



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery - Great Australian Bight Management Advisory Committee (GABMAC)

Meeting Minutes

Date: 24 November 2015

Venue: Stamford Plaza, Adelaide

Attendance

Members	Membership
Mr Barry Windle	Chair
Mr Jeff Moore	Industry Member
Mr Jim Raptis	Industry member
Mr Marcus Finn	AFMA member
Ms Giulia Porro	AFMA, MAC EO
Ms Marcia Valente	Industry member
Mr Lance Lloyd	Scientific member
Mr Peter Trott	Environment member

Agenda Item 1 – Preliminaries

Agenda Item 1.1 – Welcome and introductions / Apologies

1. Mr Barry Windle (Chair) opened the meeting at 9.00 am (AEST) and welcomed members.

Agenda Item 1.2 – Declarations of interest

2. The Chair outlined the conflict of interest declaration process as outlined in Fisheries Administration Paper (FAP12). A list of the full conflicts of interest declarations made by the MAC members and other participants is provided at Table 1 below.

Table 1: Members' declared interests as at 24 November 2015.

Member	Declared Interest
Mr Barry Windle	No pecuniary interest or otherwise
Dr Marcus Finn	Employed by AFMA, no pecuniary interest or otherwise
Mr Jim Raptis	Shareholder and employee of Raptis, 4 licenses in GAB. GAB boat and quota SFR holder.
Mrs Marcia Valente	GAB Boat and quota SFR holder
Mr Jeff Moore	Great Australian Bight Industry Association (GABIA) EO, board member of Commonwealth Fisheries Association, member of GABRAG, invited participant of SEMAC, Industry liaison officer for Commonwealth Marine Reserve consultative group and liaison officer for the South East Reserves Management Forum. In the process of setting up an industry association for Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery.
Mr Lance Lloyd	Director of Lloyd Environmental, SESSFRAG and GABRAG Member, Research fellow, Federation University Australia. Interest in projects

	involving fish and fisheries but not in the GAB. No pecuniary interest.
Mr Peter Trott	Independent consultant. No pecuniary interest. Working in markets, supply chains and MSC certification. On the MSC board of trustees.
Ms Giulia Porro	Employed by AFMA, no pecuniary interest or otherwise. Executive Officer of SEMAC and GABRAG.

Agenda Item 1.3 – Adoption of agenda

3. The MAC adopted the draft agenda noting the following changes:
 - The Multi Year Total Allowable Catch (MYTAC) for western gemfish does not need to be discussed by GABMAC as it is discussed at the annual South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC) Total Allowable Catch (TAC) meeting. The advice and recommendation provided by GABRAG will be provided to SEMAC at its February TAC meeting.
 - Dr Finn clarified that GABIA normally recommends TACs for bight redfish and deepwater flathead to the AFMA Commission.
 - Mr Raptis wished to discuss the cost recovery process, particularly in regard to co-management. Mr Finn confirmed that this will be discussed as part of Agenda item 3.3.
 - Mr Moore wished to update the MAC on a couple of orange roughy management issues.
 - The MAC agreed that a discussion about future strategic challenges and directions would be useful. This will be discussed under Agenda item 7.
 - Mr Moore informed the MAC that Mr Brad Milic will attend GABMAC to give a quick talk about the new standards released by the Australian Marine Safety Authority.

Agenda Item 1.4 – Actions arising from previous meeting

4. Ms Porro reported on outcomes arising from action items from the previous GABRAG meetings. A list of outcomes is provided below.
5. With regards to Action Item 10 from GABMAC meeting 2013, the MAC agreed that once ABARES has finalized the report on the stock structure research project, AFMA will initiate discussions on resource sharing if necessary.
6. With regards to Action Item 11, Mr Moore pointed out that any fishers wanting to utilize the orange roughy research allowance must apply for research permits by May 2016. Mr Raptis indicated that Raptis will be applying for a research permit in 2016.
7. With regards to Action Item 14, Ms Porro noted that AFMA will attempt to simplify the Boat Operating Procedures Manual. Furthermore Mr Raptis noted that it would be good to differentiate between the legislative requirements and the co-management arrangements. Ms Valente noted that the alternatives to pinkies should be included in the updated manual.



