

# Recreational Fishery Advisory Committee (RecFAC)

## RecFAC 82 Meeting Minutes

Location: Lands Building, Hobart  
Date: 8 February 2023  
Meeting Open: 9:30 am

## Acknowledgement

*In recognition of the deep history and culture of this island, we acknowledge the palawa people as the traditional and original owners and ongoing custodians of land and sea country of lutrawita/Tasmania and pay respects to their elders past and present.*

## Attendees

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### Present (in Person):

<b>Name</b>	<b>Membership Position</b>
Max Kitchell	Chair
Rod Pearn	NRE Tas
David Hawley	Recreational Member
Brody Corbett	Recreational Member
Anna Minchin	Recreational Member
Ben Cunningham	Tasmania Police
Mike Stevens	TARFish Representative
Jane Gallichan	TARFish CEO
Jane Johnston	Recreational Member
Stephen Scott	Recreational Member

### Present (via Teams):

Jo McBain	Recreational Member
Kelly Hunt	TARFish Representative
Sean Tracey	IMAS
Kimbilli Johnson	Recreational Member

### Apologies:

Kevin Bennett	Recreational Member
Eileen Langford	Tasmania Police
Nepelle Crane	NRM South
Tony Eldridge	Recreational Member
Andrew Hart	Recreational Member

### Guest Presenters/ Observers:

Ian Dutton	General Manager Marine Resources
Kate Stark	IMAS
Frances Seaborn	Fisheries Manager (Scalefish) NRE Tas
Wetjens Dimmlich	Manager, Wild Fisheries Management Branch NRE Tas
Anne Crosby	Graduate Fisheries Engagement Officer NRE Tas

Minutes: Vicki Wilshaw, NRE Tas

# Meeting Minutes

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## 1. Meeting Formalities

### 1.1. Attendance and Apologies

The Chair welcomed and invited Wetjens Dimmlich, Manager Wild Fisheries Management Branch to introduce himself to the Committee.

Apologies were noted for Kevin Bennett, Nepelle Crane, Tony Eldridge and Andrew Hart.

### 1.2. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was adopted without change.

### 1.3 Register of Interest

No updates were provided to the Register of Interest

### 1.4 Minister's Correspondence/ Decisions from Previous Meetings

The Minister noted all six recommendations from meeting RecFAC 81.

RecFAC asked the NRE Tas member if there is any further development or decisions on whether rock lobster translocation will continue (RecFAC 81 Recommendation 2). The NRE Tas member will seek further information regarding translocation and provide RecFAC an answer prior to the next meeting.

### 1.5 Action Items from previous meeting(s)

*Action Item 1: NRE Tas and TARFish to collaborate on what should be included in the review document. Identify what are the things to look back to, what are the indicators that are obvious and not so obvious.*

A meeting was held with TARFish and NRE Tas to work through the concerns and issues previously identified. Some of these issues have been incorporated into the draft Rock Lobster Harvest Strategy and Planning Document.

RecFAC reiterated its support for a review of the reasons why the targets in the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Strategy were not fully achieved in order to assist development of future management settings including the new Rock Lobster Harvest Strategy

**Action Item 1:** NRE Tas to formally document the extent to which the targets in the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Strategy were met and where they were not met, the reasons why.

*Action 2: IMAS, NRE Tas and TARFish to work collaboratively to develop a proposal for an orderly opening of Elephant Rock and Northwest Bay Research Areas and determine the research required.*

On Agenda

*Action Item 3: NRE Tas to develop a work plan and RecFAC Meeting schedule for 2023 and circulate to RecFAC no later than December 2022.*

Completed

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## 2. Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines

RecFAC were supportive of the introduction of Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines. They requested NRE Tas to release both documents for public consultation as soon as possible. However, they were concerned the proposed timeline for consultation (one month) was not sufficient given the importance of the issue and the range of other fisheries-related matters that will also be out for public comment at the same time. The members requested NRE Tas investigate the possibility of extending the consultation period to 8 weeks.

