



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



MINISTRY OF FISHERIES
Te Tautiaki i nga tini a Tangaroa

Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group

Date: 21 June 2011

Time: 9.30 am – approx. 1:00 pm

Place: Ministry of Fisheries, 101 The Terrace Wellington

Chair: Russell Harding (ph: 04-471-3204; email: rharding@doc.govt.nz)

Present: Kris Ramm (DOC), Igor Debski (DOC), Louise Chilvers (DOC), Ian Angus (DOC), Greg Lydon (SeaFIC), Paul Breen (SeaFIC), Jeremy Helson (MFish), Aofie Martin (MFish), Tiffany Bock (MFish), Di Tracey (NIWA), Brian Sanders (NIWA), David Thompson, (NIWA), Rowan Curry (MFish), Karen Baird (Forest & Birds NZ), Tyler Eddy (WWF).

Apologies: Martin Cawthorn (Cawthorn & Associates), Martin Cryer (MFish)
David Middleton (SeaFIC), Suze Baird (NIWA)

The presentation and background report for each project are available for download from <http://www.doc.govt.nz/cspmeetings>

RH opened the session and underlined the purpose of the meeting was to provide technical review of the projects presented.

POP2010-01 Draft report on New Zealand sea lion data collection from the Auckland Islands 2010/11 by Louise Chilvers (DOC)

- GL enquired whether this was the first year that pup counts had been undertaken on Kekenō.
- LC confirmed that it was not the first year and that this had been undertaken in previous years, however not always on the same day. There has been no evidence of pups being born on Kekenō.
- PB identified two discrepancies in Table 1.
- Discussion by PB/LC over figures in Table 1.
- PB reiterated SeaFIC's desire for independent verification of calculations due to concerns over miscalculations.
- LC pointed out that SeaFIC held 5 years of raw data in order to verify these calculations.
- AM suggested this was a request through the working group to have these calculations independently verified

- PB agreed.
- KB suggested publication in an international journal would remedy these editing issues.
- RC/PB discussed whether this would affect the timeliness of publication.
- LC stated that much of the work was already published.
- KB expressed concern at the downward trend in the data and enquired if this would lead to a loss of 'critical mass' and so lead to a population crash.
- LC stated that this work was used to inform threat classification amongst other things.
- KB expressed a desire to discuss the wider objectives and enquired as to whether there was investigation in to the causes of decline.
- RH stated that that discussion was outside of the scope of this meeting and so should be parked until a more suitable forum.
- KB enquired as to whether necropsies were conducted on pups and if they had identified any sources of disease.
- LC stated that this information sits with Massey University.
- AM highlighted that that MFish has a process for independent review of some work and enquired as to whether this would also be a suitable process for CSP.
- RH states that this would not be a problem, subject to cost.
- ID noted the draft MCS Annual plan includes a proposal to build a database to pull this data together which will facilitate external review.
- RC highlighted MFish's new research standards.
- IA highlighted timeliness issues with conducting this kind of external review.
- AM suggested it could be a process moving forward.
- PB enquired as to why Table 1 started in 1998 when data went back to 1995.
- LC stated this was in previous reports however it was removed for reasons of space- was happy to include it.
- PB raised points about the late timing of counts at Dundas and the resulting comparability issues with previous. Expressed scepticism at the evidence presented in favour of the results being comparable
 - % dead pups- PB contested that this displays high variability between years as Table 2 showed this varied from 5 to 13%.
 - LC stated that this was point was an indicator rather than an absolute
 - PB questioned the validity of the lack of pup movement, stating pups could have gone anywhere.
 - LC stated that there were few other locations that the pups could move to due to geography and weather. Also drew on previous experience as mothers generally only started to move their pups from Enderby in late February when the weather calmed.
 - PB stated that he had not seen this in previous reports.
 - LC stated that it had been reported that there had been no pups seen elsewhere off the island. Also stated that the Gales and Fletcher paper being quote makes mention of pups moving around the island but not off it.
 - PB noted peak pup counts on 16th January have been identified in the literature

