

SAMLMA

South African Marine Linefish Management Association

Minutes of the SAMLMA Annual General Meeting held on 5 July 2006 at the Sea Point Research Aquarium in Cape Town.

The following people were present at the meeting:

Bruce Mann (Chairman)	Oceanographic Research Institute
Steve Lamberth	Marine and Coastal Management
Chris Wilke	Marine and Coastal Management
Arthur Riordam	Mosselbay Linefishing Association
Malcolm Paul	South African Shore Angling Association
Jan Pieterse	Overberg Linefish Association
Wally Croome	West Coast Commercial Fishers Association
Mary Katerere	Sancor Secretariat, National Research Foundation
John de Roock	West Coast Commercial Linefish Association
Robert Landman	Marine Linefish Farmers Association / I&J
Guy Musson	Espadon Marine
Andre Bok	Marine Fish Culture / I&J
Jeff Petty	False Bay Treknet Fishermen's Association
Jeremy Hare	Fresh Tuna Association
Nik Scholtz	Lower Breede River Conservancy
Rupert Berlairs	Lower Breede River Conservancy
Colin Attwood	Marine and Coastal Management
Nick Hanekom	South African National Parks
Jaco Barendse	WWF- South Africa
Ken Morty	Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife
Marius Vermaak	South African Deep Sea Angling Association
Hymie Steyn	South African Federation of Sport and Sea Anglers
Bruce Jones	South African Deep Sea Angling Association
Rashiq Newman	Kalk Bay Boat Owners Association
J. C. P Joubert	P.W.C Linefish Association

Apologies:

Craig Smith	Marine and Coastal Management (MCM)
Alan Boyd	Marine and Coastal Management
John Rance	Border Deep Sea Angling Association (BDSAA)
Brett Greg	East London Museum
James Lawson-Smith	South African Free Diving Association (SAFDA)
Marthinus	Waenhuiskrans Fishers
G. L. Huysamen	Stilbaai Lynvis Vereniging
Cedric Coetzee	Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife

1. WELCOME

Mr Mann, the Chairman of SAMLMA, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.1 Invitation to MCM senior officials to attend this meeting

Mr Mann informed the meeting that he had written a letter to Mr Andre Share inviting senior officials from MCM to attend the meeting to improve communication between fishers, managers and scientists (Doc 1.1). He was disappointed to see that the invited senior officials had not attended the meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved after the following items were added:

South African membership of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission – 4.1

Limitation of by-catch by trawlers - 5.6 & 7.4

Fish quality and storage by commercial line fishermen - 5.7

Englishman commercial bag limit – 5.8

Aliwal Shoal MPA – exemption from night fishing for geelbek – 6.2

Opening of Tsitsikama MPA to angling – 6.3

Angling permits - 9.1

Sale of fish at national fishing competitions – 9.2

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved after the following changes were made:

4.2 The meeting agreed that reference to Bonanza type competitions as ‘unorganised’ should be changed.

5.2 Corrected to read “bag limit”

8.1 It was pointed out that MCM had already signed a contract with the Swellendam Municipality to patrol and monitor the Breede River area.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

4.1 Tuna/ Swordfish Longline Fishery

Mr Mann stated that Mr Craig Smith from MCM had been asked to provide feedback on this fishery but that he was not available to attend the meeting. SADSAA had requested that there be a limitation placed on the by-catch taken by longliners including marlin and that they should become part of the TAC. As it was clear that no progress was going to be made on this issue at the meeting it was resolved that the Chairman should write to MCM highlighting this issue and that of IOTC membership.

MANN

4.9 Any other matters arising not included below

No other matters were raised under this agenda item.

