



**Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery**

**21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Scallop Management Advisory Committee (ScallopMAC)**

**20-21 February 2012, Hobart**

**MINUTES**

**Members present**

Mr John Pollock	Chair
Mr Jon Bryan	Conservation Member
Mr Darren Fearnley	Industry Member (Victoria)
Mr Allan Barnett	Industry Member (Tasmania)
Mr John Hammond	Industry Member (Tasmania)
Mr Stuart Richey	Industry Member (Tasmania)
Mr Steve Mantzaris	Industry Member (Victoria)
Mr David Jarvis	Permanent Observer (Tasmanian Government)
Mr George Day	AFMA Member
Mr Matt Piasente	Executive Officer

**Observers present**

Mr Bob Lister	Executive Officer, Tasmanian Scallop Fishermen's Association (TSFA)
Dr Jayson Semmens (Day 1)	Research Member (IMAS)

**Apologies**

Mr Richard Martin	Research Member
Ms Melissa Schubert	Permanent Observer (Victorian Government)

1. The meeting opened at 9:20am on 20 February 2012 in the Shearers room at the Old Woolstore, (1 Macquarie Street, Hobart TAS 7000).

**Agenda item 1.1 – welcome and apologies**

2. The Chair, Mr John Pollock, welcomed members and observers to the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of ScallopMAC. Apologies were received from Mr Richard Martin and Ms Melissa Schubert.



**Agenda item 1.2 – Declaration of interest**

3. The declarations of interest were considered and changes were noted from members.

**Agenda item 1.3 – Adoption of agenda**

4. The items on the Agenda were adopted without change (**Attachment 2**). Members agreed to commence the meeting at 8am on the second day.

**Agenda item 2.1 – Confirmation of records for previous meetings**

5. The minutes of ScallopMAC 12, held on 17 February 2011 and the ScallopMAC teleconference held on 4 April 2011 were accepted without change.

**Agenda item 2.2 - Actions arising from previous meetings**

6. In addition to the status provided, ScallopMAC noted the completion of actions from previous meetings.

**Agenda item 2.3 – Correspondence**

7. ScallopMAC noted the items of correspondence received out of session since ScallopMAC 20.

**Agenda item 3 – Role of the MAC and improving advise to the Commission**

8. The Chair provided members with an overview of the Management Advisory Committee and Resource Assessment Group workshop held on 5 July 2011 to improve quality advice to the Commission. Mr George Day noted the letter dated 17 August 2011 from Dr James Findlay, the AFMA CEO, and provided an outline of the key outcomes from the workshop.

**Agenda item 4 – Fishery Update**

**Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF)**

9. Mr George Day provided a summary of the 2011 BSCZSF season. Following the season opening on 27 July 2011, poor catch rates were identified in the open area. The low catches were noted to be a result of a scallop die-off in the 2011 fishing area which occurred between when the area was surveyed in January and start of the season (27 July). Consequently, a new area incorporating the 2010 open area was opened on 16 August 2011.
10. Fishing effort and catch rates were significantly lower compared to previous years, with catch rates of less than 200kg/hr observed during September to December. For the 2011 fishing season, 12 boats fished, down from 26 in 2009 and 18 in 2010 and 362 tonnes of Commercial Scallop were caught, constituting 18% of the 2000 tonne TAC. No Doughboy Scallops were landed and no interactions with protected species were recorded.
11. Research catch was 95 tonnes, which included Pre-Season Surveys, Biomass Surveys and Exploratory Surveys. Nine scientific permits were issued to enable operators to undertake Exploratory Surveys starting in October 2011. Each permit was allocated 20 tonnes of research catch allowance, with five of the nine operators undertaking exploratory fishing under the permits. Two new beds



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were located and included in the Biomass Surveys undertaken during November 2011.

12. Members discussed the survey requirements in the fishery and the need for incentives to undertake surveys. At particular times there can be no economic benefits as was the case in the second half of 2010 when industry was criticised by some for not undertaking surveys. As a result a commissioned survey (cost recovered through the levy-base) was undertaken during January 2011. The benefits of a paid survey were noted whereby you are guaranteed a significant amount of work is completed. Members agreed that a program to undertake and complete surveys in a timely manner is critical to get up-to-date information in combination with fishing operations.

#### Tasmania

13. Mr David Jarvis, Manager of the Tasmanian Scallop Fishery, reported the 2011 Tasmanian season had been impacted by the White Rock scallop bed die-off. Approximately 80 tonnes were landed from Tasmanian waters with the bulk of catch from outside the white rock area. It was noted that the Tasmanian Scallop Fishery has received export approval and accreditation under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* until 2017.

