

Torres Prawn Working Group

28 - 29 July 2005
Cairns

AGENDA ITEM 3. Draft Agenda

Preliminaries

1. Opening
2. Attendance/ Apologies
3. Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes from July 2004 meeting
5. Actions Arising

Future Management of Torres Prawn Fishery

6. Managing Effort: Alternatives from the Workshop
7. Strategic assessment: Recommendations from DEH and implementation schedule/process
8. Observer Program

Discussion / Information Items

9. Outcomes from May & July (if relevant) TSFMAC
10. Outcomes from February & July PZJA Meetings
11. Finance Report
12. National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks:
Proposed mechanisms for addressing obligations
13. Comparative impacts of twin and quad gear
14. Compliance
15. Other Business

NEXT MEETING

Torres Prawn Working Group

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Cairns

AGENDA ITEM 4. Adoption of Minutes

PURPOSE

To seek the working group's confirmation of the attached draft records of the July 2004 meeting of the Torres Prawn Working Group.

BACKGROUND

The draft minutes of the working group meeting held at Cairns on 5 July 2004 are presented at Attachment 1. These minutes were circulated to members for their comment on 27 July 2004. No comments were received.

Recommendation

That members confirm the attached draft meeting record.

For Confirmation

Attachment 1

Torres Prawn Working Group

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AGENDA ITEM 5. Actions Arising

PURPOSE

To update members on the present state of Actions Arising from the 5 July 2004 meeting of the PWG.

BACKGROUND

A summary table of Actions arising from the December meeting of the PWG is presented at Attachment 2.

Recommendation

That members note the current status of Actions Arising from the July 2004 Prawn Working Group Meeting.

For Information

Attachment 2

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

No	Action	Action Officer/ Agency	Status	Comments
1	Minutes from October and December 2003 TSFPW meetings to be revised and distributed with attachments	Alistair Bain/AFMA	Complete	Revised minutes distributed with no further comments received.
2	Prepare and distribute advice on comparative impacts of twin and quad gear	AFMA	Complete	References provided to PWG members for studies done in other prawn fisheries on environmental impacts and conversion ratios.
3	Management to follow up the definition and intent of the words "activated licence" with the PZJA	Christian McDonald/ DAFF		
4	Industry to consider and suggest improvements to the one page table on design of observer program and provide feedback to management.	TSPEHA	Complete	Suggestions received from TSPEHA and incorporated into table.
5	Management to clarify percentage of compliance costs recovered from Industry	AFMA	Complete	Table to be provided to PWG members detailing proportion of costs allocated.
6	Prepare background paper on an alternative management arrangements workshop, including a statement of purpose and objectives.	AFMA	Re-considered and determined unnecessary	
7	Prepare and distribute a draft proposal for industry consideration on mechanisms for Australian operators to access preferential days not utilised by PNG in the TSPZ	Christian McDonald/ DAFF	Ongoing	Unable to be progressed until outcomes of negotiations with PNG and TSI on licences is known
8	Chair of TSFPWG to write to Chair of AFMA, requesting a one month extension to the Bycatch Action Plan deadline.	Jim Gillespie	Complete	Extension granted by AFMA Chair in July 2004.
9	Prepare and distribute a breakdown of costs associated with the implementation of a Torres Prawn Fishery observer program	Jim Prescott/ AFMA	Complete	Sent to members 9 th August 2004.

10	Prawn Working Group to agree out of session to the implementation of an observer program in the fishery, and to include the associated costs in the Bycatch Action Plan.	John Marrington	Complete	Email of 9 th August 2004 noted that no response would be taken as acceptance.
11	Prepare a paper on proposed mechanisms for addressing obligations under the National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks.	Trysh Stone	Complete	Issue discussed at Agenda Item 12
12	Investigate possible improvements to the current VMS manual reporting system. Circulate to members out of session.	Jim Prescott	Ongoing	Unsure of the need to change. System appears to work well. John Marrington to provide verbal report.
13	Follow up issue of working group meeting costs with Minister's office	Trysh Stone	Complete	Follow up with Ministers office has found that the Minister made no undertaking to pay for the meeting.
14	Develop a proposal for the establishment of a Resource Assessment Group to provide scientific advice in relation to stock assessments and other matters relevant to the Torres Prawn Fishery.	AFMA	Complete	Provided to PWG members at this meeting

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AGENDA ITEM 6. Managing effort: Alternatives from the Workshop

PURPOSE

To discuss the alternatives to come out of the Workshop.

