



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority



Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC)

FINAL MINUTES
SOUTHMAC 34
10 FEBRUARY 2016

SUB-ANTARCTIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SouthMAC)

CHAIR: Mr Peter Neville

Date: 10 February 2016

Venue: CSIRO Marine Laboratories, Hobart

Attendance

Members

Mr Peter Neville, Chair

Ms Lihini Weragoda, Australian Antarctic Division

Mr Martin Exel, Industry Member

Mr Malcolm McNeill, Industry

Dr Malcolm Haddon, Science

Mr Jon Bryan, Conservation Member

Ms Jo Fisher, AFMA Member

Ms Sarah Kirkcaldie (Executive Officer)

Observers

Mr Rhys Arangio, Industry

Introduction

The thirty fourth meeting of the Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC 34) was held in Hobart on 10 February 2016.

The primary objectives of the meeting were to discuss:

- Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery stock assessment and total allowable catch (TAC) recommendations;
- the Fishery Assessment Plans for the sub-Antarctic fisheries;
- lost longline gear in the Heard Island and McDonald islands Fishery (HIMIF);
- 25.5% minimum quota holding for trawl access in HIMIF; and
- the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) New and Exploratory Fisheries 2016/17 expression of interests.

Agenda item 1 - Preliminaries

SouthMAC 34 was opened at 9.15 am on 10 February 2016 by the Chair, Mr Peter Neville.

Mr Neville welcomed the attendance of members and the observer Mr Rhys Arangio from Austral Fisheries Pty Ltd. Mr Neville noted that Mr Les Scott attended his last Sub-Antarctic Resource Assessment Group (SARAG) meeting the previous day and again acknowledged the significant contribution he made as a member on SouthMAC and expressed members appreciation of his significant role over a number of years of service.

1.1 Declaration of interests

The AFMA member stated that as outlined in the *Fisheries Administrations Act 1991* and AFMA Fisheries Management Paper No. 1, all members (but not permanent observers or invited participants) of SouthMAC must declare any pecuniary interest in the Fishery at the commencement of the meeting 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 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.

Members acknowledged that AFMA has members on the consultative groups such as MACs because of people's expertise in areas that are relevant to discussions.

Mr Neville declared that he was the Principal of a fisheries consulting business (P.J.Neville & Associates) but had no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

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 a Director of the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies, Member of 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 (COLTO). 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.

Mr McNeill advised he is the Chief Executive Officer of Australian Longline P/L which holds various fishing rights in, and operates vessels in the sub-Antarctic fisheries and waters under the jurisdiction of CCAMLR. Mr McNeill also declared he is a member on Slope Resource Assessment Group as well as the vice Chair of COLTO. Mr McNeill 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.

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 SARAG, Northern Prawn Fishery Resource Assessment Group (RAG), Southern Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery RAG and Shelf Resource Assessment Group and attends SharkRAG and Deepwater RAG. Dr Haddon advised he has no pecuniary interest in sub-Antarctic fisheries and his salary is not dependent on any research conducted for the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Ms Lihini Werogoda advised that she is an employee of the AAD and her colleagues conduct the HIMI stock assessment. Ms Werogoda attends international meetings related to Antarctic fisheries and no pecuniary interest in Antarctic fisheries and that her salary is not dependent on AAD, industry and other research collaborations.

Mr Jon Bryan advised he is an employee of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust. Mr Bryan stated that he is a member on a number of Tasmanian fisheries advisory committees

including recreational, scallop, abalone, crustacean and scalefish but has no pecuniary interest in Antarctic fisheries.

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

Ms Kirkcaldie advised she is employed by AFMA, is also the Executive Officer for the Sub-Antarctic RAG (SARAG) and Southern Bluefin Tuna MAC and has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Mr Arangio advised he is employed by Austral Fisheries who hold SFRs in the Australian sub-Antarctic Fisheries. He is also the Secretary of COLTO, the Coalition of Legal Toothfish Operators. Mr Arangio is not aware of any investigation or prosecution action by AFMA against Austral Fisheries or of any legal action taken by Austral against AFMA.

