



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Southern Squid Jig Fishery (SSJF)
Resource Assessment Group
(SquidRAG) Meeting 24**

Minutes

Date: 02 October 2019

10:00 am 11:45pm (AEST)

Meeting Minutes

1 Preliminaries

1.1 Introduction and apologies

1. The Chair opened the meeting at 10:11 am AEDT and welcomed participants. An apology was given by Robert Curtotti after the meeting.

| Attendees | Membership |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Lianos Triantafillos | Chair |
| Daniel Corrie | AFMA member |
| Debbie Wisby | Industry member |
| Shijie Zhou | Scientific member |
| Terry Romaro | Industry member |
| Heather Johnston | Executive Officer, AFMA |
| Apologies | Membership |
| Robert Curtotti | Economic member |

1.2 Declaration of interests

2. The RAG followed the conflict of interest declarations as outlined in Fisheries Administration Paper 12. Members reviewed and updated the Declaration of Interest included at Attachment B.
3. The following participants took turns leaving the meeting while the RAG considered their respective interests and how they should be managed.
 - Debbie Wisby – declared a conflict with agenda item 4 ‘2020 TAE recommendation’. The RAG decided she could be a part of the discussion, but should not participate in forming the RAG recommendation.
 - Terry Romaro – declared a conflict with agenda item 4 ‘2020 TAE recommendation’. The RAG decided he could be a part of the discussion, but should not participate in forming the RAG recommendation.

1.3 Adoption of Agenda

4. The agenda (Attachment A) was adopted with no other business identified.

2 Meeting administration

2.1 Minutes of previous meeting

5. The RAG noted the final minutes of the SquidRAG meeting of 2 October 2018 are available on the AFMA website.

2.2 Actions arising from previous meetings

6. The AFMA member noted the status of actions arising from the SquidRAG 23 held on 2 October 2018 (Attachment C). The RAG discussed the items and following was raised:

- Action Item 1 (SquidRAG 23): Action Item to be revised to read as ‘A non-technical summary’ of the key findings of the project to be circulated to the RAG, prior to distribution to industry. AFMA to liaise with Fishwell Consulting regarding their provision of the non- technical summary.
- Action Item 2 (SquidRAG 23): SquidRAG members provided clarification around this action item. SquidRAG had provided comments regarding the Fishwell project report on ‘Locating and targeting of squid’ at SquidRAG 23 and were waiting to provide comment on the revised report that incorporated their comments. AFMA to liaise with Fishwell Consulting.
- Action Item 4 (SquidRAG 23): AFMA are in the process of developing Fisheries Management Strategies (FMS) for all Commonwealth Fisheries, this will incorporate the fisheries Harvest Strategy, Data Plan and other documents into one place.
- Given the need to develop the Fisheries Management Strategy (FMS) in the SSJF, SquidRAG 25 will be held face to face in early 2020 where AFMA will present a draft Harvest Strategy and the data needs of the fishery will be discussed. Note, the FMS will streamline a number of management strategies in the SSJF into one document, such as the harvest strategy and data strategy.
- AFMA intends to simplify the Harvest Strategy, with a trigger-based approach to assessments and data collection.
- The Data Strategy will consider data needs to support the Harvest Strategy and methods for collecting them.

3 Updates

3.1 Managers update

7. The AFMA member provided the SquidRAG with an update including:

Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy and Bycatch policies released

Revised policies were released in November 2018. Harvest strategies in major fisheries need to be reviewed within three years and all fisheries within four years, in light of the revised *Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy 2018* (CFHSP). AFMA will be reviewing the SSJF harvest strategy with a view to having an initial draft with SquidRAG by early 2020.

Regarding the *Commonwealth Fisheries Bycatch Policy 2018* (CFBP), there is a requirement to review operational policies and supporting strategies in response to changes in fishing intensity or as new knowledge emerges about the impacts of fishing activity on bycatch species. AFMA must report annually on the implementation of the Bycatch Policy and as requested by the fisheries minister.

CEO and Executive Manager, Fishery appointments

Wez Norris has been appointed as AFMA’s Chief Executive Officer and Anna Willock as the Executive Manager, Fisheries.

Demersal and Midwater senior manager

George Day has taken a position at the Department of Agriculture and left AFMA at the start of October.

Lakes Entrance office

From 1 July 2019, management of the SSJF moved to Lakes Entrance with Dan Corrie as Manager and Heather Johnston as the Senior Fisheries Management Officer.

Revised Catch Disposal Record booklet

To improve the traceability of product, AFMA has introduced the following changes to SSJF Catch Disposal Records (CDRs):

- Include a triplicate (carbon copy) that will need to be provided to the buyer/other (note: other means anyone that is receiving the catch that isn't a buyer).
- Include additional fields to record contact details of buyer/other.

In addition to improved traceability, the proposed changes to CDRs align with those for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery. Given the high degree of overlap in operators between these two fisheries, having one consistent process for both fisheries keeps the rules simpler for industry and avoids confusion.