GABMAC Meeting	Action Item	Action Person	Status
1/2013	#10 Develop a paper on future management arrangements with historical timeline for Western Gemfish.	AFMA	Not complete – Pending finalisation of Andy Moore’s stock structure research work.
1/2013	#11 Amend the GABIA Orange Roughy annual research plan to a five year plan.	Jeff Moore	Not complete. Will be complete before March 2016. Not necessary for 2015 as there was no interest to go fishing.
1/2013	#14 Update the boat operating procedures manual	GABIA/AFMA	In progress – partially complete but new work arose out of port visits that need to be incorporated. Completed and distributed by 1 April to the 2016-17 season.
1/2014	#8 Provide co-management arrangement review to GABMAC for comment when complete.	AFMA/GABIA	Provided to GABMAC OOS by end of January.

GABMAC Watch List

Action	Responsibility	Status
1. That the agenda for future GABMAC meetings be developed at an appropriately strategic level, so as to encapsulate GABTF co-management arrangements and AFMA’s dual advisory model	GABIA/AFMA/Chair	Ongoing
2. Progress the Bight Redfish management and OCS issues outside the MAC process (Cmwltth has 50kg limit on bight redfish – SA doesn’t)	AFMA, PIRSA and GABIA	Ongoing
3. AFMA, Olfish and GABIA to investigate E-CDR capability in the GABTF, once the e-log system is running satisfactorily in the fishery	AFMA <i>et al</i>	Pending
4. Incorporate WTO conditions and requirements, as well as interaction reports into	AFMA/RAG EO	Ongoing – WTO conditions not

environment reports for future MAC meeting environment updates.

in there.



Agenda Item 2 – Status of the fishery

Agenda Item 2.1 – AFMA Managers Report

8. Dr Finn tabled the Manager's Update and invited questions and discussion from the MAC.
9. Ms Valente questioned whether AFMA can contact South Australia (SA) to discuss the management arrangements of bight redfish. Industry believes that targeting of bight redfish in state waters is increasing. The MAC agreed that it would be ideal for the stock to be managed as a consolidated stock between SA and the Commonwealth; however the MAC acknowledged that it is often difficult to reach agreement with states due to political issues.

Action item: AFMA to invite a SA state representative to the next GABMAC meeting.

Action item: Mr Moore to organize a meeting with industry representatives from SA to discuss the management of bight redfish.

10. Mr Trott noted that the difference between logbook and observer reported protected species interactions should be explained to avoid public backlash.

Agenda Item 2.2 – Industry/GABIA report

11. Mr Moore provided the MAC with an update from industry on how research, management and the fishery have been progressing. Mr Moore highlighted the following key points:
 - Integrated Scientific Monitoring Program (ISMP) otolith collections are being supplemented with collections from Mr Raptis' factory.
 - GABIA is working with AFMA on the budget process.
 - The bycatch utilization project is being funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) and will look at several factors including domestic markets, international markets and the potential for new supply chains. The MAC was highly supportive of this project.
 - GABIA is co-investigator on a project to trial different seabird mitigation devices including bafflers and sprayers. Both methods have been approved by AFMA.

Action item: AFMA to circulate the specifications for the new approved seabird mitigation devices.