1.2 Apologies

No apologies were received.

1.3 Adoption of agenda

SouthMAC adopted the agenda with the addition of agenda item 18a: Depredation of whales and 18b: Undercatch/overcatch.

Agenda item 2 – Minutes from SouthMAC 33 and November teleconference

Members noted that the draft minutes from SouthMAC 33 held on 25 February 2015 were circulated for comment on 18 March 2015. Comments were received from Martin Exel and these comments were incorporated and members noted the final minutes.

SouthMAC noted that the draft minutes from the teleconference held on 10 November 2015 were circulated on 17 December 2015. Comments were received from Lihini Weragoda and these comments were incorporated and members noted the final minutes.

Agenda item 3 – Action arising from SouthMAC 33

SouthMAC discussed the action arising from SouthMAC 33.

Item	Action arising from SouthMAC 33	Status
1	MITF FAP - AFMA to circulate final MITF FAP to members	Members noted that this action was completed with the final MITF FAP circulated to members on 7 May 2015
2	MITF season extension - AFMA to inform SouthMAC of the outcomes of the AFMA Commissions discussions	Members noted that this item

	regarding the MITF season extension.	was completed with the AFMA Commission outcomes sent to SouthMAC on 25 March 2015
3	HIMI FAP - AFMA to circulate final HIMI FAP to members	Members noted that this item was completed with the final HIMIF FAP circulated to members on 7 May 2015
4	Observer trips - Industry to inform AFMA as soon as possible if they plan on conducting more than the current budgeted 17 observer trips.	SouthMAC noted that industry kept AFMA informed regarding planned trips.

SouthMAC discussed the action arising items from November 2015 teleconference.

Item	Action arising from November 2015 teleconference	Status
1	2016 CCAMLR papers - ADD and AFMA to discuss the consultative process for CCAMLR papers in 2016.	The AAD member noted that all issues relevant to industry will be discussed at the industry meeting in August and where possible, relevant papers presented to the September SARAG meeting. AAD member also stated that where above was not possible, AAD will seek agreement on any other relevant issues through other consultations. It was agreed that a list of all

		papers going to the working group on Fisheries stock assessments (WG-FSA) will be presented prior to the next SARAG meeting (Action arising 1)
2	Removal of trawl 3 boat limit - AFMA and AAD to discuss out-of-session a whole-of-government position on the removal of the trawl 3 boat limit.	Members noted that this item will be discussed under agenda item 14.
3	Senate enquiry - AFMA to provide senate enquiry submission on factory trawlers to industry.	SouthMAC noted that AFMA's submission is available on the Parliament of Australia website

Action arising 1: AAD to provide SARAG with a list of all papers going to WG-FSA-16.

Agenda item 4 – Correspondence

SouthMAC noted the following correspondence had been received between meetings:

- An email dated 5 March 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking comments on the collection of prices of transferred or leased Statutory Fishing Rights for all Commonwealth managed fisheries;
- An email dated 11 March 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie circulating the Chair's summary from the SouthMAC meeting held on 25 February 2015;
- An email dated 18 March from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking comments on the draft minutes from the SouthMAC 33;
- An email dated 19 March 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie circulating recent media releases regarding the illegal, unreported and unregulated listed fishing vessel 'Kunlun';
- An email dated 25 March 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie regarding the Commission's consideration of the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery season extension request and also the total allowable catch for the 2015/16 season;
- An email dated 31 March 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking individual MAC member comment on the proposed regulator performance framework;
- An email dated 14 April 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie regarding the AFMA draft 2015/16 budget;