#### Industry update

14. Industry members discussed the recent experiences in State and Commonwealth waters and the implications of different harvesting practices. Mr John Hammond noted that experiences in the fishery have shown that settlement is much quicker on a beds where all not all scallops are harvested from the area (i.e. spat doesn't settle on dead shell). The white rock area was highlighted where it was harvested 4 years ago and a new cohort was observed in the area the following year. It was suggested that scallops protected in the adjacent shark refuge area may have assisted with the recruitment of the new cohort.
15. Members recommended the need to further consider how and when beds are harvested to maximise returns and how to best prepare the bed for next settlement. Members discussed a strategy to harvest four year old scallops and also spreading scallops in high density beds could be adopted. It was suggested that taking a crop off, on a dense bed, will result in bigger scallops and increasing the likelihood of settlement. Industry members noted that 80mm scallops were previously targeted and using 90mm as the size limit to determine viable beds increases the risk of losing scallop beds given recent mortality events.
16. Members noted in the current Harvest Strategy the alternative to the 90mm size limit and discard rule is to regularly survey and monitor scallop beds to track growth and recruitment within the bed. This information would be used to help determine when a bed can be considered suitable (viable) for harvesting. Members noted that there is still a lot to learn how the fishery works and it is critical for management to moves along with the fishery.



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17. Mr Steve Mantzaris provided an industry update from the processing sector, advising that currently there are only five scallop processors remaining in Victoria, a reduction from 27 during the peak of the fishery. Mr Mantzaris noted he is the last remaining processor with European Union (EU) accreditation to export scallops and he will not be pursuing further accreditation due to the costs involved and the lack of supply limiting marketing opportunities. Mr Mantzaris noted he is also contemplating removing scallop processing/splitting lines due to the limited and uncertain supply.
18. Members discussed the economic status of the fishery and the need to regularly document input costs to help assess how the fishery is travelling. It was noted that the economic information in the ABARES report on the performance of the fishery is regarded as out-of-date and one method to assess the economic performance of a fishery is to look at the value of permits. Industry members advised that it's difficult to determine the true value on licenses at this point as there are a large number advertised for sale. It was suggested that the value would include the current license costs and a marginal value considering the current environment.
19. Fuel and crew costs were reported to be relatively stable and continuity of catches and supply is having the biggest impact in the fishery. Industry members noted that when the fishery recovers there will be an issue with the number of processors and the ability to handle increased landings. Members noted that as the price is sensitive to landings, a significant increase in supply may reduce the price and diminish operator returns. It was noted that previously the fishery could handle up to 3,500 tonnes before becoming uneconomical.
20. ScallopMAC noted the minimum beach price (per kilo) reported for operators were \$11 in Tasmania and \$12 in Commonwealth. The domestic market largely exists in Tasmania, for example 80-90% of scallops shucked in Victoria go to Tasmania. It was suggested that currently the market is suited to about 2,000 tonnes, and the potential to jump up \$10 per kilo exists if landings are less than 1000 tonnes. Members noted that the landings over 2,000 tonnes in 2009 resulted in a excess supply of scallops for processors to handle which resulted in processors discounting scallops sales before commencement of the 2010 season. However, the beach price was noted to remain at \$15 per kilo throughout the season.
21. Members agreed that given the current market environment and limitations the management costs need to match fishery costs. Some industry members suggested \$15 per kilo price is the platform to manage the fishery. It was also noted that stable returns will be influenced by the number of boats operating in the season and catch rates.
22. ScallopMAC noted the increase in imports from 1 to 83 million in the last ten years at an average of \$13 per kilo. It was noted that Chilean and Peruvian scallops are very similar to Australian scallops. Concerns were expressed that as operators can't compete with imports at \$13 per kilo, and due to the state of the



fishery (i.e. current licensing fee) the small operators will start surrendering concessions.

