



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Fisheries Management Authority**



# **Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Advisory Committee (SBTMAC)**

**PROVISIONAL MINUTES  
SBTMAC 36  
18 SEPTEMBER 2012  
CANBERRA**



## **SOUTHERN BLUEFIN TUNA MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SBTMAC)**

### **Introduction**

The thirty sixth meeting of the Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Advisory Committee (SBTMAC 36) was held in Canberra on 18 September 2012.

The primary objectives of the meeting were to discuss:

- the outcomes from the 2012 Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) Scientific Committee meeting;
- proposed amendments to the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery Management Plan;
- monitoring arrangements in the SBT Fishery;
- the proposed 2013 observer program;
- proposal to change the timing of the SBT quota year; and
- the status of the 2012/13 SBT Fishery budget.

### **Agenda Item 1: Preliminaries/matters arising**

#### **1.1: Opening Comments**

1. The Chair, Mr Peter Neville, opened the meeting at 1pm and welcomed members and observers to the 36<sup>th</sup> meeting of SBTMAC. In particular, Mr Neville welcomed the attendance of Dr Ilona Stobutzki as the new research member, Ms Sarah Kirkcaldie as the new Executive Officer and Mr Brett Cleary who was attending in place of the recreational permanent observer who was unable to attend. SBTMAC also welcomed Dr Campbell Davies as an observer from CSIRO. The Committee noted that the environment/conservation member, Mr Glenn Sant, would participate in the discussions by phone.

#### *Apologies*

2. Apologies were received from Greg Honeychurch (industry member), Michael Thomas (industry member), Mario Valcic (industry member), Mehdi Doroudi (State government invited participant) and John Brooker (recreational/charter fishing permanent observer). Participants at SBTMAC 36 were:

#### Chair

Peter Neville

#### Members

Ilona Stobutzki (scientific member)

Trent Timmiss (AFMA member)

Andrew Wilkinson (farm industry sector)

Glenn Sant (conservation member) by phone

#### Permanent Observers

Terry Romaro (non-farm industry sector)

#### Executive Officer

Sarah Kirkcaldie (AFMA)

#### Observers

##### *Industry*

Brian Jeffriess (ASBTIA)

##### *Recreational sector*

Brett Cleary

##### *AFMA*

John Andersen<sup>1</sup>

Matt Daniel

David Power

Nigel Abery<sup>1</sup>

##### *CSIRO*

Campbell Davies

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1: present for only selected agenda items

3. SBTMAC noted that there was not a quorum for SBTMAC 36 due to the absence of the three industry members. Two-thirds of members are required at a meeting for a quorum.

*Acceptance of agenda*

4. SBTMAC adopted the agenda without any changes (Attachment A).

**1.2: Pecuniary interest declarations**

5. The AFMA member stated that as outlined in the Fisheries Administrations Act 1991 and Fisheries Management Paper No. 1 all members of SBTMAC must declare any pecuniary interest in the Fishery at the commencement of the meeting (Table 1) and also at the commencement of each agenda item. The Committee noted that if a member discloses an interest in an item, the member must absent themselves from the meeting before the item is considered and the MAC must make a decision as to whether the member can participate in the discussion and in the making of a recommendation or remain absent from the meeting for the item. The AFMA member stressed that the MAC must fully comply with these requirements in relation to conflicts of interests during the meeting.

6. The AFMA member further noted that, regardless of the MAC's decision on the member's involvement in the discussion, in each and every case the minutes of the meeting must:

- i) record the fact of the disclosure relating to a conflict;
- ii) record the determination of the Committee whether the Member may or may not be present during discussion of the matter which is the subject of the conflict; and
- iii) produce minutes (not just a Chair's summary) for all MAC meetings, regardless of whether or not they are face- to- face.

7. SBTMAC noted that the requirement to declare an interest at the beginning of each agenda item was only for members and not for permanent observers or invited participants. It was agreed that members would declare interests at the beginning of each main agenda item, that is, at the beginning of discussion on agenda items numbered 1 through 6.

8. Members acknowledged that AFMA has consultative groups such as Management Advisory Committees because of people's expertise in areas that are relevant to discussions.

