

# West Coast Demersal Scalefish

## Expert working Group

Meeting #1 – Report (Agenda, Attendees, Summary)  
13 April 2022

**Chair:** Andrew Rowland, Recfishwest

- 12:30pm** 1. Welcome and Introduction (Group)
- 12:45pm** 2. Consultation Process (Recfishwest Staff)
- 2.1 – Expert working Group Role
  - 2.2 – Consultation Phases
3. WCDSF Background Presentation (Recfishwest Staff)
- 3.1 Management History
  - 3.2 Current Fishery and Stock Status
- 1:30pm** 4. DPIRD Stock assessment briefing (Dave Fairclough)
5. DPIRD Recreational data collection briefing (Karina Ryan)
6. DPIRD Management briefing (Shane Walters)
- 3:00pm** 7. Group discussion on DPIRD presentations
- 3:50pm** 8. EWG Administration (Matt Gillett)
- 4:00pm** Meeting Closed

### List of Attendees

#### Recfishwest Staff:

- Dr Andrew Rowland
- Matthew Gillett
- Leyland Campbell
- John Dempsey

#### Expert Working Group:

- Scott Coghlan
- Tim Farnell
- Brian Marshall
- Ashley Ramm
- Brody Laroux
- Matt Howard
- Pat Shinnick
- Michael Heslewood
- Rob Hoefhamer
- Dave Hilton

#### DPIRD Staff:

- Shane Walters
  - Dr Dave Fairclough
  - Dr Karina Ryan
  - Clinton Syers
  - Dr Emily Fisher
  - Eva Lai
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## West Coast Demersal Scalefish Session #1 April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### **Introduction:**

Introductions were made between Expert Working Group Members. Members discussed their involvement in the recreational fishing sector and their passion for the West Coast Demersal Scalefish fishery.

Andrew Rowland (Chair) thanked the Expert Working Group members for volunteering their time and expressed the importance of their input in this process.

### **Presentation (Consultation Process):**

#### Andrew Rowland:

Discussed the role of the EWG with reference to the Terms of Reference for the group. The importance of keeping an open mind towards future management was discussed. The following topics were conferred:

- Speak your mind and discuss any and all management recommendations you have;
- The EWG and management recommendations will be guided by the science from DPIRD;
- Science from the DPIRD is the best available and in the absence of other scientific studies, recommendations will be guided by this science;
- There will be no rule changes to the WCDS fishery until the current consultation process is completed, with management changes expected to come into effect during summer 2022/23;
- Please raise any concerns towards the operation of the EWG, or if you feel your views/perspective towards management recommendations is not being listened to; and
- Today's session is formed around providing all EWG members the information you need to have informed discussions towards the management of the WCDS fishery.

#### Matt Gillett:

Outlined the EWG meeting timeline for consultation phase 1, asking EWG members for feedback on the timeline, with understanding towards the intensity and timeline of the process. Informed the EWG that management recommendations from consultation phase 1 must be provided to DPIRD by early June and that the group will focus on meeting this timeline.

### **Presentation (WCDS Background):**

#### Matt Gillett:

Outlined previous management history in the WCDS fishery and discussed the high level of fisher avidity within the WCDS fishery, with a large participation rate across the West Coast Bioregion. Highlighted the complexity of a multi-species fishery with multiple user groups when matrixed with broad geographical distribution.

***DPIRD staff joined the meeting for the following presentations***

### **DPIRD Presentation (Stock Assessment Briefing):**

Dr Dave Fairclough:

Provided a broad overview and timeline of management in the WCDS fishery. 2021 stock assessment results were presented, discussing relevant data collection and analysis including:

- Demersal species being long lived, taking a long time for management effects to show impact on the stock.
- Post-release mortality being incorporated into stock assessments.
- Approximately 300-500 fish are used from collection areas to be able to build an age distribution graph.
- Charter captures are down from previous years, likely due to the impacts of Covid.
- Stock assessments show a lack of older fishing in the population which are important for contributing to the population for multiple years.

### **DPIRD Presentation (Recreational Catch Estimates):**

Dr Karina Ryan:

Provided an overview towards recreational fishery data collection including iSurveys, boat ramp surveys and camera surveys. Information included:

- Approximately 2.8 million fish are caught per year by recreational anglers.
- 25% of the population goes fishing at least once a year.
- Differences in the effectiveness of phone surveys, online surveys, and text message surveys.
- Survey sampling currently being the only feasible option to collect information on recreational fishers.

### **DPIRD Presentation (Management Briefing):**

Shane Walters:

Overview of DPIRD management towards the WCDS fishery, discussing catch share allocation between the commercial and recreational sector. The presentation also included the following:

- Harvest strategy 2021-2025.
- Management focus is on reducing total fishing mortality in line with IFM allocation benchmarks for this fishery.
- Recreational fishers are currently fishing over benchmarks, with the sector requiring a 60% reduction in total mortality to remain within the new benchmark levels.
- Commercial fishers are currently fishing under the allocated benchmark, with the sector requiring a 10-15% reduction in total mortality to reach new benchmark levels.
- Primary measures delivering most of the reduction in total mortality and supporting measures assisting in reducing total mortality.
- Whether it is appropriate to have size limits on species with high rates of post release mortality.
- Options to reduce the need for releasing demersal fish species.

The Chair thanked DPIRD for their comprehensive presentations and efforts in assisting the EWG members explore the issue, understand the background and answer any questions they had.

***DPIRD attendees left the meeting.***

**EWG Administration:**

The group discussed the administration and communications channels to be utilized over the coming weeks.

An Outlook group has been set up to act as the single point of communication and information sharing.

The Chair thanked the Expert Working Group members for their time in attending the first meeting, listening to the presentations, engaging with the DPIRD scientists and managers in gaining an understanding of this complex fishery and the challenge facing it.

**Meeting Closed.**

**ACTION:** Distribute contact details of all EWG members across the group.

**ACTION:** Recfishwest to provide WCDS stock assessments, catch allocation reports and the 2021-2015 Harvest Strategy to the EWG through communication channels.

**ACTION:** PowerPoint presentations from DPIRD to be shared with the EWG.

**ACTION:** Recfishwest to consolidate meeting schedule and seek feedback from EWG members.