

Chair's Report

Allocation Review Committee

Meeting #3 – 17 December 2024

The Allocation Review Committee (ARC) held its third meeting at West Beach and online via Microsoft Teams.

The purpose of the meeting was to conduct the full, stage 2 allocation assessments, consistent with the requirements of the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) Allocation Policy, of:

- Black Bream – recreational breach against 5yr catch average
- King George Whiting – recreational breach against RBC
- Southern Garfish – commercial breach against RBC
- Sand Crab – commercial breach against 5yr catch average
- Yellowtail Kingfish – commercial breach against 5yr catch average

The ARC acknowledged their role of recommending 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.

It was also acknowledged that the role of the ARC was not to provide advice on how the recommended outcome is implemented.

It was discussed that although the ARC had recommended 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. The ARC members also noted that were it known that a new RBC, based on more refined models, was imminent it was prudent, in some cases, to defer decisions until the RBC is available to inform outcomes and recommendations.

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.

It was noted that the Marine Scalefish Fishery (MSF) is still adjusting following a reform of the fishery which aimed to improve economic viability and sustainability, through which there was a significant reduction in the number of licences. Additionally, it was noted that a new harvest strategy and management plan is being developed for the MSF and as part of this new RBC models are being developed for the tier 1 species, including King George Whiting and Southern Garfish. Due to these factors, for King George Whiting and Southern Garfish the ARC agreed to defer their decision until the new harvest strategy, management plan and new RBC model are finalised. In making this decision to defer, the ARC considered:

- the sustainable status of King George Whiting
- the commercial catch of Southern Garfish being constrained by a total allowable commercial catch.

Consideration of the sector positions, and available catch, value and stock status information allowed for the full allocation assessment to be completed for the other three species, with outcomes as follows:

Black Bream – 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 on the Lakes and Coorong where the stock is depleted.

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Sand Crab – 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 commercial species.

Yellowtail Kingfish – 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.

An assessment report has been prepared detailing the process, outcomes and recommendations for the three species for which the full assessment of allocation was completed.

The ARC will reconvene to complete the full assessments of allocation for King George Whiting and Southern Garfish when the harvest strategy, management plan and new RBC model are finalised. It is noted the finalization of the new RBC model is unlikely to occur until early 2026.

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Dr Kate Brooks

Independent Chair of the Allocation Review Committee