



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery Great Australian Bight Trawl Management Advisory Committee (GABMAC) 1-2012

Minutes

20 July 2012

The Great Australian Bight Management Advisory Committee (GABMAC) held the 2012 meeting on 20 July 2012 in Adelaide. If you require any further information on any of the issues raised, please contact the Executive Officer, Jeff Moore, by phone on 0400 166 649 or by email to jeffmoore@gabia.com.au

Attendees: Mr Barry Windle, Dr Ian Knuckey, Mr Jim Raptis, Mrs Marcia Valente, Mr Brad Milic, Mr Ross Bromley, Mr Patrick O'Callaghan, Mr Jeff Moore.

1. Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome

The Chair, Mr Barry Windle, welcomed members to the 2012 GABMAC meeting at 8.45am.

1.2 Apologies

Apologies were received from invited participants David Carter, Martin Exel, Tony Muollo, Angus Nicholls and State Permanent Observer Alice Fistr.

1.3 Declaration of interest

In accordance with the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, members (and attendees) declared their direct interests in Great Australian Bight Trawl Fishery (GABTF).

Members and Permanent Observers

Mr Barry Windle	No financial interest
Mr Brad Milic	A/g Senior Manager, GABTF, no financial interest.
Mr Ross Bromley	A/g Manager, GABTF – no financial interest
Mrs Marcia Valente	Boat and quota SFR holder
Mr Jim Raptis	Boat and quota SFR holder
Mr Patrick O'Callaghan	No financial interest
Dr Ian Knuckey	Director of Fishwell Consulting Pty Ltd Principle investigator – Fishery Independent Survey (FIS) SESHF Principle investigator – Empowering Industry Project (FRDC) Industry Liaison Officer – SEMAC Principle Investigator – GAB Shelf FIS Association consultant - Great Australian Bight Fishing Industry Association (GABIA) Director – Australian Seafood Co-products Australian Agent – Olfish electronic logbook



Mr Jeff Moore

GABIA Executive Officer, Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA) Board member, Commonwealth Marine Reserves Industry Liaison Officer

1.4 Adoption of Agenda

The Chair, Mr Barry Windle, suggested that over the next year, agreement should be reached on what GABMAC wants to achieve in one meeting per year. He observed that much of the day to day work of managing the fishery appears to be happening in other forums and arrangements, such as co-management direct with GABIA, and in the Resource Assessment Groups (RAGs). The Chair suggested that it is time to reflect and talk about where GABMAC currently sits and to be strategic about the future.

Mr Jeff Moore advised that GABIA/AFMA worked to try and keep the agenda for the GABMAC meeting strategic. He noted that there are some impediments to this, due to legislation and planning requirements that affect the management advisory committees.

***Recommendation 1:** That the agenda for future GABMAC meetings be developed at an appropriately strategic level, so as to encapsulate GABTF co-management arrangements and AFMA's dual advisory model.*

Noting the above comments, members adopted the agenda as circulated.

1.5 Adoption of draft minutes GABMAC 1-2011

Dr Ian Knuckey suggested a few changes, including at page 4, 3.1, first dot point "The Boat Operating Procedures Manual was finalized and implemented for the 2011/12 fishing year", page 7 addition "Dr Knuckey", page 8 correct typographical error "angle" should be "angel", and page 10, 6.6 "Members also noted a proposed hook trial".

Noting these suggested changes, GABMAC members adopted the minutes from the 1-2011 GABMAC meeting as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

***Action 1:** GABMAC EO to incorporate agreed changes to the draft minutes and send the final minutes to AFMA for uploading to the AFMA website*

1.6 Actions arising from GABMAC 1-2011

Members considered the three Actions and eight Recommendations from GABMAC 1-2011. Members noted the Action Items had been completed. It was also noted that the recommendations from that meeting had either been actioned, and/or were on the agenda for GABMAC 1-2012.

1.7 Correspondence

Members noted that there were fewer items of correspondence than in previous years and surmised that this is a reflection of the co-management arrangements.

1.8 Out-of-Session papers

Members noted the out of session papers and were verbally updated on the resolutions.

1. Update on gulper shark management strategy – members formally noted the "for information" paper and that GABIA has been directly involved in the process. The A/g Manager advised a further update would be provided under agenda item 2.1.
2. A further update on gulper shark management strategy – as above.
3. Draft GABTF budget 2012/13 – Members noted GABMAC did not make a formal submission, but that GABIA provided a detailed submission, which was sent to GABMAC for comment prior to submission, in line with the "below the line" co-management arrangements.



Given the out-of-session papers were updates marked for information, GABMAC members formerly acknowledged no further action was required.

2. Status of Fishery Update

2.1 AFMA Managers Report (verbal)

The AFMA Manager, Mr Brad Milic, highlighted a number of issues for the consideration and information of GABMAC members:

- Members note that a SESSFRAG meeting will be held next week.
- Pre-proposal on Western Gemfish stock discrimination project. The outcomes of the previous GABMAC meeting were considered by GABRAG and SESSFRAG. Current allocation for CTS was based on Tier 4, but noting the Tier 1 outcome.
- A GABRAG research sub group meeting will be held prior to GABRAG to further consider GABTF strategic research
- The ERAs have been updated for teleosts and chondrichthyans – this will be considered at SESSFRAG later in July and then at the RAGs.
- GHAT gillnet update for ASL area / gillnet extension
This decision deferred again until 28 Feb 2013. This decision has implications for the gulper sharks listing and WTO. WTO expires at the end of this month. In the interim period, the fishery will be on the LENS. Conditions will be the same. In drafting new WTO conditions, will be more strategic level and less prescriptive. Mr Milic reported that AFMA's relationship with SEWPAC is positive, and the changes in relation to the GABTF reflect the relatively low risk to gulpers in the GAB.
- SESSFRAG recommended tier 1 assessments in 2012/13 - Western Gemfish and Deepwater Flathead
- Review of the Orange roughy Conservation Plan:
 - Objective to rebuild stock for commercial fishing (missing from current Plan).
 - Dr Knuckey suggested that a review of the process for delisting is needed. The MAC considered clarification is needed about what is the limit reference point? Dr Knuckey also suggested clarity should be provided on whether fishing can occur at sustainable levels after reaching this limit reference point?