5. MANAGEMENT- LEGISLATION

5.1 Recreational Fishing Regulations

SADSAA had raised the issue of the conservation of severely depleted stocks of linefish being bag limited for both recreational and commercial fishers. Mr Mann pointed out the species of concern as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Recreational and commercial bag limits for some critically over-exploited linefish species (species highlighted are not commercially bag limited)

Common name	DBL	MSL (cm)	Commercial DBL
Carpenter/silver fish	4	35	No
Englishman	1	40	No
Geelbek	2	60	No
Kob (3 species)	1/5	40/50/60	No
Red stumpnose/Miss Lucy	1	30	No
Roman	2	30	No
Slinger	5	25	No
Captain Fine/White-edged rockcod	1	40	No
Tuna (4 species)	10	3.2 kg	Yes
Yellowbelly rockcod	1	60	Yes
Catface rockcod	5	50	Yes
Dageraad	1	40	Yes
Hake	5	-	Yes
Poenskop/black musselcracker	1	50	Yes
Red steenbras	1	60	Yes
Scotsman	1	40	Yes
Adult dusky kob	1	> 110 cm	Yes

This issue had been raised by John Rance (BDSAA) and he felt that the regulations favour commercial interests above conservation and recreational/sport fishing interests. If a species was severely overexploited why was it not bag limited to both recreational and commercial fishers? This question resulted in much discussion and a summary of the main points raised are stated below:

- Most of the species under consideration (i.e. not commercially bag limited) are very important to the commercial fishery in certain areas and/or at certain times and it would make commercial fishing economically unviable if these species were to be bag limited for commercials.
- A large number of linefish species have been specifically allocated to the recreational fishery and may not be sold by the commercial fishery (i.e. decommercialised).
- The TAE of the commercial fishery had been substantially reduced (i.e. from ~3000 vessels to 450) and numbers of commercial vessels were allocated in three regions which allowed for more flexibility in the permit system.
- There is an urgent need to update the stock assessments for certain of these species (e.g. geelbek)

5.2 Protection of dusky kob in the Breede River estuary

Dr Attwood addressed the issue regarding the proposal to ban all forms of night fishing in the Breede River Estuary (Doc 5.2). Dr Attwood informed the meeting that large dusky kob were being heavily targeted in the Breede River estuary, particularly at night and that even the current bag limit of one was not sufficient to reduce mortality. The Lower Breede River Conservancy (LBRC) has requested MCM to take action so as to address

the problem. Dr Attwood stated that MCM felt that, of the various options, a ban on night fishing was the most appropriate form of control and would result in a substantial reduction in the catch of kob without impeding too much on the “enjoyment” of recreational fishing in the Breede estuary. It was however important to stipulate the specific times within which fishing was permitted (i.e. 20h00 to 06h00) as the terms ‘sunrise’ and ‘sunset’ were too vague and variable (i.e. summer vs winter). Based on a query on what the public’s reaction would be if the night fishing ban was implemented, it was stated that only a small percentage of people would object to the restriction and the majority of people would be in favour of the restriction to enable stock recovery. It was recognised that law enforcement would be a problem, particularly at night. However, it was pointed out that an overall ban on fishing would be easier to enforce than a species-specific regulation. Furthermore, the Lower Breede River Conservancy had already appointed two local law enforcement officers and that, with the aid of peer-pressure, it would be possible to implement this ban. If successful this ban could also be implemented in other estuaries where large catches of kob were made. The majority of SAMLMA members present, including the chairman, were in favour of the implementation of this regulation.

5.3 Regulations for squaretail kob in KZN

Barry Wareham (SASAA) had asked that this issue be raised. SASAA felt that the regulations for squaretail kob were unfair (boat fishers allowed 5 kob @ 40 cm) while shore anglers were only allowed 1 kob @ 60cm. This meant that anglers on fishing skis could catch substantially more kob, even if they were only fishing on the backline! SASAA believed that more avid anglers could tell the difference between the two species and that there should be separate, species-specific regulations for these two fish species. Mr Mann explained the rationale behind the current kob regulations and stated that the main reason for the regulations being “unfair” was the inability of anglers (and law enforcement officials) to distinguish between the two species. However, he believed that by launching an awareness campaign, particularly in the area between Tugela mouth and Mapelane where squaretail kob was more prevalent, it should be possible to teach anglers and law enforcement personnel the difference between the two species and thus work towards separate, species-specific regulations. This awareness campaign would probably need to take the form of a partnership between the KZNACU and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

