

RecFAC 73 | MINUTES

Meeting date Wednesday, 11 November 2020 – The Grange, Campbell Town

Attendees:

Chair:

Max Kitchell

Recreational Fisher Members:

Nepelle Crane*

Emilie Donovan*

Naomi Balon

India Thompson

Richard Sherriff

Organisation Members:

Sean Tracey

IMAS

Jane Gallichan

TARFish

Ben Cunningham

Tasmania Police

Eileen Langford

Tasmania Police

Rod Pearn

Recreational Fisheries Management (DPIPWE)

Executive Officer Vicki Wilshaw DPIPWE

Guests/ Presenters:

Klaas Hartman

IMAS

Nick Boucher

DPIPWE

**Participated through video conference.*

Apologies:

Jon Bryan, Sunny Yang, James Cartwright, Adrian Hales, Di Andoni, Marty Wells, Andrew Hart

Meeting Open: 10:00 am

AGENDA TOPICS

Meeting Formalities

- *Adoption of Agenda*

No additional items were added to the Agenda.

- *Update Register of Interests*

No changes were made to the Register of Interests; however, after the meeting concluded, a member emailed the Executive Officer an update.

- *Minister's decisions*

Nil, the last meeting was the CFAC/RecFAC workshop.

- *Action Items from previous meeting*

Action Item 2: The TARFish member requested the Department follow-up on the Minister's noted recommendations. The Chair stated he would seek further information from the Minister at when they meet.

Abalone TAC

Although there are no immediate effects for recreational sector in regard to setting of the TAC, the recreational sector seeks input as it ultimately affects stock levels and recreational fishing opportunities.

RecFAC supported the abalone TAC of 833 tonnes (185.5 t reduction), as it is the scientifically based level modelled by IMAS under the process set out in the Abalone Harvest Strategy.

During the discussion RecFAC expressed concern over continuing stock decline, and sustainability of the abalone fishery. The Department member was requested to provide an update about progress implementing the new size limits which aim to provide the three years of breeding guideline before they are harvested, as outlined in the Abalone Harvest Strategy. RecFAC reminds the Department that they support implementing the size limit changes (commercial and recreational) at a quicker rate than the 5 year plan. [Note see RecFAC68 recommendation 3].

Action item

Person responsible Deadline/Status

<i>I. Provide RecFAC an update on the implementation of new abalone size limits</i>	<i>DPIPWE Rep</i>	<i>Next meeting</i>
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Rock Lobster Fishery

- **Rock Lobster Fishery Assessment and TAC Scenarios**

IMAS presented the latest stock assessment summary and projections assessing the total allowable commercial catch (TACC) against the reference points.

The biomass (as indicated by a catch rate proxy) has declined, Statewide and in most assessment areas due to reduced levels of recruitment of undersize lobsters into the fishery.

The IMAS evaluation of the current TACC 1050.7t (100kgs per quota unit) shows that biological limit reference points are met, however the target reference point is not. This is depicted in with the probability and “traffic light” table below.

Statewide Reference point	Level	Year	Probability	
			Required	Achieved
Egg Production Limit	30%	2021	90	100
Virgin Biomass Limit	20%	2021	90	100
Virgin Biomass Target	25%	2026	70	67

IMAS advised that a 1% reduction in the TACC would be needed to achieve the required 70% probability of reaching the biomass target.

After considering the potential impacts of a TACC reduction, impact of COVID 19/China market influences on a potential under catch (commercial) and fishery risks RecFAC recommended the TACC be reduced by 1% (~ 10 tonne) for 2021/22.

IMAS and the Department representative indicated the catch to date figures are behind previous years and there is a significant chance that the state-wide commercial catch will be significantly under the TAC due to market forces (China/COVID 19). RecFAC acknowledge this, and that the TAC could be adjusted next year to bring it on track if necessary. However, noted that the target reference point of 70% probability of achieving a 25 % biomass is not conservative and regarded as an interim reference point. RecFAC members support the view that if the science indicates a target is not being reached, then the appropriate action of adjusting the TAC should be taken.

Recommendation 1

RecFAC recommend:

- That the TACC for 2021/22 be reduced by 1% ie 10 tonne to 1040 tonne.

