

CRUSTACEAN FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CFAC 85 MINUTES

28-29 October 2020

Royal Tasmanian Botanical Garden- Banksia Room



I. Welcome and preliminaries

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
Rachel McKay	Marine Police representative
Dave Ponsford	Giant crab industry representative
Clive Perryman	TRLFA representative
Ian Heathorn	Processor representative
Troy Rainbird	TRLFA representative
John Sansom	CEO TRLFA
Dawn Jordan	Rock Lobster industry representative
Jon Bryan	Community/ conservation representative

Observers

James Parkinson	CFAC Executive Officer
Nick Boucher	DPIWE Wild Fisheries Management
Angela Isles	DPIPWE compliance & licensing
Karl Krause	TRLFA President

Apologies

Craig Crawford	Marine Police representative
Malcolm Budd	DPIPWE compliance & licensing
Michael Blake	Processor representative
Amanda Inkson	Rock lobster industry representative

The Chair welcomed members to the 85th meeting. The attendance of Karl Krause as the newly elected TRLFA President was acknowledged. The main items on the agenda requiring recommendations were the TACCs for the rock lobster and giant crab fisheries for 2021/22, the management of the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone (ECSRZ) including the east coast catch cap and the north east catch caps for 2021/22.

a) Declaration of pecuniary interests

The Chair drew CFAC members' attention to the register of pecuniary interests, noting that members should add or remove interests to reflect their current situation. Karl Krause will provide his interests to the CFAC EO. Two small updates were provided and are to be reflected in an updated register prior to the next meeting.

b) Adoption of agenda

Two 'other business' items were added to the agenda)

- Review of 60 pot area boundaries (Area 5)
- *Centrostephanus* update

c) Confirmation of minutes for meeting 84

The FAC accepted the minutes of CFAC 84 (a Zoom meeting held in July 2020) as a true and accurate record of the meeting with one change to page four suggested, being to clarify that there is one year of TRLFA funding available for translocation.

IMAS provided clarification that the probability of meeting the Statewide target reference point based on preliminary data presented at meeting 84 was correct in the Minutes (57%).

d) Action arising from previous meeting

Meeting 83 Item 1: *Department to develop guidelines for all FAC's on the management plan amendment process including how submissions are treated*

The guidelines are under development by the Wild Fisheries Management Group.

Meeting 84 Item 1: *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*

Completed: Considered under item on the TACC

Meeting 84 Item 2: *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*

Scheduled to be discussed during other business, but time did not allow for this to occur. Deferred to next meeting.

Meeting 84 Item 3: *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*

Partially completed. DPIPWE member provided an update noting that an exemption order has been drafted to allow for setting pots at night at the start of a fishing trip.

Meeting 84 Item 4: *DPIPWE compliance to provide advice regarding processor's responsibility in relation to regional size limit*

No legislative requirement for processors to separate fish. Separating rock lobster from landings is voluntary and part of the traceability/risk assessment, which is up to processors to make the decision on. Noted that a processor is unable to see from the docket if rock lobster have come from the 120mm size limit zone.

The DPIPWE management member suggested that the processors association sit down with DPIPWE compliance member to discuss the issue, noting that to ensure complete separation of landings at processors would involve substantial cost and possibly new infrastructure at processor premises. Currently, it appears that processors are at risk of being prosecuted for a situation they have no control over.

Action Item: Processor Representatives to discuss with Manager Compliance to clarify issue and report back to next FAC.

Feedback on the joint CFAC / RecFAC Forum 15 September

Members of CFAC indicated that they felt that the joint CFAC/RecFAC meeting was worthwhile, with generally positive actions, good quality debate and people putting forward rational views. In general, members were encouraged by the discussion.

However, industry members noted that there will be no easy solutions to resource sharing and it will be necessary for the recreational sector to be effectively constrained and for the minister to make a clear decision on the issue. There was some concern that politics will drive the decision.

2. Brief Updates

a) Research

IMAS presented a research update noting that a link to the new stock assessment website will be provided to FAC members to test, before official public access to the website. The data presented on the website will include the 19/20 season. There is potential to include more real time information following the introduction of electronic logbooks, but this will need careful consideration regarding privacy and the frequency of updates. The FAC, IMAS and others will discuss issues associated with real time data updates.

Action:

CFAC members to provide feedback to IMAS on the format of the website.