23. ScallopMAC discussed a range of information to help characterise the current state of play for the fishery and the specific requirements for it to remain viable in the future. The key points include:
  - Value of licences – guided by the number of sales / reasons
  - Input costs - fuel, crew and licence costs
  - Market status - increased imports, no EU accredited processors and decline in the number of processors
  - Indication of the size of fishery that would be economically sustainable (tailored boutique fishery)
  - Strong need for jurisdictional concerns and considerations to rationalise management.
24. Members reiterated that the current domestic market could support 2,500 tonnes in the medium term and Mr Mantzaris noted that unless the fishery can land 20 thousand tonnes cheaply the European (French) market is not an option. Although it was suggested that if the supply is above 4,000 tonnes and with a lower exchange rate there is the potential to explore an export market. Mr Hammond noted that a TAC limit is irrelevant in the fishery as the market will dictate supply. Operators are constantly talking to processors and even in a modest fishery the market will be the biggest driver of harvest and supply.
25. ScallopMAC discussed the characteristics and requirements for the BSCZSF to enable future profitable returns for concession holders. Members noted that the fishery now has 15 committed operators who own 50% of the available quota. As such, the BSCZSF is now regarded as a small ‘boutique’ fishery. It was pointed out that it is important for stakeholders’ to recognise the BSCZSF will never be a huge fishery. This considered there is a strong need for a whole new mind set in regard to how the BSCZSF is best managed in a cost effective manner.
26. Members agreed to document and summarise the alternative model for the fishery encapsulating the MAC’s considered vision for the fishery. It was suggested that the BSCZSF needs to operate similar to the Spencer Gulf Fishery, with a strong emphasis on co-management. Additional management measures recommended by ScallopMAC included:
  - Retain two major spawning events as the basis for opening an area
  - Continue to close areas to protect spawning beds and new recruits
  - Continue to use no-navigational areas for juvenile beds
  - Continue to use quota management for monitoring purposes
  - Some members also suggested to discontinue the stock assessment process based on biomass estimate and adopt the Tasmanian regime of using scallop density for TAC setting purposes



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- Progress and adopt co-management arrangements to determine where and when to fish (includes providing more flexibility to operators assessing and harvesting the most productive grounds to maximise economic returns)
  - Provide more flexibility to vessels to move free throughout the fishery to search for new beds in an opportunistic manner.
27. ScallopMAC agreed that the details of rules beyond two major spawning as a standard rule for opening areas will need further considerations. It was pointed out that any change resulting in a less precautionary approach to management will require clear justifications and support.
28. Members discussed how the fishery is reliant on data from surveys to identify and open areas under the Harvest Strategy. It was suggested that surveys should be undertaken in January to ensure that the most up-to-date information is available when considering and recommending management arrangements.

#### **Agenda item 5 – Harvest Strategy Review**

29. Mr Day provided a summary of the status of the Harvest Strategy review including the proposed changes for 2012 and the recommendations from ScallopRAG.
30. Industry members noted that applying a Harvest Strategy developed in-line with the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy hasn't worked and this is a clear example where the fishery doesn't suit a one policy fits all approach.
31. ScallopRAG discussed the Western Zone and agreed that the control rules should apply to the whole fishery as applying the rules by zone will never allow feasible areas to be opened in the Western Zone. Industry members felt that the Western Zone will always be an opportunistic fishery and there are no incentives to survey the Western Zone with the control rules as they stand (rules applied in separate zones). Members noted that this rule will be reviewed as part of the 2013 Harvest Strategy review.
32. ScallopMAC discussed Doughboy scallop catches and it was noted that there haven't been catches of Doughboy scallops for 10 years even though processors have requested landings to explore potential markets. Members noted that originally the installation and use of tumblers was adopted to sort Doughboys and commercial scallops.
33. Members discussed the need for consistency for measuring scallops (width or length) i.e. the widest points and the requirement of a uniform system for aging scallops. Industry members noted that based on previous experiences there is a need to start harvesting at the start of the fourth year. It was noted that scallops can have multiple spawning events per year (e.g. roe replaced in 2-3 weeks and spawning 3 times per season were observed) and it is quite possible that 80mm scallops have had more than 3 spawning events.



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34. Members noted that size is used a proxy for age, and as monitoring is undertaken to determine age there is a need review and clarify how old scallops are when they have had two spawning events. Members were advised that the 90mm size rule is based on research by CSIRO in the 1980s at which size are considered 3+ ages and have had two major spawning. Monitoring is also important to understand different growth rates between beds. Members recommended reviewing the size limit as a proxy for two major spawning events and clarifying whether 80mm or 90mm shell length should be used.
35. ScallopMAC acknowledged that the current Harvest Strategy control rules are designed for two scenarios:
  1. Regular monitoring of beds, and
  2. Discovery of a new bed/s.
36. Members noted the incorporation of naming protocols for beds in the Harvest Strategy and the Executive Officer agreed to circulate the proposed naming protocols.
37. Members discussed the spatial control rule where 40% of the viable area must be closed and noted the RAG's recommendation for a specific area to be opened to restrict the impacts of fishing. Members agreed that this approach would have been more suited during the peak of the fishery with more effort in the fishery. The fishery has changed significantly with a reduced fleet and having confined areas to fish goes against the maximising economic yield objective. Members suggested that the maximum area should be opened to locate the best meats to ensure maximise returns are achieved from the fishery.
38. Members questioned the effectiveness of the input controls and why the entire fishery is closed given that it is a quota managed fishery. Mr Jon Bryan noted that the adoption of the paddock style system provides credibility to the industry and the management strategy given that it is a dredge fishery harvesting sedentary animals and there are still uncertainties on the impacts of dredging on different habitats.