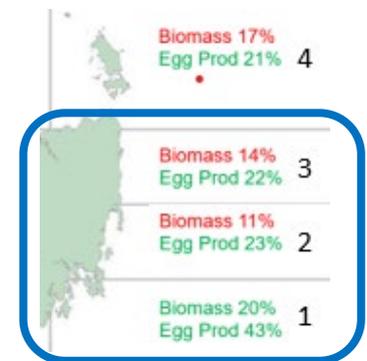
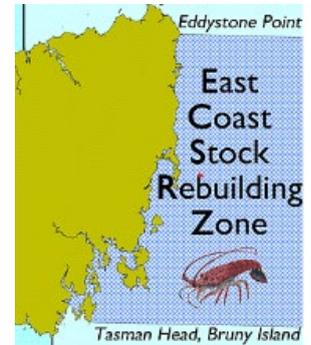
- **IMAS evaluation of East Coast Harvest Strategy**

The East Coast Stock Rebuilding Strategy aims to have a biomass of greater than 20% of the unfished fishery in all assessment areas by 2023.

Stock assessment information presented by IMAS indicates that egg production target reference points are met, however the 20% biomass target would not be met in assessment areas 2 and 3 (Eddystone Point to ~ Marion Bay) within the 2023 timeline.

Key points of the IMAS stock assessment include:

- There is a reduced abundance of undersize lobster
- The recreational catch is likely to increase in future years (the rec catch was low in 2019/20 due to COVID effects.)
- There has been a shift of commercial catch over the last 2-3 years within the catch cap area to Area 2. In previous years biotoxin closures in the Maria Island zone reduced effort area 2.
- If there were no changes to the total east coast catch, the target would be met in 2025 in Area 2 and in 2026 for Area 3.
- The total catch limit (commercial and recreational catch combined) for areas 1,2 and 3 would need to be reduced from 169t to 120t for the stock rebuilding goal to be met.



If the resource sharing allocation of 79% commercial / 21% recreational is applied to 120t, the east coast catch cap for the commercial sector will need to be reduced from 104t to 72t. The notional recreational catch would also be reduced for the stock rebuilding zone from 35t to 24t.

RecFAC:

- Do not support extending the timeframe for achieving the goals in the Strategy and similarly to the views expressed about the TAC, they emphasised that the biomass targets are not conservative enough and should be viewed as interim targets.
- Support the IMAS assessment and the need to further reduce the total catch in the ECSRZ. It also acknowledges that the recreational catch will not be restrained within the levels calculated in the catch sharing formula.
- Reinstated their consistent position that they do not support the current resource sharing arrangement for the East Coast and reinstate their recommendation that the recreational catch share should be 50% of the initial 200 tonne arrangement. [The basis is ~60% of the total recreational catch has traditionally been taken from the East Coast (areas 1,2,3). When this is applied to the legislated catch share of 170 tonnes, a catch of 102 tonnes is derived].
- Emphasised that the benefits (social and economic) of recreational rock lobster fishing to local east coast communities. Although a revised catch share with more catch to the recreational sector would have a significant impact on the commercial fleet, the fishery could be restructured to remove larger vessel access and form more of a boutique fishery with a small number of local boats with lower pot numbers (e.g. 30-40) unloading their catch locally with local benefits.
- Supported the consideration of alternate or complementary measures which could be used to constrain or offset catch including increased minimum size limits (for both sectors), increasing female season closure, or increasing translocation.

- Note that individual season limits, if progressed (if supported by the research project) may assist in the future, to dampen the predicted growth in the recreational catch.

RecFAC recommend that:

1. The commercial catch cap be reduced for the 2021/22 quota year to the level required to achieve the ECSRZ targets by 2023.
 2. The target reference year is not extended.
 3. Alternative management options; including increasing the minimum size limit for both sectors, increasing the female closure and increasing translocation, are evaluated and considered as complementary measures to existing managements.
 4. If these complementary measures are demonstrated to contribute to the achievement of the targets by 2023, then the required catch cap reduction could be adjusted by the commensurate amount.
- Minister to note that RecFAC reinstated their consistent position that they do not support the current resource sharing arrangement for the East Coast and reinstate their recommendation that the recreational catch share should be 50% (of the initial 200 tonne arrangement). [The basis is ~60% of the total recreational catch has traditionally been taken from the East Coast (areas 1,2,3). When this is applied to the legislated catch share of 170 tonnes, a catch of 102 tonnes is derived].

