Southern Squid Jig Fishery (SSJF) Resource Assessment Group (SquidRAG) Meeting 22

Teleconference Minutes

Date: 16 October 2017
10:00 am – 12:30 pm (AEST)
Attendees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lianos Triantafilos</td>
<td>Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Weekees</td>
<td>AFMA member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Wisby</td>
<td>Industry member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shijie Zhou</td>
<td>Scientific member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Curtotti</td>
<td>Economic member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Romaro</td>
<td>Industry invited participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Harding</td>
<td>Executive Officer, AFMA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meeting Minutes

1 Preliminaries

1.1 Introduction and apologies

The Chair opened the meeting at 10:00 am AEDT and welcomed participants.

1.2 Adoption of Agenda

The agenda (Attachment A) was adopted.

1.3 Declaration of interests

The RAG reviewed the table of members' and invited participants' standing declarations as required in the *Fisheries Administration Paper 12*. The Chair asked participants to declare any specific conflicts of interest with any items on the agenda or to declare conflicts of interest that were not recorded in the table provided. Following the specific conflict of interest declared by Ms Wisby and Mr Romaro regarding Agenda Item 3 in that they have financial interests within the SSJF, Ms Wisby and Mr Romaro left the teleconference individually while the RAG discussed how to handle the potential conflicts. The RAG noted the conflict of interest, but recognising Ms Wisby’s and Mr Romaro’s knowledge and valuable contribution to future discussions, the RAG agreed Ms Wisby and Mr Romaro should be allowed to provide input into the discussion and recommendation for Agenda Item 3. Ms Wisby and Mr Romaro were asked re-joined the meeting.

A table of declared conflicts of interest was updated at the meeting to take into account the changes in Mr Romaro financial interest within the SSJF (Attachment B).

1.4 Actions arising from previous meetings

The Chair advised the RAG on the status of actions arising from SquidRAG 21 held on 21 September 2016 (Attachment C). All actions were noted as completed.

2 Updates

2.1 Managers update

The AFMA member provided the RAG with an update on the management of the fishery, including:
The Department of Agriculture and Water Resource’s Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy and Commonwealth Fisheries Bycatch Policy are in their final stages.

Observer market testing - AFMA is expecting to announce a decision shortly as to whether the Scientific Observer Program will be outsourced to ensure that industry and the government are receiving value for money from this important activity. This follows a market testing process.

The AFMA Commission has now agreed to formalise the Economic Working Group to more effectively support AFMA’s fisheries management. The group will identify and advise AFMA on cross-fishery and other major fisheries economic issues on a regular basis. The group will also identify research needs and advise AFMA on research proposals relevant to fisheries economics. Members of the group will be economist members from RAGs, an economist from ABARES and additional economists with expertise in commercial and recreational fishing.

AFMA has been working with CSIRO to revise the Ecological Risk Assessment methodology for Commonwealth fisheries. The revised methodology will be used to update the Ecological Risk Assessment for squid, which is scheduled for 2019-20, noting that the SSJF is a low risk fishery.

Amendments are currently being made to Commonwealth fisheries legislation to better recognise indigenous and recreational fishing sectors. It is likely to take effect from January 2018 and, operationally, will mean more enhanced representation by these sectors on committees. A SquidRAG member, who identifies as having indigenous heritage, stated that there is nowhere on the RAG membership application/process to identify as having indigenous heritage.

Action: AFMA to make the AFMA Policy team aware of the lack of opportunity to identify as having indigenous heritage through any Committee membership application process as the policies are reviewed.

AFMA is looking at opening an office in Lakes Entrance. AFMA has had a liaison officer in Lakes Entrance for two years, which has proven to be successful. Therefore, AFMA is looking to expand the office to employee six staff across fisheries management and compliance.

There will be a workshop in November 2017 to discuss the findings of the project improving targeting of squid by the jig sector by Fishwell Consulting.

