



**Australian Government**

**Australian Fisheries Management Authority**



# **Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC)**

**FINAL MINUTES  
SOUTHMAC 36  
1 MARCH 2018**

## **SUB-ANTARCTIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SouthMAC)**

**CHAIR:** Mr Peter Neville

**Date:** 1 March 2018

**Venue:** CSIRO Marine Laboratories, Hobart

### **Attendance**

#### **Members**

Mr Peter Neville, Chair

Mr Martin Exel, Industry Member

Ms Lihini Weragoda, Australian Antarctic Division

Mr Jon Bryan, Conservation Member

Ms Jo Fisher, AFMA Member

Ms Sarah Kirkcaldie (Executive Officer)

#### **Observers**

Dr Rich Hillary, CSIRO

Mr Rhys Arangio, Industry

### **Introduction**

The thirty sixth meeting of the Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC 36) was held in Hobart on 1 March 2018.

The key items on the agenda were:

- Fishery assessment plans;
- lost longline gear in the Heard Island and McDonald islands Fishery (HIMIF);
- extension of Macquarie Island Toothfish longline season; and
- 25.5% minimum quota holding for trawl access in HIMIF.

### **Agenda item 1 - Preliminaries**

SouthMAC 36 was opened at 9.10 am on 1 March 2018 by the Chair, Mr Peter Neville.

Mr Neville welcomed the attendance of members, as well as the observers, Dr Rich Hillary (CSIRO) and Mr Rhys Arangio (Austral Fisheries Pty Ltd).

#### **1.1 Declaration of interests**

As outlined in the *Fisheries Administrations Act 1991* and AFMA Fisheries Management Paper No. 1, all members (but not permanent observers or invited participants) of SouthMAC must declare any pecuniary interest in the Fishery at the commencement of the meeting and also at

the commencement of each agenda item. If a member discloses an interest in an item, the member must absent themselves from the meeting before the item is considered and the MAC must make a decision as to whether the member can participate in the discussion and in making of a recommendation or remain absent from the meeting for the item.

Mr Neville declared that he was the Principal of a fisheries consulting business (P.J.Neville & Associates) and Chair of the Northern Territory Barramundi Fishery and Chair Fisheries Research and Development Corporation's (FRDC's) recreational fishing sub-program. Mr Neville advised that he has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Mr Exel advised that he is the General Manager, Environment and Policy, Austral Fisheries Pty Ltd. Austral Fisheries P/L owns Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) in the Australian sub-Antarctic fisheries and waters under the jurisdiction of Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). Mr Exel also declared that he is a Director of the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS), member and public officer of the Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA), member of the South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA), Deputy Chair of the Great Australian Bight Industry Association and Member of Coral Sea Fishers Association. Mr Exel further advised that he is a member of the "National Benefit Assessment Panel" for the Marine National Facility (the RV Investigator). He was not aware of any investigation or prosecution action by AFMA against his Company or of any legal action taken by his Company against AFMA.

Ms Lihini Weragoda advised that she is an employee of the AAD and her colleagues conduct the HIMI stock assessment. Ms Weragoda attends international meetings related to Antarctic fisheries and has no pecuniary interest in Antarctic fisheries and her salary is not dependent on AAD, industry and other research collaborations.

Mr Jon Bryan advised he is a part-time employee of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust. Mr Bryan stated that he is a member on a number of Tasmanian fisheries advisory committees including recreational, scallop, abalone, crustacean and scalefish, board member for the Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing (TARfish) and recreational diving clubs but has no pecuniary interest in Antarctic fisheries.

Ms Fisher advised she is employed by AFMA and is the Manager for Antarctic fisheries and has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Ms Kirkcaldie advised she is employed by AFMA, is also the Executive Officer for SARAG and Southern Bluefin Tuna MAC and has no pecuniary interest in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Mr Arangio advised he is employed by Austral Fisheries P/L who hold SFRs in the Australian sub-Antarctic Fisheries. He is also the Executive Officer of COLTO. Mr Arangio is not aware of any investigation or prosecution action by AFMA against Austral Fisheries or of any legal action taken by Austral against AFMA.

Dr Hillary advised that he is employed by CSIRO and is the Principal Investigator of the MITF stock assessment. He also advised that he is a member of AFMA's Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Advisory Committee (SBTMAC) and Tropical Tuna RAG. Dr Hillary advised that he has no pecuniary interests in the sub-Antarctic fisheries.

Mr Exel and Mr Arangio declared their interest under agenda items 6, 7, 11, 13 and 17a and Dr Rich Hillary declared his interest under agenda item 28. These three members and observers left the room. SouthMAC then discussed whether the members and observers needed to leave the room for any agenda items; it was agreed that, as their input was essential to the agenda items, they should remain in the meeting room for all discussions but not any recommendations.

