



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Management Advisory Committee (ScallopMAC) Meeting 39

Meeting minutes

7 June 2024

9:30-15:30

Park Royal Melbourne Airport



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Management Advisory Committee (ScallopMAC)

Meeting 39 – 7 June 2024

Agenda

Time (AEDT): 9:30 – 15:30

Location: Park royal Melbourne/Microsoft Teams

Chair Name: Ian Dutton

Approximate time	Item	Purpose	Lead presenter
9:30 (30 min)	Agenda item 1. Preliminaries		
	1.1 Welcome and apologies	For action	Chair
	1.2 Member responsibilities	For Noting	AFMA
	1.3 Declaration of interests	For action	Chair
	1.4 Adoption of agenda	For action	Chair
	1.5 Minutes from previous meeting	For noting	Chair
	1.6 1.6 Actions arising from previous meetings	For noting	AFMA
10:00 (30 min)	Agenda item 2. Fishery update		
	2.1 AFMA Management	For noting	AFMA
	2.2 Industry		Industry members
	2.2.1 MSC		Atlantis Consulting
	2.3 State fisheries		State managers
	2.4 Environment		Environment member
	2.5 Economic		Economic member
	2.6 Research		Scientific member
10:30 (15 min)	Morning Tea		
10:45 (30 min)	Agenda item 3. Climate Change	For noting	AFMA/CSIRO
11:15 (60 min)	Agenda item 4. 2024 pre-season survey	For noting	Fishwell
12:15 (30 min)	Agenda item 5. 2024 season recommendations		
	5.1 TAC (commercial and doughboy scallop)	For advice	AFMA
	5.2 Closures		
	5.3 Season dates		
12:45 (30 min)	Lunch		
13:15 (15 min)	Agenda item 6. Harvest Strategy review update	For noting	AFMA
13:30 (30min)	Agenda item 7. Economic condition index	For advice	ABARES
14:00 (45 min)	Agenda item 8. Research priorities	For advice	AFMA
14:45 (15 min)	Afternoon Tea		
15:00 (20 min)	Agenda item 9: Electronic monitoring		
15:20 (25 min)	Agenda item 10. Other business	For advice	AFMA

	10.1 Co-Management Committee membership	For advice	
15:45	End of meeting		

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:32

Agenda Item 1. Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair, Ian Dutton, welcomed members, participants and observers to the meeting.
2. The Scallop Management Advisory Committee (the MAC) members noted the Acknowledgement of Country, that the meeting was being recorded and commenced proceedings.

3. Membership

Name	Membership	Declared interests
Ian Dutton	Chair	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Brendan Kelaheer	Scientific Member	ScallopRAG Chair. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Andrew Watts	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions
Stuart Richey	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State fishing concessions, Commonwealth fish receiver permit and State processing licences
John Hammond	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
John Cull	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions
Steven Mantzaris	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions
Caleb Gardner	Economic member	Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies. Organisation is known to submit research funding applications for consideration by ScallopMAC
Sylvia Zukowski	Environment Member	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise
Steve Hall	AFMA member	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Alannah Wood	Executive Officer	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Matt Koopman	Invited participant, Fishwell Consulting	Fishwell Consulting employee. Fishwell have undertaken the BSCZSF survey since 2015. Fishwell also submit research funding applications and undertake research projects for

		Commonwealth, State and International fisheries agencies and other organisations including fishery associations and private companies. This includes catch and effort data from the BSCZSF. No other interest in any commercial fisheries.
Bob Lister	Invited participant, Industry	Executive Officer, Scallop Fishermen’s Association of Tasmania. Represents all Bass strait central zone fishers and processors. No financial interest in the fishery.
Ewan Flanagan	Invited participant, VFA	VFA employee, No interest in the pecuniary or otherwise.
James Parkinson	Invited participant, NRE Tasmania	NRE Tasmania employee, no interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Dan Corrie	Presenter	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Sally Weekes	Observer, AFMA Management	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Brad Milic	Observer, Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group	Employed by Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group, representing industry clients. Also employed by Australian Longline Fishing which holds various fishing rights in, and operates vessels in Antarctic and sub-Antarctic fisheries and New and Exploratory fisheries under the jurisdiction of CCAMLR.

