

## Quarterly catch and progress review

Phone hookup, 2-4 PM, 8 November 2012, 9 people attended and with many apologies.

### Brief background

A combination of quarterly phone hook-ups and meetings will be used to review catch and consider management, as is used in Tas and Vic fisheries. Brief summaries will be prepared and circulated to all on email, and will be combined with the circulated figures and tables as submissions to the TAC Setting process, as supported by the TAC Committee. At this first review, catch distribution and research were briefly discussed, followed by outstanding management issues. It is expected future reviews will concentrate more on catch and research review, with the next meeting planned for Eden in February 2013.

### Catch distribution review

#### 2011-12 Fishing Period

Brief consideration of last year's catch distribution noted the concentration of catch around Tathra, Disaster Bay and the Howe, to levels well above targets agreed at the previous Workshop. Catches were well below target north of Tathra, Eden-Bittangabee and on Saltlake. Much of this concentration has been reversed in this fishing period, diver and processor limitations and catch limits continue to influence the distribution of the catch particularly in the north, and there is no indication or suggestion that limited stocks of abalone were driving the patterns in catch.

#### 2012-13 Fishing Period

Brief consideration of this year's catch distribution noted the concentration around Long Beach-Eden and Bittangabee (red in Table 1), and reduced catches in the north, south of Turingal and Wonboyn (blue in Table 1). The impact of processing limitations in the north and daily limits on the distribution of catch was noted, as were the reversal of some catch patterns since last fishing period. Catch from close to Tathra and Disaster Bay was noted to be above targets both last year and this year. It was agreed to encourage all divers to spread catch away from these areas, where possible. In general, and particularly given the large amount of catch taken since March (i.e. 96 t in 8 months, equivalent to almost 145 t over a year) and limited catch in the north and more recently in the south, stocks appeared to remain very strong. With the significant impact of the size limit change south of Wonboyn, it will be important for catches to recover.

### Brief summary of DPI comments

DPI provided support for the process of quarterly catch reviews, and noted indicators of the stock remained positive, with most stable or slightly up. Also, DPI noted there were no indicators providing reason for concern with the stock, and acknowledged the distribution of catch was mostly not stock driven. DPI provided general agreement with the assessment of each area summarised in Table 1. While some fishing had occurred in northern areas, DPI encouraged the spread of catch toward the agreed targets.

### Research Projects

No funding has been provided for Research this fishing period, so the Abalone Council of NSW is doing what is possible with available resources. DPI noted a contract to provide some initial resources should be finalised soon, with other projects still under review. Research projects will include operation of GPS loggers and measuring loggers, and may include additional projects.

Divers were encouraged to make sure their GPS and depth loggers remained operational and to contact Duncan on 4858 0506 or 0431 755 497 if there are any problems.

## Management Issues

**Management Charges.** Concern was expressed about the increase in Management Charges, the lack of funding Research, and the lack of carryover of unspent funds from last year. DPI responded the charges were required to recover costs of Management, and that a Research Plan and funding were still being finalised, with any saving used to offset next year's charges.

**Consultation.** Concern was expressed about the recent consultation about Management Charges. DPI noted the concerns, and repeated they would continue to consult with all Shareholders, and that the establishment of a Peak Representative Body for the NSW Fishing Industry was likely to occur within the next year and drive any changes to consultation with the abalone Industry.

**Size limit.** Concern was expressed that the extensive FMS/EIS process completed in 2008 by DPI, and signed off by the Minister, had agreed to a 115 mm size limit, and why this was changed. It was also noted that the recent size limit increase had further limited access to abalone of a range of sizes, and that this has led to the loss by processors of recent orders. DPI responded the TAC Committee had expressed a preference for size limit increases together with some reductions, noted the range of opinions within Industry, and would continue to work to find the best approach.

**Harvest Strategy and FSM.** DPI noted the comments of the TAC Committee about the need for a Harvest Strategy and policy for FSM, but responded that these had not been progressed.

**Move fishing period.** A proposal to move the fishing period forward several months had been supported at the last Workshop. DPI responded that this needed further consultation.

**Separate quota to spread catch.** A proposal to introduce one or two separate quota, particularly in northern areas, had been supported at the last Workshop. DPI responded that consideration of separate quota would be possible when the new electronic catch reporting system was in place, making management of separate quota simpler and cheaper.

