



- Meeting:** **Research Planning – 2010/11**
CSP Draft 5-year Research Plan
MFish Aquatic Environment Medium Term Plan
Proposed CSP and MFish projects on protected species
- Date:** 26 August 2009
Time: 9.30 am – approx. 5.00 pm
Place: Conference Room, 4th Floor, Department of Conservation, 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington
Chairs: CSP: Johanna Pierre (ph: 04-471-3204; email: jpierre@doc.govt.nz)
MFish: Martin Cryer (ph: 04-819-4253; email: cryerm@fish.govt.nz)
- Present:** Stephanie Rowe (DOC), Eric Mellina (MFish), Kirstie Knowles (Forest and Bird), Tom Clark (SeaFIC), David Middleton (SeaFIC), Rosie Hurst (NIWA), Steve Halley (MFish), Nicola Pindur (Mfish), Greg Lydon (SeaFIC), Ed Abraham (Dragonfly), Jeremy Helson (MFish), Kate Bartram (SeaFIC), Richard Wells (Deepwater Group Ltd), Martin Cawthorn (Cawthorn & Associates), Suze Baird (NIWA), Igor Debski (DOC), Dave McFarlane (Yellow-eyed penguin trust), Pat Reid (Area 2).
- Apologies:** Barry Weeber, Cath Wallace (ECO), Richard Fanselow (MFish), Rock Lobster Industry Council, Mike Clegg (Yellow-eyed penguin trust).

Note: These minutes only cover the CSP sections of the meeting.

Introductions:

JP welcomed everyone and clarified that MCS is seeking feedback on the draft 5-year Research Plan and the draft MCS 2010/11 project outlines. While the cost and funding of individual projects would not be discussed during this meeting, MCS projects were divided between the CSP levied projects and the MCS Crown funded projects.

Written comments on both the 5-year plan and 2010/11 research proposals were called for by Friday 25th September.

Marine Conservation Services draft 5-year Research Plan

GL questioned when the MCS Strategic Plan would be released.

JP stated that as the current Strategic Plan expires in 2010, work on a new plan would begin shortly with stakeholder input.

GL noted that a lot of the Strategic Plan is woven into the Research Plan, so that if the Strategic Plan was revised the Research Plan could be shorter.

TC raised a number of issues relating to the need for a clear, whole of Government, integrated approach to protected species research. There needs to be an overarching umbrella document to define protected species management issues which includes MFish, MCS and DOC conservancies. Such a document should outline gaps in knowledge, outline priorities for research and assign responsibility between and within agencies.

JP stated that the process could be started through the revisions to the Strategic Plan. She also noted the Roles and Responsibilities document that MFish is writing.

KK requested that the 5-year plan refer more explicitly to the DOC Threat Classification System and other protected species such as white sharks and corals. There is a need for a hierarchical approach to these species as well.

KB requests better definition of adverse effects and clarification of priorities between species groups e.g. is the adverse effect to fur seals equivalent to that of leatherback turtles.

JP clarified that reference to adverse effect will be covered in the Strategic Plan

KB wanted to see management objectives for species outlining the key issues including non-fishing related threats

JP agreed to link other management documents, such as Recovery Plans, where they are available

KB would like details on all management the Department is undertaking for species listed in the 5-yr plan

TC suggested that for each species MCS should outline the management plan, objectives and threats which will then lead to research needs

KK suggested that the Threat Classification system does that and that there is a need to avoid, remedy or mitigate fisheries impacts. Minimisation of impacts is important.

KB wants to see what the Department is managing to in order to improve the threat classifications of species

PR stated that if fishing is only 10% of total impact, industry wants to see what else threatens a species

KK repeated that there is still a goal of avoiding, remedying and mitigating fisheries impacts

JP suggested many of these issues will be dealt with through the Strategic Plan. Contextual links to other management work will be made.

KB wants to see evidence of adverse effects

JP again stated this will be covered in the Strategic Plan

TC, KK Agreement that one document to connect work of MFish, MCS and Conservancies would be desirable

JP clarified that there will be further work done on the Roles and Responsibilities document and that the Strategic Plan will be revised in 2010

DMc The Yellow-eyed penguin trust works closely with DOC through the Recovery Group process. Dave informed the group that while the Recovery Team has a good understanding of land based threats, little is known about at-sea issues. There is a

need to know how many penguins are impacted by fishing. Also, tourism is a big investment and worth around \$100m to Dunedin city. He applauded the inshore observer coverage to date and wants to see more.

GL wants to see more transparency around Hector's dolphin management, particularly in Te Waewae Bay and in Auckland.

JP explained that while the MCS 5-year plan is not designed to cover Conservancy work, more context can be included.

TC wants to see greater prioritisation of research in the plan so it can be seen how money will be spent over the 5 year period

JP explained that internal funding processes do not necessarily allow such prioritisation. All projects listed are high priority for MCS.

