Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawbai

Meeting: **Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group**

Date: 27 November 2012
Time: 9.00 am – 5:00 pm
Place: Perrett's Corner Board Room, Manners St, Wellington.
Chair: Ian Angus (ph: 04-471-3081; email: iangus@doc.govt.nz)
Attendees: Ian Angus, Kris Ramm, Igor Debski (DOC), Johanna Pierre (Dragonfly), Biz Bell (WMIL), Di Tracey, Suze Baird, Sophie Mormede, Malcolm Francis, Emma Jones, Malcolm Clark (NIWA), Barry Weeber (ECO), Ben Sharp (MPI)
Apologies: Karen Baird (Forest & Bird), David Middleton (Seafood New Zealand), Richard Wells (DWG)

Order of presentations:

1 POP2011-06. Protected coral distribution and overlap with commercial fishing. Draft final report — **Di Tracey and Suze Baird (NIWA)**

MC queried whether the environmental variables used were independent of each other or may be correlated.
DT – considered each variable acted on coral in a different way, but will reassess.
SB noted that more variables were considered, as discussed in report, and those highly correlated were excluded.
MF – is there enough data for species level analysis?
DT – no, but could do by genus, which would have greater niche specialisation.
MC noted there was like to be sampling bias, by structure and size between commercial fishery and research tows.
SM – this could dealt with by modelling separately for each sampling gear type.
MC noted that dynamic topography may alias for a number of factors such as water temperature, seamounts etc.
MC suggested that dynamic topography could be excluded as an explanatory variable to help identify underlying factors.
MC noted that there was a good spread between explanatory variables.
SM noted this was partly a characteristic of the technique, or may be due to missing key explanatory variable(s).
There was some discussion on lack of predicted coral distribution on the Chatham Rise.
SM noted that the model predicts potential habitat, but fishing will have already modified certain areas resulting in absence data being recorded, e.g. in parts of Chatham Rise, and this is an issue.
ID suggest future analysis could consider historic fishing effort in the vicinity of each sample.
MC enquired whether there was enough data to support use of abundance data rather than presence-absence.
SB/DT – could try using weight data, but hard to interpret given differences between coral taxa.
SM noted the need to standardise weight and effort.

MC suggested using photos could be useful for validation at least.
SB/DT – agree would be useful, but data was not available in time for this project.
MC – note MBIE funded NIWA project on high seas VMEs may present opportunity for synergy.
DT highlighted that briefings to observers have been proven to improve data quality.
ID – noted that this would need to be costed as an additional element to observer project much as seabird identification project is costed separately.
MC noted that a high seas (SPRFMO) sedimentation project is underway and may provide some additional input data but scale may be an issue for use as a coral distribution explanatory variable.
MC highlighted that clarity on management objectives is critical in order to prioritise future actions.

2 INT2010-02. Identification of seabirds captured in New Zealand fisheries. Draft final report 2011-12. **Biz Bell (WMIL)**

There was some general discussion on how observer protocols could be further improved to ensure consistent data collection, and it was suggested that feedback/training could be provided back to individual observers where problems are encountered.

3 POP2010-03. Black petrel – at-sea distribution and population estimate. Update on proposed methods. **Biz Bell (WMIL)**

DT – will risk assessment be formally report?
BB/ID – not as part of this presentation, though this project does pick up on recommendations from risk assessment previous work (random transect population estimate and GPS tracking within zone).

4 MIT2011-01 (Specific Objectives 1 and 2). Review of methods to mitigate the capture of protected rays in commercial purse seine fisheries. **Emma Jones (NIWA)**

BW – are FADs important in relation to ray captures?
EJ/MF – not known, but no FAD fishing in NZ, is discussed in report in relation to bycatch of other taxa internationally.
ID suggested that the spatial-temporal extent of observer coverage in relation to hot spots should be checked to see if this explains year to year differences.
BW – are all captured rays mature?
MC – information available is not detailed, but refer to protected fish review report.
BW – how important is the hot spot area for fish catch?
KR – likely important given that fishing elsewhere generally only occurs when fish aggregations identified there.
There was some discussion that the CELR is still used to record commercial effort and thus detailed spatial information is not collected.
It was noted that international investigation of using larger pumps was a future option, but use of large mesh cargo net can be implemented immediately and holding a

workshop to promote this could be useful - may need some development for smaller vessels.
It was agreed that the observer questionnaire should continue to be used this season, and requesting ongoing sighting data from spotter planes could provide a useful insight.
In regards tagging, it was agreed that in the coming season tags should be deployed on any but badly injured animals at the first opportunity.

5	**POP2011-03 Protected fish – review of interactions and populations. Draft final report.**	**Malcolm Francis (NIWA)**

BW – are multiple basking shark captures just from one fishery?
MF – no, several fisheries.

6	**POP2011-04 Basking shark bycatch review. Draft final report.**	**Malcolm Francis (NIWA)**

No substantive comments.

7	**MIT2012-01, -02, -04. Seabird mitigation projects. Update on proposed methodology.**	**Johanna Pierre (Dragonfly)**

No substantive comments.

8	**INT2010-01. Observing commercial fisheries. Draft final report 2010-11.**	**Kris Ramm (DOC)**

BW – do days achieve double count days when two observers are on board?
KR – yes, but just used for financial accounting, in rest of report number of fishing events observed is reported.
EJ – no SLEDs on SWB?
KR – no.
BW – MPI have not extended management measures from SQU6T to any other fisheries catching sea lions
It was noted that jack mackerel and barracouta fisheries could be separated as they are not very similar operationally.
BW noted some of coral catch in deepwater trawl could be from new fishing areas.
BW – no integrated lineweight in inshore bottom longline?
KR – no, and bluenose lines use a lot of weights in combination with floats.
BW – coverage planned by target for setnet?
KR – yes, considered in planning, but not shown in standard report tables.
BW – was charter tuna vessel with low seabird catch rate fishing further north?
KR – will check, but likely wasn't very different.
KR sought feedback on suggested change in reporting to show captures and capture rate by vessel (annonymised).

BW – agree, but experience shows that vessels may perform poorly one year, then well the next.
BS suggested showing year to year performance would be best.
BW suggested using a standard vessel key from year to year.
JP supported vessel specific reporting, and noted that it was informative, and identified if problems are fleet wide or not.
MF highlighted that it was also important to understand if captures were coming from one event or multiple events on one vessel.
BS suggested the data be represented in three dimensions including temporal variation.
BW – if more than 5 vessels or so there shouldn't be confidentiality issue
JP noted that reporting such data will help explain why some extrapolation models are poor.

IA called for any additional written comments on any of the material presented by 14 December 2012.