

Draft Giant Crab Harvest Strategy Consultation

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Hello Ewan

I provide the following, this is my personal opinion/view for the Giant Crab consultation plan 2025,

I'm concerned for the rebuild of the Giant Crab fishery in Victoria. I can't help but think we are heading in the same direction as the South Australian Fishery

We don't have a pre recruit abundance indicator (PRI - Pre-recruit index) for the Giant Crab Fishery in Victorian, we do collect the data for the Southern Rock Lobster

I'd just like to point out Figure 5. in the attached file for the South Australia State-wide trends in the CPUE of Giant Crab pre-recruits caught in the GCF between 2000 and 2022.

In addition to the pre-recruit data, SARDI also collect the Spawning female abundance data, reference page 12 of the attachment

State-wide seasonal trends in the number of spawning females reported in the catch steadily increased from 2000 to 2016, reaching a maximum of 0.14 spawning females/potlift in 2016 before decreasing to 0.03 spawning females/potlift in 2022

Stock Status Report for the South Australian Giant Crab (*Pseudocarcinus gigas*) Fishery in 2022-23

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an assessment of the status of the South Australian Giant Crab Fishery (GCF) using data to the end of the 2022 fishing season that extends from 1 October 2022 to 31 May 2023. It analyses fishery-dependent data at a State-wide scale, collected from two management zones, the Northern Zone (NZ) and Southern Zone (SZ), and from three commercial fishing sectors: (1) Miscellaneous Fishery sector; (2) South Australian Rock Lobster Fishery (SARLF) quota sector (RL-quota); and (3) SARLF by-product sector (RL byproduct). The long-lived and slow-growth life-history characteristics of the Giant Crab render the species susceptible to recruitment overfishing. Catch declines have been reported across core areas of the species' distribution in Victoria and Tasmania, despite multiple total allowable commercial catch (TACC) reductions in these states. **In South Australia, the recent declines in catch, pre-recruit abundance** and catch per unit effort (CPUE) to their lowest levels since a TACC was introduced in 1999 signal a period of reduced fishery performance. The TACC of the GCF has been caught in only three seasons since its inception and has not been caught in the last ten seasons. Catches have declined since 2012. In 2022, the catch of 13.7 t comprised 62% of the

22.1 t TACC, which is the second lowest catch on record since a TACC was introduced (Table 1).

The amount of targeted catch in the Miscellaneous Fishery sector and RL-quota sector in 2022 was also the second lowest on record. Seasonal estimates of pre-recruit (undersize Giant Crab) abundance have also steadily declined since 2008, with 2019–2022 returning the lowest estimates on record. The primary biological performance indicator (PI) for the GCF is the five-year average CPUE (kg/potlift) of legal-size Giant Crab. Estimates for this PI have declined since 2008. In 2022, the index was 1.88 kg/potlift, which is 3.6% below the Trigger Reference Point (RP_{trig} = 1.95 kg/potlift), and the lowest estimate on record (Table 1). The low five-year average is a consequence of annual estimates of CPUE decreasing in recent years. Within the management policy for the GCF, the status of the Giant Crab stock is not prescribed below RP_{trig} (PIRSA 2018). However, using a weight-of-evidence approach, and noting the declining trend in CPUE to below RP_{trig}, and **historical lows in GCF catch and recruitment, the status of the South Australian Giant Crab stock is classified as ‘depleting’ in 2022.**

https://pir.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/469116/stock-status-report-sa-giant-crab-fishery-2022-23.pdf

Kind Regards

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