- A Fishery Independent Survey (FIS) was undertaken in 2015. GABIA has significant concerns about the causes of the low relative abundance indexes for both key species. Mr Moore noted there were three seismic surveys undertaken during the time of the FIS. GABIA is proposing to request funding from FRDC to run a FIS in 2016.
- In terms of profitability, the first part of 2015 was challenging with flathead catches decreasing dramatically. Currently the catches of flathead have increased and there is a good distribution of size.
- There is a continuing focus on maintaining high quality of the fish by storing it in ice slurry on the boat.
- The level of effort in the fishery was low during 2015 due to vessel maintenance and vessel breakdowns.
- GABIA have submitted a submission into the senate enquiry review into big boats.
- The Commonwealth marine reserves process is ongoing.

Agenda Item 3 – GABTS Management

Agenda Item 3.1 – Seabirds

12. Dr Finn introduced the item and highlighted the following:

- Seabird management plans (SMPs) have been active for a number of years in the fishery.
- Late in 2014 a trial was completed that confirmed that pinkies were effective in reducing heavy seabird interactions with trawl warps by up to 75 per cent. Based on the outcomes of this trial, AFMA reviewed all trawl SMPs, included pinkies as the standard mitigation measure and removed the need to deploy pinkies at night. The MAC noted that all boats in the GABTS deploy pinkies during night time fishing as well.
- More recently, the South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA) has been conducting Government-funded seabird trials. AFMA has received the results of the second trial and has approved bird sprayers and bird baffler devices as acceptable bird mitigation measures for seabird mitigation in trawl fisheries.
- AFMA is proposing that the bundle of interaction reduction measures together with several offal management options be included in a five year seabird strategy.

13. The MAC noted the importance of industry continuing to report seabird interactions in logbooks.

Agenda Item 3.2 – Environment update

14. Dr Finn introduced the item and highlighted the following:

- The current SESSF Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) which allows for export of product from the fishery expires in February 2016. AFMA is preparing documentation to submit to the Department of Environment for WTO re-accreditation.
- Interactions with protected species are low in the GABTS. The MAC noted the increase in interactions with fur seals.
- The Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy and the Commonwealth Policy on Fisheries Bycatch are due to be released for public consultation in the next few months.

15. Mr Trott questioned whether AFMA will be applying for a 10 year WTO accreditation and whether Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) accreditation could replace the WTO accreditation.

Action Item: Dr Finn to check whether WTO accreditation can be granted for 10 years and whether MSC accreditation could replace the WTO accreditation.

Agenda Item 3.3 – Budget 2016/2017

16. Dr Finn introduced the item and provided a verbal update on the draft 2016 Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS).

17. AFMA is producing a draft 2016 CRIS in line with the revised Australian Government Charging Framework which incorporates the Cost Recovery Guidelines. The Government introduced the Charging Framework to improve consistency of charging activities and help determine when it is appropriate to charge for a government activity.

18. The draft 2016 CRIS will be AFMA's initial application of the government's cost recovery framework. AFMA will be seeking feedback from all Commonwealth fishery stakeholders including considering options that may address stakeholder concerns where they are consistent with the government's cost recovery framework.

19. If approved by the Minister, the 2016 AFMA CRIS will replace the 2010 AFMA CRIS for the 2016-17 financial year.

20. Under the 2016 AFMA CRIS, costs are expected to increase for the GAB in the order of 20-30 per cent. The increase in costs is due to an increase in the cost recovered components of the bycatch and discard program and the policy section.

21. The MAC noted the importance of thinking about what services industry could take on to reduce management costs.

22. Mr Raptis questioned what would happen to the levy costs if GABIA was dissolved or if it was amalgamated with SETFIA. Dr Finn recommended that that GABIA raise this issue with AFMA once the consultation period opens.

Agenda Item 3.4 – Amendments to SESSF Management Plan

23. Ms Porro introduced the item and highlighted the following:

- AFMA has identified a number of opportunities to amend and improve Commonwealth fisheries management plans. The primary purpose of the amendment to the SESSF Management Plan is to provide for the grant of Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) and to simplify the arrangements relating to under catch.
- Under the proposed amendment, Individually Transferable Quota units would be converted into Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) on a one for one basis.
- The plan amendment would also remove the requirement to hold one SFR on the relevant date in order to receive under catch as well as making several administrative changes to the plan.

