



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

 **Bass Strait Central Zone
Fishery Management Advisory
Committee (ScallopMAC)
Meeting 25**

Meeting minutes

**Date: 19 June 2015
Venue: AFMA, Canberra**

DRAFT

Attendance

Name	Membership
Mr John Pollock	Chair
Mr Bill Talbot	Scientific member
Mr Allan Barnett	Industry member
Mr John Hammond	Industry member
Mr Steve Mantzaris	Industry member
Mr Stuart Richey	Industry member
Dr Sylvia Zukowski	Environment member
Mr Josh Davis	AFMA member
Mr James Parkinson	Invited Participant, Tasmania
Ms Kate Simpson	Invited Participant, Victoria
Mr George Day	Observer (AFMA)
Dr Ian Knuckey	Observer (ScallopRAG)
Mr Bob Lister	Observer (Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania)
Mr Peter Mellios	Observer (processor)
Mr John Cull	Observer (concession holder)

1. Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome and apologies

The chair noted apologies from Andrew Watts and Alecia Bassett-Albert.

1.2 Declarations of interest

ScallopMAC members updated and confirmed their interests as follows:

Participant	Membership	Interest declared
John Pollock	Chair	No interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the fishery.
Bill Talbot	Research Member	ScallopRAG Chair. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the fishery.
Allan Barnett	Industry Member (Tasmania)	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions, a Commonwealth fish receiver permit and operates a scallop processing plant.
John Hammond	Industry Member (Tasmania)	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
Steve Mantzaris	Industry Member (Victoria)	Operates a scallop processing plant.
Stuart Richey	Industry Member (Tasmania)	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
Dr Sylvia Zukowski	Environment Member	No interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the fishery.
Josh Davis	AFMA Member	AFMA Manager for the BSCZSF. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise in the fishery.



James Parkinson	Invited Participant (Tasmanian government)	Fisheries Management Officer in Tasmania. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the fishery.
Kate Simpson	Invited Participant (Victorian government)	Manager of the scallop fishery in Victoria. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the fishery.
George Day	Observer	AFMA Senior Manager. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the fishery.
Dr Ian Knuckey	Observer	Scientist. Undertakes a range of fisheries research throughout south east Australia and undertook the 2015 scallop research survey.
Bob Lister	Observer	Chief Executive Officer, Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania
Peter Mellios	Observer	Operates a scallop processing plant.
John Cull	Observer	Holds BSCZSF and other Commonwealth concessions.

Members disclosed interests, whether pecuniary or otherwise, in matters about to be considered by the MAC. Industry members and observers had interests in the following Agenda Items:

- Agenda Item 6: ScallopMAC discussion about biomass estimate survey and Harvest Strategy
- Agenda Item 7: ScallopMAC advice for AFMA Commission on 2015 season
- Agenda Item 10: Budget 2015-16.

Each industry member and observer with an interest left the room separately while the MAC made a determination about whether the member could be present during deliberations by the MAC on the matter and take part in any recommendation. In each case the MAC determined that the member's contribution would be valuable and their presence would not affect other members' consideration of, and recommendations on, agenda items. On that basis the MAC determined that each member and representative may take part in discussions and recommendations.

Dr Ian Knuckey noted he had undertaken the 2015 season survey and left the room while the MAC discussed the interest. The MAC noted that the costing of the survey would arise under Agenda Item 10 and determined that Dr Knuckey would be requested to leave the room for that item.

1.3 Adoption of Agenda

ScallopMAC adopted the agenda at **Attachment A**.

2. Meeting Administration

2.1 Confirmation of record of previous meeting

ScallopMAC noted the finalised minutes of the previous meeting of 3 March 2015 which had previously been circulated by email for comment.

2.2 Actions arising from previous meetings

ScallopMAC noted finalised Action Items.



2.3 Correspondence

The Chair noted there had been correspondence in relation to observers attending the MAC and that advice had been provided on the basis of AFMA's Fisheries Management Paper 1.

3. Fishery update

3.1 AFMA management

Josh Davis provided an update on catches from last season, including effort distribution, landed catch and monthly catch rates. The MAC noted the maximum number of boats in the fishery was 10 which had been the extent of the fleet in recent years.