***Action item 21-1: Review the size limit as a proxy for two major spawning events and clarifying whether 80mm or 90mm shell length should be used.***

#### **Proposed 2012 Harvest Strategy**

39. ScallopMAC considered the proposed 2012 Harvest Strategy and changes recommended by ScallopRAG. ScallopMAC proposed clarifying that an area qualifies as a 'Viable Area' when scallops would be at least three years of age as confirmed by surveys.

#### **Proposed 2013 Harvest Strategy**

40. ScallopMAC noted the specific characteristics of the BSCZSF, including that it did not sit within Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy approach to harvesting and ScallopMAC's understanding that the BSCZSF will remain a small 'boutique' fishery.



41. ScallopMAC **recommended** that the following proposals for the 2012 Harvest Strategy be discussed at a joint meeting of ScallopMAC and ScallopRAG late in 2012:
- retain two major spawning events as the basis for opening an area to fishing
  - implement a spatial strategy consisting of:
    - Open Areas: if they pass the two major spawning rule
    - Closed Areas for:
      - juvenile beds, including areas that do not meet the two major spawning rule
      - habitat protection, where appropriate
    - Survey Areas: which are closed to commercial fishing but in which operators can search for new beds
  - continue to use quota monitoring
  - rely on the Co-Management Committee for operational and harvesting decisions.
42. In addition, ScallopMAC **recommended** that consideration be given to:
- delaying the season end date to end of January
  - removing the east / west division of the fishery at longitude 146
  - justifying whether a 80mm or 90mm shell length should be used as a proxy for determining whether two major spawning have occurred
  - consistent naming across the Commonwealth, Tasmania and Victoria for variables such as shell length and the ages of scallops
  - AFMA opening the maximum allowable area under the harvest strategy for management by the Co-Management Committee.

***Action item 21-2: AFMA to circulate naming protocols for scallop beds based on ScallopRAG advice.***

***Action item 21-3: Jayson Semmens to clarify that an area qualifies as a 'Viable Area' when scallops would be [at least three years of age] as confirmed by surveys.***

#### **Agenda item 6 – Fisheries Surveys and Assessment**

43. ScallopMAC considered the report provided by Dr Jayson Semmens from the *Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies* (IMAS) on the Biomass Surveys conducted in November 2011. Two vessels participated in the survey, which targeted known beds and beds identified during the Exploratory Survey undertaken during October 2011.
44. ScallopMAC discussed the concerns expressed regarding the lack of recruits in the survey data, specifically Area 2 where there were catches reported containing small scallops. Members noted that the size data information from the wheelhouse logs are not included in the length frequency data-set, and the sub sample measured from the catch is assumed to be a representative sample.
45. Members discussed the proposed 200kg per hour catch rate rule to determine when to harvest the back-up area. Members noted that this may not meet the



economic efficiency objectives as viable commercial catch rates depends on a range of factors supply, including meet conditions, beach price etc. Members highlighted issues regarding specifying a minimum catch rate, and discussed leaving a strip closed as a method to counter localised depletion. Members suggested that the decision to harvest the back-up area should be considered in the event there is:

- a significant amount of TAC available
- a significant biomass available to harvest in the back-up area, and
- that catch rates in the initial area fall below economically unviable levels and there is a risk of localised depletion.

46. Members agreed to base the 2012 recommendations to the Commission on the pre-season survey results. Members also recommended removing Area 2 as a classified no-navigational zone in the event the back-up area (NE corner of Area 2) is shown to hold a significant biomass and opened during 2012.
47. ScallopMAC discussed extending the season until the end of January which may improve market capacity and help maximise economic returns.
48. Members noted that the 1 April season date was adopted with the intention to provide scallops during the Easter period. Industry members suggested that the fishery needs to concentrate on supplying scallops for the Christmas period. Members noted that extending the season into January to improve market capacity assumes product caught during the year will be sold to maintain a reasonable beach price. Members highlighted that operators will regularly need to assess market status to determine what can be harvested to hold a steady price.

