

2021/22 TACC RECOMMENDATION

GIANT CRAB

Assessment summary

The TACC for giant crab has been 10.5 tonnes since 2014/15. Catch history shows current catches around the 10t level. This level has been sustained over the past eight years, even though the current biomass is likely to be much smaller in comparison to the early 1990s.

Overall, the targeted catch rate in 2019/20 was between 0.95 and 1.14kg/24-hour pot-lift. This is a substantial reduction from the 2017/18 value of 1.27kg/24-hour pot-lift but remains well above the limit reference point of 0.52kg/24-hour pot-lift for the fishery.

In August 2019, the size limit for male crabs was reduced to 140mm. Of the 3090 crabs landed during 2019/20, 475 were between 140 and 150mm. This roughly corresponds to 15% of the weight of the landed catch. These crabs would not have constituted legal catch under the old system and consequently resulted in an increased CPUE compared to previous years. This bias was attempted to be corrected using two methods: 1) correcting the 2019/20 CPUE by removing 15% of the catch weight; and 2) considering the catch rate of crabs in numbers per potlift. The CPUE range provided in the stock assessment consists of these two methods.

The Harvest strategy currently does not outline provisions for increasing the TACC. Whilst CPUE is well above the limit reference point, the limited data available to assess the stock requires a precautionary approach to be undertaken in setting the TACC.

Recommendation:

The CPUE remains well above the current limit reference point and based on application of the current harvest strategy the RLRAG recommends that the 2021/22 TACC remains at 10.5 tonnes.