLD fisheries management. The MAC was impressed with the speed and volume of these assessments, including the creation of project teams with industry representation.
- The East Coast Otter Trawl has been granted WTO approval until December 2024. Significant data validation elements are required for most of these conditions.

e. Conservation advice

The MAC noted the update from Environment/Conservation member Joe McCrea:

- TEP interactions and bycatch are the key issues raised by NGO groups, with a particular interest in sawfish from AMCS. There is concern about the lack of consistency between AFMA SO and CMO rates of reported interactions. EM is seen as a positive potential step by NGOs in this regard. NPFI noted that this issue has been discussed with AMCS and CSIRO, highlighting that there is a range of reasons (including variable coverage) which would explain inconsistencies between the rates of reported interactions. This explanation was supported by Gary Fry (CSIRO) as was the suggestion that a standardised analysis (to account for these issues) and/or different presentation of the data might be useful.
- The MAC noted several updates relating to MSC. The NPF will be assessed under a newer version (than V1.3) in the next re-assessment. The MSC Fisheries Standard review is underway and the NPF will have at least three years to transition to the new standard once it is finalised. Several new fisheries have been recently certified, as well as additions to the number of businesses holding Chain of Custody (with increasing effort in this space).
- The National Fisheries Plan is now finalised and available, with opportunities for funding available for projects with align with the objectives of the plan.
- There has been some attention directed towards animal welfare issues (e.g. Twiggy Forrest's public criticism of JBS' operations). This is a timely reminder of the need for all fisheries to consider this issue. NPFI informed NORMAC that the Australian Council of Prawn Fisheries is about to commission a project to develop a code of conduct on animal welfare for prawn fisheries.
- In April, UWA released a report on the modelling and assessment of dolphin deaths in the Pilbara trawl fisheries, which showed interaction rates were unsustainable even with BRDs.

- Several conservation and research partnerships of note to the NPF were discussed. WWF continues to partner with John West and Woolworths, and a partnership has been formed between Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, and Birdlife International which aims to protect marine wildlife from bycatch. This will involve 'bycatch audits', the results of which will be made public. The new AMSC Sustainable Seafood Guide will also be released soon.

Agenda Item 5. NPF Indicators Report

The MAC noted the Draft 2020 and 2021 NPF Performance Monitoring Reports (NPMR) and discussed some of the issues associated with out-of-date economic data.

- The economic data currently being used in the NPMR is from the 2016/27 financial year, as the ABARES NPF Financial Status Reports have not been updated since then.
- NPMR highlighted that use of outdated data reduces the usefulness of the NPMR in monitoring key economic trends and informed the MAC that this issue has been raised with ABARES.
- ABARES indicated that the 2017/18 and 2019/20 data will be available mid-2022 and that they are looking to update their approach to improve on this.

The MAC formally noted these concerns and suggested that they be raised with the AFMA Commission. The MAC also noted the possibility of using economic data collected by Tom Kompas for the NPF Stock Assessment Model to produce a NER. NPMR will be discussing this further with Tom and ABARES.

Action: Scott Spencer to raise concerns highlighted by NPMR over delays in the updates of ABARES Financial Status Reports with the AFMA Commission.

Agenda Item 6. Tiger prawn stock assessment

The MAC noted that the RAG had discussed the fishery data inputs and the base case model structure and sensitivities that would underpin the tiger prawn stock assessment this year. This year issues with the recommended TAE had required serious deliberation by the RAG. The AFMA Member noted his preference for industry to be part of the discussion of this item, but for them to be excluded when making the final TAE recommendation. The MAC Chair noted that excluding members from the recommendation would result in the MAC not having a quorum of members, and that the MAC is advisory to the AFMA Commission. Considering the maturity of the MAC, the importance of industry to the discussion, and the fact that NORMAC has been shown to make decisions in the best interest of the fishery in the past it was decided by the Chair that industry members should remain present for this agenda item.