**Research permit for BMP.** A permit application was submitted over 6 months ago to measure abalone in the Batemans Marine Park, but no formal response has been received on why it has not been issued. DPI will investigate lack of a response on this component of the permit application.

**TAC Committee selection nomination.** One nomination has been put forward.

**Indictable offence and compliance.** It was noted the Indictable Offence legislation was, at last, beginning to see some significant penalties for theft.

**Outstanding MAC Action Items.** Concern was expressed about the lack of response from DPI to MAC Action items outstanding from November 2011, see list below. DPI noted the concern and agreed to provide a response.

Indigenous Permits policy, procedures and guidelines. DPI responded a link to the DPI website was sent, which outlines general policy on indigenous fishing. Industry requested specific procedures and guidelines.

Catch reporting change advice, call flow. DPI responded catch reporting changes are delayed due to the need for legislative changes, and the need to respond to the general review of fisheries management ,but work on this project, including a smart phone app is ongoing.

Protocols for bin weight. DPI responded this will continue to be reviewed.

A4 docket book. DPI responded that A4 dockets are currently in progress with a draft soon to be sent to industry.

Outstanding budget items. Industry requested a formal response on specific items. DPI responded all share holders were consulted and the reasoning behind the budget decisions were sent to all shareholders.

Beach price reporting and GVP calculation. Industry requested detail to the process and a formal response in writing. DPI responded they are satisfied with current arrangements.

Harvest Strategy and FSM progress. DPI responded this is ongoing. Industry repeated the importance of this issue to the TAC Committee and previous reviews.

Table 1 on next pages.

Table 1. Catch monitoring and planning for 2012-13 Fishing Period.

Area	Assessment data		2012-13 Fishing period								Comment
	Catch rate	Mean size	to date	%Target	if 120 t	Target	Review	T <sub>+30%</sub>	T%99-02	T%08-11	
Northern Pt											
<b>01 Tweed A-E</b>	-	-	0.1	5%	0.3	2.0	3.0	1.4-2.6	90	724	Little effort
<b>02 Port Stephens F-J</b>	-	-	0.2	10%	0.6	2.0	3.0	1.4-2.6	104	7017	Little effort
<b>03 Kiama K-M</b>	-	-	0.4	13%	1.1	3.0	4.0	2.1-3.9	25	278	Little effort
<b>04 Ulladulla N</b>	-	-	0.1	5%	0.3	2.0	3.0	1.4-2.6	40	219	Little effort
<b>05 South Brush P</b>	+3%	+7%	2.2	44%	6.1	5.0	6.0	3.5-6.5	42	120	Ahead of Target
<b>06 Batemans Q</b>	-	-	0.1	10%	0.3	1.0	2.0	0.7-1.3	16	296	Little effort
<b>07 Moruya R-S</b>	-	-	0.6	60%	1.7	1.0	2.0	0.7-1.3	9	60	Ahead of Target
<b>08 Narooma T</b>	-2%	0%	0.7	18%	1.9	4.0	5.0	2.8-5.2	23	123	Little effort
<b>09 Bermagui U1-3</b>	+3%	+13%	0.8	10%	2.2	7.8	10.0	5.5-10.1	26	124	Little effort
<b>10 Bunga U4-V2</b>	+14%	-1%	2.9	42%	8.1	6.9	9.0	4.8-9.0	43	118	Ahead of Target
<b>11 Moon Bay V3-W1</b>	+29%	-1%	3.0	39%	8.3	7.7	8.0	5.4-10.0	43	97	Ahead of Target
<b>12 Turingal W2-X1</b>	+13%	+2%	2.5	29%	6.9	8.5	11.0	6.0-11.0	59	129	Behind Target
<b>13 Long Beach X2</b>	+45%	+5%	2.7	87%	7.5	3.1	5.0	2.2-4.0	33	113	Well ahead of Target
<b>14 Eden Y11-21</b>	+28%	+1%	5.5	69%	15.3	8.0	10.0	5.6-10.4	34	104	Well ahead of Target
<b>15 Saltwater Y22-23</b>	+3%	+4%	2.4	40%	6.7	6.0	8.0	4.2-7.8	40	116	Ahead of Target
<b>16 Bittangabee Y24</b>	+31%	+4%	4.9	82%	13.6	6.0	8.0	4.2-7.8	34	112	Well ahead of Target
<b>17 Greencape Y31</b>	+5%	+4%	4.4	43%	12.2	10.3	13.0	7.2-13.4	55	146	Ahead of Target
<b>18 City Rock Y32</b>	-2%	-1%	3.4	41%	9.4	8.2	10.0	5.7-10.7	77	187	Ahead of Target
<b>19 Wonboyn Z1-3</b>	0%	+2%	1.7	24%	4.7	7.0	9.0	4.9-9.1	45	111	Behind Target , Size limit change
<b>20 Saltlake Z4</b>	-16%	+3%	3.0	33%	8.3	9.0	11.0	6.3-11.7	37	131	Behind Target , Size limit change
<b>21 Howe Z5</b>	-3%	+5%	1.6	10%	4.4	16	20.0	11.2-20.8	79	136	Behind Target , Size limit change
<b>Total</b>			43.2	36%	120.0	120.0			42	127	