The TARFish member, while supportive of the development of harvest strategies for various fisheries, noted they do not have any legal standing and are unenforceable. Under the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* (The Act) all decisions are to be referred to the Minister.

During the discussion members expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of time provided to review documents prior to RecFAC meetings.

The NRE Tas member acknowledged that papers were not sent within the ten-day standard period prior to the meeting. In part the delay was due to the working guideline of aiming to send all documents in one batch and some matters were still being finalised. After some discussion about procedures, NRE Tas indicated they would make documents available as they arise through a shared platform to enable members to review and to openly comment. The complete set of documents should be made available within 10 days of the meeting.

***Action Item 2: NRE Tas to set up a shared document system to support RecFAC and add documents as they are completed.***

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## 3. Scalefish Fishery

### 3.1 Scalefish Review process outline

The Chair welcomed Dr Ian Dutton, General Manager Marine Resources and Frances Seaborn, Fisheries Manager (Scalefish) to the meeting to observe the discussions regarding the Scalefish Fishery Review.

NRE Tas presented the timelines and themes proposed for the Scalefish Review. The aim is for around 45 days consultation – noting the minimum is 30 days under The Act. The review has six key themes:

1. Management for sustainability of calamari
2. Management for recovery of sand flathead
3. Management for recovery of other depleted species
4. Phase out of recreational gillnetting
5. Protecting Maugean skate in Macquarie Harbour
6. Updating and streamlining fisheries management

RecFAC raised concerns about the timeline for the review, given the complexity of issues and requested NRE Tas to maximise the time for engagement and public consultation to ensure the fishers have an informed view.

The Chair requested the NRE Tas representative provide RecFAC an outline of the public consultation process at the next meeting

**Action Item 3:** NRE Tas to provide RecFAC an outline of the public consultation processes, and the public education program for the Fisheries (Scalefish) Rules 2015 Review at the next meeting.

### 3.2 Proposals

NRE Tas presented initial proposals to address the depleting and depleted species in the current Scalefish Assessment. NRE Tas indicated that they would consider RecFAC (and the Scalefish FAC) comments in finalising proposed management changes that will be included in the draft amendments to the *Fisheries (Scalefish) Rules 2015* scheduled for release in March 2023. It was also noted that the Minister will be provided with the RecFAC recommendations when determining what to release in the review.

RecFAC supported general concepts that for depleted species:

- management action should apply,
- the minimum legal size should generally align with the size of maturity,
- boat limits and commercial trip limits should apply.

The TARFish CEO stated that, as a matter of policy, TARFish does not support the introduction of boat limits for recreational fishing and does not support any recommendation to introduce such limits.

The Department’s preliminary proposals and the RecFAC discussion and advice for each of the species is outlined below.

#### *Bastard Trumpeter:*

IMAS assessment		Biology		Sectoral catch	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends in commercial and recreational catch suggest record low population levels</li> <li>• Estimated to be depleted over many years</li> <li>• MLS below size at maturity</li> <li>• Stock recovery under current levels theoretically possible, but evidence of recovery lacking</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High recruitment variability and offshore spawning</li> <li>• Estimated size at maturity &gt;450 mm FL</li> <li>• Current minimum size limit 380 mm TL</li> </ul>		<p><b>Commercial</b></p> <p>Total catch - 5.9 tonnes (2020/21)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.4 tonnes in eastern region</li> </ul> <p>Total catch - 6.1 tonnes (2019/20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.3 tonnes in eastern region</li> </ul> <p><b>Recreational</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9.8 tonnes (2012/13)</li> <li>• 3.4 tonnes (2017/18)</li> </ul>	
Recreational			Commercial		
<b>Size limit:</b> Increase minimum size limit to 450 mm or 500 mm (current 380 mm). Ban on spearing.					
Current	Proposed	Impact	Current	Proposed	Impact (last five years)
Bag limit 5	Bag limit 2	?	200 kg trip limit (Statewide - TAS)	Western region 150 kg trip limit	0 trips, 0 tonnes
Possession limit 10	Possession limit 4	?	FLRL – 30 fish (equiv. to ~30 kg)	Eastern region 50 kg trip limit	37 trips, 1.3 tonnes
No boat limit	Boat limit 6	?	20 kg (Cwth)		