**Agenda item 6.1 – ScallopRAG report and comments**

49. ScallopMAC discussed the TAC and area recommendations made by ScallopRAG and set out in the *Report from ScallopRAG 19, held in Hobart 1-2 February 2012* (ScallopRAG Report). ScallopMAC:
  - noted that, in relation to recommendation 1(d)(iv) in the ScallopRAG Report regarding opening a back up area, ScallopMAC would be likely to recommend opening part of Area 2 as a back up area if:
    - after the Pre-Season Survey, the back up area is estimated to have a significant biomass (for example 500 tonnes) of scallops available to be caught
    - on the basis that the Industry Committee (under the current Harvest Strategy) or the Co-Management Committee (under the 2012 Harvest Strategy) only support fishing in the back up area if:
      - catch rates in [Area 3] drop to levels which are consistently below economically viable rates across the entire fishing fleet before moving to the back up area, taking into account measures approved by the Committee to avoid localised depletion such as leaving strips of unfished area



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- there is significant uncaught TAC (for example 500 tonnes) remaining before moving to fish the back up area
- subject to the comment above, **agreed with and adopted recommendations 1(b)-(h)** from the ScallopRAG Report, including with respect to Pre-Season Surveys, the TAC for Commercial Scallop and Doughboy Scallop and intended fishing areas
- noted that, given the age of scallops in [Area 3] and [Area 2] and die-offs in recent years, there were concerns that if those areas were not completely harvested in 2012, scallops may die before the 2013 season
- **recommended** that AFMA use its best endeavours to encourage surveys and facilitate opportunistic surveys.

#### **Agenda item 7 – Industry presentation on difficulties with stock assessments**

50. Mr Karl Krause, an experienced scallop operator provided a presentation of a fishery survey in Marion Bay off the East Coast of Tasmania in 2005. Mr Krause noted that the day time survey indicated the area contained uneconomic catches (~30kg) of scallops per tow. However, when the fishery opened one vessel working at night over 19 nights in a narrow half mile long area harvested 107 tonnes with catches peaking at 400kg in the middle of the night.
51. This example highlights concerns on the reliance on stock assessments in particular the differences in catch rates between night and day. Industry acknowledged that as a general rule better catches are observed at night and if a survey is undertaken during the day catches could double during the night depending on the area.
52. Some members expressed concern that the use of biomass estimates are unnecessary and preference for the Tasmanian approach to use scallop density (high, medium, low) and area management rather than stock management. Dr Jayson Semmens noted that both the Tasmanian Scallop Fishery and the BSCZSF use the same data to determine management arrangements. The main difference is the BSCZSF require biomass estimates, and this can be a problem in the sense that these estimates create expectations. It was noted that density tells you about the bed from an operational aspect (likelihood of commercial catch rates) and generally agreed that both methods are a guide, and on-the-water anecdotal input will determine how to maximise returns from an area.
53. Members expressed the need for more flexibility for surveys (i.e. vessels having a dredge on when Cray fishing in Commonwealth waters, to have a look for new beds). The MAC acknowledged its support of operators willing to search for new beds to help understand and advance the fishery.
54. The Chair thanked Mr Karl Krause and Mr Bob Lister for their presentation. ScallopMAC agreed that there were many variables in assessment but that industry should aim to collect survey data in ways that sought to replicate standard fishing operations.



**Agenda item 8 – Scallop Steering Committee update**

55. The AFMA Member advised that the Scallop Steering Committee, consisting of industry stakeholders and State and Commonwealth representatives, had held a meeting in November last year to consider options to implement cost-effective management for the south east scallop resource. Ms Sevely Sen had been contracted to review and report on possible options with the main goals of streamlining and rationalising management of the scallop resource across the three jurisdictions, the Commonwealth, Tasmania and Victoria.
56. ScallopMAC noted the five options being considered by the Steering Committee and that a follow-up meeting is being planned for March 2012. Members noted that the report is close to being finalised for public release and in the interim the Chair agreed to circulate it to ScallopMAC noting it has not yet public.
57. The Chair urged industry to keep the pressure on to ensure the process doesn't stagnate. Members noted that the timing is right to implement a new rationalised management approach due to the state of the industry in terms of management costs, the remaining fleet and economic climate.
58. Victorian members outlined that there is general agreement within Victorian operators that one license fee is preferred given the status and value of the fishery. Some members supported an independent expert panel to oversee and determine the allocation rights and for industry to step back during the allocation phase. Once the preferred option is agreed, members suggested preparing information notices that outlines how a move to one fishery will affect existing concession holders to help industry understand why the change is being progressed.
59. ScallopMAC was supportive of the work of the Scallop Steering Committee. Industry members supported changes to rationalise management arrangements, noting that allocation and access rights were important issues to address. It was agreed that the Steering Committee consultant's report would be provided to ScallopMAC members.

