



Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Research Advisory Group

Date: 8th March 2021

Time: 9:30 am – 2:30 pm

Place: Microsoft Teams Meeting

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

Attendance: Di Tracey, Jaret Bilewitch, Brit Finucci, Ashley Rowden, David Thompson, Dianna Macpherson (NIWA), Chris Gaskin (NNZST), Graham Parker (Parker Conservation), Tom Clark (FINZ), Richard Wells, Robert Tinkler (DWG), Mary Livingston, Ben Sharp, Marco Milardi, Greg Lydon, Dominic Vallieries, Tiffany Bock, Jo Lambie, Greg Lydon, Hilary Ayrton (MPI), Trude Webster (YEP Trust), Bill Chisholm (Chisholm Associates), Simon Childerhouse (Cawthron Institute), Janice Molloy (SSST), Tamar Wells, Jesse Rihia (TOKM), Graeme Taylor, Igor Debski, Lyndsey Holland, Katie Clemens-Seely, Shannon Weaver, Clinton Duffy, Graeme Elliot, Kath Walker, Tiffany Plencner, Anton van Helden, Karen Middlemiss (DOC), Savannah Goode (Victoria University of Wellington), Carol Scott (Southern Inshore Fisheries Mgmt), Denham Cook (Pelco NZ Ltd), Larnce Wichman, Daryl Sykes (NZ Rock Lobster Industry Council).

Apologies: Bruce McKinlay, Hendrik Schultz (DOC).

Introduction

Discussion around the initial prioritisation process.

IA We will provide further information on projects that didn't make it through the process.

SC How is project cost included in the prioritisation process? Also, is there a formal cap on government contribution to the CSP plan?

IA Have been fortunate to get more funding via Bio18 recently. It's important to ensure there is sufficient capacity within our team to deliver the work we plan to do.

SC I would encourage an increase in the government contribution to bycatch work.

SC I'm not sure the definition of 'cost effectiveness' is being applied in the best possible way. The efficiencies around cost should be related to how effective the technique is for reducing bycatch instead of simply 'cheap vs. expensive'.

ID Its actually more cost that we are scoring in that element, 'contribution to CSP objective/s' covers the benefits of the project.

TC Good points raised by Simon on costs and a more strategic approach required. Need to identify what the big issues are and how we are going to resolve those.

JM Agree on this.

IA If something really shines through as a strong priority we are always happy to consider this. We do have to try and spread priority across the three areas [interaction, population and mitigation]. Feedback and suggestions on priorities are really helpful.

Discussion around service providers inputting project proposals.

Discussion around population studies and their relative contribution to reducing bycatch.

TC Why is it 35% for risk/threat, should be higher than 'contribution to CSP objective/s'?

IA Happy to take feedback on weighting.

SC At what point is observer planning discussed?

IA We work with FNZ on this, its then put into the draft annual plan for stakeholder feedback.

SC I think CSP needs to highlight the fisheries they are interested in as that may differ to FNZ priorities.

Discussion around increasing observer coverage for fisheries with common dolphin interactions.

Discussion around POP2019-04: Southern Buller's albatross, Snares/Tini Heke project.

JM Males/females being included in that? And tagging?

DT Sex specific survival estimates will be done for the remaining 2 years of the project.

Discussion around coral project ranking in initial project prioritisation.

RW There are a lot of coral type proposals here, a lot of past work, international but local experience and work planned or done ex DOC CSP. We need to proceed stepwise. DWG recognises needs in this space but concerned at a shotgun approach which it at least feels like at present. Hard to prioritise here without more knowledge of FNZ work plans etc.

SC Disappointed by the lack of mitigation projects put forward this year as this is the ultimate aim for CSP. Should there be more work with industry on potential proposals?

JM Agree on this point.

TC Agree on this point.

IA Yes mitigation is a very valuable component of CSP work, there was a number of additional proposals put forward that weren't ranked in the initial prioritisation.

ID Much of the mitigation work is occurring under Bio18 so is a much smaller list for review here.