Recommendation 2: *That, as part of the Conservation Plan review, AFMA clarify the limit reference point for Orange Roughy and whether fishing can occur at sustainable levels once the limit reference point is reached*

- Mr Milic briefly outlined the proposal to increase maximum gillnet length from 4200m to 6000m was approved by AFMA in early July 2012. The MAC noted this increase doesn't apply inside the South Australian or Tasmanian State limits. In agreeing to this, the MAC noted the Commission has requested a working group be formed and that there will also be an FRDC funded schoolshark workshop, prior to SharkRAG.
- Mr Milic outlined the proposal to make changes to the stock assessment project contract. The MAC noted the RAGs advice that the SESSF FIS was considered to be of high priority. Due to funding constraints, this reduced eight Tier 1s to four Tier 1s. This was noted and supported by GABMAC members, especially given the proposed changes would not impact the Deepwater flathead assessment scheduled to be undertaken.

2.2 Industry/GABIA Report (verbal)

The GABIA EO, Mr Jeff Moore, informed GABMAC of the outcomes of the GABIA AGM and General meeting, with Jim Raptis elected as President of GABIA.

Members noted:



- Orange Roughy – there is no intent for commercial fishing of this species in the short term. Mr Moore suggested that the GABTF Orange Roughy research plan be maintained under status quo arrangements, and that results of the CSIRO genome project should be reviewed.
- Cold chain project update – the FRDC TRF project looking at the GAB cold chain is going well on a very low budget. This project is expected to deliver recommendations to improve the GABTF cold chain process at the boat/company level.
- Seismic – BP was discussed. Industry members reported meeting with BP at the GABIA meeting, which discussed a range of operational issues, and gave members a chance to raise concerns about the impacts of seismic and potential future spills once drilling commences, with BP. Members noted there are precedents for investment of oil companies in research - for example Barrow Island and the Gorgan gas fields Chevron project. Members need to be aware of previous arrangements, for example marine mammal monitoring, technology etc
- MSC considerations – Quotes have now been received.

Market and operations update

- Price gouging of refrigerant gas remains an issue. A question was raised about the difference between R22 and R404a. The Government figures suggest a \$30 - \$80 increase. The MAC agreed industry should follow this up.
- The Chair observed that the GABIA President's report provided for this agenda item in the background papers is both strategic and positive. GABMAC members agreed this should be attached to the GABMAC minutes for information (Attachment 1).

Action 2: *GABIA AGM President's report to be attached to the GABMAC minutes*

- Although the fishery has performed well sustainably, we still have the strategic issue of how to maximize returns to the Australian community. The meeting agreed stocks are at or around MEY and fishery ecosystem impacts seem relatively low, based on ERA and other measures, such as minimal effort. However, profitability is a key challenge.
- Industry reported that the low New Zealand dollar is causing higher importation of fish. Importation from Vietnam and Thailand is also an issue. Industry members raised concerns and questions about whether the same level of scrutiny (environmental, food standards etc) is placed on imports.
- The AFMA Manager noted that costs in the GABTF could be proportionally higher, due to a low number of operators in the fishery. The question was posed "Could amalgamating see cost savings?" Industry members strongly advised that every time any form of amalgamation has occurred (eg, combined with the SESSF Plan), financial and/or other costs have increased.

2.2B MPAs and GABIA deepwater closures

The GABIA EO and MAC industry member, Mr Moore, asked that GABMAC note the current status of SW MPAs and consider GABIA's proposal regarding the existing GABIA deepwater closures.

GABMAC members discussed the South West Commonwealth marine reserves process update provided in the background papers. Mr Moore reminded the MAC that in recommending the deepwater closures, GABIA also stated:



“Consistent with the Ministerial Direction, the proposed GABIA deepwater closures should only be implemented on the understanding that they are fisheries closures and may be amended in the future if necessary. For example, effective integration with the MPA planning process must be an acknowledged component of the agreement. AFMA, GABIA and other stakeholders will need to review the location and extent of the proposed fisheries spatial closures during the SW region MPA planning process.”

As such, Mr Moore advised the MAC that GABIA wishes to put the MAC and AFMA “on notice”, that concurrent with the SW marine reserves coming into effect, it would be logical, and consistent with the agreement on their implementation, to remove the GABIA deepwater closures. The MAC discussed the Gulper Shark closure in the far west and agreed while more thought is required, the extensive SW Commonwealth marine reserves is likely to adequately protect gulper sharks. It was agreed AFMA and GABIA should work on this issue and bring it back to the MAC, prior to the SW Commonwealth marine reserves coming into effect.

***Action 3:** AFMA and GABIA to jointly review the GABTF deepwater closures, with a paper to be provided for the MAC, prior to the SW marine reserves coming into effect.*

3. GABTF Management issues

3.1 Future Direction vision statement review paper

The MAC considered the background paper, recommending that members decide, after reviewing the “GABTF Future Direction Vision Statement” document, whether changes should be made.

The GABIA EO provided the MAC with the background to the development of the Vision, which occurred after the Ministerial Direction to AFMA and a request by the then AFMA Board. Members noted it is a joint GABMAC vision, which in some ways has been superseded by the AFMA/GABIA co-management agreement. However, after some discussion, members agreed it was still a relevant document for GABMAC and that it should be reviewed and updated.

During consideration of potential changes, members made the following points:

- Is the overseas market vision realistic? Industry members highlighted the current difficulties given the high Australian dollar, that marketing/promotion would be key to any success, and that such work needs to be sophisticated and is expensive.
- Various members’ experience in resource management is that the Vision could be long term – 25-50 years. Under that, development of a 3-5 year strategy to meet that vision would be necessary.
- If the export market was to be pursued in the medium term (5-10 years), an export market development grant should be pursued by industry, to show premium product in Hong Kong and in the Middle East such as Dubai.
- Dr Ian Knuckey – highlighted that the unique and “premium” product and price dimension of GABTF marketing should be included in the vision.
- Members noted there is currently no explicit mention of profitability in the challenges, but it is one of the fishery’s biggest issues. For example, AFMA can be efficient and keep costs as low as possible whilst meeting objectives, but equally industry can look at profitability with a wide range of initiatives, with suggestions including reduced costs, fuel, quality of product to increase market price etc.
- It was suggested that “demersal and midwater” should be removed to simply reference “trawl”.
- The Environment Member suggested strengthening the document to include explicit reference to minimizing impacts on bycatch and habitat interactions



Action 4: GABMAC EO to update the GABTF Vision document with suggested changes and send to MAC members for comment

3.2 Documentation of Harvest Strategies and TAC decision rules

Members considered the AFMA background paper, which outlined that while the GAB fishery is part of the SESSF, the GAB harvest strategy framework is not in the current *Harvest Strategy Framework for the SESSF 2009* document. The AFMA member asked the MAC to support the development of one document, outlining all harvest strategies and decision rules used in the SESSF, to streamline documentation and improve accessibility to information. In doing this, AFMA advised that the GAB rules will not be changed in any way, but would simply be incorporated as a separate section of the SESSF harvest strategy framework.

