



MINISTRY OF FISHERIES  
Te Tautiaki i nga tini a Tangaroa

**Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group  
National Plan of Action – Seabirds Technical Working Group**

**Date:** 12 September 2008

**Time:** 9.30 am – approx. 1.30 pm

**Place:** Conference Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Department of Conservation, 18-32  
Manners Street, Wellington

**Chair:** Johanna Pierre (DOC)

**Attendees:** David Middleton (SeaFIC), Greg Lydon (SeaFIC), Nathan Walker  
(MFish), Stephanie Rowe (DOC), Igor Debski (DOC), David  
Thompson (NIWA), Di Tracey (NIWA), Biz Bell (WMIL).

**Apologies:** Richard Wells (Clement & Associates), Chris Robertson (Wild Press),  
Pat Reid (Area 2), John Reid (Area 2).

- SR demonstrated the new Marine Conservation Services website ([csp.org.nz](http://csp.org.nz)), drawing particular attention to the meetings and publications sections. Feedback on the website was welcomed.
- DM requested reports be annotated with reference to previous versions and reorganise archive section by year.
- ID/SR said these will be addressed, but currently technical issues are limiting the reorganisation of the archive section.

**Fishing interaction projects:**

INT2007/01 Monitoring protected species interactions with New Zealand fisheries -  
Stephanie Rowe

- SR presented initial results from the 2007/08 observer year (presentation available on MCS website).
- DM – is the new observer form sufficient to record “extra incidents” with regard to previous comments from Suze Baird (NIWA)?
- SR – new form is fine for 90% of cases, may need to add an extra “other” category to distinguish fishing and non-fishing related incidents – will be investigating.
- DM/SR – some discussion on use of codes to indicate changes in species identification, and documenting database changes over time – will be investigated.
- GL - would like to see further analysis of coverage particularly with regard to vessel distribution.
- SR – will be included in full report.

- NW – noted most vessels in SQU6T were observed at least once by MFish in the past season
- GL – are warp strikes observations still being made?
- NW – yes, will be reported separately.
- In regard to captures by charter SLL vessels NW noted that tori lines used were not to MFish specifications.
- GL noted low inshore trawl coverage – was it targeted at Maui's dolphin?
- SR – no, aimed at all protected species, and included seabird warp observations. Is a very difficult fishery in which to obtain coverage.
- GL – noted 900 more days are planned for next year – can this be achieved?
- SR – these days are a separate MFish project and will use a different approach.
- NW – the 900 days are planned outside of normal observer programme using temporary observers over the summer months collecting only protected species and limited fishing effort data.
- GL – will cost be the same (\$800 per day).
- NW – same costing model has been used, but as coverage is still uncertain cost effectiveness is not known.
- DTracey – will fish bycatch be measured.
- NW – not initially.
- DTracey – would be a great opportunity to gain more information for inshore fisheries.
- NW – hope to develop project during later years to collect more information.
- DTracey – would also be good to collect inshore benthic/coral data.
- GL – will be a big ask to obtain enough skilled observers.

INT2006/02 INT2007/02 Identification of seabirds captured in New Zealand fisheries  
- David Thompson

- DThompson presented results from the 2006/07 fishing year (report and presentation available on MCS website).
- DM – were the Buller's albatross of southern form?
- DThompson – yes for this year, can normally identify at autopsy but often request a second or third opinion.
- SR – noted that not all the Chatham Island and Salvin's albatrosses caught during a single BLL incident were returned due to licing.
- GL – is predominance of adult birds normal?
- DThompson – yes, most stats for this year were "normal".
- DM – can you report on cause of death recorded at autopsy against location of death recorded on the NFBC form?
- SR – noted that this may be complicated as the information DThompson receives is from the autopsy form. This reporting could be trialled for deep water trawl.
- GL – do you still do condition reporting
- DThompson – yes, similar results to previous year with average fat score of 3.
  
- DThompson presented early results from the 2007/08 fishing year (presentation available on MCS website).

- DM - are all birds returned?
- SR – yes, apart from rare circumstances (e.g. bad licing, large catches, problems with crew).
- GL – seems there is a trend in reducing number of birds returned?
- DThompson – yes for some species, e.g. White-capped albatrosses, and less warp strike returns. But, Sooty shearwater and white-chinned petrel numbers still high.
- SR – noted that interpretation of numbers returned needs to consider the influence of observing trips with very large bycatches as this can skew a year's figures.

#### INT2007/03 Identification or protected corals - Di Tracey

- DTracey presented a progress report from the 2007/08 fishing year (presentation and report available on MCS website).
- GL – are there any coral identification experts in NZ?
- DTracey – not for protected species taxa.
- GL – are weights estimated by observers
- DTracey – yes
- GL – are some samples still sent to Te Papa?
- DTracey – now all samples sent to NIWA, some historical samples have also been transferred.
- DM – noted it would be good to thoroughly document changes to observer protocols over time, to help in interpretation of catches over time.
- DTracey/SR – yes, will attempt to document together with Observer Services.
- DM/NW/SR – discussed plans to document changes over time for all types of protected species data collection.
- DM – are samples and sub-samples representative of total weights recorded?
- DTracey – yes, protocols in place, but rely on observer taking random samples.
- GL – are estimated weights accurate?
- DTracey – yes, observers very good at estimating weights.
- DThompson – noted results similar to birds in that many tows had little coral, some had large amounts.
- DTracey – yes, old tow lines have very little coral bycatch, but in new areas, or inexperienced crew can have large hauls.

#### **Population studies**

##### POP2005/02 A population and distributional study of white-capped albatross (Auckland Islands) - David Thompson

- DThompson presented an update on this project for 2007/08 and field plans for 2008/09 (2006/07 report and presentation available on MCS website).
- GL – is pig eradication planned?
- DThompson – DOC Southland have plans in place but need to secure funding.
- DM – what proportion of birds are in the study area?

- DThompson – about 70 pairs from a total count of 4-7,000 pairs at the Auckland Islands.
- DM – how many tags will be deployed?
- DThompson – plan is to deploy 15 PTT tags at Disappointment Island, and GPS tags at Southwest Cape, 25 birds currently at sea with geolocators.
- GL queried the proportion of pairs breeding annually.
- DT – results still at early stages, but birds that successfully breed one year are less likely to breed the next (but often still show up for a time).
- NW – what is the breeding success?
- DThompson – 42 and 60% for the two years measured (could be higher as late chick mortality not included)

At-sea distribution and population dynamics of black petrels (*Procellaria parkinsoni*) - Elizabeth Bell

- EB presented results from 2007/08 and field plans for 2008/09 (presentation available on MCS website).
- DThompson – adult survival seems low, have you modelled the population trajectory?
- BB – data will be supplied to Chris Francis (NIWA) to model as part of the SeaBird project.
- DM expressed concern over estimation of population level as this was very important for Buller's albatross in previous modelling.
- BB – will estimate using habitat types.
- DM – is there good information on habitats?
- BB – slope and soil seem most important, but hopefully new aerial photographs and DOC vegetation survey will also be available.

JP requested written comments on any of the projects by Friday 26 September 2008.

Meeting closed.