



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



**Bass Strait Central Zone
Fishery Management Advisory
Committee (ScallopMAC)**



Meeting 26 (Teleconference)

Minutes

Date: 24 March 2016

Attendance

Name	Membership
Mr John Pollock	Chair
Mr Bill Talbot	Scientific member
Mr Allan Barnett	Industry member
Mr John Hammond	Industry member
Mr Steve Mantzaris	Industry member
Mr Stuart Richey	Industry member
Mr Andrew Watts	Industry member
Dr Sylvia Zukowski	Environment member
Ms Sally Weekes	AFMA member
Mr James Parkinson	Invited Participant, Tasmania
Ms Darci Wallis	Invited Participant, Victoria
Mr Clayton McCloud	Executive Officer (AFMA)
Mr Bob Lister	Observer (Executive Officer, Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania, Chair of Co-management Committee)
Ms Debbie Wisby	Observer (President, Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania)

1. Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair opened the meeting at 10:00am and welcomed members to the teleconference.

1.2 Declarations of interest

ScallopMAC agreed no agenda items raised any conflicts of interest. A list of the conflicts of interest declarations made by members for the meeting is provided below.

ScallopMAC members updated and confirmed their interests as follows:

Participant	Membership	Interest declared
John Pollock	Chair	No interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the fishery.
Bill Talbot	Research Member	ScallopRAG Chair. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the fishery.
Allan Barnett	Industry Member (Tasmania)	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions, a Commonwealth fish receiver permit and operates a scallop processing plant.
John Hammond	Industry Member (Tasmania)	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
Steve Mantzaris	Industry Member (Victoria)	Operates a scallop processing plant.
Stuart Richey	Industry Member (Tasmania)	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.

Andrew Watts	Industry Member (Victoria)	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
Dr Sylvia Zukowski	Environment Member	No interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the fishery.
Sally Weekes	AFMA Member	AFMA Manager for the BSCZSF. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise in the fishery.
James Parkinson	Invited Participant (Tasmanian government)	Fisheries Management Officer in Tasmania. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the fishery.
Darci Wallis	Invited Participant (Victorian government)	Manager of the scallop fishery in Victoria. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the fishery.
Clayton McCloud	Executive Officer	AFMA Senior Management Officer. No pecuniary interest in the fishery.
Bob Lister	Observer	Chief Executive Officer, Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania
Debbie Wisby	Observer	President, Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania, CEO of Seafood Company in Tasmania (Director is a Tasmania Scallop Concession Holder and active Commonwealth scallop fisher), Local Government Councillor, Commonwealth Processor, Industry Representative – AFMA Squid RAG Industry Invited Participant – AFMA SEMAC Fisheries Consultant Team Member – Squid Research Expression of Interest - AFMA

1.3 Adoption of Agenda

ScallopMAC adopted the agenda at **Attachment A**, and agreed to discuss an item on the Co-management Committee under other business (Item 5), which was raised by the AFMA member.

2. Meeting Administration

2.1 Confirmation of record of previous meeting

ScallopMAC noted the finalised minutes of the previous meeting of 19 June 2015 which had previously been circulated by email for comment.

2.2 Actions arising from previous meetings

The AFMA member gave an update on the progress of action items (**Attachment B**) arising from the previous ScallopMAC meeting. This included the review of the current BSCZSF Harvest Strategy, which was identified as a research priority and included in the AFMA Research Committee's 2016 call for research. The AFMA member noted that one applicant has submitted an expression of interest to conduct the project, "*Review of the effectiveness of spatial management measures in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery*", that is currently being considered by the AFMA Research Committee.

The AFMA member provided clarification that PrimeSafe is the Victorian authority charged with the responsibility of monitoring the testing of Paralytic Shellfish Toxin (PST). Any wild

catch fishing business that lands product in Victoria (under either a Victorian or Commonwealth fishing licence) must be licensed with PrimeSafe and must comply with the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code regulatory levels for biotoxins in shellfish. An industry observer asked for further clarification on whether it is the responsibility of the fishing operator or the processor to pay for and undertake testing.

Action item

Debbie Wisby to provide AFMA with a list of questions regarding who is responsible for PST testing.

The AFMA member noted that AFMA, in consultation with the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), have completed a draft review of economic indicator reports as a first step to preparing a standard set of annual economic data requirements.