BACKGROUND

At the 17th PZJA meeting in February 2005 the PZJA made a request that the Prawn Working Group and the TSFMAC provide the PZJA with timelines and proposals for effort reductions based on the delay-difference model and the alternative management workshop.

The workshop produced a number of scenarios for the working group to discuss and decide upon as the best way to achieve effort reduction for the 2006 fishing season.

Recommendation

That the PWG provide options for effort reductions for the 2006 fishing season to the TSFMAC to be progressed to the PZJA for decision.

For Discussion

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AGENDA ITEM 7. Strategic Assessment: Recommendations from DEH and implementation schedule/process

PURPOSE

To outline the recommendations from the Strategic Assessment and discuss and implantation process and schedule.

BACKGROUND

On 24 November 2002 the Minister for the Environment and Heritage (the Minister) signed an Agreement with AFMA to initiate the strategic assessment of the fishery. Following public consultation, *Terms of Reference for the Environmental Assessment of the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery* were adopted. The draft document, Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Assessment Report (the submission), was received by the Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) in November 2003. The document was released for a 30 business day public comment period that expired on 19 January 2004. Two public comments were received. AFMA provided a response to the issues raised and amended the submission where necessary. The Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) approved the submission in February 2005 and a final submission for assessment was received on 24 February 2005.

The implementation of the attached recommendations (Attachment 3) and other commitments made by the PZJA will be monitored and reviewed as part of the next DEH review of the fishery in 3 years time. A project implementation plan for the recommendations has been developed for consideration by the working group to meet the requirements (Attachment 4).

Recommendation

That the PWG approve the project implementation plan for the recommendations arising out of the strategic assessment process, noting deadlines and timeframes for the recommendations.

For Discussion

Attachment 3

Recommendations

1. DEH to be informed of any proposed amendment to the management regime for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery to enable DEH to evaluate any impact on the ecological sustainability of the fishery.
2. PZJA to continue to ensure that consultative processes are conducted in a manner that ensures the timely implementation of management responses essential for the sustainability of the fishery.
3. PZJA to develop and apply fishery specific management objectives, performance indicators and performance measures for target, key byproduct, bycatch and protected species and ecosystem impacts. PZJA to ensure that adequate information collection systems are put in place to monitor performance against indicators.
4. PZJA to develop a clear process for determining the reason for a performance measure being triggered and for implementing appropriate management measures within specified timeframes.
5. PZJA to develop within 1 year a strategy and timeframes for implementing any resultant recommendations arising from the formal compliance risk assessment.
6. PZJA to report annually on performance of the fishery against specified objectives and measures, once developed, with the reports to be made publicly available.
7. PZJA will continue to cooperate with other relevant jurisdictions to pursue complementary management and research of shared stocks for all target, byproduct and bycatch species, which may be affected by cross-jurisdictional issues.
8. PZJA, within 12 months, to develop and implement an ongoing robust system to validate effort and catch data on target and byproduct species.
9. PZJ to develop and implement a robust and regular stock assessment process, which estimates key population parameters and quantifies the uncertainty associated with each and provides a basis for risk-based management decisions for each target species, where such an analysis is feasible. For other species, the assessment process will examine the ecological sustainability of the take of target, byproduct and bycatch using qualitative or semi-quantitative risk assessments. Appropriate management responses will be developed to reduce risks to the high-risk species or groups.
10. PZJA to develop and commence by the start of the 2006 fishing season a program to reduce effort to ecologically sustainable levels with clear objectives and timeframes.
11. PZJA will continue to pursue reduction in the amount of bycatch taken in the TSPF through the refinement of bycatch mitigation technology and will investigate methods for increasing the survivability of bycatch species. Any suitable methods identified should be implemented in a timely manner.
12. PZJA to promote research into the impact of the fishery on protected species, including syngnathids and seasnakes, and to take all reasonable steps to reduce protected species interactions.
13. PZJA to develop and implement a spatial management system within the TSPF that takes account of the impacts of fishing on:
 - species and populations identified by the ecological risk assessment process as high risk;
 - important feeding/spawning/breeding/refuge grounds for key target, byproduct and protected species; and

- benthic habitats

This spatial management system will be integrated with the regional marine planning process for Northern Australia and will ensure that the entire fishery area is taken into account.

