



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment

Actions taken by Australia to implement UNGA Resolutions 64/72, 66/68 and 71/123



2 August 2022

Australia's key principles

- Bottom fishing can be sustainably managed through:
 - Input controls
 - Output controls
 - Area closures and/or move-on rules
- Most effective when complemented by comprehensive observer programs
 - Comprehensive data collection programs, including data on VME interactions

Australia's approach in the high seas

- Strongly guided by the UNGA bottom fishing resolutions
- Key policy objective is to implement these resolutions in our high seas bottom fishing activity
 - through domestic practice and our membership and engagement in bottom fishing RFMOs (SPRFMO and SIOFA)
- Target species:
 - Orange Roughy (*Hoplostethus atlanticus*)
 - Blue-eye trevalla (*Hyperoglyphe antarctica*)
 - Alfonsino (*Beryx decadactylus*)
 - Emperors (*Lethrinidae*)
 - Jackass morwong (*Nemadactylus macropterus*)
 - Deepwater snappers (*Etelis spp.*)
 - Yellowtail kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*)



Australia's approach in the high seas

In the South Pacific

- 2011 - Prepared a bottom fishing impact assessment
- 2014 - Binding bottom fishing measure adopted to implement UNGA resolutions
- 2019 - Led development of Bottom Fishing measures with New Zealand
 - Open/closed areas, encounter protocol, catch limits for Orange roughy
 - Introduced a common system and improved scientific understanding of VME habitats and impacts
- 2019/20 - Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment (BFIA) with USA, New Zealand and Chile

SPRFMO Bottom Fishing Review 2022

- Inform a revised SPRFMO bottom fishing measure to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems through effective fisheries resources management
- Review is considering:
 - appropriate spatial and management scales
 - levels of protection
 - thresholds
 - encounter protocols
 - precautionary principle
- Revised measure will implement the Guidelines and associated UNGA resolutions



Australia's approach in the high seas

In the Southern Indian Ocean

- In 2011, Australia prepared a Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment (updated in 2018 and 2020)
 - Fishing restricted to a 'fishing footprint'
 - VME trigger thresholds and move-on protocols established
 - Catch monitoring
- BFIA found that the potential for demersal trawling and demersal auto-longlining to be low when it considered:
 - Low fishing effort of Australian vessels and few areas of high fishing density
 - Spatial restriction of fishing
 - Largely low spatial overlap with bathomes most likely for VMEs
 - Management arrangements to monitor and mitigate risks on benthic habitats
- Greatest uncertainty is cumulative impact by all States' fishing efforts over time

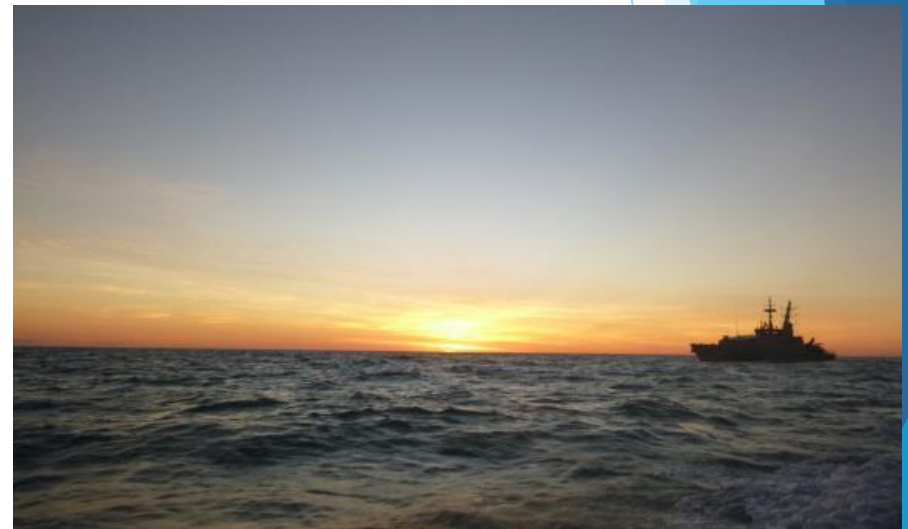
Australia's approach in the high seas

In the Southern Indian Ocean

- The 2016 SIOFA bottom fishing measure (revised in 2020) seeks to address this through:
 - Requiring all CPs, CNCPs and PFE to prepare and submit a first BFIA by 2018 and updated BFIA's prior to authorising vessels to bottom fish
 - Commitment to progressing SIOFA-wide BFIA and footprint
 - Catch/effort limits, spatial distribution, encounter protocol
- Advancing SIOFA's scientific work
 - 2017 – Bottom fishing impact assessment standard
 - 2018 - five new benthic protected areas and enhanced encounter protocols
 - 2019 – Stock assessment framework

Management of Australian EEZ bottom fisheries

- Built on the same key principles of sustainable management and strong scientific underpinnings
- Fisheries managed under a Harvest Strategy Policy based on a precautionary principle and informed by ecological risk assessments
- Controls include:
 - catch limits
 - spatial and temporal closures
 - observer requirements
 - gear restrictions



Orange roughy success story



- Orange roughy heavily fished in the late 1980s and early 1990s, leading to overfishing
- Targeted fishing for orange roughy in Australian EEZ ceased in 2006
- Comprehensive rebuilding strategy implemented
- Successfully rebuilt the eastern zone portion of the stock to within sustainable limits
- Commercial total allowable catch set in 2015 for the first time in 10 years (500 tonnes)
 - Current TAC is 900 tonnes – now classified as a sustainable stock

Reflections

- UNGA Resolutions set reasonable and manageable standards but continued implementation is important
- Cooperation is the key to implementation
 - scientific cooperation across RFMOs is crucial
 - continue to build understanding of deep-sea fishery resources through exchange of data, knowledge, ideas and practice
 - understanding of risk and risk thresholds also critical
- RFMOs are a central lever but not the only one
 - domestic action also plays a key role in driving sustainability