DPIPWE, IMAS, TRLFA and Processor Reps to discuss the issues around the future inclusion of real time data. Report back to CFAC

Projects underway at IMAS include a study on larval dispersal for rock lobster and *Centrostephanus*.

A new stock assessment model for rock lobster has been developed by Andre Punt, the Australian Lobster rock model, this model is currently being used in the WA fishery. The new model encompasses all the features that would be of use to Tasmania and, fortuitously, other lobster fisheries have been invited by WA to use the model. This will enable the research community to share information about, and develop improvements to the model. Victoria has undertaken to run the new model in parallel with their existing stock assessment model.

b) TRLFA

CFAC congratulated John Samson and Marg Atkins on being appointed life members of the TRLFA, paying tribute the length of time, hard work and dedication that both have put into the industry.

The TRLFA CEO presented the TRLFA update, points raised included:

- Details of the newly elected board and President of the TRLFA.

- Thanked the Government for the various forms of COVID-19 relief, and in particular the IFAM flights, which have been essential to accessing markets.
- Nearly half TACC has been caught. It is believed that while the fleet has the capacity to catch the full TACC the constraint will be with freight capacity to international markets.
- The TRLFA have resolved to continue investigating the development of a deed.
- Industry is smarting over decision to reduce the east coast cap last season to make up for recreational over catch; in effect the recreational sector has been rewarded for transgressing on their catch share, while the commercial sector has been penalised for remaining within their share
- The proposed TACC reduction of 1% is not supported by members, given likely under catch.
- Noted that this meeting will be Clive Perryman's last meeting as President of the TRLFA, with Karl Krause taking over the role.

c) Processors

The processor member reported highest beach price c. \$110.00 during Golden Week (first week of October) where a record price of c. \$120 for a small quantity.

The FAC was informed that buyers in China are required to pay 17% VAT import tax in advance of taking possession of the imported goods, and on receipt of the VAT payment are granted import certificates. There is now a considerable delay in obtaining these certificates, the matter remains one of concern.

Unlike in the past, large rock lobsters are in demand. It was pointed out having the NW open in September was important to take advantage of the demand for bigger fish during this time and be able to supply the market with southern rock lobster from Australia 12 months of the year and thereby compete more effectively with NZ. It was noted catches in September were down this year due to poor weather.

d) Compliance Reports

The DPIPWE compliance member and Tasmanian Police member provided the FAC with an update with the following points noted.

Marine Police: A significant investigation was completed recently involving the trafficking of fish with many infringements issued, the seizure (and subsequent release under bond) of a vessel.

Year to date (YTD) offences: 318. Of those, 73 related to commercial fishing.

DPIPWE member noted an increase in the number of rock lobster fishers taking fish without a personal fishing licence. It was suggested that an article in TRLFA and TSIC newsletters may assist with this issue.

e) Management

The DPIPWE management member provided the following updates to the FAC:

- Port meetings are now finished. Attendance was up and the best for some time with good representation of active fishers and processors. Lots of questions around the stock assessment and 2 research pot program.
- The rock lobster biotoxin monitoring program has provided clear results other than one minor elevated level in one sample from the Great Oyster Bay area. DPIPWE will not need to sample lobsters before the season openings.
- The 2 research pot program data was a key topic for discussion at all the port meetings, and there were questions around numbers of fishers contributing data in each stock assessment area. Queries were raised concerning the effects of variation in the design and materials of sample pots and the impact this may have on catches of undersized lobsters. The FAC briefly discussed the use of pots and the use of mesh liners. IMAS stressed the importance of the sub-adult data that the research pot programme produced and informed the FAC that it will be organising a review of the sampling pot program to consider issues raised by industry.

ACTION: IMAS to review research pot methodology in consultation with DPIPWE and TRLFA with a view to improving/ enhancing the program included increasing participation. IMAS to report back to FAC.

f) **Community and Conservation**

The community and conservation member noted that COVID had significant impacts on the community. The FAC was informed that the community and conservation member would no longer be supported by Tas Conservation Trust for his work on FAC and he is seeking alternative sources of funding support.

General Business

3 Rock Lobster Stock Assessment

Current year fishing update

The DPIPWE management member presented catch updates to the FAC noting that the catch to date was about 100 tonnes behind this time last year. 165 boats had recorded catch, reflecting the ongoing decline in vessel numbers.

The east coast catch cap will reopen for 6 days of fishing to catch the remaining 14t and it was likely that the NE catch cap will be reached by Christmas.

