



TTMAC 34, 15 October 2025 Meeting Record

TTMAC – Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee:

CHAIR: Mr Anthony Hurst

Date: 15 October 2025

Venue: Teleconference via Teams

Attendance:

Members:

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

Invited Participants:

- Mr Ian Bladin (Recreational sector)

Observers:

- Dr Lara Ainley (AFMA)
- Mr Josh Froggatt (AFMA)
- Mr Mat Kertesz (DAFF)
- Mr Robert Wood (AFMA)
- Ms Sally Troy (AFMA Commissioner)

Apologies: Mr Daniel Casement (Industry invited participant)

Executive Officer: Mr Shayer Alam (AFMA)



Agenda:

1. Preliminaries: welcome and apologies, adoption of agenda, declarations of interests, actions arising from previous meetings and out of session correspondence	Chair
2. Member updates	Members
3. TACC advice (including overcatch and undercatch) for ETBF and WTBF – Overview 3.1 Application of multi-season TACC procedures in the ETBF (for tropical tunas) and WTBF: non-TACC setting year 3.2 Yellowfin tuna in the ETBF 3.2 Striped marlin in the ETBF – constant catch approach 3.4 Broadbill swordfish in the ETBF – modified harvest strategy	AFMA
4. Proposed changes to management arrangements	AFMA
5. Coral Sea Hook Trial research project - update	AFMA
6. TTMAC priorities and meeting schedule	AFMA
7. Other business	Chair



Agenda Item 1: Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country.
2. The Chair welcomed all participants and noted apologies, which are recoded in the table above. Meeting participants were informed that the meeting would be recorded for the purpose of assisting the preparation of meeting minutes.

1.2 Adoption of agenda

3. The MAC adopted the draft agenda without change (**Attachment A**).

1.3 Declaration of interest

4. The MAC noted, in line with Section 3.4.3 of *Fisheries Management Paper 1 – Management Advisory Committees (FMP1)*, the requirements for members to declare all relevant interests, not limited to pecuniary gain, regarding all agenda items proposed for TTMAC 34.
5. The Chair thanked members and participants for providing updated declared interests. Having reviewed the declared interests and agenda, the Chair proposed that all members participate in all discussions, noting the value and expertise each member contributes to the formulation of advice. The Chair noted that the MAC, in providing advice to the AFMA Commission, does so within a very clear legislative framework, guided by harvest strategies and TACC setting procedures and further supported by TTRAG and their advice.
6. The Chair advised that if members realised they did have a conflict of interest that hadn't been declared or that might impact their participation in an agenda item as the meeting progressed, the member should raise it at the time and would be asked to leave the meeting briefly while the committee decides how to proceed. With agreement of all members, discussions continued with all members present. Declared interests and how they were managed at TTMAC 34 are recorded in the register of interest at **Attachment B**.

1.4 Actions Arising from previous meetings

7. The MAC noted the status of action items from previous meetings and noted that completed items will be removed from the list for the next meeting. The MAC agreed that no further action was required against action item 1 (from TTMAC 27, agenda item 3.3), action item 3 (from TTMAC 30, agenda item 6) and action item 4 (from TTMAC 30, agenda item 2). A summary of action items and recommendations from TTMAC 34 are at **Attachment C**.

1.5 Out-of-session correspondence

8. The MAC noted the out of session correspondence since TTMAC 31 (17 October 2024) and noted AFMA Management's intention to discontinue this agenda item for future meetings.



Agenda Item 2. Member Updates

9. The MAC noted the written updates from AFMA and the recreational member (**Attachment D**) as read. Verbal updates from industry, scientific and conservation members were also provided.

Industry members update

10. Industry members reported ongoing economic and operational pressures affecting the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF). Rising fuel and bait costs, labour shortages, and increased crew wages, as well as high expenses related to vessel maintenance and port services have significantly impacted profitability. These challenges have reduced operational flexibility and increased vulnerability across the sector.
11. Industry continues to face significant challenges in sourcing skilled labour domestically, leading to increased reliance on overseas workers for roles such as skippers and engineers. This shortage is impacting operational capacity and long-term sustainability of the fleet.
12. There were high catch rates of yellowfin tuna in 2024, but quota limitations resulted in substantial discards. Industry members emphasised the need for more flexible quota management settings to respond effectively to biological variability and market conditions. Industry views the proposed 20 per cent increase in the yellowfin tuna TACC as a necessary adjustment to improve catch retention and reduce discards (see agenda item 3.2).
13. In 2025, yellowfin tuna had a strong inshore presence, particularly along the NSW coast, with reports of recreational fishers catching fish close to shore. Despite this abundance, commercial operators faced economic barriers to landing fish due to low market prices and high quota leasing costs.
14. The industry achieved MSC certification for southern bluefin tuna (SBT) but noted challenges in leveraging certification for market advantage due to the proliferation of competing sustainability standards. SBT catches were consistent with previous years, but market oversupply led to significantly depressed prices, even for other species such as yellowfin tuna.
15. The economic viability of swordfish fishing is declining due to low market prices in key export destinations such as the United States.
16. Severe depredation from sharks and toothed whales was reported, with some operators losing up to 70 per cent of their catch. This issue is affecting both catch rates and economic returns. Whilst industry do move-on from areas they experience high depredation, often they encounter new whales or the whales follow the boat. There is no proven alternate mitigation method available.
17. Industry member from the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) reiterated the need to restore previously reduced yellowfin tuna quota following positive stock assessments. The reduced quota is impacting investment confidence and access to financing, with calls for timely action to support fleet renewal and development.



18. Industry members provided an update on the progress of several research initiatives aimed at supporting the long-term sustainability and operational safety of the tuna industry. A draft report for the Future Proofing of the Tuna Industry project was recently presented to the Tuna Australia Board and is expected to be finalised by December 2025. In addition, two wildlife interaction and mitigation projects, which also address work health and safety risks on vessels, are nearing completion and are anticipated to be released by the end of the year.

Research member update

19. The scientific member provided updates on several key research initiatives relevant to tropical tuna and billfish management. These included the ongoing Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for swordfish, led by CSIRO, and the Close-Kin Mark Recapture (CKMR) project aimed at improving estimates of stock abundance for swordfish. The project is set to run for seven years and is currently in its early stages, with results expected in the longer term.
20. The MAC was informed of a major new project funded through the Green Climate Fund, focused on enhancing the resilience of Pacific Island tuna fisheries to climate change. Although the project is primarily directed at Pacific Island countries, part of the funding will support CSIRO's CKMR work in the ETBF.

Conservation member update

21. The conservation member raised concerns about the level of seabird mortality across the broader regional context. The MAC noted recent findings presented at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Scientific Committee and the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) meetings, which highlighted the critical status of several seabird species.

