



Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group

Date: 6 August 2020

Time: 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Place: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Chair: Ian Angus (iangus@doc.govt.nz)

Attendance: Igor Debski, Karen Middlemiss, Graeme Taylor, Katie Clemens-Seely, Anton van Helden, Shannon Weaver, Tiffany Plencner, Clinton Duffy, Samhita Bose, Trude Hellesland (DOC), Laura Tremblay-Boyer, Katrin Berkenbusch, Yvan Richard, Edward Abraham (Dragonfly), Jaret Bilewitch, Di Tracey (NIWA), Jesse Rihia (TOKM), Glen Carbines (NZSFC), William Gibson, Marco Milardi, Karen Tunley, Lyndsey Holland, Aimee Komugabe-Dixson, Hilary Ayrton, Dave Foster, Ben Sharp (MPI), Richard Wells, Rob Tilney, Geoff Tingley (DWG), Amalia Murgueitio Calle (Student), Dave Goad (Vita Maris), Mike Bell (WMIL).

POP2018-06: Protected coral connectivity in New Zealand - NIWA

RW is that overlap based on all records fishing and survey?

JB It is a mix of bycatch and research specimens as we needed to use some research specimens to bolster the numbers for the project.

DT We could colour-code the points on the map to differentiate which specimens were bycatch and which were research samples.

IA In terms of the costs would you be able to detail those a bit?

JB DNA sequencing is about \$5 per marker per sample. For genomic methods for more focused research I was quoted around \$100 per sample though the benefit is that there is very little lab work required.

GTi Is there any scope to develop better guidance for FNZ observers to distinguish specimens when at sea or are these really effectively indistinguishable?

JB Yes we will be including new species in the new coral ID guide for observers

AKD Is it possible to ID black corals without tissue e.g. dried samples?

JB I didn't explore it for this study but I believe Lyndsey Holland explored the use of dried specimens and had some success there. There can be some residual tissue even on dried specimens. Would depend ultimately on the age of the specimen.

LH We did dried and fresh specimens and it did work quite well, the most important thing was that they were frozen.

IA I presume we are still collecting observer sample specimens to continue this work?

DT Yes but we would like more sub-samples to accompany photographed specimens.

INT2019-05: Coral biodiversity in deep-water fisheries bycatch – NIWA

GTi Its quite likely that the different ORH fisheries are comparable in this work, they are spatially distinct.

LH Also different levels of observer coverage.

JB Yes, I am grouping fisheries overall.

Discussion around the sampling selection process and that it needs to be included in the report as not based on representativeness across fisheries, space and observer coverage.

JB This could be viewed as a pilot study for what is possible following this method for assessing biodiversity. The sampling process is detailed in the report and was not

subjective, more so limited by the amount of samples available.

RW Is there any plan to include fisheries or other surveys data too?

JB Yes that would be a good thing to do. Just a case of funding to undertake that really. Will aid in determining biodiversity hotspots.

GTi I completely agree that there's huge value in the observer programme information but still only looking where fisheries operate so missing out a lot of biodiversity information.

JB I agree.

IA We try and promote the need for further investment in data deficient areas outside of fisheries arena.

INT2019-03: Characterisation of marine mammal interactions – Dragonfly

RW With the sea lion observed captures the observed effort isn't all relevant to sea lions.

LT We could put a latitude limit on the effort to make it more relevant?

RW Yes that could be a good start.

BS Could include AEBAR reference on this work in the report (sea lions chapter 4):

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/40980-aquatic-environment-and-biodiversity-annual-review-201920>

RW Is the SBW effort just in Campbell Islands or all effort?

LT Its just effort around the Campbell Islands.

RW Also is there a reason estimates for scampi and other trawls are no longer done?

LT It is up to FNZ what estimates we undertake for them.

BS Can we delay this report being finalised until the wider FNZ fur seal work has been reviewed at the AEWG on the 20th August?

KM Yes, we can do that.

RW Is it possible to see the data re effort, observer levels and observer captures in CDD captures in JMA fishery in a table? I'm interested in looking back over the past.

LT I am happy for that request to be submitted and we will consider it on our end.

EA That information (back to 1996/97) will be in the marine mammal estimation report presented at the AEWG on the 20th.

RW We started collecting data on DDDs when they were issued, but the experiment didn't work as most of the fleet took it up, so our 'control' essentially disappeared.