- LC enquired as to whether this was from the Gales and Fletcher work
 - PB confirmed it was
 - LC noted the difference in geography of the locations, as in the Enderby counts referred to in Gales and Fletcher the pups moved off the beach into the vegetation and so were unable to be counted, differing to Dundas.
 - PB suggested serial count data should be used
 - LC noted that counts were less accurate and comparable
- RC enquired whether the probability of encounter while counting pups changes with time.
- LC – yes, older pups move off the beach and become harder to count.
- RC – so a reduction in direct count is not evidence of pups moving off the island
- LC – correct.
- PB expressed concern that full mixing of pups occurred over the shorter M-R experiment this year on Dundas.
- LC noted that the pups were very mobile, particularly due to the fact that this was the first human encounter for the pups, and dead pups were counted between mark and recapture to allow for more mixing.
- PB enquired why there was then a difference to direct counts
- LC – counting large numbers of moving pups was very difficult
- GL enquired whether pups may have been hidden in the vegetation
- LC – counters moved through the vegetation and caused a lot of disturbance. The situation was very different to that on Enderby where pups could be hidden in vegetation at that time of year.
- AM noted the larger proportional drop in pup production estimate at Dundas compared to other sites
- LC noted counts between sites were historically variable
- PB concluded this difference was a comparability issue
- GL noted that pup production estimates from the last three years were stable or increasing so the term “decline continues” should not be used.
- PB noted that pup weights were not reported
- LC noted this was not a CSP objective, but covered by a DOC-funded investigation
- PB also requested reporting of number of females counted ashore and mother/pup ratios
- KB noted that comparison of Campbell and Auckland Island populations may add greater understanding
- ID noted that work was underway as part of POP2010-01 to review indirect effects and would be reported to the group in due course
- There was some further discussion about other sea lion work being conducted by other researchers, and RH underlined that the purpose of this discussion was review of the work presented, limited in scope to the objectives of the project.
- TE suggested more work should be done next year to investigate potential comparability issues
- AM requested clarification on the process to determine the acceptance of work by the group

- RH outlined that an updated report will be produced which will respond to feedback provided. If after that consensus could still not be reached, this would be recorded explicitly.

MCSINT2010-03 Bycatch of protected corals in NZ fisheries waters - draft report by Di Tracey (NIWA)

- GL questioned observer's ability to estimate the weight of large volumes of coral.
- DiT commented that she was quite confident in the observer's ability to do this
- KR stated that there are multiple methods used by observers to quantify large volumes of coral, as with fish e.g. extrapolation us from know weights of smaller volumes
- DiT commented that outliers in the data were verified through photographs as a matter of course
- BS commented that the method of quantification is recorded in the data
- KB commented that weight is not always so important and enquired as to whether the number of colonies is recorded
- DiT/BS stated that observers do collect counts and these can be included in the results
- GL enquired as to whether there were any surprised in the data?
- DiT the lack of samples from FMA 1, the Western edge of the Chatham Rise and Fiordland was unexpected. Including other sources of data (other than fisheries observers) is required in order to fill these gaps (outside of scope for current project).
- KB enquired as to whether there were difficulties in identification of the rarer species.
- DiT Yes but combining this with the broader findings is useful. Deepwater plan provides for coral identification work.
- KB noted that there were not samples from the West Coast of the South Island. Questioned whether this was due to a lack of habitat?
- DiT agreed this was interesting.
- KR commented the fleet structure in this fishery was different to others; therefore the differences in gear use may translate to differing probability of catching coral and bringing it to the surface.
- BS commented that gear data was extracted as part of this work; however this will be looked into further.
- KB enquired as to why there were no samples taken in FMA 10.
- DiT no benthic trawl is conducted in this area
- GL confirmed that there was also no demersal longlining in this area.

INT2007-02 Identification and autopsy of seabirds incidentally killed in New Zealand fisheries - draft report 2009/10 by David Thompson (NIWA)

- PB questioned what percentage of the total kills this work represented

- DT/ID stated the all birds dead birds on observed trips were normally returned for autopsy
- KB noted the lower percentage of white-capped albatross warp strike deaths in the squid trawl fishery
- KB enquired as to whether there was any analysis of this with regards to the use of mitigation
- KR/ID not as part of the is project however there is some reporting of this in the CSP observer report which is produced annually
- KB enquired as to whether the contents of the gizzard are examined- in particular with reference to plastics
- DT noted much of this information was in a data supplement that can be requested from the Manager of CSP.

RH thanked all speakers, and those stakeholders who attended for their feedback. He also thanked Ministry of Fisheries for help with accommodation. Meeting closed.