#### **Updated assessment of the squid resource,** *Loligo reynaudii*

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#### **Summary**

An assessment of the squid resource was last undertaken in 2016 and at that time included data to 2015. An additional 2 years of data are now available and these have been included in an updated assessment. A Bayesian analysis has been conducted and projections 10 years into the future suggest that effort in this fishery could be increased to 295 000 person-days.

#### **Introduction**

The squid stock assessment model is based upon Baranov catch equations. An assessment was last undertaken in 2016 and provided slightly more optimistic results than those obtained from the 2013 assessment, suggesting that the then current TAE of 250 000 person-days could be increased to 270 000 person-days without undue risk to the resource (Glazer and Butterworth, 2016). It was cautioned that given a crew complement of 2451 fishers, the average number of days fished should not exceed 110 days in order to ensure that the target effort level of 270 000 person-days not be exceeded. A recommendation of this nature was subsequently submitted to DAFF Management by the Squid Scientific Working Group.

Additional and/or revised data have become available since the assessment that was conducted in 2016. These data have thus been included in an updated assessment of the resource, the results of which are reported here. Results from a sensitivity test are also reported where the current jig CPUE index (restricted to 19 core vessels and records where 3≤crew≤20) is replaced by one in which the data are restricted to 14 core vessels and records where 3≤crew≤26 (Glazer 2019).

## **Data included in the analyses**

The following sets of data are included in the assessment of the squid resource:

- Jig catches for the period 1985-2017 (provided by SABS/NRCS),
- Trawl catches for the period 1971-2017 (Glazer 2016, DAFF Demersal Company Table Reports),
- Nominal jig CPUE indices for the period 1995-2017 for (i) the current core set of 19 vessels constrained to records where 3≤crew≤20 and (ii) a revised core set of 14 vessels constrained to records where 3≤crew≤26 (Glazer, 2019),
- Standardized trawl CPUE indices for the period 1978-1999 (Roel, 1998),
- Autumn survey abundance indices for the period 1988-2010, and spring survey abundance indices for the period 1986-2006 (Tracey Fairweather, DAFF, *pers. commn*).

The data inputs are reported in Tables 1-4 respectively.

Currently the assessment model includes abundance indices obtained from surveys conducted on the South Coast by *RV Africana* utilizing "old" gear. It should be noted that surveys have also been conducted by RV Africana using "new" gear as well as by *FV Andromeda* and *FV Compass Challenger*, but it is unlikely that the catchabilities across the two gear types and the different vessels will be the same. Since no calibration exercises have yet been undertaken, the abundance indices used in the squid assessment model have been restricted to those obtained from *RV Africana* "old" gear surveys (the series of which ends in 2010). Six autumn surveys and five spring surveys have since been conducted by the *RV Africana* utilizing "new" gear and consideration should be given to including those indices in future assessments (either as separate indices or calibrated to *RV Africana* "old" gear indices).

The 2016 assessment included survey abundance estimates reported in Fairweather (2016) where depth was allocated on a grid basis (as a result of improved bathymetric data) as opposed to being allocated according to depth fished as was applied in the past. In November 2018 an error was detected in the abundance estimates of Fairweather (2016) and these have subsequently been corrected. It is the corrected abundance estimates (Table 4) that are included in the updated assessment.

Roel (2008) reported that the population model is split into two periods, January-March and April-December, to better reflect the dynamics of the resource and the two fisheries that exploit it (jig and trawl). This relates mostly to the fact that very little recruitment takes place during the January-March period and that jig and trawl catches are disproportionately divided between the two periods. The January-March jig CPUE index is not included in the model fit since it is over this period that major changes in fishing patterns took place, including an increase in fishing operations offshore of the spawning grounds (Roel and Butterworth, 2000). This then renders the reliability of the January-March CPUE as an index of abundance questionable given concerns about comparability over time (Glazer and Butterworth, 2006).

The monthly catches for 2016 and 2017 were provided by the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS). The additional closed season for those years occurred over months April-June respectively. However, one vessel in the 2016 NRCS data had zero catch recorded against March and 2.7 tons (0.03% of the annual catch) recoded against April. Similarly, four vessels in the 2017 data had zero catch recoded against March and a total of 5.8 tons (0.05% of the annual catch) recorded against April. It has therefore been assumed that catches were erroneously recorded against April and they were re-allocated to March for assessment purposes.

## **The assessment model**

The resource is modelled by applying Baranov catch equations and these are provided in Appendix A together with the likelihood equations and prior distributions assumed for the estimable parameters.

