



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery Resource Assessment Group

 **IMPLICATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH DELAYING THE 2013-14 SESSF
FISHERY INDEPENDENT SURVEY (FIS)**

**TELECONFERENCE SUMMARY
6 MAY 2013**

PARITICPANTS

Chair

Mr Sandy Morison

Members

Mr George Day (AFMA A/g senior fisheries manager)

Dr Ian Knuckey (ShelfRAG Chair)

Dr Colin Simpfendorfer (SharkRAG Chair)

Dr Lianos Triantafillos (SquidRAG Chair)

Dr Geoff Tuck (Scientific member)

Dr Malcolm Haddon (CSIRO)

Dr Andrew Penney (ABARES)

Mr David Stone (Industry)

Mr Kyne Krusic-Golub (Fish Aging Services)

Mr Simon Boag (SETFIA EO)

Observers

Mr David Power (AFMA A/g fisheries manager)

Mr Ross Bromley (AFMA A/g fisheries manager)

Mr Ryan Keightley (AFMA, Executive Officer)



DRAFT SUMMARY

The chair welcomed all participants, noting the conflicts of interest below:

Name	Declaration
Sandy Morison	Derives financial benefits from fisheries related consultancy work including chairing of Resource Assessment Groups.
Ian Knuckey	Derives financial benefits from fisheries related consultancy work including chairing of Resource Assessment Groups. Developed, initiated and ran the SESSF FIS during 2008, 2010 and 2012. Submitted a proposal to run a 2013 SESSF FIS.
Kyne Krusic-Golub	Director Fish Aging Services, provides aging data to the SESSF stock assessments. No pecuniary interest in the FIS.
Malcolm Haddon	Derives financial benefits from fisheries research and stock assessments.
Geoff Tuck	Derives financial benefits from fisheries research and stock assessments.
Simon Boag	SETFIA EO. CFA vice-Chair. Sits on boards of Commonwealth Trawl Sector boat and quota SFR holding companies as a non-beneficiary director.
Colin Simpfendorfer	Chair of SharkRAG, no pecuniary interest.
Lianos Triantafillos	Chair of SquidRAG, no pecuniary interest.
David Stone	No pecuniary interest.
George Day	No pecuniary interest.
Andrew Penney	No pecuniary interest.

The RAG agreed to allow all participants (including those with pecuniary interests) to contribute to the discussion, noting that the discussion is about the science of the FIS, not the financial aspect, and the implications and risks associated delaying the 2013 FIS fish by one year.

Teleconference summary

- The SESSF Fishery Independent Surveys (FIS) were first conducted in 2008, and then subsequently in 2010 and 2012 (summer and winter). It was noted that FIS's provide crucial independent data to support stock assessments, particularly in the form of relative indices of abundance with reliable CV's (<30%) for many quota species.
- Based on previous SESSFRAG advice, AFMA had previously sought to conduct only a winter FIS during 2013 for the SESSF in an effort to reduce costs. However, due to the cost of the FIS themselves, and other cost increases within the fishery, the RAG is being consulted on the assessment implications and risks associated with delaying the 2013 FIS by one year.



- In its 14 April 2013 meeting, GABRAG discussed the implications of delaying the GAB FIS for one year (until 2015), and advised that they would be comfortable with this approach as it was considered to be low risk to their particular stocks. It was however noted that the longer the FIS is delayed, the more this risk will increase.
- Priority Tier 1 assessments for 2013 were identified by AFMA, and differ for those identified previously by SESSFRAG. Pink Ling, Blue Grenadier, Tiger Flathead, Deepwater Flathead and Gummy Shark were recommended. AFMA decided not to conduct Tier 1 assessments for Redfish (due to data gaps and resulting in conflicting and uncertain population statuses) and School Shark. It was noted that Industry representatives at SharkRAG disagreed with undertaking a Gummy Shark assessment, preferring all resources were directed to School Shark.
- It was noted that FIS data increases robustness of assessments across a range of species, including data poor species, and particularly when questions were being raised about the reliability of CPUE from the fishery as an index of abundance. It was emphasised that without a good quality index of abundance like that obtainable from the FIS, you will get unreliable assessments.
- Dr Penney discussed his knowledge of New Zealand's experience of FIS's. He stated that a FIS should be conducted as often as possible, and at the very least every three years, with a survey every two years an appropriate compromise. He also supported conducting only a winter FIS, provided they are on a continuous basis to ensure a consistent data series.
- A further benefit of conducting the FIS every two years is that there is the potential for the cost to be amortised over two years.
- The FIS results in a number of other benefits other than just data on quota species, e.g. information on bycatch and byproduct species. The RAG noted that this may be important considering the recent reviews of the Harvest Strategy Policy and the Bycatch Policy.
- SETFIA's EO stated that industry is fully supportive of the FIS believing that catch based assessments are increasingly irrelevant in quota management fisheries. He explained that the net cost of a single winter FIS (less revenue from catches) is in the order of \$570 000. Run every two years and amortised to the levy base the cost is approximately \$285 000 per annum. However, for 2013/14 AFMA has proposed a \$113 000 increase in fisheries management, indirect costs (excluding the cost of observers which returned to historic levels) and on research administration (some of which may decrease as the research spend decreases). The increase in these "overhead" type costs is on trend with previous years. If this trend continues it reduces industry's ability to finance future FISs.
- The RAG also emphasised that although a FIS does not replace the ISMP there are potential overlaps in some of the data collected and there was a need for a strategic review of all information sources.

Recommendations

- The RAG agreed there was little risk to any stock in deferring the 2013 FIS for one year, and supported conducting a winter FIS for 2014, repeating every two years thereon. The RAG emphasised the need for a commitment to a regular survey as the main benefit was derived from having a time series of survey results.
- A long term strategic plan is required with a commitment to continue with the FIS. Work should be undertaken to develop better synergies between the FIS, stock assessments and the ISMP.

