

Recommendation paper

Title: Loligo fishery – SBW by-catch

Date: 26th April 2022

Report of: Sheena Ross

1. Background:

- 1.1 The Scientific and FISHOPS section of the Department of Natural Resources monitor the daily catch reports received from vessels fishing under licences issued by the Falkland Islands Government.
- 1.2 On 6th April 2022 our Stock Assessment Scientist was alerted by the owners of a vessel fishing in the Loligo fishery of the presence of SBW and that this by-catch was causing problems and damaging the squid.
- 1.3 Presence of small sized Southern Blue Whiting was noted in the northern area of the loligo box, specifically grid squares XMAP, XMAQ and XNAQ.
- 1.4 On 7th April the Senior Fisheries Scientist suggested that a possible solution was to close the 3 grid squares for circa 5 days to allow the possible re-distribution of this fast moving fish.
- 1.5 It was noted by the Stock Assessment Scientist (Data) on 8th April that vessels have been self-policing to a major extent and have avoided the highest density areas.

2. Presentation and consultations:

- 2.1 DNR phoned the LPG Chairman on 8th April 2022 to advise of the presence of SBW in the loligo box.
- 2.2 Feedback from LPG generally was that there were larger schools of SBW in grid squares XMAP, XMAQ and XNAQ.
- 2.3 SBW was identified as juvenile fish and vessels fishing in the vicinity were trying to avoid the by-catch by fishing in deeper waters.
- 2.4 One fishing company were managing the issue by hauling when they see it appear on the fish finder while others deliberately moved their vessels out of the area.

3. Recommendation:

- 3.1 The problem with SBW by-catch was largely self-policed by industry but in drafting licence conditions for the Second Season 2022, we decided that vessels catching in excess of the allowed by-catch limits would not be able to return to that grid square for a period of 5 days and that the closure should affect the whole fleet. (Traditionally a grid square is closed for 10 days but this was reduced to 5 as SBW are a fast moving fish).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheena Ross". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name being more prominent than the last.

Sheena Ross
Fisheries Manager