A number of members expressed concerns about the potential for generic rules to impact negatively on the GABTF. The issue of gulper sharks, which were never targeted by GABTF operators and in relatively high abundance in the GABTF area, was raised as an example of this.

After some discussion, the MAC agreed to the proposal to include the GAB harvest strategy and decision rules in the one SESSF harvest strategy document, providing that the rules don't change and that the MAC sees a draft version of the report for comment, prior to its finalization.

Action 5: AFMA to provide GABMAC an opportunity to comment on the draft SESSF Harvest Strategy document, which will incorporate the GAB harvest strategy and decisions rules as a separate section.

The MAC also briefly discussed the status of the existing SESSF harvest strategy framework. AFMA advised it was available publicly on the web and that once finalized, the combined SESSF harvest strategy document would also be made public on AFMA's website.

3.2A TAC recommendations process review

The MAC briefly discussed the process for setting 2012/13 TACs. The MAC noted the GABRAG recommended RBCs, and TACs put forward by GABIA under the co-management arrangement for the 2012/13 fishing year. It was agreed the process was working well and that the MAC should continue to have an opportunity to comment on the TACs being recommended by GABIA to the Commission.

Recommendation 3: The TAC setting process continues to include opportunity for GABMAC to comment on the TACs being recommended by GABIA under co-management arrangements.

The Conservation member asked about the 50t Orange Roughy "bycatch" quota. The AFMA member explained that this is only for the Albany/Espérance GAB Orange Roughy quota zone, and does not impact the arrangements required under the GAB Orange Roughy research plan.

3.3 Bycatch and Discarding Workplan

AFMA provided an update to the GABTF Bycatch and Discarding workplan, dated November 2011. In considering bycatch issues, members noted there are a number of initiatives in the GABTF that assist in quantifying and reducing bycatch, including:

- gear modifications pursued by industry, including the move to T90 extensions and/or codends on all nets used for fishing on the shelf;
- area closures;



- investigation of seabird mitigation measures, including offal management and mitigation devices;
- individual vessel seabird management plans;
- production of a GABIA bycatch and discards flier to assist in accurate reporting of bycatch and discards in daily fishing logs; and
- the GABTF Bycatch and Discard Workplan;

Members thanked AFMA for the update and agreed the GABTF Bycatch and Discarding Workplan should be further refined, stipulating timelines for progress, who is responsible, the costs and where the money will come from, to carry out any existing or future actions.

Action 6: *AFMA and GABIA to further refine the Workplan, stipulating timelines for progress, who is responsible, the costs and where the money will come from.*

3.4 Draft Budget 2012/13

Mr Moore advised GABMAC members that GABIA had been working directly with AFMA on the draft budget for 2012/13. Members noted the industry view that the draft budget is a vast improvement on 2011/12 in terms of the overall levybase, noting it is largely the result of cancelling the GAB FIS.

Mr Moore said that for six consecutive years, the GABT budget has been over or around \$500k. Investment in research for stock assessment and ecosystem level management has been proportionally substantial compared to most other Commonwealth fisheries. As examples, Mr Moore said the GABT was the first to have a long-term FIS implemented, ERA level 3 completed and has since gone on to try and pursue the MEY objective and cement reliable Tier 1 stock assessments through increased data collection and research. This was a conscious investment in the fishery, agreed through the RAG and MAC, at considerable cost to industry and Government.

The MAC considered advice from industry that:

- Sustaining these levels of investment is not possible, especially while operational costs continue to rise.
- The 2012/13 budget is the first step in working towards a more sustainable, long-term budget for the fishery.
- Costs must remain relatively low and consistent into the future.

Industry members advised that GABIA will work with AFMA, GABMAC and the RAG in future years to deliver against this need. Mr Moore said GABIA applauds AFMA for recognising this reality and its commitment to working with GABIA to achieve both a sustainable fishery, with a viable future.

Members thanked industry for the detailed comments and background paper, which also set out that GABIA believes further cost reductions can occur for the 2010/13 draft budget, based on a range of factors including:

- Continued co-management arrangements, including streamlined MAC and RAG functions;
- strategic approach to research and assessments;
- adoption of E-logs across the fishery (currently 4 of 5 boats);
- E-licensing (commitment to 100% use for 2012/13);
- industry taking on greater management responsibility and data collection initiatives; and
- fairer cost attributions for research projects and RAGs, among other measures.



The MAC agreed the budget process appeared to have improved substantially this year, as a “below the line” co-management issue, and agreed it should be a process of continual improvement.

Recommendation 4: *That the positive, collaborative nature of GABTF budget development continue, both for finalizing the 2012/13 budget and as part of continual improvement for future years.*

3.5 Gear requirements

Members were referred by the AFMA member to the GABMAC background paper, which asked members to note the BRD requirements in the GABTF and make recommendations for any changes. The AFMA member advised that the GAB Trawl Boat SFR conditions specify a minimum mesh size of 90mm for all trawl nets, including Danish seine, and the conditions also stipulate the need for T90 gear extensions and/or codend configuration to be fitted to all trawl nets, excluding Danish seine, when fishing in waters less than 200 m in depth. However, members noted the specific requirements of extensions and configurations are not defined in the Boat SFR conditions, nor do they currently apply to Danish seine. Members briefly discussed the situation, noting that a range of gear details and requirements are stipulated in Card 11d of the GABTF Boat Operating Procedures Manual.

The AFMA member asked the MAC to consider:

1. If industry has a requirement for BRDs in the fishery to be legally enforceable, then BRDs should be properly defined in the GAB Trawl Boat SFR.
2. If BRDs are to be part of the requirement for using a Danish seine net in the fishery, this requirement should also be included in the GAB Trawl Boat SFR.
3. Industry is encouraged to further develop BRDs to help reduce incidental bycatch and depending on requirements, either include them in the GABIA Code of Conduct or make them a condition of the GAB Trawl Boat SFR.

The MAC considered that the issue should be pursued further, directly between AFMA and GABIA. The MAC also noted advice from the RAG that some observation of species composition and wildlife interactions should occur via observer work on the Danish seine boat, within the days allocated for such work in the GABTF.

Action 7: *GABIA and AFMA to progress GABTF gear requirement issues directly*

Members also noted the outcomes of GABRAG and GABIA/AFMA discussions, which agreed to pair trawling in the GABTF. The MAC noted advice from AFMA and Mr Moore that GABRAG considered the issue in October 2011 and unanimously agreed to support pair trawling on the basis it may improve quality, efficiency, and profitability of the fishery. However, the RAG did recommend an observer requirement (after initial operational trials/trips are completed) to ensure increased impacts are not realised (eg, unforeseen impacts like additional bycatch of GABTF species). As well, the RAG noted the general concern about potential seabird interactions. Industry agreed it needed to be proactive about what would be done to address that, in line with the requirement for sea bird management plans as part of the GABTF BOPM. GABMAC endorsed the sentiments and outcomes from GABRAG on the issue.

