



Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group

Date: 9 December 2011

Time: 9.30 am – 3:00 pm

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

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

Attendees: Igor Debski (DOC), Kris Ramm(DOC), Di Tracey (NIWA), Suze Baird (NIWA), Susan Waugh (Te Papa), Elizabeth Bell (WMIL), Malcolm Francis (NIWA), Richard Wells (DWG), Viky Reeve (MAF), Craig Loveridge (MAF), Greg Lydon (SeaFIC), Marine Pomarede (SeaFIC)

Apologies: Dave McFarlane (Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust), Sophie Mormede (NIWA), Rohan Currey (MAF)

- 1 POP2011-06. Distribution of protected corals and overlap with commercial fishing. Presentation of proposed methodology.** Di Tracey and Suze Baird (NIWA)

RW – definition of seamount

DT – “underwater topographical feature”, has definition

SB – looking for feedback on what depth/distribution of corals to include e.g. not corals in Fiordland as not impacted by fishing, or be very inclusive?

RW – tie study in with out of zone, including SPRIFMO?

SB/DI – confirmed to EEZ as per scope, but work is being conducted in association with MFish funded work out of zone (that has a different scope)

GL – exclude closures?

SB et al – need data from exclosures, and need to assess how effective current exclosures may be, recognising that they may change over time

MF/RW – agree that areas shallower than 250m should be included

RW – status of video data not available?

SB/DI – is a NIWA project and analysis resource limited. Is at a different scale to other data. Could be used to validate models

CL – how does the pattern of material returned by observers relate to functional groups

DI – no detailed analysis, but often related to the general substrate type

RW – what proportion of samples from fishing bycatch samples?

SB – don’t have precise ratio, but there are a substantial number of samples from other sources – e.g. plenty of records in middle of Chatham Rise where little fishing is conducted

SB – choice of species or genus?

MF – combination of both may be useful

VR – some level of grouping would be useful for managers to consider

VR – what footprint will be used for identifying areas of risk? All years, or recently? 20 year and five year?

SB – will depend on what's available – to follow up with MFish

CL – do observer data identification fit well with functional groups

DI – in generally very good agreement, a few examples that could be problematic

- 2 POP2011-02. Flesh-footed shearwater – population study and foraging areas. Presentation of proposed methodology.** Susan Waugh (Te Papa)

RW – what is the total population size for New Zealand, 50-100,00?

SW – yes, in that order

CL – including observer observations from both DOC counts and NOMAD?

SW/ID – yes, will be included

Some discussion on reliability of observer data. Project will use best data available.

- 3 INT2010-02 Identification of seabirds captured in New Zealand fisheries. Draft final report 2010/11.** Elizabeth Bell (WMIL)

MF – any set net coverage?

KR – a small amount of coverage off Kaikoura

GL – why birds are primarily adults?

EB – captures during breeding period

RW – juveniles of some species e.g. white-capped albatross are mainly out of zone

CL – would be good to schedule regular COD updates

ID – contract has quarterly reporting, once system fully developed this can be passed on at that stage

Discussion of Photographic identification:

EB noted the need to develop a way to filter relevant observations

VR- what proportion hard to use?

EB – about a third, though some could still be identified as of distinctive species

RW – better measure would be how many could have been photographed well given conditions

RW noted that the tools and effort invested will depend on the fishery and the questions being asked

ID/EB agreed to include maps as a separate appendix

It was agreed EB would provide feedback on current observer protocols

ID/KR to formalise a protocol with RDM and WMIL on providing extracts and updating COD

RW – how much and what type of plastic is being found in necropsied birds?

EB – mostly small fragments of plastic, some plastic bag material, will now start photographing plastics found as part of standard procedure.

4 POP2011-04. Basking shark bycatch review. Update on proposed methodology. Malcolm Francis (NIWA)

MF highlighted MFish-funded fish identification guides now produced, that cover all protected species

GL are the hypotheses related to animals moving into NZ waters:

MF changes could be due to changes in abundance or activity changing catchability

GL – what is the wider distribution of the species

MF – not well understood, have been caught in drift nets in mid-Pacific and Tasman Sea. Tracking studies in the UK and US have shown animals make large trans-ocean movements. No information on South African animals. New Zealand animals could range widely, potentially up to the north Pacific.

GL is there just one species of basking shark?

MF yes, genetic work indicates they have passed through a bottle neck

There was some discussion the historic activities of the fishing fleets involved in historic captures and what operational variables are most useful.

VR is NZ bycatch of males reflected elsewhere?

MF – very few records of females generally anywhere, the biology of the species still being poorly understood.

VR are SLEDs like to have any impact on captures?

MF unlikely, there have been captures in nets with SLEDs

5 POP2011-03. Protected fish – review of interactions and populations. Presentation of proposed methodology. Malcolm Francis (NIWA)

GL – any duplication with basking shark project?

MF – basking shark project does not include biology review etc, work on the projects will not duplicate

GL - would longline captures be released alive

MF – would be cut free, may be more captures than reported if they cut free themselves

CL – should include protected species captures reported by fishers

MF – will do

- 6 MIT2011-01. Protected rays – mitigate captures and assess survival of live-released animals. Presentation of proposed methodology. Malcolm Francis (NIWA)**

KR – any info coming from Big Fish project

MF – will look into it

There was some discussion on the operational aspects of purse seine fisheries in New Zealand. MF called for any other suggestions on potential mechanisms for handling and live release of rays.

There was discussion on how to sample the animals to tag. ID clarified that the aim of the tagging part of the project was centred on assessing mortality, but the application of tags allowed for the opportunistic collection of spatial data. ID/KR proposed it would be best to tag animals released using best practice methods which are assessed by the observer as “likely to survive” so that at least the project can collect data on whether the best practice being used is actually effective.

RH closed the meeting and called for any further written feedback on the presentations by 23 December 2011.