



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Scallop Resource Assessment Group (ScallopRAG) Meeting 44

Meeting minutes

6 June 2024

09:30-16:30

Park Royal Melbourne Airport



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Resource Assessment Group (ScallopRAG)

Meeting 44 – 6 June 2024

Agenda

Time (AEDT): 9:30 – 16:30

Location: Melbourne / Microsoft Teams

Chair Name: Brendan Kelaher

Approximate time	Item	Purpose	Lead presenter
9:30 (25 min)	Agenda item 1. Preliminaries		
	1.1 Welcome and apologies	For noting	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 Actions arising from previous meetings	For noting	AFMA
9:55 (45 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 update		State observers
	2.4 Economic		Economic member
	2.5 Research		Scientific member
10:40 (15 mins)	Morning Tea		
10:55 (25 min)	Agenda item 3. Climate change	For noting	AFMA
11:20 (50 min)	Agenda item 4. 2024 pre-season survey	For noting	Fishwell
12:10 (50 min)	Agenda item 5. 2024 season recommendations		
	5.1 TAC (commercial and doughboy)	For advice	AFMA
	5.2 Closures		
	5.3 Season dates		
13:00 (45 min)	Lunch		
13:45 (15 min)	Agenda item 6. Harvest Strategy review	For advice	AFMA
14:00 (30 min)	Agenda item 7. Economic condition index	For advice	ABARES
14:30 (20 min)	Agenda item 8. Bycatch & Discard Workplan		
	BSCZSF ERA update	For noting	AFMA
14:50 (45 min)	Agenda item 9. Research priorities	For advice	AFMA
15:35 (15 min)	Afternoon Tea		

15:50 (20 min)	Agenda Item 10. Electronic monitoring	For Noting	AFMA
16:10 (30 min)	Agenda item 11. Other business	For noting	AFMA
16:25	End of meeting		

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:30.

Agenda Item 1. Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair, Professor Brendan Kelaher, welcomed members and observers to the meeting and made an Acknowledgement of Country, paying respects to Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians, their cultures and Elders past present and emerging.
2. The Scallop Resource Assessment Group (RAG) members noted the Acknowledgement of Country, that the meeting was being recorded and commenced proceedings.

Apologies were received from Jayson Semmens, James Parkinson and Ewan Flanagan.

3. Membership

<i>Members</i>	
Brendan Kelaher	Chair
Jayson Semmens	Scientific member
Don Bromhead	Scientific member
Stuart Richey	Industry member
John Cull	Industry member
Caleb Gardener	Economic Member
Steve Hall	AFMA member
Alannah Wood	Executive officer
Invited Participants	
Matt Koopman	Fishwell Consulting (Marine Mammal Project)
Brad Milic	Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group
James Parkinson	DNRET
Ewan Flanagan	VFA
Robert Curtotti	ABARES
Dan Corrie	AFMA
Steph Brodie	CSIRO

Angela Cao	ABARES
Observers	
Sally Weekes	AFMA Observer
Stephanie Blake	ABARES

1.2 Member responsibilities

- The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) provided a refresher on the member responsibilities focusing particularly on the *Fisheries Administration Paper 12* (FAP 12) section 4.1.

1.3 Declarations of interest

- The RAG members followed the conflict of interest declarations as outlined in [Fisheries Administration Paper 12 \(FAP12\) – Resource Assessment Groups](#). Members and participants reviewed and updated the Declarations of Interest included at [Attachment A](#). Potential conflicts were declared, industry members for Agenda items 5.1 (TAC) and research member for Agenda item 9 (Research priorities).
- Chair asked members to consider that Industry members were valuable in the discussion regarding the 2024 Season recommendations with the RAG unanimously deciding that Industry members and invited participants would be involved in the discussion but would not be present for the final recommendation.
- Chair asked members to consider that scientific members were valuable in the discussion regarding the research priorities for 2025-26 with the RAG 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 recommendation.
- Chair asked members to consider that Economic members were valuable in the discussion regarding the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification and Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF) Harvest Strategy (the Harvest Strategy) with the RAG unanimously deciding that Industry members and invited participants would be involved in the discussion but would not be present for the final recommendation.

1.4 Adoption of agenda

- The agenda was adopted as final.

