



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority



Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery - Great Australian Bight Resource Assessment Group (GABRAG)

 GABRAG TELECONFERENCE 2014

MINUTES

The first Great Australian Bight Resource Assessment Group (GABRAG) meeting for 2014 was via teleconference on 5 August 2014.

Attendees

Members

Mr Lance Lloyd, Chair, Lloyd Environmental Pty Ltd
Dr Marcus Finn, AFMA Member
Ms Marcia Valente, Industry Member
Mr Jeff Moore, Industry Member, GABIA
Professor John Tisdell, Economic Member, University of Tasmania
Dr Ian Knuckey, Scientific Member, Fishwell Consulting
Dr Neil Klaer, Scientific Member, CSIRO
Mr Andy Moore, Scientific Member, ABARES
Ms Michelle Wilson, Executive Officer GABRAG, AFMA

Invited participant

Dr Geoff Tuck, CSIRO

Apologies

Mr Jim Raptis, Industry member

Agenda Item 1 - Preliminaries

Welcome

Mr Lance Lloyd (Chair) opened the meeting at 2:40pm (AEST) and welcomed members.

Adoption of Agenda

Members adopted the draft agenda

Declarations of Interest

The Chair asked the RAG members to declare any interests. Participants with declared interests left the room while agreement was sought from participants that no individual's personal interest is being served by participation. It was decided that all members and visitors could participate in all items.

| Participant | Interest Declared |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mr Lance Lloyd, Chair | No conflict of interest |
| Dr Ian Knuckey, Scientific Member | Director Fishwell Consulting, interest in sources of funding for research purposes, research work for GABIA and a purveyor of electronic logbook systems, work on Fishery Independent Surveys (FIS). |
| Professor John Tisdell | No conflict of interest |
| Dr Neil Klaer, Scientific Member | Employed by CSIRO – Interest in sources of funding for research purposes, complete stock assessments. Declared resignation from CSIRO and consequently GABRAG. |
| Ms Marcia Valente, Industry Member | GAB boat and quota SFR holder |
| Mr Jeff Moore, Industry Member | Great Australian Bight Industry Association (GABIA) EO, board member of Commonwealth Fisheries Association – No pecuniary interest. |
| Mr Andy Moore, Scientific Member | Employed by ABARES - Interest in sources of funding for research purposes, no personal pecuniary interest |
| Dr Marcus Finn, AFMA Manager | No conflict of interest |
| Ms Michelle Wilson, AFMA, GABRAG EO | No conflict of interest |
| Dr Geoff Tuck, Observer | Employed by CSIRO – Interest in sources of funding for research purposes such as stock assessments. |



Agenda Item 2 – Research Priorities

The Chair asked Mr Jeff Moore to lead the discussion of research priorities for the Great Australian Bight Trawl Fishery (GABTF) with regards to funding to be allocated in 2015-16.

The GABIA EO and consequent discussion highlighted the following points:

- The aim of meeting is for planning research priorities in the GABTF for the 2015-16 financial year.
- It was suggested that GABRAG consider the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) five year research plan when discussing priorities and also provide comment on a draft of the upcoming revision of the plan. The AFMA member explained that the AFMA Research Council (ARC) and the Commonwealth Fisheries Research Advisory Body (COMFRAB) may refer back to the long term objectives of the SESSF research plan in determining funding.
- It was noted that in determining research priorities for the GABTF, longer term strategic research ideas need to also be put forward and not just stock assessments.
- It was explained to the group that for the 2013-14 research funding, GABRAG nominated the following options:
 - Research on Western Gemfish stock and spawning behaviour
 - A broader evaluation of the Fishery Independent Survey (FIS)
 - Research on improving economic efficiencies in the GABTF.
- It was noted that a FIS will be undertaken in the GABTF in early 2015 and therefore is not a priority for the 2015-16 funding round.
- It was put to the group that it needs to be considered what opportunities may be available in the GABTF and the associated risks and impediments may be faced by industry.
- The group was reminded that it needs to think carefully about how these priorities are put to ARC as some ideas may not be appropriate for this type of funding and may get pushed back to industry to pursue.
- It was noted that previously an application was put forward to develop a business case/model for maximising the economic efficiency of the GABTF and that it could prove valuable to re-work the previous application for the 2015-16 funding round to show that a public good could come from it.
- It was agreed that the Chair, the GABIA EO, the economic member, the ABARES member and Dr Ian Knuckey would work together in re-phrasing this priority.
- The AFMA member summarised the agreed research priorities to be put to ARC:



Core research priorities

- Stock assessment for Bight Redfish
- Aspects of the SESSF wide research plan such as fish aging, length-frequency collections and the Integrated Scientific Monitoring Program.

Strategic priorities

- Development of a business case model for the GABTF.

GABRAG recommendation – for the AFMA member to pass the GABTF research priorities to the ARC by the due date.