CSIRO provided a presentation on the 2022 Tiger Prawn stock assessment, including the base case model and sensitivities and the key information that goes into the model noting the following points:

- In addition to effort, a range of economic variables are crucial to the accurate functioning of the model, as is the natural productivity of the stocks.
- While the spawning stock size of tiger prawns has been assessed as below S_{MEY} and S_{MSY} , the model predicted that the estimated total allowable effort required to achieve MEY in the Tiger Prawn fishery in 2022 is 5554 boat days (2777 days for each of the two tiger prawn species) which would equate to an increase in total effort of 19% over 2021 effort.
- The two main factors contributing to this are the recent unpredictably high costs associated with the fishery along with changing climate factors. These factors mean the long-term average

reference points, both in terms of economics and stock productivity, may no longer be appropriate under rapidly changing circumstances.

- The actual effort occurring in the fishery is below the lower effort limit of 2777 days. Originally a lower effort limit of 2777 days (in total) was introduced into the model to ensure that the pathway to an MEY trajectory did not include effort levels that were not feasible or practical for the fishery. Over recent years, the industry has not fully utilised the extent of the fishing days recommended out of the MEY model. There was no real concern about this lower level of effort in the fishery as historically, the level of effort was consistently above the fishery lower effort limit of 2777 days for grooved tiger prawns, with only the brown tiger prawns falling below this level.
- However, for the first time the effort level for both species was below this lower effort limit. This means that for this year, the minimum effort which is possible under the current base case model was greater than the previous year's total effort, and hence taken at face value, the model results would imply an increase in effort (and imply a higher TAE than currently employed in the fishery).

The MAC then noted the update from the NPRAG Chair on the deliberation which had taken place by the RAG, noting the following points:

- A range of alternative lower minimum effort levels were examined, but consensus could not be reached in terms of what was an acceptable lower effort limit.
- Given the concerns about survey results, dramatic changes in prawn prices and operating costs along with the need to redefine a baseline minimal level of effort in the fishery, NPRAG agreed that 2022 was not the appropriate year to allow a significant increase in fishing.
- Therefore, NPRAG recommended that the results of the 2022 assessment be set aside in the interim and a temporary and precautionary once-off approach to setting effort in the tiger prawn fishery be taken. NPRAG recommended a 10-20% cut in effort (as nominal days) relative to the recent five-year average in the fishery noting:
 - the fishery independent surveys have indicated a potential significant fall in stock size in the tiger prawn fishery over the past three years, and
 - the recent increase in fuel prices, could generate, in a properly updated MEY model, a considerable fall in effort to maximise profits in the fishery to meet the MEY objective.
- Although the recommended effort reduction is fairly extemporaneous, it is based on first principles in that it is a precautionary approach to declining stock trends and substantial increases in costs. It is also aligned with general approach taken in other Commonwealth fisheries under anomalous conditions and acknowledging that reductions in effort levels can be staged or constrained within reasonable bounds to not overly impact the viability of fishing operations and still result in stock recovery.
- Given that this is a once-off approach under the current economic situations, NPRAG also recommended that the stock assessment be undertaken again in 2023, rather than waiting for the usual two-year cycle for this assessment.
- NPRAG also noted that this would coincide with the current priority research need to conduct a workshop to fully reconsider the tiger prawn stock assessment model and considered it prudent to allow time for a more detailed consideration of the best way to proceed scientifically.

NORMAC considered the proposal from NPFI to implement the NPRAG recommended effort reduction of 10-20% relative to the recent five-year average (5303 effort days/yr) in the fishery noting:

- NPFI advised that a range of options for achieving this reduction in effort had been considered, including changes to gear and time fishing.

- There was a unanimous decision is to implement a fixed season closure to take effect on the 1st November, rather than closing on the season as normal on the 30 November 2022. This results in a reduction in fishing effort from recent levels by 9.78%.
- In addition, it is expected that as with the 2021 season, operators will expend effort in the JBG which would reduce the effort applied in the tiger prawn fishery. Including this expected effort reduction would present a reduction of 16.6% on the five-year average.
- NPMI reiterated the overwhelming support for the stock assessment workshop to consider the update and renewal of the model.