- An email dated 29 April 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking comments on a revised Fisheries Management paper No. 1;
- An email dated 7 May 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie circulating the final Fishery Assessment Plans for the MITF and HIMIF;
- An email dated 17 September 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie regarding the call for expressions of interest to market test the AFMA Scientific Observer Program;
- An email dated 24 September 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie attaching the finalised acquittal of cost-recovered expenditure against the budget for 2014/15 for the Commonwealth fisheries;
- An email dated 6 October 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking individual comments on the various research expressions of interests for FRDC funding in 2016-17;
- An email dated 6 October 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie attaching the updated version of Fisheries Management paper 1 which had been accepted by the AFMA Commission;
- An email dated 13 October 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie regarding holding a teleconference 10 November 2015;
- An email dated 29 October 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie attaching the agenda for the SouthMAC teleconference;
- An email dated 3 November 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie distributing the papers for the SouthMAC teleconference;
- An email dated 18 November 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking applications for Chairpersons of various Management Advisory Committees and Resource Assessment Groups;
- An email dated 25 November 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking comments on the budget implications of the draft 2016 Cost Recovery Impact Statement;
- An email dated 30 November 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie regarding completing a MAC self-assessment;
- An email dated 3 December 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie attaching a letter from the Hon Norman Moore, Chairman, AFMA Commission regarding the AFMA Commission agreed 2015/16 Total Allowable Catches for HIMIF;
- An email dated 15 December 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie extending the deadline for the MAC self-assessment.
- An email dated 17 December 2015 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking comments on the draft SouthMAC teleconference minutes;
- An email dated 14 January 2016 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking members for the Commonwealth Fisheries Marine Mammal Group;
- An email dated 19 January 2016 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking comments on the draft SouthMAC 34 agenda; and
- An email dated 21 January 2016 from Sarah Kirkcaldie attaching a letter from Beth Gibson, AFMA Policy, Environment, Economics and Research section, regarding AFMA reviewing its undercatch and overcatch provisions.

Members noted that on 8 February 2016 Sarah Kirkcaldie sent an email explaining that AFMA has been participating in a project to develop national guidelines for the quality assurance of fisheries research and science information. This national level FRDC funded

project is being led by Andrew Penney (Pisces Australis Ltd) and other co-investigators including QLD DAFF, PIRSA-SARDI, NT DPIF, CSIRO and ABARES.

Members noted that the intent of the project is to develop guidelines (or a non-mandatory standard) that participating agencies can implement to ensure that the quality of fisheries research and scientific information being used to inform fisheries management decisions is of the high standard, thus reducing the risk of poor management decisions being made. SouthMAC members expressed concern regarding the need for new standards/guidelines when there are already a number and indicated that it would be best to only have one set. Concerns were also raised regarding resources/funding, who is the intended audience of the new guidelines and whether the new guidelines would actually improve fisheries management.

SouthMAC agreed to provide individual comments on the project to AFMA by 24 February 2016 (**Action arising 2**).

Action arising 2: Members to provide individual comments on the national guidelines to AFMA by 24 February 2016.

Agenda Item 5– Report on fishing operations

SouthMAC noted the verbal report from Mr Arangio, Austral Fisheries Pty Ltd, regarding their fishing operations in sub-Antarctic waters. Mr Arangio noted that during the 2014/15 season the Company fished all of their HIMIF Patagonian Toothfish quota but not Mackerel icefish as the fish were not available when the vessel *Atlas Cove* was trawling. By the end of November 2015 all Austral vessels: the *Isla Eden*, the *Atlas Cove*, the *Corinthian Bay* and the *Austral Leader 2* were back in port in Mauritius. The *Atlas Cove* was then chartered by the French to fish for Mackerel Icefish.

Austral Fisheries vessels are expecting to begin fishing in the 2015/16 HIMIF longline season in April. The *Atlas Cove* is expected to complete the random stratified trawl survey.

Mr Exel noted that the decade long process of moving from a trawl fishery to a longline fishery was nearly complete with only 102 tonnes of Patagonian Toothfish taken by trawl in the 2014/15 season.

SouthMAC noted the verbal report from Mr McNeill on fishing operations in sub-Antarctic waters. Mr McNeill stated that Australian Longline Pty Ltd was the only company fishing in the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery (MITF) in the 2015/16 season. Members noted that this season catch rates at MITF had been poor. The Company also did not catch their entire Patagonian Toothfish quota at HIMI as their vessels had less time fishing there than anticipated.