Action item

AFMA to provide an update on a standard set of annual economic data at the next ScallopMAC meeting. Consultation will be undertaken with ABARES and Stuart Richey.

Industry member, Mr Richey, was not satisfied his questions regarding the 2015/16 budget had been answered and agreed to provide AFMA with a list of the questions he felt were still outstanding.

Action item

Mr Richey to provide AFMA with a list of questions regarding the BSCZSF budget that he would like clarification on.

2.3 Correspondence

ScallopMAC noted correspondence since the last meeting.

3. Fishery update

3.1 AFMA management

The AFMA member provided an update on catches from the 2015 season, where 2260 tonnes of the 2500 tonne TAC was caught. She also noted that:

- The AFMA Research Committee is currently considering two expressions of interest to conduct the 2016. Applicants will be notified in the first week of April.
- The draft BSCZSF budget for 2016/17 is expected to be circulated in mid-April for comment and will be based on the 2016 Cost Recovery Impact Statement (CRIS), subject to the CRIS being approved by the Minister. The final budget will be released after the Federal Budget is delivered on 3 May 2016.
- Govdex will be introduced to all MACs and RAGs during 2016. Govdex is a central online portal, which will be used by AFMA to upload all meeting papers, agendas and minutes. All MAC and RAG members will receive a login, which will be specific to their membership (e.g. ScallopMAC members can only access ScallopMAC material). Users will be able to, amongst other things, download documents, leave comments, and submit travel expense forms. Users will also receive notifications when new documents are added to the site.

3.2 Tasmanian State Government management

The invited participant from the Tasmanian Government, James Parkinson, provided an update on catches for the 2015 season, where 733 tonnes of the 1033 tonne TAC was caught. Majority of the catch came from the White Rock area. He noted that the White Rock area was voluntarily closed in September due to low catches and the presence of PST. There were minimal catches taken from Circular Head. The 2016 surveys will begin on 1 April 2016 and target six areas including White Rock, Marion Bay, and Circular Head. The season is anticipated to open in early June, depending on when the surveys are completed.

3.3 Victorian State Government management

The invited participant from the Victorian Government, Darci Wallis, provided an update on the status of the Victorian scallop fishery where approximately 30-40 tonnes of the 135 tonne TAC was caught in 2015. She also noted that:

- The TAC has been set at 135 tonnes again for 2016 season, beginning on 1 April.
- No surveys have been undertaken since 2012
- The Victorian Government is still investigating the transferability of quota in an attempt to reduce licenses in the fishery. This will allow holders to consolidate their quota onto one license instead of multiple licenses.

Industry members asked if it was possible to increase the TAC if fishers catch close to 135 tonnes. Ms Wallis explained that under legislation it would be possible, however for an increase to occur an industry survey or independent survey would have to be conducted.

4. Arrangements for 2016 season opening

4.1 Arrangements for opening the 2016 BSCZSF season

The AFMA member summarised the paper and management options for the 2016 season opening:

Option 1 - keep the fishery closed (TAC set at zero tonnes) until a biomass survey is undertaken and results discussed at the next RAG and MAC meetings; or,

Option 2 - open the season in April 2016 with a default TAC of 150 tonnes and then decide if a biomass survey should be conducted.

Industry broadly supported Option 1, moving directly to a biomass estimate survey and keeping the fishery closed until it is conducted. Industry members noted:

- this option worked well in 2015 and although there is currently good demand for scallops, industry would rather have a survey to determine the condition of scallops across the fishery.
- that the default TAC of 150 tonnes was not a feasible option for industry when they know where the productive scallop beds are. Many operators are set up for different fishing methods, and it is not cost effective to change over to scallop dredge gear for a TAC of 150 tonnes split across quota holders.
- concerns that the beds east of King Island, which were closed last season following the survey, could be wasted if they aren't fished this season. Industry agreed that these beds appear ready to be exploited and should be included in the 2016 survey.
- it was essential that industry be consulted on which areas to survey to give the fishery the best chance of opening.

The AFMA member pointed out that there is no guarantee that the season will go ahead if the survey results come back negative and that the default TAC of 150 tonnes at least gave fishers a chance to start fishing. An industry member asked if the biomass surveys did not support a season opening, if there is an option to use the 150 tonne TAC to search for beds north of Flinders Island. These beds haven't been looked at for a few years. The AFMA member was of the view this would be inconsistent with the Harvest Strategy, however could be discussed if the situation arose.

