



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority



# Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TTMAC)

MINUTES  
TELECONFERENCE  
26 MARCH 2015



**TROPICAL TUNA MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TTMAC)  
OUT-OF-SESSION MEETING**

**TELECONFERENCE**

**26 MARCH 2015**

**Attendance**

*Members*

Ms Catherine Barnett, Chair  
Mr Trent Timmiss (AFMA)  
Mr Gary Heilmann (industry)  
Mr Paul Williams (industry)  
Mr Joe Basile (industry)

*Invited participants*

Mr Cathal Farrell (industry)  
Mr Brian Jeffriess AO (SBT industry)  
Mr Grahame Williams OAM (recreational/charter fishing)

*Executive Officer*

Ms Stephanie Johnson

*Observers*

Mr Steve Auld (AFMA)

*Apologies*

Mr Terry Romaro OAM<sup>1</sup> (industry)  
Mr Angelo Maiorana (industry)  
Dr Cathy Dichmont (research)  
Mr Peter Trott (environment/conservation)  
Mr Bill Edwards (recreational/charter fishing)  
Dr Veronica Silberschneider (NSW State Government)

**Introduction**

A Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TTMAC) teleconference was held on 26 March 2014.

The primary objective of the meeting was to discuss the E-monitoring (Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery) Direction 2015 (Attachment A) and the E-monitoring (Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery) Direction 2015 (Attachment B). These Directions, if implemented, will require all operators that fish more than 30 days in the current or previous fishing seasons to have fully operational e-monitoring systems on their boats from 1 July 2015.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Romaro supplied an email outlining comments on behalf of the WTBF industry, see Attachment D.

## Agenda item 1 – Preliminaries

1. The TTMAC Chair, Ms Catherine Barnett, opened the meeting at 11:05am and welcomed members, invited participants and observers.

### 1.1 Declaration of interests

2. The Chair stated that as outlined in the Fisheries Administrations Act 1991 and Fisheries Management Paper No. 1, all members of TTMAC 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. 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 committee noted the issues surrounding the process for conflict of interest declarations and agreed that it would be discussed at a MAC meeting as to whether there was a way it could be done more efficiently.
3. The declared interests of TTMAC members, invited participants and observers present are represented in the below table.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Declared interests</b>
Catherine Barnett	TTMAC Chair, , Member Fisheries Council of SA, CEO Food SA (SA). No pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.
Trent Timmiss	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.
Paul Williams	Director of a company that holds an ETBF boat SFR and ETBF longline SFR's, minor line SFR's and a Commonwealth fish receiver permit. Member of TTRAG.
Gary Heilmann	Director of companies that hold; ETBF quota SFR's, ETBF boat SFR's, a fish receiver permit and a Coral Sea Fishery permit. Member of TTRAG.
Joe Basile	Manager of two longline vessels in the ETBF and holder of boat and quota SFRs.
Stephanie Johnson	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interest in Tropical Tuna fisheries.

Invited participants/observers	Declared interests
Brian Jeffriess AO	CEO of Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association (ASBTIA). The ASBTIA has part-ownership in the property that Archipelago Asia Pacific (AAP) is currently leasing in Canberra.
Steve Auld	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interest in the tropical tuna fisheries.
Cathal Farrell	Manager of fish receiving business and holder of an ETBF boat SFR. Director of fishing company that holds boat and quota SFRs.
Grahame Williams OAM	Immediate Past President of the Game Fishing Association of Australia, no pecuniary interest in tropical tuna fisheries.

## 1.2 Apologies

- Apologies were received from; Mr Terry Romaro OAM, Mr Angelo Maiorana, Dr Cathy Dichmont, Mr Peter Trott, Mr Bill Edwards and Dr Veronica Silberschneider.

## 1.3 Adoption of agenda

- TTMAC members noted that the sole purpose of this teleconference was to discuss the E-monitoring (Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery) Direction 2015 (Attachment A) and the E-monitoring (Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery) Direction 2015 (Attachment B).

## Agenda item 2 – ETBF and WTBF E-monitoring Directions

- The AFMA member began discussions with a general overview of the purpose of the e-monitoring Directions. He outlined that the decision to implement e-monitoring in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) and Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) was made in 2012 and at the time, this decision received unanimous support from TTMAC.
- TTMAC noted that e-monitoring is currently in the process of being implemented in the ETBF and WTBF and this process will continue. The e-monitoring Directions that have been drafted by AFMA will require all operators that fish more than 30 days in the current or previous fishing seasons to have fully operational e-monitoring systems on their boats from 1 July 2015.
- TTMAC further noted that a detailed “E-monitoring Program Overview” has been created, which outlines all aspects of the e-monitoring program for the ETBF, WTBF and also the Gillnet, Hook and Trap (GHAT) fishery. This document will be approved by the AFMA

Executive and distributed to TTMAC and all ETBF and WTBF boat owners/operators in the next week.

