

<b>TORRES STRAIT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Meeting 45 17 -18 June 2008</b>
<b>RESEARCH PRIORITIES</b> <b>Suggested research priorities - TS Committees/Groups</b>	Agenda Item No. 5.1 <b>FOR DECISION</b>

### **RECOMMENDATION**

5.1.1 The TSSAC **NOTE** the suggested research priorities from the Torres Strait Committees/Groups; and

5.1.2 The TSSAC **DISCUSS** and **AGREE** to a process for setting overall research priorities for Torres Strait Fisheries.

### **BACKGROUND**

The PZJA consultative bodies have made the following recommendations for research priorities.

#### Torres Strait Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (TSFMAC):

The TSFMAC (9.10.1) recommended

- 1) that engagement between communities and researcher is important;
- 2) the recommended research priorities from the Finfish Fishery and Tropical Rock Lobster Working Groups (given below).

#### Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG):

- 1) Continuing the mid-season and pre-season surveys, necessary to have stock assessments and set a TAC [Critical]
- 2) An expanded pre-season survey to better estimate the age 2+ population of lobster for the purpose of improving the accuracy of each year's TAC [Critical]
- 3) Determine a conversion factor between tail and live weight, the two forms in which lobsters are marketed [Critical]
- 4) Looking into testing the GPS tracking system in both TIB and TVH sectors to get better data on effort [Important]
- 5) Ensuring that length frequency monitoring to have accurate data for undertaking stock assessments and determine the population composition [Critical]
- 6) Determining a method of estimating traditional take and fishing practices to explore ways to protect and improve traditional fishing under the Management Plan [Critical]
- 7) The development of the Operational Model to use as a tool for fisheries management [Important]
- 8) Research in the bifurcation point of post-settlement lobsters between the east coast and Torres Strait

#### Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC):

- 1) Research to complete stock assessments for the main target species, tiger and endeavour prawns. [Critical]
- 2) Determination of current Bycatch Reduction Device efficiency. [Important]

- 3) Determination of appropriate level of observer coverage in the fishery. [Urgent]

Finfish Working Group (FFWG):

- 1) Development of a long term monitoring program for all sectors in the Spanish mackerel fishery. [Urgent & Critical]
- 2) Assessment of the historical and current impact of neighbouring Spanish mackerel fisheries, particularly the Indonesian, Taiwanese and PNG gillnet and longline fisheries. [Important]
- 3) Comprehensive information on population dynamics of Torres Strait Spanish mackerel, including growth, maturity, fecundity and spawning. [Important]
- 4) Confirmation of the single stock assumption for Torres Strait Spanish mackerel. [Important]
- 5) Periodic review and update of the Spanish mackerel assessment as determined by the requirements of AFMA. Operational management objectives, performance measures and decision rules need to be defined for future management strategy evaluation. [Critical]
- 6) A systematic and transparent stock assessment review process for the Spanish mackerel fishery. [Critical]

The TSFMAC (10.4.1) recommended:

- 1) The Hand Collectables Working Group's recommendation that research to address uncertainties regarding trochus stocks and the recovery of beche-de-mer be given priority by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee.
- 2) Habitat assessment for trochus using Indigenous Community knowledge and remote sensing data (satellite imaging).
- 3) Beche-de-mer stock assessment research during 2008.

Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group (TRLRAG):

The TRL RAG recommended

- 1) That the TRL stock assessments be done annually
- 2) Investigate the migration of lobsters across the different jurisdictions
- 3) Investigate the level of non-commercial take in the Torres Strait Lobster Fishery.
- 4) Fund an expanded pre-season survey to better estimate the age 2+ population of lobster for the purpose of improving the accuracy of each year's TAC. The cost of expanding the survey from 170 to 200 sites is thought to be \$26,000 from the funding agent
- 5) Research into the bifurcation point of lobsters between the east coast and Torres Strait

**DISCUSSION**

The recommended research priorities should be discussed in relation to the Research Plan discussed in agenda item 4.1.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.