An industry member asked for clarification from AFMA on the cost of conducting the surveys and opening the season, as \$250,000 appears quite high considering the cost of surveys have been reduced to approximately \$40,000 in recent years. The AFMA member explained that these costs would include the survey, MAC and RAG meetings, data entry costs and licensing transactions. The AFMA member agreed that survey costs have been reduced and the figure of \$250,000 has been taken from the Harvest Strategy, so cost for this season should be lower.

The research member summarised advice from ScallopRAG, who raised the following concerns:

- the limited spread of fishing effort across the fishery, which has been focused on a small area off King Island in recent years.
- the 150 tonne opening TAC will be skipped for the second year in a row. The RAG believes this strengthens the need to review the Harvest Strategy and should be discussed at the industry workshop.
- The RAG advised that a workshop with industry would be one of the most efficient ways to design the survey and set research catch allowance.

The AFMA member suggested that the RAG and the Co-management Committee be consulted on the development of the survey plan. This was supported by ScallopMAC members.

An industry observer asked for clarification in regards to the RAG recommendation for an industry workshop, and if 'consulting industry' means the broader industry or just MAC members. The research member suggested that this means the whole of industry.

ScallopMAC agreed to proceed directly to the biomass estimate survey and noted the advice of the RAG to conduct a workshop with industry regarding the survey methodology.

Action Item

AFMA to consult with the proponent of the biomass survey (once selected) and ensure the RAG and Co-management Committee are consulted on the design of the survey. AFMA will investigate the option of holding an industry workshop to discuss survey design for next season.

4.2 Research Catch Allowance

The AFMA member introduced and summarised the paper with a recommendation that ScallopMAC support a research catch allowance (RCA) of 24 tonnes for the 2016 BSCZSF biomass survey with the potential to increase to 36 tonnes during the survey if required. This allows for more flexibility to increase RCA if additional survey beds are found, without having to seek RAG and MAC advice.

An industry member asked for clarification regarding AFMA's Research Catch and Effort Allowance Policy, in particular the following condition:

- The holders of the research contract and scientific permit (if different) for the research project must ensure that revenue from the sale of fish caught against the research allowance must be acquitted against the cost of the project.

The AFMA member explained that the vessel undertaking the survey can use the profits made through the sale of research catch to cover the operating costs of participating in survey.

An industry member raised concerns regarding the potential results of the survey and the dredge efficiency levels used in the survey methodology. The Chair pointed out that details such as this would be best left to the industry workshop on survey methodology.

The research member advised that the RAG want to see a greater spread of effort across the fishery during the survey. He also added that the proposed RCA posed no risk to the sustainability of the fishery.

The AFMA member outlined that AFMA will send a letter to all operators (concession holders and non-concession holders) with details of the EOI to conduct the survey and that the Co-management Committee will provide advice on applicants to AFMA. AFMA will then make the final decision on which vessel/s conducts the survey.

ScallopMAC agreed with the proposed RCA of 24 tonnes for the 2016 BSCZSF biomass survey with the potential to increase to 36 tonnes during the survey if required, noting the advice of the RAG to spread survey effort across fishery.

Action Item

AFMA to clarify the Expression of Interest process for vessels to participate in the 2016 BSCZSF biomass survey, including who can apply and how operators will be notified.

5. Other Business

5.1 2016 membership of the Co-management Committee

The AFMA member summarised the role of the Co-management Committee, noting that it stipulates in the Harvest Strategy that membership is set by the MAC. The AFMA member asked for MAC advice to determine the membership of the committee and proposed to have both Tasmanian and Victorian industry associations put forward nominations for the Co-management Committee. The AFMA member also noted that the current position for the AFMA representative was vacant due to the AFMA Scallop Manager changing since the committee members were last determined.

Industry members were happy to maintain the current members on the committee and noted that the committee had worked well in the past in setting voluntary closures. An industry member raised concerns over the Victorian Scallop Fisherman's Association putting forward nominations as it only has a small number of members.