1.2 Apologies

4. We received apologies from James Parkinson, Ewan Flanagan, Dan Corrie and John Cull.

1.3 member responsibilities

5. AFMA provided a refresher on the member responsibilities focusing particularly on the Fisheries Management Paper (FMP).
6. Industry discussed how having it confidential will give some operations an advantage.
7. AFMA committed to sending the outcomes of the meeting as soon as possible via email to all members to pass on.

1.4 Declarations of interest

8. The MAC members followed the conflict of interest declarations as outlined in [Fisheries Management Paper 1 – Management Advisory Committees](#). Members and participants reviewed and updated the Declarations of Interest included at [Attachment A](#).
9. Chair asked members to consider that Industry members were valuable in the discussion regarding the 2024 Season recommendations with the MAC unanimously deciding that Industry members and invited participants would be involved in the discussion but would not be present for the final advice.

10. Chair asked members to consider that scientific members were valuable in the discussion regarding the research priorities for 2025-26 with the MAC unanimously deciding members and invited participants with a conflict of interest would be involved in the discussion but would not be present for the final advice.

1.5 Adoption of agenda

11. The MAC adopted the [agenda](#) as final.

1.6 Minutes of previous meeting

12. That ScallopMAC noted that the minutes of the ScallopMAC 38 meeting on 8 June 2023 have been finalised and are available on the [AFMA website](#).

1.7 Actions arising from previous meetings

13. No outstanding action items from previous meetings.

Agenda Item 2 – Fishery update

14. The Chair introduced the Agenda Item and asked the MAC to note the AFMA Management, state fishery, industry, environment and economic updates for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF).

2.1 AFMA Management

15. The ScallopMAC noted an update on matters relevant to the management of the BSCZSF provided by the AFMA member:

- Electronic logbooks (e-logs) are mandatory across all commonwealth fisheries for the completion and transmission of logbook returns, including the BSCZSF. E-logs must be submitted prior to the boat docking. Paper logbooks may be kept as back up and used in an emergency only;
- The total 2023 catch was 1983 tonnes (51% of the TAC), compared to 495 tonnes (13% of the TAC) in 2022. The majority (98%) was in waters northeast of King Island off Lavinia Point. Nine boats were active in 2023, compared to only seven in 2022. In 2023, one boat caught 639 tonnes (32% of the total catch), with the next closest boat catching 334 tonnes (16% of the total catch).

2.2 Industry

16. The ScallopMAC noted an update on matters relevant to the BSCZSF provided by industry members:

- Tasmanian surveys have been completed within allocated timeframe given the weather constraints, and the catch rates were good for scallop last year.
- The fishery is currently competing with imported scallops this is in part due to the lower quality of domestically available scallops.
- Fishers continue to search for the best quality scallops to provide to the domestic market however the best quality product is not relative to shell size.
- Industry noted one of the outcomes from the survey shows scallops are developing roe much earlier than previously seen and requested a discussion regarding the season start date being brought forward and the season finishing earlier.

Action Item 1: AFMA to explore the potential of moving the scallop season start date earlier in the year due to noticeable developmental changes in scallops potentially caused by climatic changes.

2.2.1 MSC

17. Brad Milic from Atlantis consulting provided the following updates on the MSC process:

- The second surveillance audit for the BSCZSF MSC is scheduled for the end of August 2024;
- The outcomes from the 2023 audit have indicated that six of the eleven conditions still behind target;
- Currently some scallop processors have Chain of custody accreditation but note this will only be valid if the fishery maintains accreditation.
- Principle 1 –Through the MSC accreditation process the harvest strategy has been assessed with no evidence to show that the management actions of the harvest strategy are meeting requirements and lacks a regular review process to reflect the current state of the fishery.
- Principle 2 – This condition has been assessed as requiring alternate measures to reduce bycatch and discards prior to the August surveillance audit, with demonstrable short and long term objectives for managing bycatch outlined in the Bycatch and discard workplan (The Workplan).e. Currently there is no empirical evidence that the Workplan or the harvest strategy are achieving this, with a need for fishery dependent data collection (i.e. bycatch and discards reported in logbooks) with additional information included from the recent ERA and RAG and MAC recommendations.

