



Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Research Advisory Group

Date: 3 December 2013

Time: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Place: Conservation House, 18 - 32 Manners St, Wellington.

Chair: Dean Peterson

DOC lead: Ian Angus (ph: 04 - 471 - 3081; email: iangus@doc.govt.nz)

Attendance: Martin Cryer (MPI), Tom Clark (Seafood NZ), Rosemary Hurst (NIWA), Carol Scott (Southern Inshore Fisheries Management), Pat Reid (Area 2 Inshore Fisheries Management), Edward Abraham (Dragonfly Science), David Thompson (NIWA), Igor Debski, Kris Ramm, Katie Clemens, Will Arlidge (DOC),

Apologies: Doug Loder (Federation of Commercial Fishermen), Karen Baird (Forest & Bird), Michelle Bertizhoff-Law, Rohan Currey (MPI), David Middleton (Seafood NZ), Simon Childerhouse (Blue Planet Marine), Martin Cawthorn (Cawthorn & Associates), Johanna Pierre (JPEC), Darryl Sykes (NZRLIC), Barry Baker (Latitude 42)

Update on CSP Strategic Statement

IA presented the approved CSP Strategic Statement, following a collaborative development process (see presentation).

IA - CSP is aiming to create an online catalogue of past research where people can go and see what has been done and what the plans are for the future. The CSP Annual Research Summary Reports are the first development in this direction, closing the loop between CSP annual planning and reporting.

The CSP process fits really well with NIWA's science planning process. NIWA is deciding where research will be targeted over the next few months. It was also stated that, MPI will soon be able to use the Aquatic Environment research planning to inform CSP research development/ planning process.

There was discussion on the absence of environmental NGOs at the meeting - apologies were discussed and noted.

As part of the background information IA explained that in the past CSP was planned within DOC and with discussions with MPI, now the project proposals will arise from advice from the CSP RAG.

There was discussion around the definition of prioritisation tools and how to consider them. The use of a scoring matrix/prioritisation diagram was suggested, and the pros and cons of such a tool were debated. Further discussion on prioritisation was postponed until the next CSP RAG meeting.

TC stated he would like DOC to consider using the term “adverse effect” instead of the term “effect” in documentation.

SC requested a review of the fisheries observer programme, and for a discussion on this including industry and DOC to look at the outcomes and how the programme is proceeding.

ACTION: Set-up a review discussion on the observer programme (IA)

Terms of Reference

IA tabled draft Terms of Reference for the CSP RAG.

There were a few minor corrections made including: typos, adding both technical and strategic input, identifying research gaps and needs, forwarding not escalating disputes, etc.

It was agreed that the new CSP calendar (i.e. the annual cycle of planning and carrying out of research) aligns well with AEBAR chapters being released and the timing of other agencies research planning schedules.

IA emphasised a commitment to giving better visibility to DOC work that’s going on; making DOC funded research more visible alongside CSP research. DOC is keen to use the RAG to give better visibility to that work over the next year.

DP noted agreement by the RAG on the Terms of Reference with minor corrections.

ACTION: Finalise the Terms of Reference for the February RAG meeting (IA)

Update on MPI Aquatic Environment planning process (Martin Cryer)

MC presented on the MPI Aquatic Environment process for research planning, highlighting similarities with the CSP process, and the desire to run joint meetings with DOC.

TC highlighted the need to know what’s coming through both DOC and MPI, to allow prioritisation, and make sure that no duplication is happening

DP - A major objective of today is to come up with projects/ideas to cover gaps, or at least figure out gaps. At the next meeting, we’ll have more information from MPI available to properly determine where there may be overlaps or synergies.

Session 1: review of progress in relevant research and other activities

NPOA seabirds

ID presented key extracts and objectives from the NPOA-Seabirds relevant to CSP mandate (see presentation)

SC - does the NPOA cover charter vessels/recreational fishing, etc?

ID - covers both international and all types of domestic fishing, an area that DOC is widely interested in, but falls out of the mandate of CSP

NPOA sharks

KR presented key extracts from the draft NPOA-Sharks relative to CSP mandate, as being illustrative of likely objectives that would drive CSP research in this area.

Observer planning

KR outlined the joint DOC-MPI processes used in observer programme planning.

There was discussion on marine mammal threat management plans and their statuses, and there was brief discussion surrounding Maui's dolphins, research being carried out on Maui's dolphins, and the establishment of a Maui's Dolphin Research Advisory Group which will guide research priorities related to that taxon.

CSP research summary reports

KR/KC presented CSP research summary reports for the last two years.