***Action item 21-4: Circulate the consultant's report to ScallopMAC members.***

**Agenda item 9 – Bycatch and discarding workplan review**

60. ScallopMAC noted the review of the previous Bycatch and Discarding WorkPlan and the new WorkPlan. Members were critical of the process citing the current state of the fishery and noted time/costs implications and that this is the same work required as the high valued fisheries. Members questioned the value of a Bycatch and Discarding Workplan for the BSCZSF because:
  - there had been no reported interactions with protected species
  - bycatch was not a significant issue for the fishery. The area open to fishing is extremely limited and scallops are the predominant species occurring in areas fished.
61. Members discussed the observer program and noted the recommendation to reduce the budgeted program from 20 to 10 observer days. Members questioned



the need to continue an observer program considering that the fishery doesn't interact with protected species. Members supported a reduction in observer program and noted that it is regarded as premature to remove the program completely.

62. Members discussed the reported bycatch from logbook data and suggested undertaking a comparison of observer data with logbook data to determine the differences in catch data. Members agreed that full disclosure of catch data in logbooks will help place the fishery in a better position to address concerns regarding bycatch and fishery impacts.
63. ScallopMAC recommended that:
  - promotion of accurate reporting be retained in the Bycatch and Discarding Workplan
  - a new action item be included in the Bycatch and Discarding Workplan for AFMA to conduct an analysis of observer records against logbooks to identify any trends or gaps in reporting
  - the targeted AFMA Observer days be changed to 10 land and sea days
  - subject to the changes above, the Bycatch and Discarding Workplan be adopted for the BSCZSF.

#### **Agenda item 10 – Fishery Research Plans**

64. ScallopMAC noted the decision of the AFMA Commission on 26 October 2011 that each fishery implements fishery-specific five year research plans and annual research work plans. Members requested that for future consideration of research projects the budget implications (i.e. who pays) need to be clearly defined. In particular, what is the industry contribution, noting that Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) research funds are recovered from the industry through a levy apportioned across the industry.
65. Members discussed the need for further research work on the impacts of different harvesting practices and techniques, such as lighter fishing leaving some stock behind to re-spawn. Members questioned whether this work can be linked in with existing funded project/s, and what could be undertaken this season. Members agreed to follow up this inquiry with Dr Jayson Semmens.
66. Members suggested undertaking further work on dredge efficiency to assist with biomass estimates from survey data. Mr Stuart Richey noted that this work can be costly without definitive outcomes and this work on dredge efficiency would need to be completed on all seabed substrates.
67. ScallopMAC discussed how scallops are aged and the usefulness of a standard approach so you know the age of scallops when you come across bed (rather than using size as a proxy for age). It was noted that counting rings maybe a good indicator for age, members recommended requesting Dr Jayson Semmens advice on the value of a feasibility (desk top study) of the usefulness of age data compared to size data.



68. Mr Bryan suggested the need for work on the long term ecological impacts of scallop dredging. It was noted that this work would assist with ongoing concerns and a stand alone document or source would be helpful to direct stakeholders. It was noted that long term monitoring projects can get very expensive. Members agreed to check with Dr Jayson Semmens what work has previously been undertaken, and to further consider the need of a long term monitoring project investigating the ecological impacts of scallop dredging. Members suggested checking with FRDC to determine what projects have been funded and undertake a gap analysis to help prioritise future work.
69. ScallopMAC recommended that the *BSCZSF Strategic Research Plan 2011/12 – 2015/16* and *Annual Research Work Plan*, including amendments agreed to by ScallopMAC, be adopted for the BSCZSF. ScallopMAC agreed that:
- AFMA obtain and circulate a list of scallop related research undertaken in conjunction with the FRDC
  - AFMA provide proposed funding splits for future research proposals.

**Action item 21-5: Jayson Semmens to comment on:**

- a) the potential to undertake additional work on the impacts of different harvesting practices and incorporate into existing projects.*
- b) the value of a feasibility (desk top study) of the usefulness of age data compared to size data.*
- c) previous work on the ecological impacts of scallop dredging.*

**Action item 21-6: AFMA obtain and circulate a list of scallop related research undertaken in conjunction with the FRDC and provide proposed funding splits for future research proposals.**

**Agenda item 11 – Review of the BSCZSF budget and costs for 2011/12**

70. The AFMA Member provided ScallopMAC with an explanation of the 2011-12 budget and levies calculations noting a 60% increase in levies in 2011, and proposed budget for 2012-13. The increase in 2011 levies was largely due to overspending last years budget (additional survey costs and increased staffing costs) plus incorporation of the three year stock assessment project into the fishery budget.
71. ScallopMAC noted the forecast budget items next financial year including:
- Reduced time splits allocated for staff
  - Reduced costs associated with the survey project (noting the costs of this project increase in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year)
  - Possible costs implications associated with the ongoing requirements of the Scallop Steering Committee
72. Members were critical of the costs associated with overheads within the fishery budget. In particular, the lack of ability of the industry to influence overheads is a major concern. Industry members outlined that the structure behind AFMA doesn't apply given the value of the fishery. In contrast the bigger valued fisheries have the ability to deal with AFMA's structure.