2.3 State fisheries

18. James Parkinson, Tasmanian State representative, provided the following written update:

- The 2023 season had a total catch of 1,188 tonnes which was caught by seven boats.
- The Tasmanian scallop fishery is currently closed; however, authorisations have been issued for fishers to participate in exploratory surveys. The north west has been identified as priority for a structured survey which is scheduled to commence the weekend of 1 June.
- A drop camera survey of the Boags MP occurred last year, with the data from this survey being used to determine if this area should be considered a spawning biomass closed area for the 2024 season.
- The fishery is planned to open in in early July.

19. Industry provided the following update on State scallop fisheries:

- It was noted that within the Tasmanian fishery, there were reports that some areas were producing 60 scallops to the kg with catches of 5-600kg an hour. The Scallop Fishery Core Group (ScFCG) plan to meet on the 27 June and the Tasmania fishery expected to open 5 July.
- The Victorian fishery has had low activity with only exploratory fishing when Danish seine pick up scallops. It was also noted although the fishery is open all year round the annual quota is small (approx. 100t) with only two boats having allocations.

2.4 Environment

20. The ScallopMAC environment member provided an overview of research undertaken on matters relevant to the BSCZSF and scallops.

21. The MAC noted;

- In other fisheries (eg.crayfish), the season opened earlier to account for climatic changes with potential to do this in the scallop fishery, however, research should be conducted to ensure changes do not impact spawning and settlement periods.
- Research published in 2024 on windfarm noise showed that during construction the pile driving noise affects the reproduction and larval stages of scallops.
- Brad Milic representative of the Scallop Association gave an overview of the previous March RAG presentation, with no progression in gear advancements recently.

22. Members discussed the outcomes of the research and relevance to the BSCZSF given the competition for development from various industries in Australian waters.

2.5 Economic

23. The Chair welcomed Caleb Gardner to the position as the new economic member to the MAC noted the progress on the economic conditions index that would be further discussed in agenda item 7 with ABARES.

Agenda Item 3 – climate change

24. CSIRO provided an overview of its Climate Adaptation Program and general information on predicted climate impacts in south eastern Australian waters relevant to the BSCZSF. Feedback was sought from ScallopRAG regarding the draft 'Climate and Ecosystem Status Report' that has been prepared for the fishery.

25. The RAG noted the following:

- Australian waters have warmed significantly over time, approximately 0.5 degree warmer than average 2024 temperatures and are tracking hotter than 2023 with monthly global sea surface temperatures at the highest levels on record.
- Sea surface temperatures of the Bass Strait show anomalies, with some significantly warmer than average (up to 2°C) with moderate to severe heat waves predicted for the Bass Strait in 2024.
- The la Nina phase of ENSO is generally a cold trend although it appears to be warming, with ENSO currently neutral, there is a fifty percent chance it may develop into a La Nina.
- Historically the outlook for sea surface temperature anomaly for Bass Strait has been cooling with predictions that it could possibly be warming in the coming winter months with the average temperature predicted to be 1°C to 2°C warmer. The index on the Southern Annular Mode (SAM) has positive phases becoming more common over time.

26. The MAC discussed:

- Bottom temperature and depth are more useful than surface temperature in relation to scallops. CSIRO confirmed that when the data from the boats of opportunity project is released the outcomes will be incorporated into the annual climate reports.

Agenda Item 4 – 2024 pre-season survey

27. Dr Matt Koopman presented the outcomes of the 2024 pre-season biomass survey, including:

- Acknowledged and thanked the skippers and crew of the boats that participated in the survey for their valuable contribution.

- The summary of data collected for each of the surveyed beds during 2024, including estimates of biomass (tonnes), percentage of weight \geq 85mm, estimated biomass of scallops \geq 85mm, density of individuals per square metre, mean size and meat weight per kilogram.
- Noting the Flinders Island 1 (F1) survey site was smaller than intended due to an error in applying the survey plan (i.e. a Flinders site from 2018 was selected instead of the full F1 bed). However, when data is extrapolated from the smaller site to the equivalent size of the full F1 bed, biomass and size frequency are representative of the full F1 bed.

