



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority

South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC)

Meeting 48

Meeting minutes

27 October 2022

Microsoft Teams Online Meeting



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The Chair opened the meeting at 09:30 hr AEST

1 Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome and apologies

1. Dr David McGlennon, the Chair, welcomed members and observers and made an Acknowledgement of Country paying our respects to this country's First People and Traditional Custodians of the land throughout Australia. Acknowledging Australia's Traditional Custodians of Country and recognising their continued connection to land, waters and community. Paying our respects to them and their cultures and to Elders past present and emerging.
2. The South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC, the MAC) members noted the Acknowledgement of Country, accepted the meeting was being recorded and commenced proceedings.
3. The Chair noted the resignation of Industry Invited participant Debbie Wisby and acknowledged Industry representative John Cull (Southern Squid Jig fishery) would attend (agenda items 7 and 8) in her place.
4. The Chair acknowledged that there were new AFMA members at the meeting and commenced proceedings with brief introductions by all present.

SEMAC Members	Role
Dr David McGlennon	Chair
Dr Anissa Lawrence	Environment member
Mr Daniel Corrie	AFMA member
Mr Gerry Geen	Industry member
Dr Paul McShane	Scientific member
Mr Kyri Toumazos	Industry member
Mr Will Mure	Industry member
Mr Simon Boag	Industry member
Mr John Harrison	Recreational member
Ms Sarah Jennings	Economics member
Ms Rebecca Jol	Executive Officer

Apologies	Role
Mr Gerry Geen	Industry member
Mr John Harrison	Recreational member



Invited Participants	Organisation
Mr Heath Folpp	NSW DPI
Mr James Woodhams	ABARES
Mr John Cull	Industry

Observers/Presenters	Organisation
Mr Wez Norris	AFMA CEO
Dr Lara Ainley	AFMA Staff
Dr Mark Grubert	AFMA Staff
Mr Steve Hall	AFMA Staff
Mr Aaron Puckeridge	AFMA Staff
Dr Nastaran Mazloumi	AFMA Staff
Ms Yvette Lamont	AFMA Staff
Dr Haydn Titterton	AFMA Staff
Mr Nathan Jackson	AFMA Staff
Ms Michelle Henriksen	AFMA Staff
Mr Roshan Hanamseth	AFMA Staff
Mr Mike Gerner	AFMA Staff

1.2 Adoption of agenda

5. MAC members adopted the agenda at [Attachment A](#) as final.

1.3 Declarations of interest

6. MAC members noted the conflict of interest requirements as outlined in [AFMA's Fisheries Management Paper 1](#). Members and participants reviewed and updated the Declarations of Interest provided at [Attachment B](#) including any specific conflicts of interest with items on the agenda. The following Declarations of Interest were made:
- Simon Boag (Industry member) declared a conflict of interest for Agenda Items 3, 5, and 6.
 - Kyri Toumazos (Industry member) declared a conflict of interest for Agenda Items 5, 6, 7 and 8.
 - James Woodhams (Invited participant- Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), declared an organisational interest for Agenda Item 6 and 8, noting that ABARES has assisted AFMA with some of the EM and congruence research analyses as well as the SSJF harvest strategy review.



7. The Chair sought advice on how the MAC should manage these conflicts.
8. The MAC decided that participants would be permitted to contribute to discussions but would be excused from the meeting for any recommendation made by the MAC for the items listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Participation in items where there were declared conflicts of interest

Agenda Item	Party with potential conflict	Discussion Participation	Recommendation Participation
3. CTS Closures	Simon Boag	Present	Absent
5. School Shark Live Release Rule	Simon Boag Kyri Toumazos Will Mure	Present	Absent
6. EM Review in the GHaT	Simon Boag Kyri Toumazos	Present	Absent
7. SSJF 2023 Fishing Season (TAE)	John Cull Kyri Toumazos Will Mure	Present	Absent
8. SSJF Harvest Strategy update	John Cull Kyri Toumazos James Woodhams (declared Interest)	Present	Absent

1.4 Minutes of previous meeting

9. The MAC noted that the final minutes for meeting 46 (19 July 2022) are now available on the [AFMA website](#).
10. The MAC also noted that the draft minutes for meeting 47 (31 August 2022) have been circulated for comment.

1.5 Actions arising from previous meetings

11. A consolidated list of action items from previous MAC meetings was circulated to members prior to the meeting. Members noted progress against action items in the update provided. One unresolved action item from meeting 41 (November 2020) was discussed in further detail as described below.

Action item 41.8: Mr Simon Boag to examine the spatial overlap of auto-longline effort with the known distribution of Squalid species to assist in the development of an industry proposal to allow the retention of non-conservation dependent Squalid species.

- This issue related to a rule that AFMA implemented in the GHaT auto-longline sub-sector whereby fishers had to stop the line and release any Squalidae species before reaching the hauler, on the basis that if any of those Squalidae species were “conservation dependant species”, then their survival would be compromised by the time they reached the hauler.



