




Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority



**Bass Strait Central Zone
Scallop Fishery
Management Advisory Committee
(ScallopMAC)**

**MINUTES
SCALLOPMAC 22 (TELECONFERENCE)
7 APRIL 2014**

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ScallopMAC MEETING 22

Chair Mr John Pollock
Date 7 April 2014
Location Teleconference

Attendance

Members

John Pollock	Chair
Bill Talbot	Scientific Member
Allan Barnett	Industry Member
Stuart Richey	Industry Member
John Hammond	Industry Member
Steve Mantzaris	Industry Member (Processor)
Steve Shanks	AFMA Member

Observers

Bob Lister	Industry (Tasmania)
David Jarvis	Tasmanian Government (DPIPWE)

Apologies

Jon Bryan	Environment/Conservation member
Mellissa Schubert	Victorian Government observer
Jayson Semmens	Scientific Member

Introduction

The Chair, John Pollock, opened the ScallopMAC meeting at approximately 10:00am on 7 April 2014 and noted apologies from John Bryan and Melissa Schubert.

Declaration of Interest

The Chair asked members if they would like to add any declarations to their previously declared conflicts of interest in relation to any of the agenda items (**Attachment 1**). Members with a declared conflict of interest then left the teleconference individually while the MAC discussed whether they considered it appropriate for these members to be present at the meeting for all agenda items. Based on conflicts of interest declared, no members were excluded from any agenda items.

Adoption of Agenda

The MAC agreed to add an update of progress on actions from the previous meeting and discussion on observer protocols for Paralytic Shellfish Toxin (PST) sampling on the agenda (**Attachment 2**).

Progress on Action items from ScallopMAC 22

ScallopMAC went through the action items from the previous meeting of February 6 and 7 2014:

1. *AFMA to circulate copies of un-finalised minutes from previous meetings to members for adoption out of session.*

Current: AFMA has circulated minutes and are awaiting comments from members.

2. *Mr Shanks to provide the ScallopMAC and RAG a copy of AFMA's current scallop handling protocols for PST testing (subject to confidentiality requirements).*

Complete: AFMA has circulated the PST protocols.

3. *AFMA to include the issue of weighing at the wharf as opposed to the processor on the next ScallopMAC agenda and have a compliance officer attend the next MAC meeting to explain compliance responses.*

Complete: AFMA had spoken with AFMA Compliance who provided advice that the procedures in the Scallop fishery consistent with other fisheries where an estimated weight is required less than 50m from the wharf and then this weight is verified when the CDR is completed. Mr Shanks agreed to circulate this advice out of session.

ACTION ITEM: Mr Shanks to provide the ScallopMAC and RAG advice from AFMA Compliance in regards to completing CDRs at the wharf.

4. *Mr Shanks to draft and circulate a copy of the revised Harvest Strategy Proposal to ScallopRAG and ScallopMAC members for comment out of session before it goes to the Commission.*

Complete: AFMA has circulated the most recent version of the Harvest Strategy for members to consider at the current meeting, with advice to be provided to the AFMA Commission.

ScallopRAG Summary

The Chair of ScallopRAG provided the MAC with a summary of the recommendations from the ScallopRAG meeting of 4 April 2014.

The ScallopRAG Chair explained that the RAG recommended a size limit of 85mm to be applied in the harvest strategy adopted for the 2014 season as an interim limit until the results of the FRDC project incorporating size limits was available in late 2014. The RAG acknowledged that 85mm was less precautionary than a size limit of 90mm, but noted that the fishery is managed by a suite of measures. As such, the RAG was in agreement that should the 33% dredge efficiency factor be incorporated in the harvest strategy, which would make the “protected” tonnages required under Tier 1 and 2 1,500 tonnes and 3,000 tonnes respectively then it was appropriate to have a 85mm size limit. This advice was based on the fact that incorporation of dredge efficiency in the harvest strategy would provide a higher level of protection to the stock.

Some members raised the question regarding the FRDC project under which the application of size limits to spawning or the number of spawnings provided for was being considered. The AFMA member said he would provide advice to ScallopMAC members out of session on the FRDC project this work was incorporated in.