Mr McNeill noted that Australian Longline Pty Ltd had purchased a new vessel, *Antarctic Discovery* which has been given a major re-fit. The *Antarctic Discovery* was due to go and fish in the New and Exploratory Ross Sea Fishery but mechanical issues prevented it leaving on time and then the ice melted sooner than expected and all the fish were caught early. The *Antarctic Discovery* instead fished in 58.4.1 and conducted research fishing. Once it returns from the CCAMLR New and Exploratory fisheries it will then get prepared to go to the MITF. The Company's other vessel *Antarctic Chieftain* will fish in HIMIF in the 2015/16 season and then CCAMLR New and Exploratory fisheries (58.4.1 and 58.4.2) in 2016/17 if they apply and their application is successful. The *Antarctic Discovery* will fish in the Ross Sea if granted access. Mr McNeill noted that the *Antarctic Discovery* was currently trialing camera's between 500-2000m. The Company had just received a report back from the vessel stating that they could see substrate, current movement and squid. Members noted that there were two

camera's on the vessel but one was not working. The report has been forwarded to the Australian Antarctic Division.

Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery

Mr Exel, Mr McNeill and Mr Arangio declared their interests under Agenda Items 6, 7 and 8, and left the room. The remaining members of SouthMAC agreed that Mr Exel, Mr McNeill and Mr Arangio should be allowed to return for all discussions under Agenda item 6, 7 and 8 but should not be present for recommendations.

Agenda item 6 – Stock assessment and TAC recommendations

Members noted that SARAG met on 9 February 2016 (SARAG 53) and discussed the CSIRO prepared stock assessment of the MITF for Patagonian Toothfish. The CSIRO member advised that the estimate of male growth had been influenced by the new data and that it now appeared unrealistic. Members noted that Dr Rich Hillary presented a paper on modelling the growth of Macquarie Island Toothfish at the SARAG 53 meeting. The paper identified future research required but noted that it did not have any significant impact on the stock assessment.

SouthMAC noted that the stock assessment included an extra year of data and included 2015 ageing data. Members noted that the status of the Fishery was similar to last year with the stock at about 67% of B_0 with similar trends in recruitment. Members further noted that there were considerable revisions to the tag recapture history with the exclusion of fish recaptured after less than 180 days of release. Previously the figure was only 10 days and industry members questioned whether the figure should remain at 10 days until 2007 when longlining was introduced. The CSIRO member agreed to discuss this issue with the stock assessment scientists (**Action arising 3**).

Members noted SARAG agreed that it is important to maintain fishing across the entire fishery and recommended a TAC of 450 tonnes for the 2016/17 season and 450 tonnes for the 2017/18 season, to be taken in approximately the following proportions: 250 tonnes from the Aurora Trough, 80 tonnes in the Southern Macquarie Ridge and 120 tonnes in the Northern Macquarie Ridge.

SouthMAC noted that the distribution of catches was a voluntary agreement with Industry and the Committee appreciated Industry's efforts to abide by the agreement. SouthMAC noted that spreading the distribution of catch across the Fishery will increase the stability of the stock assessment.

Industry participants left the room, and SouthMAC members agreed to recommend a Patagonian Toothfish TAC of 450 tonnes in the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery for each of the seasons, 2016/17 and 2017/18, as recommended by SARAG, for determination by the AFMA Commission:

Members noted that Industry had requested to have the next /stock assessment, that is for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons, completed as early as possible. It was agreed that the data for the next stock assessment would be cut off at the end of fishing in the 2016/17 season and therefore data would be available in late 2016 and the stock assessment for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons would be available for SARAG and SouthMAC consideration by May 2017.

Members thanked CSIRO for completing the MITF stock assessment and noted that the final stock assessment paper, incorporating minor edits, would be circulated in the coming weeks.

Action arising 3: CSIRO stock assessment scientists to discuss the reduction of the number of days released to re-capture for the trawl fishery as per the work done by Dr Tuck in past.