## 1.2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Dr Malcolm Haddon, CSIRO and Mr Malcolm McNeill, Industry.

## 1.3 Adoption of agenda

SouthMAC adopted the agenda with the addition of the following agenda items:

- Chair's summary of SARAG outcomes to be discussed after agenda item 2; and
- Monterey Bay slavery operations, Wentworth Group, Integrated Marine Observer System (IMOS), and SouthMAC membership to be discussed under agenda item 17 - other business.

## Agenda item 2 – Minutes from SouthMAC 35 and November teleconference

Members noted that the draft minutes from SouthMAC 35 held on 18 May 2017 were circulated for comment on 7 June 2017. Comments were received from Mr Martin Exel, Industry, Mr Rhys Arangio, Industry and Ms Amy Young, AAD. Members noted that the minutes from the SouthMAC 35 meeting have now been finalized.

SouthMAC noted that the draft minutes from the teleconference held on 7 November 2017 were circulated on 22 November 2017. Comments were received from Ms Lihini Weragoda, AAD and Mr Malcolm McNeill, Industry. Members noted that these comments have been incorporated and minutes from the November 2017 teleconference have now been finalized.

## Agenda item 2 b - SARAG summary from SouthMAC Chair

The Chair gave a summary of the major outcomes from the SARAG (SARAG 57) meeting held on 28 February 2018. SouthMAC noted that:

- It is a non-assessment year for the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery (MITF) and that SARAG will be considering a data summary by CSIRO at its next meeting;
- SARAG supported a proposal, submitted to the AFMA Research Committee by CSIRO, to develop a bespoke stock assessment model for MITF to refine and improve current assessment, to be discussed by SouthMAC at Agenda Item 8;
- The longline season extension trial is underway in Heard Island and McDonald islands Fishery (HIMIF) with setting hook requirements for the season extensions. The minimum hook set requirement for the 1-14 April period has not been met and industry indicated that they are not willing to commit to setting hooks in the daylight only in the 1-14 April period just to complete the trial. AAD and AFMA agreed to develop criteria to assess trials;
- SARAG discussed tagging mortality and noted that observers will be encouraged to share any information that may improve survivability of Patagonian toothfish;
- AAD produced a discussion paper with a preliminary analysis that noted the decline in catch rates in the HIMIF. SARAG noted that catch rates had improved slightly towards the end of the 2016/17 season and there was no need for a stock assessment in 2018 (HIMI toothfish stock assessment is biennial);
- A re-estimation of natural mortality has not been finalized and SARAG noted that this is extremely difficult to do;
- AAD provided a summary of the Kerguelen Symposium noting that it was very successful with participation from scientists from varying disciplines, policy makers and

fishing industry from both Australia and France. AAD advised that in the next 12 months there should be a publication with all papers presented and noted a desire by both Australian and French participants to hold the Symposium more often in recognition of the value it has for collaborations;

- Industry advised that the Wentworth group of concerned scientists are putting HIMI through an environmental accounting framework; and
- SARAG agreed that climate change is a watching brief and noted the work of AFMA and CCAMLR in this area.

### Agenda item 3 – Action arising from SouthMAC 35

SouthMAC discussed the action arising from SouthMAC 35.

Item	Action arising from SouthMAC 35	Status
1	<p><b>Tag re-capture</b> - CSIRO MITF stock assessment scientists to discuss the reduction of the number of days released to re-capture for the trawl fishery, as per the work done by Dr Tuck in the past (Agenda Item 6, SouthMAC 34, February 2016).</p> <p>From SouthMAC 34 minutes:</p> <p><i>Members ... noted that there were considerable revisions to the tag recapture history with the exclusion of fish recaptured after less than 180 days of release. Previously the figure was only 10 days and industry members questioned whether the figure should remain at 10 days until 2007 when longlining was introduced. The CSIRO member agreed to discuss this issue with the stock assessment scientists</i></p>	<p>At SouthMAC 35 (May 2017) CSIRO members agreed to provide an update at the next meeting (ie SouthMAC 36). SouthMAC members noted that the time between tag and recapture should be at least one season. The CSIRO observer noted that the time was 10 days but is now 6 months (ie can not recapture a tag in the same season).</p>
2	<p><b>HIMI Patagonian Toothfish TAC</b>- Industry requested that the AFMA process for setting the TAC be reviewed (SouthMAC teleconference November 2016).</p> <p>From SouthMAC November 2016 teleconference:</p> <p><i>Industry members requested that the AFMA process for setting the Patagonian Toothfish TAC be reviewed. Members requested that the TAC be set by the AFMA Commission every two years in line with the CCAMLR stock assessment process. Members agreed that this issue should be discussed at the next SouthMAC meeting in conjunction with the proposal to use break out rules in the HIMI Fishery that had been discussed at SARAG's 3 November 2016 teleconference. It was agreed that the TAC setting paper to the AFMA Commission should highlight industry's concerns with the current process of setting an annual TAC for Patagonian Toothfish. Members noted that if the TAC could not be set for a two year period, one alternative is to conduct a Patagonian toothfish stock assessment annually. Members noted that AAD would not like to revert to an annual stock assessment.</i></p>	<p>AFMA indicated that the HIMI toothfish TAC could be set for two years but stated that the mackerel icefish TAC and bycatch limits would still be set annually in line with CCAMLR and therefore there would be no cost savings. AFMA also indicated it would be very unusual for the HIMI toothfish TAC to be set at a different level to that agreed to by CCAMLR. Industry noted that if the TAC is set annually it undermines the certainty of setting a two year TAC at CCAMLR.</p>