NORMAC supported the NPMI proposal as it reduced effort in line with NPRAG recommendation and commended industry on the development of a sound and practical proposal on such short notice. This was echoed by the member of the AFMA Commission. The MAC resolved to recommend to the Commission that this reduction in effort and the early closure of the 2022 tiger season be adopted.

Recommendation: NORMAC supported the proposal by NPMI to reduce the effort in the 2022 tiger prawn season by between 10% and 16.6% and endorsed the early closure of the 2022 tiger prawn season on 1 November 2022. This recommendation considers the outcomes of the 2022 stock assessment, particularly in relation to the base case, the NPRAG recommendation that a workshop to examine the model will be held later in the year, and has regard to first principles as based on a precautionary approach to declining stock trends and substantial increases in costs.

Action: Eva Plaganyi to respond to the industry query on the reasons behind the continued increase in fishing power over recent years.

Agenda Item 7. NPF Management Plan

The MAC noted the draft *Northern Prawn Fishery Management Plan 1995* (NPF Plan) and discussed the proposed the amendments.

- The MAC accepted amendments relating to updates to definitions and descriptions to better reflect the nature of the NPF, removal of unnecessary references (e.g. to Class B SFR), and general modernisation and updates to wording (all based on advice from the drafter).
- The MAC recommended updating the 'Objectives' to refer simply to the objectives of the Fisheries Management Act, to avoid listing some aspects of the fishery but not others.
- There was a suggestion of introducing wording to ensure that measures had to be applied together to achieve success. However, it was decided that there are enough checks and balances (in the RAG and MAC process, as well as the Commission) in place to ensure they were enacted as a whole.
- It was noted that the footrope length ratio prescribed in the plan can become difficult to achieve at smaller net sizes, although no changes to this were proposed.
- Section 14 of the plan is divided two parts as pertains to prawn fishing and broodstock fishing, with conditions subsequently listed. The MAC recommended either combining these two paragraphs into one or re-ordering the conditions so that they appear in the same order in both parts.
- The MAC discussed whether to remove a reference in section 23A to permits outside of gear SFRs, boat SFRs and broodstock permits.

The MAC endorsed all other changes. AFMA management agreed to incorporate these final changes. The MAC noted that once the final changes are endorsed by NORMAC, AFMA will finalise any suggested changes with the drafter and then commence the next stages of the amendment process.

Action: AFMA to include the recommendations and comment of the MAC as discussed.

Agenda Item 8. Indigenous engagement

The MAC noted that AFMA has developed a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which is due for renewal and review in July 2022. Specific comments on the RAP included some issues with wording (e.g. use of a 'business case'), if/how Indigenous access to fisheries is included, and the high level nature of the RAP missing key actions. AFMA agreed to take this feedback back to the RAP Working Group and to provide an update on actions being taken under the plan.

The MAC then had a broader robust discussion of Indigenous engagement in NORMAC and the NPF in general noting the following points:

- The area of the NPF covers huge and varied areas of sea country across many communities, so there would be significant difficulty in finding an individual Indigenous representative for the MAC.
- However, the MAC felt that this should not be a barrier to addressing the issue of the current lack of engagement, noting that it was not NORMACs place dictate who should sit on the committee.
- There is a need for two-way training and capacity building, both to enable Indigenous members to feel comfortable in the MAC along with cross-cultural training for NORMAC members to better understand community perspectives.
- NPFI and AFMA management have engaged with some community groups, including beach clean-ups and supporting Junior Marine Ranger programs. While this is a positive step, it currently only applies to a few areas and groups.
- FRDC is currently running a project on Indigenous Capacity Building and another specifically developing an Indigenous Engagement Strategy for Commonwealth Fisheries. A review of the MAC and RAG process across all Commonwealth fisheries is also underway which will consider Indigenous participation and representation in the forums.
- There is a range of simple actions which could be taken on this. Examples include creating a map of sea country, notifying land councils and community groups when surveys will be taking place, and distributing information on research outcomes for community groups.
- Overall, there was recognition that Indigenous engagement should be pursued. There was consensus that this is an area where the MAC is lacking and agreement on the value of having a First Nations perspective on the MAC, without the need for specific representation (which can be difficult for a fishery operating across large areas of sea country).

