



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Northern Prawn Fishery Resource Assessment Group (NPRAG)

Minutes 12 March 2013
NPRAG Teleconference

Attendees

Members

Ian Knuckey, Chair
Michael O'Brien, Industry
Rik Buckworth, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
Malcolm Haddon, CSIRO
Rodrigo Bustamante, CSIRO
Norm Hall, Murdoch University
Fiona Hill, Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)
Karen Dalli, Executive Officer NPRAG

Observers

James Woodhams, Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES)
Annie Jarrett, NPFI
Trevor Hutton, CSIRO
Roy Deng, CSIRO

Apology

Tom Kompas, Australian National University (ANU)
Ian Boot, Industry
Ron Earle, Industry

Agenda Item 1 - Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome

The Northern Prawn Fishery Resource Assessment Group (NPRAG) Chair, Ian Knuckey, opened the teleconference meeting at 3:00 pm, welcoming all members and observers to the meeting. The chairman advised that the purpose of the teleconference was to look at the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF) Harvest Strategy (the Strategy) for red-legged banana prawns and review the recent catch and effort data and stock assessment, to determine if the red-legged banana prawn fishery will open in the first season of the 2013 fishing year.

1.2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Tom Kompas (economist), Ian Boot (industry) and Ron Earle (industry).

1.3 Adoption of the agenda

Members adopted the agenda item for the teleconference.

1.4 Declarations of interest

The chairman asked members if they had any declarations of interest in regards to the items relating to red-legged banana prawns. Members declared their interests and these declarations are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. NPRAG declarations of interest

Name	Interests declared
Ian Knuckey	Scientific member on the NPF management advisory committee. Submitted a tender for the provision of at-sea and data entry services for the NPF Scientific Observer Program.
Fiona Hill	AFMA employee, no pecuniary interest.
Rik Buckworth	CSIRO employee. Participate in projects related to the NPF that currently receive funding and will seek to receive funding in the future.
Malcolm Haddon	CSIRO employee. No pecuniary interest.
Norm Hall	Murdoch university employee. No pecuniary interest.
Mike O'Brien	Industry representative. Employee of a company that owns statutory fishing rights in the NPF. Interested in results of the assessments from a commercial view point.
James Woodhams	ABARES employee. No pecuniary interest.
Annie Jarrett	Contractor to NORMAC and the NPF Industry Pty Ltd. No pecuniary interest.
Trevor Hutton	CSIRO employee. Participate in projects related to the NPF that currently receive funding and will seek to receive funding in the future.
Roy Deng	CSIRO employee. Participate in projects related to the NPF that currently receives funding and will seek to receive funding in the future.
Rodrigo Bustamante	CSIRO employee. No pecuniary interest.
Karen Dalli	AFMA employee, no pecuniary interest.



Agenda Item 2 - Catch, effort and CPUE information for application of the Harvest Strategy for red-legged banana prawns.

Rik Buckworth explained Attachment B – Preliminary summary of 2012 banana prawn catches in the JBG and outlined the two main points in the Strategy (4 and 7):

4. If a minimum of 100 fishing days has been achieved and the red-legged banana prawn stock falls below the limit reference point (LRP) for the two most recent consecutive years, then the TAE is zero for a year (no fishing in the following year).

7. Fishing will be allowed for the full two seasons in the following year provided:

- that data has been provided for a minimum of 100 fishing days over the full fishing year and*
- that the average catch per boat per fishing day in August, September and October is 390 kg or more.*

There was over 100 fishing days achieved during 2012. The assessment model was updated with the 2011/12 fishery data and based on the results, the stock appears to be above B_{MSY} and B_{MEY} levels, and is therefore at a level substantially greater than the limit reference point. Also, the mean catch rate in August-October 2012 was 1349 kg/boat/day, well above the 390 kg/boat/day

Prior to the meeting, the chairman disseminated a flow chart (Figure 1) that summarised the 2013 red-legged banana prawn harvest strategy decision rules. The flowchart captured the nine reference points from the Strategy, the inputs for the last two years and that an assessment has been conducted.

Members read through the diagram and noted the information presented by the scientific member that there was greater than 100 fishing days in the last year, the limit reference point of $0.5 B_{MSY}$ was not triggered for the two most recent consecutive years and the fleet's catch was greater than 390 kg/boat/day during August-October. As a result it was agreed that **the red-legged banana prawn fishery is permitted to open for both seasons during the following fishing year (2013).**

NPRAG members agreed that the catch rate is above the LRP catch rate trigger, and that both seasons should be opened and the season will be defined by the outcome of the tiger and banana season start and end dates.

ACTION: Item on red-legged banana prawn limit reference point re: 390 kg/boat/day versus $0.5 B_{MSY}$ to be added to the April NPRAG agenda.

The Strategy does not outline that a Total Allowable Effort (TAE) needs to be set when none of the reference points have been triggered. The RAG noted that there are different means by which effort may be limited in the red-legged banana prawn fishery: implementation of a TAE; natural limitations from the environment in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf (JBG); and, closing the fishery in accordance with the triggers in place for white banana and tiger prawn fisheries.