2.2 Industry update

The industry member provided the RAG with an update on industry matters within the SSJF. It was noted that:

- individuals within the industry have been working with the relevant authorities to include arrow squid approval for export. This work will support the industry in exporting product to China, if they wish to do so.
- individuals within the industry are trying to get an experienced Chinese squid skipper over to Australia in the hope they will share their knowledge for targeting squid and fishing methods. This information would be shared with the industry.
- there has been interest from new people to enter the SSJF.
- there are high costs involved in setting up new all boats for squid fishing.
- the 2017 season was not great and fish processors did not get enough squid. Though, this could be caused by additional fish processors starting to process squid.
the current price of whole arrow squid imports to Australian is in excess of $5.00 per kg and difficult to source.

there is increasing demand for smaller squid within the Australian bait industry, which the industry has been catching in the last couple of years. It was also noted that there are consistent sightings of squid around the west coast of Tasmania, though due to the ill-equipped vessels in the SSJF, fishers are unable to target them, i.e. lack of suitable refrigeration on vessels required to travel to and from fishing grounds while maintaining product quality.

2.3 Economic Update

The economic member provided the RAG with an update on economic matters in the fishery. It was noted that:

- the market has not changed much in recent years.
- international supplies are still tight as demand keeps rising. Environmental conditions greatly affect squid catchability and the recent El Nino is thought to have affected the supply out of South America. The international supply of squid to markets will remain volatile with changing environmental conditions.

It was noted that when squid catchability around the world declines in some of the major squid fisheries such as South America, it results in a decrease in supply worldwide. This increases the prices for squid and may make it more profitable to target squid in Australia. Conversely, if squid catches increase in these major fisheries, it is likely to result in a significant decline in the prices fishers get for their product in Australia. The current high prices for squid caught in the fishery could be a reflection of current tight supply on international markets.

- Australia is still importing a large proportion of squid for human consumption.
- import unit value has come up in the last few years to about $6.50 per/kg. Though, currently the beach prices for commonwealth fishers for squid is likely to range between $2.50 - $2.70 per kilo noting that the price of imported squid is a processed price.

- with the current low exchange rate, local product is in a better place to compete with imported squid.

- local supply from Commonwealth fisheries is still low, but moderately stable

Business

3.1 Total Allowable Effort

The AFMA member presented the paper “Total Allowable Effort (TAE) for the 2018 Season” and asked the RAG to provide recommendation on the TAE for the 2018 SSJF fishing season starting 1 January 2018.

The RAG considered the catch and effort data for the SSJF, SET, CTS and GABT. The following key points were raised in the discussion:

- no sustainability issues have been identified for the fishery in terms of targeted species and bycatch.
- Commonwealth trawl fishers are known to target squid at times. Long term data collected by this fishery may strengthen our understanding of squid.
• bycatch - there was an ERA for the Squid fishery in 2006, with no species assessed as a high risk. There has been no changes within the fishery to raise concerns that this status may have changed, noting effort has decreased for several years in this fishery.

• catch and effort in the SSJF and Trawl sector of the SESSF for the 2017 season are well below trigger levels outlined in the SSJF Harvest Strategy.

• low catches and difficulty of locating squid aggregations remain.

• there are no economic concerns and the issue of latent effort was considered, but with more licences in fishery, it would help spread the management costs across the fishery, not leaving it up to a handful of licences to pay.

The RAG recommended that:

The 2018 TAE be set at 550 squid jig machines. With 4900 SFR within the SSJF, this means 8.909 SFR’s are required for each jig machine. The RAG agreed this level maintains a degree of balance between leaving latent effort in the fishery, and also keeps the capacity to allow the fishery to respond quickly to an increase in squid abundance, availability and price.

3 Other business and close of meeting

3.1 Research Plan 2018 - 19

SquidRAG identified a number of priorities for the Annual Research Statement 2018-19. After taking these priorities to SEMAC in September 2017, SEMAC did not support any of the AFMA funding priorities given the limited capacity to fund research and the low catch and effort within the fishery. SEMAC noted that the fishery and SquidRAG are waiting the outcomes from recent research “Improved location and targeting of economically viable aggregations of squid by the jig fleet” to be finalised. SEMAC did support two priorities for FRDC funding, which were:

• improving the ability and efficiency to catch squid; and
• undertaking a stock assessment. This was, ranked a medium to low priority, noting that there have been developments in the assessment of data poor fisheries that could be used to assess the SSJF.