- Industry had previously reported that identifying the protected Upper Slope Dogfish (USD) amongst the various other Squalidae species was time consuming and disrupted fishing operations.
 - These concerns prompted an independent project agreement between Les Scott (Industry) and Ross Daley (shark expert), facilitated by Simon Boag (Industry Member) to understand which dogfish (including Upper Slope Dogfish) were being caught and to determine if the crew could identify individual species of sharks prior to their arrival at the hauler.
 - Mr Boag will seek an update from Ross Daley noting that the work has not progressed due to COVID restrictions.
 - AMFA proposed removing this action item on the basis that it is no longer a priority for the MAC. However, if the work progresses, and requires further consideration, then it will be raised at a subsequent meeting.
12. The MAC agreed to remove this as an on-going action noting that the project work is with the proponent and if future issues arise, they will be considered accordingly.

2 Updates

2.1 Manager's Update

13. MAC members were provided with a written update (taken as read) on the key management issues arising since the last meeting in July 2022 and noted the following:

Demersal and Midwater staffing update

There have been further staff changes in the Demersal and Midwater Fisheries team since the previous MAC meeting. Michelle Henriksen has been recruited to the position of Senior Management Support Officer, based at the Lakes Entrance office. Michelle takes on the role of Executive Officer (EO) for GABRAG and GABMAC. Former AFMA graduate Nathan Jackson (based in the Canberra Office) has been promoted to the position of Senior Management Support Officer and will primarily focus on the Commonwealth Trawl Sector.

Steve Hall is the new manager of the SPF, SSJF and Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF) and is based in the Canberra office. Haydn Titterton (based in the Lakes Entrance office) has recently been promoted to Senior Management Officer for the SSJF and BSCZSF. Haydn also takes on the role of EO for SquidRAG, ScallopRAG and ScallopMAC. Yvette Lamont recently joined AMFA (in the Darwin office) as the Senior Management Officer for the SPF and EO for SPFRAG. An organisational chart of the Demersal and Midwater Fisheries team is provided at Appendix A.

Seabird Threat Abatement Plan (TAP)

A meeting will be held on 8 November 2022 to discuss the performance of Commonwealth fisheries under the [Seabird Threat Abatement Plan](#) (TAP). AFMA is currently preparing the annual report to support this meeting which includes information on the level of seabird interactions and hook numbers (both total and reviewed) for the hook sub-sectors in the GHAT. Under the TAP, AFMA is required to review a minimum of 10 per cent of all hooks deployed. In 2020, AFMA increased the



review rate for manual hook boats with EM to 30 per cent with a view to increasing overall fleet coverage, noting boats who fish less than 100 days are not currently required to have EM systems. Despite the increase to 30 per cent, total coverage in the manual hook sector is between 1-5 per cent. The broader rollout of EM across Commonwealth fisheries will likely result in manual hook boats having EM systems installed, and the cost of having 10 per cent on-board observer coverage in the manual hook sector as an interim approach is high. AFMA will discuss this at the upcoming TAP meeting.

Despite the low review rates, the level of seabird interactions remains below the interaction threshold in the TAP (0.01 birds per 1000 hooks). The performance of the fisheries over the last five years will also be discussed at this meeting as part of a strategic review of the TAP, commencing in 2023.

AFMA will provide advice to the MAC out of session regarding the outcomes of the TAP meeting and will include an agenda item at the February 2023 meeting.

Offshore Constitutional Settlement (OCS) arrangements

Victoria – Trawl catches of King George Whiting

The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) has raised concerns regarding Commonwealth trawlers targeting spawning aggregations of King George Whiting (KGW) in the Wilsons Promontory area and suggest that this presents a sustainability risk to the stock (see <https://vfa.vic.gov.au/science-in-fisheries/offshore-and-king-george-whiting-science>).

However, the total catch by Commonwealth boats in 2021 was only seven tonnes, which accounts for approximately two per cent of the estimated total Victorian commercial and recreational catch. Approximately three tonnes of KGW have been caught so far in 2022, with most of the catch taken between March and May. AFMA Management does not expect Commonwealth catches to increase significantly for the rest of the year.

The VFA recently contacted AFMA Management regarding a project proposal submitted to the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) to investigate the reproductive status and connectivity of KGW in the areas around Wilsons Promontory and adjacent waters. AFMA has raised concerns with FRDC about the narrow scope of the project, which focusses on Commonwealth trawl catches of KGW near Wilsons Promontory without any consideration of broader sustainability, including the impact of Victorian commercial and recreational catch, or improvements to science or stock assessment approaches.

FRDC have asked the VFA to engage with all interested stakeholders to ensure the revised proposal takes account of the broader management requirements. AFMA have not yet been provided a revised application.

Tasmania – Potential trawl impacts on juvenile Giant Crab habitat

The Tasmanian Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) contacted AFMA Management in September regarding a project proposal submitted to the FRDC by the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS). One of the aims of the project is to “Quantify the overlap of the Commonwealth trawl fishery and bryozoan habitat within the area of the Tasmanian Giant Crab fishery and estimate the current status”.



