

**bio.inspecta**

**Australia Winter Spawning Blue  
Grenadier Fishery**

**MSC Variation Request**

# 1 Marine Stewardship Council variation request

**Table 1 – Variation request**

1	Date submitted to the MSC
	23 September 2020
2	CAB
	bio.inspecta (mandated by q.inspecta)
3	Fishery name and certificate number
	Australia Winter Spawning Blue Grenadier Fishery. Initial assessment.
4	Lead auditor or program manager
	Sascha Brand-Gardner
5	Request prepared by
	Sascha Brand-Gardner
6	Scheme requirement(s) for which variation requested
	7.16 under the September 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic Derogation
7	How many times has a variation for this requirement been accepted for the same assessment of the same fishery?
	NA

**Table 2 – Variation justification**

1	Proposed variation	
	Under clause 1.1 of the September 2020 Covid-19 derogation, Covid-19 factors prevent an on-site initial assessment for this fishery due to a) National travel restrictions that impact the assessment team from being on-site.	
2	Additional time requested	
	Original deadline date	N/A
	Modified deadline date requested	
	Length of additional time requested	
3	Justification	
	<p>The three assessment team members are based in Western Australia and the State border is closed. See <a href="https://www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus">https://www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus</a> This means that we can leave the State but we are unable to return home unless we have an exemption which will not be granted for business travel reasons. It is looking like the requirements will remain in place until Christmas.</p> <p>The fishery operates out of Tasmania that also has travel restrictions. See <a href="https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/travellers-and-visitors/coming-to-tasmania">https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/travellers-and-visitors/coming-to-tasmania</a>. This means that if the team entered Tasmania we would have to quarantine in government designated accommodation for 14 days.</p>	
4	Implications for assessment	
	There may be less opportunity for stakeholder engagement. However, a recent related MSC assessment on the fishery (same stock, region and fishing method) had no stakeholder interest despite extensive outreach. We have undertaken several surveillance audits using various platforms for remote meetings that have worked really well since March 2020. Private meetings with stakeholders can be organised using Zoom, Skype or Microsoft Teams.	
5	Mitigation of the implications for assessment	
	See attached Table 3 - Risk assessment that is a requirement of the Covid-19 derogation.	
6	How many conditions does the fishery have and will their progress be affected (positive or negative)?	
	NA	
7	What is the status of the current assessment or audit?	
	The ACDR is currently being prepared and is expected to be announced around 7 October 2020.	
8	Further comments	
	Nil	

9	If applicable, additional information added after the MSC's request

Table 3: Risk Assessment for conducting a remote Initial assessment of Talleys Blue Grenadier Fishery (as per clause 1.3.4.1 of the September Covid-19 derogation)

Risk Area	Key risks	Mitigation
Sufficient information to enable an effective and robust fishery assessment process and comprehensive assessment against the MSC Fisheries Standard	Ability to verify information remotely.	<p>A shared dropbox between the client and CAB has been set up and a comprehensive client document checklist provided. There are regular phone calls, emails and Zoom or Skype calls that are effective due to strong Broadband services and the competent use of these various platforms by the CAB and client.</p> <p>AFMA, the regulatory authority has an up to date website that provides publically available reports on this fishery. The management system has a high level of transparency.</p> <p>AFMA provides data and observer reports in electronic format which is placed in dropbox and easily accessible by auditors.</p> <p>The physical aspects of the fishery do not require investigation as the fishery is very familiar to the assessment team and photos, descriptions of the vessel and gear types have been provided.</p>
	Ability to engage with stakeholders, deliver a robust stakeholder consultation process and conduct interviews with stakeholder.	Stakeholders will be informed of all consultation opportunities throughout the assessment in accordance with the FCP v2.2 and provided with the MSC template for stakeholder input. They will be invited to request private meetings with the team through the use of Zoom, Skype or Microsoft Teams. These platforms have been used by the CAB regularly since March 2020 and have proven to be effective. A recent assessment of the same fishery did not attract stakeholder interest.
	Availability of information.	Given that the same fishery has recently (completed in August 2020) been reassessed by the same assessment team, the CAB is very aware of the potential information gaps and none of the PIs in the last assessment had a draft scoring range of <60 at the ACDR stage. The fishery received one condition. In drafting the ACDR for this assessment the CAB will ensure that indicative scoring, rationales and areas where more information is needed

		are clearly worded and highlighted to ensure stakeholders are well informed prior to the "site visit" stage.
	Ability to understand the context, scale, and intensity of the fishery operations.	The team leader was part of the original assessment of this fishery (with a different client) in 2015 and the same assessment team conducted the reassessment in 2020. We therefore have a very good understanding of the fishery.
Sufficient communication capability to effectively plan, conduct interviews and facilitate information sharing as per IAF ID 4: 2018.	Availability of information and communication technology (ICT). Competency of assessment teams, auditees, and stakeholders in using ICT.	<p>The client and assessment team members have all used the ICT platforms mentioned above. We are also competent with the use of the shared screen function to make sure information is available. Should stakeholders not have access to these platforms they can submit information or request an interview over the phone or by email.</p> <p>The use of ICT for this assessment will be done in accordance with the <i>IAF Mandatory Document for the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes</i></p>
	Ability to clearly exchange information between the assessment team, prospective fishery client and stakeholders and to be understood by all parties when parties speak different languages	All of the assessment team and client representatives speak English as a first language and have very good verbal communication skills.
	Ability to schedule remote site visit activities at reasonable mutually convenient times when parties are located across different time zones	There is a 2 hour time difference between the location of the assessment team and the fishery/client representatives making scheduling relatively easy.