28. A summary of the biomass estimates is provided at [Attachment B](#), the MAC noted the outcomes of the biomass survey and provided the following comments:

- It may be beneficial to the BSCZSF to undertake a comparison of shell vs meat size to investigate the potential to predict scallop meat weight, noting this should consider meat weights with and without roe.

Recommendation 1: AFMA (in consultation with members) to compile a research scope to analyse the correlation of shell vs meat size which may be used to predict the meat weight, the project should also consider meat weight with and without roe.

Agenda Item 5 –2024 season recommendations

29. The AFMA member introduced the Agenda Item and asked the MAC to consider the results of the 2024 biomass survey (Agenda Item 4), recommendations from ScallopRAG and provide advice to the AFMA Commission on TACs, closures and season dates for the BSCZSF 2023 fishing season.

2024 commercial scallop TAC

30. The MAC noted the key points made by the RAG regarding the 2024 biomass survey and advice regarding a commercial scallop TAC for the 2024 season:

- The 2023 fishing season, TAC was under-caught with 1,983 tonnes caught of the 4,000 tonnes TAC.
- With both the Tasmanian and Victorian scallop fisheries open in 2024, fisher effort will be targeted in areas of best quality product.
- The Research Catch Allowance (RCA) will be subtracted from the 2024 TAC recommendation and consistent with arrangements in 2023, the RCA may be caught pre-season and in-season, in years where the fishery is open to commercial fishing, and the TAC is above 1500 tonnes.
- ScallopRAG recommended rolling over the 2024 season TAC of 4,000 tonnes, on the basis that:
 - no compelling argument was made to justify any change to the TAC for the upcoming season;
 - maintaining the TAC at 4,000 tonnes would provide industry with stability and consistency;
 - due to operational reasons, the TAC has been under-caught for the last three seasons, with a number of factors likely to impact the total catch in the fishery in 2024, including fleet and processing capacity, and the Victorian and the Tasmanian state fisheries both being open.

31. In formulating its advice regarding a commercial scallop TAC, the MAC noted the following:

- The recommendations made by the RAG were appropriate and widely agreed with maintaining the TAC at 4,000 tonnes for the 2024 season, on the basis that:

- the 2023 season under-caught TAC does not reflect that there are any sustainability issues with the fishery;
- the Tasmanian and Victorian scallop fisheries are open; and
- it provides stability for industry and is an indication that the fishery is well-managed and there is a healthy biomass of scallops for industry to utilise sustainably.

32. Those members and invited participants with declared potential conflicts of interest left the meeting while recommendations were made.

Recommendation 2: Consistent with arrangements in 2023, the RCA may be caught pre-season and in-season, in years where the fishery is open to commercial fishing, and the TAC is above 1500 tonnes

Recommendation 3: The commercial scallop TAC be set at 4,000t (less research catch allowance).

2024 doughboy scallop TAC

33. The MAC noted the key points made by the RAG regarding setting a doughboy scallop TAC for the 2024 season:

- The BSCZSF Harvest Strategy allows for a TAC for doughboy scallops to be determined at different levels each year, however as this species is not generally targeted the default TAC of 100 tonnes is typically applied;
- A 100 tonnes TAC allows for exploration of the fishery and markets; and
- Considering the number of doughboy scallop quota statutory fishing rights (SFRs), a reduction in the TAC may limit individual SFR holder's ability to explore the fishery and markets.

The MAC supported the RAG recommendation of 100 tonnes.

34. Those members and invited participants with declared potential conflicts of interest left the meeting while recommendations were made.

Recommendation 4: The MAC supported the RAG recommendation for doughboy scallop set at 100t.

2024 area closures

35. The MAC noted the following background regarding area closures:

- In order for an area/scallop bed to be closed under the Harvest Strategy it must have been surveyed during the biomass survey, with any beds that are closed, remaining closed for the entire fishing season.
- Beds fished that exceed a discard rate of 20 per cent of scallops less than 85 mm will be closed under a voluntary arrangement applied by industry via the Industry Co-Management Committee.

