

Banded Morwong Fishery Update

Dear licence holder

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the live fish market, industry have indicated that it is highly probable that the banded morwong Total Allowable Catch (TAC) will be substantially undercaught this season. As there is no mechanism for applying carryover of uncaught banded morwong quota units in FILMS, an alternative proposal was to increase the unit value of quota i.e. increase the TAC for the new season to potentially allow for the uncaught quota to be factored in to the quota unit value.

Licence holders will receive their renewals in January 2021 as usual. These will have the current value of 26 kilograms per quota unit applied. [Section 94 \(5\)](#) of the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* states that “If a total allowable catch is not set before the start of a quota period, the total allowable catch set for the preceding quota period applies, and the provisions of subsections (2)(b), (2)(c) and (3) apply, until a new total allowable catch is set.” This means there is potential for the setting of the TAC for the 2021/22 season to be deferred until March/April 2021 (the closed season). However, if a new TAC is unable to be set before the season opens on 1 May 2021 then the current TAC of 26 kilograms per quota unit would apply.

It is important that all banded morwong catch and effort returns and quota docketts are received at DPIPWE by Friday, 5 March 2021 so they can be entered into FILMS. The Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) will then extract and analyse the data to investigate the impact of various TAC scenarios on the spawning stock biomass. Once this process is complete, the intention is to present this information to industry via an online (Microsoft Teams) forum in late March. As Teams is accessible via mobile device and computer this will facilitate maximum industry attendance in a short timeframe.

The Scalefish Fishery Advisory Committee (SFAC) will then meet and make a recommendation to the Minister. The Minister will make his decision after considering the advice of DPIPWE, IMAS, SFAC and the outcomes of the forum. The intention is for DPIPWE to have the new TAC applied to licences by 21 April 2021.

It is strongly recommended that no seasonal or permanent transfers of banded morwong quota occur during this transitional quota period i.e. from the date a licence and quota is renewed to the date that the new licence certificates are issued, as it will complicate and delay the adjustment of quota for the entitlements concerned when a new TAC has been approved.

DPIPWE recommends that all holders of a fishing licence (banded morwong) opt to receive their licence certificates via email. Seasonal or permanent transfers can occur from the date the new TAC has been applied to the licence certificates.

The 2019/20 stock assessment is now available for download on the IMAS website at https://www.imas.utas.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1414975/Tasmanian-Banded-Morwong-Fishery-Assessment-2019-20_final.pdf. IMAS will conduct a major stock assessment for banded morwong in mid-2021 to incorporate new biological information as well as the catch and effort data from the 2020/21 quota year.

User Guide for the Commercial Banded Morwong Fishery

The 2021 version of the *Operational Guide for the commercial Banded Morwong Fishery*, which provides plain English information on the fishery, will be available for download on the DPIPWE website in early February 2021.

Banded Morwong Fishery Forum

The next forum will be held in late March 2021 and will primarily be focused on presentation of preliminary assessment data. This forum will be held online via Microsoft Teams. These forums are an opportunity for industry members to hear about the performance of the fishery - including biological information - directly from researchers (IMAS) and to provide their own feedback. It is also an opportunity for industry to discuss management issues directly with DPIPWE Fishery Managers.

You will be able to access this meeting via the Teams website. All licence holders and supervisors who have signed up to the Scalefish Fishery email subscription service will be sent an invitation to join this meeting. The link to sign up to this email subscription service is available on page 8 of both the *Operational Guide for the commercial Banded Morwong Fishery* and the *Operational Guide for the commercial Scalefish Fishery*. More information on this forum will be sent to you once the details have been finalised.

We encourage all licence holders and supervisors to participate in these forums.

If you have any questions on the 2021/22 Banded Morwong TAC setting process, please contact the Commercial Scalefish Section of the Wild Fisheries Management Branch on (03) 6165 3044.

Yours sincerely



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