1.5 Minutes of previous meeting

- AFMA advised that the Minutes from the ScallopRAG 43 meeting on 14 March 2024 were distributed to RAG members for feedback prior to finalisation and are available on the AFMA website.

1.6 Actions arising from previous meetings

- AFMA provided an overview of action items ([Attachment B](#)).

Agenda Item 2 – Fishery Update

- The Chair introduced the Agenda Item and asked the RAG to note the AFMA Management, State fishery, industry, economic and research updates for the BSCZSF.

2.1 AFMA Management

- AFMA provided the following update on matters relevant to the management of the BSCZSF:
 - Sally Weekes was recently appointed as permanent Senior Manager of Demersal and Midwater section;

- 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).
- Catch rates were high up until the end of the 2023 season, however industry reported a decline in meat quality from October to December. Overall, it was viewed as a positive season with about four times the catch compared to 2022. Unlike the 2022 season where most BSCZSF operators opted to fish in Tasmanian waters, in 2023 operators opted to fish in Commonwealth waters, particularly in the latter half of the season (October to December), due to the abundance of higher quality scallops that offset the longer steaming times.

2.2 Industry

14. The Industry members provided further updates on the BSCZSF Tasmanian scallop fishery, including:

- Acknowledged a good fishing season in 2023 although quality deteriorated in Tasmania and then improved at King Island.
- Under caught due to processing limitations.
- High quantity scallops, however, the quality deteriorated towards the end of the season.
- The issue appears to be a large quantity of scallops without enough food to support the numbers, fishers thinned the scallops by skimming the top of the beds to improve quality and will reassess scallop beds later in the season.

2.2.1 MSC

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

- 6 of the 11 conditions from the initial 2023 audit are currently behind target;
- Some processors have Chain of custody accreditation but note this is only useful if the Fishery MSC Certification is maintained.
- Principle 1 – MSC has been assessed that there is no evidence the Harvest Strategy is meeting its objectives and that a regular review process needs to be implemented to reduce unwanted scallop catch.
- Principle 2 – Implement a regular review process for alternate measure to reduce bycatch and TEPs. Implement regular monitoring to detect changes in benthic habitats, including VMEs. Fishery dependant data needs to be collected (i.e., bycatch and discards reported in logbooks) in addition to information from the ERA and minutes from the MAC and RAG.
- Principle 3 – Short- and long-term objectives for managing Bycatch required to be explicitly expressed

2.2 State fisheries

16. Industry provided the following update on State scallop fishery:

- Tasmania has seven boats fishing. The weekend commencing 1 June, a voluntary survey was underway to determine the fishery biomass and potential bed closures for the 2024 season, with a planned fishery opening in early July.
- It was noted that the Victorian fishery has very limited activity and it is unlikely to have more than exploratory fishing this season.

17. James Parkinson, Tasmanian State representative, provided the following written update on the Tasmanian Fishery:

- For the 2023 season the total catch was 1,188 tonnes, 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 and will commence the weekend of 1 June.
- A drop camera survey of the Boags Marine Park occurred last year, with the data from this survey being used to determine if it should be considered a spawning biomass closed area.
- The fishery is planned to open in early July.

2.4 Economic

18. The Chair welcomed Caleb Gardner to the position as the new economic member and noted the progress on the economic conditions index that would be discussed in agenda item 7 with the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES).

2.5 Research

19. The scientific members did not have anything to update the RAG on.

Agenda Item 3 - Climate Change

20. 20. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (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.

21. The RAG noted the following:

- Australian waters have warmed significantly over time, approximately 0.5 degree warmer than average. 2024 temperatures 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 El Nino-Southern Oscillation (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 of sea surface temperature anomalies 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.

22. The RAG Discussed the following:

- The temperature depth loggers being used in the boats of opportunity project will potentially provide beneficial information as surface temperature does not necessarily indicate temperature at depth. CSIRO confirmed that when data from this project becomes available it will be incorporated into annual climate reports.
- The Southern Australian coastal upwelling was a lot further west in 2023-24. For western Bass Strait, temperatures were between 12°C to 15°C on the seafloor and 17 °C at Flinders with Industry hoping cold water will move further north. There were no reports of dead scallops coming out of the BSCZSF area as a result of the marine heatwaves experienced in 2023.