#### *Joint posterior mode estimates*

Table 6 compares model estimates at the joint posterior mode for:

- i) the assessment conducted in 2016 (denoted "2016") which includes the current default jig CPUE index (derived from 19 core vessels and records where 3≤crew≤20),
- ii) the assessment conducted in 2019 (denoted "2019") which includes the current default jig CPUE index, and
- iii) the assessment conducted in 2019, but fitting to an alternative jig CPUE index (denoted "2019\*") which is derived from 14 core vessels and records where 3≤crew≤26.

Table 1 compares  $\frac{B_y^*}{\nu}$  $\frac{y}{K}$  (begin-year biomass relative to pristine biomass) across each of the assessments for the most recent few years. The  $\frac{B_{2016}^*}{\nu}$  $\frac{1016}{K}$  ratios for the 2016, 2019 and 2019\* assessments were calculated to be 0.36, 0.4 and 0.43. A comparison is also made between the 2019 and 2019\* assessments, where the  $\frac{B_{2018}^*}{\nu}$  $\frac{1018}{K}$  ratios were calculated to be 0.6 and 0.68 respectively. These results suggest that the 2019\* assessment yields a more positive outlook on resource status. This is likely a result of the April-December jig CPUE index which shows a marked increase in CPUE since 2015. It is also noted that the recent increase in CPUE is sharper for the CPUE index derived from 14 core vessels and restricted to 3≤crew≤26 when compared to the CPUE index derived from 19 core vessels and restricted to 3≤crew≤20 (Table 2).

Figures 1-8 compare the estimated recruitment series, the recruitment residuals, begin-year biomass series and fits to the indices of abundance. Of note is the increase in recruitment, begin-year biomass and the April-December jig CPUE indices for the two most recent years.

## *Bayesian analyses*

A Bayesian analysis was undertaken for assessment 2019\* (the model which includes jig CPUE indices derived from 14 core vessels and restricted to records where 3≤crew≤26). A chain of 800 million samples was run, saving every 2000 which resulted in 400 000 samples available for analysis purposes. Since the MCMC failed to satisfy certain convergence tests, further analyses were undertaken to determine whether such lack of convergence would substantially affect estimation of the statistic of interest, namely the biomass at the end of the 10 year projection period relative to pristine biomass, i.e.  $B_{2027}^*$  $\frac{2027}{K}$ .

This was tested by discarding the first 10% of the chain as burn-in and then splitting the remaining 360 000 samples into ten consecutive pieces, each piece containing 36 000 samples. The model was then projected forward under various constant effort scenarios (see Appendix B for assumptions related to effort when projecting into the future) using each of the ten sets of samples separately, as well as the full chain of 360 000 samples. The resulting  $\frac{B_{2027}^*}{\nu}$  $\frac{1027}{K}$  statistics and associated probability intervals are

plotted in Figure 9 for a suite of fixed effort levels (spanning the range of TAEs that have applied in this fishery in the past).

For each of the 10 sub-samples a regression was performed to estimate the effort level at which the lower 5<sup>th</sup> percentile of  $\frac{B_{2027}^*}{\nu}$  $\frac{1}{K}$  is equal to 0.2, i.e. E(0.2). The standard deviation (SD= σ) for E(0.2) across the samples was also determined as was the standard error for the overall estimate (SE= $\frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{2}}$  $\frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}$ ). These are reported in the table below.



E(0.2) for the 360 000 samples was estimated to be 294.9 with a 95% confidence interval of (290.6, 299.3). The relative consistency of the results above for the different sub-samples, plus the reasonably precise eventual estimate of E(0.2), suggests that the lack of convergence does not adversely impact the reliability and precision of the estimate or compromise its use for the basis of management advice.

## *Performance Statistics*

Since the ten parts of the chain yield similar results all 360 000 samples were used to perform stochastic projections 10 years into the future under various constant effort scenarios and the following performance statistics are reported:

- average annual catches by the jig fishery
- average annual variation (AAV) in catch by the jig fishery from one year to the next, where:  $v = 2027$

$$
AAV = \frac{1}{10} \sum_{y=2018}^{100} |C_y - C_{y-1}| / C_{y-1}
$$
  
•  $\frac{B_{2027}^*}{K}$   
•  $\frac{B_{1000est}^*}{K}$ 

$$
\bullet \quad \frac{b_{low\epsilon}}{K}
$$

These results are presented in Figure 10 and indicate that any effort exceeding around 295 000 persondays will result in a probability exceeding 5% of the biomass falling below 20% of pristine in any future year.