**Table 1: SBTMAC members/permanent observers declarations of interest**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Declared interests</b>
Peter Neville	Director of a fisheries consulting business, no pecuniary interest in SBT fishery
Trent Timmiss	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interest in SBT fishery
Ilona Stobutzki	Employee of ABARES, no pecuniary interest in SBT fishery. Noting that ABARES conducts research on range of fisheries issues
Glenn Sant	Employee of Traffic Oceania – which has a collaboration agreement with the University of Wollongong, no pecuniary interest in SBT fishery
Andrew Wilkinson	SBT quota holder, General Manager of company that owns and operates a tuna farm/catching business
Sarah Kirkcaldie	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interest in SBT fishery
<b>Permanent observer/invited participant</b>	<b>Declared interests</b>
Terry Romaro	Employee of a company that owns SBT SFR's, Works with company that has a consultancy with Aus Asia fishing that may longline fish in SBT Fishery.
Brett Cleary	Vice President Game Fishing Association of Australia, Chair Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing Inc, Member of Sustainable Marine Research Collaboration Agreement with the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS), no pecuniary interest in SBT Fishery,
Brian Jeffriess	CEO of Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association
Matt Daniel	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interest in SBT fishery
David Power	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interest in SBT fishery
Campbell Davies	Employee of CSIRO, no pecuniary interest in SBT fishery. Noting that CSIRO conducts research on range

	of fisheries issues
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**1.3: Confirmation of minutes from SBTMAC 35**

9. SBTMAC adopted the provisional minutes as a true and accurate account of the discussions from SBTMAC 35.

**1.4: Action arising from SBTMAC 35 and subsequent intercessional work**

10. Mr Wilkinson declared a conflict of interest but the Chair decided that these items will be discussed later in the agenda and the actions arising from SBTMAC 35 were just for noting under this agenda item and that Mr Wilkinson did not have a conflict of interest in respect of this agenda item.

11. Members noted the status of the actions arising from SBTMAC 35 as outlined below:

	<b>Action arising</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	AFMA to clarify VMS permit conditions for carrier vessels transferring fish to port	Ongoing  Members noted that all vessels, including auxiliary vessels that hold tow cages and carry mortalities must hold a carrier boat permit and abide by the conditions stated on a carrier boat permit and must be recorded on the CCSBT register. This item is to be discussed under Agenda item 4.1.
2	Strategic research meeting to be convened before end of 2011	Ongoing  A meeting will need to be convened to discuss budget requirements for upcoming research and intercessional science activities. This item is to be discussed under Agenda item 3.
3	AFMA to clarify occupational health and safety matters concerning the observer program	Completed  As previously advised, all AFMA observers are covered by the Commonwealth with respect to occupational health issues while

		performing their duties. However the Commonwealth can not indemnify operators for issues that arise due to negligence.
4	SBTMAC to consider changing the starting date of the domestic fishing season	Ongoing To be discussed under agenda item 5.4.
5	Encourage development of an appropriate expression of interest for intersessional science support	Ongoing To be discussed.

12. SBTMAC noted the following correspondence that had been received between meetings:

- August 2012, AFMA circulated a paper in response to issues raised by SBTMAC Industry Members on the SBT Plan Amendments August 2012;
- August 2012, AFMA circulated comments received from SBTMAC industry members on the draft amendments to the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery Management Plan 1995 and sought any further comments from members/permanent observers.
- July 2012, an out of session paper was sent to members/ permanent observers seeking comments on the proposed amendments to the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery Management Plan 1995 to accommodate changes to management arrangements and to provide flexibility to incorporate recent decisions of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT);
- May 2012, AFMA's 2012/13 budget sent to SBTMAC for comment;
- March 2012, AFMA's half yearly budget sent to SBTMAC for comment; and
- March 2012 AFMA's draft quota policy sent to SBTMAC for comment. The AFMA member provided an update on the draft quota policy paper noting that the AFMA Commission will be considering the paper at its October meeting and it will be sent to the Commonwealth Fisheries Association for comment before the Commission meeting.

## **Agenda Item 2: State of the fishery**

13.No conflicts of interest were declared under this agenda item. SBTMAC noted that no recommendations were being made and that members were just providing information reports.