Similarly, to CFAC, RecFAC requested IMAS modelling of the alternatives be presented at a video conference meeting, before confirming the recommendation. This will occur in 1 -2 weeks' time.

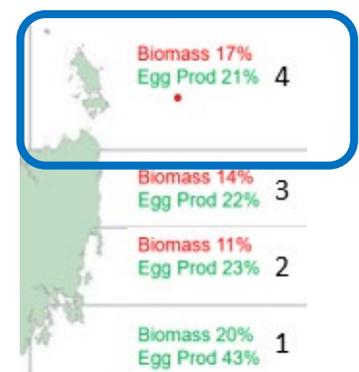
[A video conference meeting was held on 25 November, for members to provide further input into the complementary management measures. (see pages 7 and 8)].

- **North East Coast total catch and commercial catch cap**

The biomass in Area 4 has declined for 2 successive year. There has been a 7 tonne overrun of the catch cap in 2019/20. IMAS's advised that the North East commercial Catch Cap would need to be reduced by 5 tonnes to 95 tonnes to meet the rebuilding target.

RecFAC noted that CFAC had requested IMAS to provide advice whether increasing the female size limit in Area 4 would assist rebuild the biomass to the target level.

RecFAC recommended the North East commercial Catch Cap would need to be reduced by 5 tonnes to 95 tonnes to meet the rebuilding target.



- **East Coast Stock Work Plan**

India Thompson nominated to represent RecFAC on the working group [post meeting indicated she does not have time].

Recreational Policy Update

81 responses were received during the public consultation period on the draft Strategy.

It was requested that RecFAC be involved and be given the opportunity to comment the draft strategy prior to the commencement of the scheduled consultation period in February 2021.

Scalefish Update

Calamari Management Package

Most RecFAC members agree there is a need to suppress the recreational calamari catch, however there were too many variables to catching Calamari. A bag limit of 10 is considered fair and reasonable and a reduction is not supported. Boat fishing, however, appears to be more effective and has more impact on the resource than shore-based fishing, and therefore a boat limit was favoured. Boat limits of 20 to 30 were discussed. A boat limit of 30 was supported on the basis it seemed fair and reasonable

A RecFAC member requested synchronising the two calamari closures on the North and East Coast to reduce the effort being moved between the two areas when one area is closed and the other is open.

Flathead research and recovery

Sand flathead has a depleting stock status.

DPIPWE have been working with IMAS to increase the monitoring of sand flathead. IMAS has been successful in obtaining FRDC funding to investigate the biological parameters and population structures, which may have changed due to environmental shifts. The project is for 3 years.

The research member said hyperstability of flathead is a risk. This is where fish move into areas of preferred habitat as the population is depleted. Fishers do not notice dramatic catch rate declines until the fishery is close to collapse.

DPIPWE will work on a flathead recovery package, which includes communicating and engaging fishers about flathead issues and promote responsible fishing. It is also considered reasonable to flag that future management actions, possibly catch limits, may be reviewed.

Centrostephanus Update

As per background paper.

Research Update

- IMAS are currently involved in a probability-based survey to evaluate smart phone data. Partnering with South Australia and FRDC.
- Assess the effectiveness of FAD's and artificial reefs for Marine and Safety Tasmania. RecFAC were requested to provide support for further investigation into FAD's.

Emerging Issues & Matters of Importance

Marine Police

- A major investigation has concluded and resulted in two persons being arrested. Offences in the trafficking rock lobster, a commercial rock lobster vessel has been seized. Approximately, 3 tonne of rock lobster have been unlawfully obtained and sold around the state.
- RecFAC indicated there is concern of reducing effectiveness of the Fishwatch phone service. The Department and Marine Police had been working to separate the gear reporting and illegal fishing functions, however had hit some hurdles. RecFAC support reviewing the processes and request this topic be discussed at the next meeting.

