

CRUSTACEAN FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CFAC 84 DRAFT MINUTES

8 July 2020

Video Teleconference Meeting 10:30am- 12:30pm



I. Welcome and preliminaries

a) Welcome and apologies

Present

Ian Cartwright	Chair
Hilary Revill	DPIPWE Wild Fisheries Management
Klaas Hartman	IMAS Scientific Representative
Louise Hart	Rock lobster industry representative
Julian Harrington	TSIC representative
Darrell Grey	TRLFA representative
Michael Blake	Processor representative
Craig Crawford	Marine Police representative
Dave Ponsford	Giant crab industry representative
Ian Heathorn	Processor representative
Troy Rainbird	TRLFA representative
John Sansom	CEO TRLFA
Dawn Jordan	Rock Lobster industry representative
Malcolm Budd	DPIPWE compliance & licensing
Jon Bryan	TCT representative

Observers

James Parkinson	CFAC Executive Officer
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Apologies

Amanda Inkson	Rock lobster industry representative
Clive Perryman	TRLFA representative
Rachel McKay	Marine Police representative

The Chair welcomed members to the 84th meeting for the CFAC noting that this was the 1st video conference meeting for the FAC. The main item on the agenda was the preliminary 2019/20 rock lobster stock assessment presentation by IMAS .

b) Declaration of pecuniary interests

No changes to current register were flagged by members.

c) Adoption of agenda

CFAC members accepted the agenda as distributed prior to the meeting.

d) Confirmation of minutes for meeting 83

The FAC ratified the final draft of the minutes of meeting 83 (5 November 2019) as a true and accurate record of the meeting, noting that these draft minutes had been finalised in December under the new process adopted by CFAC. .

e) Action arising from previous meeting

Action Item: Department to develop guidelines for all FAC's on the management plan amendment process including how submissions are treated. – The DPIPWE member reported that this item had not been progressed to date.

2. Brief Updates

Written brief updates from CFAC members were circulated in advance of the meeting.

General Business

3. IMAS Preliminary analysis 2019/20 rock lobster stock assessment data and modelling

IMAS (Klaas Hartmann) presented a preliminary stock assessment analysis for the 2019/20 quota year, including model projections. A summary document had been circulated to FAC members before the meeting.

Key Points

- The southern rock lobster commercial TAC has been 1050.7t for the last six years preceded by three years at 1103.24t. Due to Covid-19, 86.33t of uncaught quota was rolled forward to be caught in the 2020/21 season.
- Standardised catch per unit effort (CPUE) dropped slightly in 2019/20 following five years of rising CPUE. The difference between nominal and standardised CPUE is more pronounced in this season than previously due to the introduction of the increased size limit and reduction in summer fishing due to Covid-19.
- After taking into account the impact of the size limit increase, the standardised CPUE in area 5 (NW) increased. All other areas saw consistent CPUE reductions. Of particular concern is area 4 (NE) which has now had notable CPUE decreases in the last two years.
- The biggest change in catch occurred in Area 8 (SW) which saw a reduction in-line with the magnitude of the uncaught quota roll-over.
- Competition for leased quota by fishers has become increasingly intense leading to a steady ongoing reduction in vessel numbers (with around 168 vessels having recorded landing rock lobster in 2019/20) and consequently employment. Covid-19 may have also affected this late in the 2019/20 season.
- The puerulus settlement index declined in 2019, following several good years. Partial data from the 2020 season signals an average year.
- There is a consistent increasing trend in average number of pots used per a vessel, currently approaching 48, assisted by increasing the maximum number of pots that

can be used in the western part of the fishery and the removal of the length schedule from the rules.

Industry members suggested that given the market uncertainty due to COVID 19 in January / February, fishers chose not to make longer trips to the south west coast, preferring to catch smaller loads of lobster closer to their home ports.

An industry member also commented that in Area 4 (NE) fishers were noticing the declining catch rates and there was a lot of pressure on inshore areas. He also noted that in Area 3 (upper east) this winter, he had had his best ever winter trip.

Industry members also commented on how good fishing had been this year in west / north west regions.

One member thought vessel numbers will increase during the current season, due to the lease price of quota being low.

The IMAS member noted that the decrease in the catch rate time series for Area 5 (NW) needed to be treated with care due to the regional size limit change implemented in Nov 2019 and the impact of COVID 19 on fisher behaviour including the spatial distribution of catch, at the end of 2019/20.

Concerns about the impact of COVID on the CPUE and catch analysis was raised, however, the IMAS member noted that only 1 month of the 2019/20 assessment period had actually been impacted by COVID.

