

**Email Number 1**

- **Project INT2015-3** – Question about the storage provisions for genetic samples collected from bycaught species. Where and how are they being stored and are these samples available to the public upon request?
- **Project POP2016-3** – I note that this project is intended to provide part funding to the NIWA cetacean habitat suitability modelling project. This is an excellent idea but I would recommend that DOC confirm that the output from that NIWA project will be 100% publically accessible including all the groomed data and models as this is not always the case with projects that are partly internally funded by NIWA.
- **Project POP2016-7** – I note that a shorter field season than has been previously undertaken is being proposed for 2016/17 but little rationale has been provided for this reduction in field season length. It would be useful to understand why this change is being proposed especially in light of the ongoing discussions around the TMP. Undertaking a count at Figure of Eight Island will be subject to logistical constraints but perhaps this should rather be budgetary constraints as given the survey has been undertaken there for the last 20 years there are no real logistical constraints. I note that the budget for this item has been reduced by 60% from \$250k to \$100k for the coming year which represents a significant reduction in funding. It would be useful to clearly detail which parts of the programme are proposed to be dropped and which will be retained so an objective decision can be made about the reduced budget and whether the programme can meet the stated requirements of CSP and what will be the implications for the long term data series. I would also question whether even a reduced field season may be possible for the proposed budget as the major cost is vessel charter and these costs are unlikely to be reduced as at least two trips will be required regardless of the length of the field trip. It would also be useful to understand the broader context of the CSP work and, in particular, whether DOC are considering funding any additional NZSL research from internal or other sources. I also think that it is useful to recognise that recent modelling work by Roberts et al (2014) and others have provided some indications that the cause of the decline in NZSLs is now more broadly attributed across a range of possible contributors rather than fisheries being solely responsible. This could lead to a reconsideration of the proportionate allocation of any monitoring project between Fisheries and DOC. I would also like to state a potential conflict of interest with this project as BPM have been the successful contractor on this project for the last 4 years.

## Email Number 2

Since sending in a submission on the DRAFT CSP Annual Plan, I have found some additional supporting material that has helped somewhat but have attached some additional material which should be added to my original submission please.

### Project POP2016-7

- I note that in minutes of the CSP RAG meeting on 25 February 2016 there were the following comments:
  - o POP-8.1 – It was agreed that NZSL Auckland Islands population project (Status quo) had an agreed priority of **HIGH**
  - o POP-8.2 – Auckland Islands population project (Pup count only) was given a **LOW** priority as it was *“considered inadequate to answer the questions that we need answered”*
- I also note that document that outlines DOC responses to CSP RAG meeting it says:
  - o POP-8.1 – *“Not included in the Draft CSP Annual Plan 2016/17. See POP-8.2”*
  - o POP-8.2 – *“Modified scope project to estimate pup production is included in Draft CSP Annual Plan 2016/17 as POP2016-07. Additional monitoring and associated research will be delivered through the NZSL Threat Management Plan (yet to be finalised)”*
- Furthermore, my understanding is that the Draft TMP has not yet been released for public consultation and it appears that the timetable for that is uncertain with no guarantee that a final document it will be approved in time to guide research and funding for the 2016/17 NZSL season.

The DOC response to POP-8.1 and POP-8.2 are completely at odds with the RAG agreements and in fact have taken the complete opposite approach with little or no indication of why. A more logical and consistent approach would be retain the NZSL monitoring project at its previous funding level (the “status quo” option in POP-8.1 as agreed by RAG) and modify the proportion paid by fishing industry to say 50% (which is also consistent with other project allocations e.g. POP2015-02, POP2016-02). This would ensure that the full project goes ahead jointly funded by DOC and Industry without the necessity of an approved TMP guiding additional research and funding. In the event that a TMP is approved and available to guide research for the 2016/17 season, then DOC may choose to allocate additional funds to whatever priorities have been identified and are not meet by project POP-8.1.