The RecFAC members acknowledge that the phasing out of the use of recreational gillnets, plus the proposed restriction of the use of spear fishing targeting Bastard Trumpeter effectively closes this species to recreational fishers.

RecFAC supported reducing the bag limit to two, the possession limit to four and the introduction of a boat limit of six. They also endorsed an increase in the minimum size limit to 450mm or 500mm, the size at sexual maturity. In supporting this increase the Committee realised this would effectively close what is currently a fishery based on juveniles. There was, however, no recommendation to formally close the fishery.

While there was some anecdotal evidence of an increasing interest in spearfishing, the Committee believed there was no basis for banning spearfishing as the level of this form of fishing is currently too small to materially impact stock levels.

The proposed introduction of commercial catch limits was supported at the proposed levels.

**RecFAC recommendation - Bastard Trumpeter:**

- Reduce bag limit to 2, possession limit to 4, introduce a boat limit of 6. Increase the minimum size limit to 450 – 500 mm. Do not support the banning of spear fishing.

**Striped Trumpeter:**

IMAS assessment			Biology			Sectoral catch			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends in commercial and recreational catches are close to the historical low.</li> <li>• MLS below size at maturity.</li> <li>• SE coast region has been depleted over the last decade. More data is required to determine population status [regional] trends Statewide.</li> <li>• Total levels of fishing pressure likely too high to allow recovery.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimated size at maturity &gt;600 mm for females TL &gt;610 mm for males TL</li> <li>• Propose MSL of 620 mm noting the recurring stock challenges.</li> <li>• Current minimum size limit 550 mm TL</li> </ul>			<p><b>Commercial</b> Total catch - 8.2 tonnes (2020/21)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6.2 tonnes in Tasmanian waters</li> <li>• 1.9 tonnes in Commonwealth waters</li> </ul> <p><b>Recreational</b> • 29 tonnes (2017/18) In 2017/18 the recreational catch share was estimated to be ~2/3 of all catch.</p>			
Recreational			Commercial						
<b>Size limit:</b> Increase minimum size limit to 620 mm (current 550 mm). Ban on spearing.									
Current	Proposed	Impact	Current	Proposed	Impact (last five years)				
Bag limit 4	Bag limit 2	?	250 kg combined species trip limit (Statewide - TAS)	Western region 150 kg trip limit	17 trips, 1.1 tonnes				
Possession limit 8	Possession limit 4	?		Eastern region 50 kg trip limit		83 trips, 5.6 tonnes			
Boat limit 20	Boat limit 6	?	150 kg (Cwth)	Discussions with AFMA to provide complimentary management arrangements including minimum size, spawning closure and reduced trip limits. Note rec sector take 2/3 total catch.					

RecFAC agree that measures need to be taken to reduce the fishing effort on this species. The IMAS representative stated that striped trumpeter recruitment is highly variable and there are significant stock risks with this species.

RecFAC expressed concern about the statewide approach and the level of bag limit reduction proposed by NRE Tas having the effect of closing the fishery by proxy. NRE Tas indicated that part of the consideration is the amount of mortality of striped trumpeter depredated through interactions with seals. According to NRE, a lower limit – bag or boat - may influence fishers to cease fishing and reduce both the amount retained and that lost to seals. RecFAC noted the stock depletion is more significant in the eastern region and suggested adopting a regional

approach to reduce the impact on recreational fishers on the west coast. They were concerned the proposed statewide boat limit effectively impacts the cost sharing arrangements of recreational group fishers travelling away from popular areas either by boat or to the west coast.