Agenda Item 3. TACC advice (including overcatch and undercatch) for ETBF and WTBF – Overview

22. Ahead of the MAC providing species specific total allowable commercial catch (TACC) advice in subsequent agenda items (3.1-3.4), the MAC recalled the following:
 - a. In line with the ETBF multi-season TACC setting procedure for tropical tunas (albacore tuna, bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna) and the WTBF multi-season TACC setting procedure (all quota species), the AFMA Commission determined TACCs for these quota species for three fishing seasons in November 2024.
 - b. 2025 is a non-TACC setting year for the WTBF and tropical tunas in ETBF. In a non-TACC setting year, TTRAG and TTMAC consider a reduced set of stock indicators for those quota species.
 - c. Although 2025 is a non-TACC setting year for yellowfin tuna in the ETBF, under agenda item 3.2 the MAC is being asked to consider a proposal from Tuna Australia, which has been supported by TTRAG, to increase the yellowfin tuna TACC by 20 per cent (from 2,500 t to 2,880 t).



- d. Harvest strategies are in place for swordfish and striped marlin in the ETBF and TACCs for these species are determined annually. Based on the application of those harvest strategies, TTRAG has recommended maintaining TACCs at current levels for these quota species.
23. Further, the MAC noted the following:
- a. The TTRAG advice (September 2025, [TTRAG 45](#)) on [ETBF](#) and [WTBF](#) quota species, including information from updated data summaries, harvest strategy outputs, fishery indicators and advice on overcatch and undercatch; and
 - b. TTRAG considered the latest [ETBF Climate and Ecosystem Status Report](#) when developing its advice on TACCs for the ETBF.

Agenda Item 3.1 Application of multi-season TACC procedures in the ETBF (for tropical tunas) and WTBF: non-TACC setting year

24. The MAC noted that, in line with the for tropical tuna species (albacore tuna, bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna) and the (all quota species) (the Procedures), TTRAG reviewed a reduced set of fishery indicators and confirmed no significant changes in fishery indicators or stock status that would warrant adjustments; and advised that current catch levels of those quota species are negligible in terms of regional impact.
25. The MAC noted the following key updates from TTRAG ([TTRAG 45](#), September 2025):
- a. Following the updated stock assessment, the stock status of yellowfin tuna in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) has changed from overfished and subject to overfishing, to not overfished and not subject to overfishing.
 - b. Following the updated stock assessment, the stock status of striped marlin in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) has not changed in terms of the stock being overfished and subject to overfishing.
 - c. Overall catch and effort in the WTBF remain stable at very low levels.
26. The MAC considered TTRAG advice that:
- a. In line with section 2.4 of the Procedures, the review of the reduced set of fishery indicators did not indicate any significant change or warrant alternative TACC advice for ETBF and WTBF quota species subject to the application of the Procedures.
 - b. TTRAG supported a proposal to increase the TACC of yellowfin tuna in the ETBF to 2,880 t (see agenda item 3.2).
27. The MAC noted advice from some industry members that it remains important to return the WTBF yellowfin tuna TACC to 5,000 t. Industry members advised that the TACC level, although not being fully caught, is important for attracting the investment to support the entry of vessels capable of being economically viable in the fishery. That is, vessels with a freezing capacity of minus 60°C.



Recommendations

28. Having regard for the advice provided by TTRAG and the application of the Procedures for the ETBF and WTBF, the MAC advised that the fishery indicators did not indicate any significant change or warrant alternative TACC advice for albacore tuna and bigeye tuna in the ETBF and all WTBF quota species.

Agenda Item 3.2 Yellowfin Tuna in the ETBF

29. The MAC noted that yellowfin tuna is a very large stock, with reasonable levels of mixing between the ETBF and the wider Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) tuna fishery; and that previous investigations have supported the contention that oceanographic and other factors can create fluctuations in the availability of yellowfin tuna for Australia (pulse events).
30. For some time now, in consultation with TTRAG and TTMAC, AFMA has been working with Tuna Australia on ways to both detect and create flexibility to utilise pulse events of yellowfin tuna. This has included previously increasing the yellowfin tuna TACC in 2016 from 2,200 t to 2,400 t and numerous options and proposals including multi-season TACCs, creation of high seas and in-zone quota, the ability to change TACCs during the season, and increasing overcatch.
31. Separate to the application of the ETBF multi-season TACC setting procedure, to account for future pulse events and support growth in domestic catches, the MAC considered a proposal from Tuna Australia on increasing quota flexibility and developing the ETBF, including a recommendation to increase the yellowfin tuna TACC by 20 per cent to 2,880 t.
32. The MAC noted that, in line with [TTRAG 45](#) (September 2025) advice, the most recent WCPFC stock assessment for yellowfin tuna in 2023 assessed the stock as not overfished and not subject to overfishing; and there are currently no WCPFC catch constraints and no sustainability concerns in relation to increasing the TACC of yellowfin tuna in the ETBF.
33. The MAC discussed the advice provided by [TTRAG 45](#) considering the drivers of quota inflexibility and economic inefficiency in the ETBF, dynamics of the quota market, discarding and the implications of increasing the yellowfin tuna TACC on other species, particularly striped marlin. Specifically:
- a. During periods of high availability of yellowfin tuna (pulse events), in addition to existing industry conflicts, fishers holding quota can become reluctant to lease out the quota in case they need it for their own operations; or anticipate that higher lease prices could be gained by waiting further into the season.
 - b. Higher and unanticipated lease prices at the end of the season increases volatility in profits, especially if fishers need to plan for taking advantage of a pulse event in the context of rising lease prices and the need to obtain additional quota.
 - c. With respect to the quota market dynamics, the MAC noted statements from industry members identifying that discarding of yellowfin tuna is occurring due to poor returns



against the cost of leasing quota, and due to holding quota for the potential of more valuable fish later in the season.