3.6 Bight Redfish- states (WA/SA)

AFMA advised it received a letter from PIRSA on 3 July 2012, in reply to AFMA's letter sent 28 July 2011. The SA Invited Participant advised that PIRSA's preference is to review this issue as part of the broader process, based on the Australian Fisheries Management Forum resolution agreeing to commence a review of the OCS.



Industry reiterated concerns that any OCS review is likely to take years and added concerns about reports of increased catches of Bight Redfish by SA operators. The MAC noted the figures provided in the letter to AFMA, which indicated Marine Scalefish catches had increased, but only to 11.8t in 2010/11. The charter sector reported 14,000 individual fish taken in 2010/11. The MAC noted this may include some Nannygai and swallowtail, as SA operators only record "Redfish".

Industry expressed long-standing concerns about the current OCS. The MAC noted *Centroberyx gerrardi* has been acknowledged as Commonwealth species, through historical communications between PIRSA and AFMA. Some industry members expressed the view there should be a bycatch limit on SA operators.

The meeting agreed the issue should be progressed outside the MAC between AFMA, PIRSA and GABIA.

Action 8: *AFMA, PIRSA and GABIA to progress the Bight Redfish management and OCS issues outside the MAC process*

The MAC briefly discussed management implications of State catches of Bight Redfish (and other GABTF species, and agreed to recommend that GABRAG should acquire and consider State catches of GABTF species when conducting annual fishery reviews/TAC-setting.

Recommendation 5: *That GABRAG consider WA and SA catches of GABTF species as part of the annual process to ensure sustainability of the fishery*

4. Data and Research

4.1 Future Research and Assessment Strategy

Mr Moore introduced the background paper, which asked GABMAC to note that a strategic research planning meeting will be held prior to the next GABRAG meeting, and the letter sent from GABIA to AFMA regarding the FIS and future research. The MAC was asked to consider these, and the recent findings of AFMA's scientific/economic information review, and provide any relevant advice to GABRAG, industry and/or AFMA.

Industry members said that, as highlighted in budget submissions, GABRAG meetings and other communications, that the GABTF has significantly invested in research compared to many other Commonwealth fisheries. Industry members went on to say that significant industry, government and scientific resources have been dedicated to getting the best information (including 6 years of FISs, robust stock assessments, industry data collection) to ensure sustainability. Industry advised this level of commitment must now be scaled back and prioritised, to allow budgets to better reflect the risk/catch/cost framework and/or allow industry funding to flow to research into other issues such as improving the profitability of the fishery.

Mr Moore advised that based on a recent meeting, GABIA is of the view we are collectively at the "crossroads" of the existing 5 year research plan, and need to look to the future. GABMAC's advice was sought in completing this important task.

The MAC considered the background papers and agreed much has been achieved in trying to strategically plan research in the GABTF. This has included annual reviews of the GAB research and assessment strategy, meetings of the GABRAG sub-group and RAG, among other things. Members noted this was consistent with the recent review, which also recommended that RAGs take a greater role in strategic research planning. The MAC agreed a risk management approach needs to be applied to the



budget/research/management changes into the future, noting that the risk/catch/cost framework is not well defined.

Members discussed the need for dedicated work, possibly in the form of a project, looking at a range of scenarios and inherent risks, costs, benefits and compromises for a range of management and future research scenarios. Centre of this discussion was the uncertainty about how often FISs should be undertaken. Members agreed in principle that for the most part, the fishery appears sustainable, especially for key target species, but also for other species, based on ERA results, and habitats/ecosystem, based on projects like the CSIRO habitat mapping project.

Noting the need to maintain sustainability and monitoring, the MAC identified the need to determine minimum research and data requirements for sustainability, whilst not compromising trust, possibly through a dedicated project. It was agreed these issues are broader than just the GABTF and that therefore, it would be appropriate for any work in this regard to be at an appropriately strategic level.

The Environment member advised that trust, perception and message are very important concepts that must be strengthened going forward. He advised the fishery needs to document and tell a story, working with trusted partners such as WWF, to improve perceptions. The MAC agreed that the industry as a whole, including in this fishery, are “faceless” when it comes to public perception and understanding of industry.

The MAC also acknowledged the uniqueness of the fishery, and that this needs to be delivered and promoted down to the product level.

Recommendation 6: *That GAB strategic research planning continue at the RAG level, based on a risk management approach, possibly through a dedicated project*

4.2 Data Collection

Observer program report

Members considered the observer report provided in the background papers, noting 30 days had been undertaken in the fishery up to 30 May 2012. The observers reported good cooperation and rapport. Members were impressed with the numbers of at-sea length frequencies collected for key target species, including 1688 and 1226 for Bight Redfish and Deepwater Flathead respectively. The MAC was also happy with otolith numbers collected, including 358 and 375 for Bight Redfish and Deepwater Flathead respectively. The MAC thanked AFMA for the update, regarding the outcomes so far for 2012 as a huge improvement on previous years. This was especially the case, due to the collection of information from other non-quota species such as Western Gemfish and Ocean Jackets.

E-Log report

AFMA advised reporting through the e-log system is improving, with four of the five active boats using e-logs. The MAC discussed the Olfish system and agreed to recommend that E-CDRs capability should be investigated, once the e-log system is operating satisfactorily.

Recommendation 7: *AFMA, Olfish and GABIA to investigate E-CDR capability in the GABTF, once the e-log system is running satisfactorily in the fishery*

Industry collection report

Mr Moore advised crews on GABIA boats continue to collect at-sea length frequencies to supplement the observer program and collect samples in the observer “off years”. Industry reiterated the need to chase up the missing data as identified at the last GABRAG meeting.



Action 9: AFMA and GABIA to resolve the missing length frequency data with input from CSIRO and Fishwell, if agreed as feasible and worthwhile.

4.3 Byproduct species fishery reference points

Members noted advice from AFMA and industry that the reference points were considered as part of the GABRAG process in 2011, and will again be reviewed at GABRAG later in the year. The MAC also noted that industry will be seeking advice from GABRAG as to whether the ERA quantitative assessment can be used to better justify the reference points/trigger levels.

5. Policy

5.1 AFMA quota management Policy review

The AFMA member advised that the AFMA draft policy had been released and stakeholder advice received. The MAC considered the issues raised by GABIA, noting that the overall message is that a one size fits all policy may not deliver against the principles of the draft quota administration policy, which is intended to “simply quota administration arrangements” in support of AFMA better achieving its objectives under the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* (FM Act). By contrast, albeit noting that some improvements can be made to the quota arrangements, GABIA feels that on the whole, the proposal will introduce significant additional complexity and costs into the arrangements.