KB suggested that each species account should outline the management objectives, basis for adverse effect, outstanding management questions and the information needs. This will then flow on to research projects

2010/2011 draft Research Projects

Observing commercial fisheries

SR introduced the project and clarified that CSP is in discussions with industry and MFish regarding information already collected in dredge fisheries

KB sought clarification on what was meant by potting and trapping

SR agreed the document should only refer to potting

GL passed on the views of the Rock Lobster Industry Council. At present they do not support the monitoring of pots as the proposal does not provide sufficient justification for doing so

SR referred to the Level 1 Risk Assessment and agreed to further outline the justification for monitoring this fishery and all other fisheries in the plan. She explained that CSP wishes to work with RLIC to determine the best way to achieve monitoring coverage and information

DMid discussed the issue of rotational coverage in fisheries where observer coverage is low so that estimation work can be undertaken

SR explained that rotational coverage had been undertaken in the past. To increase coverage levels in 2010/11, observer coverage of poorly known fisheries was only planned for two or three FMAs. She also stated that observer coverage was aimed at determining ways to mitigate interactions, not just estimating the number of captures

GL suggested that this should be made clearer in the proposal including information about mitigation in place and the potential for mitigation research

TC requested a 5 year outline of observer coverage in the 5-year research plan and greater detail on why each fishery is being observed

KB queried why offshore fisheries were monitored each year

SR responded that this was necessary to track changes in protected species interactions, and more detail of year to year changes in this baseline monitoring will be provided

RW added that he was happy with ongoing monitoring for the time being
GL agreed that the purpose of coverage in each fishery needs to be clearer, and a more comprehensive history of set net coverage be included

Seabird identification project

ID introduced the project and explained the additional photo-ID component.

PR raised the point that if other providers are used to deliver monitoring, then a process was needed to ensure birds could be returned

SR confirmed this is possible as long as permits are in place

DMid suggested that all observer data should be entered into a single “whole of government” database

GL asked if photos could be stored in the database

SR responded that changes were being made to allow linking of photos

New Zealand sea lions

JP explained that the current sea lion project had a three year scope and ended in 2009/10. The proposed project is for just 1 year in 2010/11. The Director General is currently considering a number of decisions for NZ sea lions.

ID introduced the project and highlighted changes from the current project, primarily removal of spatial foraging objectives, and addition of new objectives on indirect effects which propose a literature review leading to recommendations for further research.

KK was please to see the indirect project and felt it was very important.

RW questioned the title that used the words ‘adverse effects’ and requested it be changed. He added that while not opposed to the concept of indirect research, he had concern about who would do the indirect study.

ID made reference to Strategic Plan policies regarding the definition of adverse effects. He also outlined further work the Department is doing on NZ sea lions, particularly the survey work to be undertaken on Campbell Island this coming summer

KK raised concern about NZSL captures occurring in the southern blue whiting fishery and that there is a need to understand what is happening with the Campbell population

ID stated that initial work indicates the Campbell Island population may have increased but further work is needed as the survey methods used recently are not directly comparable with earlier methods

RW The indirect effects literature review must be collaborative

DMid questioned what other work was being done of NZSLs and whether there was integration

JP clarified that MCS focuses on commercial fishing impacts but works closely with S Cooper’s team, which is currently working with the DG to prioritise efforts.

Mitigation

JP introduced the project which will be in its second year in 2010/11 and will continue to focus on small vessel BLL and inshore trawl.

There was some discussion around current working being undertaken, including the planned research on inshore trawl vessels in Timaru.

GL sought clarification of how 2009/10 portside workshops are being funded

JP stated that funding is mixed as it is tied to the observer project but also to the education component undertaken by MCS

Coral

SR introduced the project and explained the change in direction from collection to analysis.

A commitment was made to discuss the future of this project with stakeholders

Poorly known species

ID introduced the project and stated that there would be an information gathering stage undertaken by MCS to determine work already underway

GL requested that reference to the “high number of spotted shag captures” in the project proposal be clarified

DMid pointed out that a lot of yellow-eyed penguin population data had already been compiled for a previous MFish project. He also suggested that rather than more population data, different data needed to be obtained as current data was not found to be suitable for mark recapture analysis.

There was some discussion that describing foraging areas for yellow-eyed penguins should be a priority objective.

DMc supported the proposal and offered assistance where possible

MC highlighted there is poor information on capture rates

Electronic monitoring

ID introduced the project and noted that given the recommendations from the 2008 trial, further work was required

GL asked when results from the last EM trial would be presented

ID confirmed that the draft report will shortly be circulated with a presentation of results expected from late September

GL requested that the term “potentially large impact” in the project description be clarified

Knowledge exchange

JP introduced the project

SB passed on a comment from Di Tracey that the coral guides should be included in this section