



## TTMAC 33, 24 July 2025 Meeting Record

### TTMAC – Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee:

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**CHAIR:** Mr Anthony Hurst

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**Date:** 24 July 2025, 10:00-13:45 (AEST)

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**Venue:** Teleconference via Teams

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**Attendance:**

**Members:**

- Ms Selina Stoute (AFMA member)
- Dr Ashley Williams (Research member)
- Mr Adam Whan (Industry member)
- Mr Grahame Williams OAM (Recreational member)
- Mr Daryn Logan (Industry member)
- Mr Glen Holmes (Environment/Conservation member)
- Mr David Ellis (Industry member)
- Mr Terry Romaro OAM (Industry member)

**Invited Participants:**

- Mr Daniel Casement (ASBTIA)

**Observers:**

- Ms Emily Lawson (AFMA)
- Dr Lara Ainley (AFMA)

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**Apologies:** Mr Ian Bladin (Recreational invited participant)

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**Executive Officer:** Mr Robert Wood (AFMA)

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### Agenda:

Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest	Chair
Summary of seabird interactions and proposed management changes	AFMA

## Welcome, apologies, and conflicts of interest

1. The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country, welcomed all participants and noted apologies. Meeting participants were informed that the meeting would be recorded for the purpose of preparing meeting minutes.
2. The MAC noted, in line with Section 3.4.3 of [Fisheries Management Paper 1 – Consultative Committees \(FMP1\)](#), the requirement for all meeting participants to declare relevant interests, not limited to pecuniary gain, regarding all agenda items proposed for TTMAC 33. The Chair asked members who declared potential conflicts to leave the meeting, pending discussion by the other members.
3. The remaining MAC members acknowledged the conflicts declared, the value of the expertise provided by each member and that the purpose of the meeting is to provide AFMA with advice within the context of the established fisheries legislation and regulation framework, and noting the scientific advice provided by the Tropical Tuna Resource Assessment Group (TTRAG). The Chair proposed that all members engage in the discussions in their entirety. Members accepted this approach.
4. Declared interests and how they were managed at TTMAC 33 are recorded in the register of interest at **Attachment A**.

## Summary of seabird interactions in the ETBF and WTBF (Winter 2020 – Summer 2024 TAP seasons) and proposed management changes

5. AFMA provided a summary of seabird interactions in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) and Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) for each seabird threat abatement plan (TAP) season and TAP fishing area, from the 2020 Winter to the 2024 Summer TAP season, highlighting the following below:

### At the fishery level:

6. The seabird bycatch rate is exceeded in the higher latitude fishing areas, below 40° South, during the summer TAP seasons.
7. In some cases, the exceedance of the seabird bycatch rate is driven by a very small number of interactions combined with a small number of hooks. However, in other cases, it is driven by a small number of boats exceeding the bycatch rate.
8. The recent seabird interaction rate in ETBF TAP fishing area 40-45°S latitude, together with the likelihood of increased fishing effort targeting SBT in the area, means that a focused industry and management response is required to mitigate the risk of high seabird bycatch rates occurring in the future.
9. Most interactions result in mortality (72%).
10. Albatrosses are the most commonly reported genus in the higher latitudes, whilst a greater number of species are reported in the lower latitudes.

11. Since the introduction of AFMA's individual accountability approach, five boats have been directed to implement additional mitigation to reduce the risk of seabird interactions.

**At the boat level:**

12. Of the boats (19) that did not report a seabird interaction, the majority fished in the northern TAP fishing areas of the fishery.
13. Of the boats that did report an interaction with a seabird within a TAP season and TAP fishing area:
- i. most (76%) interacted with a small number of seabirds (3 or less seabirds); and
  - ii. around a quarter of the boats (23%), accounted for the majority of interactions reported (65% of all reported interactions)
14. Of the cases where a boat exceeded the bycatch rate in a TAP season and TAP fishing area:
- i. around half of the boats involved, exceeded the bycatch rate only once (11 of 21 boats);
  - ii. 34% of cases have occurred because of interactions occurring on a single shot (14 cases). These cases account for a small proportion of the total reported interactions for the fishery (22 interactions);
  - iii. 24 percent of cases have occurred when a boat has interacted with at least five seabirds on a single shot together with additional interactions on other shots and/or trips. These cases account for a large proportion of the total reported interactions for the fishery (138 seabird interactions, 57%); and
  - iv. 42 percent of cases have occurred when a boat has reported interactions over a several of trips and/or shots resulting in 2-10 seabird interactions at the boat level. These cases account for 84 of the total reported interactions for the fishery.
15. AFMA were not aware of any additional information on post-release survivability of seabirds.