Action: AFMA to pass on the MAC's comments to the RAPWG, and to provide NORMAC with a list of key actions being undertaken under the RAP.

Agenda Item 9. ERA finalisation

NORMAC noted that the ERA reports for the white banana prawn and tiger prawn sub-fisheries are now complete and endorsed these reports noting that:

- NPRAG has considered the draft ERA reports a number of times since the initial draft report was provided in 2019.
- Expert advice was sought in early 2021 and considered and accepted by NPRAG, with the result that all species previously classified as high risk were reduced to either medium or low risk, with the exception of four sawfish species which remained at high risk.

- CSIRO have considered and incorporated all comments, where relevant, into the updated reports provided to AFMA in September 2021.

The issue of correct species ID was raised, particularly with black and white teatfish now IUCN listed and additional species (including scalloped hammerhead) EPBC listed. NORMAC agreed reducing uncertainty for these species will be important and suggested adding them to CMO and SO programs.

The issue of the time taken to complete the ERA reports was also raised. The current reports are using data that is over 5 years old, and the proposed timeline for an update to these reports in 2027. This could be an issue with regards to MSC. AFMA management recognised that the process has been long and arduous and agreed to recommend the Tiger and Banana prawn ERAs be undertaken much earlier than 2027.

Action: AFMA to investigate options to move up the NPF Tiger and Banana Prawn ERAs to much earlier than the scheduled 2027 date.

Action: CSIRO/NPFI to review the species on the CMO list and consider options for including IUCN/EPBC listed species to the program.

Agenda Item 10. AFMA strategic research plan 2023-28

The MAC noted the AFMA strategic research plan 2023-28, with no specific comments or changes recommended.

Agenda Item 11. Research project update

a. MICE update

The MAC noted that the MICE project is now complete with the whole report and summary fact sheet available online. Nineteen Water Resources Development (WRD) scenarios were run which tested varying levels of water extraction and dam construction in northern rivers against performance of a range of biological factors. The model indicated sensitivity to WRD scenarios for a range of commercial species (including prawns), as well as largemouth sawfish and habitats (mangroves and seagrass). The results indicate possible detrimental financial impacts along with environmental impacts.

The MAC noted the impressive nature and scale of this project and acknowledged the great work of the large team involved. It gives industry a strong basis to project their best interests (with regards to potential WRD) as well as the potential to examine climate and environmental factors in the fishery into the future.

b. Redleg assessment

The MAC noted the final report, *Revision of the Assessment Model for the Redleg Banana Prawn (Penaeus indicus) in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf Fishery*, now available on the AFMA website.

NORMAC noted the presentation provided by Éva Plagányi regarding the stock assessment project on redleg banana prawns and outcomes of the 2022 redleg stock assessment. The presentation included:

- The background of the project (including the aim of building robustness in the management of the fishery which was achieved by permanently closing the first season)
- The parameters of the model (including a proxy for MEY based on 1999-2010 average data, and the concept of a 'data sufficient' year of more than 70 boats days)

- The triggers and management actions (closing the fishery for both seasons if CPUE triggers are breached in two consecutive data sufficient years).
- The effort recommendation for 2022 is 364 days and an estimated catch of 459 tonnes. The redlegs harvest strategy developed through this project should also satisfy MSC conditions.

c. Species-split update

NORMAC noted the paper provided on the species-split project, with a presentation to be provided to industry at pre-season briefings this year to answer questions. It was suggested the presentation be circulated to members, as well as adding it to the agenda for the proposed August NORMAC meeting.

