



Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group
 Date: 12 October 2023
 Time: 10:00 am – 11.00 pm
 Place: Microsoft Teams Meeting
 Chair: Kris Ramm (Manager, Marine Bycatch and Threats team)

Attendees (36); Karen Middlemiss, Kris Ramm, Katie Clemens-Seely, Lyndsey Holland Tiffany Plencner, Graeme Taylor, Hendrik Schultz, Stephen Pilkington, Sharyn Broni, Julia Reid (DOC); David Middleton (Pisces); Richard O’Driscoll, Jason Hamill (NIWA); Sue Maturin, Chelsea McGaw (F&B); Charles Heaphy (Sealord); Alex Rogers (Hauraki Gulf Forum); Alexander Hann, Campbell Murray, William Gibson, Greg Lydon, Sonja Austin, Will Pearce Loe, Nicky Elliott (FNZ); Ben Steele-Mortimer (DWG); Carol Scott (Southern Inshore Fisheries); Ben Sharp (Corvus North Ecological Consulting); Inger Perkins (South Island Kokako Trust); Janice Malloy (SSST); Rochelle Constantine, Leena Riekkola (UoA); Robert Win (Environment Southland); Shaun Lee (STET designer); Simon Childerhouse (ELI); Trudi Webster (YEPT); Yvan Richard (Dragonfly).

Apologies (3); Hollie McGovern (DOC), Jack Fenaughty (Silverfish), Marianne Lukkien (FNZ)

Presentations:

10.00 am	Information for the public about seabird bycatch in NZ commercial fisheries – FNZ seabird bycatch dashboard	(SST and FNZ)
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1. Information for the public about seabird bycatch in NZ Commercial Fisheries – FNZ seabird bycatch dashboard (SST and FNZ)

Janice Molloy (SST) and William Gibson (FNZ) presented a draft report on the development of a dashboard for public display of seabird bycatch data.

Discussion:

SC - While there are benefits for clarity’s sake using only 5-year blocks of data, you do lose the big picture which can be critical when interpreting it. Maybe make the default display 5-years but have an option for people to see the full data series if they want, in the same simplified presentation method.

WG This was just using the results of the steering group. So that’s why we’ve opted for 5-years of data. We are not saying we will replace the PSC website, it’s great for a technical audience, but the audience for this dashboard is more non-technical.

ROD – What is the process for updating this in the future – how will we ensure the data is current?

WG - Rolling 5-years and updating as the Protected Species Capture database is updated to include new fishing years and the associated estimates become available.

ROD - And if the previous year's change too, will the next update change those previous years data?

WG – We currently update the website with all new data, so yes it will.

BSM – I think it's a really helpful process to see how different people interpret information. I do think there is a risk in oversimplification of this information. Important to guide people to the PSC website to find information in more detail. For fisheries where data deficiencies exist, the qualifying text will be really helpful. In terms of resourcing and keeping it updated, the seabird annual report is produced every year which includes a summary and could that be merged into this process. Helps to have everything in one place. Having it as part of the seabird annual report would make sense.

WG - Helpful suggestion.

SC - Good exercise and useful tool for everyone to be able to view data simply. Concern about setting up another database to extract data. Suggest maintaining a single database and then extract from PSC to the dashboard. Would save work not setting up in parallel systems and reduce risk of inconsistencies between platforms.

WG – The dashboard like the website is a summary of the PSC database and capture estimates. We will not be duplicating the underlying database.

SC - That's great.

SM - Great report. When you have the 5-year trend and are suggesting having a graph but no commentary, good to have both and any comments statistical rather than subjective. When it comes to captures by seabird type, people do want to know the species and would be helpful if dashboard drills down to species and also rate of capture per fishing effort and important for people to understand by providing a good application. Also helps to understand whether mitigation is working. Trigger event reporting, can we discuss. It is important to know mitigation types in use at time of capture and how it is going to be reported. Will it be in the dashboard or in a report – not well reported on FNZ website.

WG - For the trends, we opted not to put 95% CIs on graphs as we think it can lead to misinterpretation of trends. Information on the PSC website includes catch rates. PSC is a valuable source and won't be replaced by the dashboard. That will all still be available. We are looking at targeting a more lay audience not as familiar with scientific data. Mitigation information, we could look at including in the PSC website moving forward or somewhere else on the FNZ website with access to seabird annual report which has that detail.

SM - Can we send written comments post meeting?

WG - Yes, thanks.