36. The MAC noted the key points made by the RAG regarding the 2024 biomass survey and advice regarding area closures for the 2024 season:

- Based on the past commercial catches, it is unlikely that the total TAC would be caught from a singular region of the fishery. However, a level of precaution should be applied through the TAC and closures, noting sustainability concerns if the total TAC was caught from a single bed. The Principles for prioritising survey beds document recommends that closures are implemented across the Flinders Island, King Island and Apollo Bay sites.
- The following areas were recommended for closure by ScallopRAG on the basis of the 2024 biomass survey data;

- **Table 1.** Commercial scallop beds suggested for closures in 2024 with biomass (tonnes ≥ 85 mm in size) and density (individual/m²) of scallops. AB= Apollo Bay, FI= Flinders Island and KI= King Island

Scallop bed	Estimated biomass ≥ 85 mm (t)	Density (individual/m ²)
AB The Hill North	1,742	0.33
FI	995	0.28
FI North of Babel	283	0.1
KI Three Hummocks South (Deep)	9,587	2.0
Total	12,610	-

- The requirement to close a minimum of 3,000 tonnes has been met, as well as the requirement of the principles document to capture closures in all three regions.

37. In formulating its advice regarding area closures, the MAC noted the following:

- These closures align with the requirements of both the Harvest Strategy in terms of biomass, and the *Principles for prioritising survey beds* document in terms of spatial coverage.
- The Three Hummocks Deep bed provides a high level of biomass that meets the closure requirements of the Harvest Strategy on its own.
- The closure sites were selected to maximise opportunities to industry, whilst closing an appropriate level of biomass.
- The RAGs closure recommendations incorporate a total biomass of 12,610 tonnes.

38. The MAC adopted the RAG's area closure recommendations.

39. Those members and invited participants with declared potential conflicts of interest left the meeting while recommendations were made.

40. **Recommendation 5:** The MAC adopted the RAG's area closure recommendations.

2024 fishing season dates

41. In formulating its advice regarding fishing season dates, the MAC noted the following:

- In recent years, the season has commenced in July, after the pre-season survey, and closed on 31 December to protect settling or newly settled scallop spat.
- The [Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Management Plan 2002](#) states that the fishing season be 'a period determined by AFMA'.
 - Given that the season opened on 8 July last season, industry is broadly planning towards this date for the season opening.
 - It is unlikely that industry will seek to fish in the BSCZSF immediately, given that the Tasmanian scallop fishery will be open.
 - ScallopRAG recommended that the season should open as soon as possible, and recommended that the season opens on the 06 July 2024 and close on 31 December 2024.

The MAC recommended the season open on 6 July and close 31 December 2024.

42. Those members and invited participants with declared potential conflicts of interest left the meeting while recommendations were made.

43. Recommendation 6: The MAC recommended the season open on 6 July and close 31 December 2024.

Climate Change

44. The ScallopMAC considered information provided at the meeting by AFMA about the expected impact of climate change on the Bass Strait, namely increased variability in key indicators and water temperature. ScallopMAC considered that the annual biomass survey and TAC setting process enable AFMA to respond quickly to changes in the fishery and that the TAC is sufficiently precautionary to account for any potential risks posed by climate change.
45. Those members and invited participants with declared potential conflicts of interest left the meeting while recommendations were made.
46. The members and invited participants who declared a potential conflict returned to the meeting.

Agenda Item 6 – Harvest Strategy review update

47. AFMA provided an update on the research project scope to undertake a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) of the proposed Harvest Control Rules for the Harvest Strategy. Both ScallopRAG and ScallopMAC supported this project as a high priority for funding in 2024-25:
- A proposal to undertake this work was submitted by IMAS for consideration by the AFMA Research Committee (ARC). Due primarily to significant constraints around the 2024-25 research budget the proposal was not supported by the ARC;
 - AFMA Management still consider this work a high priority in supporting the process revising the Harvest Strategy as well as being critical to the ongoing MSC accreditation process. AFMA is currently working with MSC proponents to pursue alternate cost effective avenues for achieving the objectives of this work; and
 - It is proposed that the project be supported for ARC consideration in AFMA's 2024 call for research, at the highest (essential) priority, which will be further discussed at agenda item 8 (Research Priorities)
48. The MAC noted the following ScallopRAG advice regarding incorporation of the proposed Harvest Control Rules (HCR) framework into the [Harvest Strategy](#):
- The importance (i.e. essential) for this work to be completed, not just for the MSC accreditation but for improving the ongoing management for the fishery and also noting this review is long overdue.
 - Discussed the project being undertaken in stages or receive funding from other places, such as FRDC, however it was acknowledged that FRDC rarely undertake MSE work.
 - Discussion took place in relation to harmonisation across jurisdictions by co-developing a revised harvest strategy with state fisheries

Action 2: The economic member will engage with state representatives on the co-development of a revised project proposal to test the proposed HCR for the harvest strategy.

