



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Advisory Committee (SBTMAC)

**FINAL MINUTES
SBTMAC 41
29 JUNE 2017
PORT LINCOLN**



SOUTHERN BLUEFIN TUNA MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SBTMAC)

Introduction

The forty first meeting of the Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Advisory Committee (SBTMAC 41) was held in Port Lincoln on 29 June 2017.

The primary objectives of the meeting were to discuss:

- the outcomes from the 2017 Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) Operating Model and Management Procedure Technical meeting;
- the proposed 2018/19 research priorities;
- progress towards accounting for all forms of mortality;
- overcatch in the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery (SBTF); and
- the 2017/18 SBT Fishery budget.

Agenda Item 1: Preliminaries/matters arising

1.1: Opening Comments

1. The Chair, Mr Max Kitchell, opened the meeting at 8:40am and welcomed new members, invited participants and observers to the 41st meeting of SBTMAC. The Chair introduced new and returning members Mr Brett Cleary (replacing Dallas d'Silva), Dr Simon Nicol (replacing Dr Ilona Stobutzki) and Mr Sean Sloan (who has been nominated to replace Professor Gavin Begg). Members noted that Dr Rich Hillary is standing in as a scientific observer for Dr Campbell Davies at SBTMAC 41. SBTMAC also welcomed observers Ms Ann Preece (CSIRO), Ms Kirsten Rough (Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association (ASBTIA)), Mr Darren Tressider (Commercial spotter), Dr Daryl Evans (General Manager, Marnikol Fisheries) and Mr Mark Thyer (Sarin Marine Farm).

2. The Chair thanked The Sarin Group and Mr Michael Thomas for taking SBTMAC members out on the water yesterday to watch a harvest and tour their processing facility. Mr Andrew Wilkinson and Mr Terry Romaro were also thanked for showing members their processing operations and fertiliser plant.

3. Apologies were received from Mr Glenn Sant (conservation member), Mr David Ellis (Industry invited participant) and Dr Campbell Davies (Observer, CSIRO).

4. Participants at SBTMAC 41 were:

Chair

Mr Max Kitchell

Members

Dr Simon Nicol (ABARES)
Mr Trent Timmiss (AFMA)
Mr Andrew Wilkinson (farm industry sector)
Mr Marcus Stehr (farm industry sector)
Mr Rick Kolega (farm industry sector)
Mr Terry Romaro OAM (longline industry sector)
Mr Brett Cleary (recreational sector)

Invited Participants

Mr Brian Jeffriess AM (industry sector)
Mr Michael Thomas (farm industry sector)
Prof Gavin Begg (State government)



Executive Officer

Ms Sarah Kirkcaldie (AFMA)

Observers

Ms Ann Preece (CSIRO)

Dr Rich Hillary (CSIRO)

Mr Matt Daniel (AFMA)

Mr Sean Sloan (PIRSA)

Mr Darren Tressider

Dr Daryl Evans (Industry)

Ms Kirsten Rough (ASBTIA)

Mr Mark Thyer (Industry)

Adoption of agenda

5. SBTMAC adopted the agenda that was circulated at the meeting with the addition of agenda item 7.4 - Quota and gear pricing information request (**Attachment A**).

1.2: Pecuniary interest declarations

6. The Chair stated that as outlined in the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* and Fisheries Management Paper 1, all members and invited participants of SBTMAC must declare any interests, not limited to just pecuniary gain, in Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery as they relate to specific agenda items at the commencement of the meeting (Table 1). SBTMAC noted that if a member or invited participant discloses an interest in an agenda item, the person must absent themselves from the meeting while SBTMAC makes a decision as to whether they can participate in the discussion and in the making of recommendations, or remain absent from the meeting for the agenda item.

Table 1: SBTMAC members, invited participants and permanent observers' declarations of interest

Members	Declared Interests	Agenda Items Relevant to Declared Interests
Mr Max Kitchell	Employed as the SBTMAC Chair. No pecuniary interest in the Fishery.	Nil
Mr Trent Timmiss	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interest in SBT Fishery	Nil
Dr Simon Nicol	Member of the Commonwealth Research Advisory Committee (COMRAC managed by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation), ABARES research provider within government and no pecuniary interest.	Nil
Mr Andrew Wilkinson	SBT quota holder, General Manager of company that owns and operates a tuna farm/catching business.	6.3
Mr Rick Kolega	SBT quota holder and managing director of a tuna farm.	Nil
Mr Terry Romaro OAM	Director of a company that owns SBT, ETBF & WTBF quota SFR's. Mr Romaro further advised he is also a member of Squid Resource Assessment Group & Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee. He attends Indian Ocean Tuna Commission & CCSBT meetings representing Industry & is an Alternate Director of Tuna Australia P/L	Nil
Mr Marcus Stehr	Board member of Clean Seas, Board member of Australian Maritime and Fisheries Academy and Board member of Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association. Mr Stehr has recently been appointment to the Seafood Industry Association Board.	Nil
Mr Brett Cleary	Chair of Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing [TARFish]*, Board member Sustainable Marine Research Collaboration (SMRCA) Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)*, Trustee International Game Fishing Association and Life Member of Game Fishing Association of Australia [GFAA]*. Mr Cleary has no pecuniary interest in SBT Fishery. *Have or are funding research into SBT.	Nil
Ms Sarah Kirkcaldie	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interest in SBT Fishery.	Nil
Invited participant	Declared interests	
Mr Brian Jeffriess AM (Invited Participant)	CEO of Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association.	Nil
Mr Michael Thomas (Invited participant)	Board member of the Sarin Group that owns quota SFR's.	6.3