Agenda Item 3 – 2024 biomass survey results

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

- Acknowledging and thanking the skippers and crew of the boats that participated in the survey for their valuable contribution.
- A summary of the methods used for the survey was provided to the RAG.
- The summary of data collected for each of the beds surveyed during 2024, includes estimates of biomass (tonnes), percentage of weight $\geq 85\text{mm}$, estimated biomass of scallops $\geq 85\text{mm}$, density of individuals per square metre, mean size and meat weight per kilogram.
- Noting the Flinders Island 1 (FI1) 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 FI1 bed, biomass and size frequency are representative of the full F1 bed.

The RAG noted the outcomes of the biomass survey and provided the following comments:

- The limit of a 0.2 ind/m² density level was acknowledged as the minimum density that should be considered for a closure and that it was introduced in the Harvest Strategy when the fishery was not doing so well. It was agreed to aim higher than this if possible as a limit for closures.

Agenda Item 5 – 2024 fishing season recommendations

24. The AFMA member introduced the Agenda Item and asked the RAG to consider the results of the 2024 biomass survey (Agenda Item 4) and provide advice to the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) and the AFMA Commission on Total Allowable Catches (TACs), closures and season dates for the BSCZSF 2024 fishing season.

Research Catch Allowance (RCA)

25. Consistent with arrangements in 2023, ScallopRAG supported the RCA being caught pre-season and in-season, in years where the fishery would be open to commercial fishing, and the TAC above 1500 tonnes.

2024 doughboy scallop TAC

26. In formulating its advice, the RAG made the following key points:

- The 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 t is typically applied;
- A 100 t 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.

2024 commercial scallop TAC

27. In formulating its advice, ScallopRAG noted:

- Tier 2 of the Harvest Strategy is the most appropriate approach given the estimated biomass of scallops greater than 85 mm was 44,185 tonnes. Noting that this estimate is only for the beds surveyed and not a total estimate of the biomass in the fishery.
- The Harvest Strategy does not provide any guidance on how to set the TAC relative to large biomasses. The review of the Harvest Strategy and proposed harvest control rule (HCR) framework is intended to address this issue.
- Based on the results of the biomass survey and sustainability alone, a TAC could be set above of 4,000 tonnes.
- ScallopRAG discussed the merit of using the previous seasons TAC as a starting point for the TAC discussion.
- ScallopRAG considered TACs higher than 2023, noting that maintaining the 2023 TAC of 4,000 tonnes would provide stability and consistency to industry in the context of current operational and economic factors.
- Consistent with its advice to the AFMA Commission in 2023, the RAG noted that while the Harvest Strategy is under review, the primary TAC setting consideration should be sustainability.
- Industry members noted that it is unlikely that significant catch will be taken in the BSCZSF in 2024 (similar to 2023, a relatively positive year in relation to scallop catch, when 1983 t was taken) when taking into account expected fishing opportunities in the adjacent State scallop fisheries.
- Any undercatch in the 2024 fishing season is likely to be due to operational reasons, noting that the TAC has not been fully caught in the last three seasons for this reason. A number of factors are likely to impact the total catch in the fishery in 2024, including fleet capacity, processing capacity, and the Victorian and the Tasmanian State fisheries both being open. With operators targeting the best quality scallops across the open fisheries.
- 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.
- Similar to previous years, the RCA from the pre-season biomass survey would be subtracted from the TAC
- There is limited economic data to help support the TAC setting process. The ScallopRAG discussed an approach for considering economics in the management of the BSCZSF which will be presented and discussed at agenda item 7.

2024 spatial closures

28. In formulating its advice, ScallopRAG noted:

- While not defined in the Harvest Strategy, ScallopRAG in a priorities document noted it is important that closures represent the spatial extent of the fishery.
- It is possible to close part of a bed and obtain a biomass estimate for that area.