The MAC noted GABIA’s position is as follows:

- Within season reconciliation – largely supported as proposed
- Accounting for discards – largely not supported as proposed, though possible in some fisheries
- End of season undercatch – not supported as proposed, especially for multi-species fisheries
- End of season overcatch – supported, with industry/stakeholders to have input to determined amounts, to be agreed on a species basis
- Accounting for inter-fishery catches in over-lapping waters of quota managed fisheries – requires significant further consideration of implications and issues
- Personal use allowances – the proposal to remove the 10kg personal use allowance was not supported

Members thanked the AFMA member and industry for the update, noting the outcomes of stakeholder feedback will be considered by the AFMA Commission in August 2012.

5.2 Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy Review

The EO advised that DAFF is leading the review, which is being carried out concurrently with the Bycatch policy review. Members noted the first meeting was held in May this year. The EO advised the next steps are that consultation papers will be released for comment, and then the Department will develop reports to the Minister by March 2013. The MAC noted all stakeholders have the opportunity to have input to the review. Industry advised it would have input via the Commonwealth Fisheries Association and/or directly through GABIA.



5.3 Bycatch Policy

The MAC agreed this item had been covered under Agenda Item 5.2. Dr Ian Knuckey declared a conflict of interest, advising that he was authoring a report for DAFF, which is detailing bycatch across Commonwealth fisheries from ISMP information and other sources. Members noted the advice.

5.4 MAC and RAGs

The MAC noted the additional scrutiny being placed on MACs and RAGs, especially regarding declarations of interest.

5.5 Fee for service

The MAC briefly discussed AFMA advice that a range of services will be charged on a user pays basis in the future. The MAC expressed in principle support, but was unclear to what and how it would apply. Members agreed to await the draft policy release by AFMA before commenting further.

6. For Information

6.1 AFMA Environment Update

Members briefly considered the AFMA Environment Update. Concerns were raised about the “presumption” that the rotting, dead seal brought up in a net, in Zone A of the Australian Sea Lion management area, was an Australian Sea Lion. Members agreed this was not appropriate for the trawl fishery, where no previous interactions had occurred, and required urgent clarification from AFMA.

Action 10: AFMA to clarify whether the “presumption” that all pinnipeds caught in Zone A are deemed to be Australian Sea Lions applies to the GABTF

The Environment member observed that the update is informative, but not in the format he would have expected. The member suggested a more informative or additional approach could be to report, for example in table format, at a fishery level against key target stocks, bycatch levels, discards and other metrics.

Action 11: Environment member to articulate the observation about environmental reporting and send this and a template “environment report card” to the MAC for consideration.

7. Other business

Gulper sharks

The AFMA member advised that after a long process, closures will be implemented by 31 Dec 2012. GABIA’s previous position on the gulper shark issue was reiterated by Mr Moore:

- GABIA has a code of conduct not to target deepwater sharks (including no long tows at night in slope depths)
- There is a 15kg/day, 90kg/trip limit in place for gulper sharks across the SESSF, including GAB (due to very low effort in slope depths, has never needed to be applied to our knowledge in the GAB)
- The Murray and GAB Commonwealth marine reserves are already in place, protecting likely gulper habitat from trawl
- There is a 60nm closure specifically for gulper sharks already in existence in the GAB, between 300-600m from 133 45’ to 134 45’
- GABIA implemented an extension to its 120nm wide deepwater closure, protecting another 30nm of likely gulper shark habitat up to the 200m isobath from 121 30’ to 122 E.



- Logbook and CDRs show near to zero catches of gulper sharks
- Effort on the slope is consistently and extremely low in the GABTF - There was less than 5% of GAB effort in slope depths in 2010/11 (only about 700hrs out of over 15,000hrs)
- Terry Walkers project, using annualised average data, confirmed very low catches are likely to be taken from the GABTF
- The Commonwealth SW marine reserve network proposal will likely close significantly more area to trawl.

Based on the above, and the fact that the fishery is so closely managed through limited entry, quotas and closures, industry cannot support, or see any justification for, additional closed areas to GAB trawl to protect gulper sharks in the area of the GABTF. It was agreed a positive outcome was the evidence presented by CSIRO suggests gulper sharks in the GAB are relatively abundant, and that the 60 mile closure protects male and female adults and juveniles. Industry members advised the depletion estimates and proposed management paper must be integrated and align with the risk in each sector and area.

GABMAC noted the update.

8. Next meeting and Close

The MAC agreed to hold the next meeting on an as needs basis, but likely around the same time next year.

The Chair thanked all members and observers for their participation at the meeting.

Meeting closed at 4.40pm.

Attachment 1 – GABIA President's report



President’s/Annual Report - GABIA AGM 2012

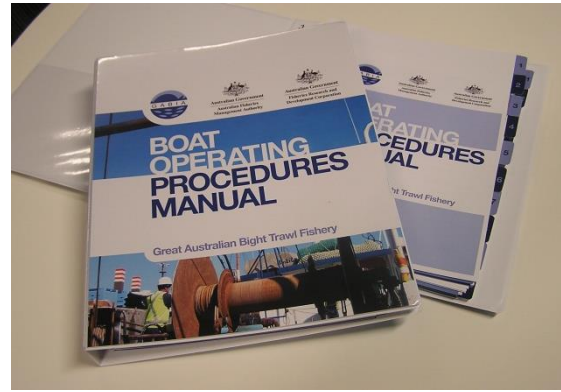
This is my first report since taking on the position in May 2011, after our dedicated President Semi Skoljarev stood down, leaving some big shoes to fill. I must say upfront that my job has been assisted greatly by having the long-standing support and professionalism of the part-time EO’s position – with Jeff Moore continuing to deal with so many of our issues, very effectively. In addition it’s been critical to our success having the assistance, experience and support of all GABIA members. Thank you to all.

The relationship between GABIA, AFMA and other stakeholders remained very positive and was strengthened during 2011. GABIA continues to work collaboratively with AFMA under the MOU both parties signed as part of co-management arrangements, under the FRDC project.

