

TORRES STRAIT PROTECTED ZONE JOINT AUTHORITY	Out-of-session
Record of Decisions	December 2024

Agenda Item No 1:

Management arrangements for the Beche-de-mer (BDM) fishery

The PZJA:

1. **NOTED** the Torres Strait Beche-de-mer Fishery Harvest Strategy (the Strategy) prescribes decision rules for controlling fishing activity including the setting of total allowable catches (TACs) for the Torres Strait Beche de mer Fishery (BDM Fishery). Under the Strategy, the Hand Collectables Resource Assessment Group (HCRAG) and Hand Collectables Working Group (HCWG) meet annually to review new data and information and provide advice on TACs as well as data, monitoring and assessment needs for the BDM Fishery.
2. **NOTED** that the HCRAG and HCWG met from 17-19 September and recommended:
 - a. the proposed TAC under catch carryover provision for black teatfish be adopted by the PZJA;
 - b. TACs for the BDM Fishery for the 2024 (current) fishing season remain unchanged for the 2025 fishing season (commencing 1 January 2025), with the exception of amberfish where a TAC of 10 tonnes was recommended. Reservations to the TAC recommendation for deepwater redfish and hairy blackfish were recorded by some scientific members;
 - c. Further consultation be undertaken in respect of the opening date for the 2025 black teatfish fishing season with other administrative arrangements remaining unchanged.
3. **NOTED** that AFMA is working with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) in respect of a TAC under catch carryover provision for black teatfish. If supported by DCCEEW, PZJA agreement will be sought to amend the Strategy (specifically, decision rule 2.11.1.1). If implemented for 2025, 2 tonnes of under catch from 2024 will be carried over to the 2025 fishing season (to be added to the recommended 20 tonnes TAC).
4. **AGREED**, considering the advice from the HCRAG and HCWG, to the following TACs (measured in wet gutted weight) for the BDM Fishery for the 2025 fishing season:
 - a. Amberfish (*Thelenota anax*) – 10 tonnes;
 - b. Black teatfish (*Holothuria whitmaei*) – 20 tonnes (plus 2 tonnes under catch, if agreed);
 - c. Curryfish species (*Stichopus herrmanni* and *Stichopus vastus*) – 60 tonnes combined (basket);
 - d. Deepwater redfish (*Actinopyga echinites*) – 1 tonne interim TAC, with a final TAC to be determined following a review by a scientific expert (expected early 2025). This recommended TAC is 4 tonnes lower than that proposed by the HCRAG and HCWG, reflecting more precautionary settings prior to receipt of further scientific advice;
 - e. Greenfish (*Stichopus chloronotus*) – 40 tonnes;
 - f. Hairy blackfish (*Actinopyga miliaris*) – 1 tonne interim TAC, with a final TAC to be determined following a review of the TAC by a scientific expert expected by early 2025. This recommended TAC is 4 tonnes lower than that proposed by HCRAG and HCWG; reflecting more precautionary settings prior to receipt of further scientific advice;

- g. Prickly redfish (*Thelenota ananas*) – 15 tonnes;
 - h. Sandfish (*Holothuria scabra*) – 0 tonnes;
 - i. Surf redfish (*Actinopyga mauritiana*) – 0 tonnes;
 - j. White teatfish (*Holothuria fuscogilva*) – 15 tonnes;
 - k. All other sea cucumber species (all other species in the families Holothuriidae and Stichopodidae) – 50 tonnes combined (basket).
5. **NOTED** that AFMA, as the PZJA licensing delegate, will undertake the relevant administrative processes to implement the TACs for the BDM Fishery for the 2025 fishing season, including correction of administrative errors conversion ratios to be applied to landed catches, to accurately reflect those detailed in Appendix A.1 of the Strategy.
 6. **NOTED** that AFMA, as the PZJA licensing delegate, will undertake the relevant administrative processes to implement arrangements for the 2025 black teatfish fishing season including the opening date once determined.

AGREED/NOT AGREED

Agenda Item No 2:

Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) Towing Variation

The PZJA:

1. **AGREED** to AFMA, as the licensing delegate, varying the conditions on traditional inhabitant carrier class A, class C and fishing boat licences to allow greater flexibility in towing tenders and providing accommodation to fishers in the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery (the TRL Fishery).
2. **NOTED** that although this management change is a departure from longstanding PZJA policy, it is the result of a broader review of management controls in the TRL Fishery following the determination of the *Torres Strait Fisheries (Quotas for Tropical Rock Lobster (Kaiar)) Management Plan 2018* (the Management Plan) in 2018.
3. **NOTED** that at the time of the Management Plan determination, the PZJA at its meeting on 26 November 2018 reaffirmed existing management controls in the TRL Fishery, but that a review of existing PZJA licencing policies and management arrangements, including input controls, would be conducted periodically after the Management Plan became operational.
4. **NOTED** that one submission was received in response to native title notification conducted under section 24HA of the *Native Title Act 1993* (the Native Title Act) with regard to the proposed licence condition variation.

AGREED/NOT AGREED

Agenda Item No 3:

Applying the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) Climate Risk Framework in PZJA Fisheries

The PZJA:

1. **NOTED** work being undertaken to incorporate climate change information into fisheries management advice and decisions in other Commonwealth managed fisheries, with a view to implementing a similar process for Torres Strait fisheries.

AGREED/NOT AGREED

Agenda Item No 4:

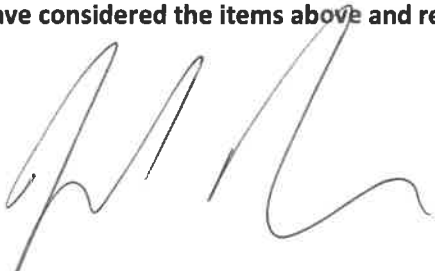
Consequential Amendments to the *Tropical Rock Lobster (Quotas for Tropical Rock Lobster (Kaiar)) Management Plan 2018* (TRL Management Plan)

The PZJA:

1. **AGREED** to determine the *Torres Strait Fisheries Amendment (Minor Updates to Management Plans) Instrument 2024* (The Instrument).
2. **APPROVED** the Explanatory Statement to the Instrument.
3. **SIGNED AND DATED** the Instrument.

AGREED / NOT AGREED

I have considered the items above and recorded my decisions:



Julie Collins MP
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Chair of the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority

DATE 18-12-24