Members	Declared Interests	Agenda Items Relevant to Declared Interests
Prof Gavin Begg (Invited participant)	Employee of PIRSA-SARDI, no pecuniary interest in SBT Fishery. Noting that SARDI conducts research on range of fisheries issues.	Nil
Mr Matt Daniel (Observer)	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interest in SBT Fishery	Nil
Ms Ann Preece (Observer)	Employee of CSIRO, no pecuniary interest in SBT Fishery. Noting that CSIRO conducts research on range of fisheries issues.	4.1, 4.2
Dr Rich Hillary (Observer)	Employee of CSIRO, no pecuniary interest in SBT Fishery. Noting that CSIRO conducts research on range of fisheries issues.	4.1, 4.2

Mr Andrew Wilkinson – as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Wilkinson left the room. The remaining members of SBTMAC agreed that Mr Wilkinson should be allowed to return for all discussions but not the recommendations made under Agenda Item 6.3.

Mr Michael Thomas – as per requirements as a MAC invited participant who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Thomas left the room. The remaining members of SBTMAC agreed that Mr Thomas should be allowed to return for all discussions but not recommendations made under Agenda Item 6.3.

Dr Rich Hillary – as per requirements as a MAC observer who has declared interests under an agenda item, Dr Hillary left the room. The remaining members of SBTMAC agreed that Dr Hillary should be allowed to return for all discussions made under Agenda Items 4.1 and 4.2.

Ms Ann Preece – as per requirements as a MAC observer who has declared interests under an agenda item, Ms Preece left the room. The remaining members of SBTMAC agreed that Ms Preece should be allowed to return for all discussions made under Agenda Items 4.1 and 4.2.

1.3: Acceptance of minutes from SBTMAC 40

7. SBTMAC noted the finalised SBTMAC 40 minutes as a true and accurate account of the discussions. Members noted that minor editorial changes were provided by members and incorporated into the final minutes.

1.4: Actions arising from SBTMAC 40 and subsequent intercessional work

8. Members noted the status of the actions arising from SBTMAC 40 as outlined below:

	Action arising	Status
1	Inter-sessional science - agreed that Management Procedure development and the aerial survey should be discussed at SBTMAC 41.	SBTMAC noted that this action was to be discussed under agenda item 4.
2	Management Procedure - include a breakdown of costs in the 5 year strategic research plan.	Members noted that this was to be discussed under agenda item 4
3	Research Mortality Allowance - AFMA agreed to provide outcomes of Kirchoff et al. 2014 project to the Tuna Australia industry observer.	Members noted that this item was completed and the report was sent to the CEO of Tuna Australia Pty Ltd.

4	<p>Stereo-video - AFMA agreed to investigate providing the additional costs of stereo video versus mono-videoing.</p>	<p>SBTMAC noted that additional costs for stereo-videoing cannot be provided due to commercial-in-confidence nature of the contract. The AFMA member noted that the monitoring contract contains the option to provide stereo video but protocols have not been developed and therefore there are no costs. The AFMA member noted that the exact cost of mono-videoing could be provided.</p>
5	<p>Australian Research Council project - project titled 'Automation of Species Recognition and Size Measurement of Fish from Underwater Stereo-Video to be discussed at SBTMAC 41.</p>	<p>SBTMAC noted that this project is published in the ICES journal of Marine Science - https://academic.oup.com/icesjms/article-abstract/doi/10.1093/icesjms/fsx007/3056949/Towards-automating-underwater-measurement-of-fish?redirectedFrom=fulltext Members noted that AFMA can't distribute the journal due to copyright issues. Members noted that currently it is not possible to fully automate stereo video. The AFMA member explained that a human is still required to identify the nose and tail but then it can automatically track the length and this speeds up the measurement process. The Australian government is maintaining its policy to not implement stereo video until it is fully automated. Industry asked to be provided with the raw data from the project (Action arising 1).</p>
6	<p>Marine Bioregional Planning - CEO of Tuna Australia to investigate the consequences of line drift.</p>	<p>Members noted that the CEO is in regular contact with the Department of Environment and Energy regarding this issue.</p>
7	<p>Barcode on tags - Mr Wilkinson to provide information on the off-the-shelf tagging system to the CEO of Tuna Australia and industry would discuss a possible solution</p>	<p>Members noted that this item was to be discussed under agenda item 6.5.</p>

8	Justin Nelligan - Chair to write to Mr Nelligen thanking him for being on the MAC for the last 3 years.	SBTMAC noted that this action was completed with a letter sent to Justin Nelligen in late 2016.
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Intersessional work