Industry members on the MAC requested that the AFMA not continue to record catch per unit of effort because it was not used for assessment or management purposes. Further, in some cases the effort records may be erroneous.

Action items in boxes

Action Item: AFMA annual manager's update not to include catch per unit of effort data.

3.2 Tasmanian management

James Parkinson provided an update on the status of the Tasmanian fishery for 2015. He noted that the statewide survey had been extended. Results from the initial survey period provided for:

- the Circular Head area, where scallop condition was poor, remaining closed but may be surveyed on an opportunistic basis during the year
- White Rock and Grind Stone area to be opened with good scallop condition in parts of the White Rock bed. A low TAC of 620 tonnes (15% of units) was expected, this is to be reviewed when catches reach 400 tonnes. Expected season open is 8 July 2015.

Industry members of the MAC noted that a bed of scallops off Devonport had been monitored for a long period indicating that size is not a proxy for age, that is, you could get older scallops smaller than 80mm. Further, in the absence of alternatives these smaller scallops were marketable.

3.3 Victorian management

Kate Simpson provided an updated on the status of the Victorian fishery for 2015. She noted that:

- the TAC had been set at 135 tonnes again this year
- no additional research had been undertaken this year
- Victoria is looking at removing the requirement for scallop receiver licenses, instead relying on the conditions on the scallop licence for compliance purposes
- longer term management arrangements will be reviewed subject to funding and future prospects for the fishery.

3.4 Industry

Bob Lister noted the current membership of the Bass Strait Co-management Committee, including its role in relation to paralytic shellfish toxin and closing beds of juvenile scallops.



Steve Mantzaris advised that scallop size and condition last year was excellent so domestic marketing had been good. This year there had been enquiries from overseas markets, including from the European Union. The MAC also discussed the potential for freezing scallops, which makes up around 20 per cent of processed volume.

4. Biomass estimate survey results

Dr Knuckey presented the results of the 2015 scallops survey (**Attachment B**). Dr Knuckey in particular thanked industry in relation to guidance on survey areas and Allan Barnett and the crew of the Insta-gator for assisting with the survey which had been put together on short notice.

The MAC noted that dredge efficiency varies significantly between areas, conditions, boats etc such that the 33 per cent dredge efficiency assumption need to be viewed cautiously.

The MAC commended the report and thanked Dr Knuckey for his efforts.

5. ScallopRAG advice on biomass estimate survey and 2015 TAC

Mr Talbot, Chair of ScallopRAG presented the advice of the RAG from its meeting of 18 June 2015 in relation to arrangements for the 2015 season.

Mr Talbot noted that the RAG considered that density was important for recruitment, recruitment was more likely to be local but did occur more broadly at times and there was little evidence for recruitment from the east of the fishery (Flinders) to the west of the fishery (King Island).

Mr Talbot presented the two options developed by the RAG:

Tier 1 option

Closing all of Flinders Island Bed and King Island East Bed. This recognised that King Island Main Bed and King Island East Bed were of similar high density and closing the whole of King Island East Bed gave effect to the intent of the Harvest Strategy. This was preferred to closing part of the King Island Main Bed, the bed most likely to maximise economic returns, because closing some of the bed could cause operational and compliance issues during the season.

Tier 2 option

Closing all of Flinders Island, King Island East Bed and King Island Middle Bed. The RAG considered this gave effect to the intent of the Harvest Strategy by closing substantial, defined areas as opposed to numerous smaller areas.

Mr Talbot advised that the RAG recommended a maximum TAC of 3000 tonnes which ensures a conservative approach where at least 40% of the bed would not be taken and represents less than 27% of the known spawning biomass. The RAG recommended a starting TAC under this Tier of 2001 tonnes stepping up to 3000 tonnes at 500 tonne increments.

The MAC supported the RAG recommendation to focus 2015-16 observer coverage on scientific surveys.



6. ScallopMAC discussion about biomass estimate survey and Harvest Strategy

The MAC noted that:

- undercatching the TAC may occur for reasons other than availability of the resource. As such, it was important to remember that if the TAC is set higher and not fully caught it is not necessarily an indication of problems with the resource
- the Boags Commonwealth Marine Reserve potentially holds spawning biomass of scallops that may be responsible for recruitment in the west of the fishery
- an improved ability to age scallops, using approaches such as ligament analysis, may be beneficial in understanding the risk of die offs.