Attachment 4

PROJECT PLAN SUMMARY

Project Plan Title	TORRES STRAIT PRAWN FISHERY – IMPLEMENTATION OF DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE RECOMMENDATIONS
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PART A

Aim of the Project	
What is the project?	Implementation of Department of Environment & Heritage recommendations for the TSPF
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviewing the performance of the TSPF - Implement a process for response to performance measure triggers - Implement recommendations from compliance risk assessment - Annual report on performance of TSPF - Implement a robust and verifiable effort & catch reporting system - Implement regular and robust stock assessment methods - Implement an effort reduction program - Implement further bycatch reduction measures - Investigate impacts of fishery on protected species - Implement a spatial management system for impacts of fishing
Overall timeframe	July 2005 to July 2008
Project Manager(s)	Mick George (AFMA Torres Strait Fisheries) Jim Prescott (Manager - AFMA Torres Strait Fisheries)

PART B

Planning & Risk Management Frameworks	<i>(In the boxes below, list the milestones to be achieved in the project. Include proposed timelines for each and who has responsibility for each milestone. Also include an assessment of the risks associated with each milestone and the treatments that will be used to minimise the impact of these risks).</i>				
	Milestone	Timelines	Responsible Area	Risk Assessment	Risk Treatment (Overall)
	Reviewing the performance of the TSPF	Ongoing	Management (AFMA) PWG & TSFMAC		
	Implement a process for response to performance measure triggers	July 2005 – February 2006	Management (AFMA) PWG & TSFMAC	No process able to be agreed upon through consultation process	Commitment by all involved to achieve results

Implement recommendations from compliance risk assessment	July 2006	Compliance (AFMA) QB&FP (QDPI&F)	Recommendations not able to be implemented due to resistance from operators or resource shortages.	Increased education and awareness Increase compliance efforts (i.e. person or funding) in the fishery
Annual report on performance of TSPF	Ongoing (February each year)	Management (AFMA)		
Implement a robust and verifiable effort & catch reporting system	July 2006	Management (AFMA) AFMA Logbook section AFMA Observer Section	Vessels not completing logbook accurately. Vessels not participating in observer program	Port Visits prior to season Continued positive portrayal of observer program, incentives to crews to participate
Implement regular and robust stock assessment methods	August 2005 – December 2006	Independent fisheries consultant	Costs associated may be prohibitive (cost recovery).	Source additional funding for independent review
Implement an effort reduction program	<i>Work in Progress</i> July 2005 – February 2006	Management (AFMA) QDPI&F PWG & TSFMAC	PWG unable to make recommendations to TSFMAC	Encourage industry ownership of process (workshop etc)
Implement further bycatch reduction measures	Ongoing	Management (AFMA) QDPI&F PWG & TSFMAC	Resistance from vessels to trial or implement BRD's	Increase education and awareness through consultation
Investigate impacts of fishery on protected species	Ongoing	Management (AFMA) QDPI&F PWG & TSFMAC	May not be a priority for industry given effort reduction issues	Increase education and awareness through consultation
Implement a spatial management system for impacts of fishing	Ongoing	Management (AFMA) AFMA Environment section		Remain part of NOO process

PART C

Involvement by Others

(In the boxes below, indicate other sections or organisations that will play a part in delivering the project)

	Name of Section or Organisation	Role
Other AFMA Sections	AFMA Environment section	Coordinates strategic assessment
	AFMA Data/ logbook section	Coordinates logbook returns
	AFMA Observer section	Coordinates observer program
	AFMA Legal section	Provide legal advise
External Stakeholders	PWG	Provides management advice
	TSFMAC	Provides management advice
	ODPI&F	PZJA Agency partner & research provider
	DAFF	PZJA Agency partner
	TSRA	PZJA Agency partner

PART D

Success Indicators

(In the boxes below, list four aspects of the completed project that will indicate to you, the Project Manager, that you have successfully delivered what was required. Also indicate how these would be measured.)

	Success Indicators	Indicators will be measured by
1	Fishing effort is reduced	Days of fishing effort compared to reference points for the fishery
2	Catch & Effort data improved	Observer coverage in the fishery is equal to specified level, logbooks are accurately completed
3	Environmental impacts are reduced	Effort is reduced, TEDs are used and mechanisms to reduce bycatch are implemented

PART E

Communications Strategy

In person communication with Islander communities and other stakeholders. Simple illustrations of population processes and fishery impacts.

The project works through a fisheries consultative structure which includes stakeholders. The Working Groups are where much of the communication between stakeholders takes place. In addition to the consultative structure there is ad hoc communication of project outcomes to stakeholders. This is done by what ever means is appropriate for the given group.