In relation to the recreational take, RecFAC support the proposed size limit increase to 620 mm in principle and the IMAS representative offered to report on the impact of the increased size limit on the recreational catch. Further possible management options canvassed, but not formally recommended, included:

- possible adoption of a regional approach to lessen the impact on west coast fishers
- increased spawning closure
- individual season limits.

The Committee considered there was no basis for banning spearfishing of striped trumpeter as the level of this type of fishing was too small to materially impact stock levels.

### RecFAC Recommendation - Striped Trumpeter

**Action 4:** IMAS to report on the impact of the proposed increased striped trumpeter size limit.

- *Did not support the reduction to the bag, possession, or boat limit nor the banning of spear fishing. They did support in principle the proposed size limit increase to 620 mm.*

### Southern Garfish:

IMAS assessment			Biology			Sectoral catch		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declining catch and effort trend in recent years.</li> <li>• CPUE fluctuates but shows recent increasing trend, however hyperstability likely an issue.</li> <li>• The recovery of the population under current levels of catch is theoretically possible, but empirical evidence for recovery is lacking.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimated size at maturity &gt;200mm TL</li> <li>• Current minimum size limit 250 mm - measuring from the upper jaw to tip of tail.</li> </ul>			<p><b>Commercial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17.0 tonnes in 2020/21</li> </ul> <p><b>Recreational</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt;2 tonnes across all surveys</li> </ul>		
Recreational			Commercial					
Current	Proposed	Impact	Current	Proposed	Impact (last five years)			
Bag limit 15	Bag limit 10	?	No limit for Scalefish licences (except FLRL)	300 kg (Statewide)	31 trips, 5.3 tonnes			
Possession limit 30	Possession limit 20	?						
Boat limit N/A	Boat limit 30	?				20 kg trip limit for RL Licence – Tas.		

The RecFAC acknowledge the recreational catch for southern garfish is relatively small (~350 kg) in comparison to the commercial catch.

RecFAC recommend there to be no further change to the bag and possession limits. Changes were considered unnecessary as they would have little or no impact on stock recovery and the



required stock protection was provided by the recently introduced spawning closure for the recreational fishery.

**RecFAC Recommendation - Southern Garfish**

- RecFAC recommend there be no further change to the bag and possession limits on the basis changes to those limits would have little or no impact on stock recovery.

*Blue Warehou*

IMAS assessment			Biology		Sectoral catch		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth-managed species subject to a rebuilding strategy</li> <li>• No evidence of stock recovery following a reduction of Incidental TAC to 118 tonnes (avoidance)</li> <li>• Presence in State waters variable from year to year</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimated size at maturity 360 mm FL</li> <li>• Current minimum size limit 250 mm TL</li> </ul>		<p><b>Commercial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.1 tonnes in Tasmanian waters and 2.4 tonnes in Commonwealth waters (2020/21)</li> <li>• 12.6 tonnes in Tasmanian waters in 2017/18 (most recent big year of catch)</li> </ul> <p><b>Recreational</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.8 tonnes (2017/18)</li> <li>• 15.4 tonnes in (2012/13)</li> </ul>		
Recreational			Commercial				
Current	Proposed	Impact	Current	Proposed	Impact (last five years)		
Bag limit 10	Bag limit 5	?	No limit for <u>Scalefish</u> licences (except FLRL)	100 Kg ( <u>Statewide</u> )	40 trips, 5.6 tonnes		
Possession limit 20	Possession limit 10	?	60 fish trip limit - RL Licence, Tas.				
Boat limit N/A	Boat limit 15	?	(equiv. to ~85 kg)				

RecFAC noted phasing out the use of recreational gillnets will reduce the impact on blue warehou stocks. During the 2013 survey, 90% of blue warehou was targeted by gillnets.