Agenda Item 7 – Economics Condition Index.

49. Invited participant , Robert Curtotti (ABARES), presented an introduction of the initial concepts and work in developing an economic condition index (ECI) for the BSCZSF.
50. The MAC noted the following:

- The ECI is a relatively simple index that provides contextual information regarding the economic performance of fishery.
- AFMA and ABARES confirmed that the costs of the ECI would be low and likely covered by ABARES within its existing budget.
- Given that the operators in the Commonwealth fishery tend to be dual endorsed, for this to be effective it should include cross jurisdictional information and include fuel prices and labour costs, noting that without additional information from industry ABARES could still provide a reasonable index from readily available information.

Action 3: ABARES will present the developed ECI findings at the next MAC meeting, scheduled for June 2025.

Agenda Item 8 – Research priorities

51. The AFMA member introduced the Agenda Item and asked the ScallopMAC to note the [BSCZSF Five Year Strategic Research Plan 2022-26](#), the Annual Research Statement, and sought ScallopRAG’s advice on priority research for 2025-26 to be included in the Annual Research Statement.

52. ScallopMAC noted ScallopRAG advice and supported the following priority research projects for inclusion in the [Annual Research Statement](#) and consideration for funding in 2025-26:

AFMA funding

- BSCZSF annual biomass Survey including target species and bycatch with the contract to cover a three year period (2025-2027).
- Developing a MSE for the Harvest Strategy (inc. testing of the proposed HCR framework)

53. The ScallopMAC discussed the following:

- The MAC reiterated how crucial the MSE testing work will be to finalising the harvest strategy and agreed to mark this as essential research. Discussion took place regarding the completion of the new harvest strategy using multiyear TACs (MYTACs) which could provide flexibility on season dates and may also provide a cost saving to the fishery.
- The annual biomass survey was included in the research priorities noting that if the fishery changes to MYTACs there will be no obligation to carry out the survey every year, only as required by the new MYTAC/Harvest strategy these changes can then be reflected in the contracts for this work.

Recommendation/Action

Recommendation 6: ScallopRAG support the biomass survey as an essential research priority for the 2025-2026 period.

Recommendation 7: ScallopRAG support the MSE of the Harvest Strategy, including testing of the proposed HCR framework as an essential research priority for 2025-26.

Agenda Item 9 – Electronic monitoring

54. The AFMA member introduced and the agenda item and was seeking advice from the MAC:

- While high quality data on bycatch is collected from the annual biomass survey, there is no in-season monitoring of the fishery and zero bycatch reported in logbooks by fishers despite various education programs.

- The consequence of having zero fishery data on bycatch has contributed to a high number of high risk species being identified in the ERA process. There is no information from fishery data to reduce residual risk scores which may result in resources being dedicated to reducing risk ratings unnecessarily.
- In the 2023 MSC audit it was noted that reporting of secondary species within the BSCZSF lacked independent validation outside the annual biomass survey with very little to no bycatch or discards recorded in logbooks. A requirement for the MSC accreditation is to implement a program to ensure species level information, at a scale relevant to the fishery is adequate to manage secondary species.
- AFMA observers have not been present in the BSCZSF since 2010 although historical observer data show catch of different organisms including, sponges, crabs and sea stars. As there has been no significant change in gear in this time, it is an assumption that these organisms are still caught in the fishery. AFMA intends to place an observer on a vessel at the beginning of the 2024 fishing season to observe bycatch and verify the feasibility for EM. This provides an opportunity to scope out the layouts of the boats to understand where the best camera placement might be for EM application.
- AFMA is currently working with MSC proponents to make arrangements for observers to commence the feasibility work, with the hope to trial EM later in the 2024 season.