ACTION ITEM: Mr Shanks to provide ScallopMAC advice on the FRDC project work on the application of size limits is incorporated in.

The ScallopRAG Chair went on to explain that the RAG considered the arrangement whereby a 150t TAC is set at the commencement of the season to be an appropriate arrangement. However, there was concern that this arrangement would not create incentive for fishers to search for scallop beds throughout the fishery. Rather once fishers had located a patch they would take the entire 150 tonnes from this area and would not search throughout the entire fishery for scallop beds. ScallopRAG suggested that a way to address this issue would be for industry to implement voluntary arrangements to prevent large quantities of scallops being taken from one area and create incentive for fishers to search throughout the fishery for commercially viable scallop beds.

The RAG Chair also explained that the RAG agreed that density is an important factor for ongoing recruitment in the fishery and should be incorporated into the revised Harvest Strategy. As a result they made the recommendation that where biomass estimates are used to determine the closure arrangements under Tier 1 or 2 the densest beds not more than two be closed.

The RAG also discussed dredge efficiency and agreed that a 33% dredge efficiency should be incorporated into the Harvest Strategy as this provides an accurate reflection of the science undertaken in the fishery and is comparative to the biomass estimate surveys. The RAG Chair also noted to MAC members that this recommendation would mean that under both Tiers 1 and 2 in the proposed revised harvest strategy there would be a requirement to close scallop bed/s containing 1,500 tonnes and 3,000 tonnes respectively. The RAG Chair further noted that over the last 2 years all the biomass estimates of scallop beds produced by the Institute of Marine Sciences (IMAS) revealed biomass estimates greater than 1,500 tonnes.

Harvest Strategy Proposal

After considering the RAG outcomes the MAC industry members explained that due to the restrictions applied under the proposed harvest strategy attached in the papers of the meeting and high management costs they considered the fishery should be closed as it was not profitable.

The MAC Chair asked that industry provide specific comments in regard to the areas of concern they had so that these comments could be passed on to the AFMA Commission. Industry members of the MAC suggested that should the sampling and surveying in the fishery be entirely conducted by industry the research costs would be reduced potentially making the management costs less burdensome. Specifically the issue of density criteria was raised and the capacity of industry to monitor criteria around density created. One industry member noted that industry knowledge should be drawn on as they had the ability to not only determine density, but also how long catch rates within beds could be maintained.

The MAC industry members suggested running a trial for two to three years where one boat searches for beds with an AFMA observer on board (possibly the *Northern Star* with the observer Nick Jones), and when an appropriate bed is found they report back to AFMA. AFMA would then close this bed and open the rest of the Bass Strait Central Zone for fishing in June. With the sliding TAC scale agreed to at ScallopMAC 22 to be used from this point to set the TAC.

The AFMA member noted and was of the view that this proposal was effectively the same proposal developed by the MAC at their meeting of 7 February 2014 that industry had advised AFMA was not acceptable due to the high cost. The AFMA member stated that nothing in regard to the cost of the proposal had changed so if the cost was still unacceptable the proposal could not be provided at a reduced cost.

Industry members asked AFMA how the hybrid proposal put forward by AFMA provided the capacity to reduce costs associated with managing the fishery. The AFMA member explained that under the hybrid proposal the only work required in the initial instance was to issue fishing concessions at the commencement of the season to concession holders with their allocations (i.e. Statutory Fishing Rights) from the 150 tonne TAC. Unlike other proposed management arrangements there was no requirement to draw lines on the water and issue research permits, which required intensive costly management.

The MAC Chair suggested that the AFMA member prepare a proposal to go to the AFMA Commission on behalf of the industry members of the MAC detailing the management arrangements they would like to see adopted. The AFMA member explained that it was more appropriate for industry to provide advice directly to AFMA and the AFMA Commission in relation to this matter.

Industry members were also of the view that in order to best present their case they should speak to the matter at the AFMA Commissions next meeting. The AFMA member agreed that he would investigate the ability for industry members to present their views on the matter to the AFMA Commission.