Forward stock assessment model projections

Model projections were presented to evaluate harvest strategy performance measures (limit and target reference points) which are used to assess whether the current TACC is on track to meet the defined egg production and biomass objectives.

The IMAS representative emphasised that the model projections were based on preliminary data and that the final figures were likely to vary from those presented.

Egg production

- Egg production under the current TACC keep is predicted to remain above the limit reference point. A small dip in egg production is expected next year, but overall egg production should remain well above the limit reference point.

Statewide Biomass

- Currently at a level of 23% of virgin biomass statewide, which is above limit reference point of 20% and trending up to meet the interim target reference point of 25%.
- However, the current TACC is not on track to meet the interim stock rebuild target of 25% biomass by 2026 with greater than 70% probability, falling short with only a 57% probability of reaching the target.
- Preliminary model outputs suggest that a small TACC reduction would be required (in the order of 5-6 kilos per unit) to meet the reference point.
- It was noted that translocation has been factored into the modelling and it would be counterproductive to reduce translocation and should this occur, there would likely be downward pressure on future TACCs.

The FAC had a brief discussion around the preliminary model outputs and the possible need for a TACC reduction. The FAC suggested that it would be useful if IMAS could model the impact of a different undercatch scenarios (from 2020/21) on future biomass trajectories and model the impact of delaying a TACC decrease for 1 year.

The TCT member suggested a TAC reduction was needed as the target reference point was not being met, and given this was a 'low bar target' it would be a mistake to not take action now.

It was noted there is one year remaining of the current TRLFA funded translocation program.

Action item: IMAS to model i) a range of undercatch scenarios (from 2020/21) on future biomass trajectories and ii) the impact on achieving the target reference point of delaying a TACC decrease for 1 year.

Action item: All members to think about how COVID induced changes in fisher behaviour might be captured by IMAS to assist stock assessment analysis for the current quota year.

The recreational survey

Klaas Hartman presented an overview of the results from the IMAS 2019/20 (Nov-April) recreational rock lobster fishery survey. It was noted that the recreational catch had declined from the previous year due to the impact of COVID restrictions along with poor weather from December through to April. Statewide catch was estimated to be ~54 tonnes and for the east coast stock rebuilding zone ~ 33 tonnes, 1.4t below their notional ECSRZ allocation.

It was noted by industry members that that recreational over catch from 2018/19 had led to a reduction in commercial allocation in the ECSRZ for the 2020/21 season.

The IMAS member was asked if recreational catch would have over run its allocation if it was not for COVID restrictions. The IMAS member agreed that an overrun would have occurred, pointing out in all years where the recreational season was not interrupted due to biotoxins or COVID as in this year, the recreational catch had exceeded its allocation, which provided a good indication of what recreational catch might be in "normal" season.

New IMAS stock assessment web site

Karlie McDonald from IMAS presented an overview of the new online interactive rock lobster stock assessment web page. Karlie noted that the online version will contain the usual stock assessment information and will be updated as new data available. She demonstrated various aspects of the web page, highlighting that the data directly behind the figures can also be downloaded. It is expected that the website will be ready to go live later this year. IMAS will be seeking DPIPWE and CFAC input, over the next 6-8 weeks. The assessment will be hosted on a standalone web page.

The FAC congratulated IMAS on the work undertaken to date and noted that the new website would be extremely useful for industry, government and the Tasmanian community.

4 COVID 19 impacts and issues (including issue of a future rollover of uncaught quota)

DMR Ian Dutton joined the FAC for this item and provided the meeting with an overview of activities involving wider government and industry. This included updates from the:

- Seafood Industry Recovery Group, noting that some FAC members were involved in this process;
- Premiers Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Committee (PESRAC)

- The trade recovery group under Jeremy Rocliff, which has been setup to assist trade recovery.

Ian emphasised the global situation was evolving and not for the better and that the Victorian COVID situation was a challenge.

He noted that all but 16 of the 680 eligible fishing licence refunds have been processed.

The TSIC member informed the FAC that Federal Government freight assistance support package had been extended until December.

An industry member thanked the Department, TSIC and TRLFA for their role in developing the assistance that industry had received to date.

Uncaught quota / future roll over

The FAC was informed that the recent TRLFA ballot results demonstrated that the majority of TRLFA members did not support a future roll over of uncaught quota from 2020/21 into the following year. The DMR indicated that the Department has not formed its final position on this issue.

The Chair asked industry members (not on TRLFA Board) for their views.

Most industry members supported the TRLFA position, i.e. not allowing the carryover of uncaught quota from this season into next year. Two industry members did not support the TRLFA position. These members expressed concerns around the limited air freight capacity, potential for a low beach price, and flow on impacts on the reputation of the Tasmanian brand for quality in the export market.