55. The ScallopMAC discussed the following:

- It was reiterated that as a result of the lack of fishery dependant data in logbooks on discards and bycatch hinders MSC and does not meet discard reporting required by AFMA. Although data is collected during the annual survey, industry made it clear that it is not representative of the catch during the season, however without t consistent (Logbook) discard reporting this may be the only data available .
- To meet MSC accreditation it was suggested that EM be installed to meet monitoring conditions for the season and then removed from the boats. However, it was noted that this will be costly and does not address the ongoing mandatory reporting requirements of AFMA.
- Industry voiced concerned over the privacy and confidentiality of the footage recorded however were reassured that protections similar to those in place as the other fisheries that already have EM.
- Industry agreed to a short term trial after which a review will be conducted prior to any decision being made on the entire BSCZSF.
- Further work is required to see if EM is appropriate across more fisheries to monitor and provide detailed information on bycatch. Costs need to be consider however to maintain MSC certification the MSC boats could trial the cameras and identify issues to there use on scallop boats. Observers are needed at the start of the season to monitor bycatch to provide base line bycatch/discard data prior to the installation of EM.
- AFMA to work closely with Atlantis Consulting who represent the scallop fishers and then MSC team undertaking the reaccreditation process.

Action 4: AFMA to meet with Atlantis Consulting to explore a short term trial in the BSCZSF to assess options for an ongoing EM program which would assist in meeting the data needs of the fishery.

Agenda Item 10 – Other business

56. The AFMA member introduced the Agenda item and asked the MAC to provide advice on the membership of the Co-management committee.

57. The MAC noted Renee Pearce's departure from the position as the Bass Strait Scallop Industry Association observer and agreed that Brad Milic as the Atlantis Industry representative was an appropriate candidate to fill the vacant position.

Recommendation 5: The ScallopMAC recommend that

- a) Brad Milic to be appointed to the BSCZFS Co-Management Committee as the Atlantis Industry representative observer; and
- b) membership of the BSCZFS Co-Management Committee be reviewed annually.

Close of meeting

58. The Chair thanked the MAC for their contribution to the meeting and wished industry all the best for the 2024 fishing season.

59. The meeting was closed at 15:03.

Attachment A - Register of interest

Table 2 declared interests

Name	Membership	Declared interests
Ian Dutton	Chair	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Brendan Kelaher	Scientific Member	ScallopRAG Chair. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Andrew Watts	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions
Stuart Richey	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State fishing concessions, Commonwealth fish receiver permit and State processing licences. Chair CFA.
John Hammond	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
John Cull	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions
Steven Mantzaris	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions
Caleb Gardner	Economic member	Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies. Organisation is known to submit research funding applications for consideration by ScallopMAC
Sylvia Zukowski	Environment Member	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise
Steve Hall	AFMA member	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Alannah Wood	Executive Officer	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Matt Koopman	Invited participant, Fishwell Consulting	Fishwell Consulting employee. Fishwell have undertaken the BSCZSF survey since 2015. Fishwell also submit research funding applications and undertake research projects for Commonwealth, State and International fisheries agencies and other organisations including fishery associations and private companies. This includes catch and effort data from the BSCZSF. No other interest in any commercial fisheries.
Bob Lister	Invited participant, Industry	Executive Officer, Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania. Represents all Bass strait central zone fishers and processors. No financial interest in the fishery.

Ewan Flanagan	Invited participant, VFA	VFA employee, No interest in the pecuniary or otherwise.
James Parkinson	Invited participant, NRE Tasmania	NRE Tasmania employee, no interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Dan Corrie	Presenter	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Miriana Sporcic	Presenter	CSIRO employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Sally Weekes	Observer, AFMA Management	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Brad Milic	Observer, Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group	Employed by Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group, representing industry clients. Also employed by Australian Longline Fishing which holds various fishing rights in, and operates vessels in Antarctic and sub-Antarctic fisheries and New and Exploratory fisheries under the jurisdiction of CCAMLR.