BS - One of the biggest sources of frustration with stakeholders is that the bycatch numbers have been insensitive to changes that have occurred when numbers don't reflect that. To fix that we need to distinguish between net and warp captures (trawl) because they are very different in terms of mitigation. Mixing together doesn't tell the whole story. For all types

we should be showing live vs dead bycatch. Even in the most basic numbers if we don't provide the ability to deliver into more depth for each scenario. Need to be very explicit about what 'capture' means. What doesn't it include, what does it include. E.g., does it include animals released alive, cryptic mortality etc. We'll keep getting confusion unless we are clear about those things. Risk of confusing people further. Need to provide clarity. Live vs dead, warp vs net, cryptic mortality.

WG - Warp vs net might be too specific for dashboard intent, but making sure it's available on the PSC website is important. Live vs dead we could provide some explanatory text to define captures. Cryptic mortality should only be used in the context of the risk assessment – with the preferred terms deaths to distinguish from captures. Agree, clarity needed to ensure the audience understands.

BSM - The seabird annual report summary breaks things down well and displays the info between main fleets. I think merging these dashboards will be the logical thing to do. We don't need both.

SC - agree with many of Ben's comments that when you simplify complicated issues you actually make it easier to get things wrong and people to get the wrong end of stick. It's a fine balancing act....

RC - Agree - it can also mask where real improvements have been made and potential emerging new issues.

BSM - Agree with Ben. I think there is a risk in oversimplification and not explaining what has changed, how it changes and what may be driving the change.

TP - Agree as well. I think it comes down to what kind of questions we are actually aiming to answer from the public. Maybe it could be valuable to be explicit about those.

CH - Agree with most of the comments made. Particularly Ben's. I appreciate you are trying to make it easy for the lay audience, and a lot will come down to how the two front ends are aligned. Concern however, about oversimplification. If someone really doesn't understand statistics, we should help them understand rather than just give them a lay explanation. 5-years trend may be problematic need to keep the long-term trend needed too. Some text needed to talk about what the average is doing. Across years without mention of fishing effort, numbers can be misleading. But a good initiative.

WG - More thinking needs to be done about how to best show trends. We are looking at updating the PSC database with more info to help people understand the graphics. We will be looking at getting feedback before upgrades to PSC happen.

SM - Agree with Charles re trends over longer time frame and importance of including effort and capture data.

SC - William - do you plan to have meeting about potential upgrades/changes to the PSC database. That would be useful and positive.

TP - Could this not be a summary page to the PSC website, to keep everything together?

YR - Automatic dashboards don't prevent the display of manual text. Changes are slow, and comments about the trend in the type of captures, the proportion of live captures, or pitfalls in the numbers could be added in a concise way to the dashboard and should only need to be updated every few years.

SM - I thought this report is about information for general lay audiences and having links to PSC and MPI databases is for more technical audiences.

DM - Title of the project and introduction in draft report on the CSP website. The title states information for public which is very diverse from scientists to general public. Naïve to think that one information resource will provide everything. Haven't had a clear statement on who the dashboard is aimed at and what other resources might be available. Has been clarification that PSC will be available. Helpful to think PSC is umbrella and dashboard comes out of that. Question – if journalists wanted to access data and create their own graphics how would they do that? Should we be providing data feeds? Need to think about different resources needed for different audiences and the PSC and dashboard who need different things. Agree with CH that it's important to communicate the important things not just what people think is important. Absent from the report is where does the risk assessment lie in this communication exercise. Bycatch needs to be contextualised around seabird populations. What are the most important bits of science to be communicated and how.

WG – People creating their own graphics – are you looking for more data than what is currently available for download on the PSC?

DM – Several media organisations like BBC and the NZ Herald take data and present in their own graphic style so need data access. How do we provide those data feeds to those who want to do their own graphics?

WG – Could also include button to take to PSC website to get your own data. We could also ensure that all stats available on the dashboard are also available on the PSC website.

DM – Two aspects – technical – how do we do it, but also how do we drill down generally. Support drilling down into detail as a general requirement for any information resource.

WG – We'll look at being more explicit in the report that the PSC website isn't going anywhere.

WG – Including fishing effort is important for context on capture rates.

DM - Report. There is a lot of focus in the report on the role of the PSC website.

Would be helpful if the report had a survey of what other information sources are out there that are relevant to the question the audience has. PSC website companion publication to AEBR for that audience. E.g., summary sections in AEBR produce key results and could be provided as a resource.

WG - Happy to talk to DM after the meeting about how to improve different areas of reporting.

Any additional comments should be provided to csp@doc.govt.nz by 5pm, 26th October 2023.

Close of Meeting @ 11:00 am