**Fishing south of 40°South latitude – Summer TAP season 2024:**

16. Bycatch levels were substantially higher in the recent 2024 summer TAP season than previous seasons. There were 110 reported interactions across the ETBF for this TAP season, of which 43 occurred south of 40°S.
17. The TAP bycatch rate was exceeded in the 40°S latitude fishing area by record levels compared to other TAP seasons and areas since the winter TAP season of 2020. No other TAP fishing area was exceeded in that season.
18. Of the interactions reported (43), 25 seabirds were reportedly released alive and 18 were dead. Seabirds were caught on both the set and haul. Almost all seabirds were reported as albatross.
19. On 31 January 2025, AFMA introduced a temporary ban on daylight setting. The ban ended at the end of the 2024 Summer TAP season on 30 April 2025.
20. Of the interactions reported (43), 40 occurred prior to the daylight setting ban and three after. In terms of effort, a total of 64,234 hooks were set prior to the ban and 43,986 were set after.

The resulting bycatch rate was 0.64 seabirds per 1,000 hooks set before the ban, and 0.07 seabirds per 1,000 hooks set after the ban.

**Proposed management changes – responding to the heightened seabird interaction risk with fishing south of 40°South latitude.**

21. The MAC noted that, based on the heightened seabird bycatch risk fishing south of 40°S latitude and potential for ongoing and increased SBT fishing, AFMA management was of the view that strengthened mitigation arrangements need to be established for that area during the summer TAP season.
22. AFMA management sought MAC advice on the amending the ETBF boat SFR conditions applicable to fishing in the TAP fishing area south of 40°S latitude during the summer TAP to strengthen the:
  - a. base level mitigation required to fish by prohibiting:
    - i. daylight setting;
    - ii. offal discharge during setting (offal includes bait); and
    - iii. offal discharge during hauling (offal includes bait) unless the discharge takes place on the opposite side of the boat to that where the longlines are hauled or the SFR holder has received written authorisation from AFMA to allow the discharge in accordance with an alternative method that mitigates the risk of seabird bycatch caused by the discharge of offal during hauling.
  - b. individual accountability by:
    - i. requiring additional mitigation if the boat exceeds the bycatch rate irrespective of previous bycatch rate history; and
    - ii. requiring a boat to move out of the south of 40°S latitude TAP fishing area if the boat has bycaught seven or more seabirds within the TAP summer season and is exceeding the bycatch rate.
23. The MAC noted that this issue was also discussed with TTRAG and noted the outcomes and recommendations from TTRAG.

**Proposal 1: Daylight Setting Ban**

24. The MAC supported the proposed daylight setting ban, to be implemented during summer TAP seasons (1 September to 30 April the following year) in the fishing area south of 40°S.
25. The MAC agreed with the advice from TTRAG that night setting is the most effective mitigation approach to reduce seabird bycatch. The MAC noted this measure would be simple to monitor and ensure compliance.

**Proposal 2: No offal discharge during setting or hauling**

26. The MAC supported the prohibition on offal discharge during the setting of longlines.

27. Having regard for operational practicality on fishing vessels, the MAC agreed that offal discharge during the hauling of longlines should be prohibited unless alternative measures can be used, such as discharge on the opposite side of the boat to where hauling is occurring, bird exclusion devices, or boat-specific offal management plans approved by AFMA. The MAC noted that discharging offal on the opposite side of the boat was consistent with the approach in CCAMLR and allowing for alternative offal management strategies was consistent with other AFMA managed fisheries (the Southeast Trawl Fishery).