RecFAC noted the high mortality rate of this species when captured in nets. It indicated that at this stage there was no useful purpose in increasing the minimum size limit to sexual maturity due to the use of recreational gillnets being phased out by 2025. RecFAC suggest flagging in the review that once gillnetting is phased out the minimum size limit could be revisited with a view to it increasing to at least 300 mm.

While the majority of RecFAC members supported the proposed bag, possession and boat limits, in the absence of consensus no formal recommendation is made on these matters.

**RecFAC Recommendation – Blue Warehou**

*The Committee does not recommend an increase in the minimum size limit.*

*Jackass Morwong:*

IMAS assessment		Biology		Sectoral catch		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commonwealth managed species with eastern stock assessed as depleted.</li> <li>AFMA implementing bycatch TAC of 20 tonnes for 2023-24 season, with 40 tonnes of <u>undercatch</u> to carryover.</li> <li>Catch and effort reported by Tasmanian scalefish fishers have been low for the past 15 years.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimated size at maturity &gt;250 mm</li> <li>Current minimum size limit 250 mm TL</li> </ul>		<p><b>Commercial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.6 tonnes (2020/21)</li> <li>1-5 tonnes since 2007/08</li> </ul> <p><b>Recreational</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.4 tonnes (2017/18)</li> <li>16.1 tonnes (2012/13)</li> <li>60-70% of total catch is estimated to be recreational.</li> </ul> <p><b>Commonwealth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~100 tonnes (2018-19 to 2021/22)</li> <li>~12 tonnes as of November 2022</li> </ul>		
Recreational			Commercial			
Current	Proposed	Impact	Current	Proposed	Impact (last five years)	
Bag limit 10	Bag limit - 5	?	No limit for <u>Scalefish</u> licence	Western region 200 kg trip limit	0 trips, 0 tonnes	
Possession limit 20	Possession limit - 10	?	60 fish trip limit - RL Licence, Tas. (equiv. to ~40 kg)	Eastern region 100 kg trip limit	7 trips, 0.3 tonnes	
No boat limit	Boat limit - 15	?				

There was considerable discussion regarding the fact that this is a commonwealth managed fishery. The recreational catch is slightly more than the commercial catch in the inshore fishery. The commonwealth catch is predominately offshore. The fisheries assessment conducted by CSIRO classifies the eastern stock as depleted.

The RecFAC members acknowledge this species does not need immediate action and requested the proposal be removed from the paper for public consultation and revisit the proposal in the next review after additional assessments have been conducted by both CSIRO and IMAS.

**RecFAC Recommendation – Jackass Morwong**

- The RecFAC recommend no change to the current bag and possession limits and requested the proposal be removed from the paper for public consultation on the basis this proposal is revisited during the next review after additional assessments have been conducted by both CSIRO and IMAS.*

## Southern Calamari:

IMAS assessment			Biology			Sectoral catch		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional increases and subsequent fluctuations in catch and effort suggest fishing pressure too high—stock maybe <u>hyperstable</u>.</li> <li>Many fishers target spawning aggregations, leading to high risk of recruitment impairment.</li> <li>Data-poor stock assessment methods indicate southeast and east coast might be depleted, and north coast depleting</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endemic to AUS and northern NZ &amp; inhabits shallow inshore waters.</li> <li>Females deposit eggs in collective egg masses over several months (Sep-Feb) attaching egg mops to the substrate—often seagrass.</li> <li>A study using microsatellite markers across Australia [Smith et al. 2015] identified Tasmania as a possibly important site for gene flow.</li> <li>Life history dynamics and studies of movement and statolith microchemistry in Tasmania suggest some localised population structuring [Pech et al. 2011].</li> </ul>			<p><b>Commercial</b> 82.2 tonnes (2020/21)</p> <p><b>Recreational</b> 31 tonnes (2017/18)</p>		
Recreational				Commercial				
Current	Proposed Northern	Proposed Southern	Impact	Current	Proposed	Impact (last five years)		
Bag limit 10	Bag limit 5	Bag limit 8	?	No limit in waters outside SE Waters.	25 kg per day <u>Statewide</u> & 100 kg Furneaux Group for seine, if not the holder of a calamari licence			
Possession limit 20	Possession limit 10	Possession limit 16	?	SE Waters – 10 fish in 24hr period if not holder of FLSC.				
No boat limit	Boat limit 15	Boat limit 24	?	FLRL – 15 fish (equiv. to ~11.4 kg)				

RecFAC recognised the increasing importance of the calamari fishery to both commercial and recreational sectors and the need to reduce fishing effort, particularly in the northern region.