3	<b>Timetable</b> - Members requested a timetable for the HIMIF and CCAMLR New and Exploratory fisheries so that all data needs are met (SouthMAC 35, May 2017)	The AFMA member noted that this was a request from SouthMAC, following a similar timetable being provided for the MITF. Members agreed that there is other work that is a higher priority and that the table does not need to be developed.
4	<b>MITF seabirds</b> - Industry expressed concern at the one seabird limit and requested a review of the five species listed in the SFR conditions. AFMA noted that the bird limit was a SFR condition, and not part of the Management Plan, and should be handled through the Threat Abatement Plan (TAP) process. Industry asked if an update could be provided at the next meeting on the bird population status. (Agenda Item 7, SouthMAC 35, May 2017)	Members noted that this item would be discussed under action arising 5.
5	<b>MITF seabirds</b> - AFMA and AAD to discuss conservation status of the birds with one bird limit at MITF. (From Agenda Item 7, SouthMAC 35, May 2017)	Members noted the AAD paper titled 'Seabird species of concern in the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery. Members noted the paper stated that four out of five birds are listed under the Environment protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. The fifth bird (grey petrel) is listed elsewhere. It was agreed that AAD would consult on how the birds were originally listed (under what criteria) to enable a discussion on decision rules for possible removal from the list if warranted ( <b>Action arising 1</b> ).
6	<b>Gear loss/recovery</b> - AFMA to present gear loss and recovery in a table with overall net result reported	This action was completed with gear loss presented under agenda item 13. SouthMAC agreed that the new presentation is the preferred format for regular gear loss/recovery agenda item.
7	<b>ERA/ERM</b> - AFMA to provide CSIRO with gear loss and recovery figures for the assessed years for both trawl and longline.	SouthMAC noted that this action was completed with all requested data provided.

## **Agenda item 4 – Correspondence**

SouthMAC noted that the following correspondence had been received between meetings:

- An email dated 17 May 2017 from Sarah Kirkcaldie attaching an advertisement for the position of Chief Executive Officer, Seafood Industry Australia;
- An email dated 7 June 2017 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking comments on the draft minutes from SouthMAC 35 held on 18 May 2017;
- An email dated July 2017 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking comments on AFMA's draft Strategic Research Plan 2017-22;
- An email dated 24 October 2017 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking members preferred date for the SouthMAC teleconference;
- An email dated 26 October 2017 from Sarah Kirkcaldie confirming the date of the November SouthMAC teleconference; and
- An email dated 22 November 2017 from Sarah Kirkcaldie seeking comments on the draft minutes from the November SouthMAC teleconference.

## **Agenda Item 5– Report on fishing operations**

Mr Arangio provided SouthMAC with a verbal update on fishing operations in the HIMIF.

Mr Arangio noted that in the 2016/17 HIMIF season Austral Fisheries Pty Ltd had 3 vessels fishing to the end of the season and caught all of their quota plus some of Australian Longline Pty Ltd's (ALPL) quota. Mr Arangio noted that Austral fisheries Pty Ltd vessels had attempted to recover lost gear from 1 December 2017 but that it was not as successful as previous attempts. Members noted that two Austral Fisheries vessels spent 2-3 days each looking for lost gear. Mr Arangio stated that all vessels are currently tied up in Mauritius with the Atlas Cove expected to leave port in about 10 days to do the random stratified trawl survey (RSTS). The Isla Eden and Corinthian Bay are expected to depart about a week after the Atlas Cove and they will be attempting to recover some lost gear before the longline season starts on 1 April 2018.

