

NEW SOUTH WALES TRAWL WHITING HARVEST STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

5TH Meeting, held online on 4 March 2021

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

The principal business of the meeting was the Working Group's letter to the Total Allowable Fishing Committee (T AFC) and its associated advice on progress towards the development of the Trawl Whiting Harvest Strategy, and reaching agreement on the target reference point for the Harvest Strategy.

The T AFC acknowledged the correspondence and stated that the advice would be taken into account in its deliberations on the quota decisions for trawl whiting for the coming season. It also appreciated the progress being made on the Harvest Strategy and looked forward to its completion. The decisions of the T AFC will not be available until they have been through the Ministerial processes.

The meeting then considered a paper put together by the Department, with some member's assistance on the different scenarios under a target of b40 or b48 relative spawning biomass. The paper covered not only the impacts on catch limits and economic returns for the commercial sector, but also the impacts on the recreational and indigenous sectors as well as other ecosystem impacts.

It was agreed that scenarios for recreational and indigenous fishers should be treated as two separate items in the analysis due to significant underlying differences.

Significant issues were discussed including the fact that better data was needed to be collected from the industry and that cross jurisdictional sharing of access to the fishery was important in deciding on targets for the harvest strategy. The respective roles and contributions of the Commonwealth and New South Wales agencies in undertaking the biomass surveys and developing the associated models to estimate the Recommended Biological Catch, and subsequently the respective Total Allowable Catches, were also discussed.

After lengthy discussion the meeting agreed to adopt a target of B48 but to also include a condition that a period of 5 years would be set for the target to be achieved. During this period all factors affecting the performance of the fishery and the viability of fishers would be kept under review.

The next meeting is set for 13 April when the issues of trigger points and management decisions would be discussed.

PETER NEVILLE

CHAIR, TWHSWG

7 March 2021