After considerable discussion, the Committee was not able to reach a consensus on whether to adopt the NRE Tasmania’s recommendations for reductions in recreational bag and possession limits and introduction of boat limits. While there was some support for the Department’s proposals, the majority considered there was no justification for altering the current arrangements other than to expand the period of the spawning closure from five to six weeks, as previously recommended. No formal recommendation is made on those matters for which consensus was not reached.

The reasons articulated for this status quo approach were,

- the proposals for the commercial sector did not guarantee any reduction in that sector’s catch.
- recreational fishing has little impact on stocks as most occurs after spawning.

The Committee suggested that because calamari is now such an important fishery for both the commercial and recreational sectors, the research and monitoring effort on this fishery be elevated to inform management and the upcoming harvest strategy.

### **RecFAC Recommendation – Southern Calamari**

*The committee restated its previous recommendation to extend the spawning closure from five to six weeks.*

*Recreational Gillnetting Inc Protecting Maugean Skate in Macquarie Harbour:*

RecFAC supported the Gillnetting and Maugean Skate proposals noting that they been discussed and endorsed at previous RecFAC meetings.

*Other Matters:*

RecFAC supported the proposed rule amendments outlined under the heading “Key Theme 6 – Updating and streamlining fisheries management” as these related to commercial fisheries management, except for charter fishery.

The members support the concept outlined for the charter fishery in Draft Amendments Paper, which included:

- Mandatory reporting,
- Reflecting the exemption of increased boat limit for SBT tuna (up to 6 for a charter boat one per paying passenger)
- Licence requirement for charter boat operators.

***RecFAC Recommendation – Key theme 6 – Updating and streamlining fisheries management***

- *RecFAC supported the proposed rule amendments outlined under the heading as these related to commercial fisheries management,*
- *RecFAC support formalising charter fishing permitting and mandatory reporting for consultation. They further suggested a maximum limit be added to the conditions.*

## 4. Flathead Fishery

### 4.1 Information Paper

IMAS assessment			Biology		Sectoral catch	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population subject to high recreational fishing pressure</li> <li>Fishery-independent surveys suggest very low abundance of legal-size fish in southeast and eastern Tasmania</li> <li>Undersize fish appear abundant, though other indicators suggest spawning and recruitment failure could be imminent if catches are not reduced</li> <li>Female biomass and spawning potential is depleted in most regions</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MLS is above size at maturity, however issues with size structure</li> <li>Females grow faster than males and more are caught as they hit the size limit faster</li> <li>Evidence of stunted population resulting from ongoing excessive fishing pressure on larger fish</li> <li>Smaller, slow-growing fish produce fewer eggs and offspring have reduced survival</li> <li>Current minimum size limit 320 mm TL</li> </ul>		<b>Commercial</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.3 tonnes (2020/21)</li> </ul> <b>Recreational</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>185 tonnes (2017/18)</li> </ul> <b>Commonwealth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Av. ~3 tonnes per year since 2018</li> </ul>	
Recreational			Commercial			
<b>Size limit: Introduce slot limit of 350 mm to 400 mm TL. Ban on spearing.</b>						
Current	Proposed Northern	Proposed Southern	Impact	Current	Proposed	Impact (last five years)
Bag limit 20	Bag limit 8	Bag limit 4	?	No limit for <u>Scalefish</u> licence (excl. FLRL)	25 kg ( <u>Statewide</u> )	63 trips, 5.4 tonnes
Possession limit 30	Possession limit 16	Possession limit 8	?	FLRL – 30 fish (equiv. to ~8 kg sand & ~17 kg tiger)		
No boat limit	Boat limit 24	Boat limit 12	?			

