

RecFAC 72 | MINUTES

Meeting date Friday, 26 June 2020 – Video Conference

Attendees:

Chair:

Max Kitchell

Recreational Fisher Members:

Sunny Jang

Naomi Balon

James Cartwright

Andrew Hart

James Cartwright

Organisation Members:

Sean Tracey

Jane Gallichan

Rod Pearn

IMAS

TARFish

Recreational Fisheries Management (DPIPWE)

Executive Officer Vicki Waters

DPIPWE

Guests/ Presenters:

Jeremy Lyle

Apologies:

India Thompson, Emilie Donovan, Jon Bryan, Ben Cunningham, Eileen Langford, Nepelle Crane

Meeting Open: 3:00 pm

AGENDA TOPICS

Meeting Formalities

- *Update Register of Interests*

No changes were made to the Register of Interests

Update of rock lobster work topics

The Department member provided a brief update on current status and priorities. A policy officer for rock lobster has been appointed and will be based in Launceston. The COVID-19 restrictions have prevented him from joining us from the mainland. It is anticipated he will commence around September.

Major upcoming priorities:

- Review of the current Rock Lobster Management Plan in 2021
- Feasibility study of individual season limits and increased monitoring of rock lobster

Overview of the 2019/20 recreational rock lobster and abalone survey

Other members of the department joined the meeting to listen to IMAS's presentation.

Key points were:

- total statewide catch for the season to date (Nov-April) was 54.3 tonnes

- total catch within the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone (ECSRZ) was 33.6 tonnes which is 1.4 tonnes less than the notional recreational catch cap of 35 tonnes
- this represents the lowest catch in the ECSRZ for the past 19 years
- it also resulted in the lowest catch rate (catch per unit effort) for that period
- 62% of fishers indicated that COVID-19 had impacted negatively their ability to fish during the season
- The 35 tonne recreational notional catch for the ECSRZ would have been exceeded, without the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 restrictions that limited fisher's access to the fishing grounds.

A question on quality of fishing and satisfaction was asked with the aim of developing a performance indicator for recreational fishing. Around 67% of respondents indicated they were satisfied with the quality of fishing. By relating this to the individual's catch data, it suggests recreational fishers are satisfied with around an average catch rate of one lobster per day. With a little more analysis this could form the base of an appropriate social indicator for the recreational rock lobster fishery.

Provide formal advice on rock lobster season dates for 2020/21

The Department proposed that no change be made to the framework used for the 2019/20 season dates. The general open dates have remained the same for many years with the recreational fishery opening on the first Saturday of November and the commercial fishery on 15 November. This year the corresponding open date of the first Saturday of November, or 7 November, does not provide the two- weekend buffer period if the commercial season opens on 15 November.

RecFAC considered and supported TARFish's proposal for a two-weekend buffer between the recreational and commercial sectors. Outside the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone (ECSRZ) TARFish propose recreational sector open Saturday 7 November and the commercial sector be delayed from Sunday 15th to Tuesday 17 November.

The Department representative suggested that it may be difficult to justify delaying the commercial fishery under the current Covid-19 stressed business environment. He acknowledged the two-weekend buffer was highly favoured by the recreational sector, and speculated whether an alternative season opening date to 1 November for all state waters, excluding the ECSRZ could be investigated. Although not an ideal option as, the first is a Sunday it would mean potters could only set the pots on the Saturday afternoon, and there may be a risk to some new licence holders not being authorised to possess pots on the day before. RecFAC discounted this option as it appeared too complex, as it would involve potters setting pots between licence years and may be a risk of having unlicensed fishers on the water (noting recreational sea fishing licences expire on 31 October).

RecFAC supported TARFish's view that the two-weekend buffer should also apply to the ECSRZ for resource sharing purposes. It was noted that the ECSRZ was highly valued by the recreational sector and recreational fishers were concerned that they could be excluded from inshore popular fishing grounds through "pot bombing" [commercial boats can have 50 pots therefore occupying local fishing grounds]. As such RecFAC proposed to delay the opening of the commercial sector to Tuesday 15 December.

The TARFish representative also indicated that TARFish suggests that if commercials have reached 90% of the catch cap in the ECSRZ by the 30 September, the commercial sector should not open to further rock lobster fishing with the ECSRZ. RecFAC did not make a recommendation on this.

The Committee agreed the buffer is important to the recreational sector to reduce the spatial interaction between the recreational and commercial sectors. It was also agreed that this issue needs to be better understood and discussed in future development of strategies and requested data depicting commercial inshore fishing during the commercial season opening dates.

Recommendation I – 2020/21 rock lobster season dates

The RecFAC recommendation for season dates is:

2020 all waters except ECSRZ

Commercial Open season Tuesday 17 Nov

Recreational Open season Saturday 7 Nov

2020 ECSRZ

Commercial Open season Tuesday 15 Dec

Recreational Open season Saturday 5 Dec

2021

Recreational Closed season 1 May Eastern Region

Recreational Closed season 1 Sep Western Region Region

Commercial Closed season 1 Sep St Helens Pt south to Sandy Cape

Commercial Closed season 1 Oct Statewide

Update on Recreational Fishing Strategy

The Minister will launch the Tasmanian Recreational Sea Fishing Strategy Survey on Sunday, 28 June. There is a targeted email list of approximately 30,000. All key stakeholder agencies have also been written to inviting them to complete the survey. Results will help develop a discussion paper.