Communications with DEH will be maintained as appropriate.

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AGENDA ITEM 8. Observer Program

PURPOSE

To discuss first round of observer trips and subsequent observer trips in the fishery

BACKGROUND

The first round of observer trips in the Torres Strait Prawn fishery was conducted during March & April 2005. Three observers spent 83 sea days on 6 vessels. A total of 268 shots were observed during the trips. Data from the first round of trips was presented at the workshop, and will be provided to PWG members at the meeting.

A second round of trips is scheduled for August 2006 with three observers again being placed into the fishery for 30 days each. Entitlement holders have been contacted asking to nominate if their vessels are available to participate in this round of the observer program. A number of vessels have indicated that they would be willing to host the observers for these trips.

A draft of the program project plan and observer implementation protocols has also been provided to entitlement holders which answer common questions. Comments from entitlement holders, skippers and crew on the draft plan and protocols were requested by 3rd June 2005. A small number of responses were received, with suggestions being adapted to help improve the program.

Recommendation

That the PWG note the results of the first round of observer trips and provide recommendations for the improvement of the observer program.

For Information/Discussion

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AGENDA ITEM 9. Outcomes of May 2005 TSFMAC meeting

PURPOSE

To discuss the outcomes of the May 2005 TSFMAC meeting.

BACKGROUND

Issues discussed at the May 2005 TSFMAC meeting in relation to the prawn fishery were information items on the first round of the observer program (discussed in Agenda Item 8 of this meeting), an update of the negotiations with TSI & PNG on entitlements, the progress on planning for the alternative management workshop, and the Strategic Assessment (Agenda item 7). The TSFMAC noted the progress of each of these items. A full copy of all the minutes from the TSFMAC meeting is available on the PZJA website (www.pzja.gov.au).

A consultative committee guidelines policy was also presented at the TSFMAC, with the TSFMAC endorsing the paper noting non islander industry concerns on the omission of peak representative bodies in the nomination process. This issue was addressed by the PZJA, who amended their previous decision to allow peak representative bodies to be part of the nomination process.

Recommendation

That the PWG note the outcomes of the May 2005 TSFMAC meeting.

For Information

Torres Prawn Working Group

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AGENDA ITEM 10. Outcomes of February & July 2005 PZJA meeting

PURPOSE

To discuss the outcomes of the February & July 2005 PZJA meeting.

BACKGROUND

The PZJA met in February 2005 & July 2005 in Thursday Island. Full outcomes from the PZJA meetings are available at www.pzja.gov.au, Outcomes from these meetings relevant to the Torres Strait Prawn fishery were:

February 2005 Meeting

PRAWN FISHERY

The PZJA **NOTED**:

1. that negotiations with both Torres Strait Islanders (TSI) and Papua New Guinea (PNG) have commenced and should be concluded by March 2005; and
2. the removal of TSI and PNG access from the fishery alone is insufficient to reduce the effort in the fishery to a sustainable level in the longer term.

The PZJA **AGREED**:

3. not to make any decisions in relation to effort allocations in this fishery until the outcomes of the negotiations are known;
4. to implement a program of effort reduction to sustainable levels when those negotiations have concluded;
5. that the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery management arrangements for 2005 are as for 2004;
6. to request that the Prawn Working Group and the TSFMAC provide the PZJA with timelines and proposals for effort reductions based on the delay-difference model and the alternative management workshop; and
7. that DAFF will consult with ABARE about the application of its economic modelling for the Northern Prawn Fishery to the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery and report to the alternative management workshop. DAFF will also consult ABARE about the possibility of social assessments but could make no undertakings about this work being pursued.

The PZJA **NOTED**:

the commencement of an observer program in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery in 2005 using scientific observers.

FISHERIES CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURE

The PZJA **AGREED**:

1. to improve the current process used to appoint non-Islander members to its advisory groups, based on the AFMA model for appointing industry members;
2. to discuss once a year how well the consultative structure is working;
3. that 'terms of members' on PZJA consultative bodies in Torres Strait should normally be for a period of three years commencing from the date of appointment by the PZJA; and
4. to the continued appointment of Mr Jim Gillespie as Prawn Working Group Chair.

The PZJA **APPROVED**:

a policy of replacing members who do not attend two consecutive meetings without consulting the Chair of the relevant committee and that should a member be replaced, the Chair notify the member in writing of their membership status.