5.4 Closing of Mussel worm as bait

This issue had been raised at the last SAMLMA meeting and had been strongly endorsed by SAMLMA. Mr Mann asked MCM whether there had been any progress in this regard. Mr Wilke replied that little progress had been made and that a letter from SAMLMA would help speed up the process.

MANN

5.5 Sale of elf/shad in KZN and Cape provinces

This issue was raised by commercial fishermen from PE. Mr Mann explained that the reason why elf were decommercialised in KZN was because this species migrates to KZN every year to spawn. Elf are heavily targeted by recreational shore anglers in KZN

and if commercial harvesting and sale of elf was allowed in KZN, this would quickly result in overfishing of the stock. Following the National Linefish Survey conducted in 1994-97 it had even been recommended that elf should be decommercialised throughout their distribution as it is the most important shore angling species caught in South Africa. However, as it is an important fish to trek netters and commercial linefishermen in parts of the Eastern and Western Cape, it was decided to retain the current status quo. Mr Wilke stated that MCM was hoping to carry out a national assessment of elf in the near future to re-evaluate the management options for this species.

5.6 Sale of artificially reared fish

Mr Mann pointed out that a number of companies were looking into the viability of raising marine fish in mariculture setups – either on-shore or in offshore cages. Some species selected for trials have included dusky and silver kob and yellowtail. There were a number of problems associated with the artificial rearing of fish including the size at which reared fish were marketed and the current legal size limits for wild-caught fish. If the optimum marketable size is below the minimum size limit (which is often the case for economic reasons), then mariculture grown fish would have to be labelled in some way to prove that they were farmed fish rather than wild caught. SAMLMA members felt that it was up to the mariculture industry to come up with viable options/solutions of how farmed fish could be suitably marked/labelled.

Under this agenda item the issue of marketing of undersize by-catch was also raised, such as the sale of silver kob caught by inshore trawlers off Mosselbaai. This was a bigger issue that needed to be addressed by MCM. For example, research needed to be conducted on implementation of by-catch excluder devices to try and reduce the by-catch of linefish in this trawl fishery.

5.7 Fish quality and onboard storage

This issue had been raised at the last SAMLMA meeting with SADSAA advocating that regulations should be promulgated to force commercial fishermen to take better care of the fish they caught, both in terms of handling and onboard storage. Commercial representatives responded by stating that it was in the interests of the fishermen to look after their fish as best as possible so as to get the best price. Mr Mann felt that this was an issue that could be dealt with by the newly established Commercial Linefish Association and that it was a question of improving awareness of fishermen on how to best handle and store their fish. Furthermore, better facilities could be provided at fishing harbours such as provision of ice and facilities for off-loading fish etc.

CROOME

5.8 Commercial bag limit of englishman

This issue had been a misunderstanding by the KZNSMBA as there is currently no commercial bag limit for englishman.

6. MANAGEMENT- MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

6.1 Brief update on status of MPA management in South Africa

Dr Boyd (MCM) had been invited to attend and address SAMLMA with regard to recent developments in MPA management. However, as Dr Boyd was unavailable, Dr Attwood was asked to address the meeting in this regard.

