



Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Research Advisory Group

Date: 6th March 2020

Time: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Place: G.01 Holloway Room, Conservation House, 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington

Chair: Ian Angus (iangus@doc.govt.nz)

Attendance: Di Tracey, Jaret Bilewitch, Brit Finucci, David Thompson (NIWA), Chris Gaskin (NNZST), Kalinka Rexer-Huber, Graham Parker (Parker Conservation), Tom Clark, Brianna King (FINZ), Richard Wells (DWG), Lyndsey Holland, Hilary Ayrton, Mary Livingston, Karen Lisa Tunley, Ben Sharp, Marco Milardi (FNZ), Trude Webster (YEP Trust), Bill Chisholm (Chisholm Associates), Simon Childerhouse, Deanna Clement (Cawthron Institute), Janice Molloy (SSST), Barry Weeber (ECO), Tamar Wells, Jesse Rihia (TOKM), Graeme Taylor, Igor Debski, Trude Hellesland, Katie Clemens-Seely, Shannon Weaver, Tiffany Plencner, Hendrik Shultz, Anton van Helden, Karen Middlemiss (DOC)

Apologies: Amanda Leathers (WWF)

Introduction

IA General reminder of the purpose, scope, vision and objectives

ID Provided an overview of the prioritisation scoring used to determine the initial prioritisation was presented for consideration by the Group

RW There is often a lot of interesting projects highlighted through this process, are there more opportunities for co-funding projects if they don't fall under the fishing levy criteria? Keen to work more collaboratively on projects

TC We need to know what other work is being done outside CSP that is fishing related

IA Yes related work that doesn't specifically fall under CSP will be discussed in this meeting, the wider bycatch programme at DOC and FNZ projects

Discussion around inter-agency coordination and collaboration between FNZ and DOC

Discussion around funding sources outside of CSP programme, specifically the Bio18 funding stream

SC Is the initial prioritisation spreadsheet online yet?

IA The proposal document is but not the initial prioritisation spreadsheet

SC Will we see the full spreadsheet of scoring?

IA We generally haven't provided the full spreadsheet as the conversation gets diverted away from discussing the projects and leads to a debate of numbers

TC What are DOCs priorities for this year in relation to bycatch? What is the strategic approach?

IA We have been expanding the amount of mitigation work we have been doing over time. Still quite keen to have a mixture of all INT, POP and MIT projects going forward as it is all important work

Discussion and scoring of projects

CSP RAG Proposal		Comments
INT-3	Protected coral identification and awareness	RW INT 3 above INT2, I don't agree with this KCS Need those initial guides to help with ID of protected species at sea DT I believe it included a training aspect
INT-2	Identification of marine mammals, turtles and protected fish captured in NZ fisheries	No comment
INT-4	Hoiho dietary study	RW How will working on faeces of hoiho be beneficial? There is a haphazard approach to hoiho projects/funding. Current work needs to be completed prior to continual work. Lack of engagement with fishing industry also IA Separate prioritisation process with hoiho in terms of recovery and bridging the two aspects is difficult. Communication issue highlighted thank you RW Deficiencies in the initial process that should be addressed prior to continuing work TC In terms of hoiho, are there other sources of funds other than CSP? IA Potentially yes, there is a funding stream in the Bio18 fund and DOC has internal funding also KRH Is there an extent of data available on this already and does this affect prioritisation? ID Yes, the current data does have an effect on prioritisation scoring HS Hoiho tracking project, data is available but final project is not yet available
INT-7	Post release survival of protected sharks and rays	RW Don't support post-release survival project for BSK as they are very likely to die
INT-6	Assess seabird post-release survival from bycatch in commercial fisheries	No comment
INT-5	Investigation of NZ FS bycatch in the cook strait hoki fishery + mitigation options	SC I can imagine it scored low because of the high cost. Could be reduced to smaller projects and shouldn't fall off the list. MPI does have the SEFRA project but this work shouldn't be delayed as there is high bycatch
POP-2	Identify basking shark feeding strategies	RW Basking shark (BSK) projects- DOC and MPI need to set up a workshop and think about BSK work in total. To discuss risk and impacts to BSK. CD I think there is merit in having a workshop, these days fishers are some of the only ppl seeing bsk these days

		RW We support BSK genetic work, always have Discussion around difficulties of anyone collecting samples at sea
POP-5	Utilisation of the marine habitat of YEP from Stewart Island	BC POP5 should occur before MIT10 BC Our fishers have knowledge around where they are and where they are not. This study appears to be operating with a parallel process that excludes fishers. I believe it needs to be downgraded in prioritisation. Needs to go through a working group process and needs to have participation of commercial fishers to explore opportunities for collaboration. So, either add these factors to the project to reflect the high priority or downgrade IA Hoiho work is managed by the other team (M2S) at DOC but will pass on the feedback
POP-7	Seabird population research: Chatham Islands	No comment
POP-12	Age estimation of white sharks from NZ waters	No comment
POP-14	Basking shark habitat use and distribution	MM Do need a better idea of distribution. Several ways to do that, but does need a bit more refinement to be feasible project RW The thing that is not proposed by anyone is where all the females and juveniles? Predominantly capturing male BSK
POP-8	White-capped albatross research and monitoring- Disappointment Island (2020-23)	No comment
POP-11	Connectivity and demographics of Hector's dolphin in the top of the South Island	No comment
POP-16	Salvin's albatross pop monitoring methodology assessment Bounty Islands	RW It would be useful to pull together the previous studies that have been done down there and look at the timing of the work to make sure its comparable across years as a recap of when is the optimum time to be down there
POP-9	Gibson's albatross- Auckland Islands seabird research	RW I am surprised Gibson's is so far down. Their population trajectory is really important and we can use that to assess the differences with Antipodean albatross ID Scoring on Gibson's would have been due to it not being a high-risk species. I agree that it can be higher
POP-15	Light mantled sooty albatross population monitoring methodology assessment- Auckland Islands	KRH Data is limited so more information is needed. GP Do acknowledge it is not getting bycaught in NZ fisheries
POP-10	Assessment of causes of low burrow	KRH Focus in POP-10 doesn't reflect the gaps highlighted in the TWG yesterday.