## **Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery**

### **Agenda item 6 – Fishery Assessment Plan 2018 – 2020**

Members noted that the Fisheries Assessment Plan (FAP) is a requirement of the Macquarie Island Toothfish Management Plan 2006 and it is revised every two years. The AFMA member noted that a few issues arose during the last fishing year and proposals to resolve these issues have been incorporated into the draft MITF FAP 2018-2020. SouthMAC noted that the MITF FAP was discussed at SARAG and it was agreed that a continuation of a tagging rate of two tags per tonne of toothfish caught is appropriate for the MITF 2018/19 and 2019/20 fishing seasons. SARAG also agreed that a 60% tag overlap was acceptable however, 80% was better. Members further noted that industry has a responsibility to work with observers to achieve tag overlap.

SouthMAC noted that AFMA observers attended SARAG and it was beneficial to have them there.

Industry left the room and the remaining members noted that AFMA will be incorporating all changes discussed and will re-circulate the FAP to industry before seeking signatures (**Action arising 2**).

## **Agenda item 7 – Extension of Macquarie island season**

SouthMAC noted that AFMA has received a request from Industry to extend the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery season by one week at the end of the season (until 7 September 2018).

The AFMA member explained that because of trade reasons, ALPL expects to now unload product from the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery (MITF) into Tasmania each year noting that previously the unloads have typically occurred in New Zealand. Industry typically conducts two trips to the MITF each season. Steaming time from the fishery to Tasmania is approximately two days longer than to New Zealand, resulting in an extra four days mid-season travelling from and to Macquarie Island. In addition, facilities in Tasmania mean that unload will take an extra day. SouthMAC noted that this collectively results in a loss of 5 fishing days mid-longline season.

SouthMAC noted that the longline season is specified in the SFR conditions for the Fishery and the current longline season extends from 15 April to 31 August each year, when seabird activity in the area is considered to be lowest. Other seabird mitigation measures in place include:

- a requirement to use paired streamer lines;
- a requirement to use integrated weighted line;
- setting at night only; and
- a collective one seabird limit for five seabird species of concern.

SARAG considered Industry's request at its meeting on 28 February 2018. SARAG supported an ongoing one week extension to the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery longline season with a summary of seabird observations and interactions produced at the end of the 2018/19 season. SouthMAC noted that the review mechanism is important and will assist in determining if the mitigation measures are effective, if the proposed extended period is posing increased risk of seabird interactions and maximise operational flexibility whilst protecting seabirds.

SouthMAC supported SARAG recommendation to extend the longline season with the summary of seabird observations and interactions to be produced. Members agreed that the decision to extend the longline season may be reviewed depending on results. If supported by the AFMA Commission, the new season dates for the Fishery will be 15 April to 7 September each year.

## **Agenda item 8 – Stock assessment 2018-19**

SouthMAC noted that the AFMA Research Committee (ARC) call for proposals closed on 31 January 2018. One proposal was received relating to the MITF stock assessment for 2018-19. The CSIRO observer noted that the proposal was to replace the existing MITF stock assessment model. Members noted that the current SS (stock synthesis) assessment was no longer meeting the requirements of the fishery so options are to use the same model as CCAMLR (CASAL 2) or design something custom built. Dr Hillary noted that the advantage of a new model is that there is an opportunity to develop a model that is more fit for purpose but the disadvantage may be that it does not produce same results as the previous model. Members noted that the MITF has 2 regions (could have 3) so it needs a well-designed model so CSIRO recommended a specific new model would be the best options which would be 85-90% the same as the current assessment (same inputs and run harvest control rule) but with a



change to how the tag data gets used. SouthMAC noted that CSIRO would run the new and old stock assessments concurrently and provide a bridging analysis.

The AFMA member noted that the process for research funding has changed and there is no longer an expression of interest phase. Members noted that the proposal will be considered by ARC on 6 March 2018.

Dr Hillary left the room and the remaining members agreed that a new stock assessment model for the MITF was required and fully supported the proposal.

## Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery

### Agenda item 9 – Ecological Risk Assessment

SouthMAC noted that CSIRO, with input from AFMA, SARAG and SouthMAC, had finalised the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) of the HIMI Fishery for the following three methods:

- demersal longline
- demersal trawl
- midwater trawl

The finalized reports were discussed at SARAG yesterday and members had provided some additional editorial comments which will be sent to CSIRO and final documents can then be produced. The changes included re-wording the section regarding the impact of Patagonian Toothfish in the longline ERA as well as updating the table on when species were last assessed for both rockcod and skates and rays.

SouthMAC agreed that the Chair should write to CSIRO to thank them for all their work in producing the ERA's (**Action arising 3**). The AFMA member stated that it was a credit to the science and management of the Fishery that all species were at level 1 whereas in the previous ERA's some went to level 2.

### Agenda item 10 – Fisheries Management Strategy

SouthMAC noted that AFMA management, in consultation with the relevant RAG and MAC, is required to develop a FMS within five years of completing the ERA for that Fishery.

