



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

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# Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC)

MINUTES  
TELECONFERENCE  
6 NOVEMBER 2014

## **SUB-ANTARCTIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SouthMAC)**

**CHAIR:** Mr Trent Timmiss (interim Chair)

**Date:** 6 November 2014

**Venue:** Teleconference

### **Attendance**

#### **Members**

Mr Trent Timmiss, Interim Chair  
Dr Malcolm Haddon, Scientific Member  
Mr Les Scott, Industry Member  
Mr Martin Exel, Industry Member  
Ms Lihini Weragoda, AAD Member  
Ms Jo Fisher, AFMA Member  
Ms Sarah Kirkcaldie (Executive Officer)

#### **Apologies**

Mr Peter Neville, Chair  
Mr Jon Bryan, Conservation Member

### **Introduction**

A Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC) teleconference was held on 6 November 2014.

The primary objective of the meeting was to discuss the outcomes of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and the recommendations from the Sub-Antarctic Resource Assessment Group (SARAG) on the total allowable catch (TAC) for Patagonian toothfish, Mackerel Icefish and catch limits for bycatch species in the Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery (HIMIF) for the 2014/15 season, which starts on 1 December 2014.

The meeting met all requirements of Fisheries Management Paper 1, including the rules for dealing with conflicts of interest.

### **Agenda item 1 - Preliminaries**

The meeting was opened at 3.10pm on 6 November 2014 by the interim Chair, Mr Trent Timmiss.

#### **1.1 Declaration of interests**

Mr Timmiss advised he is employed by AFMA and is the Senior Manager for Tuna and International fisheries and has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries. He also advised that he is a member of the Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Advisory Committee (SBTMAC) and the Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TTMAC).

Dr Haddon advised he is employed by CSIRO and is not undertaking specific research projects in relation to Sub-Antarctic fisheries, although he does provide advice to other researchers in relation to stock assessments, particularly for the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery (MITF). Dr Haddon is also a member on the Northern Prawn Fishery Resource Assessment Group and Slope Resource Assessment Group.



Mr Scott advised that he is the Managing Director of Australian Longline P/L and Managing Director of Petuna Sealord Deepwater Fishing P/L and which holds various fishing rights in, and operates vessels in the Australian Sub-Antarctic fisheries and waters under the jurisdiction of CCAMLR. Mr Scott is also an advisor to Petuna Fisheries. Mr Scott further advised he is a member on SlopeRAG, the Sub-Antarctic demersal longline member on the Threat Abatement Plan, industry representative on the Australian delegation to CCAMLR, director to CFA and Director of SETFIA. Mr Scott was not aware of any investigation or prosecution action by AFMA against his Company or of any legal action by his Company against AFMA.

Mr Exel advised that he is the General Manager, Environment and Policy, Austral Fisheries P/L. Austral Fisheries P/L owns Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) in the Australian sub-Antarctic fisheries and waters under the jurisdiction of Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). Mr Exel also declared that he is the Director of the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies, Director on the Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA), member of the South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA), Member of the Great Australian Bight Industry Association, Member of Coral Sea Fishers Association and Chair of the Coalition of Legal Toothfish Operators. He was not aware of any investigation or prosecution action by AFMA against his Company or of any legal action taken by his Company against AFMA.

Ms Fisher advised she is employed by AFMA and is currently acting manager for sub-Antarctic fisheries and has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Ms Kirkcaldie advised she is employed by AFMA and is a senior management officer in the tuna and international fisheries and has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Ms Lihini Werogoda advised that she is employed by the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) and has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Messrs Scott and Exel declared their interest under agenda items 2-5. Messrs Scott and Exel left the teleconference and the remaining members discussed whether Industry members could participate in the discussions and recommendations; it was agreed that as their input was essential to most agenda items, they should remain on the teleconference unless a specific conflict of interest was identified, at which point members would be asked to leave the teleconference for the duration of that particular discussion/recommendation.

