

NSW SPANNER CRAB HARVEST STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

Chair's Summary - 4th Meeting - 4-5 August 2022

The fourth meeting of the Spanner Crab Harvest Strategy Working Group (HSWG) took place in Ballina on Thursday & Friday 4-5 August 2022. I opened the meeting by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the lands and welcomed members and observers.

This meeting included an overview of additional harvest strategy components, including introductions to decision rules, potential approach for rebuilding should the stock become depleted in future, and periodic review and future development once implemented.

The focus of the meeting was to start to discuss and develop decision rules for the draft harvest strategy, which are a key strategy element that determines how catch should be increased, maintained or decreased in accordance with changes in fishery performance. As potential decision rules rely in particular on the strategy objectives, indicators and reference points to guide their action, these matters previously discussed were also revisited during the meeting.

The meeting was supported by provision of a developing draft of the harvest strategy, which will continue to be progressed to continue to draw the various strategy elements together, and assist the group to consider the strategy as the sum of its elements, as they will function together to maintain health of the fishery into the future.

Recognising the shared nature of the spanner crab biological stock, the group also recognised the benefits of a harvest strategy that complements the fishery by considering the relationships between the NSW and QLD fisheries, including the operation of the QLD spanner crab fishery harvest strategy: 2020-2025.

The meeting made good progress on refining indicators and reference points, and framing principles for developing decision rules for the NSW harvest strategy after considering several options potentially available. I am pleased that members are invested in this process, and that discussion demonstrates a good understanding of the fishery and options available for the group to decide upon in developing the draft strategy.

Work will continue to develop and refine the draft harvest strategy at coming meetings, and I believe the group has made good progress in developing a sound approach to support the NSW fishery and spanner crab stock well into the future.

Dr James Findlay, Chair, NSW Spanner Crab HSWG.