### **2.1: Informal industry report on the 2011/12 catching season, markets and outlook**

14. The Industry member informed SBTMAC that the 2011/12 catching season had been very different to previous years. The SBT had moved east quickly with 90% of the catch taken from the eastern extremity of the aerial survey transect line or further east than that. The fish were also smaller (with a large percentage under 20kgs at the end of the farming cycle) with slower growth rates. Members noted that industry were examining why this may have occurred eg quality/quantity of bait, water temperature profiles etc.

15. The Industry member further advised that they were informed by a main player in the Japanese market that they would get the same or a better price for SBT than last year. However, in late May/early June there was a sudden influx of salmon on to the market known as the “salmon shock”. Although, the Japanese are hoping to sell the salmon quickly, as it is priced low, it is still expected to have a significant impact on the tuna market as consumers expect cheaper product.
16. Industry re-iterated that there is still an issue with mortality, with seals being a significant issue. This has resulted in an increase in great white sharks in the farming zone chasing the seals which is causing Occupational, Health & Safety issues as well as stress on the fish.
17. Members noted that an outer zone for farms has been confirmed and several companies have already moved out. Although there is significant capital and operational costs associated with moving to the outer zone the benefits (fish health and growth rates) are expected to offset the costs.
18. Industry noted that BP conducted a seismic survey in the Bight starting in November 2011. Industry is still analysing the impact this had on the movement of the fish. Members noted that a company is talking about conducting another seismic survey next year further east.
19. An Industry observer informed members that there has been longline fishing on the West Coast out to Christmas Island but they are not targeting SBT and there has been no reported interactions with SBT.
20. In regard to the east coast longline fishery for SBT, the AFMA member advised that two boats were targeting SBT as they did last year. It was highlighted that the wild fish always get a better price than the farmed fish
21. The CSIRO observer advised that the commercial spotting index (SAPUE) supports what Industry said about the fish moving through the Great Australian Bight faster and this was noted in the Scientific Committee of CCSBT.

## **2.2: Informal reports from other stakeholders**

22. The observer from the recreational sector provided the following anecdotal information on the recreational sector:
  - Victoria – in 2012 the larger SBT were further offshore than the previous five seasons. It was assumed that the Leeuwin current was about 100nm offshore from Portland, Port Fairy and Warrnambool as this is where the schools of fish were spotted by plane. The catch rates were less than half of those in 2011 and the majority of SBT caught were between 10-20kg;
  - Tasmania – the 2012 season is consistent with the previous two years although there were more encounters with larger fish. The main size of fish reported were in the range of 25-30kg. Members noted that IMAS is conducting a boat based survey with information available early next year.
  - New South Wales – reports suggest that it was a good year particularly between June and August with a lot more fish caught off Sydney noting that the normal grounds are between Eden and Jervis Bay. The size of the SBT has been larger than previous years ranging from 65-120kgs with a 147kg fish caught of Botany Bay.
  - South Australia – reports suggest that it has been a slower year with fish caught up to about 20kgs.
  - Western Australia – reports are limited from WA but it would appear that similar catches to previous years have been made.

23. The recreational observer advised that information from NSW indicates that 3393 fish were tagged and released by recreational fishers in 2010/11 but only 960 in 2011/12 which demonstrates the high variability of the Fishery.

24. SBTMAC thanked the industry members and the observer from the recreational sector for their updates.

### **Agenda Item 3: Research issues**

No conflicts of interest were declared under this agenda item noting that no recommendations were being made and that members were providing information reports.