## **1.2 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr Peter Neville and Mr Jon Bryan.

## **1.3 Adoption of agenda**

SouthMAC adopted the agenda with the addition of an agenda item requested by an industry member on the Macquarie Island season date.

# **Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery**

## **Agenda item 2 – Total Allowable Catch recommendations**

Messrs Scott and Exel declared their interest under agenda item 2. Messrs Scott and Exel left the teleconference and the remaining members agreed that they could all re-join the teleconference and participate in all discussions but not recommendations.



Members noted that scientists from AAD had prepared the stock assessments for the two target species in the Fishery: Mackerel Icefish and Patagonian Toothfish for peer-review and consideration by CCAMLR's Working Group on Fish Stock Assessments and Scientific Committee.

Members noted that AAD presented two Patagonian Toothfish stock assessments models to WG-FSA: the base case model and the base case model that includes tagging data from the longline sector. WG-FSA agreed that the model used to determine the catch limit should include tagging data but with removal of the first four years of year class strength (YCS) (1982-1985) which produced a TAC of 4,410 tonnes. The WG-FSA recommendation was then supported by the CCAMLR Scientific Committee and Commission.

SouthMAC further noted that the assessments were considered by the Sub-Antarctic Resource Assessment Group (SARAG) prior to and after they were presented to CCAMLR.

SouthMAC agreed that the models were clear in the outcomes and there was no evidence to deviate from the CCAMLR agreed catch limits.

#### Mackerel Icefish

After considering the outcomes of SARAG's teleconference on the morning of 6 November 2014, SouthMAC agreed to recommend a 2014/15 Mackerel Icefish TAC of 309 tonnes to the AFMA Commission.

#### Patagonian Toothfish

After considering the outcomes of SARAG's teleconference, SouthMAC agreed to recommend a 2014/15 Patagonian Toothfish TAC of 4,410 tonnes to the AFMA Commission, noting that more work was required for the 2015 HIMI stock assessment and would be discussed at the next CCAMLR Consultative Forum as well as the next SouthMAC meeting.

#### Bycatch

Members noted that no new assessments were carried out on bycatch species in 2014 and agreed to implement the CCAMLR decision to retain the bycatch limits from the 2013/14 season for the 2014/15 season. The limits are:

- macrourids 360 tonnes;
- unicorn icefish 150 tonnes;
- grey rockcod 80 tonnes;
- skates and rays 120 tonnes; and
- all other species 50 tonnes for each species.



SouthMAC congratulated the AAD scientists on the significant amount of work that had been completed in 2014 and acknowledged it was a difficult year that required work right up to the start of CCAMLR. In particular, members recognised the accomplishments of Drs Welsford and Ziegler and the work they completed in 2014. SARAG noted that the CCAMLR report congratulated Australia on the work completed in 2014.

## **CCAMLR New and Exploratory**

### **Agenda item 3 – Strategic assessment recommendations**

SouthMAC noted that in June 2014, Australia submitted an application to CCAMLR to fish in CCAMLR Statistical Sub-areas 88.1 and 88.2 and CCAMLR approved the application at its October 2014 meeting.

To be able to export the catch, Australia's activity in the New and Exploratory fisheries requires accreditation under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). SouthMAC noted that AFMA had prepared a submission as required under the EPBC Act and that members had been provided with an opportunity to provide comments.

The AFMA member informed SouthMAC that the submission was provided to the Department of Environment and then released it for public comment. Members noted that no comments were received.

SouthMAC noted that the Department of Environment was currently finalising its recommendations for accreditation and these will be provided to members.

Mr Scott stated that the vessel Antarctic Chieftain is due to depart for the CCAMLR Statistical Sub-areas 88.1 and 88.2 on the 27 November and would like to have received the accreditation before departure. The AFMA member noted that AFMA is hoping to receive confirmation of accreditation by 21 November 2014.