The TRLFA CEO thought that a catch of 200t a month was possible between now and end of the quota year and thought there is a good chance that the full TACC could be taken from a catching capacity perspective.

Stock Assessment Recap 2019/20 Quota Year

The IMAS member presented the finalised rock lobster stock assessment for the 2019/20 assessment year, noting data from this year does not contribute to the assessment.

Key Points

CPUE: Nominal and standardised CPUE has dropped marginally following two strong years of increase since 2017 this was not unexpected given the declines in undersize abundance.

Vessel Landing: 173 vessels landed catch in 2019/20 assessment year. It is expected number of vessels will continue to decline, due to vessels using more pots and competition for quota.

Statewide Egg Production and Biomass

Egg production and virgin biomass limit reference points are being met with 100% probability.

Virgin Biomass target reference point: Stock assessment modelling indicates that the TRP will only be achieved with a 67% probability with the current TACC (a probability of 70% is required). To achieve the required 70% probability a minimal 1kg/unit TACC reduction would be needed. Given the impacts of COVID-19 this correction may be addressed through an under-catch in the 2020/21 season.

The FAC noted that the biomass target was an interim target and the aim was to ultimately rebuild beyond 25% of virgin biomass, to create a buffer against reduced recruitment. The Community and Conservation member suggested that a target of 45-50% of virgin biomass was more appropriate and that 25% was an arbitrary 'low bar'.

Puerulus settlement: There were low settlement years in early 2000's, however, recent years have seen some high settlements. The FAC noted that puerulus data is not used in the assessment as there seems to be limited correlation with recruitment for the most part, other than exceptionally low settlements seem to denote future poor recruitment. The FAC was generally supportive of continuing puerulus monitoring.

Commercial catch east: In general, catch rates were down following a period of rapid increases. Area 4 dropped again following a decline in 2018/19.

Commercial catch west: Catch in western areas was down particularly Area 8 which was heavily influenced by COVID impacts in Jan/ Feb. Catch from Area 5 has increased by 20 t for the 2nd successive year where the aim was to maintain it at 200t. More data on the impact of the size limit increase will be required to assess the impact of the increased catch.

Pre-recruit index (PRI) - lobsters less than 100mm

The PRI is declining across most areas in the east and currently at record low levels, with the exception of area 4 which has increased.

In the west, the PRI in most areas has also declined. The rate of decline is similar inside and outside translocation take areas. IMAS noted that this suggests that translocation is not having a significant impact on status of stocks in those areas relative to the impact on the overall decline that is occurring. The PRI in Area 5 has increased slightly.

Action IMAS look at impact of translocation on recruitment in the take areas and quantify impact on catch rates, looking at relative difference.

The TRLFA provided an overview of translocation so far. Those fishers catching translocated fish have indicated that catch rates are very good at around 2000 fish per shot.

Noted TRLFA will be making a decision mid 2021 regarding the industry commitment to future translocation from 2022. IMAS analysis will help inform industry decision making.

Careful monitoring of Area 5 over the next two years will be required to assess if the size limit change has had the desired impact on biomass and egg production. The Community and Conservation member stressed that Area 5 is an important area given its contribution to egg production and larval dispersal from the area to other parts of the fishery.

TACC Recommendation for 2020/21 quota year

The FAC agreed that the Departments' preliminary view in the background paper was very useful in focusing discussion. This position included the following statement:

Given the very small adjustment to the TACC required and the high level of uncertainty and external factors that will influence landings for the remainder of the quota year, the Department is considering the merits of maintaining the current TACC with a "watching brief" on the actual level of undercatch at the end of February 2021 and the harvest strategy evaluation in the next stock assessment in 12 months time. If the Statewide biomass target is not being met, the Department would anticipate recommending a reduction in the TACC.

The Community and Conservation provided the following statement:

In general, it would be better for TAC to be set so that biomass trended up most years and not just years of exceptional recruitment.

Target biomass levels are arbitrary and too low and should be set to protect ecological processes and maximize fishery productivity and economic return to the community. A target of 25% by 2026 is too low. A better target would result in MSY or MEY and would likely be between 40% and 70% of unfished biomass, and would have to be justified by a scientific assessment. Current biomass levels of around 20% or less are unacceptable and would be of great concern to managers of most fisheries. A final biomass target would be more useful more justifiable than the "interim targets" that are currently being used.

