

Minutes

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| Meeting | Spanner Crab Harvest Strategy Working Group | | |
| Meeting Number | 5 | Dates | 9 th September 2022 |
| Location | Online via Microsoft Teams Meeting | Time | 12:30 pm – 15:30 pm |
| Members | <p>Independents: James Findlay (Chair), Julian Morison (Economist), Jeremy Prince (Scientist)</p> <p>Commercial Fishing Representatives: Andrew Rigby, John Joblin, Ian McRae, Gary Bordin,</p> <p>Mitchell Sanders (Commercial Fishing NSW Advisory Council – CommFish NSW), Tricia Beatty (Professional Fishers' Association)</p> <p>DPI Fisheries Manager: Darren Reynolds</p> <p>DPI Fisheries Scientist: Daniel Johnson</p> | | |
| Apologies | Tricia Beatty, Darren Reynolds | | |
| Observers | Samantha Miller (DAF QLD), Nicholas Giles (DPI), Rowan Chick (DPI) Ashley Fowler (DPI) Josh Cansdell (DPI) | | |

| Agenda Item | Issue | Notes & Actions |
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| 1. | Welcome and Introduction | <p>1.1 Acknowledgment of country</p> <p>The Chair opened by acknowledging Traditional Custodians and paying respects to Elders past, present and emerging.</p> <p>1.2 Apologies and Recognition of Observers</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all Working Group members and meeting guests and noted apologies from Tricia Beatty and Darren Reynolds.</p> <p>1.3 Confirmation of Agenda</p> <p>The meeting agenda was accepted without modification.</p> <p>1.4 Declaration of pecuniary interests</p> |

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| | | <p>Updates to the register of pecuniary interests were confirmed.</p> <p>1.5 Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>The previous meeting minutes were adopted without amendment.</p> |
| 2. | Review of Developing Draft Spanner Crab Harvest strategy | <p>DPI provided an overview of the developing draft of the harvest strategy including key harvest strategy elements discussed in previous meetings. The working group reviewed the draft harvest strategy with further discussion and consideration to refine the approach to the assessment, indicators and decision rules.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p><i>Indicators</i></p> <p>Members discussed the indicators selected to measure fishery performance against the respective reference levels, with these also providing the basis for function of decision rules.</p> <p>The draft reference levels for indicators have been chosen to represent longer term averages for the indicator data, with some indicators using two-year averages to provide stability. Several indicators were identified for discussion around using the average or single year data, with members suggesting preference for a strategy that is responsive to changes in fishery performance.</p> <p>It was recognised that the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) to be undertaken to evaluate performance of the decision rules will be important to assess the balance between stability and responsiveness.</p> <p>Discussion continued about a link through indicators and performance of the QLD spanner crab fishery considering the likely reliance on recruitment from the larger QLD component of the fishery. In view of the shared nature of the stock and stock characteristics, it was agreed the NSW harvest strategy should incorporate a combination of QLD and NSW data, ideally on an annual basis.</p> <p>The draft indicators, based on NSW data, including Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE) from commercial data and CPUE of undersize males from the NSW annual independent survey, as well pooled NSW/QLD data from the combined independent surveys, were discussed and agreed. Use of annual vs two-year average data for particular indicators will be further assessed through the MSE process.</p> |

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| | | <p>It was recognised that the spanner crab harvest strategy assessment period needs to be well-defined to ensure the most complete information is used to assess the performance of the fishery. The current NSW stock assessment process is by calendar year to inform a TAC determination allocated for the financial year fishing period, which may be improved as effort information becomes integrated to real time reporting systems in future.</p> <p><i>Decision rules</i></p> <p>Members continued discussion of draft decision rules with focus on the value of stock abundance relative to the harvest strategy reference points. The draft decision rules are intended to be responsive to fishery performance with members showing preference for small proportional adjustments of either an increase or decrease of TAC to avoid potentially unexpected or large changes. Members also expressed a preference for annual TAC determinations under the first version of the harvest strategy, noting MSE may provide further information to confirm this aspect.</p> <p>Decision rule outcomes including no change to TAC, changes to TAC not exceeding a pre-set maximum TAC, and change to TAC relative to trending change in stock performance over successive years were also discussed.</p> <p>The working group agreed harvest strategy decision rules should be responsive to changes in fishery performance for the harvest strategy to be effective in controlling stock health.</p> |
| 3. | Management Strategy Evaluation | <p>DPI produced a first draft of a decision rule flow chart (or decision tree), providing a graphical representation of the formal decision rules.</p> <p>The flow chart comprises of boxes containing steps in the decision rule process, resulting in application of the rules and determining if TAC should increase, decrease or be maintained at its current level over the following year/s.</p> <p>DPI guided the working group through potential scenarios to allow thought and discussion for refining rules within the boxes as a step towards further MSE to be undertaken to assess operation of the strategy and decision rules following the meeting.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>The working group examined scenarios based on example scenarios from historical fishery data, including periods of high, low and moderate CPUE of commercial catch.</p> |

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| | | The working group discussed the logic of the decision rules within the flow chart and potential adjustments required. Suggestions of additional decision rule boxes included 'rules not met' and 'no change to TAC' be added throughout the decision rule tree. Members agreed the flow chart sequence will require testing to push its boundaries and should be tried over multiple scenarios for further fine tuning and to make sure the harvest strategy can respond appropriately and promptly to different levels of harvest or catch. |
| 4. | Other Business and Next Meeting | No other business was proposed. |

The next meeting is proposed for Ballina NSW on the 21st of October 2022.