

Out of scope

3.7 SailGP – Lyttleton Harbour/Te Whakaraupo

- DOC has been working with organisers of an international SailGP event on Lyttleton Harbour/Te Whakaraupo to ensure protection of native wildlife including Upokohue/Hector's dolphin.
- SailGP was scheduled to hold the event on 18-19 March 2023, preceded by two days of practice. SailGP is a high-profile event with a global following of fans and live television coverage. The racing yachts can reach speeds of up to 100kmh on the water.
- The harbour, including the racecourse and surrounding areas, are within the Banks Peninsula Marine Mammal Sanctuary. The area is home to a wide range of native wildlife including seabirds, fish, and marine mammals, including the distinctive and nationally vulnerable Upokohue/Hector's dolphin.
- Our concern was the possibility of Upokohue/Hector's dolphins appearing on the racecourse and potential for an incident such as a boat strike – it is not known how the dolphins will react to this type of event. We advised the race organisers of DOC's role to advocate for the protection of marine mammals, and to carry out compliance functions if any incidents involving protected wildlife were to occur.
- SailGP and ChristchurchNZ (the city's sustainable economic development and city profile agency) developed a Marine Mammal Management Plan for the event, to minimise any risks to marine mammals. DOC provided technical advice for this plan.
- DOC plan to have a vessel on the water to respond to any incidents involving marine mammals and begin compliance actions if necessary. We have also arranged for DOC staff to be in the race control centre.
- DOC worked closely with event organisers and Te Hapu o Ngāti Wheke to ensure that if an incident involving a marine mammal should occur, the animal would be treated with dignity and tikanga observed.

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