73. Members questioned the need for both the RAG and the MAC considering the current membership and the work and costs associated with conducting meetings. It was suggested that the MAC rationalisation process has worked for some fisheries and this is largely dependant on the issues. Combining the RAG/MAC was noted to be a useful step with expected efficiency gains although the value and benefits of separate meetings were also noted.
74. Members agreed to trial a combined (2 day structured) RAG/MAC meeting. It was suggested that this meeting would involve all members attending day 1 to consider presentations. Following the presentations the MAC members would leave to allow the RAG to discuss and agree on its recommendations. Members agreed to explore the option of a combined meeting and requested AFMA to outline the policy and legal implications.

***Action item 21-7: AFMA to outline the policy and legal implications holding a combined RAG/MAC meeting.***

**Agenda item 12 – Scallop Testing Costs**

75. ScallopMAC noted the Tasmanian Scallop Fishery must have a scallop Food Safety Management System (FSMS) in place, and requires the laboratory testing of all scallops landed in Tasmania. Last year the testing costs from BSCZSF scallops were \$1,714 and the Tasmanian scallop industry paid for the testing costs noting that testing benefits all BSCZSF operators to ensure product is safe.
76. Members noted that currently there are no requirements in Victoria to test scallops caught offshore, the requirement only applies to fish landed in Tasmania. This year a greater proportion of scallops are expected to be landed in Tasmania and the majority of scallops landed in Victoria go to the Tasmanian market.
77. The FSMS outlines that the testing requirements for remote areas apply to BSCZSF, and the testing regime is different for inshore locations. Members outlined the benefits of incorporating costs in the levy-base, considering the fishery wide consequences if issues are revealed plus it is feasible that testing in Victoria may come on-line in the future.
78. ScallopMAC agreed that, if permitted under AFMA's legislative framework, costs for health testing of scallops be included in the BSCZSF budget. It was noted that currently there are health testing costs for BSCZSF scallops landed in Tasmania and are anticipated to be \$3,000 in 2012-13.

***Action item 21-8: Assess the implications of including food safety testing costs in the fishery budget under AFMA's legislative framework.***

**Agenda item 13 – Quota Management Policy**

79. ScallopMAC reviewed AFMA's draft Quota Administration Policy (November 2011) and the submission prepared by ScallopMAC Member Mr Stuart Richey dated 10 February 2012. Members acknowledged the objective to maximise quota value and simplify rules across AFMA's fisheries. Key points discussed included:



- In regard to the removal of the personnel-use allowance, members consider the take home pack as a very small amount and that its removal would not stop non-compliance activity and reduce compliance costs. Alternative options suggested for this rule change included adding 3 tonnes to the TAC to account for the take home pack, and to specify that if operators wish to utilise the take home pack this allowance must be contained in a designated bag.
80. ScallopMAC considered that the small nature and specific characteristics of the BSCZSF made the Policy inappropriate for the fishery with costs outweighing benefits. In particular:
- there is little bycatch and catches of quota species in overlapping fisheries in the BSCZSF
  - the Harvest Strategy only allows fishing in areas with low numbers of juveniles which, if caught, are returned to the water alive
  - because all operators use dredges there is little they can change in their operations to reduce discards
  - TACs are recommended based on the biomass estimated within areas intended to be opened to fishing
  - spatial measures, not the TAC, are used to address AFMA's sustainability objective
  - overcatch and undercatch measures do not apply to the fishery.

However, should AFMA apply the Policy to all quota fisheries, ScallopMAC **recommended** the following changes to the Policy:

- personal use allowances be retained. The personal use allowance in the BSCZSF is 1.5 kilograms (meat weight) per boat per trip, which is a very small amount relative to the TAC. Further, the BSCZSF relies on spatial closures such that small catches above the TAC will not impact on sustainability.
- ScallopMAC proposed that scallops making up personal use allowances be clearly marked as such on the vessel, such as storing the scallops in designated containers.
- a definition of 'discards' in the context of the BSCZSF be included in the Policy. ScallopMAC proposed 'In the BSCZSF, discarding does not include undamaged scallops which are returned to the water as soon as practicable after capture'.

While not directly applicable to the BSCZSF, ScallopMAC supported:

- the retention of overcatch and undercatch provisions for other fisheries
- 28 day reconciliation.

#### **Agenda item 14 – Other Business**

81. Industry members raised concerns regarding a notice that concessions will be suspended following breaches with the 5 knot rule whilst transiting closed areas. Member noted that the Harvest Strategy review will consider how areas are defined, and a move to define the current closed area as survey area may eliminate the need for transit corridors and the need to abide by the 5 knot rule.