The NRE Tas representative updated RecFAC members on the outcomes of the Flathead Working Group meetings and specifically that the working group was not able to reach a position on flathead.

The statewide data presented to RecFAC, depicts recreational fishers are taking 2.5 times the natural mortality rate for sand flathead. Under the current management arrangements, the fishery will continue to decline.

In response to a question for regional assessments, IMAS provided indicative results which show further urgent action is required statewide.

The IMAS representative stated that a combination of significantly reducing bag limits and adjusting size limits is required. Some research modelling indicates a slot limit is an appropriate management response. Size limits 32 – 37 cm and 35 - 40 cm were discussed. The IMAS representative felt that a bag limit cut (possibly to 5) and a slot limit 32-37cm would essentially make it a female only fishery but would allow stock to recover. These measures will potentially begin the improvement of sand flathead biomass. IMAS will continue to research and model the impacts of the change in bag limits and the various size limit slots.

RecFAC acknowledge the introduction of a 5 cm slot size limit range could be appropriate, however, request the continuation of further modelling of the impacts of the change in the various size slot limits, particularly regional impacts.

The members ultimately agreed to the general proposition that there needs to be a considerable suppression of effort through significant reductions in catch limits. However, they were not comfortable supporting proposed limits, stating these decisions would ultimately be made by the Department and the Minister on information not currently available to RecFAC and it was not proper to put RecFAC members in the position to provide a recommendation without the benefit of the same information that the department and Minister would have

access to when the decision was ultimately made. RecFAC reserves the right to refine its advice after the consultation period and potentially when additional information is available.

If the introduction of a slot size limit is likely to be in the range of 5cm, the ability of spear fishers to identify legal-size fish was considered problematic. For this reason, the Committee believed that consideration be given to banning spearfishing and that this option be included in the document released for public consultation.

With the separation of management of sand and tiger flathead, the Department's preference is that fish are to be landed whole to assist in fish identification. RecFAC supported filleting at sea and with the requirement to retain the head and frames.

Councils could be offered funding support to instal disposal bins and cleaning stations through the Better Fishing Grants program to address any waste issues caused through filleting and landing fish frames.

The Compliance member requested the heads and frames of flathead be restricted for the use of baiting rock lobster pots.

#### ***RecFAC Recommendation – Sand Flathead***

*RecFAC supports urgent management action for Sand Flathead; however, they were not prepared to provide advice on actual limits for minimum size, possession or boat limits stating these decisions should ultimately be made by the Department and the Minister. The Committee supported,*

- *Introducing a slot limit.*
- *The requirement for fish to be landed as whole or fillets accompanied with fish frames.*
- *Restricting the use of sand flathead frames as bait in rock lobster pots.*
- *Consideration to be given to the banning of spearfishing.*

## 4.2 Communications and Engagement

Members advised the Department to release the Flathead for the Future information paper as soon as possible and before the release of the prospective scalefish review changes. The Committee considered that the more information was available to the community early in the process, the greater chance there will be of an informed public debate.

## Research and Management Updates

### 5.1 Research

Due to time constraints, there was no Research update.

### 5.2 Management

#### *Harvest Strategies – Abalone and Rock Lobster*

NRE Tas and TARFish have met to discuss the development of the Abalone and Rock Lobster Harvest Strategies. The principles regarding the valuing of each sector and what would be suitable allocations will be drafted and included in the Strategies.

### *Rock Lobster Catch Monitoring App*

There is currently a trial of the App. The App will be mandatory for the east coast in November 2023. Users are requesting the App allow group reporting. Compliance issues will need to be worked through if this is to be an option. Users have also requested the introduction of one App (include the rock lobster catch app on the Tas Fish Guide App). Additional feedback received from users is the catch app is very basic and unimpressive.