Agenda item 7 – Fishery Assessment Plan

Members noted that the Fishery Assessment Plan (FAP) is a requirement of the *Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery Management Plan 2006*. SouthMAC noted the draft FAP proposed a tagging rate of two toothfish per tonne caught at Macquarie Island in the 2016/17 season. Members noted and agreed with SARAG's recommendation that the MITF FAP become a two-yearly document, given the two-yearly TAC setting cycle for the Fishery.

Members agreed that the FAP should be re-drafted with amendments including removing any historical information that is no longer relevant making the document more concise and change it to a two year FAP in line with the quota settings (**Action arising 4**). Members noted that the FAP can not be finalised until the Commission determines the TAC. Industry supported the proposed tag rate but questioned if they need to continue tagging at such a high rate. CSIRO noted that in the north a tag rate of two tags per tonne was required but that it could be reduced for Aurora Trough. CSIRO agreed to consider when in the next few years it would be appropriate to reduce the tag rate (**Action arising 5**). The FAP will be re-drafted and circulated to members once the AFMA Commission has agreed to the MITF 2016/17 TAC.

Action arising 4: AFMA to circulate draft revised MITF FAP to members.

Action arising 5: CSIRO to examine when it would be appropriate to reduce the current tag rate of two tags per tonne.

Agenda item 8 – Extension to longline fishing period

Members noted that at their November 2014 and February 2015 meetings, SARAG and SouthMAC discussed an industry request to extend the MITF longline fishing period to include 15-30 April. SARAG and SouthMAC supported a trial extension to the longline fishing period, noting that the extension would require consultation with the Threat Abatement Plan for Seabirds (TAP) team within the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD). A trial of the two week season extension was supported by the AFMA Commission.

Members noted that during 15-30 April 2015, 244,390 hooks were set in this trial period and no seabirds were caught.

Members noted that daytime setting is not permitted in the MITF and fishing must cease immediately for the remainder of the season for a boat if any of the following birds are caught and killed:

- Wandering albatross
- Black-browed albatross
- Grey Headed albatross
- Grey Petrel: or
- Soft-plumaged petrel

Members further noted that the *2014 Threat Abatement Plan for the incidental catch (or bycatch) of seabirds during oceanic longline fishing operations* requires that AFMA implement an appropriate management response for bycatch incidents where more than one seabird is killed on a single trip by an individual longline fishing vessel. Members noted that the TAP team supported a permanent extension of the longline season given the other conditions imposed on operators.

SouthMAC agreed that the MITF longline season be extended to permanently include the period 15-30 April.

Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery

Mr Exel, Mr McNeill and Mr Arangio declared their interests under Agenda Items 9-14, and left the room. The remaining members of SouthMAC agreed that Mr Exel, Mr McNeill and Mr Arangio should be allowed to return for all discussions under Agenda items 9-14 but should not be present for recommendations.

Agenda item 9 – Season extensions

SouthMAC noted that based on the requirements of CCAMLR Conservation Measures, AFMA has granted access to the HIMI season extension periods to the following vessels:

Vessel	1 to 30 April 2016	15 September to 30 November 2016
Atlas Cove	✓	✓
Isla Eden	✓	✓
Austral Leader II	✓	✓
Corinthian Bay	✓	✓
Antarctic Chieftain	✓	✓
Antarctic Discovery	x	x

The AFMA member explained that access to the season extension periods 1 to 30 April 2017 and 15 September to 30 November 2017 is conditional on that vessel demonstrating full compliance with Conservation Measure 25-02 in the 2015/16 fishing season. Members noted that the fishing vessel *Antarctic Discovery* was new to the HIMI Fishery and had not fished in CCAMLR waters in the previous season.

Agenda item 10 – CCAMLR Fisheries Review meetings and science work plan

SouthMAC noted that a draft of a new science work plan has been circulated to the CCAMLR Fisheries Review Meeting group and AAD are awaiting comments. AAD advised that the work pursuant to the plan had been completed last year and there was some moneys under spent due to efficiencies gained through the year. Members were advised that the next CCAMLR fisheries review meeting had not yet been scheduled but would most likely be in late February.