Proposal 3: Requiring additional mitigation irrespective of previous bycatch rate history

28. The MAC agreed that boats exceeding the bycatch rate should be directed to implement additional mitigation measures irrespective of previous bycatch rate history, allowing for more responsive management to reduce seabird bycatch and overall risk of exceeding the fishery-level TAP bycatch rate for the area south of 40°S during the summer TAP season.

Proposal 4: Requiring a boat to move out of the area if it has five or more seabird interactions

29. The MAC supported implementing a requirement for a boat to move out of the area south of 40°S based on a threshold of five or seven bycaught seabirds.
30. With respect to this proposal, the MAC noted the TTRAG recommendation that the threshold of bycaught seabirds be less than seven for the purposes of a mitigation approach to reduce the risk to the fishery. The MAC considered whether the threshold should be five or seven seabirds; and agreed that the rule would provide strong incentives for vessels to implement effective mitigation before reaching the threshold. The MAC recommended both options (five or seven) be considered for ongoing consultation.

**Proposed management changes – improve their effectiveness, simplify the administration of the rules and provide greater certainty to industry in how they apply**

31. The MAC noted that AFMA Management was seeking advice on a range of changes to the broader seabird management arrangements for the ETBF and WTBF to ensure the arrangements remain effective and, as far as possible, are simple and easy to understand.
32. The MAC did not have sufficient time to consider all of the proposals and agreed to defer discussion on those items until its next meeting, noting that consultation could proceed with industry on the proposed changes to mitigate seabird interactions below 40°South before the start of the 2025 Summer TAP season.
33. The MAC noted that under current arrangements, if a boat exceeds the bycatch rate in a TAP fishing area and season, the fisher is not required to deploy additional mitigation on that boat if it does not meet certain preconditions. These are:
- a. no recent history of exceeding the bycatch rate;
  - b. not taken more than 10 seabirds within the current or previous TAP season; or
  - c. has no unreported seabird interactions.

34. AFMA management sought advice on changes to these criteria and other aspects of the seabird management arrangements.

35. The MAC's preliminary discussion of AFMA management's proposed changes is as follows.

Proposal 1: Preconditions for requiring a boat to apply additional mitigation - change the definition of "recent history"

36. The MAC noted the current conditions were unclear and supported AFMA Management's proposal to use a simple recent history criterion of exceeding the TAP seabird bycatch rate in any of the last four TAP seasons in any TAP fishing area.

Proposal 2: Preconditions for requiring a boat to apply additional mitigation - 10 or more seabirds

37. The MAC agreed to discuss this proposal further at a later meeting.

Proposal 3: Preconditions for requiring a boat to apply additional mitigation - Unreported seabird interactions

38. The MAC supported AFMA Management's proposal to remove the *unreported seabird interaction* as precondition for requiring additional mitigation. The MAC noted that unreported seabirds are already managed through compliance processes and viewed this proposal as streamlining administration while maintaining compliance oversight. The MAC further noted AFMA Management advice that following a compliance investigation any confirmed unreported seabird interactions are used in future bycatch rate calculations for the boat and fishery.

Proposal 4: Time period for implementing additional mitigation

39. The MAC supported AFMA Management's proposal changes that clarify the time period that additional mitigation is applied being, either when the vessel reduces their seabird bycatch rate to below 0.05 birds per 1,000 hooks or the end of the respective TAP season. The MAC noted that the proposal maintains the intent of the conditions and viewed this amendment as clarifying mitigation timeframes without changing substantive mitigation requirements.

Proposal 5: Criteria to apply further additional mitigation

40. The MAC agreed to discuss this proposal further at a later meeting.

Proposal 6: No offal discharge during setting or hauling (fishery-wide)

41. The MAC supported the prohibition of offal discharge during the setting of longlines.

42. The MAC agreed to give further consideration to the proposal to prohibit offal discharge during the hauling of longlines and to continue discussion at a later meeting. The MAC noted different views from members and discussed the benefit of standardised rules across the entire fishery, that seabird bycatch occurring during hauling is more so an issue in the area south of 40°S, and the capacity of operators to manage offal discharge during hauling without additional regulation in broader areas of the fishery.

