

ANTARCTIC FISHERIES FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN

2026 – 2030

The *Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan 2002* and the *Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery Management Plan 2006* both require that a five-year strategic research program be developed and implemented, to support assessment and management of the fisheries. The Management Plans also require that the five year strategic research program be reviewed annually. Due to Australia's involvement in CCAMLR Exploratory Fisheries, some research for these areas has also been included however this is not a comprehensive list.

To meet the Management Plan requirements, the Sub-Antarctic Resource Assessment Group (SARAG) and Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC) will develop the Antarctic Fisheries Five Year Strategic Research Plan. The Plan identifies areas of priority research for Antarctic Fisheries for 2026 – 2030, and should be considered in conjunction with the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) 5 year Southern Ocean Work Plan. The work under the Southern Ocean Work Plan will be funded through AAD core funding and industry through the Industry/FRDC Southern Ocean Industry Partnership Agreement.

The Antarctic Fisheries Five Year Strategic Research Plan includes research for the Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI) Fishery, Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery (MITF) and CCAMLR Exploratory fisheries. There is also a small component for toothfish fisheries within SIOFA and SPRFMO due to the interaction between HIMI and MITF (Item 13). The numbering is for ease of reference but does not reflect any order of priority.

SARAG and SouthMAC recognise that significant resources and funding will be required to complete all the items listed below. Given the current funding environment it is possible that not all of these will be completed within the five year timeframe. However, the Plan tries to present a picture of the level of research required to address issues in relation to the management of the fisheries.

The Antarctic Fisheries Five Year Strategic Research Plan should be read in conjunction with [AFMA's Strategic Research Plan 2023 – 2028](#).

	Heard Island & McDonald Islands	Priority	Funded?	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
1.	<u>Project:</u> HIMI toothfish stock assessment <u>Details:</u> Includes whale depredation estimation, consideration of tagging data and approaches to integrate this, provision of a updated stock assessment, and additional relevant items from the HIMI Stock Assessment Technical Working Group workplan. <u>Funding:</u> Industry/FRDC IPA, AAD	High	Yes	X		X		X
2.	<u>Project:</u> CCAMLR MSE <u>Details:</u> Development and testing of CCAMLR MSE in relation to HIMI. <u>Funding:</u> AAD	High	Partially	X	X			
3	<u>Project:</u> HIMI Icefish Assessment <u>Details:</u> Annual stock assessment of icefish at HIMI <u>Funding:</u> FRDC IPA	High	Funded through to 2027	X	X	X	X	X
4.	<u>Project:</u> HIMI Bycatch Assessments <u>Details:</u> Development of a skate stock assessment, updates to assessments for both macrourid species, unicorn icefish, and grey rockcod <u>Funding:</u> FRDC IPA	High	Yes		X			
5.	<u>Project:</u> HIMI RSTS <u>Details:</u> Undertaking the RSTS, exploration of frequency and model-based indicators. <u>Funding:</u> Industry/FRDC IPA	High	Yes	X	X*	X*	X*	X*
6.	<u>Project:</u> HIMI Random Longline Survey <u>Details:</u> distribution of longline effort in line with AAD survey design <u>Funding:</u> Industry	High	Yes	X	X	X	X	X
7.	<u>Project:</u> HIMI Patagonian Toothfish Close Kin Mark Recapture <u>Details:</u> Exploration of viability for CKMR, estimated cost \$1,400,000 <u>Funding:</u> Possibly sourced from Industry/FRDC IPA	Low	No				X	X
8.	<u>Project:</u> Ecology of the HIMI marine ecosystem <u>Details:</u> Specific outcomes and costs to be determined <u>Funding:</u> to be determined	Low	No					

*subject to results from exploration of RSTS frequency.

	Macquarie Island Toothfish fishery	Priority	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
9.	<u>Project:</u> MITF toothfish stock assessment and management advice <u>Details:</u> running the toothfish stock assessment, updating bycatch analysis, providing TAC advice. Frequency to be determined following updated project results in 2026. <u>Funding:</u> CSIRO/Industry through AFMA levy base	High		x		x	
CCAMLR Exploratory Fisheries							
10.	<u>Project:</u> Ecosystem impact of fishing in CCAMLR <u>Details:</u> Evaluation of impacts of fishing on marine ecosystems, discussion ongoing at CCAMLR <u>Funding:</u> Government	Medium					
11.	<u>Project:</u> Exploratory fisheries research <u>Details:</u> Includes annual research plans for East Antarctic and associated research plans, and relevant work for other exploratory fisheries <u>Funding:</u> Government/FRDC IPA	High	x	x	x	x	x
Climate Change							
	<u>Project:</u> Climate change impacts on Sub-Antarctic fisheries <u>Details:</u> Research directions to be identified through the two HIMI and MITF workshop processes, timing also to be determined <u>Funding:</u> To be determined	High					
Cross Fishery Research							
12.	<u>Project:</u> Southern Ocean Fisheries Electronic Monitoring Trial <u>Details:</u> Assessing the viability and capability of electronic monitoring for Southern Ocean Fisheries <u>Funding:</u> AFMA EM Program	High	x				
13.	<u>Project:</u> RFMO participation and activity. <u>Details:</u> Engagement at SIOFA and SPRFMO, work associated with exploratory fishing (including data collection and research plans) <u>Funding:</u> Industry/government	High	x	x	x	x	x