Dr Attwood informed the members of the following:

- The Stilbaai MPA had been designed and sent out for public comment. Minor comments were received. It will be a large zoned MPA with three no-take zones including the area near Geelkranz, the area to the west of the harbour near the vis vyfers and the upper two thirds of the Goukou estuary.
- The closed fishing areas of Kei, Gulu and Nyara were being changed to MPAs in terms of the Section 43 of the MLRA. This had involved a substantial contribution from BDSAA.
- Establishment of a large offshore MPA around the Prince Edward and Marion Islands was going ahead to protect Patagonian toothfish and associated marine life.
- Extension of the Addo National Park to include a marine component in the Woody Cape/Alexandria region was under negotiation between SANparks and the local community.
- Progress with the establishment of the Namaqualand MPA between the Groen and Spoeg Rivers had been hampered by mining and commercial fishing interests in the area.
- The Koggelberg Biosphere Reserve included a marine component near Betty's Bay MPA, but no more than 30% of the area would be closed to fishing. There was currently a problem as no-one was willing to manage this reserve.
- There was a proposal to establish a MPA on the Agulhas Banks to protect some of this important offshore habitat.

6.2 Aliwal Shoal MPA – exemption from night fishing for geelbek

Mr Naidoo from the KZNSMBA raised the issue of fishing for geelbek at night within the Aliwal Shoal MPA and asked whether they could get an exemption to do so. Mr Morty (EKZNW) responded that skiboat fishermen were allowed to launch from launch sites within the MPA (e.g. Rocky Bay) and to fish at night so long as they did so outside of the boundaries of the MPA (i.e. from Umkomass to Mzimayi River and extending 7 km out to sea). Mr Naidoo confirmed that most of the geelbek reefs were near the offshore boundary of this MPA and further offshore.

6.3 Tsitsikama National Park

Mr Mann informed the meeting that MCM and SANparks had been considering opening up sections of the Tsitsikama National Park (TNP) to fishing due to pressure from local communities living adjacent to the park. He stated that the TNP was South Africa's oldest and largest no-take MPA and that opening this MPA would be unwise as it would set a precedent for other protected areas. Furthermore, opening this area to fishing would be in direct contravention to South Africa's international obligations under the Biodiversity Convention. Mr Mann then asked the members present whether SAMLMA should write a letter to the Minister recommending that the areas within the TNP should

not be opened to fishing by the local community? No consensus was reached by the meeting in this regard as it was clearly a very delicate matter.

7. COMMERCIAL ACCESS RIGHTS

7.1 Rights allocation process for the traditional commercial linefish sector

Mr Wilke was asked to briefly explain the rights allocation process to the meeting. Unfortunately this was poorly recorded and is thus not reflected in these minutes. Ensuing discussion dealt with issues such as registration and training of crew, problems of vessel owners who were unsuccessful in the rights allocation process and who were still fishing illegally, etc.

7.2 Hake-handline rights allocation

Nothing was recorded under this agenda item.

7.3 Tuna-pole rights allocation

The process of rights allocation to this sector had not been well controlled by MCM (i.e. virtually all applicants had been successful). This had resulted in a number of rights holders in the tuna-pole sector who were not essentially tuna fishermen (e.g. it was apparent that some traditional linefishermen that mainly target snoek had obtained fishing rights in this sector). Mr Wilke reminded the members that performance as a right holder will be investigated to see whether the right holder is indeed catching tuna or other linefish species.

7.4 Access to snoek and yellowtail by Tuna-pole sector & 7.5 Snoek bycatch by Trawl Fishery

SAMLMA had set up a task team to address the yellowtail access rights issue in 2005 and recommendations were recorded in the minutes from the SAMLMA AGM on 15 July 2005. However, at the meeting it had become clear that access to snoek was an even bigger issue and, coupled to the trawling of snoek as a so called “by-catch”, there was much concern around access to snoek. SAMLMA was thus tasked to set up a meeting to look at; 1) Illegal targeting of snoek by trawlers, 2) rights of the tuna-pole sector to target snoek and yellowtail. However, this had not been done due to the whole rights allocation process and remained an outstanding issue.