Next Meeting

September 2020: A combined meeting with CFAC

Meeting Closed: 5:00 pm

UPDATED ACTION ITEMS

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS ARISING FROM REC FAC 72

	Action	Who	When /Status
1	Seek advice whether there are biosecurity issues allowing the recreational take and possession of rock lobster in Northern Bass Strait waters and transfer to and from Victoria.	DPIPWE	Future Meeting
2	Have an on-going list of RecFAC recommendations with a summary of the response. Compile from Meetings 67 and 68, and maintain ministerial recommendations for the last 2 years.	DPIPWE EO.	Before next standard meeting
3.	Update on status of Bastard Trumpeter	DPIPWE Rep	Next standard meeting
	Compile a list of general information and identify a reading list for RecFAC	DPIPWE	Before next meeting

FUTURE DIRECTIONS LIST

ITEMS IDENTIFIED AND RECOMMENDED FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION		
Item	When Raised	Comments Priority/Status
Scalefish Appropriate age for using certain fishing gear (recreational gillnetting and setlines).	RecFAC 62	Feed into Scalefish review >2020
Scalefish DPIPWE prepare a paper outlining the key issues and management options that reduce the impact of recreational gillnets. Include Attendance provisions or reduced maximum soak times (such as 2 Hrs) for recreational gillnets	RecFAC 64	Feed into Scalefish review >2020
Bastard Trumpeter - investigate whether further management action is required to address the status changed from “transitional depleting” to “overfished”.	RecFAC 57	
Inshore shellfish Consider potential overfishing of inshore invertebrate. Review catch limits Closed areas in intertidal zone.	RecFAC 52	Preliminary approval from Minister to draft papers etc.
Rock Lobster Western Region – Boat Limit - Suggested, but not fully discussed that boat limits could be further limited in Western Region – 25 still too high? Also mentioned individual catch limits (bl of 5/ pl of 10 or special licence 15) – are they too high. Raised by Stafford. Are they related to compliance issues, marketing, inshore depletion/ resource sharing issues? Seek additional info from Stafford, Marine Police.	RecFAC56 &57	Opportunistic if there are MP amendments. Remove from list Suggest Issues will be discussed in RL policy document brief etc.
Rock Lobster Harvest Strategy and Policy Needed	RecFAC65	

<p>Rock Lobster Compliance Review Topics - Tighten the rule relating to Eastern Region possession limit near the coastal strip to enhance compliance. Eg. Can not possess > 2 within 100 metres of EC waters unless the fisher can establish they were on a multiple day fishing trip. DPIPW and Marine Police to develop background need and work up proposal if deemed necessary.</p>	RecFAC56	Remove from list Feed into rock lobster compliance review
<p>Rock Lobster – Special Licence Rock Lobster- The Committee recommended to t the fishing licence (special rock lobster) be removed consultation will be undertaken in future reviews.</p>	RecFAC65	March 2019 - Minister supported consultation in 2020/2021 review
<p>Consider compliance risks of allowing recreational rock lobster fishing in the Northern Bass Strait area or lobster being landed in Victoria.</p> <p>Mandatory VMS for the commercial rock lobster fishery should be considered given the extent of spatial management and number of boundary lines.</p>	RecFAC 65	Feed into rock lobster compliance review RecFAC recommended mandatory VMS at Meeting 69.
<p>Scallops D'Entrecasteaux Channel Recreational Scallop Fishery: management strategy and decision rule criteria</p> <p>Develop policy for area management. Review status of key inshore areas to be considered as non-commercial areas (i.e for explicit access of recreational and indigenous fishers) Key areas include: D'entrecasteaux Channel, Norfolk Bay, Mercury Passage, Great Oyster Bay which have not been subject to any commercial activity for many years.</p>	RecFAC56 RecFAC 69	By early 2021.
<p>Abalone Catch Limits, what is a reasonable bag and possession limit, the introduction of a boat limit and a minimum age for a recreational abalone licence, compliance issues.</p>	RecFAC 61	Implemented November 2019.

RESEARCH NEEDS AND IDEAS

TOPIC, NEED ETC	
Topic	When Raised
<p>RecFAC indicate that increased monitoring of sand flathead is a priority. The urgency for Developing a cost-effective monitoring regime and stock assessment for Sand Flathead is due to transiting depleting stock status indicated recent scalefish fishery assessments and the fact that sand flathead is the back bone of recreational fishing in Tasmania as it constitutes >60% of all recreational fish caught in Tasmania.</p>	<p>RecFAC65</p> <p>Project application is awaiting FRDC funding</p>
<p>Striped Trumpeter – Increased sampling or collection of frames required so this species can be adequately assessed. i.e Not Undefined.</p>	RecFAC 57
<p>Charter Boat Fishery Logbook collection and analysis</p>	RecFAC 60, RecFAC62