3.2 Industry update

8. The industry member provided the SquidRAG with an update on industry matters within the SSJF. It was noted that:
 - the 2019 season in the SSJF has been positive, although catch rates have dropped compared to 2018, the price has increased.
 - vessels have spent a large amount of time searching and were spread across the fishery. Information has been shared between operators, which is positive.
 - there are increased export opportunities to China at a good price. The demand may have an effect on the availability to the domestic bait market and human consumption.
 - there has been an increase in demand in the domestic bait market, and those tuna fishers using squid as bait have reported increased catches.
 - the average price was around four dollars per kilogram with the highest price reported as five dollars. The industry member noted that these prices do not take into account transport costs.

3.3 Economic Update

9. The economic member provided a written update after the meeting at Attachment D.

4 2020 TAE recommendation

3.1 Total Allowable Effort (TAE)

10. The AFMA member presented the paper "Total Allowable Effort (TAE) for the 2020 Season" and asked the RAG to recommend the TAE for the 2020 SSJF fishing season which starts 1 January 2020.
11. The SquidRAG considered the catch and effort data for the SSJF and trawl sectors of the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery, and noted the following:
 - No catch and effort triggers set in the Arrow Squid Harvest Strategy were reached in the current (2019) season.

- Catch (as at August 2019) for the SSJF is 245 tonnes, well below the intermediate trigger level of 3000 tonnes. Trawl catch is 402 tonnes, well below the intermediate trawl catch trigger of 2000 tonne. The combined jig and trawl catch is around 647 tonnes, well below the combined intermediate catch trigger of 4000 tonnes.
- The 30 vessel effort trigger limit in the SSJF has also not been exceeded with 9 vessels active in 2019.

12. The following key points were raised in discussing the 2019 TAE:

- While catch in the 2019 season is lower than the 2018 season, it is not necessarily a sustainability concern as lower catch does not indicate lower abundance.
- There could be a number of factors contributing to low catch such as environmental conditions and vessels ability to locate the squid.
- The environmental conditions may play a significant part in a vessel's ability to locate the catch. Collection of environmental data may increase industry's ability to understand the effects of environmental conditions.
- Despite bycatch being considered low risk in the SSJF, better recording of by-catch is needed by operators and will be prioritised as part of the forthcoming SSJF Data Strategy.

Action item: AFMA to contact operators to remind them of their obligation to report bycatch

The RAG recommended that:

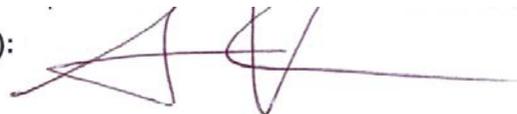
The 2019 TAE be set at 550 squid jig machines, as per the 2019 season. With 4800¹ SFR in the SSJF, this means 8.909 SFR's are required for each jig machine. The SquidRAG agreed while there is latent effort in the fishery, this level maintains a degree of balance between sustainability and maintaining the capacity of the fleet to allow it to respond quickly to an increase in squid abundance, availability and / or changes in markets.

Other business and close of meeting

13. AFMA is intending to hold SquidRAG 25 in early 2020, date and location to be confirmed with members. The aim of this meeting will be to discuss a draft revised harvest strategy, draft Data Plan and the five year research plan and annual research priorities.

14. The Chair thanked SquidRAG for their contributions and closed the meeting at 11:45 am.

Signed (Chairperson):



Date: 21 October 2019

Attachments

Attachment A: SquidRAG 24 Final agenda

Attachment B: SquidRAG 24 Declared conflicts of interest

Attachment C: SquidRAG 24 Action Items

¹ Note, during SquidRAG 24 the number of current gear SFRs discussed was 4900 but on the 15 October 2019 AFMA Management provided a correction to the number of gear SFRs as 4800 to members via email.



Southern Squid Jig Fishery Resource Assessment Group (SquidRAG)

Meeting 24 – teleconference

Agenda

Wednesday 2 October 2019

Time (AEST): 10:00

| Participants | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Members | Membership |
| Dr Lianos Triantafillos | Chair |
| Dr Shijie Zouh | Scientific Member |
| Terry Romaro | Industry Member |
| Debbie Wisby | Industry Member |
| Robert Curtotti | Economic Member |
| Dan Corrie | AFMA Member |
| Heather Johnston | Executive Officer |
| Apologies | |
| | |

| Approximate time | Agenda item | |
|------------------|-------------|--|
| 10:00 | 1 | Preliminaries 1. Welcome and apologies 2. Declaration of interests 3. Adoption of agenda |
| 10:15 | 2 | Meeting Administration 1. Minutes of previous meeting 2. Actions arising from previous meetings |

| | | |
|-------|---|--|
| 10:30 | 3 | Fishery update <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AFMA management 2. Industry update 3. Economic update |
| 11.00 | 4 | 2020 TAE recommendation <i>SquidRAG will develop advice for SEMAC and the AFMA Commission for the 2020 TAE</i> |
| 12:00 | 5 | Other business <i>Early 2020 face to face meeting</i> |
| 12.30 | | Close |