Agenda item 11 – Fishery Assessment Plan

SouthMAC noted that the HIMI Fishery Assessment Plan (FAP) is a requirement of the *Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan 2002*. The draft 2015/16 FAP was provided for comment and members agreed to aim for a tagging rate of approximately two tags per tonne of toothfish caught in all fishing operations and to remove all the unnecessary information in the FAP and make it a two year FAP. SouthMAC noted that the tagging rate for the 2014/15 season was increased voluntarily by industry to two fish tagged per green weight tonne to inject additional tags into the fishery. Members noted that it was more important to tag quality fish than the quantity. The draft 2015/16 FAP also set out the timetable for the RSTS. Industry noted that for operational reasons they may need to complete the RSTS in early- to mid-March this year. Concerns we raised by members that the RSTS has previously been conducted between April-June and doing it earlier could cause problems for the stock assessment. Industry noted there was already an arrangement underway to move to biennial RSTS, and eventual removal of the requirement, as a result of the stock assessment being a tag based assessment. AAD agreed to, in 2016, review the objectives of the RSTS. SouthMAC noted that if the 2016 RSTS is not completed a Mackerel icefish assessment cannot be conducted in 2016. SouthMAC also noted that mackerel icefish behave differently in February March to later in the year thereby possible introduction of bias to the assessment. SouthMAC members (excluding industry members) agreed that the earliest the survey could start was 20 March 2016. Industry noted that this may not be operationally possible and while every attempt will be made to undertake the work, the worst case could be they may only complete the 5 day Mackerel icefish section of the survey, noting that the HIMI FAP provides for RSTS credits and debits to be carried over from year to year. SouthMAC also noted that whilst the assessment is moving to a tag based assessment, the RSTS continued to be important for determining age class strength, particularly the age distribution of pre recruit fish during the transition period. SouthMAC noted that the time series and therefore consistency was important until additional analysis is done on tagging data.

SouthMAC noted that the FAP will be finalised and circulated to members out of session (**Action arising 6**).

Action arising 6: AFMA to circulate final HIMI FAP to members

Agenda item 12 – Lost longline gear

SouthMAC members noted the summary of gear loss in the sub-Antarctic fisheries over the last five years. Members noted that at its meeting the previous day SARAG agreed that this should be a standard RAG agenda item and MAC members agreed that it should also be a regular SouthMAC agenda item. Members requested that more information be included in the next paper including number of boats, when longline fishing began, number of sets, lost hooks compared to hooks set and also any gear that is recovered. Industry noted that more than half of the lost gear in 2014/15 came from one vessel and that there had been some issues with the line tension equipment on that vessel and also some operator error. Industry members explained a range of mitigation measures they would be using in the upcoming season to reduce gear loss including skipper incentives and working with gear suppliers to develop transponders on the lines to help locate the lost lines. Industry will attempt to retrieve previously lost gear during the 2015/16 season and SouthMAC agreed that retrieving gear should be a priority. Members noted that it was unlikely that lost bottom set longline gear ghost fishes but there could be environmental damage from the line moving laterally on the seabed. It was surmised that the gear would not likely roll up into a ball on the bottom of the seabed like Spanish longline, as the gear is heavily weighted. Industry stated that they would

be discussing line thickness with gear supplier noting there is a compromise between gear thickness and drag in the water and tension created causing the gear to break.

Agenda item 13 – Electronic monitoring trial

The AFMA member informed SouthMAC that AFMA was attempting to secure government funding to do an electronic monitoring trial in the sub-Antarctic fisheries. Members were informed that the trial could include species identification under consistent lighting and length measures in the factory. SouthMAC members noted that SARAG raised concerns regarding cost implications and noted it would only be economical efficient if the number of observers required could be reduced to one observer. The AAD member noted that CCAMLR had a requirement for two observers in New and Exploratory fisheries and any electronic monitoring trials in the CCAMLR Area would need to be considered by CCAMLR. Members noted that the system would need to be installed in Australia.