AFMA has raised concerns with DNRE and FRDC, similar to those regarding the VFA King George Whiting proposal, that the scope focusses only on trawl impacts and does not account for broader impacts such as climate change or Tasmanian commercial fishing contributing to the decline and lack of recovery for Giant Crab in Tasmania. These concerns were noted at the recent Commonwealth Research Advisory Committee (ComRAC) meeting and AFMA understand the proponents have been asked to consult more broadly on the scope and objectives of the project.

14. In response to the abovementioned proposals, Simon Boag (Industry member) noted that he had increasing concerns that both the OCS arrangements and the research planning cycle are being misused for political gain. Mr Boag cautioned the committee that the scope of these research proposals are very narrow, focused only on trawl impacts and need to consider broader sustainability impacts, including the impact of other commercial and recreational catch, climate change and the accuracy of the stock assessments.

2.2 Industry Update

15. The Chair asked industry members to provide an update on any items arising since the last meeting (19 July). The MAC noted the following:

Will Mure (Industry member) raised the following points for the CTS and GHaT:

- Pink Ling season has commenced and catches in the west are the best seen for many years.
 - Eastern ling catches are also very good and the eastern/western breakdown arrangements for ling management facilitated by SETFIA is working very well.
16. The AFMA member (Daniel Corrie) gave a brief update on the recommended biological catch (RBC) and TAC outcomes for Blue-Eye Trevalla (SERAG October 2022), noting that the Catch-Per Unit Effort (CPUE) data series is declining and has resulted in a significant reduction to the TAC.
 17. Mr Corrie noted that whilst there has been issues with the database (resulting in changed indices to the CPUE series) that may have exasperated the decline, the overall trend in CPUE is likely to be the same.
 18. The MAC noted that SERAG will consider whether the CPUE is a reliable index and whether the current Tier 4 assessment is appropriate for Blue-eye trevalla. The impact of orca depredation on the index is another factor that will be considered.
 19. Industry expressed concern and disappointment in the fluctuations in indicators that influence the TAC setting process.

Kyri Toumazos (Industry member) raised the following points for the GHaT:

- High catch rates in the Gillnet and Hook fisheries.
- Waiting on permit to trial auto-longlining in Bass Strait

Simon Boag, on behalf of the Southern Shark Industry Association (SSIA), the Small Pelagic Fishing Industry Association (SPFIA) and SETFIA raised the following points:



For the SPF:

- Dolphin and seal interactions are very low (virtually none)
- Catch rates are up
- Market prices are up
- Fuel price are also up

For the CTS:

- The AFMA decision to implement closures in the CTS will start at the beginning of the 2023-24 fishing season (1 May 2023).
- Acknowledgement was directed towards AFMA for their professional approach taken throughout the difficult consultation process.
- The structural adjustment package for the CTS has been supported in the 2023-24 budget.
- This measure will provide \$24 million (including \$3 million for levy relief and \$1 million in admin costs) over three years from 2022-23 for financial assistance in response to catch reductions and area closures in the CTS fishery (should concession holders wish to transition out of the SET sector) and minimise impacts on businesses and the regional economy.
- Future management advice needs to acknowledge that the CTS will become a much smaller fishery and industry.
- It is anticipated that up to 20 (8-10 inactive licence holders and approximately 10 active permits) may consider the buyout.
- The spatial footprint of the inshore trawl fleet (for available fishing ground - 3 miles to 1,000 m deep) is estimated to reduce from 6 per cent to 4 per cent once the closures are implemented. Very few fishable grounds will be open to trawlers.

3 CTS Closures

20. The Chair introduced the agenda item noting that the design of the five spatial closures has been finalised. Members were asked to provide advice on two points relating to elements of the spatial closures in the CTS, as follows:

- PROVIDE ADVICE on the SETFIA proposal regarding Danish seine gear modifications; and
- PROVIDE ADVICE on any additional items relating to the closures for consideration.

21. The MAC noted that:

- The AFMA Commission met on 7-8 September 2022 to consider a range of advice relating to proposed closures in the CTS to reduce the catch of at-risk species. The Commission approved the closures as presented to them and for these to come into effect on 01 May 2023.
- Noting the history of low catches of at-risk species, and comparatively large catches of flathead by Danish seiners in the area known as Closure D, the Commission proposed that this closure may only apply to otter trawl boats, subject to gear modifications being adopted across the Danish seine



fleet to offset catches of at-risk species in this and other areas of the fishery. The required catch reduction would need to offset approximately 500 kg of Jackass Morwong.

- To address the Danish seine fleet's need to implement gear modifications, SETFIA established a working group to discuss bycatch reduction and gear modifications. The working group identified three possible options to reduce bycatch of at-risk species and Mr Simon Boag (SETFIA) wrote to AFMA on 18 October outlining Industry's preferred option.
- The proposed gear modifications are supported by global research on size selectivity in net circumference, length and mesh diameter and is based on gear that is currently being used in the NSW Southern Fish Trawl (SFT) sector to reduce the size selection of Eastern School Whiting.