A critical problem for the rock lobster fishery and Tasmania's marine environment is the ongoing expansion of *Centrostephanus urchin* barrens. Overfishing of rock lobster and the almost total removal of large (carapace length >140 mm) rock lobster that can limit the expansion of urchin barrens is a direct cause of this problem along Tasmania's east coast. Without habitat there is no fishery.

Current management does not adequately address east coast problems or allow a quick enough recovery of stocks to reasonable levels (not the arbitrary interim targets) and in particular do not address the habitat loss due to expanding urchin barrens.

An effective solution to these problems would be to close down the east coast commercial rock lobster fisheries in the catch cap areas until an evidence based strategy could be developed to deal with expanding *Centrostephanus urchin* barrens and other fishery problems. At the same time the recreational catch should also be constrained and not allowed to expand significantly.

If commercial catch is removed from the east coast, then the state-wide TAC should be reduced by a corresponding amount to maintain stock rebuilding.

Useful performance measures for any strategy that aims to limit urchin barren expansion and the destruction of reefs that support rock lobster fisheries are:

1. Density of large (carapace length >140 mm) rock lobster that can limit the expansion of urchin barrens.
2. Area coverage of urchin barrens.

There are so many problems associated with East Coast rock lobster fisheries that a strategy needs to be developed urgently at a higher level than the FAC.

The TRLFA considered that if there is a closure on the east coast then industry would need to be compensated for the loss of 100t of quota. If an east coast closure is to mitigate a threat to the ecosystem then the recreational fishery would need to be closed too.

There was no FAC support for a closure of the commercial fishery on the east coast.

With the exception of the Community and Conservation member, the FAC supported the DPIPWV proposal noting that there would be a need to consider a TAC reduction 12 months' time if stock rebuilding was not back on track.

CFAC recommendation to the Minister: CFAC recommends that the Rock Lobster TACC for 2021/22 remain unchanged and be set at 1050.7 tonnes, which equates to 100kg/unit, noting that biomass target reference point is not being met.

4 East Coast Management

a) IMAS evaluation of East Coast Harvest Strategy

The IMAS member began by presenting an update on research pot data, highlighting the reduction in undersized biomass, signalled by the under-size data. The PRI in areas 2 and 3 are declining.

Area 1:

Egg production not a concern. Biomass at 20% and expected to grow and reach 25% by 2023. Increase in exploitable biomass expected.

Area 2:

This is the greatest area of concern. Egg production has declined but is expected to increase. Biomass rebuilding is two years behind schedule. There may be a small drop in exploitable biomass before ongoing rebuilding.

Area 3

Egg production above 20% and expected to increase. Biomass target behind by one year.

Generally, the PRI is impacting forward projections along with increased catch from Area 2.

b) Recommendation East Coast Catch Cap

To meet target reference point in Areas 2 and 3, IMAS has indicated that total east coast catch from Areas 1, 2 and 3 combined needs to be constrained to 120t, a reduction from the 2019/20 total catch limit of 169t (49t reduction).

The IMAS advice indicates the need to reduce the catch is due to the following factors:

- Reduced undersize abundance.
- Expansion of recreational effort and catch (driven in part by increasing catch rates).
- Shift of commercial catch over the last two to three years within the catch cap area to Area 2.

The Department outlined the range of management options that had been raised by DPIPW or by industry at port meetings to address the stock issues.

In discussion the following points were raised:

- loss of productive area due to the expansion of urchin barrens was another significant factor impacting rock lobster stock on the east coast.
- The quantum of the reduction is driven by the need to take stronger action due to the proximity of the target year.
- Under the current catch limit of 169t, Area 2 will be two years behind meeting its 20% target and Area 3 one year behind.
- 2019/20 recreational catch was significantly influenced by poor summer weather and COVID-19 restrictions. Without these constraints the catch would have been at least, and possibly higher due increased catch rates and potential participation as reported in the recent FRDC east coast rock lobster project.
- The commercial sector is looking at a 32t catch cap reduction on top of the 15t reduction last year due largely to previous recreational share overruns.

The FAC considered the following management option to address the 49t reduction for 2021, as advised by IMAS. It was noted that a number of the options had long term benefits to the fishery but would not achieve the short term 2023 target.

