Hector’s and Māui dolphin North Island Forum

How did we get here and where are we going?

October 2023

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

New Zealand Government

Background of Threat Management Plan

- First established in 2008
- Non-statutory agreement between Conservation and Fisheries
- Shared goals and objectives
- Management under respective legislation:

  - DOC: Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978

  - Fisheries NZ: Fisheries Act 1996

- Overarching these pieces of legislation are agency obligations to our Treaty partners, e.g. as set out in the Conservation Act 1987

Background of Threat Management Plan

- Risk reduction via area-based restrictions on fishing and other measures under Fisheries Act
- Department of Conservation using the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 is using Marine Mammal Sanctuaries to reduce risks from seismic surveying and seabed mining
- The Department managing other non-fisheries risks to the dolphins Including the impacts from disease.

Background of Threat Management Plan

- The TMP for both subspecies was reviewed 2018/19
- For this review, agencies developed an extensive independent research, risk assessment and evaluation process, completed in 2019
- June 2020, the Minster of Conservation and the Minister of Fisheries announced their decisions on new measures from the review to increase protection for Hector's and Māui dolphins. Including a Toxoplasmosis action plan
- Further fisheries measures for the South Island have now been put in place, that Fisheries New Zealand will talk to later in this meeting.

The Threat Management Plan

TMP – Non-fishing protection measures

- In 2020 as a result of the review, variations to 5 marine mammal sanctuaries and the Kaikoura Whale Sanctuary were introduced to provide greater protection for the dolphins.
  - Seismic surveying is prohibited in the five marine mammal sanctuaries with some exemptions.
  - Seabed mining is prohibited within the five marine mammal sanctuaries with an exemption for existing permits under the Crown Minerals Act 1991 and any subsequent permit related to an existing permit.
- Toxoplasmosis action plan was developed to scope the range of actions necessary to start addressing the threat from the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii* to the dolphins. This involved developing a research plan, which underpinned the successful budget bid in Budget 2022, with the Toxoplasmosis programme enabled from July 2023.

Map of Marine Mammal Sanctuaries and extensions

Map of Marine Mammal Sanctuaries

Implementation of TMP

- The long-term goal of the TMP is that: ***Hector's and Māui dolphin subpopulations are thriving or increasing, supported by an enduring, cohesive and effective threat management programme across New Zealand.***

- Underpinning this are four medium-term goals:

  - **Ensure that known human-induced threats are managed within levels that allow subpopulations to thrive and recover.**
  - **Engage all New Zealanders in Hector's and Māui dolphin conservation**
  - **Understand how tangata whenua wish to exercise kaitiakitanga of Hector's and Māui dolphins.**
  - **Improve knowledge of poorly understood threats to support long- and medium-term goals, which are effectively targeted, measurable and time-bound**

Broader context that informs this work

Te Mana o te Taiao & Partnership

- **Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (ANZBS)** The ANZBS provides the overall strategic direction for biodiversity in Aotearoa New Zealand for the next 30 years. It gives overarching direction and guidance to related strategies and work programmes, including the Hector's and Māui dolphin TMP.

- Four of the five outcomes in the strategy align directly with the vision, goals and objectives of this TMP:

  - Outcome 2: Indigenous species and their habitats across Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond are thriving
  - Outcome 3: People's lives are enriched through their connection with nature
  - Outcome 4: Treaty partners, whanau, hapū and iwi are exercising their full role as rangatira and kaitiaki
  - Outcome 5: Prosperity is intrinsically linked with a thriving biodiversity

- **DOC working in partnership with Māori**

Purpose of this forum

In Scope

The Forum will be jointly convened by the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Fisheries New Zealand to:

- gather input and undertake discussions on progress in implementing the TMP and associated research priorities;
- provide a platform through which DOC and Fisheries New Zealand can communicate annual plans and proposals to achieve the TMP objectives;
- facilitate the exchange of information, concerns, ideas and perspectives.
- The Forum will meet annually, or more frequently should the need arise.

Purpose of this forum

Out of Scope

- The Forum is not a substitute for statutory consultation, nor is it the only forum that DOC and Fisheries New Zealand may use to provide for input and participation with tangata whenua or engage and consult with stakeholders.

- The Forum is not a science review forum and will not focus on technical aspects related to research projects that have been procured by DOC or Fisheries New Zealand. Science peer review of Hector's and Māui dolphin research is done by DOC and Fisheries New Zealand's science staff and science working groups, in particular the Conservation Services Programme (CSP) and Aquatic Environment Working Group (AEWG).

- The Forum is not an advisory or decision-making body. DOC and Fisheries New Zealand have the statutory role of advising their respective Ministers, who ultimately make decisions around protection of Hector's and Māui dolphin pursuant to their respective legislation.