22. The MAC discussed:

- The design of the CTS closures and predicted reductions in catch were based on historical effort. A shift in effort to areas that have not traditionally been fished may result in additional catches of at-risk species. Hence, the expected reduction in total mortality of this group of species may have been overestimated. The committee did however note that adult Jackass Morwong are generally restricted to certain depths and reef structures and are unlikely to be encountered in large quantities outside the closures.
- There may be some risk (albeit very low) in allowing Danish seiners to fish within Closure D before the benefits of gear modifications are fully understood. It was however noted that this decision had already been made by the Commission, with support from the MAC at its July 2022 meeting.
- AFMA should consider constraining the TAC of target species to reduce impacts on "companion" at-risk species until the effectiveness of the closures and gear modifications are understood (noting that the MYTAC for flathead was not increased for the 2022/23 fishing season).
- The level of discarding of at-risk species remains unknown and AFMA should consider increasing the level of observer coverage for Danish seiners until Electronic Monitoring has been adopted across the fleet. An approach similar to that taken in the Eastern Orange Roughy Zone, where a proportion of days fished must be observed, could be considered in Closure D. It was noted however that this would come at a significant cost, and should be weighed against the risk of Danish seiners catching at-risk species in Closure D.
- A condition of Danish seiners retaining access to Closure D - as outlined in the AFMA letter to industry - was that it demonstrates the effectiveness of the gear changes at some point in future. Ideally, this would be achieved through structured gear trials, and the MAC encouraged AFMA to pursue alterations to the current FRDC trawl gear selectivity trial. Alternatively, if formal gear trials are not completed, then observers should continue to collect information to compare length frequencies before and after the change in Danish seine gear.
- The validity of CPUE as an indicator of fish abundance may be compromised as the CTS is expected to undergo significant changes in terms of fleet size, spatial footprint and gear selectivity (due to the structural adjustment, closures and Danish seine gear alterations, respectively). AFMA should consider the utility of other potential methods (such as Close-Kin Mark Recapture) to estimate changes in the catch and abundance of target, byproduct and bycatch species.



23. The committee did not consider it possessed the relevant technical expertise to provide advice on the relative benefits of any particular combination of Danish seine gear modifications. There was general agreement that it would be difficult to retrospectively measure the specific benefits of a change in Danish seine gear in a sector that is about to enter a structural adjustment process (which is expected to reduce the number of active vessels) and will have additional closures in place from 1 May 2023.
24. The committee did however commend SETFIA for seeking broad industry input on potential gear modifications and establishing a Danish seine gear working group that provided advice to AFMA in a short period of time.
25. The committee requested that AFMA consider the abovementioned points when considering the industry proposal, but also more broadly when implementing the closures.

4 Protected Species Management

26. The MAC noted the update provided by Daniel Corrie (AFMA member) on protected species management arrangements in Commonwealth fisheries.
27. The MAC noted that:
 - Industry sought advice from AFMA on a risk-based management approach for protected species, noting that the protection status afforded to various species is different.
 - AFMA's general approach to managing protected species will be informed by the broader review of the Commonwealth Bycatch Policy.
 - Once the review of the Commonwealth Bycatch Policy is complete, the *Fishery Management Paper Number 15 AFMA Bycatch Strategy – Mitigating Protected Species Interaction and General Bycatch* (FMP 15) will be updated, and the consultation process will continue through RAGs, MACs, relevant departments, key stakeholders and the general public.
 - The focus of the review of FMP 15 is to ensure consistency with 1) the Commonwealth Fisheries Bycatch Policy and Guidelines (Bycatch Policy and Guidelines); 2) AFMA's Ecological Risk Management (ERM) framework; and 3) the requirements for species listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
 - A review of the Small Pelagic Fishery and Gillnet, Hook and Trap Sector Dolphin Strategy will be undertaken soon, and consideration will be given to the species classification.
28. The MAC discussed:
 - The committee raised some concern that AFMA's approach to managing protected species is different to some other agencies, noting that some critically endangered species have no management strategies in place (e.g. sawfishes).
 - The committee encouraged AFMA to adopt a more consistent approach to the management of protected species encountered by Commonwealth fisheries.



5 School Shark Live Release Rule

29. Lara Ainley (AFMA presenter) introduced the agenda item and asked that the MAC consider the application of the School Shark live release rule under the School Shark Rebuilding Strategy in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF).

30. The MAC noted that:

- The AFMA Commission seeks advice on the current requirement to release any School Shark caught live in the SESSF. More specifically, whether:
 - a) a level of discard survivability should be accounted for in the stock assessment and TAC setting process;
 - b) the requirement to release live School Shark should be removed; or
 - c) the status quo arrangements and mortality assumptions in the stock assessment should be maintained.
- AFMA intend to review the Strategy after the completion of the next stock assessment (scheduled for 2024) and in the meantime will consider amendments to the Strategy on an as-needs basis.
- If option (a) were implemented, there is some information available to estimate a level of survivability which could then be incorporated in the stock assessment. While the level of fishing mortality assumed in the stock assessment may be reduced, it is not clear how this would impact the model outputs and subsequent bycatch TAC setting process.
- If option (b) were to be implemented, the approach for estimating total fishing mortality in the stock assessment would not change – the combination of retained and discarded catch, with all discards considered as mortalities. While the modelled recovery would not change under option (b), the actual recovery may be slightly lower due to the small increase in the true mortality.
- If the requirement to release live School Shark were maintained, including the assumed 100 per cent mortality in the stock assessment (option c) total mortality would continue to be overestimated. However, this would be consistent with the precautionary principle outlined in the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* (FMA) and would promote recovery of the stock.
- The MAC also noted some discussion by SharkRAG regarding the stress and economic implications for industry of releasing live School Shark that could otherwise be retained at \$10-15/kg, which is also relevant to option (a).