#### **3.1: Outcomes from the 2012 CCSBT Scientific Committee meeting**

25. The scientific member recounted the main outcomes from the 2012 CCSBT Scientific Committee meeting noting that the record of the meeting is not finalised until the CCSBT meeting in October. SBTMAC noted that the Scientific Committee:

- i) re-iterated the 2011 stock status advice noting that the spawning biomass is at a low fraction but also the positive outlook given the reduction in total catch, reduced fishing mortality and expectation under the Management Procedure (MP). The Scientific Committee discussed whether the aerial survey triggered exceptional circumstances under the meta rules but the analysis suggested that it didn't so the recommendation to the Commission was to not revise the 2011 decision;
- ii) spent a considerable amount of time discussing the preliminary results of the close kin genetics study. The Scientific Committee raised a number of technical issues that needed to be further looked at. Although the results appear to show a higher spawning biomass than previously thought, the estimated productivity does not change substantially and therefore the TAC advice is unlikely to be substantially different;
- iii) had an expectation from the Commission that an updated Management Procedure would be done in 2013 and updated stock assessment (revised operating model) in 2014;
- iv) discussed the Strategic Research Program (SRP) and preliminary list of priorities which will be further discussed intercessionally with an expected revised SRP adopted next year;
- v) recommended no longer using one of the monitoring CPUE series called 'space time windows index' as it was no longer appropriate;
- vi) supported the work done by the Secretariat on the Global Trade Atlas but the Scientific Committee noted the limitations but still believes it is important to consider this work in terms of watching the market for catches that are outside of CCSBT; and
- vii) advised that the Japanese raised questions regarding stereo video and estimation of recreational catch in the Australian report. The Japanese had used market data to back calculate Australia's catch.

26. The scientific member noted that the Scientific Committee Secretariat agreed to subscribe to the Global Trade Atlas last year to monitor SBT trade and had done an analysis to look at trade trends. The Scientific member noted that issues with the atlas include: lack of a single code for SBT fillet, mis-reporting and that it did not differentiate between a product that is imported and then re-exported.

27. SBTMAC noted the outcomes from the 2012 CCSBT Scientific Committee meeting.

### **3.2: Report from the Research Sub-committee meeting (18 September 2012)**

28. The scientific member, as Chair of the Research Sub-committee (RSC), gave a verbal summary of the outcomes from the RSC meeting held in Canberra earlier that morning. Key points arising from the meeting were:

- i) An update was provided on the current research projects including the discussion at the Scientific Committee noting that:
  - a) the close kin genetics project final report is due in February 2013;
  - b) for the 2012 scientific aerial survey there is a Tactical Research Fund application with FRDC to look at environmental factors that may have resulted in an anomaly year for SBT in the Great Australian Bight; and
  - c) noted that the Scientific Committee had finalised the technical specifications for the Management Procedure that was adopted and the code for the Management Procedure will be managed through version control software.
- ii) The sub-committee spent time documenting research programs noting that that CCSBT ESC will be adopting a new 5 year SRP in 2013 and also in terms of work needed to be done to run the Management Procedure next year and a revised Operating Model in 2014.
- iii) Noted that the Scientific Committee recommended a technical meeting in 2013 to assist in moving towards the revised Operating Model; and
- iv) Recommended ABARES convene a research planning meeting at end of October to talk about priorities for 2013/14 and also SRP medium term priorities (Attachment B).

29. SBTMAC endorsed the outcomes from the RSC meeting.

<b>Action Item 2:</b> Strategic research meeting to be convened before end of 2012
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### **Agenda Item 4: Compliance issues**

No conflicts of interest were declared

#### **4.1: Report from the Compliance Sub-committee meeting (18 September 2012)**

30. Mr John Andersen from AFMA Compliance, as the Chair of the Compliance Sub-committee, gave a verbal presentation of the outcomes from the meeting held in Canberra earlier that morning. Key points arising from the meeting were:

- i) The sub-committee discussed the audit program in the farm sector and covered the general outline of how the audits are run. The Sub-committee noted that a level 1 desk top audit program on the farm sector completed across whole sector with a level 2 more detailed audit also carried out on selected individuals (one completed with another still to be finalized);

