



## Seafood Risk Assessment (SRA) Working Group Minutes

Date: 04 April 2022

Location: Zoom

Attendees: 7

5	Members	1	Technical Advisor (TA)
#	Observers	0	Steering Committee
1	Secretariat		

### Agenda

1. Assessment updates – wild and farmed
2. Peer review progress
3. Next steps
4. Aquaculture improvement project update
5. HKSSC member support tools and product trials
6. Q3 meeting date 2022

#### 1. Assessment updates – wild and farmed

- 10 new species to be uploaded onto the SRA website this year
- Six wild catch species assessed in 2021:
  - 3 X sea cucumber species - *Holothuria fuscogilva*, *Stichopus japonicus*, *Holothuria tubulosa*
  - Sweetwater fish – *Arapaima gigas*
  - Soft-shell mud crab - *Scylla serrata* (wild)
  - Antarctic toothfish - *Dissostichus mawsoni*
- One more sea cucumber species - *Holothuria scabra* (DNA tested and confirmed) most likely from Mozambique (not South Africa as originally proposed) – assessment not started yet as no data publicly available – TA has asked TRAFFIC South Africa to connect us to WWF Mozambique to assist
- Trader information might not always be reliable, as found from cases where an origin was reported by trader but then the species is not commercially traded in the reported origin so this is a useful case study for members
- Three farmed species assessed in 2021 / 2022:
  - Soft-shell mud crab - *Scylla serrata* (farmed)
  - Pearl oysters *Pinctada fucata* and Noble scallops *Mimachlamys nobilis* – full assessments completed; awaiting summary profiles and then AFCD review
- All the sea cucumber species mentioned above are dried products, and one also frozen



## 2. Peer review progress

- Internal review on all six wild catch profiles and three farmed profiles completed
- 3 x sea cucumber species - peer reviewed by Steven W Purcell - National Marine Science Centre, Southern Cross University, Australia
- Sweetwater fish – refocused profile on the community managed areas - peer reviewed by Joao Campos-Silva - Instituto Juruá
- Antarctic toothfish and soft-shell mud crab (wild & farmed) not peer-reviewed
- Pearl oysters and Noble scallops - peer reviewed by Heather Sadusky, UMaine 2020 profiles recently peer reviewed - will be uploaded to the SRA website:
  - Farmed Giant Grouper (China, Taiwan, HK) – Dr Mike Rimmer - Tropical Aquaculture Research group, University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia
  - Spiny lobster (wild) (Philippines, Australia) - Dr Clive Jones - Centre for Sustainable Tropical Fisheries and Aquaculture, James Cook University, Australia
  - Swordtip squid (wild) (Vietnam) – Mr Pham Van Long - Research Institute for Marine Fisheries, Vietnam
  - Leopard Coral Trout (wild) – Dr Neil Loneragan - Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Ecosystem Research, Murdoch University, Australia - did not need to give a huge amount of input as original assessor was Yvonne Sadovy, an expert on LCT
- Indoguna may have contacts in Thailand to peer review soft shell mud crab
- Peer reviewers deemed necessary before uploading profile to website
- Consideration that finding peer reviewers requires tremendous amount of time but agreed this is an important network to build on
- Noted that assessments done in 2020 we had to look for peer reviewers in 2021
- **[Action]** TA to send profiles to Indoguna (for Thailand ) and to pursue Bangladesh reviewer again

## 3. Next steps

- Upload all updated profiles from 2020 to SRA website, including tuna species
- 2021 profiles completed and reviewed – to be uploaded to website by end of April
- Local farmed species in Hong Kong – to undergo review process with AFCD
- Outstanding sea cucumber assessment – to be completed as soon as possible - to get in touch with WWF Mozambique
- Once all uploaded to website, link will be sent to WG members
- Discussion and comments from WG members: Now the assessments have been completed, how do we connect with suppliers and encourage sourcing of the more sustainable options? We have access to technical information, now need to translate SRA results to be usable by the industry and drive deeper into the supplier side:
  - Could be beneficial to start exploring possibilities to include a traders section in the profiles - to include basic information (e.g. websites) on national resource centres / local supplier directories after a green national origin is identified for



certain species. This would ideally include the country's traders in that species. E.g. for sea cucumber, Steve Purcell may know of traders

- SRA can't recommend which company to source from, plus many products are assessed to be of Medium risk due to lack of finer details but agreed we could add this as part of the assessment criteria going forward for future profiles, so that the researcher focuses on finding such a trading resource or alternatively we find this through the peer reviewers
- Added benefit: Resource centre list can provide insights into what products being commercially traded in a country - possible to compare with trader information to find potentially existing discrepancies (such as in the case of sea cucumber from South Africa / Mozambique)
- Repacking can also cause loss of information
- HKSSC currently doing research that will push HK government to implement more regulations for labelling of seafood origins
- Customs data is usually helpful for this: e.g. eel in France (endangered species) - not big demand but there is a demand for smoked eels - not allowed to be traded in France but can still buy from neighbouring countries such as Holland (products transit from France)
- Another example of how profiles are flagging issues to be aware of: Vietnam farming spiny lobster and buying fry from Indonesia - this is technically illegal as Indonesia has a ban on exporting fry - so important for member sourcing spiny lobster to find out origin of fry from the suppliers
- As indicated during discussions with TRAFFIC SA many issues only come to surface after dedicated analysis of data and information, therefore these processes may take a long time, but it's essentially the only way to spot and address them
- **[Action]** TA to ask peer reviewers whether they know of any resource centres / online trading directory (e.g. Steven Purcell for sea cucumber, Clive Jones for spiny lobster etc.) for items that are low risk