- Consideration should be given to the long-term economics and the value that closed areas provide to the fishery in future seasons. This includes the proximity of the beds to ports due to the increase in operational costs such as fuel prices.
- Previous genetic studies have indicated that the scallops in the Flinders Island North of Babel bed are more closely related to the scallop beds on the east coast of Tasmania than the other beds at the Flinders Island area. Noting the genetic importance of the scallops in this bed, ScallopRAG considered closing this bed.
- A closure of the Flinders Island 1 bed would support protection of recruitment and spawning scallops in the Flinders Island area, noting its long-term reliability in providing density and biomass estimates. It was noted that while fishers have been keen to target this area, there has not been any fishing activity at this site recently, and it is unlikely in 2024 due to operational and economic factors (mentioned above).
- In the Three Hummocks South site the RAG suggested the bed be divided from the north western point to the south eastern point with the eastern side proposed for closure. The Three Hummocks eastern side was considered for closure due to deeper waters and higher number of scallops <85mm.
- The suggested spatial closures protect an estimated spawning biomass of 12,610 tonnes of scallops 85 mm or greater (29 per cent of the estimated spawning biomass surveyed; see Table 1)

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	-

2024 fishing season dates

29. In formulating its advice, ScallopRAG noted:

- AFMA requires a minimum of three weeks between the RAG/MAC meetings and the season opening to prepare for the season rollover;
- The season start date has typically been set in the second week of July and industry generally plans towards this opening date;
- AFMA are planning to have the fishery opened on Saturday 6 July 2024; and
- Industry supported an opening date of 6 July, noting that AFMA will need sufficient time to provide seven days' notice to concession holders prior to the opening of the season.

Climate Change

30. The ScallopRAG also considered information provided at the meeting by AFMA about the expected impact of climate change in Bass Strait – namely increased variability in key indicators and increased

water temperature. ScallopRAG considered that the annual biomass survey and TAC setting process enable AFMA to respond quickly to changes in the fishery and that the recommended TAC is sufficiently precautionary to account for any potential risks posed by climate change.

31. Those members, Brad Milic, Stuart Richey and John Cull, who declared a potential conflict left the meeting while the recommendations were being formed.

Recommendations

Noting the advice above, the ScallopRAG made the following recommendations to the MAC and the AFMA Commission regarding arrangements for the BSCZSF 2024 fishing season:

Recommendation 1: 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 2: The doughboy scallop TAC be set at 100 tonnes and the commercial scallop TAC be set at 4,000 tonnes (less the RCA)

Recommendation 3: The following areas be closed

- 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)

Recommendation 4: the fishing season open on or as soon thereafter 6 of July 2024 and close on 31 December 2024.

Agenda Item 6 - Harvest strategy review update

32. Advice was sought from the RAG regarding incorporation of the proposed HCR framework into the [Harvest Strategy](#), future work to inform the Harvest Strategy including the population dynamics project and the merits of pursuing the development of an economic conditions index to inform management of fishery.
33. AFMA provided an update on the research project scope to undertake a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) of the Harvest Strategy and test the proposed HCR framework that ScallopRAG and ScallopMAC supported as a high priority as part of AFMA's 2023 call for research, including:
- A proposal to undertake this work was submitted by the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (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)
34. The ScallopRAG noted the following:

- The importance (i.e. essential) for this work to be completed, not only for the MSC accreditation but for improving the ongoing management for the fishery and noted the review is long overdue.
- It was discussed how the work may be conducted in smaller portions, or alternatively receive funding from other sources, such as FRDC although it was acknowledged that FRDC do not undertake MSE work.

Agenda Item 7 – Economic conditions index

35. Economic member, Robert Curtotti (ABARES), presented an introduction of the initial concepts and work in developing an economic condition index (ECI) for the BSCZSF.
36. The ScallopRAG noted the following:
- The economic member suggested incorporating processor information and labour costs as these factors appear to impact the fishery. The more factors considered, the more useful the ECI will be. These can also include factors that are not controlled by fishers such as fuel prices.
 - It was noted that the ECI would not be used to directly set TACs but sit outside the Harvest Strategy and provide contextual information on the economic state of the fishery and factors impacting that to inform management and the AFMA Commission.
 - Industry members raised concern over funding for the ECI and noted this project would not be Industry funded. AFMA and ABARES confirmed that the costs of the ECI would be low and likely covered by ABARES within its existing budget.

Recommendations/Action

Recommendation 5: Noting industry's views regarding costs(above), ScallopRAG support the development of an ECI for the BSCZSF as low cost contextual information to inform management.