9. The following items/issues have been progressed out-of-session since the last SBTMAC meeting:

- a) 14 November 2016, the Executive Officer circulated the draft minutes from SBTMAC 40 for comment;
- b) 9 January 2017, AFMA circulated the new approved Cost Recovery Impact Statement for information;
- c) 16 January 2017, Executive Officer circulated an email seeking member availability for SBTMAC 41;
- d) 18 January 2017, Executive Officer circulated another email seeking member availability for SBTMAC 41;
- e) 14 February 2017, AFMA circulated for comment a preliminary expression of interest in response to AFMA's research Committee 2017 call for research;
- f) 27 February 2017, Executive Officer sent an email confirming the date of SBTMAC 41;
- g) 14 March 2017, AFMA circulated an email seeking input into AFMA's domestic compliance risk assessment process;
- h) 31 March 2017, AFMA circulated an email seeking comment the draft 2017/18 budget for the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery;
- i) 14 March 2017, AFMA circulated an email seeking input into AFMA's domestic compliance risk assessment process;
- j) 15 May 2017, AFMA circulated an email seeking input into AFMA's domestic compliance risk assessment process;
- k) 15 May 2017, AFMA circulated a letter to the SBTMAC Chair advising that the public consultation period for the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy, Bycatch Policy and National Plan of Action for Seabirds;
- l) 7 June 2017, Executive Officer circulated an email providing details of SBTMAC 41; and
- m) 13 June 2017, Executive Officer circulated the draft agenda for SBTMAC 41;

Agenda Item 2: State of the fishery

2.1: Informal industry report on the 2016/17 catching season, markets and outlook

10. Industry members informed SBTMAC that fishing had been very good this season with good quality fish caught quickly that were on average 2-3kgs larger than last year. The ASBTIA observer noted that the warmer water temperatures made it easier for fish to surface and therefore easier to spot. Industry reported that all the fish were caught east of the aerial survey area. Shorter tows times contributed to the generally low rate of mortalities again this season.

11. Industry informed members that there had been a strong demand from Japan for SBT but prices had remained the same partially due to an appreciation in the Australian dollar. Members noted that Industry was still looking at expanding into new markets in China and Korea and these were starting to look promising. Members noted that there was a shortage of Bigeye on the market and this may be increasing demand of SBT and hopefully prices may increase next year.

12. SBTMAC noted that industry were looking at having a fuelling station on Kangaroo Island next catching season.

13. Members noted that 95% of the longline catch to date had been taken south of Eden. No catch had been reported in Western Australia. SBTMAC noted that industry was concentrating on SBT as there had not been the usual run of Bigeye and Yellowfin tunas. The average size of SBT caught was around 40kgs with some up to 50kgs. SBTMAC noted that the weather had been good which had allowed smaller boats to go out further. Industry was optimistic that July would be a good month with better quality fish being caught and prices going up. The AFMA observer noted that around 174 tonnes of the remaining SBT quota had been caught with about 863 tonnes left. The AFMA member noted that there are SBT zones in place and industry need quota and electronic monitoring if they are fishing in the zone. Industry was reminded that they are not allowed to discard dead SBT but they can release alive and vigorous fish.

14. Industry questioned when electronic monitoring would be accepted internationally. The AFMA member noted that Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) were accepting it and that there had been no opposition to CCSBT accepting it. One of the issues identified is that it can't give sex and length details but this is not an issue for SBT as this data can be collected on shore however, members noted that other scientific data can't be collected. Members noted that the Solomon Islands will have electronic monitoring in 2018, New Zealand by 2019 and the World Bank was sponsoring Fiji and Seychelles to do a large scale trial.

2.2: Informal report from other SBTMAC members and invited participants

15. The recreational member provided an update on the recent recreational catches of SBT. Members noted that overall the states have had a good recreational season with the Tasmanian season now running for nearly 12 months (a few years ago it was only a 6 month season). Members noted that recreational fishers are also catching SBT when targeting swordfish. The recreational member noted that fishers are catching Mahi Mahi and Striped Marlin in larger numbers than before off Tasmania and noted that the water temperature was not as cold as usual.

16. In Victoria there has been good fishing and SBT were being caught closer to shore than usual. Members noted that fishing effort has changed off Victoria with an increasing proportion of recreational fishers heading east (Lakes Entrance and Mallacoota) chasing swordfish.

17. The State government observer noted that South Australia licence charter fishing operators and have been collecting data since early 2000s. Members noted that the logbook data shows that there are low catches in the months July – November.

18. SBTMAC noted the comprehensive written report from Mr Dallas D'Silva who was the previous recreational member on SBTMAC (**Attachment B**).

Agenda Item 3: CCSBT

3.1: Outcomes from the 8th CCSBT Operating Model and Management Procedure Technical Meeting

19. The Scientific member advised he will circulate a report summarising the outcomes of the meeting but he reminded members that the outcomes are not public until the end of the Commission meeting (**Action arising 2**).

20. Members noted that CCSBT requested in 2015, that the Extended Scientific Committee (ESC) commence work to transition to a new management procedure (MP). The new MP will include abundance estimates of juveniles from gene-tagging SBT, which have been recommended as essential data for use in a new management procedure in preference to the existing aerial survey relative abundance estimates, used in the current MP. The development of a new MP over the next 12 months will be the basis for future TAC recommendations to the Commission. Members noted that the management objective of the MP is a 20% spawning biomass by 2035 with 70% probability. SBTMAC noted that there needs to be a discussion on whether to retain this objective (including the % spawning biomass, date and % risk). Industry stated that they were opposed to moving the date forward as this date was set at 2035 as a trade-off for the 3000 tonne increase limit. Industry also expressed concern that non-member catch will be deducted rather than an estimate of over catch being included in the Operating Procedure.