Proposals not taken forward into prioritisation

Title	Comments
Obtaining better estimates on inshore trawl cryptic mortality levels	To be delivered by FNZ
Post-release survival of protected sharks and rays	Discussion needed around how to actually undertake this work. Concerns/questions re H&S around having observers tag live animals, cost of providing tags, etc. Due to concerns, panel suggest holding off until rescoping can be done
Investigation of common dolphin bycatch from small vessels (<28m) in the Taranaki trawl fishery	Project rationale and proposed additional observer coverage has been rolled into the observer programme planning process
Recovery potential of protected deep-sea stony corals	Project is dependent upon a voyage that hasn't happened yet and upon live specimen collection and spawning. Outputs downstream useful to CSP. Proposal on hold for now
Assessing Hector's dolphin use of the water column	Separate programme of work underway through MPI/FNZ which needs to be completed prior to undertaking this work
Effectiveness of night setting as a mitigation measure	Panel notes the importance of this project, but also notes that there is working currently ongoing to test the feasibility of this, propose holding for future year(s)
Demersal Longline Mitigation	Currently work underway already
Fisher resource development - mitigation videos	Work will be picked up this year under liaison programme (2020/21)
Dolphin dissuasive device field trials	Current project proposal is not fit for purpose as is, further work needs to be done to develop project proposal on how to test acoustic deterrents for dolphins
Understanding barriers to mitigation uptake	On hold for this year

Discussion and scoring of projects

CSP RAG Proposal		Comments
INT-6	Characterisation of protected coral interactions	RW Is that going to include a collation on knowledge to date? LH This project is an amalgamation of 10 years of data since last conducted
INT-3	Review of commercial fishery interactions with NZ non-chondrichthyan protected fish and marine reptiles	JL Would this include survivability, avoidance and mitigation? ID This project could be broadened to include this JL We are specifically thinking in relation to turtle interactions ID Yes they will be the focus of this project
INT-4	Collection and curation of tissue samples from protected fishes and turtles	No comment
INT-2	Post release survival rates of seabird bycatch in commercial fisheries	RW Has there been a power analysis of how many we need to be tracked to be sufficient? KM I believe it was around 30 in the prior research by WMIL RW Was that accepted as sufficient though? E.g. will the outcome be acceptable KM Experimental design would need to be finalised further on in the process GP Budget is very small, so have to be really considerate of the sample size GP FNZ went through this a few years back, and abandoned the effort, and the budget was larger than that proposed here JR 30 is too small a total sample size. Will require at least 30 independent samples of all variables. Need a full experimental design planned before funding/supporting GP Agree with Jesse. Vessel effects need to be taken into account. 30 birds is too small and will lack power ML Wanting a bit more information on this to ensure there is no overlap with an FNZ project TC This seems to have two projects bedded in here, I support the black petrel work, but unsure about the first part of it
INT-5	Behaviour of Hector's dolphins around set net at Kaikōura	TC First time trying to record the behaviour of dolphins around nets, in the absence of attaching tags to dolphins this would assist with understanding behaviour around fishing gear AvH We could get a very good picture of dolphin activity by doing this but the cost is very high. Putting tags on a few animals will tell you the behaviour of a few animals, however by putting it on the nets you would know not only the animals were around the nets but also where they are in the water column.

		<p>CS Not too many set netters left in the Kaikoura region, no one is looking at potting</p> <p>SW There is a mitigation project proposal directly focused on potting interactions in the Kaikoura region for discussion shortly</p> <p>Discussion around separate TMP funding</p>
POP-4	Identify protected coral hot spots using species distribution models	<p>TB Unsure how this is not already a double up on work that has already been conducted?</p> <p>LH The difference here is that abundance data would be incorporated into this for the first time</p> <p>Discussion around out of EEZ work occurring separate to this proposal</p>
POP-5	Impact of fishing on the ecosystem services provided by deep-sea corals in the NZ region	<p>TB I'm not aware of a good description of ecosystem services provided by corals to be able to conduct this research.</p> <p>LH First attempt to use some ES values</p> <p>AR First step is trying to quantify those ES, first one being habitat services for associated biodiversity</p> <p>TB My preference would be to split the project to first determine ES before committing funding to further work</p> <p>AR Ecosystem services provided by coral have been looked at overseas (references in the proposal). This proposed project is to apply approaches to provide similar evidence for corals in NZ waters</p> <p>JR Don't see management outcome of this project. Not sure that ecosystem services data are required/in scope for management of protected coral bycatch under CSP</p> <p>DT Research feeds into coral recovery studies from fishing impacts</p>
POP-6	Deep-sea protected coral reproduction	<p>JR Don't see management outcome of this project</p> <p>LH Continues current work and will feed into a risk assessment eventually but still very much at data gathering stage at this point</p>
POP-9	Seabird population research: Chatham Islands	No comment
POP-17	Black petrel research	<p>TC Black petrel should not be ranked this low</p> <p>ID Is one of the highest-ranking seabird POP projects</p> <p>BS I also think this should be ranked higher</p>
POP-1	Age estimation of white sharks from New Zealand waters	<p>MM Support this as useful work for future risk assessments</p> <p>BS I would support this project having higher priority [higher ranking in this list]. Shark aging would lead to clear immediate benefits for our ability to understand impacts on</p>

