

Roles and activities of AFMA's Environment Section in 2009-10 Brief for AFMA & MAC members

The Environment Section undertakes a broad range of activities on environmental issues related to fishing. These activities can be separated into four broad functional categories:

- Providing advice;
- Developing environmental policy;
- Coordinating and driving environmental initiatives;
- Monitoring progress and ensuring AFMA meets its legislative environmental requirements.

The Section's activities cover the following programs.

Ecological Risk Management Strategy (Industry funded) (1.76 Full Time Equivalents)

The Environment Section coordinates and manages the Ecological Risk Assessment / Management (ERA/M) process. ERA methodologies have been developed over time from a largely qualitative to a fully quantitative assessment. The Section ensures the results have been subject to a scientifically rigorous and repeatable process. A fishery's ERA is released with the accompanying Ecological Risk Management report that focuses on AFMA's measures to mitigate high risks is complete.

The Section has the following roles:

- Provide a quality assurance role for ERA/M reports to ensure consistency with the requirements of AFMA's ERM strategy and the associated templates for both the Productivity Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) Level 2 Residual Risk and ERM reports;
- Coordinate the timing of detailed ERM strategies for each of AFMA's managed fisheries;
- Provide advice to MACs on the status of individual fishery's ERM implementation and response;
- Provide advice to the AFMA Executive, Environment Committee and Commission on policy setting and direction of ERM, status of implementation within individual fisheries and discussion on forward direction and priorities;
- Maintain AFMA's web pages to reflect AFMA's broad pursuit of the ecological component of ESD and all publicly released ERM and ERA reports, including residual risk documents.

**Harvest strategies
(Industry funded) (0.5 FTE)**

The Section has the following roles:

- Facilitate understanding of the Harvest Strategy Policy and ensure it is applied consistently across AFMA's fisheries in line with the Ministerial Direction;
- Coordinate use of AFMA's harvest strategy template;
- Oversee review of harvest strategies where required;
- Provide advice to AFMA staff, MACs, RAGs, Australian Fisheries Managers Forum and other forums as needed on implementation of harvest strategies;
- Work with BRS on projects related to assessment and review of AFMA's harvest strategies

**Strategic assessment and export reassessments
(Industry funded) (0.3 FTE)**

The Section has the following roles:

- Provide advice to fisheries managers on the requirements of the EPBC Act;
- Review documentation for submission to the Environment Committee and the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA);
- Monitor compliance with conditions and recommendations;
- Negotiate conditions and recommendations in collaboration with fisheries managers.

**Threatened, Endangered and Protected Species
(Industry funded) (1.0 FTE)**

The Section has the following roles:

- Coordinate the reporting of wildlife interactions to DEWHA in line with the Memorandum of Understanding between AFMA and DEWHA;
- Analyse wildlife interactions across fisheries;
- Coordinate submissions on nominations of protected species and key threatening processes;
- Represent AFMA on the development and operation of threat abatement plans and recovery plans;
- Coordinate submissions and represent AFMA on the development and operation of national plans of actions.

Marine Bioregional Planning (Government funded) (0.84 FTE)

AFMA is taking an active role in the Marine Bioregional Planning (MBP) process to ensure that the broader interests of a sustainable fishing industry are taken into consideration. This engagement is primarily through a central liaison officer within the Environment Section, who co-ordinates AFMA's involvement in the MBP process both within AFMA and with DEWHA, DAFF, BRS and other external agencies and stakeholders. This approach ensures consistency, and a more efficient engagement in the process, and assist fisheries managers, DEWHA officers, DAFF, BRS and fisheries stakeholders to influence and support the MBP process.

The liaison officer is responsible for coordinating AFMA's engagement in these processes, through:

- Attending Stakeholder Meetings;
- Compiling **AFMA Management Briefs**—publicly available on the AFMA website (note: these briefs are circulated to AFMA fisheries managers, MAC executive officers, fishing industry association representatives, the Commonwealth Fisheries Association and relevant government departments);
- Compiling Commonwealth fisheries MAC Papers for industry and other AFMA stakeholders;
- Liaising directly with MAC executive officers and commercial fishing industry association representatives to ensure that MACs and industry remain informed, especially in relation to public consultation periods;
- Answering questions from government agencies relating to AFMA's engagement in MPA and MBP;
- Coordinating data requests from DEWHA for development of MBP profiles/plans;
- Updating AFMA's website for MBP;
- Compiling news articles for circulation to stakeholders via AFMA's official newsletter—**AFMA Update**;
- Notifying fisheries managers and MAC EOs when **MPA Management Plans** are due to expire/undergo reviewed.

