

RecFAC 74 | MINUTES

Meeting date Friday, 12 March 2021 – Level 1, 134 Macquarie St, Hobart

Attendees:

Chair:

Max Kitchell

Recreational Fisher Members:

Stephen Scott

Emilie Donovan

Martin Wells

Organisation Members:

Sean Tracey

IMAS

Jane Gallichan

TARFish

Ben Cunningham

Tasmania Police

Rod Pearn

Recreational Fisheries Management (DPIPWE)

Executive Officer Vicki Wilshaw

DPIPWE

Guests/ Presenters:

Klaas Hartman

IMAS

Malcolm Budd

DPIPWE

Samantha Twiname

DPIPWE

Sven Frijlink

DPIPWE

Ian Dutton

DPIPWE

Apologies:

Eileen Langford, Jon Bryan, Naomi Balon, Dianne Andoni, Sunny Jang, Nepelle Crane, Andrew Hart, Richard Sherriff, Adrian Hales

Meeting Open: 9:40 am

AGENDA TOPICS

Meeting Formalities

- *Meeting Open – Ian Dutton*
 - The Recreational Strategy is due to be released for public comment about 26 March;
 - Challenges facing the commercial fishery sector: ie the financial relief for the rock lobster fishery, TACL board issues;
 - Developments in the Aboriginal cultural fishing sector, developing a proposal for investing in the Aboriginal fishery and granting rights of access to sea country;
 - A Government grant has been received to fund the project *Tasmanian Ocean Business Incubator (TOBI)* to serve as a physical and virtual business hub to the seafood sector.
- *Adoption of Agenda*

The agenda was adopted.
- *Update Register of Interests*

The TARFish member advised of an alteration to her interests as listed in the register. No other changes to the register were required.

- *Minister's decisions*

The Minister noted the Committee's recommendation that the statewide rock lobster TACC be reduced by 1% and that the east coast catch cap be reduced to the level required to achieve the east coast stock rebuilding target by 2023. The Minister also acknowledged that rock lobster matters are complex and he appreciates the advice that is provided by RecFAC.

RecFAC acknowledged the Minister's recent notation that he will consider the community value of rock lobster fishing in future decision making.

The TARFish member requested the decision be recorded in the Decision Register.

- *Action items from previous meeting*

Action Item 1: It was suggested to remove this action item from the list as this is a compliance issue, not a biosecurity issue. RecFAC supported the removal of this item on the proviso that the Department member confirm with the member who initially raised this issue.

Action Item 2: Bastard Trumpeter, noted it is a depleted fishery, this species is not a high priority to address fishery concerns. RecFAC supported moving this action item down to future directions.

Action Item 4: The Department is organising an abalone workshop in April which will include working on the Harvest Strategy. The RecFAC Chair, TARFish CEO and Dept Rec Fisheries Manager have been invited. Report back to RecFAC after the workshop regarding the implementation of new abalone size limits.

Action Item 5: No further action. To be discussed at a future meeting.

Recreational Strategy Update

It is anticipated that the Minister will release the Draft Strategy for public comment on or about 26 March 2021

The RecFAC will receive the Recreational Fishing Strategy either on the day of the release or just prior. Each member can provide comments individually. RecFAC will review the strategy and provide formal comment at a special meeting in April.

Action item	Person responsible	Deadline/Status
1. Schedule a special RecFAC meeting to discuss the Recreational Fishing Strategy mid to late April.	DPIPWE EO.	April 2021

Individual Season Limit and Monitoring project update

Nils Krueck, Sam Twiname (IMAS) and Rod Pearn presented an update from a research and management perspective. The project is investigating systems and options for monitoring the recreational rock lobster catch including an individual season limit.

The project intends to trial a smartphone app and tags ASAP until the Eastern Region season closure in April.

Similar to the previous FRDC project, this project will also report on evaluating management options against effectiveness, cost and acceptability. It was noted that some of these options are known to have low acceptability.

The RecFAC requested policy guidance outlining the catch share and the enabling mechanisms and underlying principles for implementation; ie what are needed to get buy in for these mechanisms.

RecFAC also emphasised the importance of engaging with recreational fishers to allay concerns that these management tools negatively impact on the recreational fishery. This should be done prior to realising the trial. The Department representative indicated initial communications could mention that ISLs, if feasible, could share the catch amongst fishers in a more equitable manner, and offer some flexibility when individuals caught their catch ie opens up some of the previous season reductions, especially outside the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone,

Progress will be presented at the next RecFAC meeting.

Rock Lobster catch share including discussing TARFish proposal

Following the out-of-session considerations of finalizing RecFAC advice on the TAC and East Coast Catch Cap, the TARFish representative requested that RecFAC formally consider a recommendation on the catch share. Subsequently the Department representative drafted a background paper in consultation with the TARFish representative and RecFAC Chair. The paper indicated what a catch amount for the recreational fishery would look like linked to the TARC and different East Coast Stock rebuilding Zone boundaries, which have changed over time.

During discussion a view was expressed that the east coast catch share is currently the biggest issue in the recreational fishery. The Committee reflected on its previous considerations on this matter spreading over six meetings dating back as far as April 2018. It noted that over that period it has consistently recommended that the catch share be reviewed and that the recreational component be increased from the current 40 tonnes to 100 tonnes, phased in over a number of years in order to mitigate the impact on the commercial sector. The Committee restated its support for this recommendation and indicated its frustration that the recommendation has not been acted on.

