



Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Research Advisory Group

Date: 8 March 2019

Time: 9:30 am – 2:30 pm

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

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

Attendance: Giacomo Giorli, Di Tracey, Jaret Bilewitch (NIWA) Johanna Pierre (JPEC), Simon Childerhouse (Cawthron), William Gibson, Greg Lydon, Jo Lambie, Hilary Ayrton, Lyndsey Holland (FNZ), Chris Gaskin (Northern NZ Seabird Trust) Tom Clark (FINZ), Tamar Wells (TOK), Graeme Taylor, Igor Debski, Trude Hellesland, Katie Clemens-Seely, Shannon Weaver (DOC).

Apologies: Malcolm Francis, Rosemary Hurst, Richard Wells, Karen Baird

Introduction

IA General reminder of the purpose, scope, vision, objectives and overview of strategic statement revised December 2018.

Discussion around strategic overview of bycatch/marine threats

Discussion and scoring of projects

Project proposals for 2018/19 and comments from the Group are summarised in the table below. These are tabled in order of initial prioritisation. Prioritisation was discussed at the start and end of each project block (INT, POP, MIT).

Final comments

General discussion about the amount of new funding available for project outside the standard CSP funding.

TC- FINZ will favour work on mitigation and interaction over population work

Discussion around a Hector's dolphin sub-population study

Further feedback

The Chair called for any additional feedback, in writing to csp@doc.govt.nz, by 22 March 2019.

CSP RAG Proposal		Comments from CSP RAG 8 March 2019
INT-2	Identification of seabirds captured in New Zealand Fisheries	Generally agreed - Discussion around the amount of necropsies included in the contract and species of priority for DNA component.
INT-4	Characterisation of marine mammal interactions	FINZ expressed concerns around the relevance to conservation. CSP highlighted that it would be a pre-emptive study on marine mammal interactions with commercial fisheries.
INT-7	Estimating cryptic mortality rates of warp strikes	FINZ raised concerns about crossover with an MPI project. CSP aware of this and will clarify the status of the MPI project.
INT-3	Identification and storage of cold-water coral bycatch specimens	Generally agreed - Discussion around the amount of specimens identified. Discussion around budget.
INT-5	Coral biodiversity in deepwater fisheries bycatch	NIWA highlighted that this project is also relevant to CSP objective B, CSP to amend this.
INT-8	Post-release survival of seabirds	Generally agreed- Discussion around MPI having a similar project to this in the past that did not go ahead. CSP highlighting that this project would 'go back to the drawing board' in the aim of finding an effective mechanism for measuring post-release survival. NIWA suggested that genetic mark-recapture studies could also be considered.
INT-6	Characterising net captures of seabirds in deepwater trawl fleet	Discussion around MPI having a net capture analysis and workshop coming upm CSP to clarify the status of this work to avoid crossover.
POP-9	Investigation of electronic device options to assess distribution, diving and foraging behaviour of Hector's dolphins	Generally agreed- Cawthron agreed with the need for this project as it would enable 3D analysis of dolphin behaviour, though suggested the budgeted amount may be quite high. NIWA agreed on the budget being higher than required. TOKM support the project as it feeds in to the TMP.
POP-17	Black petrel population project	Discussion around previous work done on population size. CSP highlighting that there is a shift towards juvenile recruitment given it is so low. FINZ expressed concern over the budget being too high.
POP-14	Fish shoal dynamics in North-eastern New Zealand	Discussion around aer-sight database and the analysis desired through this project. NIWA suggested the project would be more robust if catch data was included. TOKM suggested the project was more aligned with fisheries management vs conservation. CSP to make the link to protected species more evident in the annual plan. FINZ agree that there is need to understand more about inshore productivity. Suggestion that this project should be split in to two and that budget is too low.
POP-4	New Zealand fur seal: Cook Strait habitat use assessment	Cawthron agreed on the priority of the project given the quantity of fur seal interactions in the area. Discussion around the potential of animals moving up to the area from Kaikoura.