Action: AFMA/CSIRO to circulate Judy Upston's presentation to members and include a presentation on this in the next NORMAC meeting agenda.

d. Integrated Monitoring Program

The MAC noted an update from CSIRO on the operation of the Integrated Monitoring Program (IMP) which was successfully carried out from the 19th February to 8th March for 2022. Indices looked poor for grooved tigers, brown tigers and endeavour prawns, but were positive for banana prawns (gulf-wide index was the third highest of the series). This reflected the amount and extent of rain in the region from November 2021 - February 2022.

e. Sawfish projects

NPFI provided NORMAC with an update on initiatives relating to the reporting of sawfish interactions and research being undertaken on sawfish noting the following points:

- A preliminary investigation on the spatial distribution of interactions across the fishery showed a potential hotspot near Melville Island.
- Variability between CMO and SO data was discussed, with broad agreement that the statistical trends across the two observer programs are consistent. NORMAC agreed that it is worth putting some time and effort into considering how to design the analyses to better reflect the accuracy of CMO and SO interaction rates.
- There is some ongoing work on using camera footage for analysis of sawfish interactions.
- An internal analysis between vessels using different types of mesh and interactions in relation to top opening as compared to bottom opening TEDs had also been agreed upon by NPFI.

NORMAC acknowledged that this continues to be the highest priority issue for NPFI and the industry.

f. Red (blue) endeavour prawn

NORMAC noted the update on the Red and Blue Endeavour Project with Stage 1 (on modelling growth of endeavour prawns) completed and Stage 2 (on CPUE standardisation) on track with a progress report to be provided at the end of May 2022.

Agenda Item 12. Other Business

No other items of business were included in the agenda.

Agenda Item 13. Next meeting

The Chair advised that the next meeting will be a teleconference in mid-August. The Chair thanked the members and closed the meeting at 3:35pm.

Signed (Chairperson):



John Glaister

11 August 2022

List of Attachments

- 1) NORMAC annotated agenda
- 2) NORMAC declared conflicts of interest

ATTACHMENT A: Declared conflicts of interest

| Participant | Declared Interest |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair | |
| John Glaister | NORMAC Chair, ex-AFMA Commissioner, no pecuniary interest in the fishery. |
| Members | |
| Greg Albert | NPF Statutory Fishing Right (SFR) holder, interested in the successful management of a profitable and sustainable fishery |
| Ian Boot | Industry member – NPRAG Managing Director of Austfish, a company that operates NPF vessels. Has a commercial interest in the fishery. NPF broodstock permit holder. Participates in scampi fishing. |
| David Carter | NPF Statutory Fishing Right (SFR) holder CEO of a business which owns and operate vessels in the NPF Interested in the successful management of a profitable and sustainable fishery |
| Ian Knuckey | <p>Positions: Director –Fishwell Consulting Pty Ltd Director –Olrac Australia (Electronic logbooks) Chair –Northern Prawn Fishery Resource Assessment Group Chair –Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group Chair –Victorian Rock Lobster and Giant Crab Assessment Group Chair –Victorian Central Zone Abalone Fisheries Resource Advisory Group Chair –Gulf of St Vincent’s Prawn Fishery MAC Research Scientific Committee Scientific Member –Northern Prawn Management Advisory Committee Scientific Member –Gulf of St Vincent’s Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee Scientific Member –Tropical Tuna Resource Assessment Group Scientific Member – SESSF Resource Assessment Group Councillor –Victorian Marine and Coastal Council Member –The Geelong Agri Collective</p> <p>Fishwell current/recent projects: DAWE Project: Multi-sector fisheries capacity building AFMA 2022-:Annual monitoring, reporting and assessment of SPF marine mammal interactions, including effectiveness of mitigation measures AFMA 2020-0807: Bass Strait Scallop Fishery Survey – 2020-22 AFMA 2019-0836: Information the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Harvest Strategy and TAC setting process with economic data and MEY proxies FRDC project: Principal Investigator for SA Peak Industry body project AFMA project: Design sea cucumber fishery-independent survey for Coral Sea FRDC 2019-027: Improving and promoting fish-trawl selectivity in the SESSF and GABTS FRDC 2019-072: A survey to detect change in Danish Seine catch rates of Flathead and School Whiting resulting from CGG seismic exploration. FRDC 2019-129: Potential transition of shark gillnet boats to longline fishing in Bass Strait - ecological, cross-sectoral, and economic implications FRDC 2018-021: Development and evaluation of SESSF multi-species harvest strategies Traffic Project: Shark Product Traceability NT Fisheries: Design and implementation of a tropical snapper trawl survey Sea Cucumber Ass. : Design and implementation of various sea cucumber dive surveys. Australia Bay: Queensland Gulf of Carpentaria Developmental Fin Fish Trawl Fishery Tas. Abalone: Scientific Advisor for Tasmanian Abalone Council Ltd PEMSEA: Developing EAFM Plan for Red Snapper in Arafura and Timor Seas Beach Energy: BACI study of Prion Marine Seismic Survey impacts relative biomass of scallops on beds in the immediate vicinity. Expert Witness: Gladstone Harbour development impacts</p> |