- d. With respect to the discarding of yellowfin tuna, data provided by AFMA highlights that during the period 2020-2024, the most reported reasons to discard were “shark damaged” and “unmarketable”. The reason “no quota” was not reported.
- e. A higher yellowfin tuna TACC may provide greater availability of quota and allow fishers to both utilise the increased availability of catch during pulse events and reduce discarding (by using the extra quota to store fish in freezers rather than discarding it). This means dead fish are more likely to be eaten rather than high-graded.
- f. The MAC agreed that it is unlikely that the proposed higher TACC would entice new entrants to the fishery, which could dissipate potential profits, because a new entrant would likely need to acquire rights to multiple ETBF quota species (rather than just yellowfin tuna).
- g. Increased catch of striped marlin in association with increased catch of yellowfin tuna is a key concern, especially within the recreational fishing sector, noting that the level of discarding of striped marlin also increased significantly in 2024.
- h. In 2024, an anomalous peak of striped marlin catch occurred early in the year, compared to peak catches normally occurring later in the year in association with yellowfin tuna, and may indicate that targeting has occurred. Industry members stated that this targeting behaviour was likely due to two new entrants and would be unlikely to occur again.
- i. The MAC agreed that since the numbers of hooks targeting yellowfin tuna is not expected to increase, the associated catch of striped marlin is unlikely to increase and the potential impact of an increase in the yellowfin tuna TACC would likely be managed within the current striped marlin TACC of 351 t.
- j. Further, the MAC noted that increased catch of striped marlin may also be associated with increased catches of SBT in the ETBF and increased availability of that species, noting similar increased catches of striped marlin in 2024 in the recreational sector.
- k. An increase in the yellowfin tuna TACC would likely support flexibility in how quota is used and potentially increase retention and utilisation of catch to improve the economic productivity in the fishery.

Recommendations

- 34. The MAC supported the proposed increase in the TACC for yellowfin tuna in the ETBF by 20 per cent to 2,880 t for the 2026 and 2027 fishing seasons, in line with advice from [TTRAG 45](#) (September 2025) and to improve economic productivity in the fishery.
- 35. Additionally, the MAC agreed that catch and discards of both yellowfin tuna and striped marlin should be closely monitored.



Agenda Item 3.3 Striped marlin in the ETBF – constant catch approach

36. The MAC recalled that TACC advice for striped marlin in the ETBF is guided by constant catch harvest strategy approach, where the recommended TACC is 351 t, subject to the annual review of fishery indicators and consideration of additional indicators that could trigger revisiting the management strategy evaluation (MSE) and harvest strategy (HS) work for the species.
37. The MAC noted TTRAG advice ([TTRAG 45](#), September 2025) including the following key updates:
- a. Following the updated stock assessment, the stock status of striped marlin in the WCPFC has changed from potentially overfished to overfished when assessed against the D/D_{MSY} reference point; and with respect to fishing mortality, from potentially subject to overfishing to not subject to overfishing.
 - b. Having regard for the updated stock assessment, the WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC21) advised that catches of striped marlin should not increase above recent average levels.
38. The MAC noted that in 2024, catch and discards of striped marlin increased compared to previous years. The MAC noted both TTRAG and industry member advice that this level of discarding is anomalous compared to previous years and was driven by a small number of operators with less experience in the fishery. Industry members reiterated previous advice that striped marlin is a byproduct species and operators do not target striped marlin. Industry members further advised that the TACC limit does not support targeting.

Recommendations

39. Having regard for the advice provided by TTRAG and the application of the ETBF striped marlin constant catch harvest strategy, the MAC recommended a TACC of 351 t for striped marlin for the 2026 ETBF fishing season.
40. In making this recommendation and having regard for the latest management advice from WCPFC for striped marlin and recent increases in striped marlin discarding, the MAC recommended ongoing monitoring of catch and discards, including the reasons for discarding.
41. The MAC recommended applying the same overcatch and undercatch arrangements from the 2025 fishing season to the 2026 fishing season.

Agenda Item 3.4 Broadbill swordfish in the ETBF – modified harvest strategy

42. The MAC recalled that TACC advice for broadbill swordfish in the ETBF is guided by the application of the [modified swordfish harvest strategy](#) agreed by the AFMA commission in September 2024.



43. The MAC considered the available information on the status of the agreed fishery indicators, TTRAG advice and the results of the [calculation of the ETBF broadbill swordfish recommended biological commercial catch \(RBCC\)](#), derived from the application of the modified swordfish harvest strategy.

Recommendations

44. Having regard for advice provided by TTRAG and the application of the modified broadbill swordfish harvest strategy, the MAC recommended a TACC of 1,047 t for broadbill swordfish for the 2026 ETBF fishing season.
45. The MAC recommended applying the same overcatch and undercatch arrangements from the 2025 fishing season to the 2026 fishing season.

Agenda Item 4. Proposed changes to management arrangements

46. The MAC recalled that during its meeting on 24 July 2025 ([TTMAC 33](#)), the MAC considered a summary of seabird bycatch in the ETBF and WTBF between the 2020 winter TAP¹ season and the 2024 summer TAP season (inclusive); and proposed changes to the seabird management arrangements for the ETBF and WTBF to improve their effectiveness, simplify the administration of the rules and provide greater certainty to industry in how they apply.
47. The MAC noted that, at the time, there was not sufficient time to consider all of the proposals and that AFMA prioritised the implementation of proposed changes in the ETBF fishing area south of 40°S during Summer TAP seasons, prior to the commencement of the 2025 Summer TAP season on 1 September 2025.
48. Following from this and during this meeting, the MAC reviewed and provided advice on the remaining proposed changes to seabird management arrangements in the ETBF and WTBF. The MAC also considered an additional proposal to implement the deployment of tori lines at all times when setting longlines.
49. The MAC noted that subject to their advice, it is AFMA's intention to consult SFR holders on the proposed changes.
50. In addition to the specific proposals, the MAC noted that currently tori lines are not required to be deployed when setting longlines at night. In other AFMA longline fisheries (demersal longline), tori lines are required to be deployed during setting regardless of the time of day. The MAC noted advice from industry members that the deployment of tori lines at night would not have any significant operational impact, however resolving any deployment issues at night is more difficult. The MAC noted advice from the Conservation Member that, in their experience in international discussions on this matter, the focus has been trying to minimise the risk of tori lines not being deployed during setting that commences at night but continues into daylight hours. The MAC recommended AFMA undertake an analysis of available data to

¹ Seabird Threat Abatement Plan (TAP)



assess bycatch risk at night in the ETBF and WTBF, including independent observer observations, to inform further MAC discussions on tori line deployment.

51. The MAC noted the following key points on each proposal:

Proposal: the criteria used to determine if a boat should be required to apply additional mitigation, reduce the number of significant interactions from ‘10 or more seabirds’, to five seabirds caught in a TAP fishing area and TAP season.

52. Industry members noted that operators further north in the fishery have a low rate of seabird bycatch and that the fishery has good overall performance in these fishing areas under the TAP.
53. Other members noted that given the known distribution of seabirds, the risk of seabird interactions is not limited to temperate waters and does extend into sub-tropical waters further north than 35°S;
54. The MAC noted that reducing the criteria from 10 or more seabirds allows AFMA to intervene earlier and reduce the risk of the fishery exceeding the TAP bycatch rate thresholds; and that reducing the threshold to 5 seabirds strikes a balance between improving the performance of the fishery and minimising the impact on operators. This measure will not impact fishers with low bycatch rates; and
55. The MAC further noted that operators who are directed to move out of the fishing area south of latitude 40°S and choose to fish in fishing area 35-40°S, should be subject to additional mitigation to reduce the risk of ongoing seabird interactions by that operator, noting that bycatch rates for that fishing area are exceeded more frequently than the more northerly areas.