Members noted that FMS are designed to integrate and replace previously existing and separate fishery specific management strategies (ie harvest strategies, ecological risk management strategies, research strategies and data strategies). The FMS is then used to guide the development of an integrated Annual Fishery Workplan, and AFMA's progress against each FMS (and thus its performance against legislated objectives and requirements including the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) is reported in Annual Fishery Management Strategy Reports for each fishery.

The AAD requested that in producing the FMS, AFMA consider CCAMLR requirements to ensure they are addressed.

The AFMA member agreed to clarify if the FMS will be a public document (**Action arising 4**).

## **Agenda item 11 – Fishery Assessment Plan 2018-2020**

SouthMAC noted that the FAP is a requirement of the Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery Management Plan 2002. Members noted that AFMA produced a draft 2017/18 – 2018/19 HIMI FAP which incorporated suggestions to clarify issues that have arisen over the past fishing year which was discussed at SARAG 57.

At SARAG 57 members agreed to incorporate the following into the new FAP:

- 2 tags per tonne;
- 60% (minimum) tag overlap but with an aim of 80%;
- industry and observers work together to achieve the tagging rate and tag overlap statistic;
- Remove the number of days required to complete the random stratified trawl survey (RSTS) but keep the same station number;
- include estimate of cost to industry to do RSTS and tagging (\$280,000 just for tagging program);
- The RSTS to start no earlier than 20 March and completed by 30 May but noted that there may be need to do another RSTS later in the season; and
- Additional editorial changes.

Industry left the room and the remaining members agreed that AFMA would incorporate the above changes and will re-circulate the FAP to industry before seeking signatures (**Action arising 5**).

## **Agenda item 12 – 25.5% minimum quota holding for trawl access**

SouthMAC noted that in November 2017, the AFMA Commission considered SouthMAC 35's support for continuing the three trawler limit in the HIMI Fishery beyond one year. The AFMA Commission noted the concerns raised by SouthMAC in removing the limit and agreed to extend the three trawler limit for one year, which is until 30 November 2018.

Members noted the AFMA Commission also requested that AFMA Management prepare an evidence based assessment of the three trawler limit against AFMA's legislative objectives, for consideration by the AFMA Commission at its November 2018 meeting. SouthMAC requested that AFMA management prepare this in consultation with SouthMAC, DAWR and any other stakeholders.

SouthMAC noted the Industry member provided the minutes from all previous SARAG and SouthMAC meetings where the 3 trawler limit had been discussed (SARAG 53, 54 and 55, SouthMAC 30, 31, November 2015 teleconference, 34, November 2016 teleconference and 35). SouthMAC noted Industry and AAD's strong support to retain the 3 boat limit as it forms part of a package of trawl management tools for the HIMI fishery that have been presented to CCAMLR from time to time. Industry highlighted that a considerable amount of time has been spent discussing this issue and questioned the efficiency of ongoing discussions. The Industry member also noted that there is no administrative burden to roll over the three trawler limit each year as part of the TAC setting Determination. Industry further noted that rolling over the three trawler limit as part of the TAC Determination meet's AFMA's legislative objectives including economic efficiency and international obligations. The AAD member noted that any consideration of the removal of the three trawler limit should be accompanied by a discussion on alternative mitigation measures including those discussed at previous meetings. One alternative previously discussed is to restrict the Fishery to the current trawl footprint but

members noted that this would require more consultation and was not the desired option for some stakeholders.

### **Agenda item 13 – Update on longline gear loss and mitigation**

SouthMAC members noted the summary of gear loss in the sub-Antarctic fisheries over the last ten years.

Industry noted that in 2013 they had changed gear to thicker line to reduce loss but based on the summary the opposite thing may have happened so will be discussing with skippers and gear providers. Industry agreed that the fish caught on the lost longline should be included in the stock assessment. SouthMAC discussed management approaches to encourage skippers to recover gear and enforcing penalties if industry don't recover quantities of lost gear.

Industry proposed that, in addition to toothfish mortality on lost gear being incorporated into the stock assessment, the estimated catch on a company's net gear loss within a season be deducted from that company's quota holding in the following season. This would provide an incentive to recover gear.

The AAD member stated that it was important that CCAMLR is aware that boats may be active in the HIMI fishery prior to the start of the longline season, and that this activity is due to attempts at gear recovery.

Industry left room and SouthMAC agreed to recommendations to incorporate the lost fish in the stock assessment as well as AFMA exploring the feasibility of deducting the estimate of fishing mortality on the net gear loss per company, at the end of the season, from the following season's quota to encourage industry to recover gear.