SquidRAG Declaration of Interests of members (Agenda item 1.2)

Last updated: October 2019

| Name | Membership | Declared interests |
|----------------------|-------------------|--|
| Lianos Triantafillos | Chair | No interests declared, pecuniary or otherwise. Involved in broad research projects though none specifically squid related. |
| Debbie Wisby | Industry Member | CEO of a fishing Company in Tasmania- Scallops, Squid and Shark. Company/ Director holds commonwealth squid jig SFRs and various Tasmanian licences. South East Management Advisory Committee invited participant Scallop Management Advisory Committee industry member Industry representative of Tasmanian Scallop Fishery Advisory Committee. Commonwealth Fish Receiver. Local Government Mayor. |
| Shijie Zhou | Scientific Member | CSIRO undertakes research on a range of fishery related matters No interest declared, pecuniary or otherwise. |
| Robert Curtotti | Economics Member | ABARES undertakes research on a range of commonwealth fisheries related matters. No interests declared, pecuniary or otherwise. |
| Terry Romaro | Industry Member | Director of a company that owns ETBF boat SFR's, minor line SFR's, ETBF longline SFR's, WTBF boat SFR's, WTBF longline SFR's, Coral Sea Trawl permit, Western Skipjack purse seine permit, SPF purse seine, mid-water trawl SFR's, SPF quota SFR's and Squid(SSJF)Units. Shareholder of a company that owns shares in a proposal to fish with foreign long liners in the WTBF. Invited participant on SBTMAC, SquidRag and industry representative at the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna & IOTC. |
| Dan Corrie | AFMA Member | No interests declared, pecuniary or otherwise. |
| Heather Johnston | Executive Officer | No interests declared, pecuniary or otherwise. |

Previous action items from squidRAG 23

| MAC meeting # | Agenda Item | Action item # | Action Item | Agency/ person | Timeframe | Progress |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|--|----------------|-----------|----------|
| 23 | 3.2 | 1 | A “fishermen friendly” summary of the key findings of the project to be circulated to industry | | | |
| 23 | 3.2 | 2 | SquidRAG to provide any comments on the Fishwell project report on ‘Locating and targeting of squid’ prior to it being made publically available | | | |
| 23 | 3.2 | 3 | AFMA to liaise with Fishwell Consulting regarding the feasibility of corroborating this seasons (2018) data with the findings outlined in the report | | | |

| MAC meeting # | Agenda Item | Action item # | Action Item | Agency/ person | Timeframe | Progress |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|---|----------------|-----------|----------|
| 23 | 3.3 | 4 | A draft data strategy for the SSJF to be developed by AFMA that incorporates suggestions made by the SquidRAG with respect to collect data in the fishery | | | |

Action items from squidRAG 24

| MAC meeting # | Agenda Item | Action item # | Action Item | Agency/ person | Timeframe | Progress |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|--|----------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| 23 | 3.2 | 1 | A “fishermen friendly” summary of the key findings of the project to be circulated to industry | AFMA | Out of session prior to SquidRAG 25 | |
| 23 | 3.2 | 2 | SquidRAG to provide any comments on the Fishwell project report on ‘Locating and targeting of squid’ prior to it being made publically available | AFMA | Out of session prior to SquidRAG 25 | |

| MAC meeting # | Agenda Item | Action item # | Action Item | Agency/ person | Timeframe | Progress |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|---|----------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| 23 | 3.2 | 3 | AFMA to liaise with Fishwell Consulting regarding the feasibility of corroborating this seasons (2018) data with the findings outlined in the report | AFMA | Out of session prior to SquidRAG 25 | |
| 23 | 3.3 | 4 | A draft data strategy for the SSJF to be developed by AFMA that incorporates suggestions made by the SquidRAG with respect to collect data in the fishery | AFMA | SquidRAG 25 | |
| 24 | 4 | 1 | AFMA to contact operators to remind them of their obligation to report bycatch | AFMA | Prior to 2020 season start | |

SSJF Economic Update

- The ABARES 2019 Fishery Status Report for ABARES is now available. The report shows that squid are not subject to overfishing or over-fished and that NER in the fishery are likely to have improved in 2017–18.
- Based on preliminary price information the Gross Value Production (GVP) for the SSJF in the 2018/19 financial year is indicated to be around \$1.0 million. This represents a significant decline in GVP relative to 2017-18 levels. The decline is largely attributed to a fall in overall catch volume in the 2018-19 year.
- International squid prices remain high as a result of tight supply in the face of rising global demand. The Australian unit import price for processed product has been steadily increasing, rising from \$4.66/kg in the 2014-15 financial year to \$8.04/kg for the 2018-19 financial year. On average, about 16,000 tonnes of squid is imported into Australia per year.
- Higher international prices, coupled with lower domestic landings, is leading to higher domestic prices for squid. Domestically, the Sydney market price for 2018-19 financial year was around \$3.80 per kg, a substantial increase on prices for 2017-18 (\$2.93).