Agenda Item 8 – Bycatch and discard workplan

37. The ScallopRAG noted an update from AFMA on the status of the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) for the BSCZSF, stating that bycatch analysis from the biomass surveys will provide a more informed risk assessment of bycatch species and ultimately also inform an update of AFMA's Bycatch and Discard Workplan.

AFMA is proposing the following;

- Further work regarding the collection and collation of supporting evidence is required by CSIRO for its consideration in reviewing residual risk assessments for high risk species.
- AFMA will reconvene with the ScallopRAG to discuss this work later in 2024 and provide the supporting evidence for CSIRO's consideration.

38. The ScallopRAG noted the following:

- A number of species identified as high risk in the ERA have limited information available particularly relating to species fecundity. This was identified as a potential student project, however it is unlikely to align with the required time frames.

Agenda Item 8 – Research priorities

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

40. ScallopRAG 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 (2026-2028).
- Developing a MSE for the Harvest Strategy (inc. testing of the proposed HCR framework)

41. The ScallopRAG noted the following:

- That if it was decided to move to a multiyear TAC (MYTAC) this could be written into the contract allowing variation from annual to biannual or other arrangement if it is so decided in the future.
- The importance of the MSE project was reiterated as this will inform an update to the Harvest Strategy, provide for potential MYTACs, and address MSC accreditation requirements. MSE testing of the Harvest Strategy was last carried out in 2011 and the implementation of an updated strategy is a priority to ensure the fishery is managed as efficiently as possible.
- ScallopRAG would like to see a presentation on the use of video technology project recently undertaken while completing the 2024 scallop surveys in Tasmanian waters. The outcomes from this project could provide information on the feasibility for undertaking similar video work in the BSCZSF.

Recommendations/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.

Action Item 1: AFMA to contact Dr Ryan Day (UTAS), the principle investigator (PI) of the project investigating the use of video survey techniques to determine commercial scallop abundance and request a presentation for ScallopRAG on the outcomes of this project.

Agenda Item 10 –Electronic monitoring (EM)

42. The AFMA member introduced the potential for an EM trial in the Scallop fishery and asked the RAG to note the following:

- 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 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 surveys with very little to no bycatch or discards recorded in logbooks. A condition for the fishery MSC accreditation is to ensure the

collection of 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, hermit crabs and sea stars. As there has been no significant change in gear in this time, it is assumed that these organisms are still caught in the fishery. AFMA discussed to be placing 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 and trial EM later in the 2024 season.

43. The RAG discussed the following:

- Industry advised they would participate in an EM trial but did not want to incur the ongoing costs associated with the trial or an ongoing monitoring program.
- It was noted that there are no logbook records of discards or bycatch in past years including that of juvenile scallops, this hinders MSC accreditation and does not comply with AFMA requirements to record bycatch and discards.
- Industry provided context around the gear used advising that a 95mm tumbler is used to purposely exclude juvenile scallops with the survey not representative of fishing operations as fishers are much more selective at minimising bycatch and discards.

Action Item 2: AFMA to approach Fishwell Consulting to overlay survey data with known fishing areas to gain a more representative assessment on the potential level of bycatch in the fishery.

Agenda Item 11 – Other business

Harvest Strategy review working group membership

44. The AFMA member provided a background on the BSCZSF Harvest Strategy Review Working Group (the Working Group) and its Terms of Reference and asked the RAG to consider current membership of the Working Group.

Recommendation 8: ScallopRAG supports the current membership of the BSCZSF Harvest Strategy Review Working Group.

Remuneration

45. The AFMA Member provided an update on remuneration for ScallopRAG members and requested that all claims for reimbursement be received prior to the end of financial year.

Close of meeting

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

47. The meeting was closed at 15:49.

Attachment A- register of interest

Table 2. Declared interests

Name	Membership	Declared interests
Brendan Kelaher	Chair	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Jayson Semmens	Scientific member	Scallop Research Group Leader, Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies. Organisation is known to submit research funding applications for consideration by ScallopRAG
Don Bromhead	Scientific member	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Stuart Richey	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State fishing concessions, Commonwealth fish receiver permit and State processing licences.
John Cull	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
Caleb Gardner	Economic Member	Employee of IMAS, UTAS. Organisation is known to submit research funding applications for consideration by ScallopRAG.
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 pecuniary interest in any commercial fisheries.
Sally Weekes	AFMA	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Dan Corrie	AFMA	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Steph Brodie	CSIRO Presenter	Employed by the CSIRO and through the organisation either has in the past or may in the future, receive funding for research related to the fishery.