The SquidRAG discussed holding a face to face meeting in 2018 to discuss future research priorities for the fishery. This timing will allow for the current research project Improved location and targeting of economically viable aggregations of squid by the jig fleet to be completed; the work being performed by some industry members regarding Chinese and SSJF fishing methods; and, the finalisation of the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy, which may include updating the SSJF Harvest Strategy

Action item: SquidRAG to consider holding a face to face meeting in the middle of 2018 to discuss future research priorities for the SSJF.

The Chair thanked SquidRAG and the meeting concluded at 11:40 pm.

Signed (Chairperson):

[Signature]

Date: 23 November 2017
Attachments

Attachment A: SquidRAG 22 Final agenda
Attachment B: SquidRAG 22 Declared conflicts of interest
Attachment C: SquidRAG 21 Action Items
Southern Squid Jig Fishery Resource Assessment Group

Squid Resource Assessment Group (SquidRAG) 22 - teleconference

Monday 16 October 2017

(2-3 hour) 10:00am – 12:30 pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time)

Final Agenda

How to join the teleconference:

Please dial in on: 1800 631 989 (Toll free number)

You will then be prompted to enter a PIN: 845493#

Chair: Lianos Triantafillos

Participants:
- Sally Weekes, AFMA
- Debbie Wisby, Industry member
- Shijie Zhou, Scientific member
- Robert Curtotti, Economic member

Invited participant: Terry Romaro, Industry invited participant

Executive Officer: Anthony Harding, AFMA

ITEM

1 Preliminaries 20 minutes
1.1 Welcome and apologies Chair
1.2 Acceptance of agenda Chair
1.3 Declarations of interest All Action
1.4 Actions arising from previous meetings Chair

2 Updates 30 minutes
2.1 Managers update Sally Weekes
2.2 Industry update Debbie Wisby
2.3 Economic update Robert Curtotti

3 Business 45 minutes
3.1 Total Allowable Effort (TAE) Sally Weekes Paper

4 Other business and close of meeting 25 minutes
4.1 Research Sally Weekes / All
   • Outcomes from SEMAC meeting
   • Proposed research meeting for 2018
4.2 Next meeting All
## SquidRAG Declaration of Interests of members, invited participants and observers (Agenda item 1.3)

Last updated: September 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Interest declared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lianos Triantafillos</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>No interests declared, pecuniary or otherwise. Involved in broad research projects though none specifically squid related.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Wisby</td>
<td>Industry Member</td>
<td>Commercial squid fisher. Financial interest in the fishery declared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shijie Zhou</td>
<td>Scientific Member</td>
<td>Assessment scientist that submits fishery research proposals. No interests declared, pecuniary or otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Curtotti</td>
<td>Economics Member</td>
<td>No interests declared, pecuniary or otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Weekes</td>
<td>AFMA Member</td>
<td>No interests declared, pecuniary or otherwise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthony Harding</td>
<td>Executive Officer</td>
<td>No interests declared, pecuniary or otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Romaro</td>
<td>Invited participant</td>
<td>Director of a company that owns ETBF boat SFR’s, minor line SFR’s, ETBF longline SFR’s, WTBF boat SFR’s, WTBF longline SFR’s, Coral Sea Trawl permit, Western Skipjack purse seine permit, SPF purse seine, mid-water trawl SFR’s, SPF quota SFR’s and Squid(SSJF)Units and jig machines. Shareholder of a company that owns shares in a proposal to fish with foreign long liners in the WTBF. Invited participant on SBTMAC, SquidRag and industry representative at the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna &amp; IOTC.</td>
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### Southern Squid Jig Fishery Resource Assessment Group

**Actions arising from last SquidRAG meeting (Agenda item 1.4)**

**Actions arising from SquidRAG 21:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action No.</th>
<th>Action required</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Completion status</th>
<th>Further comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>Assist in the development of a project scope for a data poor assessment method for arrow squid, to be included in the <em>Southern Squid Jig Fishery Five Year Research Plan 2015-2019</em>.</td>
<td>Dr Zhou</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>Circulate a research paper on improving the efficiency of Southern Squid Jig Fisheries from 2011.</td>
<td>Sally Weekes</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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