5 Other Business

Restrictions on setting pots at night

An industry member raised the issue that the rule prohibiting multiple night shots outside a catch cap area does not have a provision to allow fishers to set the first set of a trip at any time. This provision is included in the equivalent rule restricting multiple night shots inside a catch cap area. The DPIPWE member explained that this would appear to be a drafting oversight and confirmed there was no intent to restrict the time of the 1st set of a trip.

It was noted that whilst the Marine Police could exercise discretion in relation to this rule, the rule really required amendment. The DPIPWE member flagged that the next round of legislative amendments are not scheduled until late 2021. She suggested that DPIPWE will work through the issue with the Marine Police to try and find an interim solution.

Action item: DPIPWE to work with the Marine Police to try and find an interim solution to the issue of the current restriction on the time of the first set of a trip.

Concern about stock assessment data being widely available online.

An industry member expressed concern about markets accessing online stock assessment information or other groups using the information to work against the industry.

IMAS member suggested it was willing to take the comments on board and consider any suggestions as to how the stock assessment information should be made available, suggesting as it stands the assessment takes place 12 months after the end of the quota year.

The DPIPWE member suggested that the fishery was a public resource, transparency was necessary and that the IMAS assessment was already available and published on the web.

It was noted that the availability of stock assessment information was an important issue that should not be ignored. Industry needed to articulate their views and make it clear why the data should not be published.

Concern about processor responsibility in relation to regional size limits

A processor member was concerned about a processor's responsibility in relation to regional size limits as processors do not have definitive information as to exactly where a vessel's catch has been taken from. As the DPIPWE compliance member had left the meeting – this issue was taken as a “question on notice”.

Action item: DPIPWE Compliance member to respond out of session on this issue.

6 Future Meeting Dates

If issues arise in short term another video conference can be scheduled.

DPIPWE are considering a joint RecFAC / CFAC face to face meeting in a similar format to last year, possibly in September. CFAC members expressed their support for a joint meeting.

Table 1- CFAC Pecuniary Interests Register 8 July 2020.

title	name	surname	position	Declaration
Mr	Ian	Cartwright	independent chairman	Chairman of TasFRAB, AFMA Board member, Thalassa Consulting Company
Mr	Julian	Harrington	TSIC representative	CEO Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council,
Mr	Jon	Bryan	Community and Conservation Representative	No pecuniary interests. Environmental and conservation interests, employed by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust and also a member on all Tasmanian Fishery Advisory Committees. TARFish Board member and member of two dive clubs.
Dr	Klaas	Hartmann	IMAS representative	No pecuniary interests. Employed by the IMAS.
Mrs	Hilary	Revill	DPIWE Fisheries Manager	No pecuniary interests. Employed by the DPIPWE.
Mr	Malcolm	Budd	DPIPWE licensing and quota audit representative	No pecuniary interests. Employed by the DPIPWE.
Mr	Clive	Perryman	TRLFA representative	Licence holder- rock lobster, president of the TRLFA
Mr	Troy	Rainbird	TRLFA representative	Board member of the TRLFA, owner operator of a rock lobster fishing vessel.
Mr	Darrell	Grey	TRLFA representative	Has interests in Tasmanian rock lobster entitlements, rock lobster quota units and scale fish licence. As a barrister and solicitor represents fishermen from time to time.
Mr	John	Sansom	TRLFA Executive Officer	Holder of a rock lobster entitlement, executive officer of TRLFA.
Mrs	Amanda	Inkson	Rock lobster industry representative	Holder of southern rock lobster entitlement and units, holder of giant crab entitlement and units, holder of banded morwong entitlement, holder of scalefish B.
Mrs	Louise	Hart	Rock lobster industry representative	Holds in partnership two rock lobster entitlements, rock lobster quota units and a rock lobster fishing vessel.
Mrs	Dawn	Jordan	Rock lobster industry representative	Holds Tasmanian: rock lobster licences and quota, giant crab licences and quota, scalefish licences. Family members have interests in Tasmanian abalone quota, commercial dive fishery, a charter vessel.
Mr	David	Ponsford	Giant crab industry representative	Supervisor on a Tasmanian rock lobster and giant crab entitlements.
Mr	Michael	Blake	Processor representative	Tasmanian Manager, South Australian Lobster Company (SALCO), natural nominated person on a RL processors licence, holder of a recreational rock lobster licence. SALCO holds a rock lobster entitlement.
Mr	Ian	Heathorn	Processor representative	Holder of processor, rock lobster and scalefish entitlements