- ii) AFMA advised that a detailed audit program for the wild sector on the east coast was being conducted for the first time and highlighted that paperwork needs to be improved;
- iii) In general, members noted that the CDS scheme process has progressed well in a short period of time. There were issues in the wild sector but this was mainly due to the frequency of catching SBT;
- iv) Members discussed tags on the east coast and it was agreed that AFMA would work with industry to develop a better way to audit the tag process;
- v) Members noted that compliance risk assessments would now be conducted bi-annually and that the identified risks were the same as last year;
- vi) Industry highlighted an issue with the requirement to have carrier boat permits on boats being used to transport mortalities to Port Lincoln. AFMA agreed to work with industry to try to rationalise requirements whilst maintaining the integrity of the audit process;
- vii) Members noted sea patrol compliance levels were high;
- viii) The sub-committee agreed that pre-season briefings could be improved by targeting crew on carrier boats in separate briefings from crew on catching boats. Industry agreed to ensure that all key people attend the briefings; and
- ix) AFMA clarified that section 164 of the legislation regarding liability of corporate entities had always existed but did not do what it was intended to do when originally written so it has been amended appropriately. The new legislation puts the onus on the holder to be more accountable for their agents and the conduct of their staff.

31. SBTMAC endorsed the outcomes from the CSC meeting and thanked Mr Andersen for his attendance at SBTMAC noting that the sub-committee meeting was very productive.

## **Agenda Item 5: Domestic management issues**

Mr Wilkinson declared his conflict of interest under Domestic management issues as a SFR quota holder as well as a Manager of a SBT company. In line with the requirements as a MAC member who has declared an interest under an agenda item, Mr Wilkinson left the room. Mr Romaro confirmed that as a permanent observer he did not need to leave the room. The remaining members of SBTMAC agreed that Mr Wilkinson should be allowed to return for all items under Agenda item 5 as Mr Wilkinson's expertise was important to discussions and that most items were for noting.

### **5.1: SBT Plan amendments update**

32. SBTMAC noted that AFMA had engaged a drafter to amend a number of sections of the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery Management Plan 1995 (the Plan) to accommodate changes to management arrangements and to provide flexibility to incorporate recent decisions of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT).

33. Members confirmed that they had considered the draft Plan out-of-session and recommended it be released for public comment. The AFMA Commission considered the Plan amendment at its meeting of 27/28 August 2012 and approved the release for public comment for a period of 30 days. Members noted that the public comment period closes on Friday 5 October 2012.

34. The Committee were advised that the process for amending the Plan now involves:

- i) Consideration of the comments received during the public comment period by AFMA and SBTMAC;
- ii) Comments provided to AFMA Commission for amendment approval. Noting that if the comments result in significant changes the Plan amendments can go out for public comment again;
- iii) The amended Plan determined by the AFMA Commission or Chief Executive Officer;
- iv) The amended Plan accepted by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; and
- v) The amended Plan registered on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments (this is a disallowable instrument for 15 sitting days).

35. Members noted that it is anticipated that the Plan will be considered by the Minister at the end of November 2012.

36. Matt Daniel, AFMA Manager, SBT Fishery, summarised the amendments which include:

- i) replacing the bycatch action plan with an ecological risk management plan;
- ii) replacing verified count with transfer weighing which will allow the use of stereo video;
- iii) Removing the requirement to place a public notice in a National newspaper once TAC's are decided by the AFMA Commission. Advertising is very costly and the amendments streamline the process noting that stakeholders will be informed by the website and letter;
- iv) allowing for the determination of fishing dates by the registration of a disallowable legislative instrument rather than a regulation. This provides greater flexibility and is consistent with arrangements in other fishery Management Plans;
- v) allowing undercatch arrangements as agreed to by CCSBT;
- vi) applying overcatch provisions to the minorline sector;
- vii) expanding overcatch arrangements and removing the need for industry to apply for the 25 tonne, instead determine a percentage or tonnage; and
- viii) streamlining the setting of the Total Allowable Catch to allow AFMA the flexibility to determine a provisional live weight value or the actual live weight value for an SFR earlier in the Australian SBT fishing season.

## **5.2: Monitoring arrangements in the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery**

37. The AFMA member advised that following the commercial trial of stereo video based in the SBT fishery the AFMA Commission agreed to implement stereo video based monitoring services from 1 December 2012. In response, AFMA published a request for tender (RFT) through Austender to provide services. A number of tenders were received and a preferred supplier agreed. However, members noted that through the tender process a number of issues were identified that resulted in stereo video most likely costing more than had been anticipated.