POP-5	Spotted shag population review	FINZ agreed on second objective more than the first, suggests project should be lower priority.
POP-8	Protected coral reproduction study	Discussion around the gap of knowledge in coral productivity.
POP-18	Understanding potential interactions and indirect effects between commercial fisheries and NZ king shag foraging activity, diets and population trends	FINZ- agreed on this project having conservation value but unsure about relevance to CSP. TOKM highlighted that multiple pressures will likely be affecting these birds and suggested complimentary work on other threats alongside this project would be beneficial. NIWA suggested benthic habitat change component of proposal would be difficult.
POP-2	Antipodes Island seabirds research	CSP highlighted cost sharing benefits of the project. TOKM agrees Antipodes Island work should be prioritised but does not agree on the inclusion of giant petrel in proposal. FINZ suggest POP 1,2 and 3 should be higher priority than POP-18.
POP-3	Campbell Island seabird research	Split views- CSP highlighted the cost effectiveness of undertaking this project during this research cycle. FINZ expressed concern over YEP more so than the species covered in this proposal. TOKM agreed with the need to undertake this project. FINZ suggest POP 1,2 and 3 should be higher priority than POP-18.
POP-1	Southern Buller's albatross: Snares/Tini Heke population project	TOKM support the project but queried the budget increase. CSP highlighted that the increases is down to logistical costs rising for all sub-Antarctic work. FINZ suggest POP 1,2 and 3 should be higher priority than POP-18.
POP-13	NZ fur seal: Bounty Islands population assessment	Cawthron support the project and budget, highlighted that gaining a trend from data may not be possible. Discussion around the timing of photographic surveys. CSP highlighted the ability to look into spatial extent of colonies on the island and investigate overlap with seabird colonies.
POP-15	North-eastern New Zealand seabird tracking and dietary analyses	General discussion around this building on work already completed in the current research cycle, hence making findings more robust.
POP-6	The relative abundance and distribution of data-deficient Odontocete species in the Cook Strait region from passive acoustic data	Generally agreed low priority/ lack of relevance to CSP. General discussion around reducing this to focus on beaked whales, reducing the budgeted amount. TOKM expressed concern about it being a limited time frame of analysis and that more data would be required. Cawthron and FINZ see the benefits of the research but do not see the relevance to CSP.
POP-7	Leopard seal: New Zealand distribution and occurrence assessment	Agreed to be low priority- TOKM highlighted that the Leopard Seal Database team have a report underway so this project under CSP may be pre-emptive. CSP to look into. Cawthron agrees work may be already covered in report underway outside of CSP.
MIT-6	Optimum batching interval for discharge management for inshore fisheries	Disagreed high priority- FINZ agree with offal management being a high priority but do not see the applicability of standardising a batching regime across many varied inshore

		fisheries. Suggest offal management is best dealt with at an individual vessel basis through the liaison programme. FINZ does not support the project due to lack of beneficial outcomes from the project. FNZ suggested a specific fishery focus for a batching project e.g. scampi. CSP to look in to.
MIT-2	Underwater bait setter for surface longline vessels	Generally agreed high priority- Discussion around this being a combined project with industry and government. NSST suggested the inclusion of an underwater camera to monitor diving birds, CSP to consider the inclusion of this.
MIT-1	Review of mitigation techniques to reduce benthic impacts of trawling	Generally agreed priority – CSP to refine the objective against the project description as there are discrepancies. Discussion around a ocean based trial component to this study, CSP highlighted that this study would be preliminary work to gear trials.
MIT-5	Lighting adjustments to mitigate against deck strikes/vessel impacts	Generally agreed priority- Discussion around lighting with on-board camera rollout. TOKM expressed concern over the island-based project, suggesting seabird behaviour may differ to that around fishing vessels, FNZ agreed that at-sea trials should be a component of the study. Discussion around halogen and LED lighting. Discussion around crew safety and human behavioural responses to different lighting. CSP to consider expanding project out to include at-sea trials.
MIT-4	Dolphin Deterrent Device Mitigation in inshore fisheries	<i>This project was initially removed from CSP prioritisation but is included in this table due to discussion at the CSP RAG.</i> FINZ supports the project. Discussion on how the project could be undertaken to gauge the flight reaction of dolphins to DDIs utilising a drone overhead. Discussion around potential issues with the project that would require addressing e.g., community engagement, drone regulations around marine mammals and habituation.