## Attachment A – Register of declared interests, TTMAC 33, 24 July 2025

Name	RAG/MAC position / organisation	Declared interests	Potential conflicts identified at TTMAC 33 and how they were managed
Anthony Hurst	Chair	Currently doing some work for Victorian Fisheries Authority on carp control in freshwater rivers, lakes, and wetlands. No pecuniary interests in tropical tuna.	Nothing declared
Selina Stoute	AFMA member, Senior Manager Tuna and International Fisheries	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. Senior Manager of the tuna and international fisheries. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nothing declared
Adam Whan	Industry member	ETBF SFR holder. Owner of vessels, quota and a factory in Mooloolaba.	Declared a potential conflict as a Director of Tuna Australia and an active operator in the ETBF, however, does not operate south of 40°S. The MAC agreed that all participants engage in the discussions in their entirety.
Daniel Casement	Industry invited participant	Chief Executive Officer of Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association and Chairman of Commonwealth Fisheries Association.	No direct personal interest; but declared a potential conflict on behalf of Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association (ASBTIA) membership as the CEO of ASBTIA. The MAC agreed that all participants engage in the discussions in their entirety.
Daryn Logan	Industry member	Part owner and sole Director of Sniper fishing Pty Ltd, an ETBF vessel operator and quota SFR holder. Board Member of Tuna Australia.	Declared a potential conflict as an active operator in the ETBF, however, does not operate south of 40°S. The MAC agreed that all participants engage in the discussions in their entirety.

Name	RAG/MAC position / organisation	Declared interests	Potential conflicts identified at TTMAC 33 and how they were managed
David Ellis	Industry member	<p>Is currently the CEO of the industry association, Tuna Australia which includes a salary paid by industry. Co-Investigator of the proposed Coral Sea Hook Trial Proposal. Is the PI on the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FRDC Project 2020-041. Improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and safety of mitigation tools for protected species interactions in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery</li> <li>- FRDC Project 2021-078. Improving the management of wildlife interactions in pelagic longline fisheries</li> <li>- FRDC Project 2021-063. Future Proofing: Integrating community quota, product supply, product innovation and market diversification in Australia's Tropical Tuna Industry.</li> </ul>	<p>No direct personal interest; but declared a potential conflict on behalf of Tuna Australia (TA) membership as the CEO of TA.</p> <p>The MAC agreed that all participants engage in the discussions in their entirety.</p>
Emily Lawson	AFMA Observer	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. Senior Policy Officer in the Foreign Compliance Policy team. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nothing declared
Glen Holmes	Environment/conservation member	Employee of Pew Charitable Trusts, no pecuniary interest in Australian tropical tuna fisheries.	Nothing declared



Name	RAG/MAC position / organisation	Declared interests	Potential conflicts identified at TTMAC 33 and how they were managed
Grahame Williams, OAM	Recreational member	Past President of the Game Fishing Association of Australia, Treasurer and Records Officer of the NSW Game Fishing Association and Game Fishing Association Australia Executive Officer. No pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries. Member of the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust. NSW Minister for Fisheries Special Advisory Council – RF NSW.	Nothing declared
Lara Ainley	Manager, Tropical Tuna Fisheries	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nothing declared
Terry Romaro, OAM	Industry Member	Director of a company that owns Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) boat statutory fishing rights (SFRs), minor line SFRs, ETBF longline SFRs, Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) boat SFRs, WTBF longline SFRs, Western Skipjack Tuna Fishery (WSTF) purse seine permit, Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF) purse seine, mid-water trawl SFRs, and SPF quota SFRs. Shareholder of a company that owns shares in a proposal to fish with foreign longliners in the WTBF. Industry member on Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) and Tropical Tuna MAC, Invited participant for TTRAG, and industry representative at the Commission for the Conservation of SBT (CCSBT) & IOTC. Invited participant for SquidRAG and squid SFR holder. Director of Tuna Australia.	No direct personal interest; but declared a potential conflict as a Director of Tuna Australia (TA). The MAC agreed that all participants engage in the discussions in their entirety.