8. MANAGEMENT- LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

8.1 Regional Update on Inshore Compliance and Enforcement Activities

Mr Morty (EKZWN) provided a comprehensive summary of the marine management activities undertaken in KZN. He also mentioned progress made with registering of subsistence fishers in that province. With regard to a query on the continued functioning of the Coastal Fisheries Liaison Committee in KZN, Mr Morty responded that the regional Fishing Forums were being reactivated and will largely fulfil this function.

The chairman had received a communication from John Rance (BDSAA) that wished to commend law enforcement officers in the Eastern Cape for their willingness to communicate and interact. However, there were some serious repetitive transgressions

taking place in the Transkei/Border regions and they requested that a high level task team of MCM & SAPS officials be established to investigate and resolve these issues.

Mr Croome pointed out that in the Western Cape the level of non-compliance was very high and that there were few effective convictions being made by the law enforcement authorities. Furthermore, the sale of fish by recreational fishers was regularly taking place but no action was taken by the relevant authorities. Mr Lamberth agreed that poaching of linefish along the coast was a major problem but that it was difficult to enforce, particularly as courts tended to deal leniently with transgressors and cases were either thrown out of court on technicalities or transgressors received small fines which did not act as a deterrent.

It was recognised that MCM fisheries inspectors lacked effective training and in many cases were not motivated to enforce regulations applying to linefish. It was also clear that much of the current law enforcement efforts were focussed on abalone poaching. Mr Wilke stated that it is important for MCM law enforcement officials to attend the SAMLMA meetings so that they can respond to the questions being raised at these meetings.

8.2 Vessel Monitoring Systems

This issue was raised by commercial fishermen from PE. Mr Croome informed the meeting of the negotiations that he had been having with the suppliers of VMSs to try and make them more affordable to fishermen. It was also pointed out that there needed to be an extension granted to the fishermen in order to give them time to purchase and install a VMS on their vessels.

9. MANAGEMENT- PERMITS AND EXEMPTIONS

9.1 Marine Recreational Permits (including angling permits)

This agenda item was raised by SADSAA and they requested clarity from MCM on a number of issues including:

- Progress made towards issuing of smart cards
- Analysis of sale of angling permits (numbers, types, region)
- A full financial statement from MCM on the MLRF (i.e. income and expenditure)

Mr Wilke informed the meeting that MCM had drawn up a tender to contract out the development of a smart card system for angling licenses. However, this process had been stalled and little progress had been made. With regard to the analysis of the number and type of fishing licenses sold, problems remained between MCM and the Post Office (who were selling the licences) with regard to the setup of a suitable database to record this information efficiently and to allow for suitable analysis.

Mr Wilke also informed the meeting that he had tried to get a statement on the MLRF but that he had been informed by the Chief Financial Officer that the Fund was currently being reviewed by Parliament because of the poor auditing that had taken place since 2001. He indicated that he would try and provide SAMLMA with an audited statement once/if it became available so that they could be included in the minutes.

9.2. Exemptions to permit sale of fish at SADSAA competitions

Mr Mann referred to documents 9.2a and b, which were copies of SAMLMA correspondence endorsing SADSAA's request to sell fish caught at national competitions for the last time. MCM had approved this for 2005 and 2006 with the exception of the bottomfish nationals to be held in Durban in August 2006. The chairman commended SADSAA for their letter stating that "SADSAA has made the decision to no longer apply for the exemptions but to research alternative methods of scoring so that fish will no longer be killed at national tournaments". He congratulated SADSAA for taking this decision and said that the catch and release approach to fishing competitions was really a step in the right direction.

In a similar vein, the chairman also commended SASAA for their decision to use measuring rather than weighing fish in their shore fishing competitions as this would help increase the survival rate of released fish. He furthermore encouraged SASAA to include concepts such as using barbless hooks and not gaffing fish to further reduce mortality of released fish.