Attachment B – Summary of 2024 Biomass survey

Table 2. 2024 Biomass survey summary

<i>Area</i>	<i>Bed</i>	<i>Estimated biomass (t)</i>	<i>% weight > 85 mm</i>	<i>Estimated biomass > 85 mm (t)</i>	<i>Density (ind/m²)</i>	<i>Mean Length</i>	<i>Meat / kg Mean</i>
<i>Apollo Bay</i>	<i>AB The Hill North</i>	<i>3,304</i>	<i>52.7</i>	<i>1742</i>	<i>0.33</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>97</i>
<i>Flinders Island</i>	<i>FI-FI1</i>	<i>1125</i>	<i>88.4</i>	<i>995</i>	<i>0.28</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>74</i>
	<i>FI North - The Sisters</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>87.2</i>	<i>234</i>	<i>0.18</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>78</i>
	<i>FI South – North of Babel</i>	<i>517</i>	<i>54.6</i>	<i>283</i>	<i>0.10</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>51</i>
	<i>FI- North of babel NE</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>62.1</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>0.005</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>King Island</i>	<i>KI-10</i>	<i>2056</i>	<i>70.3</i>	<i>1444</i>	<i>1.09</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>90</i>
	<i>KI-9</i>	<i>1352</i>	<i>48.7</i>	<i>658</i>	<i>0.24</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>151</i>
	<i>KI-Three Hummock South</i>	<i>9435</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>7075</i>	<i>1.55</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>83</i>
	<i>KI Three Hummocks South East</i>	<i>7837</i>	<i>85.9</i>	<i>6732</i>	<i>3.23</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>86</i>
	<i>KI -6</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>58.9</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>0.01</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>111</i>
	<i>KI Lavinia East</i>	<i>7932</i>	<i>97.2</i>	<i>7707</i>	<i>1.46</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>115</i>
	<i>KI Lavinia North</i>	<i>17760</i>	<i>97.4</i>	<i>17290</i>	<i>3.44</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Total</i>		<i>51627</i>		<i>44185</i>			

Attachment C – Action items and recommendations

Table 3. Actions from meeting 39

Agenda Item	No.	Action	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
2.2	1	AFMA to explore the potential of moving the scallop season start date earlier in the year due noticeable developmental changes in scallops potentially caused by climatic changes.	AFMA	ScallopMAC 40
6	2	The economic member will engage with state representatives on the co-development of a revised harvest strategy and explore potential inputs/outputs for the project.	Economic Member	ScallopMAC 40
7	3	ABARES will present the developed ECI findings at the next MAC meeting, scheduled for June 2025.	ABARES	ScallopMAC 40
9	4	AFMA to explore a short term trial in the BSCZSF to assess if an ongoing observer and EM program would be beneficial to the fishery.	AFMA	ScallopMAC 40

Table 4. Recommendations from meeting 39

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
4	1	Compile a research scope to analyse the correlation of shell vs meat size which may be used to predict the meat weight, the project should also consider meat weight with and without roe.	AFMA	
5	2	Consistent with arrangements in 2023, the RCA may be caught pre-season and in-season, in years where the fishery is open to commercial fishing, and the TAC is above 1500 tonnes	AFMA	
5	3	The commercial scallop TAC be set at 4,000t (less research catch allowance) and doughboy scallop set at 100t	AFMA	
5	4	The MAC recommended the doughboy scallop TAC beset at 100t.	AFMA	

5	5	<p>The following areas be closed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apollo Bay The Hill North, (estimated biomass ≥ 85 mm 1742 tonnes, 0.33 ind/m²) • Flinders Island, (estimated biomass ≥ 85 mm 995 tonnes, 0.28 ind/m²) • Flinders Island South (North of Babel), (estimated biomass ≥ 85 mm 283 tonnes, 0.1 ind/m²) • Three Hummocks south (deep), (estimated biomass ≥ 85 mm 9587 tonnes, 2.00 ind/m²) 	AFMA	
5	6	the fishing season open on or as soon thereafter 06 of July 2024 and close on 31 December 2024.	AFMA	
10	7	<p>a) Brad Milic to be appointed to the BSCZFS Co-Management Committee as the Atlantis Industry representative observer; and</p> <p>b) membership of the BSCZFS Co-Management Committee be reviewed annually.</p>	BSCZFS Co-Management Committee/AFMA	
8.2	8	<p>Research priorities for consideration of AFMA funding in 2025-26;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 annual biomass Survey including target species and bycatch as a low cost, high priority and feasibility • MSE evaluation as part of developing a HCR to consider management strategy evaluation, this is a medium cost, high priority and feasibility 	AFMA/ARC	