- Dual advisory model sets out who has responsibility for what
For example, budgets go to GABIA for consideration. Closures and research surveys (FIS, orange roughy) are the responsibility of GABIA. Only one GABMAC meeting per year.
- TAC-setting, strategic research and stock assessment planning and monitoring
Example – GABIA sets TACs and applies decision rules – within agreed HS
Assessment cycles are no longer annual
Default TACs are set 2-3 years into the future
Research and management program is targeted and based on the “risk/catch/cost” principle
- A quota monitoring strategy
GABIA members have continuous quota monitoring.
Communication strategy is developed.
- An enhanced fishery information collection program
E-logbooks.
Industry data collection – slope species and target species length frequency and otolith collection. Eg, DF and BR sampling increased
- Product traceability process (concept stage)
E-CDRs – reduce regulatory burden and costs. Chain of custody process for demonstrating sustainability and quality.
Easy transition to third party certification and branding
- Comprehensive, vessel specific operational procedures manual, which includes all operational agreements and requirements
Gear requirements and closures. Compliance. Requirements for discards recording.
Development of Seabird Vessel management plans to mitigate the risk of interactions with seabirds. OH&S. etc

Attachment 1 – GABIA AGM 2012 President’s Report

One of the new initiatives was the development of a GABTF Boat Operating Procedures Manual by GABIA and AFMA. The manual was launched in Adelaide by Dr Mike Kelly. This collaborative undertaking will deliver lasting benefits for effective management of the GABTF and forms a template for many other fisheries to follow if desired. The Manual details all of the requirements for fishing in the GABTF in a simply laid out, easy reference waterproof format, as well as industry initiated best practice guidelines on a range of matters including the environment and sustainability. Every boat in the fishery has a manual on board so skippers and crew can readily access the information they require. The manual was successfully updated for 2011/12.



Whilst not all of these “co-management” initiatives have been progressed to operational level, the arrangements continue to be pursued where agreed, such as the potential to move to E-CDRs. The concept of traceability starts with E-CDRs and has not been dropped, though many operational and cost issues would need to be over-come to progress this further. GABIA also prioritised learning more about the GABTF cold chain, in the hope to improve fish quality and shelf-life, before thinking more about traceability. The FRDC TRF project being run by Dr Richard Musgrove has been very successful during 2011, and looks promising to deliver insightful information about aspects of the GABTF cold chain such as on-board handling and processing, refrigeration and transport.

The GABTF continues to invest significant time and resources into optimum management of the fishery, underpinned by research. Ongoing input to stock assessments, the industry led FIS (carried out Feb/March 2011), GABIA orange roughly research plan during winter of 2011, GABRAG taking on Western Gemfish are just some of the areas GABIA has played a leading or key role.

The most recent significant achievement is the Kompas/Klaer GABTF Maximum Economic Yield (MEY) study. GABIA pushed for and gained FRDC funding for this study. In November 2011, GABIA wrote to AFMA highlighting the scientific reasons why the baseline MEY targets from that research should be used in the GABTF key stock assessments, for target biomass levels and RBC projection purposes. This was supported by AFMA, with RBC projections from the revised stock assessments for both Deepwater flathead and Bight redfish increasing from 1,463t and 1,556t respectively for 2011/12, to 1,733t and 5,823t (2,358t long-term RBC was used) respectively for 2012/13. This resulted due to target biomass levels changing from the default B_{48} , to B_{43} and B_{41} respectively.

Given the financial realities, the previous significant investment and proven ability to work with AFMA and scientists, GABIA started re-thinking the long-term GABTF research and assessment strategy during 2011 (Attachment 1). Work continues on this, but the scheduled and costly FIS has been put on hold indefinitely. GABIA made the call, with GABRAG advice, that such a move would not jeopardise stock assessments. This will significantly decrease the AFMA levybase over at least the next few years and allow GABIA

Attachment 1 – GABIA AGM 2012 President’s Report

to strategically plan for the future, including investments into areas other than fisheries research.

The AFMA/GABIA Co-management Arrangement sets out, among other things, that following consultation with GABRAG, GABMAC and AFMA, GABIA is responsible for making TAC recommendations to AFMA. GABIA fulfilled that responsibility in 2011, with the Commission setting GABTF TACs fully in line with the GABIA recommendations.

During the year following discussions at GABRAG, it was agreed the default TAC change decision rules for Deepwater Flathead and Bight Redfish should be amended slightly, to account for the fact that FISs are not carried out every year. The revised default TAC change decision rules were implemented effectively for the 2012/13 quotas, following support from GABMAC and AFMA.

To reduce costs and increase the level of information flowing out of the GABTF into research, the GABIA proposal to only have ISMP observers every second year has been implemented successfully, including for 2011. Reportedly, the GABIA promotion of the need to accurately record discards in logbooks remains at high levels, and has been seen as a model for other fisheries. Please pass on GABIA’s thanks to skippers and crews. In the current climate of high levels of scrutiny and some mis-trust of the industry in terms of TEP interactions, quota discarding and other issues, the fact that AFMA and GABIA have been able to maintain this cost saving exercise is testament to the trust built upon between regulators and the GABTF.

The GABIA initiative of crew-based data collection for Deepwater flathead and Bight redfish length frequencies continues very successfully. This work has been acknowledged publicly by AFMA in the AFMA News updates, as well as being applauded at GABRAG meetings. The sample numbers are quite extraordinary, with well over 20,000 length frequencies taken during 2011. We must thank the crews who try to achieve a bin of each species per shot.

In addition, the GABIA slope species sampling was also successful during 2011. Despite only a relatively small number of trips being carried out in slope depths, samples of a range of species were collected, with lengths and otoliths taken in the Melbourne fish market. The flexible relationship with Fishwell Consulting has been very helpful in achieving this outcome.

A number of interesting operational changes have occurred during 2011, with the introduction of a Danish Seine vessel by one of our newer members, Mr Tony Muollo. Tony has reported that there are significantly reduced bycatch levels, reduced fuel costs, but also that catches are much lower, and mainly of flathead. GABIA assisted in reducing the red tape and anxiety of AFMA with a new method entering the fishery. GABIA also assisted my Company, by suggesting the most appropriate way to broach the concept of pair trawling in the GABTF. This resulted in Gear Directions changes being made, to allow pair-trawling in the GABTF, and clarified issues such as if any additional rules would be required to trial such gear.

Marine Bioregional Planning is clearly a huge issue we’ve been facing in GABIA for some years, with 2011 quite an intensive period for the EO, GABIA members and the industry as a

Attachment 1 – GABIA AGM 2012 President’s Report

whole over the past year. The Government’s “displaced activity policy” was released, and shortly after the SW draft network of MPAs in May. A long consultation process followed, during which the EO played a key role, not only for GABIA members, but for all State and Commonwealth fisheries in the SW, in a position funded by Government. This culminated in Jeff pulling together a unified fishing industry position on a refined network of MPAs, that met Government objectives and minimised impacts on industry. The fact that the EO was able to stay focussed on those issues, whilst carrying out the GABIA EO role, and remaining impartial and well respected by all of the sectors involved, should be applauded. By all accounts, the impact on GABTF key grounds is negligible, and all of the known deepwater areas are also not included in the proposal.