Proposal: to specify that, after implementing additional mitigation, further mitigation is required if the boat catches another seabird.

56. The MAC agreed that the proposal was a logical approach to reducing the likelihood of ongoing seabird interactions for a boat already subject to additional mitigation.

Proposal: to prohibit offal discharge during setting and during hauling, unless discharged on the opposite side of the boat or in line with an AFMA-approved alternative method.

57. The MAC recalled that a prohibition on offal discharge during setting was supported at the previous meeting ([TTMAC 33](#), July 2025) and that the proposed constraints on discharge during hauling have already been applied to fishing in the area south of 40°S during summer TAP seasons.

Recommendation

58. Having considered the views of members and with the intention to continue a targeted risk-based approach to management, the MAC recommended reducing the number of significant interactions from ‘10 or more seabirds’ to five seabirds caught in a TAP season in the fishing areas south of 35°S. This approach recognises that the risk of the ETBF and WTBF exceeding the bycatch rate has been demonstrated to be higher in these areas compared to more northern fishing areas.



59. The MAC supported the proposal to specify that, after implementing additional mitigation, further mitigation is required if the boat catches another seabird (irrespective of life status) as a logical solution to reducing ongoing seabird interactions for a vessel already implementing additional mitigation.
60. The MAC supported the proposal to prohibit offal discharge during hauling, unless discharged on the opposite side of the vessel or in line with an AFMA-approved alternative method, to maintain consistency across the fishery.

Agenda Item 5. Coral Sea Hook Trial research project - update

61. The MAC recalled that at its meeting on 4 February 2025 (TTMAC 32), the MAC considered a research proposal from Tuna Australia to investigate the effects of increasing hook numbers in the Coral Sea Zone under a scientific permit, allowing higher hook counts from 1 March to 31 August each year for three years. The MAC agreed to support the research proposal, emphasising the need to manage risks associated with blue and black marlin, and protected species, subject to:
 - a. Including catch limits (set at the Tier-1 combined trigger used in the previous trial, being a combined total of 99 interactions) that, if exceeded, trigger TTRAG and TTMAC to review available information.
 - b. Regular reporting to TTRAG and TTMAC after each scientific permit period, with reference to all protected species, including turtles; and
 - c. Feedback from TTRAG and TTMAC may be considered for subsequent applications for scientific permits.
62. The MAC noted AFMA granted scientific permits to two boats to participate in the trial over the period 6 March to 31 August 2025; and that the catch limits for blue and black marlin were not reached during the trial period for 2025 (**Table 1**).
63. The MAC noted advice that due to delays in appointing a PhD candidate to the project, a more detailed report on the first year of the trial will be provided by the principal investigator before research activities take place in the second year of the trial.
64. If required, a short online MAC meeting will be held to consider the project update. The recreational member requested the project report include previously reported details such as, life status of marlin discards and area fished in relation to longitude 148°E.



Table 1. Total interactions of blue and black marlin, total hooks, total shots and the proportion of shots with greater than 500 hooks, total interactions with protected species for the two ETBF vessels participating in the Coral Sea Hook Trial Research Project during the period 1 March to 31 August 2025. Data has been collated from AFMA logbooks, including daily fishing logbooks and wildlife logbooks.

2025 trial period (1 March to 31 August 2025)	
Total Interactions with blue and black marlin	
Blue Marlin	17
Black Marlin	18
Combined	35
Total effort	
Total Hooks	146,250
Total shots	138
% shots with >500 hooks	92%
Total Interactions with protected species	
No protected species interactions were recorded.	

Agenda Item 6. TTMAC Priorities and Meeting Schedule

65. The MAC reviewed the key management priorities (Table 2) and meeting schedule over the short-to medium term. The MAC noted that the next TTMAC is scheduled for October 2026, likely to be held online. The MAC further noted that additional issue-specific MAC meetings may be convened on an as needs basis.
66. Based on discussions at the meeting, members reflected on the following important issues:
- The economic conditions facing the industry is a key issue and understanding the underpinning drivers is important. Members welcomed advice that the CEO of Tuna Australia was working with ABARES to provide advice on inputs into ABARES annual economic conditions report for the ETBF.
 - Whilst AFMA's fisheries are regulated to a high standard, it is essential that standards are lifted for other fleets operating on the high seas. Regional coordination is essential to effectively mitigate certain impacts of longline fishing, one being the impacts on seabirds.
 - Where possible, collaboration with State jurisdictions on research costs and effort should be pursued. In particular, to support the development of a CKMR program for broadbill swordfish.



Table 2. TTMAC standing and short/medium-term priorities

Priority	Description	MAC advice, progress and updates
Provide advice on TACCs	The Commission has agreed a process for monitoring and providing advice on TACCs in the ETBF and WTBF comprising a mix of indicator and harvest strategy approaches. The necessary analysis to support this monitoring and TACC advice is included in the current intersession science project delivered by CSIRO. This project ends 30 June 2025.	Ongoing standing priority In 2024, the AFMA Commission endorsed multi-season TACC setting procedures for the ETBF tropical tunas and WTBF, where TACC advice is provided to determine TACCs for 3 seasons in a single decision; and with monitoring of indicators during interim years. These procedures were first applied in 2024. Science services for the ETBF and WTBF have been included in the AFMA research priorities for 2026/27. The requested project scope addresses this priority.
Review impact of international fisheries on the fish resources.	This priority relates to the ongoing ‘evaluation’ of impacts of international fisheries on the fish resources as opposed to a unique review. The preparation of up-to-date information for this review is part of the current intersession science project delivered by CSIRO.	Ongoing standing priority. Science services for the ETBF and WTBF have been included in the AFMA research priorities for 2026/27. The requested project scope addresses this priority.
Climate Adaptation program – Ecosystem Status Report and Climate Risk Framework (ETBF SWO)	The objective of the AFMA’s Climate Change Adaptation program is to ensure climate change information is incorporated into fisheries management advice and decisions in AFMA’s Commonwealth fisheries. MACs and RAGs are to consider annual Ecosystem Status reports and, when finalised, the Climate Risk Framework, when providing TAC advice.	Ongoing standing priority. Climate change and Ecosystem Status Reports have been developed and are part of the fishery indicators review cycle. AFMA is also developing a Climate Risk Framework (CRF). Swordfish was part of a trial to test and develop the draft CRF. TTRAG 44 (July 2025) considered the application of the draft CRF on swordfish in the ETBF. The RAG requested further information regarding the climate projections used to derive the climate impact risk score before finalising their advice. The RAG also advised that given the draft nature of the species assessment report and that further RAG advice was pending, the assessment should not be published as part of the Trial Report until it can be finalised. Given the timing of subsequent RAG and MAC meetings, these matters were unable to be resolved prior to the conclusion of the trial in August 2025. The outcomes of the trial as well as a revised CRF (based on