21. The Scientific member noted that this will create technical problems in developing and tuning a new MP, as it is almost impossible to 'slow' the recovery until 2035, with the current 3000t limit on TAC increases. Members noted that re-tuning will be discussed at the CCSBT Commission meeting but focus will be on the stock assessment.

22. SBTMAC noted that a stock assessment was being done this year which would include additional genetic data. Members noted that only a preliminary assessment had been done and the final full assessment won't be conducted until the Extended Scientific Committee meeting. Members noted that Australia had been approached by Japan to do a joint assessment. Industry questioned if the half sibling data was going to be incorporated. The Scientific observer noted that there was now agreement on how to include it and this was a positive step. The stock assessment will definitely include the new POP data and should include the half sibling data. Members noted that recent recruitments were very high and current estimates are that the stock is at 14% of the spawning biomass (this is up from 5% in 2011 and 11% in 2016). The POP evidence indicates that most parents are between 12 and 25 years of age. The Scientific member noted that there are scenarios in the stock assessment that allow for additional mortalities and it will provide a range of current stock status.

23. SBTMAC noted that the CCSBT Operating Model and Management Procedure Technical meeting had been very productive.

3.2: Upcoming 2017 CCSBT Scientific Committee meeting

24. Members noted that the CCSBT Scientific Committee meeting will be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from 28 August - 2 September 2017. It was suggested that a phone hook-up with relevant CCSBT members would be required in July to discuss further progress and the addition of half sibling data to the close kin project.

25. Members noted that CCSBT are funding collection of close-kin data and analysis but there is no funding for doing statistical analysis in 2018.

26. SBTMAC noted that the aerial survey won't be conducted in 2018 due to CCSBT not funding it.

Agenda Item 4: Research issues

4.1: Proposed 2018/19 research program and priorities

27. Members noted that normally the MAC meeting is held in September after the CCSBT Scientific Committee meeting so the research program and priorities are a lot clearer.

28. Members noted that in 2016 a total of 3,600 fish were tagged and 15,000 samples were being collected this harvest which would enable an absolute abundance estimate of 2 year olds from gene tagging. Members noted that sampling was a trial and error process to find the most efficient methods. A second round of tagging was conducted in early 2017 with nearly 8,000 fish tagged. Members noted that more samples means more matches are expected and reduces variance in the estimates of abundance. Members noted that the aim was to utilise the gene tagging data in the new MP as the aerial survey would not be conducted anymore. It was noted that by 2018 there should be two estimates and by 2019 there should be three estimates. The scientists and CCSBT thanked industry and SeaTEC for their continued assistance with the project.

29. SBTMAC noted the presentation from Ms Ann Preece on the current and future research workplan.

Current 2017-18 workplan

- New data sources in operating models:
 - New close-kin abundance estimates;
 - Simulate future data in projections;
 - gene-tagging index, close kin abundance estimates, CPUE;
 - 2017 stock assessment; and
 - 2018 further work on new MPs and consultation with industry, AFMA, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and other stakeholders.

2018-2019 SBT Inter-sessional Science project

- Participate in:
 - planning, technical consultation;
 - ESC and OMMP meetings, inter-sessional webinars;
 - review of exceptional circumstances; and
 - provide scientific advice to AFMA, ABARES, Industry and the CCSBT.

- Provide data through the 2019 CCSBT data exchange.
- Undertake the routine otolith archiving, ageing and developing age-length keys for the Australian SBT surface fishery.
- Consideration of data collection for AUS longline fishery.

2018-2019 MP testing, consultation, selection

- Further testing of candidate Management Procedures.
- Iterative consultation with Australian Industry and government.
- Selection of best performing MP in 2018 - but may be delayed.
- Options for scheduling of additional meetings or longer timeframe suggested at OMMP meeting – to be considered by the Commission.
- Data preparation for running MP for TAC advice in 2019 – unless delayed until 2020.

2018-19 maturity and age validation workshops

- CCSBT size/age at maturity workshop
 - Estimate an unbiased maturity schedule for use in SBT models including in independent close-kin assessment model;
 - Collection of ovaries (and otoliths where possible) by all CCSBT members. The Australian collection - over 178 ovary samples collected >110cm;
 - Histology of Australian samples;
 - Statistical analysis of histology results from all members;
 - CCSBT age validation workshop (reading otoliths);
 - Examine precision and bias of age estimates between readers and laboratories;
 - Ensure consistent methods and protocols used by all members; and
 - Resolve technical issues.

Close-kin

- The CCSBT is supporting close-kin collection of tissue samples:
 - Port Lincoln – 1500 samples from juveniles/year; and
 - Indonesia – 1500 samples from adult fish/year.
- CCSBT funding genetic sequencing of these new samples.
- Unfunded:
 - Genotyping – from the genetic sequencing data; and
 - Statistical analysis to determine POPs for use in Operating Models and Management Procedure.

30. SBTMAC noted the proposed 2018/19 research program.

4.2: Research Mortality Allowance

31. SBTMAC noted that Australia will be requesting a research mortality allowances (RMA) for one project on Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) in 2018. The project titled 'Health assessment of wild Southern Bluefin Tuna' has requested a Research Mortality Allowance of 1.2 tonnes for 2018.