31. The MAC considered the following points:

- The Live Release Rule was put in place to promote the recovery of School Shark and to prevent targeting.
- Industry have long-held concerns with this requirement, arguing that there is little value in releasing live School Sharks if all are considered as mortalities.



- The current level of post release survival is not well understood but is assumed to be low (approximately 10 per cent based on published material) albeit slightly higher in the longline fishery.
 - The actual level of discarding is also not well understood but from logbook data, discard estimates from the trawl fishery are close to 20 t and are considered 100 per cent mortalities. The discard estimates in the GHAT are slightly higher at around 40 t, with around 25 per cent of fish landed on the deck being alive (~10 t). If 15 per cent of these fish survive release, then the survival rate and stock recovered is around 1.5 t.
 - There is a risk for increased discarding as quota's become fully caught. The committee stressed the need to document any targeting of School Shark and fishing behaviours at the vessel level.
 - The committee noted the reliability of logbook data in the GHAT demonstrated by the ABARES congruence analyses and expects that the total mortality could continue to be accurately estimated and accounted for in future assessments and bycatch TAC setting processes if the rule were to be removed.
 - The committee noted that logbooks have been updated to allow for industry to record discards as alive or dead so a measure of mortality vs survivability could be used in the stock assessment.
 - The bycatch TAC was adjusted from 194 t to 225 t which may reduce the level of discarding because there is more quota available.
 - The CPUE for School Shark in both the Gillnet and Longline sectors has been relatively stable over the years.
32. The committee considered the abovementioned information regarding the current level of discarding and possible survival rates by gear type and the advice from the SharkRAG and agreed that there would be little impact on the overall rate of recovery if (b) were to be implemented.
33. The MAC supported option (b) – that the requirement to release live School Shark is removed and recommended the following advice:
- That state water School Shark catches and incidental bycatch is monitored to obtain a better estimate of total mortality.
 - Logbook data to be monitored at the fishery and individual boat level once the rule is removed.



6 EM Review Rate in the GHaT

34. The MAC noted the update provided by Lara Ainley on a proposed reduction to the electronic monitoring (EM) review rate for gillnet boats in the GHaT sector of the SESSF.

35. The MAC Noted:

- Since 2015, in the gillnet, hook and trap sector (GHAT) of the SESSF and under the Fisheries Management (E-Monitoring Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery) Direction 2021, all full time fishing boats (those that fish more than 50 days per season) with demersal gillnet and longlines, and for boats fishing within specific areas or under certain concessions, are required to have electronic monitoring (EM) systems installed and operational while fishing. EM is primarily used as a tool to validate catch and effort data recorded in daily fishing logbooks, including interactions with protected species.
- For all boats with EM, AFMA implements a minimum EM review rate of 10 per cent across the GHAT. Additionally, where AFMA determines a greater need or risk of non-reporting, AFMA may increase the EM review rate. Under the Australian Sea Lion Management Strategy, 100 per cent of the EM footage for boats fishing in the Australian Sea Lion (ASL) zones in South Australia is reviewed for protected species interactions. Under the Seabird Threat Abatement Plan (TAP), AFMA is required to ensure a minimum of 10 per cent of hooks deployed using longline methods across the fishery are reviewed.
- On 23 November 2021 AFMA received a proposal from Mr Stuart Richie, Southern Shark Industry Association (SSIA) Chair, to reduce the EM review rate from 10 per cent for gillnet boats in the GHAT on the basis that a comparative analysis of logbook and EM data (Attachment B) showed a high level of congruence for key species and that the objectives of AFMA's EM program could still be achieved with a lower EM review rate.
- The proposal to reduce the EM review rate from 10 to 5 per cent was presented to SharkRAG at its recent meeting on 19 October 2022. SharkRAG were generally supportive of the proposal, and provided advice specifically relating to the utility of logbook data for use in stock assessments, and how a reduction in the review rate may influence reporting behaviour and the ongoing reliability of logbook data.
- AFMA sought advice from the MAC, with a particular focus on management implications, on a reduction to EM review rates for the gillnet sector from 10 to 5 per cent. The MAC noted that:
 - The reduction will be considered a trial and can be used to understand the influence of reduced EM review rates on reporting behaviour for other Commonwealth fisheries.
 - To continue to meet the obligations under the TAP, AFMA will maintain a 10 per cent EM review rate for hook methods and the requirement for 100 per cent monitoring of all gillnet fishing effort in South Australian waters under the Australian Sea Lion Management Strategy will continue to apply.
 - Simon Boag (Industry member) acknowledged the primary goals achieved by EM and noted that these goals can still be achieved at a significantly lower cost to industry if review rates were



reduced. Mr Boag reported on the current accuracy of log book reporting in the Ghat fishery (as acknowledged in the ABARES logbook and EM congruence report) and noted that regardless of the review per cent, GHaT crew understand that their performance is being monitored and will do their best with regard to reporting and handling of catches.