Recommendation: GABMAC supported the recommended changes to the SESSF Management Plan.

Agenda Item 4 – TAC recommendations for 2016/2017

Agenda Item 4.1 – Bight redfish

24. AFMA and GABIA are seeking MAC comment on the TAC recommendation for bight redfish for the 2016-17 fishing season noting that as part of the co-management agreement GABIA provides the TAC recommendation to the AFMA Commission.

25. Dr Finn highlighted the following:

- GABRAG accepted the stock assessment model as presented by Dr Malcolm Haddon noting that the updated 2015 model produced a more reliable estimate of biomass compared to the model used in 2011.
- The model predicted a female spawning biomass of 63 per cent and a decrease in virgin biomass of about 25 per cent compared to the 2011 stock assessment.
- The model produced a one year Recommended Biological Catch (RBC) of 862 tonnes, a three year average RBC of 828 tonnes, a five year average RBC of 797 tonnes and a long term RBC of 537 tonnes.
- The RAG noted that the stock is above the management target of 41 per cent and that Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE) continues to decline.
- The RAG supported a five year average RBC of 797 tonnes and recommended two breakout rules.

- The RAG noted that the Harvest Strategy large change limiting rule would be triggered, however implementing the rule would pose no risk to the stock.

Recommendation: The MAC supported the RAG advice and noted that GABIA will provide a TAC recommendation for bight redfish to the AFMA Commission.

Recommendation: The MAC recommended that in the future AFMA distribute the stock assessment documents to MAC members to provide them with the background information.

Agenda Item 4.2 – Deepwater flathead

26. Dr Finn introduced the item and highlighted the following:

- The last deepwater flathead stock assessment was undertaken in 2014 and the species is on a three year Multi Year Total Allowable Catch (MYTAC).
- The RAG reviewed the breakout rules and noted that they had not been triggered. The RAG recommended continuing with the MYTAC.

27. The MAC noted that a stock assessment for deepwater flathead is scheduled for 2016.

Recommendation: The MAC supported the RAG advice and noted that GABIA will provide a TAC recommendation for deepwater flathead to the AFMA Commission.

Agenda Item 4.3 – Orange roughy

28. Mr Moore updated the MAC on the following:

- At its meeting in July 2015, the RAG agreed to extend the orange roughy research plan to a five year plan.
- The RAG also recommended a 50 tonne bycatch TAC and a 200 tonne research TAC for the Albany and Esperance zone.

29. Mr Raptis questioned whether the Albany and Esperance zone could be reopened to fishing (similar to what has occurred in the East). Mr Moore confirmed that the Albany and Esperance stock was classified as conservation dependent and that it has not been subject to the same research as the Eastern stock making it difficult to determine whether the stock has recovered.

30. Mr Moore recommended ageing the orange roughy otoliths from the Albany and Esperance and comparing the age structures with otoliths aged in the Eastern zone. The MAC agreed that it would be useful to determine the cost of ageing the otoliths before proceeding.

Agenda Item 5 – Data and research

31. Dr Finn introduced the item and informed the MAC that GABRAG and AFMA have developed an annual research plan for 2016-17 which has been submitted to the AFMA Research Committee (ARC) and ComFRAB.
32. The MAC noted that no strategic research had been recommended for 2016-17, however several strategic projects were currently underway. These include the western gemfish stock structure project, the SESSF monitoring and assessment review project and the bycatch utilization project. The MAC noted their support for these projects.
33. Mr Raptis questioned how GVP for the fishery is calculated.

Action item: Mr Moore to contact Mr Rob Curtotti at ABARES to discuss how GVP for the fishery is calculated.

Action item: AFMA to keep the MAC informed on the bycatch utilization project.

