

Minutes

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| Meeting | Spanner Crab Harvest Strategy Working Group | | |
| Meeting Number | 7 | Dates | 2nd February 2023 |
| Location | Online via Microsoft Teams Meeting | Time | 13:00 - 16:00 |
| Members | <p>Independents: James Findlay (Chair), Julian Morison (Economist), Jeremy Prince (Scientist)</p> <p>Commercial Fishing Representatives: Andrew Rigby, John Joblin, Ian McRae, Gary Bordin,</p> <p>Mitchell Sanders (Commercial Fishing NSW Advisory Council – CommFish NSW), Tricia Beatty (Professional Fishers’ Association)</p> <p>DPI Fisheries Manager: Darren Reynolds</p> <p>DPI Fisheries Scientist: Daniel Johnson</p> | | |
| Apologies | | | |
| Observers | Rhys Watson (DAF QLD), Nicholas Giles (DPI), Rowan Chick (DPI), Ashley Fowler (DPI), Josh Cansdell (DPI), Shane McGrath (DPI), Aaron Puckeridge (DPI) and Heath Folpp (DPI) | | |

| Agenda Item | Issue | Notes & Actions |
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| 1. | Welcome and Introduction | <p>1.1 Acknowledgment of county</p> <p>The Chair opened by acknowledging Traditional Custodians and paying respects to Elders past, present and emerging.</p> <p>1.2 Apologies and Recognition of Observers</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all Working Group members and meeting guests.</p> <p>1.3 Confirmation of Agenda</p> <p>The meeting agenda was accepted.</p> <p>1.4 Declaration of pecuniary interests</p> <p>Updates to the register of pecuniary interests were confirmed.</p> <p>1.5 Minutes of the previous meeting</p> |

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| | | The previous meeting minutes were adopted without amendment. |
| 2. | Overview of submissions received on the Consultation Draft Spanner Crab Harvest Strategy | <p>The Chair opened the meeting by stating that the objective of the meeting is to review submissions received during public consultation and the current draft including the position on indicator reference levels with the inclusion of Queensland (Qld) Fishery Independent Survey (FIS) data.</p> <p>The Chair noted the next steps to progress the draft strategy, being submission to CommFish NSW for review if endorsed by the working group at this or a following meeting.</p> <p>DPI briefed members on submissions received through public consultation undertaken between 23 November 2022 and 9 January 2023.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Members discussed public submissions, noting two submissions were received with both in support of the harvest strategy as drafted. Members did not suggest any changes on the basis of submissions.</p> |
| 3. | Review of combined Fishery Independent Survey data | <p>Since the last meeting, DPI undertook further scenario testing using combined Qld and NSW FIS data to verify suitable indicator reference point levels. DPI presented options on the reference level for legal-sized crabs caught per ground line from the combined fishery-independent survey (FIS_{LEGAL}), with review in the context of historical levels.</p> <p>Using historical catch data, DPI led members through each of the options and how each reference level would influence changes in the spanner crab TAC.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>After the group went through several scenarios the members recommended to set the FIS_{LEGAL} reference level at 9.117 crabs per groundline to allow the harvest strategy to be more responsive to changes in the spanner crab stock and allow increase to harvest when the stock is performing well.</p> |
| 4. | Review of Consultation Draft harvest strategy | <p>Members and DPI reviewed the Consultation Draft Harvest Strategy, with minor changes suggested and accepted.</p> <p>The Chair then sought confirmation on the strategy as a final draft. All members agreed they endorsed the draft harvest strategy as final and recommended it be sent to Commfish NSW for their review and if endorsed, be provided to the Minister for adoption.</p> <p>Action:</p> |

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| | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DPI submit the Draft Spanner Crab Harvest Strategy to Commfish NSW for their review and endorsement. 2. If endorsed by Commfish NSW, the Draft Spanner Crab Harvest Strategy be provided to the Minister for adoption. |
| 5. | TAC discussion | <p>The working group discussed the TAC level in relation to decision rules provided in the harvest strategy and current catch levels. Discussion centred around the benefits of TAC's that more closely align with catch, noting recent catches are well below the TAC and it may take some time for TAC and catch to rationalise.</p> <p>Members recognised that where catch is restrained by TAC this will allow the TAC to operate as an effective management control under the harvest strategy. Whilst there are a range of factors that can influence both catch and TAC, if TAC and catch are managed in concert this will increase the likelihood of the harvest strategy in managing available biomass and meeting its objectives.</p> <p>As the health of the NSW biomass is likely to be influenced by both NSW TAC settings and recruitment from the Qld portion of the stock, the principle was recognised and noted for consideration under the TAC setting process over time, particularly noting the potential impacts of reducing TAC in the early stages of operation of the harvest strategy.</p> |
| 6. | Other Business and Closing | <p>The group again discussed the potential for a co-management approach regarding a flexible spawning closure period. DPI confirmed support to assist industry discussing and developing a co-management approach to the seasonal spawning closures, noting that this would be pursued as a separate process to the Terms of Reference of this working group.</p> <p>In closing the meeting both the Chair and DPI commended the working group for their commitment and input in developing and finalising the draft Spanner Crab Harvest Strategy.</p> |