## **CCAMLR Conservation Measures**

### **Agenda item 4 – Revised Conservation Measures (CM) for 2014/15**

SouthMAC noted that in addition to a number of other conservation measures, the following relevant conservation measures were revised at the 2014 CCAMLR meeting:

- 10-01 – Marking of fishing vessels and fishing gear
- 10-05 – Catch Documentation Scheme for *Dissostichus* spp.
- 24-02 – Longline weighting for seabird conservation
- 25-02 – Minimisation of the incidental mortality of seabirds in the course of longline fishing or longline fishing research in the Convention Area
- 33-02 – Limitation of by-catch in Statistical Division 58.5.2 in the 2014/15 season
- 33-03 – Limitation of by-catch in new and exploratory fisheries in the 2014/15 season
- 41-08 – Limits on the fishery for *Dissostichus eleginoides* in Statistical Division 58.5.2 in the 2014/15 season
- 41-09 – Limits on the exploratory fishery for *Dissostichus* spp. In Statistical subarea 88.1 in the 2014/15 season



41-10 - Limits on the exploratory fishery for *Dissostichus* spp. In Statistical subarea 88.2 in the 2014/15 season

42-02 – Limits on the fishery for *Champscephalus gunnari* in Statistical Division 58.5.2 in the 2014/15 season

Members noted that CM 10-01 had changed to be more specific on vessel markings. Industry requested the final wording for the conservation measure be provided to members as soon as it is finalised.

Members noted that significant changes were made to CM 10-05 to reflect operational reality and ensure more control of the paper trail to reduce fraud.

Members noted that bottle testing requirements were changed in CM 24-02 in 2014.

The AAD member noted that the change to CM 25-02 were to streamline the requirements in CM 24-02, 25-02 and the specific measures applying to each CCAMLR fishery.

SouthMAC further noted that the bycatch limits were maintained for the HIMI Fishery in CM 33-02.

Members noted that CM 41-09 and 41-10 had been amended to provide more specifics on research requirements. The Industry member noted that they had agreed to tag 3 fish/tonne caught in the south and 1 tag/tonne in the north in the Exploratory Fisheries in Statistical Sub Area 88.1 and 88.2.

The AAD member highlighted the requirement to provide notification of vessel details within 7 days of issuing licence to the CCAMLR Secretariat and agreed to discuss these requirements with AFMA ahead of the start of the season.

## **Other**

### **Agenda item 5 – Other Business**

#### **5.1 Amendment to the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery season**

Mr Scott requested that SouthMAC discuss the possibility of amending the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery season by 2 weeks so that it commences 15 days earlier on 15 April.

As discussed by SARAG at its teleconference that morning, Dr Haddon noted there were no scientific implications for the stock assessment by starting the season earlier.

SouthMAC noted the discussion at SARAG that morning, in particular that:

- 1) the MITF SFR conditions state that longlining is only permitted between 1 May and 31 August. Any amendment to the longline season would require consultation with the Threat Abatement Plan for Seabirds team;
- 2) the current 2014/15 quota year, which runs from 1 May 2014 - 30 April 2015, is specified in a legislative Determination. As the quota for the current year is fully caught, a season extension would require the revocation of the existing Determination and issuing of a new Determination that defines an earlier season commencement.

Industry noted that there have been no interactions with birds since 2006 and that, while the longline season in the fishery extends from 1 May to 31 August, the fishery used to start on 15 April every year however this was before operators were permitted to longline in the fishery. Industry further noted that the fishery has very successful mitigation measures to



avoid bird interactions, and if approved, it is likely that any vessel would only night setting from 15 April to 1 May.

SouthMAC agreed in principle to extending the season noting that industry will be meeting with seabird experts next week and depending on the outcomes of these discussions industry will then send a formal request to AFMA seeking an amendment to the MITF season dates.

### **Agenda item 6 - Next meeting**

SouthMAC agreed to hold the next face-to-face meeting in Hobart on 25 February 2015.

The Chair thanked members for participating in the teleconference and closed the meeting at 4 pm.

