



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



MINISTRY OF FISHERIES  
*Te Tautiaki i nga tini a Tangaroa*

**Meeting:** Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group  
National Plan of Action – Seabirds Technical Working Group

**Date:** 11 April 2011

**Time:** 9.30 am – approx. 1:00 pm

**Place:** Department of Conservation, 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington

**Chair:** Russell Harding (ph: 04-471-3204; email: rharding@doc.govt.nz)

**Present:** Kris Ramm (DOC), Igor Debski (DOC), Louise Chilvers (DOC), David Middleton (SeaFIC), Tom Clark (SeaFIC), Greg Lydon (SeaFIC), Jeremy Helson (MFish), Ed Abraham (Dragonfly), Yvan Richard (Dragonfly), Finlay Thompson (Dragonfly), George Clement (DWG), Jodie Campbell (DWG), Jeff Flavell (DOC).

**Apologies:** Rebecca Bird (WWF), Bob Zuur (WWF), Pat Reid (Area 2), Martin Cawthorn (Cawthorn & Associates), Martin Cryer (MFish)

The presentation and background report for each project are available for download from <http://www.doc.govt.nz/cspmeetings>

RH opened the session and underlined the purpose of the meeting was to provide technical review of the projects presented.

- GL requested clarification on the status of the updated, but draft, report for POP2007-01 (Research to assess the demographic parameters and at sea distribution of New Zealand sea lions, Auckland Islands) recently posted on the MCS website.
- ID responded that the report was updated following technical input from previous TWG meetings, and had been submitted for final peer-reviewed publication in the MCS Series, so remained draft until final publication.

RH noted the report for POP2009-01 population dynamics of black petrels by Elizabeth Bell (WMIL) was posted on the MCS web pages, but a presentation was not possible at this meeting. ID noted that historically review input from the working group on black petrel reports had been minimal, and a presentation would be arranged only by request. Such a request, or comments on the draft report should be received by 29 April 2011. E-mail to [csp@doc.govt.nz](mailto:csp@doc.govt.nz)

**POP2010-01 Progress report on New Zealand sea lion data collection from the Auckland Islands 2010/11. Presentation by Louise Chilvers (DOC)**

- DM noted that the 2011 pup count estimate was not comparable to previous years based on existing information on pup counts over time
- LC suggested next year two mark-capture estimates could be made at Dundas to investigate the influence of late timing
- DM suggested using existing information on counts from other sites would be a better approach
- GC enquired whether late counts had been made in any previous years
- LC – not during her involvement, but maybe about 11 ago
- GL queried the need to tag pups, rather than chip them, and expressed concern for potential impacts on wellbeing of the animals
- LC noted resightability would drop greatly, especially during harem periods, if tags were not used. Chipping in addition to tags allowed better estimation of tag loss rates.
- DM requested the number of pup mortalities observed at 2 months
- LC did not have the number at hand, but was expressed as 8%
- DM outlined again that using the pup production estimate for 2011 in a time series was misleading
- RH requested further comment on the suggestion by LC to conduct two mark-recapture estimates next year
- DM responded that it would be preferable to use existing information, including that published from 1994/95, to define a pup number curve and develop a correction from that.
- DM requested mark-recapture raw count data
- ID agreed they would be provided in an updated report
- JC noted an error in Table 1 of the draft report
- JC requested clarification on why pup production estimates were reported, what these tell you about the population level, and requested further information on pup-cow ratios etc.
- ID responded that various other work was relevant to these questions including previous analyses of demographic parameters and would supply relevant reports to JC after the meeting
- JC noted some minor discrepancies in the report
- ID requested these be provided and will be investigated
- DM, in summary requested the follow revisions to the draft progress report: correction to Table 1, clarification of reporting of standard errors, counts rather than percent be provided in Table 2, not plotting the 2011 pup estimate as a time series point, addition of counts prior to 1998, and further investigation of the effect of timing differences.
- JH enquired whether the report would return to the working group after adjustments
- ID responded that a final report would be presented at a later meeting, tentatively in late June.
- RH/ID will aim to make available an updated progress report by 15 April, and requested further written comments by 29 April 2011.