9. TTMAC industry members expressed their concern of the e-monitoring program and stated that they feel ill-informed of the detailed aspects and operation of the program. These concerns were in particular regard to the compliance aspects of e-monitoring. It was requested by the industry members that AFMA hold a wider industry meeting to answer questions and explain the program to all interested operators.
10. The AFMA member acknowledged the concerns of industry and stated his intention to hold an industry meeting in Sydney sometime after Easter. He also stated that many of the concerns of industry have been addressed in the E-monitoring Frequently Asked Questions document at Attachment C.
11. The AFMA member then proceeded to work through the e-monitoring Direction for the ETBF (Attachment A). He explained that the ETBF and WTBF Directions contain exactly the same wording except where there is reference to the specific fishery.

*Paragraphs 4-7*

12. TTMAC members did not provide any comment on these paragraphs.

*Paragraph 8-12*

13. These paragraphs refer to the e-monitoring system requirements. The TTMAC industry members queried the definition of the modes; “on”, “sleep” and “off” and when each mode can be used. It was noted by TTMAC that e-monitoring systems may only be powered off when a boat is in port, where power supplies are limited. When transiting to/from a fishing ground, systems may be turned to “sleep” mode. E-monitoring systems will be triggered to “on” when the drum rotation is sensed and all fishing activity will be recorded.
14. TTMAC industry members also queried the operation of e-monitoring systems when baiting. The AFMA member indicated that this information is all covered in the e-monitoring program overview document, but AFMA is investigating the possibility of setting “geofences” around certain areas where e-monitoring footage is not required. This may include main baiting grounds and ports.
15. Industry members also commented that boat operators should not be required to ensure that e-monitoring systems are operational at all times, as operators may not always be aware that there is a problem. It was agreed that in Paragraph 9, the words “must ensure” should be replaced with “must take all reasonable steps” to ensure that their e-monitoring systems remain operational.

*Paragraph 13*

16. This paragraph refers to the requirement for e-monitoring systems function tests and system maintenance to be undertaken by operators. No major concerns were raised by members on this paragraph, however the AFMA member clarified that “keeping cameras clean” refers to a simple spray down when crew are cleaning the deck.

*Paragraph 14*

17. In this paragraph, TTMAC industry members questioned the definition and inclusion of “Schedule 1”. Schedule 1 refers to areas within a fishery that require 100% monitoring,

such as Sea Lion and Dolphin exclusion zones. The AFMA member advised that Schedule 1 is irrelevant to the ETBF and WTBF as there are no areas where 100% monitoring is required. Schedule 1 is included for the reference of the GHAT fishery.

18. Industry members were concerned that there is the potential for areas in the ETBF and WTBF to be included in Schedule 1 in the future. The AFMA member stated that this is highly unlikely and the only reason this could happen was if the availability of Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) quota on the east coast falls to a very low level. He also stated that with e-monitoring, fleet-wide bans in fishing should not occur as any issues can be managed on an individual boat basis.
19. To remove confusion and concern regarding Schedule 1, TTMAC agreed to remove point 14.a from the ETBF and WTBF Directions.
20. To maintain consistency throughout the Directions, it was also agreed by TTMAC to replace the word “must” to “take all reasonable steps to” in all paragraphs where relevant.

*Paragraph 14*

21. An industry invited participant requested the inclusion of the mutual obligations of AAP in this paragraph. While there is currently reference to AAP included in the Directions, there is no explanation of the service obligations of AAP. TTMAC noted however, that the requirements and obligations of AAP are stipulated in their contract with AFMA.
22. TTMAC members further noted that there are two contact points included in the Directions; an AAP contact and an AFMA contact. The reason for this is that AAP will only be available during business hours. If operators experience problems with their e-monitoring system outside of business hours, they can contact the AFMA duty officer. The notification of issues to AAP/AFMA can be in the form of a phone call or email, but operators can radio to shore managers to report faults as well. This allows potential system repairs to be organised more quickly.
23. The AFMA member emphasised that as long as operators make reasonable efforts to organise system repairs as soon as possible, the draft Direction does not give AFMA Compliance the power to stop fishing operations.

