

<b>TORRES STRAIT PRAWN MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Meeting No. 5 4-5 December, 2007</b>
<b>Reports: Alternative Effort Management System – PZJA discussions</b>	Agenda Item No. 2.1

## **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 The TSPMAC **NOTES** that no decision was reached by the PZJA regarding the Alternative Effort Management System proposal.

## **BACKGROUND**

The chair of the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA), the Commonwealth Minister for Fisheries and Forestry introduced a proposal to establish an Alternative Effort Management System based on licensees holding ‘a set of “Allocated Fishing Days” consistent in number to that he or she held prior to effort reduction implemented by the PZJA at the commencement of the 2006 season’. This was discussed out of session by the members of the PZJA during October 2007.

During the second out of session discussion the other PZJA members requested further time for consultation on the proposed system. The Chair agreed to this request. Following that meeting the election was announced and Caretaker conventions were in force from noon Wednesday 17 October 2007.

## **DISCUSSION**

A decision on this proposal was not reached.

<b>TORRES STRAIT PRAWN MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Meeting No. 5 4-5 December, 2007</b>
<b>Reports: Industry report - Season summary, 2007</b>	Agenda Item No. 2.2

## **RECOMMENDATION**

2.2 The TSPMAC **NOTES** the Industry report provided in respect of the 2007 season for the TSPF.

## **BACKGROUND**

The TSPMAC was formed following the PZJA 19 decision to elevate the status of the prawn working group to the TSPMAC in April 2006. As a Management Advisory Committee, the TSPMAC has a responsibility to remain current in all issues involving the fishery. At times this can be difficult due to multi-agency involvement within the fishery and the spatial distribution of its members. The 2007 season is now closed (December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007) and as such it is timely for TSPMAC members to provide a general overview of the 2007 fishing season.

## **DISCUSSION**

The TSPMAC meetings offer an opportunity for all members to share fishery information that they have received either directly or indirectly.

Members are invited to provide further verbal information relating to the 2007 season on topics including but not limited to:

- Catch rates;
- Product quality;
- Fishery economics; and
- Bycatch rates.

<b>TORRES STRAIT PRAWN MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Meeting No. 5 4-5 December 2007</b>
<b>Report: Compliance Report – season update on activities, 2007</b>	Agenda Item No. 2.3

## **RECOMMENDATION**

2.3 That the TSPMAC **NOTES** the update on compliance activities provided in respect of the 2007 season for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery.

## **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the QB&FP operations within the Torres Strait is to carry out surveillance and enforcement duties to support the legislation and the policies of the PZJA.

Specifically:

- 1) To provide an education and extension service for both traditional and commercial fisher persons to enhance the development and management of the fisheries within the Protected Zone.
- 2) To undertake such duties as required by the PZJA to protect the resources of the TSPZ and to enhance their exploitation by persons permitted to utilise those resources in keeping with the spirit of the Treaty between Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The program is run from the Thursday Island office of the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol with support from offices in Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville.

## **DISCUSSION**

The attached report (Attachment 2.3A) outlines the activities and results of the QB&FP Thursday Island, Torres Strait Protected Zone (TSPZ) and Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) for the 2007 season to date.

<b>TORRES STRAIT PRAWN MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Meeting No. 5 4-5 December, 2007</b>
<b>Reports: Observer program report – preliminary summary, 2007, &amp; Plan for 2008</b>	Agenda Item No. 2.4

## **RECOMMENDATION**

2.4 The TSPMAC **NOTES** the activity in the observer program in the fishery for 2007 to date, and the proposed activity in 2008.

## **BACKGROUND**

Observers have been deployed into the TSPF fishery during the 2007 season in order to meet recommendations arising from the Strategic Assessment process by the Department of the Environment and Water Resources (DEW) and to provide data for the fishery to assist in making management decisions.

## **DISCUSSION**

The observer program budgeted for 180 observer days in the fishery for the 2007 season. This equates to approximately 2.5% coverage for the fishery (based on 6,867 allocated nights to the Australian industry). As of 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2007, 125 observed fishing nights and 8 travel days have been achieved. This represents 1.8% of all allocated fishing nights for the TSPF but 3.2% of the actual nights fished. Observer coverage will continue until the end of the TSPF fishing season (December 1, 2007).