| Participant | Declared Interest |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Brodie Macdonald | Employed by AFMA, A/g Senior Manager – Northern Fisheries. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise |
| Jo McCrea | Bio.inspecta, Development Manager Freelance sustainable seafood advisor/consultant NSW Ministerial Advisory Council, Conservation Member National Fishery Advisory Council, Conservation Member FRDC Leadership Group for development of Strategic R&D Plan AFMA Climate Change Adaptation Project, Steering Committee Member Recent prior, WWF AUS, Head of Sustainable Seafood Program 2012-Aug '20 |
| Michael O'Brien | NPF SFR holder, interested in the successful management of a profitable and sustainable fishery |
| Arthur Raptis | NPF Statutory Fishing Right (SFR) holder Observer at Australian Council of Prawn Fisheries (ACPF) meetings Interested in the successful management of a profitable and sustainable fishery |
| Invited Participants | |
| Annie Jarrett | CEO – NPF MSC – Asia Pacific director Commonwealth Fisheries Association Director Chair – Australian Council of Prawn Fisheries (ACPF) Member of the FRDC selection panel Invited participant - NPRAG No pecuniary interests Represents the interests of industry. |
| AFMA | |
| Cate Coddington | Employed by AFMA. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise. |
| Elissa Mastroianni | Employed by AFMA No interest, pecuniary or otherwise. |
| Darci Wallis | Employed by AFMA, Northern Prawn Fishery Manager. No interests, pecuniary or otherwise. |
| Observers / Presenters | |
| Beau Anderson | Employee of A Raptis and Sons NPF member Skipper in the NPF Has provided charter for scientific surveys in NPF in the past and may in future. |
| Rik Buckworth | Scientific member – NPRAG Scientific Member – Torres Strait Finfish RAG Director – Aquatic Remote Biopsy Pty Ltd Director – Sea Sense Australia Pty Ltd Adjunct Professor – Charles Darwin University CSIRO Honorary Fellow Chair of the NT Aquarium Fishery Management Advisory Committee Consultancy contract with NPF to review Red Endeavour Prawns Current projects with government agencies, CDU and fishing industry for projects in the NT, Torres Strait and Qld Researcher involved particularly in stock assessment research in NPF. Has in the past and may in future seek and receive funding for research in the fishery. |
| Josh Cahill | Employed by NPF – Projects Manager |