Priority	Description	MAC advice, progress and updates
		feedback received during the trial) were considered by the AFMA Commission at their meeting in September 2025.
Review the process for recommending TACCs for tuna species.	Consideration of whether the process/analysis for recommending TACCs for tuna species could be refined. This priority has been supported by the current intersession science project delivered by CSIRO.	In line with this priority, the AFMA Commission adopted multi-season TACC setting procedures for the ETBF tropical tunas and WTBF, where TACC advice is provided to determine TACCs for 3 seasons in a single decision; and with monitoring of indicators during interim years. These decisions were made in September 2024 and November 2024 for the ETBF and WTBF respectively. The procedures were first applied in 2024. More recently TTRAG 45 (September 2025): discussed the need to develop a systematic approach for adjusting TACCs for species not covered by formal harvest strategies, addressing the gap identified in current management processes for both increasing and decreasing catch limits; and agreed to reconsider the 2021 striped marlin MSE results as a starting point to reconsider the constant catch/harvest strategy approach.
Coral Sea Hook Trial	TTMAC supported a further Coral Sea Hook trial at their meeting in February 2025, TTMAC 32. The project is being led by Tuna Australia and the University of the Sunshine Coast. Regular reporting to TTRAG and TTMAC after each scientific permit period, with reference to all protected species, including turtles is expected. Feedback from TTRAG and TTMAC may be considered for subsequent applications for scientific permits.	Two scientific permits were granted for trial activities in 2025. AFMA will provide an update on marlin interactions against the agreed triggers at the meeting. Further reporting on the first year of the trial is pending. Project reporting and analysis have been delayed due to delays in appointing a PhD student.
Ecological Risk Assessment and response	To achieve ecologically sustainable development goal, AFMA uses an ecosystem-based approach to manage fisheries. This method focuses on understanding how commercial fishing affects the marine environment. AFMA is committed to this goal and uses the	ERAs for the ETBF and WTBF were finalised in 2025. Having regard for the high-risk outcomes for several species, AFMA will now update is an ERM framework as necessary. TTRAG 44 (July 2025) agreed that further work is required to understand the scope of the fisheries and address the outcomes of the ERAs before providing



Priority	Description	MAC advice, progress and updates
	Ecological Risk Management (ERM) framework to help create fisheries management plans that support ESD objectives. The main tool in this framework is the Ecological Risk Assessment for the Effects of Fishing (ERAEF), which evaluates the potential risks fishing activities may pose to the marine ecosystem.	advice on the proposed ERM response, including reviewing literature, considering findings from Tuna Australia's FRDC project, assessing the scope of the fishery to improve risk outcomes, identifying research priorities, and improving species identification. AFMA will convene further meetings in 2026 to progress this priority.
Performance review of seabird management arrangements	Effectively mitigating seabird interactions with longline fishing in the ETBF and WTBF is a high management priority. AFMA introduced seabird management changes in 2019 to allow for individual boat measures. Five years on from those reforms, AFMA management recommended that performance of the arrangements be reviewed.	AFMA consulted with TTRAG (TTRAG 44 , July 2025 and TTRAG 45 , September 2025) and TTMAC (TTMAC 33 , July 2025) on proposed changes to seabird management arrangements in 2025 to improve their effectiveness, simplify the administration of the rules and provide greater certainty to industry in how they apply. Further due to recent, unprecedented levels of seabird bycatch in the ETBF, AFMA prioritised variations to ETBF SFR conditions relating to seabird management and mitigation in the area south of 40°S. TTMAC will consider additional proposed changes to apply to other areas of the ETBF and WTBF.

Agenda Item 7. Other business

67. There was no other business

Close of meeting

68. The Chair thanked the MAC members, invited participants, and observers for their participation in the meeting, and closed the meeting at 4:46 pm on 15 October 2025.

Attachment A – Adopted final agenda

Wednesday 15 October 2025, 9:00 am to 4:46 pm		
45 mins 9:00 – 9:45	1. Preliminaries Welcome and apologies Adoption of agenda Declarations of interests Actions arising from previous meetings Out of session correspondence	Chair
45 mins 9:45 – 10:30	2. Member Updates	Members
15 mins 10:30 – 10:45	MORNING BREAK	
75 mins 10:45 – 12:00	3. TACC advice (including overcatch and undercatch) for ETBF and WTBF – Overview Application of multi-season TACC procedures in the ETBF (for tropical tunas) and WTBF: non-TACC setting year Yellowfin tuna in the ETBF Striped marlin in the ETBF – constant catch approach Broadbill swordfish in the ETBF – modified harvest strategy	AFMA
60 mins 12:30 – 1:30	LUNCH BREAK	
45 mins 12:45 – 1:30	2026 TACC advice for ETBF and WTBF (cont.)	AFMA
120 mins 1:30 – 3:30	4. Proposed changes to seabird management arrangements	AFMA
15 mins 3:30 – 3:45	AFTERNOON BREAK	
30 mins 3:45 – 4:15	5. Coral Sea hook trial	AFMA
30 mins 4:15 – 4:45	6. TTMAC priorities and meeting schedule	AFMA
15 min 4:45 – 5:00	7. Other business	Chair

Attachment B – Register of declared conflicts interest relevant to agenda items

Name	MAC position/ organisation	Declared Interests	Potential conflicts identified at TTMAC 34 and how they were managed
Anthony Hurst	Chair	No pecuniary interests in tropical tuna.	Nothing declared
Selina Stoute	AFMA member	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. The MAC agreed that all participants engage in the discussions in their entirety.
Ashley Williams	Scientific member	Employee of CSIRO, no pecuniary interest in Australian tropical tuna fisheries. Is the PI for the project on Data Management, Assessment and implementation of Harvest Strategy for Australia's Tropical Tuna and Billfish Fisheries	Nothing declared
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. The MAC agreed that all participants engage in the discussions in their entirety.
David Ellis	Industry member	Is currently the CEO of the industry association, Tuna Australia, which includes a salary paid by industry. Is the PI on the following projects: - FRDC Project 2020-041. Improving the effectiveness, efficiency and safety of mitigation tools for protected species interactions in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery - FRDC Project 2021-078. Improving the management of wildlife interactions in pelagic longline fisheries - FRDC Project 2021-063. Future Proofing: Integrating community quota, product supply, product innovation and market diversification in Australia's Tropical Tuna Industry.	No direct personal interest; but declared a potential conflict on behalf of Tuna Australia (TA) membership as the CEO of TA. The MAC agreed that all participants engage in the discussions in their entirety.
Glen Holmes	Conservation member	Employee of The Pew Charitable Trusts, no pecuniary interest in Australian tropical tuna fisheries	Nothing declared