TH Just curious to know around the time those devices were put on board was there any other mitigation measures brought into place at that time? E.g. no hauling in a certain time period.

RW I've never been of the view that the time period thing has any effect on bycatch. We did bring in trigger reporting at that time.

Discussion around acoustic deterrent devices in longlining

RW Cetaceans and longlines-how many are hook based captures and how many are entanglements?

KB Yes that is worth looking in to.

AVH We see injuries of entanglement injuries in beaked whales with longline (presumably), interested to hear if there have been any issues with the trace in other animals?

IA This to be discussed at another time.

Discussion around vessel noises and other cues that attract marine mammals to operating fishing vessels.

BS Can you please cross reference the cryptic mortality project report, published last year?

KB Yes, we have referenced that in the report.

RW Lack of propositions for fur seal mitigation but you can see a steep drop off in fur seal captures and I think that has a lot to do with operational changes that helped with that reduction.

Discussion around underwater cameras as a way to measure cryptic mortality

Seabird observer sightings data - Dragonfly

RW Do observers ever take a photograph of an assemblage of seabirds to get expert identification?

YR Definitely the data suffers from inaccuracy in species identification

WG Did you exclude observers with little experience?

YR Observer information is anonymised so not able to know the experience.

ID High occurrence of species recorded at species group level- this is our attempt to deal with the variation in observer ability to identify right down to species.

GTi Is there any information about the time spent to do a count? How variable is the time spent by observers?

ID Counts are supposed to be instantaneous at a point in time.

TH It is variable depending on fishing/conditions/number of birds however it is meant to be a "snapshot" in time.

RW Have data been collected from ET voyages too?

TH Yes, observers do but unsure if covered in this work?

YR We excluded ET data.

DG Is data straight off nomad or have corrections from observers been included? My understanding is observers noted corrections in diaries as they couldn't edit the records in the NOMAD.

TH Corrections are made at by the observer team if any are required so what Dragonfly have received has been reviewed.

WG Yes, data between diaries and Nomads is rectified at the end of the trip before being archived.

DG Are you distinguishing ones that occur during low light?

YR We could potentially do that.

GTi Are there any plans to quantify the levels of misidentification across the observer programme?

YR We have done some work on the bycaught birds but not really the seabird count data, it could be modelled though.

Commercial fisheries seabird interaction health assessment tool - DOC

RW This has benefits in feeding into risk assessments. I've always been quite keen on post release survival, so I am supportive of this proposition but want to make sure we aren't collecting data for data's sake. On the C category that are now described as 'free-riders' that are riding the cod-end on deck it would be good if there is some video of this to show observers that examples like this would classified as 'C'.

MB Wording for Category C could easily be tightened up, photos in this presentation is very biased to deck strikes.

GTi Has anybody done any analysis of observer data as it exists to categorise into these classifications?

RW I don't believe it does.

DG Yes there is an MPI project on how the risk assessment deals with cryptic mortality.

DG When I first started observing we were asked to make a judgement call on whether a bird was going to survive and then there was a shift away from that to record specific injuries. I am a little bit more hesitant that observers make an assessment of survival on vessel not making a judgement call.

GTi Agree with Dave's perspective, the decision needs to be analytical

DG Yes, I don't see the benefit in the observers doing this especially as they can be under pressure to make it a certain way.

TH Agree also.

WG I think it would be good to see observers trained more but I also agree with what Dave said.

RW Yes observers need to record, not decide.

Discussion around SEFRA

RW The penultimate question is: who will use the results of analysis of these data and for what? is it the SEFRA or another model or assessment. If we have a research question the data required will become obvious. I just don't fully understand the 'why'.

WG Yes, the main output for this would be for the SEFRA model.

GTi To inform understanding of proportion likely to survive, the existing data could be analysed to evaluate likely survival. Make use of existing data first.

SW We could do a project retrospectively categorising these based off observer data for say the last 5 years.

WG I support that approach.

GTa Just checking that observer instructions cover off the safe release of the birds in B and C category. They will be disorientated after handling and if released into throng of birds behind the boat its likely some will be taken out quite quickly by giant petrels or skuas.

KM Potential for this to be added to 'moderate' category.

WG We should take the conservative approach like Mike said previously, that oil is bad, therefore any oil puts them in A.

GTi Take this to a panel of 5 people that work with injured birds/wildlife specialists, I am not sure the current attendees have the ability to inform this adequately.

End of meeting