38. SBTMAC noted that AFMA is still in negotiations with the preferred tenderer but given the cost implications, the AFMA Commission has agreed to delay the introduction of stereo video until 1 December 2013.

39. SBTMAC further noted that in the interim (for the season starting 1 December 2012) AFMA has decided to increase the sample size of each tow pontoon to 100 fish in order to improve the statistical quality of the sampling regime. All other parts of the verified count procedure, including the 10kg rule, will remain unchanged.
40. AFMA advised that they had written to the industry association, SEWPAC and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry outlining the Commission's decision to delay the introduction of stereo video.
41. The environment member expressed concern regarding the ramification of changing the date for Australia in CCSBT. The AFMA member noted that the introduction of stereo video was not a binding resolution of CCSBT and that Australia has always stated that it would only be introduced if it was commercially viable.
42. Industry again raised concerns regarding the introduction of stereo video. Some of the issues discussed include:
  - i) Industry will not know what has been transferred to the pontoons for 3-4 weeks;
  - ii) All animal husbandry developed over many years will be destroyed;
  - iii) Industry do not believe it will be economically efficient;
  - iv) Owners of the purse seiners will be responsible for any overcatch; and
  - v) Concerns that the 10kg rule will be eliminated with the introduction of stereo video;
43. The AFMA member advised that at industries request part of the contract negotiations with the preferred supplier include that the company must supply estimates within 3 calendar days of transfer. Industry stated that they do not believe this is achievable.
44. Members further noted that the contract with the preferred supplier will be for 4 years with the first year increasing the fish sampling protocol and the next 3 years stereo video.
45. SBTMAC noted that AFMA had done extensive research and could not find another member of CCSBT that uses stereo video to estimate quota. AFMA acknowledged that stereo video is logistically difficult as the supplier will be viewing 3-400,000 fish in 5-6 weeks and that AFMA is going to encounter issue when developing the system.

### **5.3: Proposed 2013 observer program**

46. Members noted that the number of observer days in the SBT fishery remains the same with 90 sea days (10% coverage) budgeted for 2012-13. However, there will be an increase in costs due to a change to the way observer costs are allocated between fisheries and also less sea days in other fisheries are budgeted than in the past which results in the administration cost per sea day being slightly higher than in the draft budget.
47. The AFMA member explained that each year ASBTIA undertakes a process of random vessel selection and advises AFMA of two catching vessels and two tow vessels that have been selected for observer coverage. In the past this has worked with varying degrees of success and may require some changes for the coming season to increase observer coverage on tow vessels.
48. In the longline sector (the ETBF boats fishing in the SBT core zones) the observer coverage depends on the number of boats fishing in the zone and the amount of quota available. Industry anticipates more quota being available to the east coast this year.

### **5.4: Proposal to change the timing of the SBT quota year**

49. Industry members reiterated their desire to change the start date of the Australian fishing year from the current 1 December to 1 November.
50. SBTMAC noted that AFMA has drafted Management Plan amendments that simplify the administrative process for setting season dates. Currently, the season is set by regulations and the amendments propose to set the date with a determination which should shorten the time to set season dates from 6-9 months to 1 month process. This means that it is likely that any future decision regarding season dates will not be constrained by administrative processes.
51. The AFMA member explained that one of the issues for industry is if the fish move early and companies want to fish in November. SBTMAC noted that it is unlikely that AFMA will be able to change the date or set overcatch provisions by 1 November 2012. However, AFMA would need to look at when the quota is decremented. If the Management Plan amendments are agreed by 1 December 2012 it may be possible to have a start date of 1 November 2013. The AFMA member explained that the Plan amendments become law the day after they are gazetted although they are still subject to a disallowance process.
52. The AFMA member advised that in October 2013 there will be an exception where there is a possibility that the TAC for the season commencing 1 December 2013 (or 1 November 2013) could be reduced by a CCSBT decision in October 2013.
53. Members noted that the adoption of the CCSBT Management Procedures, which sets Global Total Allowable Catches in three year blocks, means that normally the CCSBT will make a decision in the October the year before the TAC is to take effect giving the Australian industry over 13 months notice of changes to the global TAC.

