

Chair's Assessment Outcomes Report

Allocation Review Committee

Assessment of the sector allocations of Black Bream, Sand Crab and Yellowtail Kingfish

The Allocation Review Committee (ARC) held a formal meeting on 17 December 2024 to conduct the full assessment of the sector level allocations of Black Bream, Sand Crab and Yellowtail Kingfish, and recommended whether:

1. No action required; or
2. proceed to adjust shares; or
3. manage each relevant sector(s) to return to within their original allocated shares.

In undertaking a Stage 2, full, allocation assessments, the ARC noted their recommendation for allocation assessments be based on a sector's proportional share of the recommended biological catch (RBC), as a proxy for sustainable yield (see [Chair's Assessment Outcomes Report – commercial only allocation of Southern Calamari](#)), where a reliable RBC is not available, an alternate proxy, such as 5yr catch average, should be used. In doing so the ARC members adopted the proxy considered most reliable and used in the Stage 1, initial, allocation assessments by the Allocation Working Group in determining that a breach had occurred and there was need for a full assessment. Notably, it was recognised that:

- Black Bream – the recreational sector breached their proportional share of the 5yr catch average;
- Sand Crab – the commercial sector breached their proportional share of the 5yr catch average;
- Yellowtail Kingfish – the commercial sector breached their proportional share of the 5yr catch average.

The species were considered one at a time with the Recreational and Commercial fishing sector representatives providing overviews of their relative sector's positions on each of the species, highlighting the value of the species to the sector. For each species, general discussion was had by the ARC, considering stock status, risk of each potential outcome, management changes, and species value.

Consideration of the sector positions, and available catch, value and stock status information allowed for the full assessment to be completed for Black Bream, Sand Crab, and Yellowtail Kingfish, with key considerations and outcomes as follows:

Black Bream

It was acknowledged that Black Bream stocks in the Lakes and Coorong, where the commercial fishing of the species predominately occurs, is classified as depleted, and the stock in the marine waters is classified as sustainable. The ARC noted the stability over the recreational catch over time whilst commercial catch had notably dropped with discussions suggesting this may be due to the stock status and management arrangements brought in for recovery the stock as well as the impact of seals. The importance of the species, particularly as a catch and release sports fish, to the recreational sector was noted in the context of many recreational fishers not taking full bag limits of the species.

The ARC recommends the recreational sector should be managed back to within their allocation (their proportional share of the total 5 year catch average) and consider regional management of the species with a focus the Lakes and Coorong where the stock is depleted.

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Sand Crab

Discussion was had around the identification of Sand Crab as an underutilised species, with it noted the breach was driven by low recreational catches (with catches having dropped with the halving of bag limits) rather than increased commercial catches.

The ARC recommends that the sectors should be managed back within their allocation, ideally through increasing the recreational access to Sand Crab. This was based on the significant reduction in recreational catch, and consequent reduction of the 5yr total catch average as a driver for the breach, recognising Sand Crab as an underutilised species.

Yellowtail Kingfish

The high social value of Yellowtail Kingfish to the recreational fishing sector as well as the economic value to regional towns through tourism driven by targeting of the species was noted, along with the value of having wild caught Yellowtail Kingfish available on the market through commercial fishing. It was discussed that the commercial allocation of the species was very low which results in any slight fluctuations in catch triggering a breach, even if catches are low, but noted that current commercial catch levels are higher than historic causing increased concern (centered around the disruption to spawning stocks) in the recreational community.

The ARC recommends that the commercial sector be managed back within their allocation. This decision was based on the important social and regional economic value of the species to the recreational fishing sector.

Summary of Recommendations

- Black Bream – **the recreational sector should be managed back to within their allocation (their proportional share of the total 5 year catch average)** and consider regional management of the species with a focus the Lakes and Coorong where the stock is depleted.
- Sand Crab – **the sectors should be managed back within their allocation, ideally through increasing the recreational access to Sand Crab.**
- Yellowtail Kingfish – **the commercial sector be managed back within their allocation.**

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Dr Kate Brooks

Independent Chair of the Allocation Review Committee