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In the meantime, once fishing areas have been agreed transit corridors for the 2012 season will be distributed for comment.

82. Mr Lister proposed that the industry Co-management Committee will continue under its existing name 'Bass Strait Scallop Industry Management Committee' (as per management arrangement booklet) and membership for 2012 will include:
  - **Victorian members;** Mr Darren Fearnley and Mr John Cull (noting that Mr Andy Watts is available as a back-up in Darren's absence)
  - **Tasmanian members;** Mr Allen Barnett and Mr John Hammond.
83. ScallopMAC agreed with Mr Lister and approved the appointments.
84. ScallopMAC noted that stakeholders (including operators, processors, management and researchers) will be notified via e-mail of all decisions and changes to fishing areas by the Industry Co-management Committee. An additional survey before season was suggested by Mr Lister to determine when / where to fish before the season commences. Also once decisions have been made regarding areas and zones, industry will seek AFMA's assistance to update and distribute maps.
85. Mr Richey outlined that the BSCZSF is overdue for a discussion on VMS its uses and other areas where the fishery can develop. The MAC noted the Norwegian system of operators selling fish whilst at sea (i.e. operators outline catch and processors can bid live) is an area worth investigating.
86. The Chair thanked Members for their contributions.

**Meeting ended at 11am**



ATTACHMENT 1

Actions arising from ScallopMAC 21

Item number	Action	Action officer
21-1	Review the size limit as a proxy for two major spawning events and clarifying whether 80mm or 90mm shell length should be used.	Jayson Semmens
21-2	AFMA to circulate naming protocols for scallop beds based on ScallopRAG advice.	AFMA
21-3	Jayson Semmens to clarify that an area qualifies as a 'Viable Area' when scallops would be [at least three years of age] as confirmed by surveys.	Jayson Semmens
21-4	Circulate the consultant's report to ScallopMAC members.	AFMA
21-5	Jayson Semmens to comment on: a) the potential to additional work on the impacts of different harvesting practices and techniques and incorporate into existing projects. b) the value of a feasibility (desk top study) of the usefulness of age data compared to size data. c) previous work on the ecological impacts of scallop dredging.	Jayson Semmens
21-6	AFMA obtain and circulate a list of scallop related research undertaken in conjunction with the FRDC and provide proposed funding splits for future research proposals.	AFMA
21-7	AFMA to outline the policy and legal implications holding a combined RAG/MAC meeting.	AFMA
21-8	Assess the implications of including food safety testing costs in the fishery budget under AFMA's legislative framework.	AFMA



ATTACHMENT 2

21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery  
Management Advisory Committee (ScallopMAC 21)  
Agenda

Monday 20 February

Time	Item	Presenter
9.00 am	<b>1. Preliminaries</b>	Chair
	1.1. Welcome and apologies	
	1.2. Declaration of interests	
	1.3. Adoption of agenda	
9.10	<b>2. Meeting Administration</b>	Chair
	2.1. Confirmation of records for previous meetings	
	2.2. Actions arising from previous meetings	
	2.3. Correspondence	
9.20	<b>3. Role of the MAC and improving advice to the Commission / Preamble for MACs</b>	Chair
9.30	<b>4. Fishery Update</b>	George Day
	4.1. Management update	David Jarvis
	4.2. Industry update	Melissa Schubert Industry Members
10.00	<b>5. Harvest Strategy Review</b>	George Day
10.45	<i>Morning tea</i>	
11.00	<b>Harvest Strategy Review cont.</b>	
12.30 pm	<i>Lunch</i>	
1.30	<b>6. Fishery Surveys and Assessment</b>	Jayson Semmens
3.00	<i>Afternoon tea</i>	
3.15	<b>6. cont. 2012 Management arrangements and recommendations</b>	
4.00	<b>7. Industry presentation on difficulties with stock assessments</b>	Bob Lister
5.00	<i>Close</i>	



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Tuesday 21 February

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
9.00 am	<b>8. Scallop Steering Committee update</b>	George Day
9.30	<b>9. Bycatch and Discarding Workplan review</b>	Matt Piasente
10.00	<b>10. Fishery Research Plans</b>	George Day
10.45	<i>Morning tea</i>	
11.00	<b>11. Review of the BSCZSF budget and costs for 11/12</b>	George Day
12.00	<b>12. Scallop Testing Costs</b>	Industry
12.15	<b>13. Quota Management Policy</b>	George Day
12.30	<b>14. Other business</b>	
	14.1 ScallopMAC work plan for 2012/13 and next meeting	
1.00 pm	<i>Close</i>	