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Attachment B – Register of declared conflicts of interest

Name	MAC position/ organisation	Declared Interests	Potential conflicts identified at TTMAC 34 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
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 and a 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.
Lara Ainley	Manager, Tropical Tuna	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nothing declared
Ian Bladin	Invited recreational member	President of the Game Fishing Association of Australia, Director Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation, former Queensland charter boat owner. Member FRDC Commonwealth Research Advisory Committee (COMMRAC)	Nothing declared
Sally Troy	Observer	AFMA Commissioner. No conflict of interest in tuna and billfish fishery.	Nothing declared
Robert Wood	Observer	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. Senior Management Officer in the tropical tuna fisheries team. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nothing declared
Shayer Alam	Executive officer, AFMA	Employee of AFMA, which includes a salary. Senior Management Officer in the tropical tuna fisheries team. No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nothing declared

Attachment C - Summary of Actions Items

Item	Meeting raised	Action	Responsibility	Status at TTMAC 34
1.	TTMAC 27 , agenda item 3.3	AFMA will review EM discussion documents for reference to the amortisation of capital costs EM equipment.	AFMA	COMPLETE – no further action required AFMA is focused on significant EM reforms including expansion of EM across other fisheries, internalisation of EM review and implementing a standards-based approach for EM hardware. AFMA's EM team has consulted industry on these reforms. The AFMA Commission has already decided to expand EM into the Great Australian Trawl Fishery (this year), Southeast Trawl Fishery (July 2026) and the Northern Prawn Fishery (March 2027). These changes will impact the relative share of EM Program costs in the ETBF. Observer costs for the ETBF immediately prior to the introduction EM was around 800k. ETBF EM costs for 2025-26 are around 500k.
2.	TTMAC 28 , agenda item 3.1	AFMA to check the swordfish catch weights submitted for WCPFC to ensure weights are accurate.	AFMA	IN PROGRESS: CSIRO, AFMA and ABARES have been working with WCPFC Scientific Pacific Community on the history of reported catch data and mismatches and changes over time. This work is being progressed opportunistically against competing priorities.
3.	TTMAC 30 , Agenda item 6	A member of the AFMA Policy, Environment, Economics and Research (PEER) team to attend TTMAC 31 to provide background and context on the policy position for the 28-day reconciliation period.	AFMA	COMPLETE – no further action required Information on the policy was provided by the AFMA member during TTMAC 31 .
4.	TTMAC 31 , Agenda item 2	AFMA to confirm the scope and expected timeframe of the proposed policy review (FMP 10 – Managing undercatch and overcatch of quota) is; and whether the scope can include consideration of the discussed issues (pulse events, overcatch and undercatch, quota reconciliation and the need for greater flexibility).	AFMA	COMPLETE – no further action required The expected timeframe for reviewing FMP 10 is not yet settled. Industry advice on the application of FMP 10 over the years, including that from Tuna Australia and TTMAC will be considered under the review. All MACs will be provided an opportunity to advise on the review in due course.

Item	Meeting raised	Action	Responsibility	Status at TTMAC 34
5.	TTMAC 31 , Agenda item 2	Industry members to develop a paper that discusses pulse events, overcatch and undercatch, quota reconciliation and the need for greater flexibility, which could inform the policy review (of FMP 10).	Industry members	COMPLETE – no further action required Tuna Australia have submitted a paper in response to a letter from the AFMA Commission outlining their decision not to support changing overcatch and undercatch provisions in response to pulse events. The recommendations in their paper will be discussed at this meeting at agenda item 3.



Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TTMAC)

Meeting 34

15 October 2025

Agenda item 2 Member updates

AFMA management update

Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) approval ETBF

1. The ETBF has been granted export approval as a [Wildlife Trade Operation \(WTO\)](#) until 19 August 2028, subject to four conditions relating to annual reporting, ecological risk management, striped marlin stock management and seabird mitigation; in line with AFMA's current management practices.
2. AFMA's application for reapproval of the WTBF as an approved WTO is currently under consideration. The current WTO for the WTBF expires on 11 November 2025.

Changes to seabird management arrangements - fishing south of 40°S during summer TAP seasons

3. AFMA has varied the ETBF Longline Boat Statutory Fishing Rights (SFR) with respect to seabird mitigation and management for longline fishing south of 40°S during summer TAP seasons. Following consultation with TTRAG and TTMAC, AFMA consulted all ETBF SFR holders on the proposed changes (the consultation period closed on 13/08/2025). One response was received. The submission raised concern with applying fleet wide measures and opposed the daylight setting ban. The respondent advised that a daylight setting ban would cause both operational and safety challenges, resulting in a significant financial burden. The respondent proposed alternate mitigation measures: requiring paired and modified tori lines and adjustments to line weighting.
4. As noted in AFMA's advice to SFR holders advising of the changes (letter dated 15 August 2025), AFMA understands that these changes will have an impact on the operational flexibility for some fishers. These impacts have been considered against the risk of having unacceptable levels of seabird bycatch occurring in the fishery. To avoid undue operational impacts, the changes are highly targeted, focused only on longline fishing south of 40°S and only during the summer TAP seasons.
5. Following AFMA's decision, AFMA received a scientific permit application from an operator wishing to use alternate mitigation arrangements (to the daylight setting ban) in the area south of 40°S during the current summer TAP season. AFMA's consideration of this application is ongoing.

Seabird interactions 2025 Winter TAP Season

6. During the 2025 winter TAP season (01 May - 31 August 2025, data as of 28 August 2025), the ETBF recorded a total of six seabird interactions. All interactions occurred in the 35-40°S fishing area. The fishery-level seabird interaction bycatch rate of 0.05 birds per 1,000 hooks was not exceeded for this fishing area. However, two vessels were directed to implement additional mitigation due to exceeding the boat-level interaction rate of 0.05 birds per 1,000 hooks.