NPRAG members **concluded** that there is **no requirement to set a TAE** for 2013, and that fishing can occur in both seasons until such time that the triggers in place for white banana or tiger prawn fisheries are met.



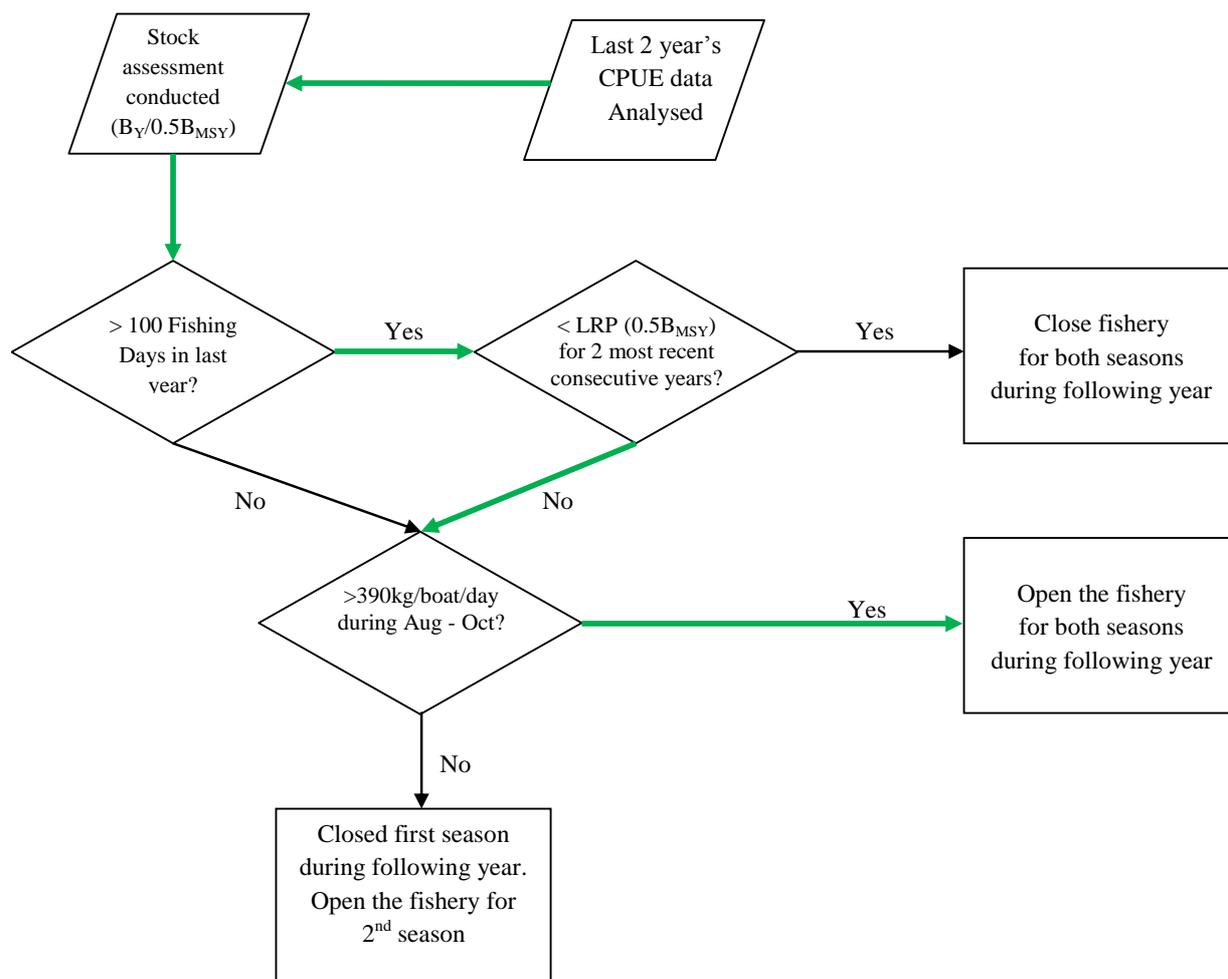


Figure 1. 2013 Red-legged Banana Prawn Harvest Strategy Decision Rules Flowchart

The RAG discussed the statement in the Strategy that the LRP catch rate trigger applies to catches of all banana prawn species in the JBG (both white and red-legged banana prawns). There was some confusion as to whether this arrangement was to apply under an input control management system (noting the harvest strategy for red-legged banana prawns was developed for both quota and effort based management systems). CSIRO provide catch rates for combined banana prawn catches in the JBG and red-legged banana prawn catches in the JBG based on their species split model (location/time of year caught).

The RAG agreed that for the 2013 fishing year this confusion was not an issue because both the combined and single species catch rates were both above the LRP catch rate trigger, however further discussion to clarify this matter should take place at the April NPRAG meeting.