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## 5. Emerging Issues and Matters of Importance

### 6.1 Marine Police

Due to time constraints, there was no Marine Police update.

### 6.2 TARFish

Due to time constraints, there was no TARFish update.

### 6.3 Rec Fisher Representatives

Due to time constraints, there was no update from Recreational Fishers.

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## 10 Other Business/ Dates for future meetings

Next Meeting:

Meeting Closed: 4:05 pm

## Appendix 1: RecFAC 82 Agenda

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1. Meeting Formalities
  - Acknowledgement of Country (Chair)
  - Attendance and Apologies (Executive Officer)
  - Adoption of Agenda (Chair)
  - Register of Interests for all members (Chair)
  - Minister's correspondence/decisions from previous meeting (Rod Pearn)
  - Action Items from previous meeting (Rod Pearn)
2. Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines (Rod Pearn)
3. Scalefish Fishery (Rod Pearn)
  - Scalefish Review process outline
  - Proposals
4. Flathead Fishery (Rod Pearn)
  - Information paper
  - Communications and Engagement
5. Research and Management Updates
  - Research (Sean Tracey Proxy?)
  - Management (Rod Pearn)
    - i. Harvest Strategies – Abalone and Rock Lobster
    - ii. Catch Monitoring App
    - iii. Summer fishing program update
    - iv. Scalefish Endorsement Review
  - Recreational Sea Fishing Strategy Update (Rod Pearn)
6. Emerging Issues & Matters of importance
  - Marine Police (Tas Police)
  - TARFish (Jane Gallichan)
  - Rec Fisher reps
7. Other Business/ Dates for future meetings
  - Future Meeting dates

Meeting close ~ by 4:00 pm



## Appendix 2: Action Items

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	Meeting #	Description	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	RecFAC 81	IMAS, NRE Tas and Peak Bodies to work collaboratively to develop a proposal for an orderly opening of Elephant Rock and North West Bay Research Areas and determine the research required.	IMAS/ NRE Tas/ TARFish and TRFLA	
2	RecFAC 82	NRE Tas to provide RecFAC an outline for the public consultation period, including a public education program for the Fisheries (Scalefish) Rules 2015 Review at the next meeting.	NRE Tas	Next Meeting

## Appendix 3: Register of Interests

Members	Interest
Max Kitchell	Chair of: Tasmanian Scalefish Fishery Advisory Committee (SFAC) Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Advisory Committee Small Pelagic Fishery Resource Assessment Group
Rod Pearn (NRE Tas)	NRE Tas Recreational Fisheries programs (including the Fishcare Tasmania Program)
Ben Cunningham (Tas Police)	No interest to declare
Eileen Langford* (Tas Police)	No Interest to Declare
Sean Tracey (IMAS)	No Interest to Declare
Nepelle Crane* (NRM South)	CEO – NRM South
Jane Gallichan TARFish	Family member involvement in Commercial Rock Lobster fishery Member of TasRAC and SMRMCA
Kelly Hunt	No Interest to declare
Stephen Scott	No interest to declare
Andrew Hart*	Produce and host brand funded television series <i>Hook, Line and Sinker</i> (inc sponsors Yamaha Motor Australia, Wilson Fishing, Isuzu Ute Australia)
Brody Corbett	Family member Rock-Lobster Quota Holder
Anna Minchin	Member of Tasmanians for Marine Parks
Kevin Bennett*	President Break O Day Sports Angling Club
Jo McBain	Family member Commercial Rock Lobster fisher Board member East Coast Tourism
Tony Eldridge*	No interest to declare
Jane Johnston	No interest to declare
David Hawley	No interest to declare
Mike Stevens	No interest to declare
Kimbilli Johnson	Secretary, Van Diemens Fly Fishing Club

\*Not in attendance to update Register