Ecological risk management (ERM) in response to recent ecological risk assessments (ERA) for ETBF and WTBF

7. Ecological Risk Assessments (ERAs) for the ETBF and WTBF incorporating updated data from ABARES, were finalised in February 2025 and circulated to TTMAC. These assessments, guided by Fisheries Management Paper 14 ([FMP 14](#)), support AFMA's objectives for Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) through structured risk evaluation and management.
8. Under FMP 14, AFMA is required to consider the results from ERAs and outline the management processes necessary to mitigate risk where it is high, as well as address other key fishery management objectives on a per-fishery basis. [TTRAG 44](#), in July 2025, agreed that further work is needed to address ERA outcomes before advising on ecological risk management responses, including reviewing literature, considering findings from Tuna Australia's FRDC project, assessing the scope of the fishery to improve risk outcomes, identifying research priorities, and improving species identification.
9. Due to concerns about the ERA methodology and challenges in interpreting risk outcomes, the RAG also recommended a technical review of the ERA process as a research priority across all fisheries (see further information below on research priorities). The RAG agreed to set up a working group to work through the ERM process, and the MAC will be consulted and updated on the progress.

Swordfish harvest strategy review

10. [TTRAG 38](#) commenced a review of the processes for recommending total allowable commercial catches (TACCs) for the key target species across ETBF and WTBF in July 2023 and recommended prioritising a review of the swordfish harvest strategy, supported by the three-year CSIRO project titled: *Scientific advice management of Tropical Tuna and Billfish Fisheries*. [TTRAG 40](#) (March 2024) considered updates from the Project team and provided advice on a list of prioritised options to be progressed for Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE).
11. In July 2024 ([TTRAG 41](#)), the RAG endorsed a workplan for the MSE of the ETBF swordfish harvest strategy, which was last discussed and updated at TTRAG 45. In line with this workplan, the RAG endorsed updated operating models, the base case, and the reference grid in both July and September 2025.

Application of Climate Risk Framework (CRF) for swordfish in ETBF

12. AFMA's [draft CRF](#) has been under development since 2023 and is an approach to integrate climate risks into formal decision-making processes at AFMA. At its November 2023 meeting, the AFMA Commission endorsed the trial implementation of the draft CRF. The draft CRF has been applied to 15 species across 6 Commonwealth and Torres Strait fisheries, including broadbill swordfish in the ETBF.
13. AFMA established a CRF Working Group to support the trial and provide strategic advice to the AFMA Commission and AFMA management on the development, coordination and implementation of the draft CRF. The Working Group met with industry representatives, management and scientific stakeholders at a meeting on 9 October 2024 to consider the trial application of the draft CRF to broadbill swordfish. A range of suggestions were made to include additional information in the draft Species Assessment Report regarding the descriptions of climate and stock status risk as well as science, management and industry measures.
14. A draft species assessment report for broadbill swordfish was considered by TTRAG in July 2025. The RAG requested further information regarding the climate projections used to derive the climate impact risk score before finalising their advice. The RAG also advised that given the draft nature of the species

assessment report and that further RAG advice was pending, the assessment should not be published as part of the Trial Report until it can be finalised.

15. Given the timing of subsequent RAG and MAC meetings, these matters were unable to be resolved prior to the conclusion of the trial in August 2025. The outcomes of the trial as well as a revised CRF (based on feedback received during the trial) were considered by the AFMA Commission at their meeting in September 2025.

Pacific bluefin tuna catch limit for Australia

16. The WCPFC Pacific bluefin tuna (PBT) catch limit for Australia was increased to 40 tonnes from 10 t effective from 01 February 2025 under the WCPFC Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific Bluefin Tuna ([CMM 2024-01](#)). The PBT catch in the ETBF has increased to 27 tonnes in 2023 from 8.5 tonnes in 2022, and in 2025, approximately 29 tonnes have been caught (data correct as of 29 September 2025 (**Figure 2.1**)).

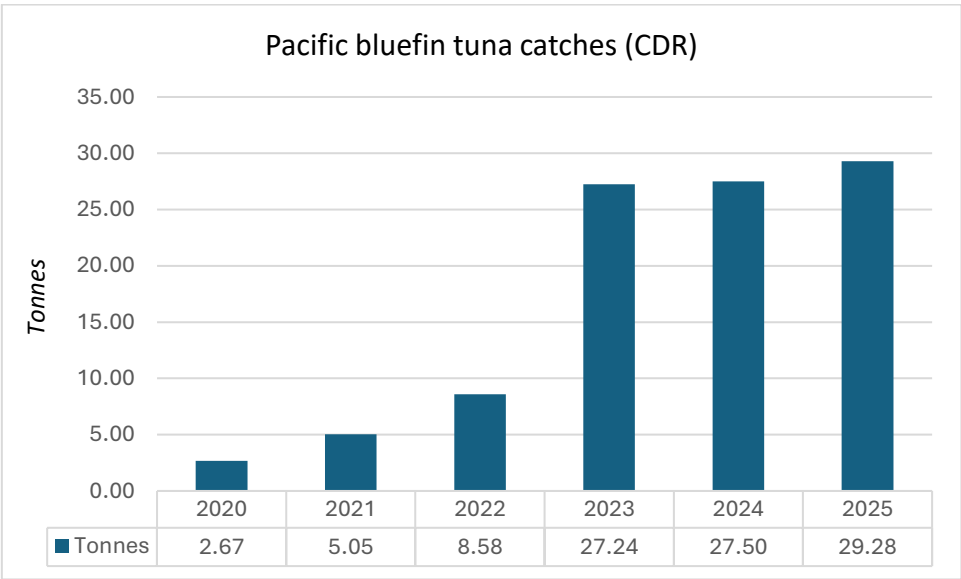


Figure 2.1 Pacific bluefin tuna catch in the ETBF 2020-2025

WCPFC Scientific Committee outcomes (in brief)

17. The WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC21) convened on 13-21 August 2025 and discussed updated stock assessments for striped marlin, swordfish and skipjack; seabird mitigation obligations, harvest strategies for south pacific albacore and bigeye tuna; and upcoming work under the harvest strategy workplan, specifically MSE for swordfish.
18. The stock assessment for striped marlin indicated that the stock is overfished but unlikely to be undergoing overfishing. SC21 also recommended not increasing catches above recent average catch levels.
19. A harvest strategy/management procedure for south pacific albacore is expected to be adopted by the WCPFC in December 2025.
20. AFMA has invited Mr Mat Kertesz, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, to this meeting who can provide further information on SC21 outcomes and WCPFC priorities as needed.