36. The MAC discussed:

- The cost of the current EM review process is a significant proportion of the cost of EM. As such, reducing the time spent reviewing the footage will subsequently reduce the cost of EM and lower cost - recovered levies.
- The future benefits of automated intelligence (AI) for addressing some of the time consumed by evaluating footage and reducing a proportion of the cost.
- Mike Gerner (AFMA Senior Manager Electronic Monitoring) provided the committee with an update on the development of computer assisted review technology noting that whilst the technology is being developed globally and that the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) are a leading developer in this field, AFMA are yet to develop the fish identification technology component.
- The committee noted that the development of AI technologies will be a future component of EM and is critical for driving down EM costs. AFMA is currently developing an AI (automated intelligence) and machine learning strategy and has committed to invest in the development of AI through the electronic monitoring program for Commonwealth fisheries.
- In reference to the ABARES congruence report, the reporting accuracy for target species was generally high but there was some degree of inter-vessel variability, especially for discards. As such, ABARES have recommended the development of a framework for performance criteria, under which the reliability of logbook data could be measured at the fishery and individual boat levels.

37. The MAC made the following points:

- The committee agreed that the performance indicators used in the ABARES congruence report need to be refined noting that the current criteria are not a measure of validity of logbook data for use in stock assessments.
- The committee discussed the need for clear performance indicators so that logbook data could be measured at the fishery and individual boat levels and used as a framework to determine and support a trial for reducing EM review rates for compliant operators.
- When interpreting the misreporting of ETP's, bycatch and byproduct, consideration and further investigation should be given to the type of interaction as some interactions may be picked up on camera but not visible to the operator.
- Low performing vessels will need clear guidelines, evaluation standards and education to understand the reporting requirements and improve on their performance.

38. Wez Norris (CEO AFMA) joined the meeting to inform the committee on some of the expectations and implications of the current proposal to reduce the EM review rate in the GHaT sector.



- Mr Norris acknowledged that the review costs are a major contributor to the cost of the EM program.
- The committee noted that the overall cost to the levy base includes catch and effort validation, additional supplementary footage reviews (as required by other management strategies) and other activities including education programs and enforcement.
- Some of the risks associated with a reduction in the review rate were discussed and outlined below:
 - The ability for AFMA to detect and follow up on unreported protected species would be halved.
 - Behavioural changes that could reduce the accuracy of logbook data.
 - Provide less data with which to update congruence analyses and validate logbook accuracy.

39. The committee did not provide a conclusive recommendation for reducing EM review rates but there was general agreement that prior to a reduction, the ABARES recommendations should be implemented to improve accuracy of logbook reporting. The committee provided AFMA with the following advice:

- To save on review time and cost and still meet the TAPS requirement for 5 per cent coverage, AFMA to consider combining the review times for vessel catch and effort and TAP species interactions (e.g. 5 per cent full review of catch and effort with additional 5 per cent looking for TEPS).
- Consider a vessel- specific risk based approach and focus management arrangements where the issues are.
- Incentivise fishers that do the right thing through reduced footage/fees.
- Regular feedback to Industry between EM footage and audit rates (more frequent than the end of the season).
- Develop clear performance standards before the trial commences.
- Pursue AI technology that can help identify species and significantly reduce the cost to industry.
- Consider and monitor operating behavioural change over the long-term not just during the trial period.
- There must be follow up for non-reporting of ETPs. Vessels not reporting birds and seals should face compliance action.
- ABARES recommendations need to be implemented first.
- Need to compile a list of the risks to stock by lowering review rates to assess/review.



7 SSJF 2023 Fishing Season (TAE)

40. The MAC noted the update provided by Steve Hall on the 2023 SSJF fishing season TAE:
- Catch and effort in the SSJF and Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) are below the triggers outlined in the current [SSJF Harvest Strategy](#); and
 - Updates to the SSJF Harvest Strategy will be considered at Agenda Item 4;
 - There are no sustainability issues for the fishery with the latest ABARES report assessing the fishery as not overfished nor subject to overfishing;
 - No bycatch has been recorded by operators in 2021; and
 - While there is some capacity for expansion in the fishery, the SSJF Resource Assessment Group (SquidRAG) recommended that the 2022 TAE be maintained at 550 standard squid jig machines.
 - Across all sectors, fishing effort was low in 2022 compared to previous years (only 5 active SFRs). This is primarily due to rising fuel costs and difficulty finding crew, which impeded operators from fishing, rather than poor fishing conditions and a reflection on squid abundance.
 - AFMA recommended maintaining the SSJF TAE at 550 standard squid jigging machines for the 2023 SSJF fishing year, starting on 1 January 2023. With 4,800 gear SFRs currently held in the fishery, 8.7 SFRs will be required for each machine.
41. The MAC discussed:
- The appropriateness for such high catch triggers when catches remain low. The committee noted that:
 - a) This is one of the reasons for the introduction of the low catch trigger (discussed in agenda 4).
 - b) The high TAE's for squid and associated catch triggers (as outlined in the Harvest strategy) reflect the historic catch and effort conditions (when foreign boats targeted squid) a few decades ago.
 - c) Standardised CPUE has not changed very much.
42. The MAC supported maintaining the SSJF TAE at 550 standard squid jig machines for the 2023 fishing year, commencing on 1 January 2023.