ACTION: Item on red-legged banana prawn LRP and its interpretation re: combined banana prawns or single species to be added to the April NPRAG agenda.

Agenda Item 3 – NPRAG 2013 specified fishing pattern

NPRAG members briefly discussed Figure 2 (below) which is the formalised graph of the expected effort pattern for tiger prawns in 2013, an outcome of the discussion at the February



teleconference meeting. RAG members agreed to these recommended changes and commented that the figure was a good representation of the expected 2013 fishing pattern.

The RAG noted that the figure indicates that effort for brown tiger prawns starts prior to season opening, which is not the case, and that the first incline of brown tiger prawn effort should be vertical along the dashed line marking the start of the first season line to indicate that effort commences on the opening day. Dr Hall also suggested that the y-axis should be changed to read 'proportion of the annual fishing effort'.

ACTION – CSIRO to update Figure 2 to ensure brown tiger prawn effort is vertical at the start of the season and update y-axis title to 'proportion of the annual fishing effort per week'.

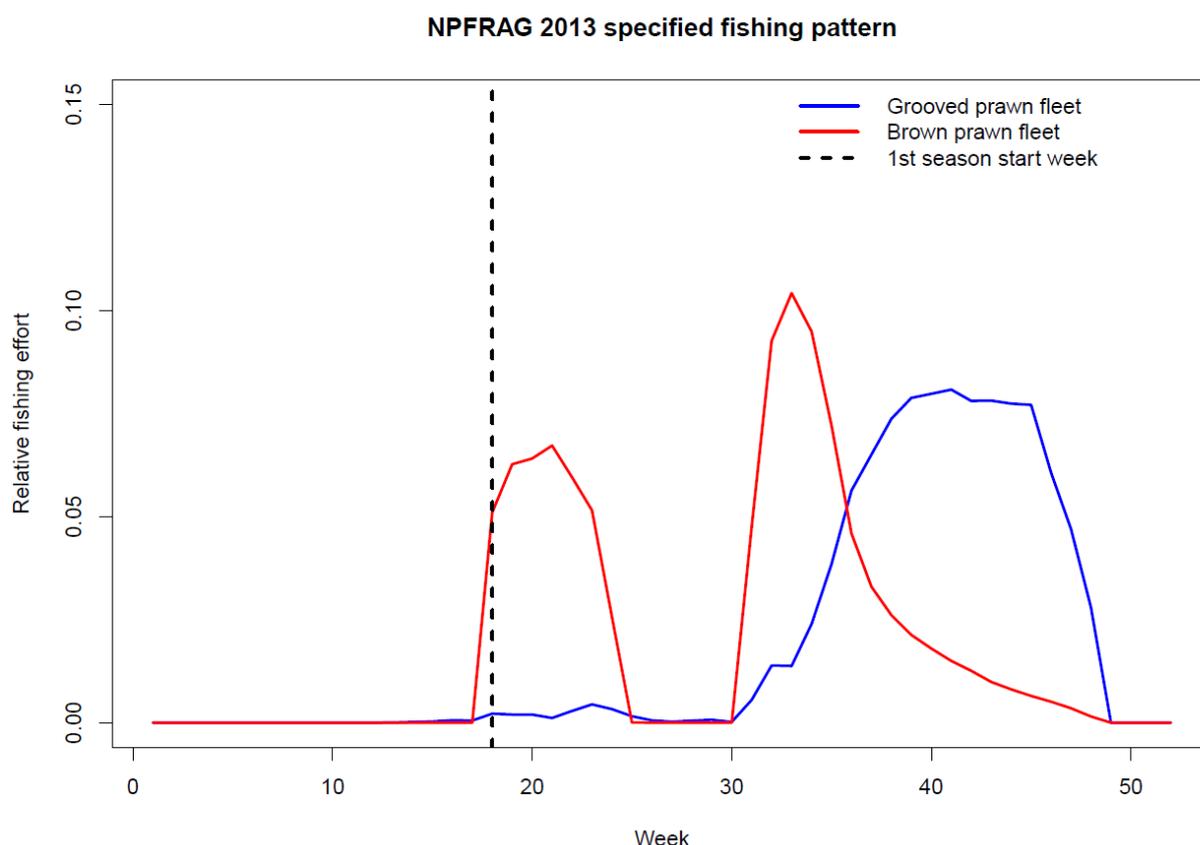


Figure 2. NPRAG 2013 specified fishing effort pattern, with relative fishing effort on the y-axis and fishing week on the x-axis. Red line is effort on brown tiger prawns, blue is effort on grooved tiger prawns and the dotted line is at 1 May.

Agenda Item 4 - Arrangements for future meetings

NPRAG meeting to be held in Brisbane on 30 April 2013, the draft agenda and assessment papers will be distributed to members prior to the meeting.

Meeting closed at 3:40 pm.

Dr Ian Knuckey
NPRAG Chair
28 March 2013