Agenda item 14 – 25.5% minimum quota holding for trawl access

SouthMAC noted that prior to 2012 the *Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan* restricted the Fishery to three boats through a minimum quota holding of 25.5%. With more of the catch being taken with automatic longline the three boat limit became restrictive. The Plan was changed to remove the limit on the number of longline boats, but retain a limit on the number of trawlers through a Determination. This Determination was for three years and meant to be an interim measure until the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) was updated. Members noted that this issue was discussed at the SouthMAC teleconference in November 2015 and it was agreed that AFMA and AAD would discuss out-of-session. To allow more time to discuss and consider all the implications of removing the 25.5% minimum quota holding AFMA implemented the Determination for another year. Members noted that this issue was discussed at SARAG 53 and agreed that there needs to be some discussion on how the benthic impact of trawling is managed if the limit is removed. SouthMAC requested that SARAG examine whether the minimum quota holding is the most efficient method to manage benthic impact. The Conservation member noted that the Marine Protected Area is a component of the suite of mitigation measures for managing benthic impacts in the HIMI EEZ. . The AAD member noted that the three boat limit together with the MPA forms the existing package of benthic impact mitigation measures and if the three boat limit was to be removed then a more effective measure would need to be put in place to ensure Australia continued to manage benthic impacts effectively. Members noted that this item will need to be included on the agenda for the next meeting of SARAG for discussion/decision at the SouthMAC teleconference in November 2016

CCAMLR New and Exploratory Fisheries

Mr Exel, Mr McNeill and Mr Arangio declared their interests under Agenda Items 15 and 16, and left the room. The remaining members of SouthMAC agreed that Mr Exel, Mr McNeill and Mr Arangio should be allowed to return for all discussions under Agenda items 15 and 16 but should not be present for recommendations.

Agenda item 15 – 2016/17 Expressions of Interest

SouthMAC noted AFMA had recently released the 2016 Guide to CCAMLR New and Exploratory Fisheries (the Guide). The Guide outlines the process for Australian companies wanting to seek access to CCAMLR New and Exploratory Fisheries in the 2016/17 fishing season. Members noted that Expression of Interest (EOI) must be submitted to AFMA by 22 February 2016 and that there is no fee for submitting an EOI.

The next step is for AFMA and AAD to consider all EOIs and then fishing company(ies) will need to submit a full proposal and an assessment fee by late March 2016. Members noted that to simplify the process a pre-proposal is no longer required. AFMA and AAD agreed that members could submit full proposals without needing a comprehensive research plan but that details of research would be needed for consideration by the CCAMLR Interdepartmental Committee and CCAMLR Consultative Forum which are scheduled to meet on 14 April 2016.

AAD, with input from AFMA and applicants, will then prepare the research components of the applications, prior to lodging a full proposal with the CCAMLR Secretariat by 1 June 2016.

Agenda item 16 – Consideration of New and Exploratory fisheries issues

SouthMAC noted that there currently wasn't an appropriate forum for domestic discussions about CCAMLR New and Exploratory fisheries. Members noted that some issues that have arisen over the last year and that could arise in the future include:

- providing general updates on fishery operations and status to agencies, conservation representatives and fishing industry representatives;
- assessments under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*;and
- providing advice on fishery related issues including on benthic impacts, bycatch, move-on provisions and stock assessments.

SouthMAC noted that this issue was discussed at SARAG and members agreed that it was appropriate to discuss scientific issues associated with CCAMLR new and exploratory fisheries at SARAG. SouthMAC agreed that management issues such as those listed above should be discussed at SouthMAC.

Finance

Agenda item 17 – 2016/17 budget

SouthMAC noted that the draft AFMA budget for 2016/17 will be released for comment in the next few months. Members noted that for the sub-Antarctic fisheries more staff time has been allocated for the 2016/17 budget because the current staff allocation is insufficient. . However, the observer budget will decrease given the predicted decrease in trips to the sub-Antarctic fisheries because of the lower HIMI TAC.

SouthMAC noted that the Cost Recovery Impact Statement (CRIS) was currently being reviewed and members had been provided with an opportunity to provide feedback. The AFMA member stated that a decision on the CRIS was expected soon with a draft budget released soon after.