Table 1, continued. Catch monitoring and planning for 2012-13 Fishing Period.

Area	Comment	Preferred action
Northern Pt		
<b>01 Tweed A-E</b>		Increase catch
<b>02 Port Stephens F-J</b>	Catch remains at very low levels and well below targets, through mostly diver and processor limitations. Catch rates and size of abalone have increased in a similar way to the rest of the fishery.	Increase catch
<b>03 Kiama K-M</b>		Increase catch
<b>04 Ulladulla N</b>		Increase catch
<b>05 South Brush P</b>		Spread catch more
<b>06 Batemans Q</b>	Catch remains at very low levels and well below targets, mostly diver and processor limitations. Catch rates and size of abalone have increased in a similar way to the rest of the fishery.	Increase catch
<b>07 Moruya R-S</b>	Catch ahead of target, but target is very low compared to historic catches and was based on recent low catch. Some catch in recent months, with increased catch rates and sizes of abalone.	Increase catch and target
<b>08 Narooma T</b>	Catch remains below targets, through a combination of diver and processor limitations. Catch rates and size of abalone mostly stable for past 12 months in T, with size of abalone higher than before, and increases in size of abalone in U in recent months.	Increase catch
<b>09 Bermagui U1-3</b>		Increase catch
<b>10 Bunga U4-V2</b>	Catch ahead of target, catch rates increased in last 12 months, mostly in V1, while sizes of abalone stable.	Maintain catch
<b>11 Moon Bay V3-W1</b>	Catch ahead of target, catch rates increased in last 12 months, while sizes of abalone stable.	Maintain catch
<b>12 Turingal W2-X1</b>	Catch behind target, catch rates increased in last 12 months, mostly in X1, while sizes of abalone stable.	Maintain catch
<b>13 Long Beach X2</b>	Catch well ahead of target, catch rates and sizes of abalone increased in last 12 months.	Reduce catch
<b>14 Eden Y11-21</b>	Catch well ahead of target, catch rates increased while sizes increased in Y1 and stable in Y2.	Reduce catch
<b>15 Saltwater Y22-23</b>	Catch ahead of target, catch rates stable and sizes of abalone increased in last 12 months.	Maintain catch
<b>16 Bittangabee Y24</b>	Catch well ahead of target, catch rates and sizes of abalone increased in last 12 months.	Reduce catch
<b>17 Greencape Y31</b>	Catch ahead of target, catch rates stable and sizes of abalone increased in last 12 months.	Do not increase catch
<b>18 City Rock Y32</b>	Catch ahead of target, catch rates and sizes of abalone stable.	Do not increase catch
<b>19 Wonboyn Z1-3</b>	Catch well behind target from size limit change, catch rates stable and sizes of abalone increased in last 12 months, mostly in Z1.	Increase catch where possible
<b>20 Saltlake Z4</b>	Catch behind target from size limit change, catch rate reduced and sizes of abalone stable but variable.	Increase catch where possible
<b>21 Howe Z5</b>	Catch well behind target from size limit change, catch rate stable and sizes of abalone increased.	Increase catch where possible