10. LINEFISH RESEARCH

10.1. Observer Programme and 10.2 Second National Linefish Survey

Mr Mann stated that time and time again SAMLMA had stressed the urgency of implementing both these projects. Detailed project proposals had been submitted every year for the past five years but, for various reasons, MCM had been unable to come up with the required funding. In view of the funding generated by the linefish sector into the MLRF, this was simply unacceptable and that it was imperative that MCM implements both these projects as a matter of urgency in 2007. Mr Wilke pointed out that both these projects are very important and have been endorsed as a matter of high priority by the Chief Director.

10.3 Marine Linefish Research Group

A short report documenting the activities of the MLRG was included as Doc 10.3. The MLRG had met in July 2005 at the South African Marine Science Symposium and had decided that it was important to continue the group as a co-ordinating group under SANCOR. Dr Paul Cowley (SAIAB) was elected as chairman and had taken over from Mr Mann in January 2006.

10.4. Summary of current marine linefish-related research projects being undertaken in South Africa

Doc 10.4 was a compilation of all marine linefish and related research projects taking place in southern Africa during 2005 and was tabled for the information of SAMLMA members.

11. SAMLMA MATTERS

11.1. Evolution of SAMLMA into a Management Advisory Group (MAG)

This had been on the agenda for some time but little progress had been made. Mr Penney's comments at the 2005 SAMLMA AGM about the autonomy and independence of SAMLMA were valid and the chairman suggested that perhaps SAMLMA should strive to continue in its present form as the official "interest group" in linefish related matters.

11.2. Formation of the National Commercial Linefish Association

Mr Mann reported that MCM had called for the formation of "Recognised Industrial Bodies" by the various fishing sectors. This association would interact directly with MCM on matters relating to management of the commercial/traditional linefishery. Mr Croome pointed out that although this new association was necessary to represent commercial linefishermen throughout South Africa, it needed the ongoing support of SAMLMA. Mr Mann thanked Mr Croome for taking on this unenviable task in establishing this new association in his own time and expense. He wished the association good luck and looked forward to productive future collaboration.

11.3 SAMLMA Membership Fees

Mr Mann apologised for the lack of a financial statement from SAMLMA's bank account but indicated that with the SANCOR secretariat having left, he was not able to obtain a statement. However, he indicated that the balance in the account was over R 5000 but he could not confirm who had paid or not. The chairman asked the members whether or not they thought it was worthwhile maintaining a SAMLMA bank account and asking members to pay fees? Currently the SAMLMA Constitution does not specify the need for membership fees and the chairman simply did not have time to chase up people who had not paid their membership fees.

The response from the meeting was that if people did not pay their membership fees they should not be given the opportunity to speak at SAMLMA meetings. It was also suggested that membership fees should be raised to R500 next year. The chairman thus decided to retain the current membership fee system and would endeavour to send out invoices to members for the 2006/07 year once the new SANCOR secretariat had taken up her position.

11.4 Election of EXCO members

Mr Mike Beaurain was re-elected as vice-chairman and representative for the recreational sector in 2005 so he remained in his position for another year. The following positions on the Executive Committee were up for re-election:

Category A – Scientific (including position as Chair). Mr Mann was re-elected.

Category B – Conservation bodies. Mr Morty was re-elected.

Category C – Commercial linefishery. Mr Croome was elected into this position.

Members of the Executive Committee were congratulated on accepting their respective positions of responsibility.

11.5 SAMLMA representation on MCM Linefish Working Group

The chairman pointed out that he had been invited to sit as a representative on MCM's Linefish Working Group (LWG). Furthermore, the chair would be able to nominate one

of the members on the SAMLMA EXCO to attend LWG meetings in an observer capacity, depending on the nature of the meeting.

11.6 SAMLMA Report to SANCOR

Mr Mann indicated that short progress report and budget is prepared and submitted to SANCOR every year. This was tabled as Document 11.5.

12. GENERAL

Nothing was reported under this agenda item.

13 CLOSURE

Mr Mann thanked everyone for their participation and contributions to the meeting. He also thanked the SANCOR Secretariat for organising the catering and taking the minutes. The meeting was adjourned at 16:00.