#### **5.5: Status of AFMA's 2012/13 SBT budget**

54. SBTMAC noted the final 2012/13 budget for the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery was circulated to Members on 17 July 2012. The final budget was \$1,514,987, an increase of \$408,459 (46%) from 2011/12.
55. SBTMAC recognized that the majority of this increase was under research due to the re-introduction of the intercessional science project that was missing in last year's budget. Management costs and overheads have also increased as a result of an under estimation of staff time in 2012/13, a 3% AFMA wide pay increase as well as an extra 0.25 FTE staff member to cover extra work due to the implementation of stereo video and time required to implement changes to the Management Plan and to deal with other complicated management issues.
56. Industry members expressed an issue with the estimated \$107,118 increase in compliance data collection to cover the projected increase in the costs of the monitoring services for the anticipated introduction of stereo video. The AFMA member noted that these costs may not be as much and are subject to negotiations with the stereo video service provider.
57. Industry also expressed concerns regarding research costs and indicated that they would be writing to AFMA seeking clarification.
58. The AFMA member advised that when all observer days are not used the remainder is part of the acquittals.
59. The AFMA member took on board the criticism of the 2012/13 research budget process and noted that the 2013/14 process will be starting earlier in an attempt to improve the process. An initial budget will be prepared prior to Christmas 2012 and discussed with

CFA early in 2013. Members further noted that the budget process will be more complicated next financial year as there is a \$13.8 million cap for industry levies.

## **5.6: Environment update**

### Strategic and Export Assessment Update

60. SBTMAC noted that the approved Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) for the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery expires on 24 July 2013. The WTO is subject to nine conditions and three recommendations. AFMA reported that progress against these conditions and recommendations were conveyed to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPAC) in early August. All were achieved except condition 4 regarding stereo video and a letter had been sent to SEWPAC explaining the delay.

### Protected Species Update

61. Members were advised that since the last SBTMAC meeting, AFMA has provided SEWPAC with final quarterly reports for the second, third and fourth quarters of 2011 and the first quarter of 2012. AFMA has also provided SEWPAC with the preliminary quarterly report for the second quarter of 2012 on behalf of fishers. There were no interactions reported in SBT logbooks for this period.

### Marine Bioregional Planning (MBP) update

62. The Committee noted that the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery operates in the South East, South West, North West, North and East Marine Regions. The Director of National Parks released a notice inviting public comment on the proposed Proclamations of Commonwealth marine reserves. Members were aware that the public comment period closed on Monday 10 September 2012.

### Petroleum and related applications and Other International Consultation

63. SBTMAC noted the reports on Petroleum and related applications as well as other International consultation.

### Reviews of the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines (CFHSP) and the Commonwealth Policy on Fisheries Bycatch (CPFBS)

64. Members noted that the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is leading separate, but coordinated reviews of the CFHSP (2007) and the CPFBS (2000). Terms of reference for both reviews can be found on DAFF's website. Stakeholder advisory committees have been established for both reviews and include representation from the SBT industry. All committees met for the first time in May 2012. The scientific member noted that issue papers for public comment will be released in the not too distant future via the DAFF website.

65. Members further noted that reports from each review are expected to be provided to Minister Ludwig in March 2013

#### 5.6.5: ERA review for the SBT fishery

66. SBTMAC noted the most recent risk assessment of the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery was completed by AFMA in December 2009 and resulted in no high risk species being identified within the Fishery.
67. AFMA advised that the organization is currently completing a project aimed at revitalising AFMA's commitment to Ecological Risk Assessment/Ecological Risk Management (ERA/ERM).
68. Members discussed that AFMA originally anticipated that the SBT fishery would be reassessed prior to expiry of its export approval on 24 July 2013, however, this is not a requirement of the Fishery's current export approval.
69. SBTMAC agreed that a decision on when the SBT Fishery will be reassessed, should be deferred until completion of the AFMA's revitalisation project in March 2013.

#### **5.7: Other domestic management issues**

70. The conservation member advised that a DAFF inter-departmental and stakeholder meeting had been held a few weeks ago to discuss the outcomes of the CCSBT Scientific meeting as well as preparation for the upcoming CCSBT meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 6: Next meeting**

No conflicts of interest were declared under agenda item 6.

