

A GPO Box 4509
Melbourne Victoria 3001
E victorianfisheries@vfa.vic.gov.au
T 136 186

Mr Steve Melissakis
President
Scallop Fishermans Association Inc
PO Box 690 Lakes Entrance 3909 Victoria

Dear Mr Melissakis,

Steve

2018/19 SCALLOP (OCEAN) FISHERY TOTAL ALLOWABLE COMMERCIAL CATCH

Thank you for taking the time to prepare a submission in regards to the proposed 2018/19 Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) for the Scallop (Ocean) Fishery. I write to advise you that the TACC has now been set after consulting with stakeholders in accordance with Section 3A of the *Fisheries Act 1995*.

The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) has received the draft final report abundance survey from Fishwell Consulting Pty Ltd (Fishwell), which indicates a continued low level of abundance throughout the fishery. Whilst the survey did find commercially available scallops, they were not at a level considered sufficient to provide ongoing recruitment to the fishery and justifiable to increase the TACC. A final report will be provided to all Scallop (Ocean) Fishery Access Licence holders when available in coming weeks.

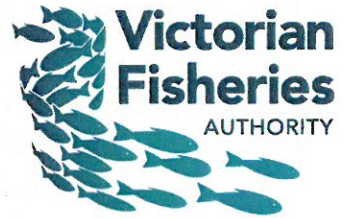
The VFA is confident that Fishwell has conducted a high quality and scientifically robust survey. Fishwell has demonstrated experience in undertaking abundance surveys in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery and has declared any conflict of interest as per Victorian Government policy.

I have carefully considered the information available, including the draft report and the submissions that I received, and have decided to continue the current 135 tonne TACC (1.5 tonne per licence holder) on the basis that this is a sustainable maximum harvest level. Maintaining 1.5 tonne of quota per licence will provide the opportunity for fishers to locate scallop beds that are considered to be viable and may inform future TACC setting.

I acknowledge the desire of industry to have flexibility to allow within season quota increases. Any increase in TACC would however need to be subject to evidence of higher stock biomass.

The 135 tonne TACC and the tradeable nature of licences and quota units provides licence holders the opportunity to explore the fishery and to increase their quota by purchasing licences or leasing quota.





I have enclosed a copy of the 2018/19 Further Quota Order for the Scallop (Ocean) Fishery for your reference.

If you would like any further information please don't hesitate to contact Monique Leane, Fishery Manager, on (03) 8392 6877 or monique.lean@vfa.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Travis Dowling".

Travis Dowling
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Fisheries Authority

15/03/2018

