

Chair's Summary – Line & Trap Harvest Strategy Working Group Meeting 8

The eighth meeting of the Line & Trap Harvest Strategy Working Group (the Working Group) was held on 23–24 April 2025. DPIRD presented updated stock assessment results for both Snapper (*Chrysophrys auratus*) and Yellowtail Kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*), and the Working Group discussed implications for the developing harvest strategies.

For both species, DPIRD has produced high-quality integrated stock assessment models. For Snapper, we are presented with a data-rich environment, and stakeholders can be confident that robust inferences can be made from the model. While the Kingfish assessment has high quality biological and commercial catch data, knowledge gaps (currently being addressed through research programs) in Kingfish movements and migration, and associated access by fishers, cause some uncertainty in the assessment's biomass estimate.

For both species, the Working Group is re-examining the form of the harvest control rule, albeit for different reasons. For Snapper, biomass is low, however has been building since the 1990s with commercial fishing effort also reducing considerably in this time. Given these factors, the Working Group has confidence the stock will likely continue building. To minimise impact on catch that is estimated to be at levels that will support continued stock building, the Working Group is considering a constant catch system, whereby catches will be managed under a constant upper catch limit (maximum catch level) for an interim period, after which the harvest control rule may be reviewed, and a dynamic system implemented. A dynamic system would see catch levels set according to the outputs of the harvest control rule within the harvest strategy.

For Kingfish, a constant catch system could be used to support a precautionary management approach, without the complexity of navigating a dynamic system with some uncertainty around the current biomass level. The constant catch management system for Kingfish is also likely suitable for a longer period with periodic assessment of levels, until knowledge gaps around Kingfish movements have been bridged.

Given the recent stock assessment updates, and the implications these have for both harvest strategies, a ninth Working Group meeting will be required prior to finalising the draft harvest strategies for public consultation. The Working Group looks forward to reviewing these harvest strategies at the upcoming meeting and receiving the public's comments soon.

Ian Cartwright, Chair, Line & Trap Harvest Strategy Working Group

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