While I can see some possible merit in following the POP-8.2 option plus some addition funding confirmed later, my concern would be that if the TMP fails to be approved in time, then it is highly likely that we will be stuck with a “pup count only” option as that is all that has been budgeted for and we would lose vital information on demographics, disease, etc. which would set us back in our understanding of the NZSL. By proceeding with the option POP-8.1, we are guaranteed a full and complete field season and won’t have a hole in the 20+ year data set which will limit our ability to understand what impacts fisheries and other factors are having on NZSL.

If DOC has already approved additional internal funds to supplement POP-8.2 into a larger project (more like POP-8.1) then I would be more comfortable with CSP only proceeding with something along the lines of POP-8.2. However these funds would have to publicly confirmed and committed to by DOC prior to the approval of the 2016/17 Annual Plan and we have seen no sign of this. In the

absence of this commitment, POP-8.1 or an identical approach to the 2015/16 CSP project should be undertaken.

Hope these are useful and, as always, happy to chat about them. Grateful if you can confirm receipt of my two submissions please.

Regards

Simon

### **Email Number 3**

Hi CSP once again,

I haven't had any response to my previous two emails but have managed to chat to Kris Ramm who was helpful in explaining some issues. Please find some additional comments on the DRAFT CSP Annual Plan 2016/17. All my comments relate to project POP2016-7.

1. This project has been ongoing for more than 20 years but is still being offered as an annual contract despite it being offered as a multi-year contract when DOC was undertaking the work inhouse. It would strongly recommend a multi-year contract is used to cover this project as the need for the work is unlikely to change in the short to medium term. This would significantly reduce workloads for project and contract management for DOC, allow the successful contractor to invest, develop and maintain capacity to undertake the work, reduce burdens of securing permitting of the research (which could also be multi-year) and would align with other work that DOC has already committed to through other internal funding (e.g. PhD funding on disease)
2. Advice from Kris Ramm was that the final size of the programme for the 2016/17 has yet to be confirmed but is likely to comprise CSP funded and DOC funded components that would provide for cost-effective synergies between the two components. This is a good idea but it is not possible to usefully assess the overall programme of work without having details of each component and confirmation that they will go ahead. As a result is difficult to comment usefully on the CSP component as if the DOC component will pick up all the other work then that may be fine but if it does not, then there will be large gaps in the programme. I would recommend that a programme similar to that undertaken in the 2015/16 season be included in the Plan for 2016/17 but that the industry funding only be say 50% of the total programme. This would provide clear guidance that the wider work programme would be going ahead but that that industry would only be asked to fund the component that was directly relevant to the risk that they pose.
3. The draft plan provides very little detail of exactly what will be done. This needs to be made completely explicit in the plan but I would recommend the following components as undertaken in 2015/16:
  - a. Standardised pup production counts at all Auckland Island colonies (SB, DD, SEP, F8) in mid-January
  - b. Tagging and microchipping of all live pups at SB colony [This would represent a change from last season when only 50% of pups were tagged] F8 must be counted and not excluded as the Draft Plan appears to indicate
  - c. Tagging of 400 pups at DD colony

- d. Weighing and measuring 100 pups at SB & DD on the day of the mark-recapture [Measuring is a new suggestion which was done in 2015/16 for the first time] and as many pups as possible at F8 colony
  - e. Resighting effort [i.e. to conduct a five week period of resighting previously marked animals at Enderby Island] to allow for the continued collection of demographic information
  - f. Collection of diet samples throughout the season to maintain existing collection
  - g. Autopsy of dead pups to determine cause of death
  - h. Continuation of the provision of ramps at colonies to prevent pups dying in holes. Additional new ramps could be installed on Dundas Island which will require some additional support
4. I don't believe that the project, even as specified in its present limited form, is achievable for the indicative budget provided. I would draw CSP's attention to the following issues:
- a. the vessel Tiama will not be available for the coming season and that charter costs are there likely to be considerably higher than in previous years
  - b. it is not clear if Helicopter transport of the team to Dundas Island will be available for the coming season and if not alternative transport will need to be considered
  - c. the last time that a short field season (with only pup counts and tagging) was undertaken was in 2012/13 (POP2012-01) and the indicative budget at that time was \$150k

Good luck with your deliberations and feel free to call me to discuss any of the issues I have raised in my three emails.

Regards

Simon