



Australian Government

Department of Climate Change, Energy,  
the Environment and Water



Tasmanian  
Government

## National Recovery Team for the Maugean Skate Meeting I: Public Communique 4 August 2023



Maugean skate *Zearaja maugeana*. Copyright Jane Rucker/IMAS

The National Recovery Team for the Maugean Skate was formed in July 2023 and its first meeting was held on 27 July 2023 in Hobart.

### BACKGROUND

The Tasmanian endemic Maugean skate (*Zearaja maugeana*) is listed as Endangered under both Tasmania's *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The species is also a priority threatened species under the Australian Government's *Threatened Species Action Plan (2022-2032)*.

Recent research and monitoring by the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies, University of Tasmania, indicates that Macquarie Harbour retains the only viable population of the species, and that this population is likely to have undergone significant decline in recent years. The Tasmanian and Australian governments have been working collaboratively with key stakeholders to explore a suite of conservation actions for the species, beginning with proactive and precautionary measures to address known threats, while simultaneously planning a consultative and coordinated strategy to enable measures which will stabilise the population and promote longer term recovery in the wild.

## **ROLE OF THE RECOVERY TEAM**

Given the complexity of the conservation management environment for the Maugean skate, the formation of a Recovery Team is considered key to the conservation planning and implementation process. It will provide a representative, collaborative and transparent framework for coordinated conservation management of the species.

Membership of the Recovery Team includes representation from all stakeholder groups with an interest in Maugean skate conservation management, including the Australian, State, and local governments, Hydro Tasmania, aquaculture industry, local community, research organisations, natural resource managers, and environmental non-government organisations. An invitation to join the Recovery Team has also been extended to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, Copper Mines of Tasmania, and the West Coast Recreation Association. The Recovery Team plans to meet on approximately a quarterly basis, with more regular meetings organised if required.

## **SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE RECOVERY TEAM**

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) and the Australian Government's Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) jointly hosted the first meeting of the National Recovery Team for the Maugean Skate in Hobart on 27 July 2023. The first meeting of the Recovery Team discussed the Terms of Reference, the role and responsibilities of the Recovery Team and its members, and elected key officers including Chair, Vice-Chair and Coordinator. The Recovery Team also agreed to convene smaller topic-specific ad-hoc sub-groups if required.

After a series of technical workshops with stakeholders and experts which outlined the threats to the species and the current state of the Macquarie harbour system, a structured decision-making workshop was held in Hobart 25-26 July 2023. The outcomes of this workshop was provided to the Recovery Team for consideration.

The agreed primary objective for immediate short term action was to develop a strategy, based on the best available information, aimed at preventing the extinction of the Maugean skate and maximise its recovery in the wild, while simultaneously minimising the impact of conservation actions on local communities and industries. It was agreed the strategy will need to consider the following key areas: environmental remediation and pressures on Macquarie Harbour; the initiation of captive breeding programs; and the effects of other threatening processes such as predation, climate change, and bycatch of the skate during recreational and commercial fishing.

The Recovery Team will work together over coming months to formulate and implement a roadmap of actions designed to meet the agreed objective. The Recovery Team agreed that time is critical for this species and that, early intervention of science-based management strategies is required. The deliberations of the Recovery Team will also inform the development and implementation of the Tasmanian Conservation Action Plan and Commonwealth Conservation Advice for the species.

## RECOVERY TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Organisation	Reason for membership
Jo Crisp (Chair)	Environment, Heritage and Lands Division, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Tasmania (NRE Tas)	Representative of State Government Agency accountable for species.
Davina Gregory-Dunsmuir	Environment, Heritage and Lands Division; NRE Tas	Representative of State Government Agency accountable for species.
Tom Duncan (Coordinator)	Environment, Heritage and Lands Division; NRE Tas	Representative of State Government Agency accountable for species.
Sven Frijlink	Primary Industries and Water Division; NRE Tas	Representative of State Government Agency accountable for species.
Lesley Gidding-Reeve (Vice-Chair)	Marine Species Conservation Section; Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)	Representative of Federal Government Agency accountable for species.
Alyssa Giffin	Marine Species Conservation Section; DCCEEW	Representative of Federal Government Agency accountable for species.
Darryl Cook	Environment Protection Authority	Representative of independent environmental regulator
Jayson Semmens	Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS), University of Tasmania	Technical specialist on species
David Moreno	IMAS	Technical specialist on species
Jeff Ross	IMAS	Technical specialist on Macquarie Harbour environmental dynamics
Toby Patterson	CSIRO	Technical specialist on elasmobranchs
Karen Wild-Allen	CSIRO	Technical specialist on Macquarie Harbour environmental dynamics
Bec Sheldon	Hydro Tasmania	Representative of hydro-electric energy producer
Laura Simmons	Zoo & Aquarium Association (ZAA) SEA LIFE ANZ	Technical specialist on ex-situ conservation techniques
Colin Simpfendorfer	Commonwealth Threatened Species Scientific Committee	Representative of Threatened Species Scientific Committee
Leonardo Guida	Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS)	Representative of environmental-NGO Sector
Matt Barrenger	Salmon Tasmania	Representative of aquaculture industry, with operations in Macquarie Harbour
Harriet Brinkhoff	Strahan Community Aquaculture Forum	Representative of West Coast community
David Midson	West Coast Council	Representative of Local Government Area
Iona Flett	Cradle Coast Natural Resource Management	Representative of local NRM authority