#### **4. Aquaculture improvement project update**

- Questionnaire (English and Chinese) sent to Hong Kong New Territories Fish Culture Association (Chairman and Secretariat)
- Focus remains on seed (where juveniles are being sourced from) and feed (how much fishmeal / fish oil enters the feed and identifying the source fisheries for FMFO)
- For seed - Taiwan regarded to be problematic; therefore important to identify how much is being imported from Taiwan
- Other challenges that the farmers are facing, and issues raised by members (e.g. product safety / chemicals use) are also included in the questionnaire
- Delay in feedback due to Covid restrictions
- Questionnaire not yet distributed to the grey mullet farmers; extended timeline should hopefully become clearer towards end April



## 5. HKSSC member support tools and product trials

M&C:

- Supplier able to answer most questions for frozen black tiger, vannamei prawns and farmed Barramundi (ASC certified or in process of getting certified)
- Fresh yellowfin tuna (not certified) but the supplier has a method to track the source
- Oldest supplier (artisanal fishing) - managed to get some information including catch area, fishing gear - will send the TA the results
- For already certified products - data collection is much easier
- Some products could be quite challenging when sourced through an intermediary - this is the case for a lot of seafood distributors as it is difficult to find source supply when trading in minimum orders, especially for fresh products - Generally need huge quantities for more information to be collected from the suppliers
- Case of Worldwide Seafood:
  - M&C not buying from them - but agrees would be good to get them onboard as they are huge and supply to a lot of hotels
  - M&C do buy from other local companies from time to time
  - Minimum order quantity is very important
  - Secretariat to follow up with Worldwide Seafood to chase on data collection for member species
- Question was raised: is there a need for a different approach for smaller/middle-sized supplier companies?
- TA suggested once we have the member survey results back we could consider using the criteria from the survey as a first step for small / mid sized suppliers
- Received a request from KIN for basic information for their marketing team to highlight - but even so it was difficult to find
  - Had to bypass intermediary and go to source for information
  - By sharing info and checking the packaging - sometimes easy to find the original source
  - Intermediary would be happy to help for easy questions but might not for a whole questionnaire

Indoguna Singapore

- To cover whelks, squid, cuttlefish and octopus, as well as Pacific Oyster from Japan
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- Haven't received assessment report for Irish whelks yet, but will send to TA as soon as they do
- Squid, cuttlefish, octopus from one supplier from similar catching origin and fisherman - shortage of workers due to Covid - haven't had a solid response yet
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- They usually have to go directly to the source for information
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- Working with local suppliers - challenging as can't get info from them about the product - they try to give as least information as possible as they don't want you going to the source
- Also when already buying locally - there is less openness to questions
- Very difficult to work with competitors in Hong Kong - can we look to see how the UK has managed to encourage cross collaboration?

### Summary

- Information on harvesting area, method of fishing, harvest method of farmed products should be basic information requested
- HKSSC Member survey - Secretariat to send reminder email to SC to get final green light - aim to circulate survey within the week
- Content of Member survey might be useful for intermediaries. The aim of the survey is to gather volume and species data to help pitch for funding to work on common species collaboratively (and to address Indoguna's concern above about competitors generally not working together in HK)
- **[Action]** TAI to confirm with SC member, Huw Thomas, how the UK managed to get competitors working together and what strategies and platforms they used. It was shared that once the members all knew what common species they were trading in - then they worked on high risk species together → therefore the FIP model could be applicable to HK too
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- Important information to gather from this survey and for recruitment in general:
  - Who are actually the biggest traders in Hong Kong Take stock of trading volume of HKSSC members
  - Foundation funding is now focused on species, rather than geographical area
  - Ideally the member survey will help us find common species traded by members → then we can combine efforts
- Input from Wynn:
  - General sense that there is not much of a holistic view in Macau and it's challenging to get people to share information and work together towards a common cause
  - Starting to contact chambers of commerce and distributors in Macau - suggestion for HKSSC to arrange a webinar to share information

### 6. Q3 meeting date 2022

- Date / time options for Q3 2022 WG meeting – proposed **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022 @3pm** HKT
- Cesar de Sainte Marseville (M&C) has confirmed interest to Chair the SRA WG from Q3 onwards
- TA and M&C will get in touch to ensure a smooth transition
- Technical Advisor still to support on project co-ordination and quarterly updates to Chair / WG