

34th Protected Zone Joint Authority Meeting

Meeting Outcomes

Teleconference - Monday 20 January 2020

Welcome and Apologies

The Chair opened the 34th meeting of the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) at 3:06pm AEDT. An attendance list is provided at [Attachment A](#).

1. Global Total Allowable Catch for the Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery

1.1. The PZJA **AGREED**, that the Torres Strait Protected Zone (TSPZ) TRL Fishery (TRL Fishery) global Total Allowable Catch (TAC) will be 582.1 tonnes (unprocessed weight) for the 2019-20 fishing season, noting:

- a. The global TAC covers the area of the TSPZ and is to be shared between Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) as per the terms of the Torres Strait Treaty (the Treaty). AFMA will meet with the PNG National Fisheries Authority (NFA) shortly following this meeting (by the end of January 2020), to confirm on the global TAC and catch sharing arrangements for the 2019-20 fishing season.
- b. Once an agreement has been reached, the Minister will be asked to determine an increase to the interim TAC that was agreed in November 2019 for the Australian TRL Fishery under section 14 of the Torres Strait Fisheries (Quotas for Tropical Rock Lobster (Kaiar)) Management Plan 2018 (the Plan). This increase will be equivalent to Australia's share of the global TAC as agreed with PNG.

1.2. The TSRA Chair supported the above recommendation but raised concern as to whether there would be enough quota available for TIB fishers to last until the end of the 2019-20 fishing season, and requested that measures be put in place to manage stakeholder expectations and give industry confidence that good processes are in place, including:

- a. For the global TAC to be closely monitored and a communication plan be developed by PZJA agencies to provide Torres Strait communities and industry regular updates on catches and explanations of catch sharing arrangements and how this would affect the fishery
- b. That in catch sharing negotiations with PNG, 450 tonnes be secured for Australian fishers in Australian waters (with 298 tonnes or 66.17 per cent required to sustain fishing by TIB fishers for the full season)
- c. That the current developmental permit be managed appropriately.

2. Total Allowable Catch for Spanish mackerel and coral trout for the 2020-21 Fishing Season, Torres Strait Finfish Fishery

2.1. The PZJA **AGREED** that, for the 2020-21 fishing season of the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery, the total allowable catch (TAC) for Spanish mackerel will be 59 tonnes and the TAC for coral trout will be 135 tonnes.

2.2. The PZJA **NOTED** that AFMA, as the PZJA licensing delegate, will complete relevant administrative processes to implement the TACs for the Finfish Fishery for the 2020-21 fishing season, in particular:

- a. amending conditions on sunset licences with respect to individual catch allocations recommended to AFMA by the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) by varying the licence conditions under section 22 of the Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984 (the Act);
- b. in agreeing to the total catch to be allocated to sunset licences, regard will be had to likely catches expected under Traditional Inhabitant boat (TIB) licences. TIB licences are not subject to formal catch limits in the Finfish Fishery; and
- c. if required, additional measures will be developed to ensure catches do not exceed the agreed TACs.

2.3. The TSRA Chair supported the above recommendations but expressed his view that the previous decisions hadn't prevented the stock declining, and that he would like to see strict adherence by sunset licence holders to their quota and licence conditions. AFMA noted it was happy to work closely with the TSRA in relation to licence conditions, that it would be using the necessary tools to monitor catches, and would ensure the AFMA compliance team is aware of TSRA's concerns around sunset licence compliance.

3. Other business

The Chair noted that he was looking forward to a face to face PZJA meeting being held on Thursday Island around April 2020.

Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 3:24pm AEDT.

Meeting attendance

20 January 2020

PZJA members

Chair

- Senator the Hon. Jonathon Duniam, Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries

Member

- Mr Napau Pedro Stephen AM, Chair Torres Strait Regional Authority
- Ms Claire Andersen, Executive Director, Fisheries Queensland, as Deputy for The Hon. Mark Furner MP, Queensland Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries

Government Delegations

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

- Ms Anna Willock, Executive Manager, Fisheries
- Mr Steve Bolton, Senior Manager, Northern Fisheries and Co-management
- Mr Steve Hall, Senior Management Officer

Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

- Ms Claire Andersen, Executive Director, Fisheries Queensland

Torres Strait Regional Authority

- Mr Mark Anderson, Manager, Fisheries Programme
- Ms Allison Runck, Project Manager, Fisheries Programme

Office of Senator the Hon. Jonathon Duniam

- Ms Danielle McKay, Advisor – Fisheries

Apologies

PZJA member

The Hon. Mark Furner MP, Queensland Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries

Government Delegations

Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

- Mr Graeme Bolton, Deputy Director-General, Fisheries and Forestry (Queensland)

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

- Mr Wez Norris, Chief Executive Officer