International obligations (Government funded) (0.15 FTE)

The Section is responsible for the coordination of AFMA input and/or provide environmental input to delegations attending meetings of international agreements including:

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

Bycatch and Discard Program
(Government funded project) (2.0 FTE)
(Industry funded) (0.07 FTE)

All fisheries will have brought their Bycatch and Discard Workplans into force by mid-2009. The resulting work for the 2009-10 fiscal year will consist of:

- Reporting on progress against workplans by all fisheries at the 6 month mark;
- Ensuring consistency between program and Commonwealth and National Bycatch Policy;
- Providing support to fisheries to implement projects identified in the workplans;
- Reconvening bycatch working groups and sub-committees for each fishery, clearing the actions through the MACs, informing other stakeholders for comment and submitting the new list to the Environment Committee (EC) for comment and acceptance.

The Bycatch and Discard Team will also be working on the following activities.

- The work that is continuing in relation to sharks and the continuous improvement of AFMA's 'Chondrichthyan Guide for Fisheries Managers', and taking the guide through to publishing;
- Benchmarking of bycatch in accordance with AFMA's obligations under the AOP and PBS is a facet of the program that will demand a lot of time to get right over the next 12 months;
- Seabird work that is only just starting to gain momentum in association with AAD, DPIWE, DEWHA and AFMA;
- Ongoing Australian fur seal work and the inevitable response to interactions in the blue grenadier fishery for which we are forward planning for the 2009 season;
- Other TEP species work that requires our team to be reactionary and immediately able to respond. This includes our underwater video equipment and the expertise in the use of it;
- On an international level (CITES) we are reporting on the process of ERA outcomes and how we manage that process through to physically implementing actions to address risks;
- PI and CI work on research projects such as the 'Economic Incentives to Reduce Discarding' project, as well as a project on the extension of Jeremy Lyle's work on seal interactions and mitigation techniques in the SPF;
- Work extending from the Quota Management Team of which we are a member, and the subsequent discards debate;
- Applying for relevant grants as they come available.

**Development of spatial management policy
(Government funded) (0.2 FTE)**

AFMA is working toward developing a policy and guidelines on the use of spatial management in Commonwealth managed fisheries to better explain the purpose and facilitate the use of spatial management measures.

The Section has the following roles:

- Participate in drafting the policy. AFMA intends to draw on the project's findings in formulating its spatial management policy and guidelines. AFMA will be consulting with the fishing industry and other organisations including DAFF, BRS, DEWHA and the Commonwealth Fisheries Association while drafting the policy;
- Participate in developing the guidelines on the use of spatial management in AFMA's fisheries.

**Development and implementation of a byproduct policy
(Government funded) (0.03 FTE)**

The Section has the following roles:

- Participate in drafting the policy;
- Coordinate the development of fisheries' byproduct strategies.

**Australian Fisheries Managers Forum and Marine and Coastal Committee
(Government funded) (0.05 FTE)**

Represent AFMA at the Australian Fisheries Managers Forum and Marine and Coastal Committee as required.

**Petroleum and related applications
(Government funded) (0.55 FTE)**

Coordinate AFMA's response to applications on petroleum exploration and other non-fisheries activities likely to affect commercial fishing activities.

**Climate change
(Industry funded) (0.1 FTE)**

Coordinate AFMA's involvement in with other agencies in relation to climate change initiatives.

**National Introduced Marine Pests Coordination Group
(Industry funded) (0.02 FTE)**

Represent AFMA's interests in relation to introduced marine pests.

**Environment Committee, EMMAM and AFMA-DEWHA Standing Committee
(Industry funded) (0.60 FTE)**

Organise and prepare papers for:

- Environment Committee to allow the Committee provide advice to the AFMA Commission and AFMA Management on strategies to address environmental or conservation issues and to meet AFMA's legislative objectives, focusing on ESD, the precautionary principle and minimising the impact on non-target species;
- Environmental Members of MACs Annual Meetings to allow NGOs to raise common issues and provide input on AFMA environmental initiatives;
- AFMA-DEWHA Standing Committee to allow for discussions of emerging and ongoing environmental issues.

**Develop and manage GreenFish
(Industry funded) (0.05 FTE)**

AFMA is required (as are all Commonwealth agencies), under the Section 516A of the EPBC Act, to report, among other things, measures taken to minimise environmental impacts of the agency in its Annual Report. GreenFish is the forum that drives and coordinates AFMA's response.

GreenFish reviews, audits and suggests improvements to the environmental practices within AFMA and to reduce costs through using more environmentally sustainable practices in the workplace. GreenFish focuses on issues such as: electricity use, water use, use of office supplies, transport and waste management.

The Section has the following roles:

- A member of the Section chairs and minutes GreenFish meetings, and coordinates actions arising.