July 2005 Meeting

The final decisions from the July 2005 PZJA meeting are unavailable at time of distribution of the agenda papers. If finalised prior to the working group meeting, a copy of the decisions will be made available to members at the meeting.

Recommendation

That the PWG note the outcomes of the February and July PZJA meetings.

For Information

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AGENDA ITEM 11. Finance Report

PURPOSE

To provide the Torres Prawn Working Group with an update on expenditure as at 31 May 2005.

BACKGROUND

The 2005/06 Torres Prawn Fishery budget is presented at attachment 5. This has been prepared in line with the current financial year's budget, and was distributed to working group members for comment on 27 April, with no comments received.

It has since been noticed that the costs for the observer program for the 2005/06 financial year were not included in the budget process due to miscommunication between the AFMA Management and Observer sections. The amount required for the program is \$138,630, with \$110,904 (80%) being industries contribution and \$27,726 (20%) Government contributed through cost recovery arrangements.

Torres Strait Prawn expenditure for the first 11 months of the 2004/05 financial year is summarised in the table at attachment 6.

The following is a brief description of notable over/underspent budget items attributable to industry:

Salaries & Staff Related Costs

Overspent by \$9,871

This item is overspent as a result of increased involvement of senior staff in the fishery and additional staff time required with the implementation of the observer program into the fishery.

Travel Costs

Underspent by \$19,985

This item is underspent as it was originally anticipated that a meeting of the working group would be held in the 2004/05 financial year.

Logbooks

Underspent by \$14,847

As was the case in the 2003/04 financial year data entry costs have been kept low due to a high level of timely and accurate logbook returns from this fishery. This minimises the time staff require to chase-up and process logbooks, keeps the data entry costs to a minimum. Industry is to be congratulated on their performance in this area.

Data Management

Industry component underspent by \$6,949

Data Management costs are directly linked to data entry costs. As outlined above, a high level of accuracy in completion and timeliness in submission of logbooks has kept these costs relatively low.

Recommendation

Members note

- the 2005/06 budget for the Torres Prawn Fishery, with the need to amend to include costs for the observer program; and
- and the expenditure of the 2004/05 budget to end of May 2005.

For Information

Attachment 5

Attachment 6

Torres Prawn Working Group

5 July 2004
Cairns

AGENDA ITEM 12. National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks: Proposed mechanisms for addressing obligations

PURPOSE

To discuss the implementation of action items from the national plan of action into the fishery.

BACKGROUND

A paper will be provided to members at the meeting on this.

Recommendation

That the PWG discusses the implementation of action items from the National Plan of Action for the prawn fishery.

For Discussion

Torres Prawn Working Group

5 July 2004
Cairns

AGENDA ITEM 13. Comparative Impacts of twin and quad gear

Purpose

To provide information on research into the comparative impacts of twin and quad gear in trawl fisheries.

Background

At the July 2004 Prawn Working Group meeting an issue of the effect of twin gear compared to quad gear was raised in discussions regarding effort reduction and impacts on the environment. Further information was sought by members on the comparative impacts of twin and quad gear in trawl fisheries.

A number of research projects have been conducted on the matter previously. The list below provides the details of these projects, which are available from Fisheries Research & Development Corporation (FRDC) <http://bookshop.frdc.com.au>.

- Effects-of-trawling subprogram: The environmental effects of prawn trawling in the Far Northern Section of the Great Barrier Reef (1993/096). Contact FRDC for purchase details.
- Effects of Trawling Subprogram: effects of trawl design on bycatch and benthos in prawn and finfish (1993/179). Contact FRDC for purchase details.
- Surrogates I Predictors, impacts, management and conservation of the benthic biodiversity of the Northern Prawn Fishery (2000/160).

There is currently also a research project in the NPF titled "*Determining ecosystem impacts and effort neutral translation formulae for trawl gear in the NPF*". The results from this project will be made available to PWG members if requested.

Recommendation

That members note the research currently available and that being undertaken on the comparative impacts of twin and quad gear in trawl fisheries

For Information

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AGENDA ITEM 14. Compliance report

PURPOSE

To inform the PWG of current compliance issues for the Torres Strait Prawn fishery.

BACKGROUND

A verbal update on compliance in the Torres Strait Prawn fishery will be presented to the PWG meeting by Queensland Boating & Fisheries Patrol.

Recommendation

That the PWG consider the information presented in the compliance report.

For Information

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AGENDA ITEM 15. Other Business