In response to a discussion on the possible impacts of ghost fishing and benthic impacts of lost gear, Industry returned to the room and noted that it takes approximately two weeks for lost longlines to be cleared of all bait and catch (by decay, feeding by sealice or other). As such there was unlikely to be anything left on lines and the gear was unlikely to ghost fish. Industry further stated that Integrated Weighted Line has limited movement on the seabed.

## **CCAMLR New and Exploratory Fisheries**

### **Agenda item 14 – Expressions of Interest for 2017/18 season**

SouthMAC noted that AFMA released the AFMA-AAD Guide to CCAMLR New and Exploratory Fisheries on 21 February 2018. Members noted that the guide used to include an expression of interest stage but that had been removed this year to remove administrative burden. AFMA requested that, as well as the requirements of the Guide, industry inform AFMA as soon as possible if they are intending on submitting a proposal. Austral Fisheries Pty Ltd noted that they would not be submitting a proposal to fish in CCAMLR new and exploratory fisheries this year.

Members noted that CCAMLR member country Exploratory Fisheries Notifications are required to be submitted to the CCAMLR Secretariat by 1 June 2018. , AAD, with input from AFMA and

the applicants, will prepare the research components of the applications, prior to lodging a full proposal with the CCAMLR Secretariat.

## **Agenda item 15 – Olympic fisheries in CCAMLR areas 88.1 and 88.2**

SouthMAC noted that during the 2016/17 and 2017/18 fishing seasons, some parts of CCAMLR Exploratory Fisheries in areas 88.1 and 88.2 were closed with either significantly more or significantly less of the total catch limit taken. The AFMA member explained that in 2017/18 the CCAMLR Secretariat used 2016/17 data to predict when a fishery should close but 2016/17 was a good year with little sea ice which was very different to conditions in 2017/18. SouthMAC noted that the CCAMLR Secretariat had circulated a summary of fishery forecasting and closure notices for the exploratory fisheries for subarea 88.1 and SSRUs A and B in Subarea 88.2 outside the Ross Sea region MPA. SouthMAC noted that this issue was likely to receive considerable discussion in the intersessional period and at CCAMLR 2018, specifically catch management in these areas with the increasing number of vessels participating in these Olympic style fisheries.

The AAD member noted that the CCAMLR exploratory fishing notification for Ross Sea region will be different this year with 88.1 and 88.2 a and b to be considered one 'area' and notification for 88.2 c-h to be considered the other area.

## **Finance**

### **Agenda item 16 – 2018/19 budget process**

SouthMAC noted that in March 2018, AFMA is expecting to consult with the Commonwealth Fishers Association (CFA), and the fishing industry more broadly, on the draft 2018-19 budget. SouthMAC will then be provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft budget.

The AFMA member noted that staffing hasn't changed in Antarctic fisheries section so should be similar to the 2017/18 budget.

## **Other**

### **Agenda item 17 – Other business**

#### **17 a – Skate and ray handling guide**

The AFMA member noted that following desktop research, consultation with observers, consideration of WG-FSA 2017 discussions and to provide guidance on best practice handling, AFMA has developed a draft Skate Best Practice Handling Guide. SouthMAC noted that in addition to the Guide, AFMA has also amended statutory fishing right conditions to ensure that the condition of skates and rays are properly assessed. AFMA considers that the condition of skates and rays cannot be properly assessed if the skate/ray is only brought alongside the vessel and is not examined at a closer distance by a crew member. This is supported by WG-FSA's 2017 consideration of the issue. As such AFMA management proposed that the SFR condition be amended to read:

*All skates and rays must be brought on board or alongside the roller to be checked for tags and for their condition to be assessed. Recaptured tagged skates and rays should not be re-*

*released. Unless otherwise specified by scientific observers, all other skates and rays caught alive with a high probability of survival should be released alive, by the boat, by cutting snoods, and when practical removing the hooks.*

SouthMAC noted that SARAG supported the draft Skate Best Practice Handling Guide prepared by AFMA and that SARAG agreed that the SFR conditions should be amended as recommended by AFMA.

SouthMAC noted that AAD had produced a paper for SARAG that examined the life status of skates and rays from observer data against vessels to see if there are any patterns that could support the development of a standard set of procedures for handling skates and rays in the Patagonian Toothfish Fishery at HIMI. The paper was considered at SARAG 57 and members noted that based on observed counts of skates and rays during the line observation period in 2016 and 2017, the fate of skates and rays (alive or dead) varied strongly between vessels and years and no particular pattern was obvious. SARAG also noted that the AFMA observers at SARAG also mentioned that the number of skate deaths did not seem accurate.

Members noted that observer counts are not currently accurate and usually done on a monitor scaling up 40% (observation). Industry suggested retaining 10 skates and collecting data as an indicative proportion.

