

# Department of Conservation Status Report

## for the Minister of Conservation

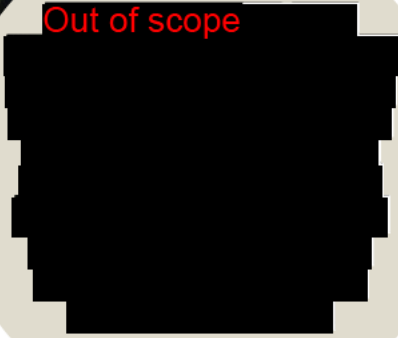
Week beginning 1 May 2023

Date:        /        /

Seen by Hon Willow-Jean Prime  
Minister of Conservation



Out of scope



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

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3.1 SailGP event in Whakaraupō Harbour (17-18 March) ..... 6

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### 3 Updates

#### 3.1 SailGP event in Whakaraupō Harbour (17-18 March)

- Further to our advice on the SailGP race (Status Report week beginning 17 April), DOC is considering actions in response to SailGP continuing racing despite warnings that dolphins had been sighted close to the racecourse.
- SailGP race organisers developed a Marine Mammal Management Plan (MMMP) to minimise the risk to Upokohue/Hector's dolphins. DOC provided technical advice for the plan but did not sign off or approve it.
- Section 8.2 of the MMMP outlines the rehearsal and race day procedures if a marine mammal is sighted within zone 4 (which contains the racecourse). It states the *"event director shall cease racing and instruct all boats to drop off the foils if racing is underway, support boats shall be instructed to keep speed below 5 knots."*
- On 19 March 2023, during the third and final race, as the racing vessels approached the final turn around the marker, we were notified that dolphin had crossed the boundary into zone 4. This boundary was approximately 100m from the eastern racecourse perimeter to which the racing vessels were fast approaching.
- This was communicated to the event director multiple times by both the Marine Mammal Spotting Coordinator, and the DOC Operations Manager.
- The SailGP race director did not make the call to cease racing nor instruct the boats to drop off their foils. This was a breach of the MMMP.
- The consequences for SailGP breaching the MMMP are not clear cut given that the plan was not legally binding.

##### Next steps

- DOC compliance officers have requested data and GPS boat logs from SailGP to confirm the details of what happened. They are investigating whether SailGP may have also breached the Marine Mammal Protection Regulations 1992.
- This incident was disappointing. We are working with our Treaty partner on how we could engage with SailGP in the future.
- The DOC compliance investigation regarding the Marine Mammal Protection Regulations is ongoing, and we cannot comment on any potential outcomes or consequences at this time.
- To ensure this does not happen again, there are several options which will depend on the outcome of the current investigation process, debriefs with local iwi, DOC staff and SailGP, and a review of SailGP's MMMP.

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- Further updates and options will be provided as we progress this work.

Contact: Jo Macpherson, Regional Operations Director Eastern South Island: 9(2)(a)

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