**– Call for Expressions of Interest –**

**Vessels to assist in testing modified
trawl gear to improve efficiency**

## Expression of Interest

Expressions of Interest are being sought from board trawl operators in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark (SESSF) Commonwealth Trawl Sector (CTS) who want to make their vessel, fishing gear and crew available to undertake trials of modified trawl gear.

The FRDC and NSW DPI are starting a four-year project to work with CTS and GABTS trawl fishers to prioritise, assess and then refine modifications designed to minimise unwanted catches and improve trawl efficiencies. It is hoped the project will support wide-scale voluntary adoption and ongoing exploration of appropriate best-practice trawl gear technologies.

The first experiments will focus on trawl ground-gear configuration and the effect of different-sized discs/bobbins on relative catch and engineering performances of trawls fishing in NSW and Commonwealth waters.

Please read the details provided below to help you decide whether you would be interested in being involved in this experiment. It is important to note the vessel will largely operate as it does in normal fishing operations, using its own quota and keeping the proceeds from sale of the catch but the experiments will require regular changes of net configuration, so there will be some level of daily fee paid to the vessel to account for this.

If you are interested in participating, please forward your expression of interest to Ian Knuckey (ian@fishwell.com.au) or Matt Broadhurst (matt.broadhurst@dpi.nsw.gov.au). When forwarding your expression of interest, please outline how the vessel, skipper and owner requirements will be met and complete the relevant tables provided.

## Please Note:

* Vessels must have permits/licences to fish in the Commonwealth and ideally, NSW state trawl fisheries.
* Expressions of interest must be received by Ian Knuckey (ian@fishwell.com.au) or Matt Broadhurst (matt.broadhurst@dpi.nsw.gov.au) by **17 February 2021**.

## Background

According to a recent review, around 50% of CTS fishers use a maximum disc size of 200 mm diameter, with the rest of the fleet evenly distributed around using smaller or larger discs. Inshore vessels in southern NSW waters are restricted to 100-mm diameter discs. Anecdotal reports from fishers indicate that these different ground gear configurations can have an important impact on trawl efficiency and bycatch levels. We want to scientifically test the level of this impact.

## Experimental Design

1. The general area of the work will be off the NSW southern coast between Sydney and Bermagui.
2. The experiment will require 10-12 sea days, but possibly longer.
3. Skippers will need to conduct three experimental 2-hour trawls per day (other commercial fishing can continue after these).
4. Three types of ground gears will be tested (100-, 200- and 300-mm discs) as shown in the table below.
5. Other than needing to use a net with specific ground gear configuration, normal commercial trawls of 2-hour duration can be conducted.
6. Scientific permits will be required to allow carriage of the non-standard gear.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Ground gears to be tested (100-, 200- or 300-mm discs) |
| Day | Haul 1 (two hours) | Haul 2 (two hours) | Haul 3 (two hours) |
| 1 | 100-mm disc (Trawl A) | 200-mm disc (Trawl B) | 100-mm disc (Trawl A) |
| 2 | 200-mm disc (Trawl A) | 300-mm disc (Trawl B) | 200-mm disc (Trawl A) |
| 3 | 300-mm disc (Trawl A) | 100-mm disc (Trawl B) | 300-mm disc (Trawl A) |
| 4 | 200-mm disc (Trawl A) | 200-mm disc (Trawl A) | 100-mm disc (Trawl B) |
| 5 | 300-mm disc (Trawl A) | 200-mm disc (Trawl B) | 200-mm disc (Trawl B) |
| 6 | 100-mm disc (Trawl A) | 300-mm disc (Trawl B) | 300-mm disc (Trawl B) |
| 7 | 300-mm disc (Trawl A) | 100-mm disc (Trawl B) | 300-mm disc (Trawl A) |
| 8 | 200-mm disc (Trawl B) | 100-mm disc (Trawl A) | 100-mm disc (Trawl A) |
| 9 | 300-mm disc (Trawl B) | 200-mm disc (Trawl A) | 200-mm disc (Trawl A) |
| 10 | 100-mm disc (Trawl B) | 300-mm disc (Trawl B) | 100-mm disc (Trawl B) |
| 11 | 300-mm disc (Trawl B) | 300-mm disc (Trawl B) | 200-mm disc (Trawl A) |
| 12 | 200-mm disc (Trawl B) | 100-mm disc (Trawl A) | 200-mm disc (Trawl B) |

