

# Marine Scalefish Fishery Management Advisory Committee

## Out of Session (OOS) Meeting - 16 September 2025

The Marine Scalefish Fishery Management Advisory Committee (MSFMAC) held an OOS meeting on 16 September 2025 via online video conference call. The meeting considered updates on the algal bloom, discussed exceptional circumstance considerations, the draft Management Plan for Recreational Fishing in South Australia and the draft Implementation Plan for the Harvest Strategy for the Marine Scalefish Fishery (MSF).

## Algal Bloom

The MSFMAC received updates from SARDI on the algal bloom and rapid assessment of fish stocks as part of the SARDI Algal Bloom Response. The MSFMAC noting that there are algal blooms in Spencer Gulf (SG) and Gulf St Vincent (GSV) with large concentrations of *Karenia* north of Adelaide. The algal bloom has held a stationary position on the western side of SG with northern areas of the gulf less impacted.

The industry request for clarity on the application of exceptional circumstances within the harvest strategy was discussed with respect to the process to apply exceptional circumstances in response to the algal bloom, how data would be assessed, how exceptional circumstances would be considered and process for communicating this to stakeholders. The requirement for credible information to inform the consideration of exceptional circumstances and the balance with precaution was discussed. The MSFMAC noted that application of exceptional circumstances would be considered application of the harvest strategy in determining management arrangements for 2026/27.

The MSFMAC noted that the rapid assessments are being undertaken by SARDI in collaboration with commercial and charter fishers, and where possible, will include updated fishery stock assessments in Stock Synthesis 3. Accelerated development of these models is being undertaken and where possible will consider algal bloom impacts.

Recent significant decreases have been observed in commercial catch of some key species in some fishing zones and GSV may be more impacted than SG.

The MSFMAC discussed the impacts of the algal bloom on fish stocks and the consideration of management arrangements, noting that there is uncertainty about when the algal bloom might end, complicating assessment of the impact on fish stocks. The MSFMAC noted the rapid assessments with targeted commercial catch rate data analysis will commence in September 2025 and information would be available to inform stock assessments in May 2026.

The MSFMAC discussed whether adaptive management within the current season should be contemplated.

The MSFMAC discussed whether there is a need to demonstrate additional precaution with respect to impacted fish stocks in the interim period prior to 2026/27 TACC setting, noting that management decisions need to be based on credible evidence or data, yet that the Act includes the precautionary principle.

The Committee indicated there was significant concern for Southern Calamari in GSV from the algal bloom and some members considered there was responsibility to consider application of a precautionary approach.

The MSFMAC recommended that a MSFMAC meeting be held in October 2025 to consider relevant new information from the rapid assessments underway, consider what management processes are available that could be applied within the current fishing period and discuss what management arrangements could be considered within the existing management framework to support impacted stocks where there is credible information that fish stocks are at risk of becoming depleted.

## Draft Management Plan for Recreational Fishing

The MSFMAC discussed key elements of the draft Management Plan for Recreational Fishing in South Australia and provided high-level feedback to be considered by the Recreational Fishing Management Plan Working Group in finalising the draft.

The MSFMAC noted concerns about the application of recreational allocations triggers from a range of perspectives including data collection, the relative trigger level compared to the allocation level applied to trigger an allocation review and discussion on whether this approach is appropriate for the recreational sector and what those levels of triggers should be. Noting these triggers had been applied by PIRSA for recent allocation reviews. There was concern about the method used to propose the triggers for recreational allocations, in particular, when they relate to high value species.

The MSFMAC requested that PIRSA further consider how the allocation triggers are calculated and the appropriateness of triggers between the sectors.

## Implementation Plan for the Harvest Strategy Framework

The updated Implementation Plan for the Harvest Strategy Framework was provided for MSFMAC consideration and the MSFMAC discussed the updates applied to make the Implementation Plan consistent with updates made to the Harvest Strategy Framework.

MSFMAC members asked to provide comments on the updated draft Implementation Plan out of session, within the next two weeks. PIRSA would then consider the comments received prior to the MSFMAC consideration of recommending the final Implementation Plan.

**The next MSFMAC meeting was expected to be held in late October 2025 with a final date to be confirmed out-of-session.**

Dr Ilona Stobutzki

Chair of the Marine Scalefish Fishery Management Advisory Committee