

NEW SOUTH WALES TRAWL WHITING HARVEST STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

6th MEETING 13 APRIL 2021

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

At the previous meetings, agreement was reached on a number of critical elements of the Harvest Strategy. Namely the objectives, the use of spawning biomass as a key performance indicator, a target reference point of 48% of unfished biomass and a limit reference point of 20% of unfished biomass. It was acknowledged that a number of further elements needed to be considered to flesh out the more detailed working parts to ensure it met its objectives and could provide transparency to industry and other stakeholders as to how it was proposed to help manage the fishery.

To this end two papers were presented by Departmental representatives. The first paper set out those elements which were yet to be discussed as proposed parts of the Strategy. The paper also referenced details from the Commonwealth and Queensland Harvest Strategies (to date) for the information of the meeting.

Acknowledging that biomass assessment work would be undertaken at three yearly intervals, the meeting discussed options for tracking the health of the fishery and the performance of the Harvest Strategy for the years in-between. This involved consideration of trigger reference points between the target and limit reference points, decision rules, breakout rules and rules around reviews of the Strategy over time.

A key discussion point concerned the level of confidence in some of the current data being collected and proposed for use in the Harvest Strategy, along with the associated complexities given the fishery is multi-jurisdictional, multi species, targeted by five fleets in different areas and with different gears.

The second paper explored how the status of the stock was being determined and classified under the Status of Australian Fish Stocks (SAFS) agreed processes. This involved a discussion of the inter-play between the Biomass estimates and models and the levels of fishing mortality (or fishing pressure) in the fishery. Historical material was presented and discussed as to how this relationship had played out in the past.

It was agreed that the preliminary discussion around these issues needed to be further considered at a face-to-face meeting, particularly fishing mortality, as there is considerable complexity behind the concepts, how they are calculated, the confidence limits within them and what alternatives may be used, if any.

This will occur at the next meeting proposed to be held in early June in Ballina.

PETER NEVILLE

CHAIR, TWHSWG

14 April 2021