## Catch / Payment arrangements

1. All catch (quota) taken during the experiments will be the property of the vessel owner and can be sold as usual.
2. Landings of all SESSF quota species in Commonwealth waters will need to be covered by and decremented from the operator’s own quota holdings.
3. Sale of the catch caught during the experiments and transport and marketing costs will be entirely the responsibility of the vessel.
4. Carriage of the scientists and regular changes of trawl nets will make fishing less efficient than normal so a fee will be paid to the boat owner to offset this.
5. Apart from the modifications to the trawl ground gear, all tows will be undertaken in compliance with the normal rules and regulations applying to commercial fishing (see SESSF management arrangements Booklet 2020).

## Vessel requirements

The vessel and fishing equipment must:

1. be in proper good and workmanlike condition and suitable for use in the experiment;
2. be maintained in Marine Board Survey class 3 (or equivalent) for the duration of the experiment;
3. have appropriate insurance, marine survey requirements and safety gear to carry two extra scientific personnel in addition to the skipper and crew;
4. have a stabilised 240-volt AC power supply and an inverter, so we can operate our trawl-monitoring equipment.
5. have two exactly identical trawls (same headline, footrope, netting, codend, etc) that we can use to alternately attach the ground gears (which we will provide) before each fishing day;
6. have sufficient accommodation and space for two additional scientific personnel in addition to the skipper and crew;
7. have sufficient deck space to process and sort each catch collected during each trip; and
8. have space in the wheelhouse or other suitable dry area for scientists to operate a laptop and process data, samples, and record sheets, etc.

## Skipper requirements

The skipper must:

1. have demonstrated recent experience trawling in the SESSF CTS and NSW inshore trawl fishery;
2. be willing to take directions for scientists to conduct valid experimental trawls; and
3. ideally have some level of wider industry involvement in Industry Associations.

## Owner requirements

The owner must:

1. hold a Permit / Statutory Fishing Right for the SESSF CTS and ideally also a permit for the NSW inshore trawl;
2. be able to make the vessel, skipper, crew and appropriate fishing gear available for the entirety of the 10-12 day experiment during April - May 2021;
3. ensure and demonstrate that the vessel has appropriate insurance (loss/damage, third party liability, WorkCover or equivalent) throughout the experimental period;
4. ideally have some level of wider industry involvement and/or active involvement in management / research of the fishery (e.g. participation in AFMA / MACs / RAGs / Industry association);
5. ensure that the scientists are provided with a satisfactory standard of accommodation, victualling, medical care and a safe and healthy working environment; and,
6. ensure that scientists are given reasonable access to all required areas and facilities of the vessel to collect data, samples, and other information required and have reasonable daily access to the vessel’s communication facilities.

EOI details for involvement in trawl modification experiments

**VESSEL DETAILS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant name** |  |
| **Company name** |  |
| **Address** |  |
| **Email address** |  |
| **Phone number** |  |
| **Commonwealth SESSF licence / SFR details** |  |
| **NSW inshore trawllicence / SFR details** |  |
| **Vessel Name / Call sign:** |  |
| **Registration** |  |
| **Home port** |  |
| **Length** |  |
| **Hull type** |  |
| **Main engine (make / power)** |  |
| **Auxiliary engine** |  |
| **Sleeping capacity** |  |
| **Life raft capacity(please include copy of survey certificate)** |  |
| **Design / make and description of normal inshore trawl gear** |  |

**VESSEL TECHNOLOGY DETAILS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **GPS**  |  |
| **Radar** |  |
| **Sounder** |  |
| **Communication equipment(Provide callsign / numbers)** | *Vessel radio callsign :Vessel mobile :Vessel satphone :Vessel inmarsat :Vessel email :* |
| **Sea scales** |  |

**INSURANCE DETAILS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hull insurance (please include copy of policy renewal)** |  |
| **Public Indemnity Insurance (please include copy of policy renewal)** |  |
| **Marine Survey expiry date(please include copy of survey certificate)** |  |

**CREW DETAILS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Skipper’s name** | **Experience**  |
|  |  |
|  |  |