8 SSJF Harvest Strategy Update

43. The MAC noted the update provided by Steve Hall about the revised SSJF Harvest Strategy and a proposed new 'lower catch and effort' harvest strategy trigger:
- In 2020, the AFMA Commission requested that the SSJF Harvest Strategy 2007 (current Harvest Strategy) be updated to reflect the current state of the fishery and be ready for the Commission's consideration prior to the 2022 fishing year;
 - AFMA Management have developed a draft SSJF Harvest Strategy to replace the current strategy. The only substantive change was the inclusion of a proposed new 'lower catch and effort trigger';



- SquidRAG and the MAC considered the draft SSJF Harvest Strategy, including the proposed new trigger at their meetings in October 2021, and, not able to reach consensus, asked that AFMA consult further with industry prior to finalisation;
 - AFMA has undertaken additional consultation with SSJF industry during 2021-2022 and no substantive comments were received; and
 - SquidRAG, at its meeting in October 2022, reconsidered the draft Harvest Strategy and recommended implementing the proposed new ‘lower catch and effort trigger’ on the basis that the updated SSJF Harvest Strategy includes additional advice where if none of the triggers outlined in the Harvest Strategy are reached, SquidRAG will consider the available catch and effort data as part of the TAE setting process to ensure there are no sustainability concerns associated with recent catches. Where available, state catches will also be considered to provide context to the level of Commonwealth catch and effort.
44. The MAC supported the updated SSJF Harvest Strategy and proposed new ‘lower catch and effort’ harvest strategy trigger changes on the basis that the lower trigger better reflects the current state of the fishery and provides a framework for reviewing information when the state of the fishery changes. The MAC also supported SquidRAG’s recommendation for the Harvest Strategy to include additional advice for SquidRAG to consider when the triggers outlined in the Harvest Strategy are not reached.
45. The committee noted:
- The higher catch triggers in the current Harvest Strategy reflect the historic catch and effort conditions (when foreign boats targeted squid) and are not clearly linked to recent catch and effort data and hence do not reflect the current fishery conditions. The committee acknowledged that the lower catch and effort trigger is trying to address this.
 - Based on the unstandardised CPUE across the SSJF sectors there has been no significant changes, which suggests that the fishery is relatively stable.

9 Other Business

46. There were no other items raised.

10 Review of Action Items

47. There were no action items arising from the meeting.
48. Committee recommendations arising from this meeting are outlined in [Attachment C](#).

11 Next Meeting

49. The next meeting will be held in February 2023 (in either Melbourne or Canberra) with a date to be set in the coming weeks.



12 Close of Meeting

50. The Chair thanked the MAC for their contribution and closed the meeting at 5:09 PM.



Attachment A – Agenda

Agenda Item	Speaker	SEMAC Action	Timing/Duration
MS Teams Teams Conference			09:30-17:25 (AEDT)
Preliminaries			
1.1. Welcome and apologies	Chair	Noting	60 mins 9:30-10:30
1.2. Acceptance of agenda	Chair	Advice	
1.3. Declarations of interest	Chair	Noting	
1.4. Action items	Executive officer	Noting/questions	
Morning Tea			15 mins 10:30-10:45
Updates			
2.1. Managers update (taken as read)	Mark Grubert	Noting/questions	30 min 10:45-11:15
2.2. Industry update	All	Noting/questions	30 mins 11:15-11:45
Business Items			
3. CTS Closures update	Mark Grubert	Advice	45 mins 11:45-12:30
4. Protected Species Management SSJF Harvest Strategy update	AFMA	Noting	20 mins 12:30—12:50
Lunch			30 mins 12:50-13:20
5. School Shark Live Release Rule	Lara Ainley	Advice	60 mins 13:20-14:20
6. EM Review Rate in the GHaT	Lara Ainley	Advice	60 mins 14:20-15:20
Afternoon Tea			15 mins 15:20-15:35
7. SSJF 2023 Fishing Season (TAE)	Steve Hall	Advice	30 mins 15:35-16:05
8. Harvest Strategy update	Steve Hall	Advice	30 mins 16:05 – 16:35
9. Any other business	Chair	Noting/Questions	15 mins 16:35-16:50
10. Review of action items	EO	Advice	5 mins 16:50-16:55
11. Next Meeting/Meeting Close	Chair	Noting	5 mins 16:55-17:00