In an attempt to get the GABTF message out there, work has progressed on the website. We expect release of our new GABIA website (www.gabia.com.au) during 2012, to provide an effective focal point for those interested in what we do as an industry body. It will be rewarding to showcase the leadership and effectiveness of the GABIA model, as well as promote the great products the fishery provides. In the meantime, GABIA has developed and promoted a GABTF fact sheet (Attachment 2), which has been sent around to various Commonwealth Departments.

The GABTF, and industry as a whole, continues to be faced with increased scrutiny in relation to environmental issues – ranging from impacts of fishing on the sea bed, through to interactions with threatened, endangered and protected (TEP) species such as gulper sharks and sea birds. Whilst we have largely dealt with these issues through seabird management plans and GABIA involvement in the gulper sharks issue, including submissions, GABIA needs to stay on the front foot. Particularly, the work GABIA has done so far on gear technology is very positive. Such initiatives should continue, within the context of the needs, requirements, risks and financial realities of the fishery.

GABIA, through the EO, remains engaged in a range of core activities, including regular liaisons with Agency people including AFMA, DAFF and SEWPAC. Jeff sits on a range of committees and bodies, including as Board member of CFA, GABMAC EO, GABMAC and GABRAG industry member, SESSFRAG Chair meetings invited participant, SEMAC invited participant, AFMA/CFA Cost Efficiency working group, Quota policy working group, Commercial fishing industry representative of the Commonwealth’s Displaced Activities Policy Stakeholder Advisory Group, CFA representative on the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy policy review, and Industry Liaison Officer for the South East, South west and North West industry MPA working groups. During 2011, GABIA’s direct or indirect support for and involvement in these forums keeps us fully engaged and aware of emerging issues, lifts the profile and knowledge of the Association and benefits both the Association and the industry as a whole.

Other key issues, processes and submissions GABIA has dedicated itself to during 2011 include reviewing the bycatch workplan, ERA, seismic testing in the Bight, AFMA budgets, RAG rationalisation, quota review, MSC quotes, Bight redfish OCS, gillnets to hooks issue, stock regionalisation, progression of E-logs, and AFMA’s review of scientific and economic information and advice.

Attachment 1 – GABIA AGM 2012 President’s Report

Heading into the next twelve months, some significant challenges remain for GABIA. Marine Bioregional Planning will be largely completed within the year, and will continue to be resource intensive as we remain involved with the consultations. We will also be busy with resolution of issues relating to the government financial assistance packages for any of our members impacted by the MPAs and the development of management plans for the reserve networks. The ongoing challenges of effective and efficient fisheries management will remain. GABIA needs to strategically position itself, further aligning research and management with the risk/catch/cost framework, and think outside the square in terms of focussed efforts to improve profits.

In closing, I would like to sincerely thank all members for their financial support of GABIA. In order to maintain the capacity and success of GABIA, memberships need to be paid. In urging members to keep on top of fees, it is important to note that the costs of maintaining the EO services and other GABIA costs are more than offset by levy cost reductions, quota increases, more sensible, effective and efficient management, and risk minimisation roles GABIA has played such a key role in delivering. I would also like to again thank Jeff Moore, and others intimately involved in the fishery, such as Dr Ian Knuckey, who through dedication, knowledge and experience have contributed in so many ways to ensure our ongoing success as an organisation.

Cohesion within our organisation is critical to our success. Without GABIA working effectively as a group, the very strength of GABIA would be compromised. We are seen as leaders, a unified group of industry running separate businesses, but with a common vision of a sustainable and profitable fishery.

Jim Raptis
President

Table : GABTF – future research and assessment plan (2011 update)

		2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
B. REDFISH*	TAC	2,000t	2,000t	1,653t	1,556	TBD	TBD
	Assessment	x	✓	x	✓	x	TBD
D. FLATHEAD*	TAC	1,400t	1,300t	1,100t	1,500t	1,500t	TBD
	Assessment	x	x (update)	✓	x	✓	x
MEY study		x	Developed		✓	n/a	n/a
MSE						✓	n/a
FIS		✓	✓	x	✓	x	TBD
ISMP (onboard)		✓	x	✓	x	✓	x
(onshore)		x	✓	x	✓	x	✓
Slope species MONITORING		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LOGBOOK	(discards recording)	Education✓	Monitoring✓	Audit✓	✓	✓	✓
GABIA length measurements	Industry onboard	NA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RAG (meetings)		1	2	2	2	2	2
MAC (meetings)		1	1	1	1	1	1
BYCATCH	T90 extensions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Seabird Management Plans		Developed	✓	✓	✓	✓

*default setting – can be influenced by decision rules as outlined below

Facts about trawling in the Great Australian Bight

The Great Australian Bight Trawl Fishery (GABTF) is one of the most demonstrably sustainable fisheries in Australia and the world, managed collaboratively under strict mandated and industry agreed management arrangements by the Commonwealth Australian Fisheries Management Authority.

The FACTS - the GABTF:

- Is under quota management and other effective controls
- Key stocks Deepwater flathead and Bight redfish are well above target biomass levels as set out in the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy, at 62% and 73% respectively
- Has a “trawl footprint” of, or fishes, less than 5% of the fishery, mainly over sandy and muddy substrates and nets on the bottom are only 25m-30m wide
- Has only 4-5 active vessels operating in a huge area of waters (and can fish a maximum of 10), and has fished the same areas for over 20 years
- Was found to have not one (zero) “high risk” species at the highest level of CSIRO’s Ecological Risk Assessment, the SAFE analyses
- Does not have any interaction with sea lions or fur seals, as verified by 10 years’ worth of independent observing
- BRS Status Reports state
 - “Bight redfish – “not overfished / not subject to overfishing”
 - Deepwater flathead – “not overfished / not subject to overfishing”
 - Orange roughy – “not subject to overfishing”
- Has had a Fishery Independent Survey in place for 6 years, tracking key and byproduct species abundance as a key indicator of fishery and stock health
- Implemented a combined industry/AFMA program to assess the nature and extent of seabird interactions in the fishery, which found very minimal interactions and has led to the implementation of “Seabird Management Plans” tailored specifically to each active boat
- With AFMA, developed and implemented an extensive system of spatial closures up to 120 nautical miles wide out to the EEZ for the additional safeguard of slope and deepwater species and ecosystems (in addition to the GAB Marine Park and Murray MPA)
- Works with AFMA and other stakeholders on a wide range of research, bycatch mitigation and management initiatives, both through informal and formal “co-management” arrangements
- Contributes to jobs for regional southern Australia and supplies over 2,500t of fresh sustainable seafood to Australians every year

“The small number of operators and their continued willingness to support a range of voluntary conservation and management measures are also positive indicators for the sector”

– BRS Fishery Status Reports 2009

GABTF background

The GABTF is sustainably managed through a combination of input controls, which establish a framework for limiting fishing effort (boat SFRs), and output controls, which provide a direct limit on the catch of deepwater flathead, Bight redfish, orange roughy and some species of shark. Each of the ten boat SFRs granted in the sector allows for the operation of one boat. Each boat and quota SFR is a transferable, long-term, secure fishing right granted under the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*.