Option	Implications
32 tonne catch cap reduction	Will not effectively address stock issues, particularly if no additional recreational management,
Increased LMLs	Good potential long term benefits. Could commence in 12 months; applies to both sectors, will not address 2021 issue. Complex; needs IMAS analysis needed.
Translocation	TRLFA can redirect 10,000 fish to Area 2 this year – quantum of impact to be calculated; may be limited. Will partly assist 2021 issue
Extend female closed season	Egg production not at issue. Applies to both sectors and would slow down race to fish in catch cap area,
Extend target year to 2025	Would need to be in combination with some or all of the above.
Close the commercial fishery	Unacceptable to commercial sector. Inequitable with only partial stock benefits subject to recreational management.
Fast track options for stock rebuilding with actions for both sectors	Would reduce crippling uncertainty, for east coast operators in particular.

The FAC considered actions that can be taken in the short term to address the issue for 2020/21, noting the urgent need for a more comprehensive solution. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Most options will not achieve the 20% biomass target in Area 2 by 2023.
- Recreational catch is likely to increase to 50t or more by the end of summer.
- Industry members unanimously rejected any proposal to reduce the commercial catch.
- There are no new management options proposed to constrain recreational catch for the new 2020/21 season.
- Industry members supported an increase in a female size limit to be guided by the science and supported the redirection of 10,000 lobsters from Area 4 to 2 under the TRLFA program.
- To do nothing as was an untenable situation, while extending time frame by two years was an admission of failure.

In general industry were mindful of actions that would significantly impact on fisher livelihoods, and felt a compliant commercial sector was being penalised for an issue created by an inadequately managed recreational sector.

The TCT member stated that the sentiment expressed in the statement made earlier during the discussion of the 2020/21 TAC applied and should be referenced in the minutes (see above).

The FAC developed the following preliminary recommendation, which will be firmed up by 1 December, informed by additional IMAS analysis and further FAC consideration.

Preliminary recommendation:

Immediate action for March 1 2021: translocation, extend female closed season to commence 1st March 2021.

Short term action 12-18 months: Revision of size limits; development of options for EC rebuilding strategy.

5 North East Catch Cap Recommendation

The IMAS member informed the FAC that the NE catch cap area rebuild target is behind by one year and that a 5t reduction in the cap is needed to bring the rebuild target on track. Biomass is currently at 17% with the rebuild trajectory looking flat. There is very little data behind the PRI for the area, with the measurement of around 500-600 animals contributing to the data for the area. The FAC noted commercial catch rates have declined for two years in a row and that the catch cap was overran by 7 tonnes in 2019/20.

The Department presented the management perspective and suggested a 5t reduction for this area was a small contribution to make to bring the strategy back on track. The Department would be prepared to consider size limit changes alongside those for the east coast for the longer term. It was suggested that more data needed to be collected from that area in order to make a well-informed decision.

The FAC discussed the impact of the preferred TRLFA policy option of increasing the size limit vs. the 5t catch reduction, noting that while the former would not be able to

be actioned for next season, but it could have substantial long-term benefits. The IMAS member confirmed that increasing the size limit will increase yield per recruit, but was unsure how this would compare to 5t reduction.

Industry members did not support a cap reduction, the Department reserved its position pending analysis of potential size limit increase.

The Community and Conservation member noted that the target of 20% was arbitrary and too low, and supported reducing the catch cap.

NE fishers will be encouraged to collect more data through the research pot program.

Industry members supported increasing the size limit for the north east.

Preliminary recommendation:

Reconsider the proposed reduction of the North East Catch Cap using IMAS analysis of the projected stock benefits of increasing female size limit of 105mm to 120mm.

6 Giant Crab Stock Status

The IMAS member presented an overview of giant crab (GC) fishery, as sent out to members in the background papers, noting there was not enough data to run the giant crab stock assessment model. While a TAC higher than anticipated catch had been set in the past, to account for past under catch, higher prices have made GC more attractive and the full TAC of 20t has been close to being caught. Most of the catch in recent years has come from the west coast.

Soak time has been increasing, which has been factored into the CPUE analysis. Four days being the cut off for soak time beyond which it is believed the bait loses attraction.

The FAC noted that there are only 2 “full time” giant crab fishers participating in the fishery, taking around 50% of the TAC. Another 5-7 vessels take the remainder. Analysis of raw unstandardised logbook data indicates a trend of increasing catch rates since 2012, however trends in standardised catch rates diverge and show a downward trajectory. IMAS acknowledged the paucity of data available to inform the assessment. Following industry concerns around the factors included in the standardisation process including soak time, raised at a recent giant crab forum, IMAS provided new analysis on catch rates trends using only data from the 2 full time fishers, which showed an increase in catch rates over the last few years.

