



Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group
Date: 12 December 2014
Time: 9:00 am – 3:30 pm
Place: Room G0.1, Conservation House, 18-32 Manners St, Wellington.
Chair: Ian Angus (ph: 04-471-3081; email: iangus@doc.govt.nz)

Attendance: Richard Wells (DWG/FINZ), David Thompson (NIWA), Kath Walker, Graeme Elliott (Albatross Research), Barry Baker (Lat 42), Nathan Walker, Chris Dick, James Andrew, Dominic Vallieres (MPI), Karen Baird (Forest&Bird), Johanna Pierre (Dragonfly), Paul Crozier, Igor Debski, Kris Ramm, Graeme Taylor (DOC)

Apologies: Kalinka Rexer-Huber (Otago Uni)

CSP TWG presentations:

1 INT2013-04 Optimisation of observer data collection protocols. Draft final report Johanna Pierre (Dragonfly)

RW suggest the project should also consider role of debriefs

There was discussion that this can play an important role on assessing the information collected and whether any additional information was gained that could in future be more routinely collected

KB suggested focus should be on electronic data capture

It was clarified that the form development process must be appropriate to produce both paper forms and electronic forms, as paper forms will always be needed as a back up option for electronic device failure etc

RW queried the need for reviewing wider strategic documents

IA – DOC considered it important to review the wide range of drivers on the requirements for observer information to ensure we are focusing on necessary and important data needs

RW – any consideration of seismic observers?

IA – currently seismic observers focus is on marine mammals, but we are working with operators to investigate more structured ways of collecting other observational data

BB – have just reviewed purse seine bycatch and shearwater captures do occur elsewhere

ID – should ensure current protocols are adequate to pick up on such bycatch

RW suggested including an analysis of how New Zealand observer practices relate to global best practices

KB – are we happy that we are collecting the right operational and environmental

factors related to bycatch? Particularly given large variations in bycatch year to year

JP – was quite a lot of variation globally, have looked at important variables identified during bycatch estimation, feedback welcome

RW noted that variables such as SST are available from remote sensing

- 2 MIT2013-02 Surface longline seabird mitigation. Draft final report** **Johanna Pierre (Dragonfly)**

ID – was the slow down in hook pod sinking at 6m related to pods opening?

JP – no, hookpod sink rates are slowing down, relative to normal gear, at 6m likely due to the relatively shorter snood length when hook pods are deployed.

JP highlighted that shark bycatch rates should be interpreted with caution as only on one vessel in one season. It was noted other trials were underway overseas that should provide interesting comparisons.

It was noted that trialing lumo vs non-lumo leads would be interesting in relation to shark bycatch.

- 3 POP2014-02 Gibson's albatross population estimate. Proposed methodology** **Kath Walker & Graeme Elliott (Albatross Research)**

BB noted that he had looked at autostitching for Disappointment, but didn't work as very few features. Was also investigated for Salvin's survey at Bounty Islands. When technology was adequately advanced for such automated methods it would be cost effective to move that way.

ID proposed that further scoping of both aerial mapping, exploring resolution from other studies, and associated stitching techniques, be advanced as part of work to develop tools to obtain robust population wide estimates.

If systems are proven adequate, there may be potentially wider use across a range of monitoring projects.

It was noted that loafers likely to be very variable dependent on timing, and in order to better investigate this, ground counts of standing/sitting no egg/sitting on egg could be progressed this season.

GE suggested trends far more important than population counts. For sampling the population, existing ground counts can be used

ID clarified that the objective of the total population count was related to the required inputs to risk assessment

RW recommended that CSP discuss with military the potential use of their technology for aerial survey

- 4 POP2014-02 White-capped albatross (Auckland Islands). Proposed methodology** **Barry Baker (Lat 42) David Thompson (NIWA)**

RW –would existing data support the analysis of habitat preference?

BB – yes, there is a clear preference apparent

BB recommended in regards ground truthing that similar methodology be used to the previous ground truthing work to maximise comparability

KW – should record wind speed and direction as this may impact the number of loafing birds

DT – can look to do some comparison in different weather conditions

RW concerned that even long term work on Southern Buller's at the Snares has provided information that has clearly driven fishery management, so would caution starting a new project

BB – to ensure resighting effort is collected, location should be very accessible, and future work should be planned in at least a five year window
ID – medium term research plan does align to allow this
RW noted we should be clear about future effort required to provide robust estimates
ID suggested the project report back to TWG with a power analysis based on the sample size achieved in the field.

- 5 **POP2014-02 Black petrel population project. Update on proposed methodology** **Kris Ramm (DOC)**

KR provided a brief update on implementation of the project, including the deployment of acoustic monitors on Little Barrier Island and dog-based searches on Great Barrier Island.

- 6 **POP2014-02 Salvin's albatross at The Snares – ground survey. Draft final report** **David Thompson (NIWA)**

RW – is there any difference in breeding biology from Bounty Island birds?
BB – there is limited information, but thought to be the same.
GT noted that young birds, or birds without nests may just lay an egg on the ground leading to broken eggs, therefore including them in the total makes it a measure of breeding attempts.
BB noted the high number of loafers may be due to egg loss due to nesting on poor terrain.
GT noted that this would lead to low productivity.
There was discussion that this information may be relevant to risk assessments etc.
RW – were there many empty nest pedestals?
DT/BB – would be hard to quantify as some birds had very poor pedestals.

- 7 **POP2014-02 Salvin's albatross at The Snares – aerial survey. Draft final report** **Barry Baker (Lat 42)**

In discussing differences in estimates from ground and aerial methods it was noted that transects for ground truthing may not have covered the island in a representative way, and ground truthing was conducted on only one island.
It was noted that a remote camera system may be useful to obtain robust information on the proportion of loafers, and breeding success as well as getting an index of abundance.

Non- CSP TWG presentations:

- 8 **Light-mantled sooty albatross aerial survey Auckland Islands 2014. Draft final report (30mins)** **Barry Baker (Lat 42)**

GT noted that this species can nest as low as 5m above sea level, but only where there are steep slopes behind.
GT - by mid to late Jan, would expect at least some chicks would no longer be guarded.
DT suggested there would likely be substantial numbers on main Auckland Island.
BB – disagree, see very few when travelling between Disappointment and Adams.

ID noted that small colonies regularly counted on the south coast of Adams Island were in the area search but not identified.

GT noted that some counts were made on Campbell Island by Peter Moore.

ID/DT – comparable counts will hopefully be made this season

Close of meeting

IA – further written feedback on the items discussed today is welcomed by 9 January 2015.