32. The major aim of this project is to assess the health of wild SBT. As well as traditional health assessments including histology, microbiology, immunology and haematology, this project will aim to further develop and apply new molecular methods, including those for pathogen detection and associated pathology in wild SBT. New molecular methods will be developed which could help to identify specific blood borne biomarkers for various pathogens (disease agents) and ultimately could lead to non-lethal health assessment for these animals. This project, undertaken by researchers from the University of Tasmania, will have significant scientific and ethical benefits. The results of this project will contribute to the knowledge of the health of wild SBT populations including pathogen prevalence and/or intensities. Identification of suitable health biomarkers could also negate the need for destructive sampling of animals. This project could therefore have implications for future SBT research.

33. SBTMAC noted that this project was granted 1.2 t RMA in 2016 and 2017.

34. SBTMAC supported request for 1.2 tonnes of RMA for the project titled "Health assessment of wild SBT" and asked to receive any reports from the project (**Action arising 3**).

Agenda Item 5: Compliance issues

5.1: Compliance update

35. The AFMA observer noted that AFMA engages State agency including PIRSA to assist in compliance operations. SBTMAC noted the performance/statistics provided by the AFMA Compliance area which showed that compliance with management arrangements this year was good. AFMA/PIRSA conducted 13 at sea inspections, with one inspection requiring further investigation.

36. The AFMA observer noted that during a recent boarding operation off South Australia, it was identified that some Commonwealth Southern Bluefin Tuna operators have, and are, inadvertently taking non-permitted species in the normal process of taking live bait. It has also been identified that it may not be feasible for operators to exclude, or subsequently remove, non-permitted species in the normal process of capturing and storing that live bait. Consequently, to take account of this reality AFMA agreed to adopt a pragmatic and discretionary approach in the field. It was agreed that a sensible outcome would involve the exercise of discretion where the presence of non-permitted species within live bait tanks is detected. SBTMAC noted that compliance action would only be considered where it is clear that the contents of bait tanks are outside the intent of the terms of the MoU. For example, where the volume of non-permitted species is believed to be substantially greater than that of the permitted species, or where large individuals of those non-permitted species are present. This has been agreed between AFMA and PIRSA and conveyed to off shore vessels and all compliance officers.

37. Members noted that there were no issues identified during the audits of 100 fish samples.

38. SBTMAC noted the update from AFMA Compliance.

Agenda Item 6: Domestic management issues

6.1: Progress towards accounting for all forms of mortality

39. SBTMAC noted that at the annual Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) meeting in 2014 the following common definition of attributable catch was agreed:

A Member or Cooperating Non Member's (CNMs) attributable catch against its national allocation is the total Southern Bluefin Tuna mortality resulting from fishing activities within its jurisdiction or control including, inter alia, mortality resulting from:

- *commercial fishing operations whether primarily targeting SBT or not;*
- *releases and/or discards;*
- *recreational fishing;*
- *customary and/or traditional fishing; and*
- *artisanal fishing.*

40. It was agreed that Members would fully implement the definition by the 2018 fishing season. SBTMAC noted that now the Australian government must make a decision regarding how it will account for all sources of mortality by the next season. Members noted that the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is the lead agency in relation to decisions taken at CCSBT and is responsible for resource sharing policy across Commonwealth fisheries and that the Assistant Minister will be making the decision regarding resource sharing.

41. SBTMAC further noted that this issue was raised as part of the Productivity Commission report: Inquiry into regulation of the Australian marine fisheries and aquaculture sectors and provided commentary on how resource sharing could be achieved. The Department responded by stating the following:

The Australian Government is currently developing a resource sharing policy and will work collaboratively with state and Northern Territory governments to ensure a consistent cross-jurisdictional approach to resource sharing.

42. The AFMA member noted that recreational fishing for SBT is managed by the relevant states. States that have a recreational fishing bag limit (number of fish that can be retained) for SBT include SA, VIC, TAS and NSW. SA also has a limit on the number of SBT taken per boat. Retention of SBT by recreational fishers is banned in QLD.

43. Members noted that overall, the data available on the recreational catch of SBT are limited and no estimates of total Australian recreational SBT catch are available. However, several recent recreational surveys have taken place in individual Australian states. Members noted that various national surveys have been proposed but have not received any funding including a recommendation from the Productivity Commission to do a recreational survey every five years for all species. Members noted that a targeted survey for SBT would cost millions of dollars. Members noted a study conducted in 2016 by Dr Sean Tracey examining post-release survival and physiological stress in SBT captured recreationally. This study estimated a post-release survival rate of 86.6 per cent and indicates that SBT captured recreationally are likely to survive when released.

44. SBTMAC noted that the Australian Government has not currently announced a policy position on how recreational mortality will be taken into account. AFMA expects this will be communicated before the CCSBT annual meeting in October and AFMA will take this policy decision into account when setting the 2017/18 TAC.

45. The recreational invited participant noted that they had been contacted by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and would be putting a proposal to the Assistant Minister and acknowledged the growing number of recreational fishers fishing for SBT as their recovery continues.

46. The State government observer, Mr Sean Sloan, noted that the South Australian government supported the improved management of recreational catch and completing a national survey that should be funded by the Commonwealth. Mr Sloan noted that SBT catch is critical to South Australia's economy particularly on the Eyre Peninsula and is also important to the recreational sector that takes an estimated 150 tonnes. Mr Sloan noted that South Australia has undertaken three state wide recreational catch and effort surveys, with the most recent survey undertaken in 2013/14. SBTMAC noted that South Australia has bag and boat limits and manage their recreational charter sector with limited entry licensing and logbook reporting requirements. Mr Sloan stated that the South Australian Government position is that any move to allocate quota to the national recreational sector should be through a formal buy back of existing SFRs allocated in the fishery.