MC - How projects relate to management objectives is covered in MPI annual review documents.
ID - the CSP reports could identify which CSP objectives it falls under, and therefore make the strategic linkage more explicit

CS noted that quota owners want to know who's going to use project outputs and why, as well as seeing value for money

ID - In the future, there will be a 1 pg template that contractors will complete. In the past, most reports have contained abstracts, KC has been helping condense them down and summarise them in a consistent format

KC presented example recommendations made in some CSP research reports.

It was noted that recommendations can potentially focus solely on research needs not research gaps, and that both will be considered during the RAG research priority planning. However, review of full reports by the CSP TWG should ensure that recommendations are focussed on the research gap areas that the project was targeted at.

ACTION: Present the new 1-page template to the RAG (IA)

Other research summary documents

There was discussion on other information sources that should be considered. Conservancy research, NIWA's core funding research, research arising from the Hauraki Gulf forum, research that MBIE is funding and the research coming out of the Marsden fund were all mentioned.

ACTION: Notify DOC through the CSP email of any large research programmes not already covered. (All RAG members),

This can then be made available to the CSP RAG as additional background information.

Session 2. Identify research gaps

Ongoing research

ID presented a list of ongoing CSP projects, and those that form part of longer term work. (see presentation)

Research Ideas

ID presented research ideas for seabirds identified through recent risk assessment, risk assessment review, ACAP and New Zealand seabird experts (see presentation)

ID - ACAP looks more broadly at all species across the world to identify data gaps, irrespective of levels of imminent threat. Compared to seabirds risk assessment which is focussed on fishing risk, however there is still a lot of overlap.

DP reiterated the aim of the session was for the group to advise DOC on where the research gaps are, and ideas for research projects to address them, and suggested an initial focus on identifying gaps.

DT suggested that gaps in seabird research be based on the seabirds risk assessment, which gives clear guidance.

IA acknowledged that this is a good starting point, but cautioned full reliance on a risk assessment, also noting this was not currently available for other taxa. Ideas should also consider feasibility and opportunities for collaboration, for example, if there's already a trip down to the Bounty Islands, other research in the same area could be conducted at low cost that may or may not be specified in the seabirds risk assessment or not of the highest priority.

MC - mitigation is a good example of a research direction that does not directly fall out of gaps identified by a risk assessment.

ID noted however that the risk assessment was used to prioritise the fisheries in which to focus CSP mitigation work (e.g. inshore bottom longline), and also noted that CSP is committed to the NPOA-Seabirds and so we will need to collect information necessary to measure changes over time and meet other NPOA objectives.

TC - the first priority should be baseline **mitigation work**.

IA noted that historically CSP has used the seabird risk assessment, expert opinion, etc., to develop research ideas, aligned with MPI research, and then consult on a draft annual plan. However, feedback was that stakeholders wanted to be a part of that process earlier, which is why DOC has established this RAG to allow such participation.

There was discussion on risk assessment approaches for other taxa. MPI are currently contracting the development of a risk assessment for marine mammals, and a workshop for corals is to be conducted alongside a current CSP project. The group identified one project area could be a **risk assessment for protected fish**.

The RAG agreed that risk assessment development was within the scope of research within the CSP mandate.

- It was also highlighted that, **indirect effects of fishing** are poorly understood and should be another priority area of investigation.

IA - historically the CSP planning process has been constrained to shorter time frames, however one aim of the CSP RAG is to provide research ideas that will form a longer term plan.

RH - deciding on regular monitoring frequencies will allow rotation of projects year by year

ID - For seabirds we now have the risk assessment which helps identify priorities, which allows us to plan long term projects and to measure changes over time as required to meet NPOA-Seabird objectives.

ACTION: Draft a medium term research plan for seabirds for consideration at the next CSP RAG meeting. (ID)

For other taxa, it's a bit too early to plan out research in such a broad way.

The members of the RAG agreed that a **framework of research priority areas**, with context, and based on identified management objectives would be useful for the CSP RAG to consider and make research suggestions around.

ACTION: The CSP develop a framework of priority research areas as a starting point for the next CSP RAG meeting. (IA)

Wrap up

DP summarised the key recommendations arising from discussions:

1. Risk assessment for protected fish identified as a useful project
2. Mitigation projects should be actively developed
3. CSP to develop a medium term population research plan for seabirds based on priorities identified by the seabird risk assessment for consideration at the next CSP RAG meeting
4. CSP to develop a framework of priority research areas for consideration at the next CSP RAG meeting

The meeting ended at 2:45pm.