



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority



Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC)

MINUTES
TELECONFERENCE
19 NOVEMBER 2013

SUB-ANTARCTIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SouthMAC)

CHAIR: Mr Peter Neville

Date: 19 November 2013

Venue: Teleconference

Attendance

Members

Mr Peter Neville, Chair

Dr Malcolm Haddon, Scientific Member

Mr Les Scott, Industry Member

Ms Rhonda Bartley, AAD

Mr Trent Timmiss, AFMA Member

Ms Sarah Kirkcaldie (Executive Officer)

Observers

Mr David Carter, Industry Observer

Dr Dirk Welsford, AAD Observer

Apologies

Mr Martin Exel, Industry Member

Mr Jon Bryan, Conservation Member

Introduction

A Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC) teleconference was held on 19 November 2013.

The primary objective of the meeting was to discuss the recommendation coming from Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and the Sub-Antarctic Resource Assessment Group (SARAG) on the total allowable catch (TAC) for Patagonian toothfish, Mackerel Icefish and catch limits for bycatch species in the Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery (HIMIF) for the 2013/14 season, which starts on 1 December 2013.

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

Agenda item 1 - Preliminaries

The meeting was opened at 2.00pm on 19 November 2013 by the Chair, Mr Peter Neville.

1.1 Declaration of interests

Mr Neville declared that he was a Director of a fisheries consulting business but had no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Dr Haddon advised he is employed by CSIRO and is not undertaking specific research projects in relation to Sub-Antarctic fisheries, although he does provide advice to other researchers in relation to stock assessments, particularly for the Macquarie Island Toothfish



Fishery (MITF). Dr Haddon is also a member on the Northern Prawn Fishery Resource Assessment Group and Slope Resource Assessment Group.

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

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

Ms Kirkcaldie advised she is employed by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) and is currently acting manager for sub-Antarctic fisheries at AFMA business and has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Ms Rhonda Bartley advised she is employed by the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) business and has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Dr Welsford advised that he is employed by the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) and was responsible for monitoring and assessing the Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI) Fishery and other CCAMLR fisheries and also data collection for the MITF. Dr Welsford advised that AAD get core funding but also seek grants from Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) and AFMA. However, members noted that Dr Welsford salary was not connected to these grants.

Mr Carter advised that was attending the meeting as an observer and that he is employed by Austral Fisheries P/L.

Mr Les Scott, Mr David Carter (CEO Austral Fisheries), Dr Welsford and Dr Haddon declared their interests in relation to Agenda Item 2. It was agreed that although Dr Haddon was employed by CSIRO the organisation was not directly involved in the HIMI Fishery stock assessment and he was not required to leave the teleconference. It was noted that both Dr Welsford and Mr Cater were observers at this meeting and were not required to leave the teleconference. SARAG requested that Mr Scott leave the teleconference so that the remaining members could discuss his declared interest. The remaining MAC members agreed that Mr Scott could participate in the SouthMAC discussions/recommendations in relation to the setting of the toothfish and icefish TAC and bycatch catch limits in Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery.

1.2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Martin Exel and Mr Jon Bryan.

1.3 Adoption of agenda

SouthMAC adopted the agenda without change.



Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery

Agenda item 2 –stock assessment

Members noted that scientists from the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) had prepared the stock assessments for the two target species in the Fishery: Mackerel Icefish and Patagonian Toothfish for peer-review and consideration by CCAMLR's Working Group on Fish Stock Assessments and Scientific Committee. SouthMAC further noted that the assessments had been considered by the Sub-Antarctic Resource Assessment group (SARAG) prior to and after they were presented to CCAMLR.

Mackerel Icefish

Members noted that at CCAMLR, Australia sought to include the option of taking two seasons TACs for icefish in the one season. This would allow for operational flexibility whereby all the icefish catch would be taken in one season with zero catch in the following season unless a new survey indicates that the current 1+ or 2+ are sufficiently abundant to support commercial fishing.

SouthMAC noted that the Mackerel Icefish assessment was accepted by CCAMLR without change with members agreeing that the catch limit for Mackerel Icefish should be set at 1,267 tonnes for 2013/14 and a 30-tonne research and by-catch limit in 2014/15 unless revised advice from following the 2014 survey indicates that a fishery is viable. SARAG supported the recommendations from CCAMLR.

SouthMAC agreed with SARAG that the TAC for Mackerel Icefish should be set at 1,267 tonnes

Patagonian Toothfish

SouthMAC noted that the AAD prepared a stock assessment and presented it to CCAMLR with a sustainable yield of 3,005 tonnes prescribed for the 2013/14 season.

However, at the CCAMLR meetings, the CCAMLR Working Group for Fish Stock Assessments raised a number of concerns with the stock assessment and members were unable to reach a consensus on the management advice.

CCAMLR agreed that the catch limit from the previous two years (2730 tonnes) should be carried forward for the 2013/14 season, and that management advice for 2014/15 would be based on a revised assessment to be presented to CCAMLR next year.

The Industry member raised concerns about getting the required work completed by the 2014 CCAMLR process and requested that if additional resources were required that industry is informed as soon as possible. The AAD member acknowledged that it was a tight timeframe and that a lot of work was required.

SouthMAC agreed to recommend a 2013/14 TAC of 2,730 tonnes to the AFMA commission noting that a workplan for the 2014 HIMI stock assessment was being developed and would be discussed at the next CCAMLR Consultative Forum as well as the next SouthMAC meeting.

Bycatch

Members noted that no new assessments were carried out on bycatch species in 2013 and agreed with CCAMLR's recommendation to retain the bycatch limits from the 2012/13 season for the 2013/14 season. The limits are:

- macrourids (360 tonnes);



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

Other

Agenda item 3 – Other Business

Industry members raised concerns that the issue of the impact of bottom trawling was discussed at CCAMLR with a call to ban trawling in CCAMLR waters. The AAD member noted that this was not a formal proposal and that Australia would be given opportunity to present arguments against a ban if a proposal was put forward. SouthMAC noted that any proposal would require consensus from all member countries.

SouthMAC agreed that the best response to the issues raised regarding bottom trawling would be to complete the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation funded project titled 'Demersal fishing interactions with marine benthos in the Australian EEZ of the Southern Ocean: an assessment of the vulnerability of benthic habitats to impact by demersal gears'. AAD noted that the project was close to completion and would be published by the end of 2013.

Agenda item 4 - Next meeting

AFMA recommended that the annual December face-to-face meeting should be delayed until February or March 2014 to enable sufficient time for a workplan to be developed for the 2014 HIMI stock assessment. SouthMAC agreed to hold the meeting early in 2014 and if possible hold it in conjunction with the March SARAG meeting.

SouthMAC noted that Ms Lihini Werogoda was returning for maternity leave the following week and Ms Bartley would be stepping down as a SouthMAC member. Members thanked Ms Bartley for representing AAD on SouthMAC.

The Chair thanked members for participating in the teleconference and closed the meeting at 2.45 pm.