**CSP Observer Programme – abundance of seabirds in the vicinity of fishing vessels. Presentation of data entered to date, and development of database. Presentation by Ed Abraham (Dragonfly)**

- GC outlined the importance of standardising counts as much as practical, and distinguished between counts of abundance around a vessel as reported in this project, and birds being in specific risk areas e.g. in front of a warp.
- DM enquired whether counts were made only at haul
- EA – counts primarily made during first daylight haul, but some additional counts are made
- GL noted counts were approximate
- GC enquired how this information might aid bycatch estimation
- EA responded that it could be particularly useful to identify areas where certain species are not present, and thus inform area based extrapolations
- GC queried how reliable observer identifications were
- EA noted this varied by observer and could be partially assessed by comparing performance of correct identification of birds autopsied, but there was not enough data to do this consistently
- DM enquired as to the time line for improving forms based on recommendations suggested, given the observer planning process for deepwater fisheries currently underway
- KR will attend meetings to develop deepwater observer coverage and feed through suggested improvements
- ID noted rarer species may be less likely to be identified than commoner ones
- GL suggested 60m should be the maximum distance that observations are made
- ID responded that 100m was chosen as generally preferred by observers when debriefed
- GC enquired as to funding of this work
- ID clarified that the data analysis was crown funded, but observations were collected as part of the CSP Observer Programme
- GC questioned the usefulness of the information to fisheries management, whether it could be used to detect trends and noted that birds put themselves at risk
- RH noted that the observer deepwater observer optimisation process will provide an opportunity to consider the potential redesign of future data collection
- GC was keen to see full objectives developed
- KR noted that data collection has historically required very little observer effort as it combined well with other duties
- DM enquired whether there were any fisheries-independent observations collected that could be compared
- ID noted there may be some localised areas such as Hauraki Gulf where birdwatching pelagic trips are regularly organised
- GC suggested differences between vessels with different offal management or vessel management strategies could be investigated
- EA agreed this would be informative but had been out of scope for the current work

**Offal batching (2010 trawler trial) – analyses of the effect of batching treatments on seabird attendance. Presentation by Ed Abraham (Dragonfly)**

- GC considered that birds struck the warp rather than warps striking birds, and the warp was the problem, not offal
- GC considered risk could only be described by the occurrence of birds forward of the warps, and not attendance close to the vessel as used in this study
- GC noted mincing was developed based on advice from Robertson that it would reduce attractiveness to albatross
- GC asked if tori lines were always used
- EA – mostly, but sometimes not when windy etc
- TC noted that as tori lines were used this work was addressing marginal benefits only
- GC noted that there was an apparent increase of bird numbers over the trip
- EA responded that it may be related to where the vessel fished over the period of the trip
- GC suggested any further work should focus on assessing birds forward of the warps, and use controls with no mitigation
- GC noted the lack of a spike of attendance at time zero within 10m for 2h batching
- JC noted the percentage of time that discharging was occurring was the most important factor to minimise rather than length between batching
- DM noted that capacity for a long inter-discharge period would allow for offal to be discharged when no gear was in the water therefore removing warp strike risk associated with offal feed activity
- GC suggested it would also be worthwhile to investigate net captures in relation to discharge patterns
- DM noted that set and haul were peak risk times as tori lines were not deployed

**INT2009-01 CSP Observer Programme – draft annual report 2009/10. Presentation by Kris Ramm (DOC)**

- GL enquired whether reduced set net coverage was related to reduced effort following closures?
- KR – no, commercial effort was back up similar to pre-closure levels
- TC noted coverage started quite late in the year
- KR – yes, but more extended compared to previous year
- DM noted it still started well after July
- GC noted the need to focus management efforts on vessels with multiple captures
- JH responded that MFish will have been involved in vessel-specific responses to large capture events
- GC queried how coverage was targeted, for example for scampi
- KR noted that for deepwater fisheries CSP coverage was combined with MFish coverage so was balanced between different objectives
- GC enquired whether these multiple captures were simply multiplied up in estimation work

- EA – in essence, but where other information is available this is used in modelling approaches.
- EA – does pelagic trawl include small vessels targeting BAR?
- KR – hard to differentiate, but small inshore vessels targeting BAR are classed as inshore trawl
- GC enquired what proportion of interactions were deck strikes
- EA – no figures immediately to hand
- ID noted that it varied by taxa, with diving petrels and storm petrels being relatively highly prone to deck strikes

ID introduced the new reporting structure for INT2010-02 seabird identification. Follow requests for more timely reporting, quarterly reports will be circulated within three months of each quarter ending. The Oct-Dec 2010 report is now available at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/publications/conservation/marine-and-coastal/marine-conservation-services/csp-reports/identification-of-seabirds-captured-in-nz-fisheries-quarterly-report/>. Presentations to the working group will be scheduled six-monthly, and a full annual report will be reviewed by the group. ID called for any feedback on the structure of the quarterly reports.

DM requested e-mail updates be provided for any reports posted or updated on the MCS web pages.

GC noted appreciation for efforts to improve timeliness in project reporting.

RH thanked the presenters and attendees. Minutes and presentations will be added to the MCS webpage <http://www.doc.govt.nz/cspmeetings>. RH and called for comments on any of the work presented, reports tabled, or the draft minutes by 29 April 2011.