The FAC also noted that trends in undersize abundance have increased over recent years, and that a new research project to collect length frequency data using camera technology is scheduled to commence early next year. The Giant Crab representative expressed his support for participating in this project.

Industry noted that the size of crabs is markedly differentiated by depth, and that fishers chose their fishing location to select the desired size range of Giant Crab.

Ongoing but unquantified impacts of Commonwealth trawling activity on Giant Crab habitat and the impact of seismic surveys remain significant concerns.

From the analysis of catch rates the IMAS member thought that the nominal catch rate data presented an over optimistic view of the fishery and that the standardised data

presented an overly pessimistic view and the true situation was likely to be somewhere in the middle

The Department member informed the FAC that in light of the new CPUE analysis presented by IMAS, the Department did not believe a 25% reduction in the TAC for 2021/22 was warranted. This view was supported by IMAS and the industry members.

Action Chair to write to letter to AFMA re trawl interactions.

CFAC recommendation to the Minister: The CFAC recommends setting a Giant Crab fishery TAC of 20.7 tonnes or 20kg/unit for the 2020/21 season

7 Update Individual Season Limit (ISL) Project and Rec Fishing Strategy

ISL Project: The DPIPWE Recreational Fisheries Manager provided an overview of the ISL project. The project has commenced without funding due to its high priority. A funding application is with the FRDC for consideration.

Equity within the recreational fishing sector is currently a significant issue, noting high level support for an ISL system around the state according to discussions at recent Recreational Fishing Strategy meetings held over the past month.

The project will look at a range of options on how to monitor an ISL. IMAS is undertaking a national / global literature review, including the Victorian recreational lobster tagging program, noting this program had different objectives.

There was concern that recreational participation will increase as catch rates improve and catching a rock lobster becomes easier. It was noted that the ISL project is in its early stages and all options would be considered.

Recreational Fishing Strategy. The FAC was provided with an update on the recreational fishing strategy. Main issues raised during consultative meetings included: rock lobster catch share, impact of trawlers on flathead, catch share for scallop deckhands, sharing rock lobster pot catch, lack of compliance, better flow of information, more support infrastructure such as fishing platforms and closure of infrastructure, barriers to fishing for women and disabled people, barriers between fresh and sea fishing, recreational only areas around boat ramps, and the removal of recreational netting.

8 Update Fisheries Digital Transition Project (FDTP) including draft amendments to the Act

The DPIPWE FDTP project manager provided a recap of the project and the associated benefits it would bring to industry and Government. It was noted that the rock lobster fishery will have the opportunity to trial a “proof of concept” or test app for digital catch and effort reporting.

DPIPWE will be building a custom app specifically for Tasmanian Fisheries via a third party developer, rather than buying an off the shelf app that has already been developed like DeckHand. This will give the Department better control over the intellectual property, upgrade costs and managing privacy issues.

**Action: FAC members who are interested in participating in trialling app.
Contact Daniel Gledhill (Daniel.Gledhill@dpiuwe.tas.gov.au)**

9 IMAS Social and Economic Assessment

a) Economic Survey results

IMAS scientists (Emily Ogier and Steven Rust) presented an overview of the IMAS social and economic survey. Industry members expressed their thanks for the effort that Steve Rust was putting into 'ground truthing' the economic data by visiting and discussing data with fishers.

Direct fishing costs were around \$30/kg, vessel fixed costs ranged from \$7-23/kg, and were greatest for smaller vessels on the east coast which are taking less catch.

Smaller east coast vessels have higher total costs per kilo caught compared with larger vessels, reflecting the fixed nature of many costs and the impact of the volume of catch on the total costs per kg. It was noted that smaller vessels generally rely more on leasing in quota which also increases the costs.

b) Analysis to help inform policy options.

IMAS presented an overview of their current and proposed socio-economic research projects.

It was noted that it is hard to compare recreational and commercial 'values' since for the most part they are not directly comparable.

IMAS will be providing reports on projects from the end of 2020 onwards, which should provide a useful contribution to inform development of social and economic policy options for the rock lobster fishery.