	occupancy rates in Westland petrels	Interesting gap in no-breeders having a low survival rate could be attained relatively cost effectively GT The reason we put this proposal up as it has such a low occupancy rate, that needs understanding. Trying to get a handle on the broader issue RW Westland Petrel non-breeding birds, need a desktop into resightings ID Mortality estimates does require more work also
POP-1	Protected coral reproduction study	DT I am surprised this has been ranked so low. Huge gap in knowledge in coral productivity
POP-6	Movements and habitat use by spine-tailed devil ray	No comment
POP-17	Grey petrel population estimate-Antipodes Island	No comment
POP-4	Investigating foraging plasticity for NE NZ seabirds	GT Lots of sampling work in this area over the past few years and there is validity in continuing this work. May be other possibilities to fund this work other than through CSP RW There have been big projects around indirect effects. Only ever been looked at in the context of fishing. Needs to be wider work on indirect effects instead of just trying to link to fishing. GP Was rec fishing included in the earlier assessments? CG We do have projects underway, looking at historical data of oceanographic variabilities in relation to fish shoaling activities
POP-3	Ecology of provisioning for seabirds in NE NZ	See comments for POP-4
MIT-9	Hook-shielding use in the surface longline fishery	JM I am nervous about MIT-9 being rolled out. Most of the fleet is moving to line weighting and don't want fishers ditching line weighting when they are handed hook shielding devices
MIT-1	Protected species liaison project	SC I like that this is being broadened to cover more fisheries. Strongly support
MIT-6	Adaptive management tool use to improve sink rates	TC I am concerned about the SLL fishery concentration on setting and avoiding the risk there. We have a long soak period that hasn't had a lot of attention. Where are captures in relation to buoys and weights JM Has a report been delivered on the current work on this? ID No we haven't had a report back on this yet but aiming for completion before the end of the financial year
MIT-8	Mitigation gaps analysis towards reducing protected species bycatch	RW A workshop is required for this. Huge knowledge base in NZ. SSST stocktake document also

		<p>JM I support what Richard is saying. A lot of this work has been done, matter of doing a prioritisation process across it. Could be done quickly and affordably</p> <p>GP I agree with MIT-8 being an important project, as I did the review on seabirds it would be easy to update for birds</p>
MIT-4	Effectiveness of night setting as a mitigation measure	<p>TW I think this is really important to measure. Just wondering re methodology, should capture rates between night and day be compared? Could just be a desktop study instead of having to go out on boat</p> <p>JM I support this project. If observer data is not useful, I agree it's a good complimentary project</p> <p>BS Observer data is useful just the gathering of information via the comments field may not be as effective as it could be, should be in columns. I do support this project. How many interactions do you have to see on board to have any statistical power is my concern</p> <p>ID This project aims to utilise new technology to do a more controlled assessment of what is happening as an observational study</p>
MIT-5	Demersal LL mitigation	<p>BK Know of other similar projects to MIT5, could be a double up with other projects that have already be done or underway</p> <p>RW Line setter project needs references</p> <p>JM My understanding is a report has been submitted by the contractor, but not a final report as of yet</p> <p>BK Can this be circulated?</p> <p>TH Yes, a bit more context on this, there is the Kellian line setter and two other iterations. One that is looking to be a more viable mechanism at this stage though more at-sea testing is underway. I can provide more information on where things are at</p> <p>RW We need more information on this proposal before submitting comments on this project</p> <p>JM I support this project but do understand Richards comments/ concerns. I don't think there is duplication it is just looking at different options</p>
MIT-7	Improving engagement of fishers with seabird advocacy	No comment
MIT-2	Multi-Taxa bycatch reduction technology: set net illumination	No comment
MIT-3	Rope modification to reduce whale entanglements in pot fisheries	<p>SC MIT3- Prior CSP project needs to be taken into consideration, has there been significant developments since then</p> <p>JM Not just the rope but the whole rope buoy system needs to be looked at. There is</p>

		some tech that might be relevant to this. Might be some synergy here with looking at floats. Float design needs to be taken into consideration for pots and demersal LL
MIT-10	Investigating potential impacts and opportunities of transitioning setnet fisheries in hoiho habitat	BC Can't really proceed until we know where the habitats are. It is about setting up an expert panel workshop but that should be happening now. In its current form it shouldn't proceed

Final comments

SC Poor representation of marine mammal mitigation projects which is disappointing. Need a fur seal trawl mitigation project in the mix as work in this area cannot be delayed

Discussion about protected species database

BS Database is one thing, there is the dragonfly website, then there is a whole lot of projects that use that data to create estimates. Is being managed in-house at MPI

TW Appreciate FNZ providing update on their projects here also. Can we also get an update on the projects that will go through the BCBC process alongside the CSP Annual plan

IA Yes, we will provide this

Further feedback

The Chair called for any additional feedback, in writing to be emailed through to csp@doc.govt.nz, by **22 March 2020**