| Participant | Declared Interest |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>Contract work for other various fisheries Commercial sea urchin diver in the Victoria Central Zone Fishery Leasee holder of sea urchin quota Undertakes contracting work with other fisheries – Commonwealth and state jurisdictions.</p> |
| Roy Deng | <p>Employed by CSIRO. Research provider. Member of a research body providing scientific advisory services to the fishery management. May in future seek and receive funding for research in the fishery.</p> |
| Ron Earle | <p>NPF Statutory Fishing Right (SFR) holder, interested in the successful management of a profitable and sustainable fishery</p> |
| Gary Fry | <p>Employed by CSIRO. Research provider. Has in the past and may in future seek and receive funding for research in the fishery.</p> |
| Rob Kenyon | <p>Employed by CSIRO. Research provider. Has in the past and may in future seek and receive funding for research in the fishery.</p> |
| Sean Pascoe | <p>Employed by CSIRO. Research provider. Has in the past and may in future seek and receive funding for research in the fishery.</p> |
| Norm Peovitis | <p>Managing director WA Seafood Exporters Pty Ltd. Holder of NPF Gear units, B units and owner of 3 NPF vessels.</p> |
| Éva Plagányi | <p>Scientific member – NPRAG Employee of CSIRO. Research provider involved particularly in stock assessment research in NPF. Also currently receiving FRDC funding related to development of a GoC ecosystem model. Has in the past and may in future seek and receive funding for research in the fishery. Scientific member of TRLRAG and TS HCRAAG.</p> |
| Andy Prendergast | <p>General manager responsible for Austral fisheries, Prawning division</p> |
| Phil Robson | <p>Industry member – NPRAG Employee of A Raptis and Sons (holds concessions in the NPF), responsible for managing NPF vessels & an NT demersal fish trawler. Has provided charter for scientific surveys in NPF in the past and may in future.</p> |
| Darren Roy | <p>Queensland Government representative. No pecuniary interest</p> |
| Scott Spencer | <p>AFMA Commissioner Chair – Biosecurity Queensland Ministerial Advisory Committee Director – Queensland Regional and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA)</p> |

ATTACHMENT B – NORMAC 85: May 2022 meeting agenda

NORMAC 85: May 2022 meeting Agenda – View Brisbane Hotel

Friday, 20 May 2022, 0800-1800

| AGENDA | | | |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Time | Item | Purpose | Presenter |
| 0800 | 1. Preliminaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Acknowledgement of country, welcome and apologies b. Declarations of interest c. Adoption of Agenda d. Minutes from previous meetings e. Correspondence sent / received | For action | Chair (20 mins) |
| 0820 | 2. Actions arising from previous meetings | For noting | AFMA (10 mins) |
| 0830 | 3. Outcomes of out-of-session items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. NPF Bycatch Strategy 2020-21 b. Developmental Fishing Policy c. Fishing Capacity Determination d. Update to the NPF red endeavour harvest strategy e. Strategic research proposal – all commonwealth fisheries: scoping studies to address four key strategic research needs | For endorsement | AFMA (15 mins) |
| 0845 | 4. Reports / Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Industry report b. AFMA management report c. NPRAG report d. Jurisdictional update e. Conservation update | For information | a. NPFI b. AFMA c. Ian Knuckey d. Darren Roy e. Jo McCrea (1.5 hrs) |
| 1015 | <i>Morning Tea – 15 min break</i> | | |
| 1030 | 5. NPF indicators report (annual industry report on fishery performance indicators) | For information | NPFI (15 mins) |
| 1045 | 6. Tiger prawn stock assessment | For information | CSIRO (45 mins) |
| 1130 | 7. NPF Management Plan | For advice | AFMA (1 hr) |
| 1230 | <i>Lunch – 30 min break</i> | | |
| 1300 | 8. Indigenous engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. AFMA's commencement of a <i>Reflect RAP</i> b. NPF perspective | For advice | AFMA (45 mins) |
| 1345 | 9. ERA finalisation | For decision | AFMA (15 mins) |
| 1400 | 10. AFMA strategic research plan 2023-28 | For comment | AFMA (20 mins) |
| 1420 | <i>Afternoon Tea – 15 min break</i> | | |
| 1435 | 11. Research project update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. MICE Update b. Redleg assessment c. Species-split d. Integrated Monitoring Program e. Sawfish projects f. Red (blue) endeavour prawn | For information | a. Eva b. Eva c-f. as read (1.25 hrs) |
| 1550 | 12. Other business | | (10 mins) |
| 1600 | 13. Next meeting | For decision | AFMA (5 mins) |
| 1605 | <i>End of Meeting</i> | | |