Brad Milic	Invited Participant, Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group	<p>Employed by Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group, representing industry clients.</p> <p>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.</p>
Stephanie Blake	Observer	No pecuniary interests in scallop fishery, involved in fisheries research with ABARES, but none linked to the scallop fishery.
Robert Curtotti	ABARES	No pecuniary interests in scallop fishery, involved in fisheries research with ABARES, but none linked to the scallop fishery.
Angela Cao	ABARES	No pecuniary interests in scallop fishery, involved in fisheries research with ABARES, but none linked to the scallop fishery.

Attachment B – Previous action items and recommendations

Table 2. Action items from previous ScallopRAG meetings

Agenda Item	No.	Action	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
3	3	AFMA to enquire with Fishwell the potential for the Population Dynamics project to inform assumptions on M.	AFMA/Fishwell Consulting	Prior to ScallopRAG42
2.3	1	AFMA and state representatives to raise/discuss the new state VMS requirement at ScallopMAC and confirm that Commonwealth Fishery (AIS) requirements including software and interface with elogs will be compatible.	AFMA	
5	4	AFMA, the ScallopRAG Economic Member and BSCZSF industry to work together to develop a fit for purpose economic conditions index to inform management of the fishery and provide an update of progress to the next ScallopRAG meeting in 2024.	AFMA/ABARES/Industry	Prior to commencement of project (1 July 2023)
3	1	AFMA to organise a meeting, prior to the June RAG and MAC, with ABARES, the ScallopRAG/MAC economic member and industry to further discuss the development of an economic conditions index for the BSCZSF.	AFMA	Prior Scallop RAG44
4	1	AFMA to meet out of session with industry and scientific members to discuss the high risk species identified in the recent ERA and evidence available to put forward a case to eliminates irrelevant species.	AFMA	4

3	3	AFMA to investigate when the two high risk species were caught and if it requires further analysis from CSIRO.	CSIRO	Prior to ScallopRAG44
---	---	--	-------	-----------------------

Table 3. Recommendations from meeting 41

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
2	1	<p>The RAG recommended that the following beds be surveyed during the 2024 survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King Island 6 • King Island 9 • King Island 10 • Three Hummock South (exploratory) • Three Hummock South East (exploratory) • King Island Lavinia (2 sites – North & East) • Apollo Bay – The Hill North • Flinders Island 1 • Flinders Island North – The Sisters • Flinders Island exploratory South • Flinders Island exploratory North • * Backup if Flinders Island exploratory sites don't yield a productive scallop bed 		

Attachment C – Action items and recommendations

Table 4. Actions from meeting 44

Agenda Item	No.	Action	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
9	1	AFMA will investigate the results of the video survey and obtain report to share with the RAG with the view to engage parks for a survey in Boags area.	AFMA	Before scallop RAG 45
9	2	AFMA to organise out of session research priorities workshop.	AFMA	Before scallop RAG 45
10	1	Ask fishwell to overlay the fishing area with survey results to assess level of bycatch in fishery that is more representative than the survey data.	AFMA	

Table 5. Recommendations from meeting 42

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
5	1	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	2	The doughboy scallop TAC be set at 100 tonnes and the commercial scallop TAC be set at 4,000 tonnes (less RCA)	AFMA	
5	3	<p>The following areas will be closed for the 2023 season</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 5364 tonnes, 2.39 ind/m²) 	AFMA	

7	1	That the RAG moves forward with the ECI as a low cost contextual piece of information, noting industries views funding. That industry has no value in it so do not want to financially contribute.	AFMA	
9	1	Recommends the biomass survey as a research priority for the 25-26 period.	AFMA	
9	2	Recommends the MSE testing as essential for the updating of the Harvest Strategy and to investigate MYTACs as an option moving forward. Will seek rag input out of session.		
11	1	ScallopRAG supports the current membership of the BSCZSF Harvest Strategy Review Working Group.		