*Paragraph 15 & 16*

24. TTMAC industry members queried the timeframes regarding the return of e-monitoring hard drives to AFMA. They stated that many operators would be unlikely to keep track of the date when they inserted a new hard drive into the system and therefore, would be unlikely to return the hard drive to AFMA at the end of a 30-day period.
25. Industry members requested that notifications, preferably in the form of emails, be sent to operators indicating when their hard drive is required to be returned. The AFMA member agreed to investigate the possibility of setting up an automated notification system.
26. In specific reference to paragraph 15, TTMAC agreed to remove point 15.c from both of the Directions.
27. It was noted by TTMAC that the reasoning for the regular return of hard drives, regardless of whether the drive is full or not, is to enable AFMA/AAP to provide timely feedback reports to operators on the accuracy of their logbook reporting.

*Paragraphs 16-18*

28. TTMAC did not provide any specific comments on these paragraphs, however in reference to paragraph 17 the AFMA member stated that specific instructions on how to install/replace a data drive will be provided to boats.

*Paragraphs 19 & 20*

29. These paragraphs refer to the loss, theft and/or damage of e-monitoring systems. Several TTMAC industry members expressed concern regarding the replacement of e-monitoring systems if stolen. The AFMA member stated that the system will be replaced by AAP initially and an operator would be permitted to continue fishing. However, AFMA Compliance will also conduct an investigation and dependent on the results of the investigation, the boat owner may be liable for the system replacement costs.
30. Industry members reiterated their concerns with this, stating that AFMA should replace e-monitoring systems regardless of the outcome of an investigation. The AFMA member clarified that this is about providing the right incentives. The cost of replacement equipment will be taken from the levy-base.

*Paragraphs 21-23*

31. No major comments were received from TTMAC members on these paragraphs. However, the AFMA member clarified that AFMA requires the return of e-monitoring systems where a boat exits the fishery as the parts can be used as replacements. This helps to minimise the costs to the levy-base. The AFMA member also stated that e-monitoring systems parts come with differing warranty periods and conditions. Most issues should be covered by warranty unless there is evidence of intentional damage.

*General e-monitoring discussion*

32. TTMAC noted that the current contract for the provision of e-monitoring services by AAP is for 3 years however this may be extended to 4 or 5 years. If cheaper or more feasible options become available in future, AFMA may consider these.
33. TTMAC industry members reiterated the high level of concern among the ETBF and WTBF operators on the implementation of e-monitoring systems. They requested more information and communication from AFMA.
34. An industry member also expressed their surprise and concern at the increase in the daily charge rate for an AFMA observer. The full rate will now be \$1,500 per fishing day and the AFMA member clarified that this is the unsubsidised rate. In the past, AFMA has subsidised the direct cost of observers by contributing to the cost, however with e-monitoring systems, there is no human observer budget in the ETBF from which to subsidise SBT fishing days. Prior to 1 July, if an operator does not have a fully operational e-monitoring system on their boat and they intend to fish in the SBT management zones, they will be required carry an AFMA observer at the same coverage level as last year and pay the full, unsubsidised rate.
35. The AFMA member advised TTMAC that the SBT management zones will be put in place again for this season, but once e-monitoring has been fully implemented in the ETBF, the need for these zones will be reviewed by AFMA. For the current season, a minimum of 1 uncaught SBT quota SFR will be required to enter the SBT core and buffer zones.

36. In relation to discarding, TTMAC industry members expressed concern that some issues may be highlighted with e-monitoring systems. They stated that there should not be a law on discarding at sea. The AFMA member responded that the Parliamentary Secretary has requested that the policy on discarding be reviewed and the preliminary documents on this review should be available for comment in the coming months. This review is across all fisheries and in some cases, the level of discarding can dramatically affect the stock assessments for some species.
37. An industry member further queried the cut-off of large bycatch species such as whales, sharks and manta rays, before they are hauled up to the boat. He stated that it is common for operators to cut these species off at the swivel to avoid potential injury to crew, however this would mean that it may not be in view of an e-monitoring camera. The AFMA member confirmed that this is acceptable as long as the cut-off is recorded in the logbook.
38. TTMAC noted that AFMA will incorporate all comments into the ETBF and WTBF Directions and will distribute the revised version to all MAC members. Once this has been completed, the AFMA CEO will consider making the Direction. If the AFMA CEO signs-off the Directions they will be gazetted and tabled in Parliament.
39. Some TTMAC industry members stated that they are unhappy with the process of implementing e-monitoring systems and they felt that there are still many unanswered questions. They also stated that the projected cost saving is not as large as they expected and they do not think that e-monitoring is worthwhile.
40. The AFMA member clarified that the estimated \$400,000 cost saving to industry with e-monitoring systems as described in the 2011 trial report refers to the scenario where industry pays for all equipment, installations and maintenance. As AFMA have now decided to cover these costs with government and levy-base funds, the direct savings to industry are smaller.
41. The AFMA member informed TTMAC that AFMA would be in contact with industry to organise a date for an industry meeting in Sydney.

The AFMA Member closed the meeting at 12:40pm.