

Barramundi Fishery Management Advisory Committee

Meeting #4

Independent Chair: Mr Ian Cartwright.

Participating Members: Mr Rob Fish (commercial fishing), Mr David Ciaravolo (recreational fishing), Dr Peter Kyne (environmental science/conservation), Dr Rachel Groom (environmental science/conservation), Mr Murray Knyvett (Aboriginal traditional marine harvest), Mr Brenton Cardona (Aboriginal traditional marine harvest), Ms Tarun Richards (Aquaculture industry).

Permanent Observer: Ms Katherine Winchester (NTSC).

Observers: Ms Ursula Godson (NTGFIA), Mr Will Bowman (DITT), Dr Brien Roberts (DITT), Mr Malcolm Marshall (WPS), Mr Cameron Berryman (Wildbarra), Ms Adele Pedder (AMCS; for agenda item 2.3).

Executive Support: Mr Jonathan McPhail (DITT).

Administration Support: Tilly Adamson (DITT).

Apologies: Mr Daniel Keyes (Aboriginal traditional marine harvest).

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

The fourth meeting of the Northern Territory Barramundi Fishery Management Advisory Committee (the Committee) was held on Thursday 1 and Friday 2 December 2022 at the NT Fisheries Building, Berrimah, Darwin.

The commercial fishing member and fishing tourism member have resigned from the Committee. Mr Rob Fish has been appointed as the new commercial fishing member by the Minister for Agribusiness and Fisheries and Ms Ursula Godson will be the proxy member for fishing tourism.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister to the Chair regarding a request for the delivery of advice on a baseline Harvest Strategy and a TEPS Strategy by August 2023, and to initiate discussions on resource sharing at meeting #4. Given this, the Chair worked with the Committee to draft a timeline to meet the Minister's request, including:

- An updated draft TEPS strategy to be presented to the Committee in April 2023 and finalised by August 2023.
- Presentation of the elements of the draft Harvest Strategy to the Committee by April 2023 and agreement on advice for biological limit reference points by August 2023. Trigger and target reference points will be developed following the completion of pre-requisites activities (i.e., socio-economic assessment, resource sharing).

GENERAL BUSINESS

Resource Sharing

The Committee noted and discussed the NT Resource Sharing Framework process and the proposed steps to be conducted to complete this process for the Barramundi Fishery. The Department advised that a consultant will be engaged to undertake a socio-economic assessment of the Barramundi Fishery and a background information paper will be provided to the Committee to support resource sharing discussions.

Members supported the approach of implementing output control management for the commercial fishery, via a Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC).

Revisit long-term fishery goals

The Committee revisited the long-term fishery goals, given their importance in determining how the fishery is to be managed and to provide a clear vision for where the fishery intends to be in 5 to 10 years.

To support the revision of the goals and objectives, the commercial sector had workshoped goal-setting for the fishery and provided the Committee with a number of proposed amendments.

The Committee reviewed each of the proposed amendments and agreed whether they were to be accepted, amended or rejected. Following this review, members agreed to a revised goals and objectives. The Committee noted that the goals and objectives will be revisited at the end of the process and during the public consultation phase.

The Committee discussed development of a management table that provides clarity on the management actions that will be necessary to support each goal and objective. The Committee requested the Department to commence work on this.

Threatened, Endangered and Protected Species (TEPS) Strategy

The Department informed the Committee that a draft TEPS Strategy has been developed through the assistance of the TEPS working group and an expert panel workshop that focussed on trigger limits for sawfish and river sharks. The Committee were advised that the draft TEPS Strategy has been designed to implement best practice arrangements to effectively manage TEPS interactions, and encourage a process of continual improvement to reduce TEPS interactions to an acceptable level. The key objectives of the draft TEPS Strategy are to:

- improve monitoring and reporting to understand the interactions between TEPS and fishing gear;
- identify and implement risk minimisation options suited to an individual fisher's location and operations; and,
- support innovate research that identifies techniques to minimise interactions, reviews the effectiveness of mitigation measures, and strives for continual improvement

Committee members were advised that additional work is required on the draft TEPS Strategy (especially for Dolphins, Turtles and Dugongs) prior to providing an updated draft in April 2023 and a finalising the strategy by August 2023.

Update on the development of a Barramundi Fishery Harvest Strategy

The Department provided an overview of the steps necessary to develop a Harvest Strategy, guided by the NT policy and guidelines. The Committee were advised that the first step is to define the fishery, which includes specifying the level of management and monitoring. At previous meetings the Department provided a definition of the fishery and has been working with the Committee to define spatial management areas for the fishery, which had requested further details on the spatial management areas to make an informed decision.

King Ash Bay was raised as an important area for recreational fishing, as there is significant recreational effort exerted in this area by visitors, and a suggestion was made that King Ash Bay should be included as an additional (sixth) spatial management area. Members discussed this proposal and agreed to recommend inclusion of the additional area, with the boundary to align with known Barramundi stock boundaries and river catchments. The Department advised this is significantly different to the proposed fish management zone currently under consideration and intent of a spatial management area.

The Committee endorsed the proposed spatial management areas, and the inclusion of the new area, and agreed that more information is needed on the stocks in the new management area. The Committee acknowledged that upon gaining further information, the management areas may be adjusted.

The Department informed the Committee of the remaining steps in the development of a harvest strategy and the Committee provided a number of recommendations. The Committee also discussed the importance of developing conceptual and operational objectives and recommended that the Department work with each stakeholder group to develop these objectives prior to the next Committee meeting.

The Department presented the key findings on the influence of the Australian Monsoon Index (AMI) on Barramundi populations with the conclusion that that the AMI is suitable as a performance indicator in the harvest strategy.

Chair's summary

FRDC Project 2021-098: *Incorporating Aboriginal perspectives into fishery management review processes, using the Northern Territory Barramundi Fishery as a case study.*

Dr Groom provided an overview of the FRDC project and mentioned the pilot "Fisheries Management 101" program the Department has developed to support capacity building and engagement of Aboriginal Communities in the NT. The Department provided an overview of the pilot program and the tools used to engage participants. Dr Groom noted that the FRDC project follows separately to the 'Fisheries Management 101' presentation.

Dr Groom advised the Committee that the FRDC project team have presented at one workshop in Maningrida where communities shared their views on their aspirations for the fishery in their area, their traditional knowledge and fishing practices. Dr Groom informed the Committee that three other locations will be visited to collect information for the FRDC project. Dr Groom will provide the Committee with an update at the next Committee meeting.

Next Meeting

April 2023



Ian Cartwright
Chair, BFMAC

For further information on the issues above, please contact the Mr Jonathan McPhail, Aquatic Resource Manager on telephone number 8999 2100 or via email, jonathan.mcphail@nt.gov.au.