47. Industry stated that this issue is very important to industry and noted that this issue has been around for a number of years with no progress and now there is a tight timeframe to make a decision. Industry believe the Department has a clear position and their role is to advise the Minister how to take quota from the commercial sector and give it to the recreational sector. Industry stated that they have no issue with resource sharing but they need to be compensated if quota is removed from them.

48. Industry claimed that section 17.2 of the Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Plan states that AFMA can't allocate more quota than agreed to at CCSBT and industry have sought legal advice. The ASBTIA CEO stated his view that section 17.2 of the Management Plan could not be used to decrease the quota. Industry noted that if the Management Plan is revoked then SFR options are created and any succeeding plan must allocate in equal proportion.

49. The AFMA member asserted that section 17.2 is not about increasing/decreasing/changing TAC but simply states that AFMA must set TACs prior to each season and cannot set it higher than CCSBT allocation to Australia. He noted that in every quota managed fishery AFMA sets a TAC to pursue legislative objectives, the relevant harvest strategy and AFMA has to take into account all sources of mortality (e.g. State fishery). The AFMA member noted that this is not a one off situation and AFMA had reduced striped marlin, elephant fish and gummy shark TACs noting that TACs move up and down for a variety of reasons.

50. Industry noted that since 1984 the whole system has been based on collateral and secure right of access used for whole supply chain (including banks). Industry stated that Parks and Wildlife charge people to use national parks and questioned why recreational fishers won't have to pay. Industry also stated that currently there is no cap on the recreational sector's share of the stock.

51. SBTMAC noted that Australia must account for all sources of Southern Bluefin Tuna mortality within Australia's National Catch Allocation from 2018.

6.2 : Industry presentation – Statutory Fishing Rights in SBTF

Mr Brian Jeffriess gave a presentation on the farming sector of the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery. Mr Jeffriess discussed the business model, the challenges that industry face, SBT basic principles, quota changes, sovereign risk and resource sharing. The presentation is provided at **Attachment C**.

6.3: Overcatch in the SBTF

52. The AFMA observer noted that the Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Plan (the Plan) came into force in 1995 however there was no formal provision for concession holders to access overcatch arrangements at that time. In the early 2000s the industry approached AFMA to introduce arrangements to allow either overcatch arrangements or live release provisions. In 2008, AFMA initially modified the Plan to allow concession holders to apply, not more than once a season, to retain an amount of overcatch of Southern Bluefin Tuna of less than 25 tonnes.

53. In 2013 the Plan was amended again and overcatch arrangements modified. The requirement to apply to AFMA for overcatch was removed and replaced with overcatch arrangements that allowed access to 5% of an operators holdings up to a maximum of 25 tonnes. These arrangements allowed the overcatch to be paid back at 1:1 in the following season. The AFMA member noted that the 25 tonne cap was implemented in 2013 at the request of the Department of Agriculture to limit any Australian overcatch to manageable levels while providing a level of flexibility to operators.

54. SBTMAC noted that live release provisions apply to the live release of SBT after they have been transferred to tow pontoons. It should be noted that separate to this purse seine operators can release fish immediately after capture provided the fish are alive and vigorous and before any transfer of fish to a tow pontoons. Live release provisions were also permanently incorporated when the Management Plan was amended in 2013. The provision required concession holders to apply to AFMA for a permit to release fish. The intent of the provision was that a release would be allowed each season to ensure that Australia did not exceed its national allocation.

55. SBTMAC noted that while undercatch arrangements are explicitly allowed by CCSBT (through a resolution agreed in 2014) a resolution relating to overcatch is yet to be agreed.

56. SBTMAC noted that in 2016 AFMA conducted a review of overcatch/undercatch arrangements across all Commonwealth fisheries. The intent of the review was to ascertain how the current arrangement's impact on markets and the decision making process.

57. A number of submissions were received from SBT Industry members looking to retain access to 5% overcatch allowance but seeking to remove the 25 tonne cap and replace it with a maximum cap of 100 tonne. The intent of the industry proposals was to allow companies holding more than 500 tonne of quota, access to the full 5% of their holdings. Industry noted that many years ago some of the quota was held in multiple companies but it was now held under one company which meant that this company held more than 500 tonnes. The AFMA member questioned why industry want to use overcatch provisions when there is quota available.

58. The AFMA observer noted that in 2014, Australia overcaught its CCSBT allocation and Japan instructed its importers to refrain from importing Australian SBT. Fortunately the east

coast season had all but ceased due to the prevailing water conditions and the remaining catch was marketed domestically.

59. Mr Wilkinson and Mr Thomas were asked to leave the room as background discussion on this agenda item had concluded and, in line with SBTMAC's earlier decision (item 1.2), they were to be excluded from discussions relating to recommendations.

60. The AFMA member re-iterated that the current system was already flexible with the ability to do live release, lease additional quota and be overcaught by 25 tonnes. Industry noted that they would be forced to break up companies again if the system was not changed.

61. SBTMAC noted that industry strongly supported pursuing amendments to the cap of 25 tonnes of overcatch per company but noted AFMA's reservations given the current flexible system. The State government and recreational members did not express a position on the proposal. It was agreed that AFMA would discuss the issue with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and attempt to come up with a solution that will be acceptable to CCSBT **(Action arising 4)**.

