

RECOMMENDATIONS ON ROCK LOBSTER TACs FOR THE TRISTAN GROUP OF ISLANDS FOR THE 2013/14 SEASON

D S Butterworth and S J Johnston
Marine Resource Assessment and Management Group (MARAM)
Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics
University of Cape Town

As a result of the increased workload placed on MARAM because of the OLIVA incident, OMP development for all four islands has not been achieved in time for the 2013 TAC setting process. OMP development has focused first on the Tristan island. This has precluded updated assessments for the Inaccessible and Gough islands being completed by this time, as would have been desirable to serve as a basis for recommending TAC's for those lobster populations. In these circumstances, the following are the MARAM recommended TACs for each island for the 2013/14 season.

Tristan

An initial OMP has been selected, in consultation with James Glass, which will modify the TAC up or down each year depending on the extent to which the recent CPUE is above or below its average level over the 2010/11 to 2012/13 seasons. This OMP has been tested against a number of plausible underlying models of the Tristan resource. The OMP commences with a value for the TAC for the first season, which was agreed to be set at **165 MT** for 2013/14. A detailed report on the OMP development will be forwarded next month.

Nightingale

The situation at Nightingale is unclear, given the unexpectedly high CPUEs experienced over the past season. It is necessary to see how these CPUEs might change over the immediate future before the reasons for these high values hopefully become more evident and allow a reliable assessment to be conducted. In the meantime, a PUCL (Precautionary Upper Catch Limit) of **40 MT** is recommended. This is to be taken in a minimum of two tranches of 20 tons/tranche in a normal commercial fishing pattern of 5-7 days duration. This value may be increased to 65 MT (the pre-OLIVA level) at a later stage of the season depending on the CPUEs attained during these tranches. The exact rule for this adjustment is yet to be formulated; a recommendation will be developed by September.

Inaccessible

It is recommended that last year's TAC of **70 MT** again apply. This is based on consideration of the nominal CPUE trend – see Figure 1. The nominal CPUE value for the most recent 2012/13 season shows an increase compared to the previous year's CPUE, so that two years of increased CPUE at Inaccessible island have now been observed. It is recommended that adjustment of this TAC (slightly up or down) be considered in September when the updated assessment for Inaccessible will have been completed.

Gough

It is recommended that last year's TAC of **95 MT** again apply. This is based on consideration of the nominal CPUE trend – see Figure 1. Although the 2012/13 nominal CPUE value is down from the 2011/12 season's value, it is nevertheless only slightly lower than the 2010/11 value. This follows a period of sustained increase in the CPUE. The CPUE trend therefore raises no immediate concerns about the appropriateness of the present TAC. It is recommended that adjustment of this TAC (slightly up or down) be considered in September when the updated assessment for Gough will have been completed.

Figure 1: Inaccessible and Gough nominal CPUE trends including data for the 2012/13 season.