Table 1 sets out the details of the vessels that have participated in the observer program for the 2005, 2006 and the 2007 season to date. A total of 19 vessels have participated, with three of those vessels participating in both the 2005 and 2006 seasons, one vessel in both the 2006 and 2007 seasons, and another vessel participating in all three seasons from 2005 – 2007.

Table 2 shows fishing effort and observer days in the TSPF for 2007. It can be seen that the majority of fishing effort for 2007 was concentrated toward the beginning of the year. This has logistical issues and implications for observer coverage across the entire season and will be discussed in at TSPMAC 5.

Observers have expressed their thanks for the cooperation of vessel crews involved in the program. Also, a number of skippers and crews have provided positive feedback on both the program and the observers themselves.

The AFMA Observer Section will provide members with a summary of observed catch data for the 2007 season at the meeting. Any feedback on the program should be provided at the meeting for consideration in the development of the observer program for the 2008 season.

**Table 1.** Vessels that have participated in the Observer program during 2005, 2006 and 2007.

<b>VESSEL</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>Impact</b>	X	X	
<b>Valkyrie Voyager</b>	X		
<b>K Maree II</b>	X	X	
<b>Maggie Jo</b>	X		
<b>Ida G</b>	X	X	
<b>Faysea G</b>	X		
<b>Judy B</b>	X	X	X
<b>Cassandra</b>	X		
<b>Signet</b>	X		
<b>Gold Coaster</b>	X		
<b>Aquarius 6</b>		X	X
<b>Ankh Cross</b>		X	
<b>Danny B</b>		X	
<b>Violetta</b>		X	
<b>Crystal Enterprise</b>		X	
<b>Relentless</b>		X	
<b>Darden Star</b>			X
<b>Samantha J</b>			X
<b>Bounty Hunter</b>			X

**Table 2.** Fishing effort and observer days in the TSPF from 1<sup>st</sup> March – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2007 (source AFMA Logbooks). The Logbook data is 85% complete/entered for October, but incomplete for November.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Nights fished / month</b>	<b>Observer Days</b>
<b>3</b>	993	0
<b>4</b>	835	30
<b>5</b>	683	42
<b>6</b>	426	0
<b>7</b>	304	0
<b>8</b>	332	0
<b>9</b>	293	0
<b>10</b>	77	6
<b>11</b>	?	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>3943</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Observer coverage of nights fished</b>		<b>3.2%</b>

<b>TORRES STRAIT PRAWN MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Meeting No. 5 4-5 December, 2007</b>
<b>Reports: Data report – Trends in catch and effort data, 2007</b>	Agenda Item No. 2.5

## **RECOMMENDATION**

2.5 The TSPMAC **NOTES** the preliminary information presented on the trends in the 2007 catch and effort data compared with earlier years.

## **BACKGROUND**

A download of the available TSPF logbook data for 2007 was obtained from the AFMA logbook section in Mid October, 2007. This data has been analysed and the results incorporated into a PowerPoint presentation for the meeting. The analysis provides a preview of some of the information that will go into the 2008 edition of the Torres Prawn Handbook. Note however that this presentation is based on incomplete 2007 logbook data.

## **DISCUSSION**

The trends in the logbook data suggest that the total fishing effort for 2007 will be similar to 2006 (~4,500 days)<sup>1</sup>. Although the tiger prawn catch was well below average in March, the April to June catches were about average. The March tiger prawn catch rate was much lower than for 2006 but still above average. As for 2006, the April to September tiger prawn catch rates (CPUE) were well above average indicating a high stock biomass level. The total tiger prawn harvest for 2007 will probably be slightly lower than for 2006.

In contrast to 2006 the monthly endeavour prawn catches for 2007 have all been well below average. The monthly catch rates (CPUE) have tracked along the average pattern indicating an average endeavour prawn stock biomass level for 2007. The total endeavour prawn harvest for 2007 is likely to be much lower than for 2006.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that this data does not account for the PNG days that were distributed to licences later in the season.