6.4: SBT budget issues –2017/18 SBT budget

62. The AFMA member provided the MAC with a summary of the budget for the SBT Fishery in the 2017/18 financial year. Members noted that the AFMA Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) specifies what costs for management activities should be recovered from fishing concession owners and what should be funded by government. Government policy requires AFMA to review and update its cost recovery arrangements at least every five years. Subsequently, AFMA has developed the 2017 CRIS which represents an update upon the previous 2010 CRIS.

63. The implementation of the 2017 CRIS has resulted in a range of significant changes to AFMA's cost recovery arrangements from the 2010 CRIS and these changes combined with the new activity based costing approach will make direct comparison of the 2017-18 budget to the 2016-17 budget difficult, but in future years comparisons should be easier.

64. SBTMAC noted that the SBT cost recovered budget had increased by \$225,437 and this was mainly due to the SBT monitoring contract costs for the ranching sector increasing due to the change under the new CRIS from being 50% cost recovered to 100% cost recovered. Licensing costs have also increased due to an increase in managing the Catch Documentation Scheme and the costs being calculated on actual expenditure in recent years. Policy support costs have also being included in all AFMA fisheries for the first time in the 2017/18 budget.

65. Members noted that Table 2 in the document titled AFMA 2017 CRIS 2017-18 budget explains all the activities that AFMA undertakes and which costs are cost recovered and the amount that is government funded (around \$5.4 million from industry \$2.8 million government funded). Members noted that activities associated with CCSBT, foreign fisheries, Compliance and indigenous activities are all government funded.

66. The AFMA member outlined the cost-recovered components of the 2017-18 SBT Fishery budget.

ACTIVITY GROUP	SBT FISHERY COSTS 2017-18	SBT FISHERY FEE FOR SERVICE
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A. Management of domestic commercial fisheries	\$325,069	
D. Policy support (based on number of FTEs)	\$32,357	
G. Data collection and management (80% industry recovered)	\$627,647	
H. Research (previously each project assessed individually now 75% industry and 25 % government includes hard parts and CCSBT inter sessional science)	\$168,685	
I. Licensing / registration and revenue collection (licensing transaction and overheads)	\$46,674	\$1,780
TOTAL	\$1,200,432	\$1,780
TOTAL LEVY BASE	\$1,198,652	

67. Industry acknowledged that the budget process is rigorously done by the SBT section but expressed concern at the sudden increase and would have preferred a staged increase. Industry also questioned the costs for the policy section. The AFMA member noted that the policy costs includes a component of operational policy, economic advice, environmental management, legal services such as quota administration, bycatch and discards policies and managing protected species issues. The costs are calculated based on full time equivalents (FTEs) staff and a breakdown of costs could be found in page 34 of Attachment B.

68. SBTMAC noted the 2017/18 SBT Fishery budget.

6.5: Barcode tags for longline sector

69. At SBTMAC 40 it was proposed that barcodes be incorporated into CCSBT catch disposal scheme tags to minimise tag miscoding errors in the longline sector. AFMA noted that the current system had been working well in the ranching sector where there are well identified systems and process in place. However, in some areas of the longline sector where these systems don't exist an improved method of reading tag numbers is required. Members noted that there would still be errors with the barcode system but hopefully these would be reduced.

70. SBTMAC noted that in recent seasons the ranching sector has used between 290,000 and 305,000 tags and the longline sector has used between 13,000 and 17,000 tags.

71. Members noted that there is a 9 cent/tag difference between the current tags and the barcode tags. SBTMAC supported using the barcode tags in the longline sector but not the farm sector if there is a higher cost associated with printing the bar codes. ASBTIA indicated that it is possible with some additional work, to use both systems noting that Tuna Australia Pty Ltd are keen to use the barcode tags. Members noted that it will take between 2-3 weeks between printing and receiving tags and agreed that a request for tags would need to be made as soon as the farm sector stops processing based on the amount of quota left.

6.6: Proposed changes to chum boats

72. SBTMAC noted the proposal from AFMA to require all secondary fishing vessels to have at least one uncaught SBT statutory fishing right nominated to the boat during fishing operations. Members noted that to be as efficient as possible, vessels often fulfil a number of roles including chumming, towing, searching for fish and fishing. To ensure these secondary fishing vessels are complying with the necessary obligations in relation to the taking of fish AFMA proposed that all vessels that are likely to be involved in fishing, including chum boats, nominate at least one uncaught SBT SFR.

73. Members noted that the process of nominating of an SFR can be undertaken through AFMA's GoFish online licensing system and there is no cost involved. Members further noted that secondary fishing vessels does not include feed boats and other small tenders unless they are directly involved in the fish catching process.

74. Industry sought clarification regarding reporting requirements if SBT is caught. The AFMA member noted that if it is caught and a mortality then the purse seine logbook (TBP 03A) must be completed. If the SBT is alive and vigorous it may be released and no paper work is required.

75. SBTMAC supported the proposal to require all secondary fishing vessels to have at least one uncaught SBT SFR nominated to the boat during fishing operations starting on 1 December 2017.