34. Dr Finn provided the MAC with an overview of data collection in the GAB noting that the Integrated Scientific Monitoring Program (ISMP) and the crew collected data program occur on alternate years.
35. Dr Finn recommended that a couple of observer days be included in the budget during the years of the crew collected data program to ensure that the AFMA observer section has the resources allocated to enter the crew collected data into the database and quality control it.
36. The MAC noted the importance of providing regular feedback to the individual boats on the quality of the data collected to ensure that the data collected is of continuous high standard.

Recommendation: The MAC recommended congratulating all boat crews on the data collection to date and providing an incentive to continue the collection of the data.

Agenda Item 6 – MAC self-assessment

37. Ms Porro presented this agenda item and explained that it is a requirement of Fisheries Management Paper 1 that each year the MAC undertake a self-assessment against the performance criteria. The MAC reviewed the survey responses completed by a number of members and discussed each criterion with a view to how things could be improved. The MAC felt strongly about what feedback is provided to the Commission and whether the Commission is made aware of what is occurring in the GABTS.
38. The self-assessment will be provided to the Commission.

Agenda Item 7- Other business

39. The MAC discussed the future strategic challenges of the GABTS as well as the future direction of the fishery.
40. Mr Raptis stated that the GABTS as a whole is currently not in a profitable position and management costs are high and not affordable in the long term. Mr Raptis stated that all of the license holders should be working together to restructure the fishery and develop a new co-management model. Mr Raptis expressed his support for amalgamating GABIA with SETFIA if it would reduce management costs.
41. Dr Finn stated that AFMA acknowledges the difficulties the GABTS is facing and that management costs have been maintained at 3-4 per cent of the fishery GVP for several years. The MAC agreed that industry should work together to consider a substantive structural change to the fishery.
42. Dr Finn noted the importance of having a strong peak industry body to reduce management costs and ensure that the industry has one united voice.
43. Mr Windle highlighted that the 2016 CRIS consultation will be a good opportunity for industry to provide feedback on the structure of cost recovered management costs.
44. Ms Valente noted the importance of the bycatch utilization project in improving the profitability of the fishery and strongly recommended that industry focus on increasing export opportunities and strengthening the opportunities in international markets.
45. Mr Raptis stated the importance of allowing the use of foreign vessels in the GABTS. Mr Finn strongly recommended that industry write to AFMA and the Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA) to initiate discussion about bringing foreign vessels into the GABTS.

In summary the MAC agreed that the GABTS industry is in a fairly precarious situation and strongly recommended the following:

- **industry to formally write to AFMA regarding the use of foreign vessels in the GABTS**
- **industry to provide extensive comment on the 2016 CRIS review**
- **industry to consider how it could restructure and develop a new co-management model (potentially amalgamating with SETFIA).**

The Chair then thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting at 16:50.

Action Items - consolidated list

Action Item	Action	Action Person
GABMAC –2015		
1	AFMA to invite a SA state representative to the next GABMAC meeting.	AFMA
2	Mr Moore to organize a meeting with industry representatives from SA and WA to discuss the management of bight redfish.	Jeff Moore
3	AFMA to circulate the specifications for the new approved seabird mitigation devices.	AFMA
4	Dr Finn to check whether WTO accreditation can be granted for 10 years and whether MSC accreditation could replace the WTO accreditation.	AFMA
5	Mr Moore to contact Mr Rob Curtotti at ABARES to discuss how GVP for the fishery is calculated.	Jeff Moore
6	AFMA to keep the MAC informed on the bycatch utilization project.	AFMA
GABMAC - 2014		
8	Provide co-management arrangement review to GABMAC for comment when complete.	AFMA/GABIA
GABMAC - 2013		
10	Develop a paper on future management arrangements with historical timeline for Western Gemfish.	AFMA
11	Amend the GABIA Orange Roughy annual research plan to a five year plan.	Jeff Moore
14	Update the boat operating procedures manual	GABIA/AFMA