

Chair's Summary – Line & Trap Harvest Strategy Working Group Meeting 5

The fifth meeting of the Line & Trap Harvest Strategy Working Group (the Working Group) was held on 27–28 February 2024 and saw the Working Group discuss the design of the decision rules and how various harvest controls will be incorporated into the harvest strategies. The Working Group also established some important principles which will affect the development and operation of the decision rules. A major principle important to the Working Group, is the need to establish some form of recreational-commercial cross-sectoral allocation, to ensure equitable distribution and shared ownership of the resources.

At meeting 4 the Working Group held preliminary discussions around Snapper and Kingfish harvest controls but needed further data analyses to progress this discussion. NSW DPI presented further information at meeting 5, which allowed the Working Group to hold a detailed discussion around various management options at different biomass levels in the Snapper and Kingfish harvest strategies.

Recreational fishing members have been collaborative in discussing changes that may be needed under various biomass settings and have recommended harvest controls which could be used to control catch. Reporting and data collection provides challenges to monitoring or managing recreational harvest to a fine scale catch allocation, but this may become more feasible over time.

For Snapper, the Working Group noted that given that the NSW portion of the eastern Snapper stock is thought to be building with current fishing pressure, a status-quo management approach may be suitable. This could see commercial and recreational fishing continue with minor adjustments to current management arrangements on the condition that stocks continue to build towards the target reference point at an acceptable rate. If stocks were to decline, the harvest strategy would define management changes to guide the stock back towards the target. It is considered that the most appropriate management arrangements will recognise the multi-species nature of Snapper fishing and minimise potential impacts to multi-species harvest.

When discussing Kingfish, the Working Group noted that they held concerns with the current stock levels for Kingfish and noted that their biology and distribution is different to Snapper. As such, different management approaches may need to be considered such as a greater focus on building this stock towards a target level. To gain a better understanding of how the discussed management arrangements may affect those fishing for Kingfish regularly, the Working Group will invite specialist commercial Kingfish fishers to join meeting 6.

I look forward to continuing the decision rule discussions with the Working Group at meeting 6.

Ian Cartwright, Chair, Line & Trap Harvest Strategy Working Group

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