The MAC agreed that Mr Richey and Mr Lister would write to AFMA outlining a proposal for the management of the fishery that addressed their concerns. The AFMA member explained that in any advice provided to the Commission on the management arrangements for the fishery the proposal put forward by industry would be provided as an attachment to ensure Commissioners were well aware of the industry position and that it was not tainted by AFMA's views.

<p>ACTION ITEM: Industry to write to AFMA to outline their views in relation to the management of the fishery, which would also be put forward to the AFMA Commission for consideration.</p>

Other business

Paralytic Shellfish Toxin (PST)

An Industry Member commented that he could not understand the need to send an observer on the boat to collect samples for PST testing. The Chair explained that under the action items AFMA had provided a copy of the procedures for collecting samples for PST testing and this met the obligation as specified in the action items for the meeting.

Levies

Another Industry member raised the issue that concession holders may not pay the levies for the upcoming financial year. The AFMA member advised that all concession holders had paid their first quarter levy installment with the exception of one.

Meeting Closure

The MAC Chair closed the meeting at approximately 11:50am on 7 February 2014.

Attachment 1

ScallopMAC Declared Conflicts of Interest

Member	Position	Declaration of interest
Mr John Pollock	Chair	No pecuniary interest in the fishery.
Mr Bill Talbot	Research Member	ScallopRAG Chair. No pecuniary interest in the fishery.
Mr Steve Mantzaris	Industry Member (Victoria)	Operates a scallop processing plant.
Mr Allan Barnett	Industry Member (Tasmania)	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions, a Commonwealth fish receiver permit and operates a scallop processing plant.
Mr Stuart Richey	Industry Member (Tasmania)	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions. FRDC Board Member.
Mr John Hammond	Industry Member (Tasmania)	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
Mr David Jarvis	Tasmanian Government	Senior Fisheries Management Officer (Crustaceans and Scallop Fisheries) in Tasmania. No pecuniary interests in the fishery.
Mr Steve Shanks	AFMA Member	AFMA Manager for the BSCZSF. No pecuniary interest in the fishery.

ScallopMAC Annotated Agenda

Teleconference Meeting - Monday 7 April 2014, 10am

1. **Adoption of agenda**
2. **Conflict of interest declarations**
3. **Apologies**
4. **ScallopRAG summary**

ScallopRAG Chair to provide summary of ScallopRAG outcomes/ advice from the meeting of 4 April 2014.

5. **Revised Harvest Strategy**

Following consideration of the advice from ScallopRAG, ScallopMAC to provide advice to the AFMA Commission concerning the revised harvest strategy. This advice should include:

- Comments on the strategy from all members;
- Advice on the size limit to be incorporated in the strategy; and
- Advice on the biomass to be closed to fishing when considering dredge efficiency.

In addition to the advice provided ScallopMAC also need to provide advice in relation to the implementation of a revised Harvest Strategy for the 2014 season.

6. **Consideration of the correspondence provided from the Tasmanian Scallop Fishermen's Association re management arrangements for 2014 season**

The correspondence recommends undertaking surveying prior to the commencement of the season to identify a 500 tonne scallop bed to be closed to fishing for the 2014 season. When considering the proposal the issues that need to be considered are:

- How the proposal relates to the proposed revised harvest strategy; and
- How the proposal will be funded – given IMAS have stated that should biomass estimates be determined with scientific staff on board the vessel then a higher costing level will be required as part of the research costs for the fishery.

7. **Research funding for 2014 – 15 financial year**

AFMA management is seeking advice from ScallopMAC on research funding, through the cost recovery process, for the fishery for the 2014-15 financial year. This advice is sought on the basis that we are not sure if research will be required for 2014-15. This is largely dependent on the type of harvest strategy adopted. Noting that should a 150 tonne TAC be set and advice is provided that industry do not want the TAC increased beyond this level during the 2015 season then no research would be required.

However, should the decision be made not to provide research funding for the 2014-15 financial year and research surveys are required costs incurred will be recovered through the 2015-16 levies.