Other

No interests were declared under agenda items 18 or 19, SouthMAC noted that these items were for information.

Agenda item 18 – Other business

Agenda item 18a – Depredation of whales

SouthMAC noted that at the COLTO workshop held in Norway in June 2015 the most popular discussion item was whale depredation. It was agreed that a workshop would be held in mid-March 2016 in Chile. Mr Arangio reported that the workshop had 30 confirmed attendees from every Patagonian Toothfish fishery and also scientists and external experts from the Alaskan Black cod Fishery were attending to provide information on what has worked and what hasn't in that Fishery. Members noted that Dr Welsford from AAD had been invited to attend and that Mr Arangio and Mr McNeill would be attending from Australia possibly with a student from the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies. Industry noted that the outcomes will be published and agreed to provide them to SARAG and SouthMAC (**Action arising 7**).

Action arising 7: Industry to provide outcomes of whale depredation workshop to SARAG and SouthMAC.

Agenda item 18b - Undercatch/overcatch

SouthMAC noted that on 21 January 2016 AFMA circulated a discussion paper on AFMA's planned review of its undercatch and overcatch provisions. The AFMA member explained that the review proposes three overarching options for overcatch and undercatch arrangements:

1. keep the undercatch and overcatch provisions as they are;
2. change the current undercatch and overcatch provisions, including aligning current provisions to one uniform approach; or
3. completely remove undercatch, overcatch percentage and/or overcatch weight determination.

Members noted that at HIMIF and MITF the arrangement for overcatch is: <10t overcatch is deducted at 1:1, 10-20 tonnes it is deducted 1:3 and if more than 20 tonnes overcaught is an offence. Members noted that this issue was discussed at SARAG 53 and concerns were raised with having one system across all Commonwealth fisheries (option 2) and also indicated that discarding may become a concern. SARAG indicated that they would recommend keeping the current arrangements at HIMIF and MITF (option 1).

The AAD member noted that international obligations within the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) need to be taken into consideration as the document only discussed international obligations outside the AFZ. The AAD member also noted that CCAMLR does not have overcatch and undercatch mechanisms and the conservation measures require vessels to not overshoot the TACs.

Industry left the room and SouthMAC agreed that the Chair would write to AFMA noting that SouthMAC recommended that the current undercatch and overcatch provisions remain the same for sub-Antarctic fisheries noting the international obligations (**Action arising 8**).

Action arising 8: Peter Neville to write to AFMA stating that SouthMAC recommended that the sub-Antarctic undercatch and overcatch provisions stay the same.

Agenda item 19 - Next meeting

SouthMAC agreed to meet via teleconference in November 2016 to discuss SARAG and CCAMLR's consideration of the HIMI stock assessment. Members agreed the next face-to-face meeting of SouthMAC would be held in Hobart in early 2017 in conjunction with SARAG, and depended on when the next MITF stock assessment is conducted. Industry members also stated for information that there will be a Marine Stewardship Council annual review conducted in June 2016.

Item	Action arising from SouthMAC 34	Action person
1	WG-FSA papers - AAD to provide SARAG with a list of all papers going to WG-FSA	AAD
2	National guidelines - Members to provide individual comments on the national guidelines to AFMA by 24 February 2016	Members
3	Tag re-capture - CSIRO stock assessment scientists to discuss the reduction of the number of days released to re-capture	CSIRO
4	MITF FAP - AFMA to circulate draft revised MITF FAP to members.	AFMA
5	Tag rate - CSIRO to examine when it would be appropriate to reduce the current tag rate of two tags per tonne.	CSIRO
6	HIMI FAP - AFMA to circulate final HIMI FAP to members	AFMA
7	Whale workshop - Industry to provide outcomes of whale depredation workshop to SARAG and SouthMAC	Industry
8	Undercatch/overcatch - Peter Neville to write to AFMA stating that SouthMAC recommended that the sub-Antarctic undercatch and overcatch provisions stay the same	Chair