Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Fisheries New Zealand
Tini a Tangaroa

North Island Hector's and Māui Dolphin Forum Terms of Reference

1 Background

Hector's and Māui dolphins are only found in New Zealand. Together they are one of the world's rarest dolphin species.

In response to public and government concern about the effect of human-induced deaths on these dolphins, the Hector's and Māui Dolphin Threat Management Plan (TMP) was developed in 2008. The Māui dolphin component was reviewed in 2012, and a full review was undertaken in 2019-20. https://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/protecting-species/protecting-marine-species/our-work-with-maui-dolphin/hectors-and-maui-dolphin-threat-management-plan/review/

2 Purpose of the forum

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.

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.

The Forum will meet annually, or more frequently should the need arise.

3 Membership and participation

Forum membership may include representatives from tangata whenua, environmental groups, fishing industry, oil, gas and minerals industry, recreational and Māori fishing interests, territorial authorities, research providers, tourism, conservation boards, and central government agencies. This does not take the place of ongoing means of providing for input and engagement with Māori.

For the Forum to be effective a level of pragmatism will need to be applied to the number of people attending meetings, whilst still being inclusive and representative. DOC and Fisheries New Zealand will work with representatives to define this.

It is expected that members will be persons who have knowledge and experience in relation to Hector's and Māui dolphins. Should a participant not be able to attend a meeting, they may request that a suitably qualified alternate from their organisation attend as their replacement.

Members are expected to come prepared to contribute to discussions, follow up on agreed action points and abide by the terms of reference of the group. Members are not expected necessarily to represent the views of their sector, but there is expectation that members report back to their sector.

To encourage openness of discussion the Forum will operate under Chatham House rules, i.e. participants may subsequently refer to the discussions but must not attribute comments to particular individuals or organisations, or utilise social media to update and inform external parties during any of the Forum meetings.

Participants in Forum meetings should declare, during opening introductions, their sector affiliations and any substantial or perceived conflicts of interest related to any issue or scientific conclusion. The Chair will determine how any identified substantial or perceived conflicts of interest are to be managed.

4 Chair

The role of Chair will be filled by an independent facilitator appointed by DOC and Fisheries New Zealand.

The Chair will be responsible for:

- Facilitating open and constructive discussion;
- Recording conclusions, advice, and action points;
- Recording the different views of members where conclusions, advice and action points are unable to be provided by consensus and initiating or recommending any further actions that might assist in achieving consensus.

5 Technical and administrative support

Technical and administrative support will be provided by DOC and Fisheries New Zealand staff.

Agendas and background papers will be made available to participants prior to the meeting via email. Where this is not possible, hard copies will be made available at the meeting. Presentations, a meeting report, and any other relevant documentation will be made available on the DOC website following the meeting.