Accordingly, it requested the Chair to write to the Minister requesting a meeting to clearly outline RecFAC's position and its strength of feeling in relation to the east coast rock lobster catch share. Members requested the opportunity to comment on a draft of the letter prior to it being forwarded to the Minister.

Action item	Person responsible	Deadline/Status
1. Draft a letter to the Minister addressing RecFAC's frustrations regarding their recommendation to review the catch share arrangement and request a meeting with the Minister for the Chair to discuss the issues further	Chair (RecFAC)	Before next meeting

Recommendation 1

Consistent with previous recommendations, the Committee restates its support for a review of the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone rock lobster catch share such that the recreational component is increased from 40 tonnes to 100 tonnes and that this increase is phased in over a number of years

Rock Lobster Fishery

The following recommendations on rock lobster matters are made in the context of the Committee's expectation that its position on the east coast catch share receives positive consideration by the Minister.

- **Size Limit proposal**

RecFAC received a briefing from IMAS on the science behind a proposal to use size limits as a management tool to assist in rebuilding stocks. The Committee noted and supported the principle of dividing the rock lobster fishery into three different size limit zones, broadly reflecting the respective growth rates in those zones. It understood that adopting such an approach will likely maximise the yield per lobster and optimise productivity of the stock.

RecFAC also understood that catch rates will be reduced for recreational and commercial fishers in the short term – around two to three years. As lobsters grow through, catch rates are expected to return to current levels and further improve as stocks rebuild.

A maximum size limit was supported as it will reduce risks associated with urchin barrens.

The Marine Police representative stated that there were some serious compliance issues regarding the multiple sizes of rock lobster on land. RecFAC supported the Department, Marine Police and TARFish discussing these to resolve compliance risks. This included no transiting; fish to be caught and landed within a single sized zone, identifying lobsters (ie single colour tags or by tail clipping). A reporting system, or the app (being developed in the Rock Lobster Monitoring/ Individual Season Limit research project may assist with locating where fish were caught.

The RecFAC did not reach consensus on a special commercial season allowing the harvest of slow growing small lobsters from deep waters in the south west. It was noted that this may pull some commercial fishing effort away from other regions which are more important to the recreational sector, however, there is no guarantee this would occur. It also noted the very significant compliance issues surrounding this proposal.

RecFAC supported the introduction of VMS to the commercial fishing fleet, including the rock lobster fleet.

The Department will work with the Marine Police and TARFish to identify potential boundary issues, refining boundaries, and compliance needs. Feedback gained from public consultation will then identify any other unforeseen issues.

The TARFish representative indicated support for the concept that size limits have positive stock benefits but did not support regional size limits as the impact on recreational fishers is disproportionate.

Recommendation 2

RecFAC supports in principle the adoption of the following size limits

Northern Area – minimum size limit: 120 mm female, 115 mm male

Eastern Area – minimum size limit: 115 mm female and male, maximum size limit: 140 or 145 mm female and male

Rest of Tasmania – minimum size limit: 105 mm female, 110 mm male.

In making this recommendation the Committee recognises that further work needs to be done to better refine regional boundaries and to iron out compliance issues.

• Commercial fishery pot limit proposal

RecFAC had previously considered a proposal in 2019 for an increase of the maximum commercial pot numbers to 60 pots. It repeated its concern then that such an increase would serve to exacerbate interactions between commercial recreational fishers and, therefore, did not support such an increase in areas most favoured by the recreational sector. The Committee was happy to restate its support for 60 pots on the west coast

Recommendation 3

RecFAC supports,

- a 60 pot maximum in areas 6, 7 and 8,*
 - a 50 pot maximum in areas 1, 4 and 5*
 - a 40 pot maximum in areas 2 and 3*
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- **Season opening dates for 2021**

The DPIPWE representative proposed the same season dates as last year. The Committee supported this approach apart from the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone, where it recommended a two-weekend buffer between the recreational and commercial sectors.

Recommendation 4

RecFAC recommends adoption of the following season dates

- *Commercial Open season* *Sun 15 Nov: all waters except ECSRZ*
- *Recreational Open season* *Sat 6 Nov: all waters except ECSRZ*

- *Commercial Open season:* *Mon, 13 Dec: ECSRZ*
- *Recreational Open season:* *Sat 4 Dec: ECSRZ*

2022

- *Recreational Closed season* *1 May: Eastern Region*
- *Recreational Closed season* *1 Sep: Western Region*
- *Commercial Closed season:* *1 Sep: St Helens Pt south to Sandy Cape*
- *Commercial Closed season:* *1 Oct: Statewide*

Next Meeting:

- In April, schedule a special RecFAC Meeting to discuss the Recreational Fishery Strategy.
- Next RecFAC Meeting, May 2021.

Meeting Closed: 3:35 pm

UPDATED ACTION ITEMS

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS ARISING FROM REC FAC 74

	Action	Who	When /Status
1	Schedule a special RecFAC meeting to discuss the Recreational Fishing Strategy mid to late April.	DPIPWE EO	April 2021
2	Draft a letter to the Minister addressing RecFAC's frustrations regarding their recommendation to review the catch share arrangement and request a meeting with the Minister to discuss the issues further	Chair (RecFAC)	Before next meeting
3	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
4	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