

NSW SPANNER CRAB HARVEST STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

Chair's Summary - 3rd Meeting - 28-29 April 2022

The third meeting of the Spanner Crab Harvest Strategy Working Group (HSWG) took place in Ballina on Thursday & Friday 28/29 April 2022. I opened the meeting by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the lands and welcomed members and observers.

This meeting started with an overview of the topics and timeline for development of the NSW Spanner Crab harvest strategy. Despite having to postpone this meeting from an earlier date because of the severe flooding in the Ballina region, where many Spanner Crab fishers are based, we are still aiming to have a harvest strategy ready for adoption by the end of 2022.

We intend to make progress in discussing and deciding upon the harvest strategy's key components at each meeting. In between meetings, DPI staff will assemble a draft harvest strategy based on the group's deliberations and bring this draft back to the group at each meeting. This way we can make the best use of everyone's time and expertise.

This meeting focussed on indicators that are available to measure the performance of the NSW Spanner Crab fishery against the harvest strategy, its objectives and decision rules, and what reference points, or periods in the history of the fishery, can be considered desirable or undesirable.

Industry representatives shared their knowledge and experience of good times and bad and helped advance the discussion toward the decisions that will need to be made as the harvest strategy is developed. Ultimately, a harvest strategy must link objectives, through indicators and reference points, to decision rules that control harvest, in this case setting the Total Allowable Catch for Spanner Crab.

The group received an excellent presentation from representatives of the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, who are responsible for managing fishing on this shared stock in Queensland waters. The Queensland fishery is already managed by a harvest strategy and both jurisdictions recognise the benefits of pursuing complementary approaches to management, and the benefits provided by past experience through the Queensland strategy.

The meeting also considered a referred recommendation from CommFish NSW regarding potential changes to one of the NSW annual spawning closures, and agreed to write to CommFish separately to provide its' consensus advice.

Good progress was made at the meeting and the working group will meet again soon to further develop the draft harvest strategy.

Dr James Findlay, Chair, NSW Spanner Crab HSWG.