Action Item

In relation to the Harvest Strategy review proposed for later in 2015, and summarising items arising under a number of agenda items, the MAC recommended the following items be considered:

- potential for external review of the Harvest Strategy with the initial question being the utility of closed areas given:
 - the total biomass of scallops in south east Australia in surveyed beds, state fisheries, marine reserves and outside of known areas
 - the low capacity of the current fleet

AFMA will develop proposed terms of reference for the review by the RAG and MAC as part of research priority setting for the FRDC funding cycle.

- size as a surrogate for age and the potential for marketing of smaller scallops in the absence of larger scallops
- dredge efficiency in the context of the Harvest Strategy
- research catch allowance and incentives for exploratory surveying
- considering moving between Tiers in the Harvest Strategy. That is, moving from Tier 1 to Tier 2 during the season.

7. ScallopMAC advice for AFMA Commission on 2015 season

The MAC recommended a TAC of 2001 tonnes with the potential to step up to 3000 tonnes at Tier 2 of the Harvest Strategy consistent with the advice of the RAG. This:

- provides planning certainty for the coming fishing year
- recognises the middle and eastern King Island were significant, viable beds and closing them would give effect to the intent of the Harvest Strategy
- means that, even under the maximum TAC, less than 27 per cent of the known, surveyed biomass was able to be taken. This should reserve scallops for future seasons and give effect to the intent of Tier 2 of the Harvest Strategy by promoting relatively constant catches over years, which was important for maintaining markets.

8 Paralytic Shellfish Toxin (PST) testing

Bob Lister advised the MAC that the Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania organises testing of scallops landed in Tasmania (from the State fishery or Commonwealth fishery) and outlined the process for consideration by the MAC. Mr Lister expected to implement metals testing once every two years and PST testing monthly in significant open areas, with increased frequency if needed.



It was noted the program was expected to cost around \$3 000. While testing for PST included scallops from the Commonwealth fishery, the costs were only funded by Tasmanian levies. Mr Davis advised that it had received a response from PrimeSafe Victoria advising they do not currently test scallops taken in the Commonwealth fishery.

Action item

The MAC requested that AFMA clarify responsibility for monitoring and testing of PST for scallops landed in Victoria. Then, if necessary, AFMA to revisit the protocols and cost recovery arrangements.

9. Economic indicators

Mr Richey advised the MAC that economic indicators were collected with a view to measuring and understanding the economic returns of the fishery over time (**Attachment C**). The MAC discussed the indicators and how best to convey relevant information to the Commission.

Action item

AFMA to review economic indicator reports provided by ABARES and Econsearch to prepare a standard set of annual economic data and a useful narrative for the Commission in setting season arrangements. AFMA to circulate out of session advice for consideration by the MAC. AFMA to also provide data to assist completing the report tabled by Mr Richey

10. Budget explanation 2015-16

The MAC noted the draft 2015-16 budget and that there had been a 50 per cent increase in budgeted expenditure. Industry members raised strong concerns about not being informed of changes made between the draft 2014-15 budget and final 2014-15 budget.

Action item

The MAC requested that AFMA ensure clear budget explanations be provided to the MAC following finalisation of the 2015-16 budget.

The 2015-16 budget was discussed including why there was an increase in compliance data costs from 2014-15, the anticipated change of observer days to zero and the allocation of staff time to ScallopRAG.

Action item

AFMA to provide advice to the MAC on why compliance data costs had increased from 2014-15 to 2015-16.

The MAC noted that what industry pays in levies reflects both budgeted expenditure and the previous year's actual expenditure. Reflecting this, the MAC noted the importance of being provided with actual expenditure figures when available and for consideration with the next year's budget.

Action item

AFMA to provide actual expenditure details at the same time as the budget explanation letter.

Dr Knuckey left the room noting his potential interest in relation to survey costs. The MAC then considered the costs of surveys over the last three years. The MAC was pleased to note that the fishery had alternative research providers available to undertake future surveys.



The meeting closed at 2:45pm.