ScallopMAC agreed to maintain the current membership of the Co-management Committee for 2016 and agreed to add Ms Weekes as the AFMA representative. The current members are:

Industry co-ordinator (Chair)	Mr Bob Lister
Victorian representative	Mr Andrew Watts
Victorian representative	Mr John Cull
Tasmanian representative	Mr Allan Barnett
Tasmanian representative	Mr John Hammond
AFMA representative	Ms Sally Weekes

Mr Lister advised members that he would be away during April and May, and suggested passing Chair duties of the Co-management Committee over to Ms Weekes.

5.2 Moving to electronic logbooks

An industry member asked AFMA to investigate when scallop operators could move to electronic logbooks (e-Logs), as he was concerned the scallop fishery would be the last to move to e-Logs and be charged a greater percentage of paper logbook levies. Specifically, the industry member would like to know:

1. How quickly the industry can implement e-Logs
2. How overheads for paper logbooks are attributed.

Action Item

AFMA to clarify how quickly industry can implement e-Logs and how overheads for paper logbooks are attributed.

The Chair thanked all members for their contribution and closed the meeting at 11:30am.

Signed (Chairperson):



Date: 16/5/2016

List of Attachments

- Attachment A – ScallopMAC 26 Agenda
- Attachment B – Current Action Items

Attachment A

**Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery
Management Advisory Committee (ScallopMAC)**

Meeting 26

Teleconference

Draft Agenda

Approximate time	Agenda item
10:00am	1. Preliminaries 1.1. Welcome and apologies 1.2. Declaration of interests 1.3. Adoption of agenda
10:15am	2. Meeting Administration 2.1. Minutes of previous meeting 2.2. Actions arising from previous meetings 2.3. Correspondence
10.30am	3. Fishery update 3.1. AFMA management 3.2. Tasmanian management 3.3. Victorian management
11.00am	4. Arrangements for 2016 season opening (AFMA) 4.1. Discussion paper with options for the opening of the scallop season 4.2. Research catch allowance
11:45am	5. Other business
12:00pm	Close

Attachment B

Current ScallopMAC Action Items

MAC meeting no.	Agenda Item no.	MAC Action Item	Details
25	6	Harvest strategy review	<p>Identified as a research priority and included in the AFMA Research Committee 2016 call for research, titled <i>Review of the effectiveness of spatial management measures in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery</i>.</p> <p>One applicant submitted an expression of interest and this submission is currently being considered by the AFMA Research Committee.</p>
25	8	AFMA clarify responsibility for monitoring and testing of PST for scallops landed in Victoria. Then, if necessary, AFMA to revisit the protocols and cost recovery arrangements.	<p>PrimeSafe are charged with the responsibility to ensure that seafood landed and produced with the state of Victoria complies with the requirements of the Seafood Safety Act 2003 (VIC). PrimeSafe licence conditions require all seafood businesses to comply with relevant Australian and Victorian standards and guidelines. The relevant standard and guideline for a wildcatch business is the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.</p> <p>Any wild catch fishing business that lands product in Victoria (under either a Victorian or Commonwealth fishing licence) must be licenced with PrimeSafe and must comply with the Food Standards Code regulatory levels for biotoxins in shellfish.</p> <p>There is no legal capacity for AFMA to undertake monitoring or testing and recover costs through levies.</p>

25	9	AFMA to review economic indicator reports provided by ABARES and Econsearch to prepare a standard set of annual economic data and a useful narrative for the Commission in setting season arrangements. AFMA to circulate out of session advice for consideration by the MAC. AFMA to also provide data to assist completing the report tabled by Mr Richey.	Draft review complete. Consultation with ABARES to occur prior to next face to face MAC meeting.
26	2.2	Debbie Wisby to provide AFMA with a list of questions regarding who is responsible for PST testing.	
26	2.2	AFMA to provide an update on a standard set of annual economic data at the next ScallopMAC meeting. Consultation will be undertaken with ABARES and Stuart Richey.	
26	2.2	Mr Richey to provide AFMA with a list of questions regarding the BSCZSF budget that he would like clarification on.	
26	4.1	AFMA to consult with the proponent of the biomass survey (once selected) and ensure the RAG and Co-management Committee are consulted on the design of the survey. AFMA will investigate the option of holding an industry workshop to discuss survey design for next season.	

26	4.2	AFMA to clarify the Expression of Interest process for vessels to participate in the 2016 BSCZSF biomass survey, including who can apply and how operators will be notified.	
26	5.2	AFMA to clarify how quickly industry can implement e-Logs and how overheads for paper logbooks are attributed.	