Action item

Person responsible Deadline/Status

2. RecFAC to discuss improvements to the Fishwatch Service	RecFAC	Next meeting
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TARFish

- Paul Lennon has been appointed as the TARFish Chair.
 - The review of TARFish has been completed and the new organisational strategy will be made available on the TARFish website.
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Next Meeting:

- Schedule a workshop early in the new year to discuss the draft recreational strategy.
 - Plan a joint meeting/ workshop with SFAC in March 2021.
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Meeting Closed: 4:00 pm

Subsequent Meeting 73A– Rock Lobster via Teams 25 November 2020

Attendees:

Chair:

Max Kitchell

Recreational Fisher Members:

Andrew Hart

India Thompson

Sunny Yang

Organisation Members:

Sean Tracey

IMAS

Jane Gallichan

TARFish

Jon Bryan

Conservation

Rod Pearn

Recreational Fisheries Management (DPIPWE)

Executive Officer Vicki Wilshaw

DPIPWE

Guests/ Presenters:

Klaas Hartman

IMAS

Apologies:

James Cartwright, Adrian Hales, Di Andoni, Marty Wells, Ben Cunningham, Eileen Langford, Richard Sherriff, Emilie Donovan, Nepelle Crane, Naomi Balon

At the RecFAC meeting in Campbell Town on 11 November, the Committee considered the latest data and modelling from IMAS that suggested a very significant reduction in the east coast rock lobster catch cap was needed to ensure the 20% limit reference point was achieved by no later than 2023 as required under the stock rebuilding plan. To mitigate the size of the potential reduction several possible alternatives were suggested and requested IMAS to further analyse the outcomes.

These included:

- adjusting size limits
- increasing female season closure
- increasing translocation
- extending the target reference year to 2025.

After a lengthy and complex discussion, the Committee came to the following resolution in respect of the alternative management options:

1. *It reconfirmed its commitment to the ECSRZ target being achieved by 2023*
2. *It acknowledged that the potential alternative options had the capacity to mitigate an otherwise sharp drop in the catch cap but that they needed to be considerably refined and tested before any could be formally adopted*
3. *When considering which of the options should be adopted the following principles should be brought to bear,*
 - *minimise impacts on both recreational and commercial sectors*
 - *measures should be simple, consistent, and easy to understand for fishers and compliance operatives*
 - *measures should result in a net benefit to the fishery eg, provide a level of *Centrostephanus* control in addition to overall sustainability of the fishery.*
4. *With these principles in mind the following measures were of interest,*
 - *increasing female size limit*

- *applying maximum size limits*
- *increasing the level of translocation.*

These recommendations were made in the context of the Committee's continuing advocacy for the current resource share of 79% commercial: 21% recreational to be changed to a 50:50 split. They are also made in the full understanding that the current 20% limit reference point is not the ultimate target for the fishery but is rather a necessary minimum level below which the fishery should not go. A target reference point, considerably greater than 20%, will be developed in a future process and brought to the Committee for its consideration.

Two members dissented from the above recommendation and made alternative recommendations below:

Member 1 stated that there is a crisis on the east coast and much bigger changes than are being proposed will be needed to fix the stock and urchin barren problems.

Should note that 20% target by 2023 is arbitrary and is too low if we want a productive fishery or to protect reef from urchin barrens. For an acceptably productive fishery stocks should be rebuilt to be either MEY and MSY level within an acceptable time frame, not 20% by 2023.

To protect reef from expanding urchin barrens, there should be an aim to increase density of large rock lobster (carapace length > 140 mm) to a level that will limit ongoing expansion of long-spined urchin barrens.

As previously suggested, the east coast should be recreational only fishery which that would make it easier to deal with that sector's latent effort and the urchin barren problem. There needs to be an evidence-based strategy to deal with expanding urchin barrens.

Real action needs to be taken. Putting off hard decisions now will result in the need for even harder decisions in the future.

Member 2 until a clear and firm commitment has been made by the Minister to protect fair and reasonable access to the ECSRZ for recreational fishers, specifically 50% of the TAC or 80 tonnes (whichever is the greater), that RecFAC will reserve any further advice except to reaffirm its commitment to achieving the interim stock rebuilding target of 20% by 2023.

Because attendance at the meeting was close to being inquorate, out-of-session endorsement or otherwise of the resolution was sought from all RecFAC members. In the event no consensus was able to be reached out-of-session on the proposed resolution and it, therefore, lapsed.

UPDATED ACTION ITEMS

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS ARISING FROM REC FAC 73

	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	Update on status of Bastard Trumpeter	DPIPWE Rep	Next standard meeting
3	Compile a list of general information and identify a reading list for RecFAC	DPIPWE	Before next meeting
4	Provide RecFAC an update on the implementation of new abalone size limits	DPIPWE Rep	Next meeting
5	Discuss improvements to the Fishwatch phone service	RecFAC	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. DPIPWE 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