Signed (Chairperson):

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Stallock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Date: 28/07/15

List of Attachments

- A. ScallopMAC 25 Annotated Agenda
- B. 2015 survey report
- C. Economic indicators



Attachment A**Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery
Management Advisory Committee (ScallopMAC)****Meeting 25****Draft Agenda****Location: AFMA L6, 73 Northbourne Ave. Canberra.****Friday 19 June 2015****Time (EST): 09:00**

Participants	
Members	Invited Participants
John Pollock – Chair	James Parkinson – Tasmania
Bill Talbot – Scientific member	Kate Simpson – Victoria
Josh Davis – AFMA member	Ian Knuckey, ScallopRAG
Allan Barnett – Industry member	Observers
John Hammond – Industry member	John Cull, Industry member
Steve Mantzaris – Industry member	Peter Mellios, Industry member
Stuart Richey – Industry member	Bob Lister, Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania
Andrew Watts – Industry member	Alecia Bassett-Albert, Victorian Scallop Fishermen's Association
Sylvia Zukowski – Environment member	George Day, AFMA

Approximate time	Agenda item
9.00am	1. Preliminaries 1.1. Welcome and apologies 1.2. Declaration of interests 1.3. Adoption of agenda
9.30am	2. Meeting Administration 2.1. Minutes of previous meeting 2.2. Actions arising from previous meetings 2.3. Correspondence
10.00am	3. Fishery update 3.1. AFMA management 3.2. Tasmanian management 3.3. Victorian management
10:30am	<i>Morning tea</i>
11.00am	4. Biomass estimate survey results (Ian Knuckey) <i>Ian Knuckey will present the 2015 scallop bed survey results and explain how the biomass was estimated.</i>



Approximate time	Agenda item
11.30am	5. ScallopRAG advice on biomass estimate survey and 2015 TAC <i>ScallopRAG Chair will present the ScallopRAG advice on management arrangements for the 2015 season.</i>
12.00pm	6. ScallopMAC discussion about biomass estimate survey and Harvest Strategy
1.00pm	<i>Lunch</i>
2.00pm	7. ScallopMAC advice for AFMA Commission on 2015 season
2.30pm	8. Paralytic Shellfish Toxin testing <i>Action item from previous meeting</i>
2.45pm	9. Economic indicators (Stuart Richey) <i>Action item from previous meeting</i>
3:00pm	10. Budget Explanation 2015-16
3.15pm	11. Other business
4.00pm	<i>Close</i>



Attachment B - 2015 survey report



Attachment C – Economic indicators

Suggested economic indicators for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery. All prices are depicted without GST.

Year	Fuel (net)	Levy (SFR)	Lease Price (per SFR)	Sale price	No. leases	No. sales	Alloc. TAC	Catch	% caught	Beach Price	W'sale	Vessels (Auth.)	Vessels (Op.)
1984								20,000				237	<237
2006				\$23,000-\$55,000	0	22	0	0	100.00%	\$13.00			0
2007					0	0	0	0	100.00%	\$13.50			0
2008	\$1.06060				0	0	0	0	100.00%	\$18.75			0
2009	\$0.69135	\$0.2333	\$1.73		49 out 18 in	10	2500	2400	96.00%	\$15.00		67	26
2010	\$0.72987	\$0.6500	\$2.01	\$80,000	51	12	3000	2880	73.00%	\$15.00		67	18
2011	\$0.91106	\$0.6600	no lease		0	0	2000	1460	18.00%	\$16.75		67	12
2012	\$0.90837	\$1.0500	no lease		0		2000	195	9.76%	\$18.00		67	
2013	\$0.93847	\$0.6451	no lease		0		1500	244	16.26%	\$15.00		67	10
2014	\$0.95973	\$0.3571	\$0.89				1500	1418	94.53%	\$13.50		67	10

Notes:

1. From 2013 licensing and logbooks are fee for service
2. Fuel is per litre net of GST and DFR and DFR at Devonport
3. 2006 sales are from Securing Our Fishing Future restructure
4. Prices from years with zero catch are Tasmanian beach price
5. TAC and catch are shellweight
6. SFR levy is paid prior to lease e.g. 2014 return for SFR owner is \$0.89 less levy of \$0.3571