The average projected jig CPUE for fixed effort levels is shown in Figure 11 together with the average CPUE as reported by the jig fishery for the period 2013-2017. The projected CPUE falls below the recent historic average (2013-2017) for effort levels exceeding 200 000 person-days. It should be noted that the recent historic average differs markedly from that of the 2016 assessment (see table below) and the reason for this is most likely the substantial increase in CPUE experienced in the jig fishery in 2016 and 2017 (see Figure 4).



## **Acknowledgement**

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## **References**

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# **Table 1: Trawl<sup>1</sup> and jig<sup>2</sup> squid catches (tons) split by period.**

 1 Source: Glazer (2016) for 1971-1996 catches; Annual Demersal Company Table Reports for catches post 1996 2 Source: Reports from SABS/NRCS

**Table 2: Jig CPUE indices (kg/person-day) split by period. The indices in the left panel are derived from 19 core vessels and records where 3≤ crew ≤20. The indices in the right panel relate to 14 of the 19 core vessels (those that have been active in the fishery over the entire period) and records where 3≤ crew ≤26. Note that the model fits to the April-December index only.**





	<b>CPUE</b>	
Year	Jan-Mar	<b>Apr-Dec</b>
1978	13.77	7.46
1979	19.97	7.92
1980	14.52	4.31
1981	17.78	8.12
1982	16.50	4.94
1983	24.10	3.22
1984	8.90	4.02
1985	12.69	3.17
1986	6.20	2.80
1987	5.79	2.11
1988	5.60	3.15
1989	8.81	3.43
1990	6.25	2.07
1991	5.28	2.34
1992	3.84	1.72
1993	3.53	2.09
1994	6.58	2.14
1995	5.20	2.08
1996	5.25	2.10
1997	4.34	1.79
1998	4.83	2.21
1999	5.17	1.84

**Table 3: Trawl CPUE indices (kg/minute) (Roel, 1998).**



**Table 4 – 0-200m Abundance estimates obtained from research surveys conducted by** *RV Africana* **between 1986 and 2010 (Fairweather,** *pers. commn***). These are updates of the indices included in the 2016 assessment for reasons explained in the text.** 

# **Table 5: Comparison of parameter estimates at the joint posterior mode obtained from the 2016 and 2019 assessments respectively.**









**Figure 2: Recruitment residuals.**



**Figure 3: Begin-year biomass (tons).**



**Figure 4: Fits to the April-December jig CPUE indices (kg/person-day).**



**Figure 5: Fits to the January-March trawl CPUE index (kg/minute).**



**Figure 6: Fits to the April-December trawl CPUE index (kg/minute).**



**Figure 7: Fits to the autumn survey biomass indices (tons).**



**Figure 8: Fits to the spring survey biomass indices (tons).**



**Figure 9: Median B2027/K for various effort levels obtained from projecting forward from ten parts of the chain where each part contains 36 000 samples, as well as for the full chain comprising 360 000 samples. The 5th and 95th percentiles are shown. The red horizontal line represents 0.2K.**



**Figure 10: Performance statistics obtained from projecting the resource forward utilizing 360 000 samples. Catches refer to those made by the jig fishery. To aid interpretation, dashed horizontal lines at depletions of 0.1 and 0.2 are included in the top two plots.**



**Figure 11: Average jig CPUE over the projection period for various fixed levels of effort. The 5th and 95th percentiles are also shown. The horizontal lines represent the average annual nominal jig CPUE as taken by the fishery over the period 2013 – 2017 (for all vessels and restricted to records where 3≤crew≤26) together with the 5th and 95th percentiles.**

# **Appendix A**

## **Table A.1: Baranov model formulations.**



**Table A.2: Fits to indices (-** *ℓn***L)**





# **Table A.3: Assumed priors for the estimable parameters**

## **Appendix B**

The assumptions made relating to effort in the projections are as follows:

- The proportion of annual jig effort expended in each period is equivalent to the average observed over the last 3 years for which data are available (2015-2017), and is 0.32:0.68 for Jan-Mar:Apr-Dec.
- Future trawl effort is constant and is equivalent to the average standardized effort in the trawl fishery over the last 5 years for which data are available (1995-1999).
- The proportion of annual trawl effort expended in each period is equivalent to the average observed over the last 5 years for which data are available (1995-1999), and is 0.19:0.81 for Jan-Mar:Apr-Dec.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Initial Recruitment,  $R_0 = e^X$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The reduction in recruitment as a result of jigging disturbance,  $\eta = e^{Y+1.0219X-10.92}$