SouthMAC supported the Skate Best Practice Handling Guide and noted that it will be finalized shortly and sent to Industry (**Action arising 6**). Members also supported the amendment to the SFR conditions.

SouthMAC discussed the issue of returning of elasmobranchs (dead and alive) to the water. Members noted that CCAMLR states that all elasmobranchs can be returned but the HIMI Management Plan states they must be retained, however the new SFR condition will clarify that skates and rays with a high chance of survival should to be returned to the water. SouthMAC noted that all practical measures must be taken to ensure sleeper sharks are released alive.

#### **Agenda item: 17b**

##### **Update on US Marine Mammal Imports**

SouthMAC noted that the United States has established import provisions that require harvesting nations to meet US standards for fisheries management with regard to interactions with marine mammals within the next 5 years. As part of this, the US sought information on each export fishery's recorded interactions with marine mammals and management measures to mitigate marine mammal interactions.

SouthMAC noted that they had previously been briefed on the expected process and timelines for Australia to submit relevant information to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Department of Agriculture is leading Australia's input into this process with AFMA providing fishery specific information on historic numbers of marine mammal interactions, descriptions of the characteristics of each fishery (number of boats, methods, area of operations etc.) and current regulatory measures and physical mitigations in place to protect marine mammals.

Members noted that in April 2017 Australia provided a comprehensive submission to NOAA on each of its fisheries. As well as providing the required information, the submission sought to achieve a blanket exemption for all Australian export fisheries due to Australia being able to demonstrate a comparable level of protection for marine mammals. The outcome of this application for a blanket exemption is not yet known.

SouthMAC noted that AFMA will provide further advice to the SouthMAC once the outcome of this application has been determined. Members expressed concern that if there is a blanket rule and there is an issue in one Australian fishery it could cause problems for the sub-Antarctic fisheries. AFMA agreed to clarify what will happen if there is a blanket rule and the issue is not common to all fisheries (**Action arising 7**).

### **Agenda item: 17c - Indigenous and recreational membership on MACs**

SouthMAC noted that on 29 January 2018, Dr Nick Rayns, AFMA, wrote to the Chair providing an update on AFMA's implementation of the *Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Act 2017* which came into effect in November 2017. Members noted that as part of the implementation AFMA will extend membership of MACs to include recreational and indigenous members where it is considered appropriate.

Members noted that there is no historical or current involvement of either recreational or indigenous fishers in sub-Antarctic waters. As such, members did not see an immediate need to involve these parties in SARAG or SouthMAC. However, members agreed that indigenous and/or recreational fishers should be encouraged to attend SARAG and/or SouthMAC as observers if they expressed an interest to do so. Members did not have any additional comments on the changes to FAP 12 or FMP 1.

### **17d Seabird sub strategy**

SouthMAC noted that AFMA has drafted a Seabird Bycatch Strategy (the seabird strategy) which is the first of a suite of sub-strategies being developed under the overarching AFMA Bycatch Strategy. The AFMA Bycatch Strategy serves as a guide for responding to bycatch issues across Commonwealth Fisheries in order to operationally pursue the objectives of the Government Bycatch Policy and higher legislation.

The AFMA member informed the group that the strategy aims to ensure consistency in the management of interactions between seabirds and Commonwealth fisheries using a risk based approach. This includes improved data collection and monitoring of seabird interactions; applying appropriate mitigation and management measures; streamlining consultative arrangements for seabird bycatch management; improving environmental stewardship by fishers and understanding cumulative impacts of Commonwealth Fisheries.

Members noted that the draft seabird strategy has been distributed for comment internally within AFMA, and externally to other government organisations and environmental non-government organisations. The conservation member requested that AFMA ensure that relevant smaller NGOs have been consulted eg Birds Tasmania.

The AAD member noted that AAD's comments had been provided by their seabird expert which were not reflected in the version presented to SouthMAC. The AAD member requested that AFMA liaise with the seabird expert and also ensure that CCAMLR requirements are taken into account in the Strategy.

Industry stated that the strategy needs to be consistent with all international obligations, the TAP as well as the National Plan of Actions for seabirds.

## **17e Slavery**

Industry noted that about a month ago Monterey Bay Aquarium produced a seafood slavery risk tool that came to conclusion that the Australian Toothfish Fishery was a high risk to slavery. Industry explained that Australia gives effect to the matters addressed by the *Minimum Age Convention, 1973* through other measures. Members noted that industry and the Australian Government have been working with Monterey Bay in the last month and yesterday it was revised and the Fishery has been reconsidered and now is low risk.