Attachment B – Register of Interests

Members	Declared interest - Last updated: July 2022
Dr David McGlennon	SEMAC Chair - No interests pecuniary or otherwise
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>Conservation member on GABMAC, SPFRAG, SEMAC and the South Australian Rock Lobster MAC</p> <p>Chair of Ocean Future Fund Inc.</p>
Mr Gerry Geen	No pecuniary interest.
Mr Will Mure	<p>Sole Director of Mures Fishing P/L</p> <p>Commonwealth fish receiver permit</p> <p>Tasmania fish processing licence</p> <p>Scalefish hook boat SFR, SEQ Quota Holding Permits, Auto longline fishing permit</p> <p>High Seas permit</p> <p>Blue eye trevalla SFRs, Ling SFRs, Ribaldo ITP</p> <p>Mixed species Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) and SFRs</p> <p>Member of various fishing related associations including Seafood Industry Australia (SIA), South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA), Southern Shark Industry Alliance (SSIA), Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC)</p> <p>Industry member on SERAG</p>
Dr Paul McShane	<p>Chair of SERAG and a member of SEMAC and SESSFRAG.</p> <p>No pecuniary interest in the SESSF.</p> <p>Principal of Global Marine Resource Management Pty Ltd.</p> <p>Adjunct Professor (Fisheries and Aquaculture) College of Science and Engineering, James Cook University.</p>
Dr Sarah Jennings	<p>Economics member on SERAG and SESSFRAG.</p> <p>Economics coordinator, FRDC Human Dimensions Sub-Program.</p> <p>Member of AFMA Economics Working Group.</p> <p>Independent economics consultant.</p> <p>No pecuniary or other interest.</p>
Mr John Harrison	Panel Member of the Independent Review of the Domestic Commercial Vessel Safety Legislation and Cost and Charging Arrangements.
Mr Simon Boag	<p>Industry member on SERAG.</p> <p>Executive Officers to SETFIA, SSIA and SPFIA.</p> <p>SETFIA and SSIA receives funding from AFMA to complete projects under co-management agreements.</p> <p>Undertakes contracts as an independent consultant.</p>
Mr Kyriakos Toumazos	<p>Director of Southern Sea Eagles Pty Ltd</p> <p>Director of Southern Fisheries Pty Ltd</p>

	<p>Board Member of South Australian Boating Facility Board</p> <p>Executive Officer of South Australian Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association</p> <p>Board Member of Southern Shark Industry Alliance</p> <p>Industry Member on Shark Resource Assessment Group</p> <p>Industry Member of AMSA Regional Safety Committee</p> <p>Director of Health Balance Pharmacies</p>
Mr Daniel Corrie	AFMA Senior Manager & SEMAC member – no interests pecuniary or otherwise.
Invited participant	
Mr James Woodhams	<p>Employed by ABARES. A/g Director.</p> <p>Steering committee member – multispecies harvest strategy project.</p> <p>A minor element (funding) on the DRPs project.</p> <p>Has been involved in conversations of the FIDWG and higher-level project steering committee for the FRDC-CSIRO project biological parameters used in Commonwealth fishery assessments.</p> <p>No pecuniary interests.</p>
Mr Heath Folpp	Mr Heath Folpp NSW DPI (Fisheries)– no interests pecuniary or otherwise
Mr Bruce Wallner	SquidRAG Chair - No interests declared, pecuniary or otherwise in the SSJF.
Mr John Cull	<p>Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.</p> <p>Industry Member on SquidRAG, ScallopRAG, and ScallopMAC.</p> <p>Vice President – Scallop Fishermen’s Association of Tasmania Inc (SFAT)</p>
Executive Officer	
Ms Rebecca Jol	AFMA – Senior Management Officer, No interests pecuniary or otherwise.
Observers	
Dr Mark Grubert	AFMA, Trawl Manager – no interests, pecuniary or otherwise.
Mr Aaron Puckeridge	AFMA, Senior Management Officer – no interests pecuniary or otherwise.
Dr Lara Ainley	AFMA, GHaT and High Seas Manager – no interests, pecuniary or otherwise.
Mr Steve Hall	AFMA, A/ Manager- SPF, Scallop and Squid – no interests, pecuniary or otherwise.
Mr Roshan Hamanseth	AFMA, Senior Management Officer – no interests pecuniary or otherwise.
Dr Nastaran Mazloumi	AFMA, Senior Management Officer – no interests pecuniary or otherwise.
Ms Yvette Lamont	AFMA, Senior Management Officer – no interests pecuniary or otherwise.
Dr Haydn Titterton	AFMA, Senior Management Officer – no interests pecuniary or otherwise.
Mr Nathan Jackson	AFMA, Senior Management Support Officer – no interests pecuniary or otherwise.
Ms Michelle Henriksen	AFMA, Senior Management Support Officer – no interests pecuniary or otherwise.

Attachment C – Committee Recommendations

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Timeframe
1.5 Previous Action Items	1	Provide an update from Ross Daley (in the Industry update for SEMAC 49) on the squalid ID project	Simon Boag	SEMAC 49
2.1 Manager's Update	2	AFMA to provide advice to SEMAC out of session regarding the outcomes of the TAP meeting and will include as an agenda item at the February 2023 meeting.	AFMA	SEMAC 49
5 School Shark live release rule	3	That state waters School Shark catches and incidental bycatch is monitored to obtain a better estimate of total mortality.	AFMA	
5 School Shark live release rule	4	Logbook data to be monitored at the fishery and individual boat level once the rule is removed.	AFMA	