		sharks, I would push it to the top, from an FNZ perspective JR Agree, also aligns with development of NPOA sharks
POP-2	Understanding bycatch thresholds of great white sharks	CD Have had discussion with CSIRO with their work related to this. The proposal would change considerably and should cost less than initially put forward
POP-18	Fur seal population estimate and bycatch analysis, Cook Strait	SC I was surprised at how low this ranked due to the amount of bycatch that is estimated to be occurring
POP-19	Genetic connectivity of Hector's dolphins across the top of the South Island	No comment
POP-3	Determine protected deep-sea coral contribution from seabed imagery	No comment
POP-10	White-capped albatross research and monitoring- Disappointment Island (2021-24)	No comment
POP-12	Assessment of causes of low burrow occupancy rates in Westland petrels	No comment
POP-20	Acoustic monitoring of Hector's dolphin interactions with harbour set nets	No comment
POP-8	Flesh-footed shearwater population monitoring	TC Why is this proposal so low? GT Is a continuation of juvenile recruitment work to understand return rates TC A lot of investment in banding in previous years so have to continue this work or else previous work is wasted RW Agree with Tom DC Agree BS Support. Where birds are already banded there is a clear benefit to collecting resight data
POP-11	Gibson's albatross- Auckland Islands seabird research	JM Unsure why this is ranked so low ID Incremental gain in knowledge vs addressing a big knowledge gap is likely why it has fallen further down the ranking KW Are travel costs being evenly shared across projects? ID We can look at subantarctic costing further BS Support. Where birds are already banded there is a clear benefit to collecting resight data. Also support the proposal to trial drones for improved data collection at Auckland Islands

POP-15	Southern royal albatross population research and monitoring- Campbell Island 2021-23	JM Unsure why this is ranked so low
POP-13	Light-mantled sooty albatross population monitoring- Adams Island	No comment
POP-16	Otago and Foveaux shag population estimate	No comment
POP-7	Investigation foraging plasticity for north-eastern New Zealand seabirds	No comment
POP-14	Grey petrel population assessment- Antipodes Island	KW It does look like it would be a good year to conduct this project. Discussion around the slips causing issues for this work
MIT-1	Protected species liaison project	RW Can LO Programme be labelled Inshore/HMS LO Programme? To differentiate with the deepwater programme
MIT-2	Cetacean interactions with pot fisheries in NZ waters	SC Nice to see this, look at MIT2016-02 [and MIT2019-01] to see if anything else could be added to this proposal SW We will review prior research more thoroughly to flesh out this proposal if it makes it through to the draft annual plan CD Would be good to expand this project to include interactions with sea turtles as well. There are a few records of leatherback turtles being caught in cray pot lines
MIT-4	Inshore trawl mitigation	TC We need to progress this and a discussion is a good place to start. Need to look at the efficacy of different options CS Unclear why this isn't internal [DOC] work
MIT-5	Develop protocols for increasing sink rates for bottom longline	TC Further discussions on this required, workshop is required RW Need collaborative, across government work here to progress a key issue and area
MIT-3	Eliminating hoiho bycatch in set net fisheries	TC Risk assessment underway, believe this is a population and disease problem not a fisheries problem. Need to know where risk assessment work is at with MPI BS I believe this is an overlap in work MPI is conducting so should be taken off Discussion around what may be predated hoiho

Further feedback

The Chair called for any additional feedback, in writing to be emailed through to csp@doc.govt.nz, by **22 March 2021**