## **17f. Wentworth**

Industry informed SouthMAC that in 2008, the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists and other experts in science, economics, statistics and public policy, published the Accounting for Nature model. This model places scientific information about the condition of environmental assets (native vegetation, soil, rivers, and fauna) into an accounting framework. This can help community and policy makers to understand complex scientific information that is needed to underpin policy and evaluate investment decisions, and the success of these investments over time.

SouthMAC noted that the Wentworth Group had a lot of success on land and is now moving into marine environment and had approached Austral Fisheries Pty Ltd to help develop an environmental account for two Australian fisheries: the Patagonian Toothfish Fishery around Heard Island and McDonald Islands, as well as the Northern Prawn Fishery.

SouthMAC noted that the Patagonian Toothfish Fishery account will use the Accounting for Nature model to combine scientific information about the condition of the fishery into a common unit of measure called an environmental condition (Econd). Econds are scored between 0 and 100, where 100 represents the fishery in an undegraded state. Industry noted that the model will show how much work has been done in the Fishery and encouraged members to look at their website.

## **17 g Integrated Marine Observer System (IMOS)**

Mr Exel stated that he attended day one of the annual conference on IMOS. IMOS is a nationally funded program that has been routinely operating a wide range of observing equipment throughout Australia's coastal and open oceans, making all of its data accessible. Mr Exel noted that the collection of data in Australia is phenomenal and explained that there is a marine funding requirement in the next few years regarding effective system for repository of data. Mr Exel explained that SARAG/SouthMAC are not effectively using/plugging in to the data that they have for example, underwater vehicles were discussed on first day. Industry will be speaking to CSIRO to discuss hydrophones and whale sounds.

## **17h. SouthMAC membership**

SouthMAC noted that membership on the MAC expires on 30 June 2018. AFMA is currently completing the appointment of a Chair and once that process is complete there will be an advertisement seeking other members for SouthMAC.

## **Agenda item 18 - Next meeting**

SouthMAC agreed to meet via teleconference on 8 November 2018 at 10:30am to discuss the outcomes of CCAMLR. Members agreed the next face-to-face meeting of SouthMAC would be held in Hobart in early 2019 in conjunction with SARAG,

The Chair closed the meeting at 12:50pm

## Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC) - Meeting 36

Final Agenda

Thursday 1 March 2018

8.30am – 3.00pm

Cove Room - CSIRO Marine Laboratories

Castray Esplanade, Hobart

### Introduction

- |    |  |       |                  |
|----|--|-------|------------------|
| 1. | Preliminaries  |       |                  |
|    | 1.1 Declaration of interests                           | Chair | For Discussion   |
|    | 1.2 Apologies  | AFMA  | For Information  |
|    | 1.3 Adoption of Agenda                                 | Chair | For Decision     |
| 2. | Minutes from SouthMAC 35 and November teleconference   | AFMA  | For Information  |
| 3. | Action Arising   | AFMA  | For Discussion   |
| 4. | Correspondence   | AFMA  | For Discussion   |
| 5. | Update on fishing operations (HIMI, MITF, Exploratory) | All   | For Information* |

### Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery

- |    |                                      |      |                    |
|----|--------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| 6. | Fishery Assessment Plan 2018 – 2020  | AFMA | For Decision       |
| 7. | Extension of Macquarie Island season | AFMA | For Recommendation |
| 8. | Stock assessment 2018-19 proposal    | AFMA | For Comment        |

### Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery

- |     |  |            |                 |
|-----|--|------------|-----------------|
| 9.  | Ecological Risk Assessment                   | AFMA       | For Information |
| 10. | Fisheries Management Strategy                | AFMA       | For Information |
| 11. | Fishery Assessment Plan 2018 – 2020          | AFMA       | For Decision    |
| 12. | 25.5% minimum quota holding for trawl access | AFMA       | For Information |
| 13. | Update on longline gear loss and mitigation  | Indus/AFMA | For Information |

### CCAMLR New and Exploratory Fisheries

- |     |   |      |                  |
|-----|---|------|------------------|
| 14. | Call for proposals for 2018/19 season           | AFMA | For Information* |
| 15. | Olympic fisheries in CCAMLR areas 88.1 and 88.2 | AFMA | For Discussion   |



## Finance

16. 2018/19 budget process AFMA For Information

## Other

17. Other Business

- a. Skate and Ray Handling Guide AFMA For Discussion
- b. Update on US Marine Mammal Imports AFMA For Information
- c. Indigenous and recreational membership on MACs AFMA For Discussion
- d. Draft Seabird Bycatch Strategy AFMA For Discussion
- e. Monterey Bay slavery operations Industry For Information
- f. Wentworth Industry For Information
- g. Integrated Marine Observer System (IMOS) Industry For Information
- h. SouthMAC membership Industry For Information

18. Next Meeting Chair For Discussion

\* Verbal update, no agenda paper provided