AFMA Research Committee – agreed priorities for next call for research funding applications

21. ETBF and WTBF research priorities were circulated to TTMAC on 21 August 2025 and discussed at the AFMA Research Committee (ARC) and RAG Chairs meetings on 28 August 2025. The ARC discussed the strategic research needs and future challenges relevant to the ETBF and WTBF, including advice from AFMA Management to exclude the proposed research priority to review the ERA methodology at this time. This is because AFMA management recommended that work first be undertaken by AFMA and CSIRO to address concerns and plan for a future review if required. Further, updating the MSE for striped marlin was also excluded pending further discussion within the RAG.
22. The ARC met again on 29 August 2025 and considered proposed research priorities across all fisheries, supporting the Scientific Advice for Tropical Tuna and Billfish Fisheries scope for the ETBF and WTBF.

Australian Government priority to improve productivity growth

23. As requested by the Australian Government Treasurer and Minister for Finance, AFMA has provided advice to the Government on regulatory reform opportunities within fisheries that may contribute to improving Australia's productivity growth. The Government made clear that any suggested opportunities "should be concrete and tangible, have an identifiable implementation pathway, be able to be delivered within existing resources, and not compromise core regulatory objectives and protections". In preparing its advice AFMA consulted the Commonwealth Fisheries Association.
24. In addition to the initiatives AFMA has identified, the Government's prioritisation of improving productivity presents a broader opportunity for AFMA by reinforcing AFMA's desired approach to be innovative and responsive in the way it conducts its business. Without comprising AFMA's regulatory obligations, AFMA expects its MACs and RAGs to also consider opportunities to support productivity improvements when developing management advice.

Ministerial Statement of Expectations

25. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has issued AFMA her expectations of AFMA in managing Commonwealth fisheries. Ministerial Statements of Expectations (SOE) are issued by the responsible minister to a regulator to provide greater clarity about government policies and objectives relevant to the regulator in line with its statutory objectives, and the priorities the minister expects it to observe in conducting its operations. Statements of Expectations are updated with every change in Minister.
26. The Minister's expectation reinforces the important of AFMA existing priorities and align with the Government's productivity agenda. In due course AFMA will reply to the Minister with its Statement of Intent (SOI). A SOI outlines how the regulator intends to meet the SOE including how it will demonstrate progress.

Written update from recreational member

Provided by: Grahame A Williams, OAM

Position on TTMAC: Recreational/Charter Fishing Member

General Update: Fishing area from QLD border to VIC border in Commonwealth Waters 2024-25.

Plus some extra information on Marlin & Y/F Tuna species.

Game fishing for the 2024-25 season has been very good and all NSWGFA clubs scheduled Sanctioned Tournaments for the season on top of general club points score days which in most cases are run every 2nd weekend of the month for the period September through to mid-July. The number of NSWGFA clubs is 23 with 3158 anglers registered & affiliated with NSWGFA and GFAA.

During the past season the clubs scheduled 22 tournaments, however 4 were cancelled due to weather issues so below are numbers of fish from the 18 tournaments run.

	<u>T&R</u>	<u>Captured</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total fish Tagged & Released</u>
Striped Marlin	739	22	761	97.2%
Black Marlin	327	3	330	99.8%
Blue Marlin	121	21	142	85.2%
Y/F Tuna	56	49	105	53.4%

For the information of the MAC & AFMA the total membership of GFAA at end of the 2024 financial year was 7832 affiliated members with 80 clubs. Breakdown is as follows: NSW 3085 = 39.5%, QLD 2011 = 25.8%, WA 1089 = 13.9%, TAS 668 = 8.5%, VIC 600 = 7.6%, SA 287 = 3.6%, NT 92 = 1.1%

Interesting **T&R** figures for Australia wide for Marlins follow:

	<u>T&R</u>	<u>% caught in NSW bordered waters</u>	
Striped Marlin	2399	96.5%	Note: approx. 83% were caught between Lat. Sth 34.5° & 37°
Black Marlin	1082	50.1%	
Blue Marlin	682	30.3%	

Another interesting point is in comparing the game/recreational catch of Black & Blue Marlin with the ETBF hooked & discarded numbers. Game/Rec 1764 T&R + 48 taken = 1812, ETBF 5864 therefore Rec/game was 30.1% of the overall catch however I acknowledge that a good percentage of the ETBF catch would be alive when released. (Waiting on AFMA to provide figures for dead, alive & unknown, delay due to AFMA updating their data system at time of this update).

I have done some work on the game/recreational share of Striped Marlin in the ETBF with the following result:

Comparison between ETBF fleet take of Striped Marlin during the fishing season 2024 and the similar time frame for game/recreational fishers.

ETBF fleet catch (Final Catchwatch) 2024 was 365,300kg which I have based on average size of 80kg = 4,566 fish.

Game/Recreational fleet.

Captures by game fishers: Known during tournaments **22 fish**. (sighted capture certificates)

Known during club point score days which = 24 days per season X 22 clubs, 18 active clubs = **217 fish**

(clubs weigh station records) Total **239** fish captured by game fishing club members. $239 \times 80\text{kg} = 19,120\text{kg}$.

Estimated

Known T&R number of fish = **2399** (NSW Fisheries Tag data base). Mortality I have based on estimated 15% therefore **360** fish $\times 80\text{kg} = 28,800\text{kg}$.

Unknown calculated guess Striped Marlin taken by general non-club recreational anglers I have allowed **200** fish $\times 80\text{kg} = 16,000\text{kg}$

Game/recreational known $= 19,120\text{kg} + 28,800\text{kg}$ (estimate of Tag mortality) $+ 16,000\text{kg}$ (estimate number) **Total kg for game/recreational = 63,920kg**

Game/Recreational share is $63,920\text{kg} \div 365,300\text{kg} = 17.5\%$

ETBF share is 82.5%

General Recent Fishing Update for NSW.

During June – July there were good catches of SBT and Y/F Tuna off Sydney and very good catches of SBT off the south coast.

In the past 6 weeks there has been tremendous catches of Y/F Tuna around 50-60kg south from approx. Ulladulla down to Bermagui with the major in close catches off Batemans Bay. Also some good action off Sydney waters, however numbers of fish nowhere near the south coast fish. Up north there have been a few Striped Marlin T&R as well as a few off Sydney in the last 2 weeks. It appears this run of fish is continuing at present whilst not as prolific numbers. Really great to see Y/F Tuna back in numbers inside the shelf, has not been like this for a few years now, hopefully it will continue to happen in following seasons

Hopefully we will have a really good season really from now on and firing up with great numbers of Marlin from next January through to the end of season in July.

A good game/recreational fishery is great for coastal regional areas, towns and their businesses as good fish numbers means plenty of recreational fishers travelling into the coastal towns when the bite is on.

Happy to answer any questions.

Regards to all,

Grahame.