Summary table at Attachment A

Agenda Item 3 – Breakout Rules for Western Gemfish

The Chair invited Dr Marcus Finn to talk about the breakout rules for Western Gemfish. The AFMA member made the following points:

- All MYTAC species require a breakout rule allocated to them.
- Breakout rules are intended to alert AFMA and the RAG that something different to what was predicted is occurring.
- For example, breakout rules for a number of SESSF Tier 1 species are triggered when the CPUE is outside of the model-predicted 95% confidence interval for CPUE.
- Tier 4 species are typically based on the information that is available for the species and presented in the SESSF data summaries each year. These include the change in CPUE from when the MYTAC was set, the change in catches and whether the main method used to target the species has changed.
- Western Gemfish are a Tier 4 species and are the only species assessed under GABRAG to not have breakout rules applied.
- Western gemfish are nearly exclusively caught by trawl methods, so a change in ratio of catches by method may not be a good breakout for this particular species.
- Catches of Western Gemfish against quota over recent years have been low (approximately 35%), and so may also not be a reliable breakout trigger.
- CPUE over the last 4 years has been relatively stable.

The AFMA member recommended that based on this information, the most appropriate breakout rule for Western Gemfish is change in CPUE. The Chair noted that the percentage change in CPUE would also need to be determined.



The group discussed various options for what percentage change would be suitable as an indicator. Discussion also revolved around whether the variation in the CPUE over recent years could be used to determine an appropriate trigger.

CSIRO members noted that Bight Redfish and Deepwater Flathead both have breakout rules regarding change to CPUE using 95% confidence intervals and suggested that this rule also apply to Western Gemfish.

Dr Ian Knuckey left 4.10pm

The group agreed to the suggestion made by CSIRO and will adopt a breakout rule for Western Gemfish based on the same principles as the breakout rule used for Deepwater Flathead and Bight Redfish.

GABRAG recommendation – For Western Gemfish, the same breakout rule should apply as for Deepwater Flathead and Bight Redfish (i.e. Western Gemfish have broken out if the observed standardised CPUE falls outside of the 95% CI of standardised CPUE over the last 10 years).

Agenda Item 4 – Update on Western Gemfish Research

The Chair invited Mr Andy Moore to provide an update on the Western Gemfish research project. Mr Andy Moore highlighted the following key points:

- The summer sampling period has finished and currently the winter sampling period is being undertaken.
- Good samples were obtained in the Great Australian Bight, Kangaroo Island, Portland, Western Bass Strait and off Tasmania.
- Samples were also obtained from the Australian Museum to repeat the Colgan and Paxton (1997) mitochondrial DNA work.
- Mitochondrial sequencing has been undertaken for samples obtained from the fishery and from the Australian Museum.
- As of 5 August 2014, approximately 60 samples had been sequenced showing a distinct segregation between east and west stocks with an overlap area to the west of Tasmania.
- Nuclear work/Microsatellite data was slow to get going due to trouble obtaining markers from the supply company. This issue has now been resolved.
- Jenny Ovenden's team is screening the markers and hopefully data will be released soon.
- The summer samples and potentially winter samples will be processed in time for the next GABRAG meeting.



- Length frequencies and gonad samples were also obtained from the same locations.
- Summer samples are showing that a spawning population exists off Kangaroo Island during the summer period.
- There is some evidence of a spawning population in the Western Great Australian Bight but it is not as strong as the population off Kangaroo Island.
- Questions surrounding fishing practices such as on the shelf or slope may assist in analysing these results.

Mr Jeff Moore stated that information regarding the sampled shots was easily obtainable upon talking to the skippers if dates are provided. Mr Moore also questioned the coordination and communication between researcher and the boat/operator and whether this was done to the best ability.

It was noted that a full coordinated approach is beyond the budgetary constraints of the project. However, it was agreed that a targeted approach needs to be taken and has been done to some degree but could be done better for future winter and summer samples.

GABRAG Action Item – Mr Jeff Moore to organise a phone hook up with Dr Andy Moore and Mr Jim Raptis to discuss coordinated samples of Western Gemfish for the upcoming sampling periods.

Agenda Item 5 – Other Business

Dr Neil Klaer addressed the group about the timing of GABRAG meetings and the correction of the GABTF research planning table in reference to when assessments are due to take place. It was suggested that as a general rule, GABRAG should adopt the approach that if a stock assessment is due to take place then two GABRAG meetings should take place in that year. The group agreed.

It was suggested that time between meetings also needs to be considered and sufficient time provided in order for members to consider the information and make informed recommendations to GABMAC.

GABRAG Recommendation – Adopt the general rule that in years of stock assessments being undertaken, two GABRAG meetings will occur.

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation. Particular thanks were extended to Neil Klaer on his retirement from CSIRO and GABRAG.

Meeting closed (4:20pm).



Attachment A – Summary of GABTF research priorities

| Fishery | Topic | Proposed Project | Evaluation | | |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| | | | Cost (GAB contribution) | GABRAG views on m'tment Priority | Feasibility |
| GAB Trawl | Assessment of target species | Conduct stock assessment on Bight Redfish (Tier 1) | Low-med | Essential | High |
| GAB Trawl | Integrated Scientific Monitoring Program | AFMA observer program | Low | Essential | High |
| GAB Trawl | ISMP data services contract | Conduct analysis and reporting of ISMP data | Low | Essential | High |
| GAB Trawl | Fish Ageing | GAB contribution to SESSF fish ageing | Low | Essential | High |
| GAB Trawl | Socio-economic considerations | Future proofing the GAB Trawl Fishery – investigation of business models that maximise fishery economic returns to the Australian community | Med | High | Med |