71. SBTMAC expressed its appreciation to Tony Kingston for all his hard work over a number of years in the SBT Fishery. Members noted that the Chair had written to Mr Kingston thanking him for his contributions to SBTMAC as the Executive Officer.
72. The AFMA Member advised that when he presented the Management Plan amendments to the AFMA Commission they were critical of the fact that only industry provided comments on the draft Management Plan amendments.
73. Members expressed concern that now they only meet once a year it is more difficult to engage in all out-of-session issues without face-to-face discussions. Also the requirement that MACs only deal with "above the line" issues and not "operational "below the line" issues further limits the capacity to contribute to all "out of session" proposals. Members suggested that two meetings per year would be ideal to provide for up-to-date discussion on all issues.
74. SBTMAC agreed that in future when an out-of-session paper is sent out for comments the Executive Officer will provide a mechanism for members to acknowledge that they have read the paper but have no comment.
75. SBTMAC proposed to hold a meeting in Port Lincoln in April/May 2013 as well at the September meeting. The AFMA member highlighted that the April/May meeting was not included in the 2012/13 budget so would result in an overspend. However, a second SBTMAC meeting could be included in the 2013/14 budget if it was deemed necessary to hold two meetings per year.
76. The Committee agreed that if a meeting was not held in May 2013 then the next meeting would be in September 2013

**Action Item 3:** Executive Officer to include an option for members to respond to any out of session papers with a 'no comment' response.

Meeting closed at 3.55pm

**Peter Neville**  
SBTMAC Chair  
September 2012



# Meeting of the Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Advisory Committee (SBTMAC 36)

12.30 - 5pm Tuesday 18 September 2012

AFMA Aquarium Room - 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Bank West House,  
73 Northbourne Avenue Canberra

## Draft Agenda

- 1. Preliminaries/matters arising**
  - 1.1 Opening remarks/apologies/acceptance of agenda
  - 1.2 Pecuniary interest declaration
  - 1.3 Acceptance of draft minutes SBTMAC 35 September 2011
  - 1.4 Action arising SBTMAC 35 and intersessional work
- 2. State of the Fishery**
  - 2.1 Informal industry report on the 2011/12 catching season, markets and outlook
  - 2.2 Informal reports from other stakeholders
- 3. Research issues**
  - 3.1 Outcomes from the 2012 CCSBT Scientific Committee meeting
  - 3.2 Report from the Research Sub-committee meeting held morning of 18 September
- 4. Compliance issues**
  - 4.1 Report from Compliance Sub-committee meeting held morning of 18 September
- 5. Domestic management issues**
  - 5.1 SBT Management plan amendments update
  - 5.2 Monitoring arrangements in the SBT Fishery
  - 5.3 Proposed 2013 observer program
  - 5.4 Proposal to change timing of the SBT quota year
  - 5.5 SBT budget issues
    - 5.5.1 Status of AFMA's 2012/13 SBT budget
    - 5.5.2 Other AFMA budget issues
  - 5.6 Environment update
    - 5.6.1 Commonwealth review of the Harvest Strategy
    - 5.6.2 ERA review for the SBT Fishery
  - 5.7 Other domestic management issues
- 6. Next meeting**

## **Research Activities**

- Close kin genetics project (final report due February 2013)<sup>a</sup>
  - Finalising close kin stand alone stock assessment
- Management Procedure (2013)
  - Exceptional circumstances
  - Aerial Survey Index
    - Tactical Research fund project on SBT habitat
  - Alternate CPUE (Korea and Taiwan)
- Revised Operating Model 2014
  - Incorporating the close kin genetic data and other updates
- Hardpart archiving<sup>a</sup>
- Aging Indonesian otoliths
- Tissue collection for further close kin genetics<sup>b</sup>
- Intercessional science to support Extended Scientific Committee 2013
- SAPUE – generation<sup>c</sup>
- Aerial survey
  - 2013<sup>a</sup>
  - 2014
- Recreational catch monitoring design <sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Funded

<sup>b</sup> Estimated costs \$25–30,000 currently unfunded

<sup>c</sup> Funded as part of the aerial survey