The GABTF resources are currently being responsibly managed under a suite of arrangements and monitoring/assessment initiatives including:

- ◆ Quota management for the key target species deepwater flathead and Bight redfish, set in line with the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy and species assessment harvest control rules
- ◆ Quota management for orange roughy and some species of shark
- ◆ Comprehensive spatial management measures (both fisheries and MPA closures)
- ◆ Catch limits and strategic research and management triggers for developing fisheries of non-quota species (development strategy)
- ◆ Fishery Independent Survey (FIS) of shelf resources developed and implemented since 2005 providing valuable, fishery independent and verified information on key target species, byproduct and incidental catch species (see dedicated section below)
- ◆ Integrated Scientific Monitoring Program (ISMP) collecting independent scientific information on catch, discard and important biological information on target, byproduct, incidental catch and threatened/endangered species
- ◆ Industry-based collection of important biological and acoustic information on fish stocks (eg, GABIA slope species sampling protocols, 100% industry recording of bycatch in logbooks)
- ◆ Scientifically robust fishery assessments in place to set recommended biological catches for use in the total allowable catch (TAC) setting (Current base case assessments indicate Bight redfish at 73% B_0 and Deepwater flathead at 62% of B_0)
- ◆ GABIA Orange roughy research strategy
- ◆ GAB Ecological Risk Assessment/Management (Level 3 ERA results indicate zero high risk species from this fishery)
- ◆ Implementation of a GABTF Boat Operating Procedures Manual, including Seabird Management Plans

In many respects, the GABTF is still a developing fishery. The current fishery on the shelf only operates within a restricted and well defined longitudinal range across the GAB (due to the fishery boundary). The risk-based, cost effective and efficient measures in place to ensure sustainable development of existing and potential growth components of the fishery will be maintained and refined over time. This is ongoing and involves significant industry and Government investment in research and management including regular reviews of catch and effort data, FIS and ISMP outputs and other relevant information such as species specific biological and fishery information, through the established consultative processes.

Link to BRS Fisheries Status Report 2009:

[BRS Great Australian Bight Trawl Sector Fisheries Status Report 2009](#)

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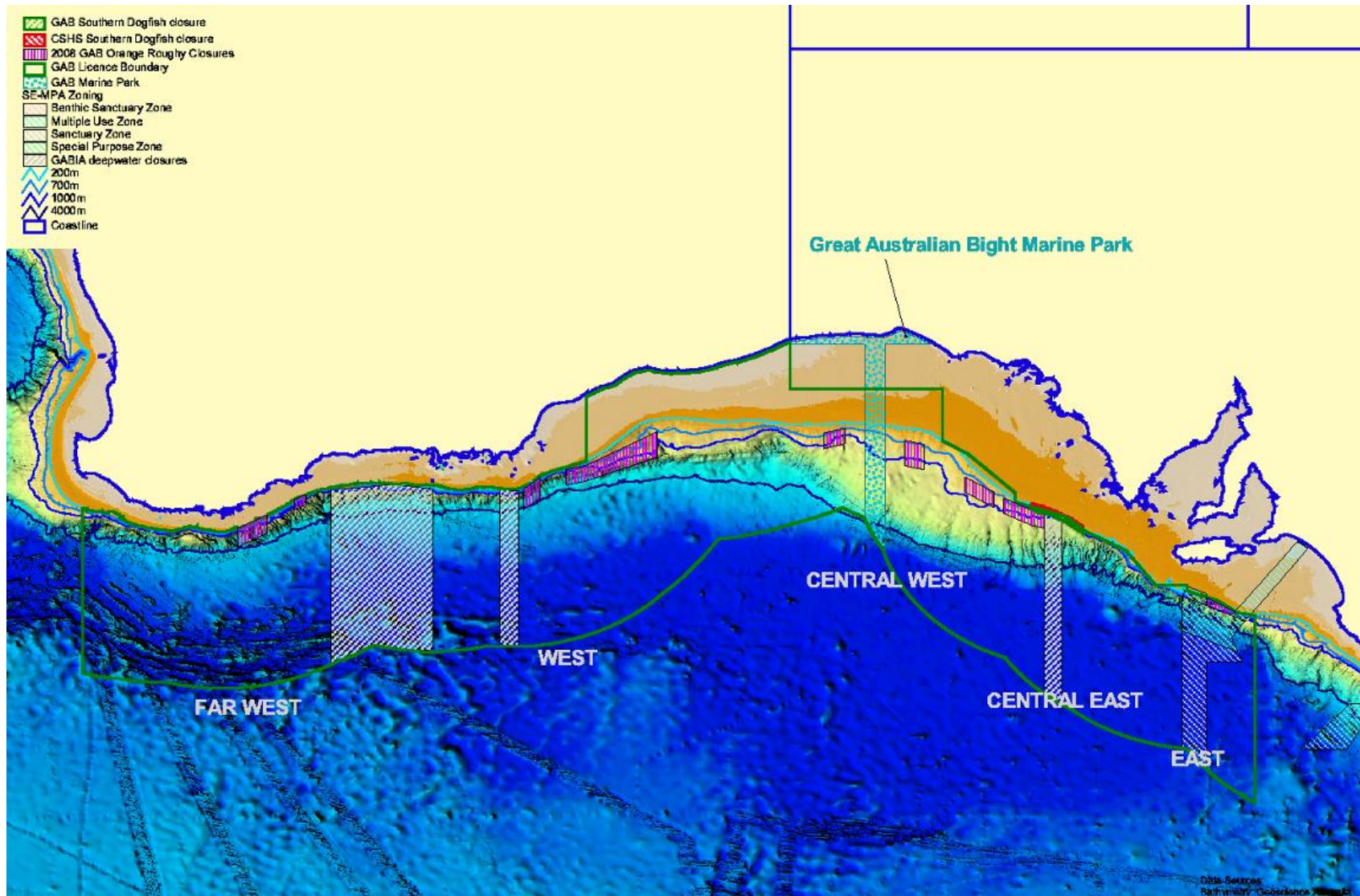


Figure: GABTF existing spatial management (Source: CSIRO GAB mapping 2010)