10 Process to develop the next East Coast Stock Rebuild Plan

The DPIPWE management member outlined a proposal (based on feedback from the joint CFAC / RecFAC Forum) for a collaborative process to develop a new 10 year east coast stock rebuilding strategy.

A joint CFAC/RecFAC working group (WG) was proposed, which would meet monthly from December 2020. Outcomes from the working group would be reported back to each FAC, for consideration prior to the FAC's providing advice / recommendations to the Minister.

Proposed W/G makeup

- CEO TRLFA and TSIC
- CEO TARFISH
- DPIPWE managers
- IMAS researchers
- 1 or 2 volunteers from each FAC who can commit time on a regular basis

CFAC supported the proposed process and establishment of the working group. The FAC suggested that the WG include an east coast fisher and a non-extractive community representative. Karl Krause (TRLFA president) also volunteered to be on the working group.

11 Expiry of Rock Lobster Rules/Management Plan (MP) in Nov 2021 and the process to remake the MP

- DPIPWE management member informed the FAC that the current rock lobster rules/MP expire on 1 November 2021. The statutory process to re make the management plan will take around 12 months and include a two-month public consultation period. The Department highlighted that the remake will essentially be a 'roll over' the old rules for another ten-year period, given time constraints and the fact that key policy / research projects currently underway will not be finalised by the end of 2020. However, she emphasised that the Department is anticipating the new management plan will be amended to implement any policy decisions as and when required over the next 12 – 24 months.

The DPIPWE management member presented a list of potential rule changes to be included:

- Capacity for Minister to determine regional size limits and regional gear limits and boundary lines via a public notice
- New telephone report for vessels transiting NW zone with undersize lobsters
- Telephone report amendment make it easier to change fishing area in pre fishing report
- Exceptional circumstances carryover – broaden definition
- Definition of caught / returning lobsters to sea
- Rec fishers reporting service when unable to meet 48 hr rule
- Double night shot restrictions align Rules 77 A and B
- Remove rules relating to baited pots

Industry members noted that while there was advantage in terms of additional flexibility by taking size limits and gear limits out of the MP, proper consultation processes and sufficient industry lead time for any changes would be critical.

The FAC cautiously supported the principle of flexibility provided there was adequate consultation.

The FAC had a brief discussion around the utility of VMS. It was noted that VMS would mean many rules would be redundant, however a compliance risk assessment will be required.

Action item: TRLFA to provide advice to DPIPWE on any rules they believe urgently require review by 1 December

12 Harvest Strategy Discussion

Nick Boucher (DPIPWE) presented an overview of the process to develop a new harvest strategy for the fishery including:

- Decision rules
- Triggers
- Harvest strategy principles

- Management responses.

It was noted the HS will not be a legislated instrument, however DPIPWE will be looking for Ministerial approval of the HS. The FAC noted that past harvest strategies have concentrated on empirical portion of the harvest strategy and little has been reported or actioned in terms of the social and economic elements.

DPIPWE will be developing the HS in close consultation with FAC's and Peak Bodies.

14 Other Business

Review of 60 pot zone boundaries: DPIPWE reported that this review has not commenced as there is a back log catch and effort data entry for the current quota year. Data from the latest IMAS stock assessment for 2019/20 indicates that catch from Area 5 has increased by 20t for the 2nd successive year.

Centrostephanus update: The Department has been focusing on taking 'no regret' actions, while the Strategy (being prepared by CSIRO) is being drafted. The significant funding commitment through the Abalone Reinvestment Fund (ARF) continues to be used to fund a range of initiatives. These include:

- Harvesting subsidies, noting the risks associated with relying on a single processor (RTS) - harvest is having an appreciable impact on standing stock as outlined in IMAS assessment.
- Processing into fertiliser, which makes use of all sizes and conditions of urchins sold.
- Culls, which are currently taking place in the south to push the urchin expansion front north.

IMAS are undertaking substantial research work including the production of a stock assessment.

The FAC discussed the challenge of maintaining an urchin fishery, alongside the rock lobster and abalone fisheries, both of which would prefer to see urchins heavily depleted, and possibly below the levels that would be sought by what is rapidly becoming an established centrostephanus fishery. The Department noted that if carefully managed, the ecological problem could be solved through an initial period of high mortality through harvesting and other methods, followed by a longer-term sustainable urchin harvest at a lower level. It was agreed that striking this balance would be challenging.

Table 1- CFAC Pecuniary Interests Register 28 October 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, 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, 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

