



Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Research Advisory Group

Date: 3 December 2014

Time: 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Place: Conservation House, 18 - 32 Manners St, Wellington.

Chair: Hilary Aikman

Attendance: David Middleton (Trident), Richard Wells (DWG), Jack Fenaughty (Sanford Ltd), Andrew Branson (NZ Rock Lobster Industry Council), Kath Walker (Albatross Research), Dominic Vallieres (MPI), Nathan Walker (MPI), Malcolm Francis (NIWA), Ian Tuck (NIWA), David Thompson (NIWA), Paul Crozier (DOC), Martin Cryer (MPI), Katherine Clements (DOC), Katie Clemens-Seely (DOC), Vicky Reeve (MPI), Owen Anderson (NIWA), Marie Julie Roux (NIWA), Jim Roberts (NIWA), Jenny Oliver (MPI), Tom Clark (FINZ), Johanna Pierre (JPEC Ltd/Dragonfly), Laura Boren (DOC), Kris Ramm (DOC)

Apologies: Karen Baird (Forest & Bird), Rob Mattlin (MWR), Simon Childerhouse (Blue Planet Marine), Barry Baker (Latitude 42), Barry Weeber (ECO)

Introduction/ CSP Strategic Statement

HA presented the approved CSP Strategic Statement, following a collaborative development process. A general reminder of the purpose and scope of the December RAG meeting was presented.

Presentation of the Annual Summary Report

KCS and KR presented the 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14 Annual Summary Reports.

It was suggested that future Annual Summary Reports should include the summary of the recommendations that was presented in the Powerpoint presentation, since this was a helpful compilation. It was also suggested that it should be highlighted whether these recommendations are from research reports or from DOC.

ACTION: Include summary of research recommendations in future CSP Annual Summary Reports.

Update on Seabird Research

KC presented a review of the seabird research from the previous year that was not directly related to DOC and MPI. Unlike last year, an updated list of resources was not provided since efforts have been devoted to the larger undertaking of developing a Seabird Framework. This framework will encompass a two part database of up-to-date published and unpublished relevant biological metrics for at-risk seabird species and a literature review of all relevant publications, focusing on sources published post-2000.

RW highlighted the fact that gaps in knowledge might be filled by university-based research, and it was agreed that it would be worthwhile to reach out to universities in attempts to collate

all knowledge.

ACTION: Liaise with universities to gather published and unpublished research for the seabird framework database

Update on Shark Research

KR presented a review of the shark research from the previous year that was not directly related to DOC and MPI. It was mentioned that mortality rates of post-release survival rates would be of interest to NIWA. There was a discussion about the feasibility and potential utility of permitting fisherman to tag protected fish species that they release alive in order to better understand post-release survival. It was mentioned that this would require a large quantity of tags and a robust documentation system, perhaps highlighting some of the hurdles in implementing such a system. Another discussion was around encouraging fisheries to return dead specimens, but questions remained about sources of funding and need of such specimens.

Update on Marine Mammal Research

PC presented a review of the marine mammal research from the previous year that was not directly related to DOC and MPI. VR suggested that the bycatch research should be used to update the observer guidelines surround marine mammals.

Additional areas of research surrounding marine mammals were mentioned: Sea lion tracking at Campbell Is. (NIWA), southern right whale population estimate at Campbell Is. (DOC/NIWA), elephant seal tracking at Campbell Is. (NIWA), Isotope analysis on New Zealand sea lion teeth to detect changes and variation in nutrition (NIWA), NZSL disease and nutrition studies (Massey University), marine mammal genetics (Auckland University and Otago University), telemetry work on NZSL at Stewart Island, and pup count and tagging work at Stewart Island).

Update on Coral Research

KR presented a review of the coral research from the previous year that was not directly related to DOC and MPI. Additional work was highlighted being done regarding habitat suitability modelling as collaboration between NIWA, and MBIE for the EEZ and SPRFMO areas.

KW brought up the gap in knowledge concerning changes and productivity in the deeper oceans surrounding NZ. Others mentioned there might be potential for such research in conjunction with work done by Deep South, Sustainable Seas, or the marine biodiversity programme at MPI.

Other Projects

MC brought up a project with Andrew Baxter regarding traditional surveying of marine mammals in the Hauraki Gulf.

Seabird Medium Term Research Plan

KC presented the seabird population medium term research plan for 2015. DM mentioned it is important to make sure the DOC medium term research plans are incorporated into the MPI medium term research plans.

TC raised issues with doing research on low risk species given the rankings of high risk seabirds

in the medium term plan.

NW highlighted the issues with looking at the change in uncertainty per species for risk parameters such as Adult Survival, Number of Breeding Pairs, and Cryptic Multiplier, suggesting that the overall risk ranking of the species is not considered.

ACTION: Reassess consideration of relative uncertainty and overall risk in the seabird medium-term research plan

RW brought up concerns surrounding the cost and temporal implications of Mark-Recapture work, suggesting that no considerable results have come of M-R work already underway and completed, such as for the Southern Buller's albatross.

KW noted that understanding what is happening to populations overtime is important, and that mark-recapture studies supply this knowledge where observer coverage is not available.

MC noted the lack of representation of the Level 3 Risk Assessment in the medium-term research plan, suggesting that this be incorporated into the research planning process as well. There was some debate about whether or not it would be appropriate to move away from the Level 2 Risk Assessment and focus efforts on a Level 3 Risk Assessment.

ACTION: Incorporate outputs from the Level 3 Risk Assessment in the seabird medium-term research plan

RW asked for clarification regarding the word "Review" in the 5-year plan. It was agreed that more clearly explaining the purpose of the review by species and action would be useful in the medium-term research plan.

ACTION: Clarify "Review" in the seabird medium-term research plan

NW brought up concerns around the two year gap in time series for the white-capped albatross since this has previously been conducted on an annual basis.

ACTION: Reassess population monitoring requirements to reflect conservation concern for the species

Protected Fish Medium Term Research Plan

KR presented an update around the development of the protected fish medium term research plan. It was noted that the seabird medium-term plan would serve as a template for other taxa's research plans once their individual risk assessments are completed.

Wrap Up

HA provided closing remarks and commended the constructive feedback provided throughout the morning. HA remarked that DOC will be accepting written feedback regarding the seabird 5-year medium-term research plan until the 5th of January, 2015, at which point the comments will be reviewed and incorporated into the plan in time for review for the February CSP RAG meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.