6.7: Environment update

76. The AFMA member noted that since SBTMAC 40, the Minister for the Environment gazetted a Declaration of an Approved Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) and an Amendment to the List of Exempt Native Specimens (LENS) for the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery on 12 December 2016 to expire 13 December 2019. The WTO is subject to six conditions which were all expected. Industry indicated that they had hoped for a 5 year WTO but noted that only 3 year exemptions are given to any fishery with conservation dependent species.

77. SBTMAC noted that currently a longliner is spending its entire time targeting SBT off Tasmania and a breach of the Seabird Threat Abatement Plan (TAP) requirements has occurred in this area. The AFMA member noted that seabird mitigation is an important issue and AFMA will be working with all operators to ensure the TAP requirements are met.

78. Members noted that AFMA is often asked to provide comments on proposed petroleum and related activities which may interact with fishing or have potential effects upon the fishing industry. Activities include petroleum / mineral exploration, burial at sea, sea dumping, marine farming development and boat scuttling. When responding to enquiries AFMA will request that the applicant contact the appropriate industry bodies. It was noted that increased activity is expected in the next few years and that there is a very small window between SBT and whale migration and any activity would need to be timed carefully to minimise the impact. Industry requested input into any AFMA submissions. It was agreed that Industry would write to AFMA expressing their concerns (**Action arising 5**).

Agenda Item 7: Other business

7.1: Possible amendments to the SBT Management Plan

79. SBTMAC noted that industry had decided not to pursue possible amendments to the SBT Management Plan until the issue of resource sharing had been resolved.

7.2: Harvest Strategy/Bycatch Policy update

80. SBTMAC noted that the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is undertaking public consultation on the revised Commonwealth Fisheries Bycatch Policy and the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy. The draft policies were circulated to members for comment in May 2017. The AFMA member noted that there was a stakeholders workshop held last week and noted that there may be cost implications for AFMA and industry. Members noted that the public consultation period finishes shortly and the plan is for the policies to be finalised by the end of the year.

7.3: How 3D Imaging can Measure Tuna Biomass

81. SBTMAC noted the paper sent by the Environment member, Mr Glenn Sant, on a project undertaken in Spain to count and measure tuna biomass. Members further noted that this information was published on the ATUNA and Fish Information Services websites in May 2017. The paper explained that a biomass measurement system has been developed for transfer among Bluefin tuna cages using acoustic and optical techniques and is based on a synchronized system of video cameras and scientific echo sounder.

82. Industry noted that the technology had not yet been adopted.

7.4: Reporting SFR trading price information

83. Industry members expressed concern regarding AFMA's request to provide price information when trading quota and gear statutory fishing rights. Industry noted that price is determined by a number of factors and argued that this would not help the economic efficiency of the Fishery.

84. The AFMA member noted that the collection of the information is for the purposes of evaluating the biological and ecological status of fisheries resources and also a way to monitor economic performance of the fishery.

85. Industry noted that the collection of this information will cause issues with banks and result in irreparable damage and stated that this is the worst decision in 30 years of dealing with a regulatory agency.

Agenda item 8: Next meeting

86. SBTMAC members noted that the next meeting would be a teleconference and would be held in the second half of September 2017. The Executive Officer will circulate dates closer to the time. The Scientific member noted that he would be travelling for business most of August and September.

87. Members further noted that this would be Professor Begg's final meeting as the State government invited participant and the Chair, on behalf of SBTMAC, thanked Professor Begg for his invaluable contribution to SBTMAC over the last few years.

Meeting closed at 2:21pm

Max Kitchell
SBTMAC Chair

Attachment A

**Meeting of the Southern Bluefin Tuna
Management Advisory Committee
(SBTMAC 41)**



Thursday 29 June 2017

8.30 am – 4.00pm

Marine Science Centre, Port Lincoln

Final Agenda

- 1. Preliminaries/matters arising**
 - 1.1 Opening remarks/apologies/acceptance of agenda
 - 1.2 Pecuniary interest declaration
 - 1.3 SBTMAC 40
 - 1.4 Action arising SBTMAC 40 and intersessional work
- 2. State of the Fishery**
 - 2.1 Informal industry report on the 2016/17 catching season, markets and outlook
 - 2.2 Informal reports from other SBTMAC Members and Invited Participants
 - 2.3 AFMA report on SBT catches in the longline sector
- 3. CCSBT**
 - 3.1 Outcomes from 8th CCSBT Operating Model and Management Procedure Technical Meeting
 - 3.2 Upcoming 2017 CCSBT Scientific Committee meeting
- 4. Research issues**
 - 4.1 Proposed 2018/19 research program and priorities
 - 4.2 Research Mortality Allowance
- 5. Compliance issues**
 - 5.1 Compliance update and outcomes
- 6. Domestic management issues**
 - 6.1 Progress towards accounting for all forms of mortality
 - 6.2 Industry presentation – Statutory Fishing Rights in the SBTF
 - 6.3 Overcatch in the SBTF
 - 6.4 SBT budget issues - 2017/18 SBT budget
 - 6.5 Barcode tags for longline sector

- 6.6 Proposed changes to chum boats
- 6.7 Environment update (includes Seabird Threat Abatement Plan Update and WTO approval)

7. Other Business

- 7.1 Possible amendments to the SBT Management Plan
- 7.2 Harvest Strategy/ Bycatch Policy update
- 7.3 How 3D Imaging Can Measure Tuna Biomass
- 7.4 Quota and gear pricing information request

8. Next meeting

