



Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group

Date: 21 November 2013

Time: 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Place: Conservation House, 18 - 32 Manners St, Wellington.

Chair: Ian Angus (ph: 04 - 471 - 3081; email: iangus@doc.govt.nz)

Attendance: Richard Wells (DWG), Barry Baker (Latitude 42), Karen Baird (Forest & Bird), Johanna Pierre, Finlay Thompson (Dragonfly Science), Igor Debski, Kris Ramm, Katie Clemens (DOC), Michelle Bertizhoff - Law (MPI), John Cleal (on contract to Clement & Associates).

Apologies: David Middleton (Seafood NZ), Laws Lawson (Fisheries Inshore New Zealand)

Presentations:

1. MIT2012-04 Surface longline seabird mitigation. Johanna Pierre (Dragonfly)
Progress report and recommendations for MIT2013-02

KB – did you look to see what other testing had been done overseas and did that help you with designing what you're doing?

JP – yes, we took stock and rolled that into what we were planning, but were constrained by dealing with observer availability

KB – are you comparing your data with other data from overseas?

JP – yes, but unfortunately there's not enough data yet, but that's the aim in the future

There was discussion about the best way to represent the data recorded by the TDRs on the line, some felt that the current way of representing the data did not accurately reflect the “impressiveness” of the data, others felt the main point to be learnt from the data was the rapid sink rate within the first several meters, and that the graph accurately represented that.

JP – agree information can be tailored to specific audiences

There was discussion surrounding the TDR graphs that were presented on the various reasons for the noise in the graphs as well as the various circumstances that might have resulted in the differences seen in sink rates / depth graph.

KB – lumo leads still are being shown to sink more rapidly, which is still most important

JP – yes

R – there has been the odd batch of lumo leads that have been hard work, most likely due to issues with the manufacturing process

JP – thicker mono line will mean more difficult to get on as well

Meeting in Tauranga

KR – overall, people who had used line weighting were more positive about it, although there were issues (moving things around the vessel, heavier gear), etc, but one of the guys using them was very happy with it. (R – agreed – although, that is just one guy)

There was discussion on the issue of the safety of the leads, the fact that some fisherman may feel that these leads can kill people, information on the Maritime NZ safety warning for some leads, the necessity for people to clarify the actual circumstances under which people were harmed / injured / killed (if at all), the necessity for any trials showing that there is a health and safety risk with these leads to be made available, the importance of proper manufacturing, the importance of proper use of the leads, adherence to health and safety regulations surrounding their use, and the importance of a hazard management plan. The existing one page hazard sheet referring to these leads will be circulated by JC.

KB – is having the lumo lead at the actual hook safer (it might get completely bitten off and not have to slide anywhere)?

JP – not sure

BB – that’s probably a question for Graham Robertson to answer. It’s not necessarily safer, as it still needs to move

JC – there is a recommended setting for space from hook to lead for safe-leads

There was agreement in terms of moving this and related projects forward that using observer coverage to conduct these intensive trials wasn’t working, and that MIT2013-02 should be implemented using a partial charter agreement and getting dedicated researchers on the boat to do the research.

2. MIT2013-03 Characterisation of smaller vessel deep water bottom longline operations in relation to risk factors for seabird capture. Proposed methods **Johanna Pierre (Dragonfly)**

R – will that review go back in time with respect to the New Zealand situation (specifically the white-chinned petrel captures issue a while ago)?

JP – we have talked about starting with that time period. We’ll focus on the current stuff, but will also cover the older stuff

R – I’d be really interested if this would pick up on a lot of that earlier stuff, that Sanford fleet in particular, did to reduce the petrel bycatch. I think it would be good because a lot of people don’t know about this

JC – I wouldn’t mind figuring out if we could find out if there’s a difference between Open ‘J’ hook and circle hook used on baiter

JP – birds have got mixed results on circles and Js, will have a look and see if there’s any relevant data on this

KB – will you be looking at location as a factor?

JP – yes

3. MIT2013-05 Development of bird baffler design for offshore vessels. Proposed methods **John Cleal (Clement & Assoc)**

FT – do any vessels use both tori lines and bafflers

MB – yes, both

R & JC – recommend that all their boats use both at all times

R – it's about adding something that related in time and space relative to the warp

JC – there are varying points where the warp enters the water (3m to 25m), a 6m boom won't help, so it's about developing something that will help with the majority of cases. Currently all our vessels have 6m boom and tori lines

R – suggest talking to non-fishing engineers about how to strengthen the pipes supporting the boom

JC – have been looking at paravane booms, some are 10-12 m and they aren't supported by anything else

R – it's in your favour, the amount of \$ people are willing to spend on something that they don't need to deploy and redeploy many times a day.

R – we know, where those BATMs are and what they catch in that fishery – should build a boom that works for them and their fishery specifically

MB – look at something that targets them specifically.

JC – on a large vessel fishing in shallow water, which has a warp entry point a 20-25 m aft of the vessel, no boom will help, tori lines are the best way to go, everything else is just for show

There was discussion on whether or not similar ideas would work on either smaller or larger vessels than the target group, and what mitigations methods are most suitable for these vessels.

MB – when will you decide whether to use private observers?

JC – we're trying not to use them

MB – to help plan observer placement it would be good to know early in which fishery trials are planned – as the difference fishery / target species will radically effect the collection of data (i.e. squid fishery vs. one with heaps of offal)

There was discussion about the necessity of robust statistics and how the scope of this project was more aimed at running a broadly comparative study on upgrades to better an existing mitigation device.

FT – when you chose these places, presumably you'll chose areas with lots of birds

JP – highly variable, and likely to not be perfect, but that's what we'll be aiming to do.

JC – aiming for March in the squid season, in April, most of the birds will be gone

There was discussion about the actual name of the device.

There was discussion about the legal requirements of fishing vessels carrying mitigation devices, and whether there will be any comparison made between the current ones in use and the one in development.

4. MIT2013-01 Sea Trials of the Kellian line setter. Proposed methods

Barry Baker (Lat 42)

R – one of the issues that I saw with the original one, was not so much the weight, but the position of the weight – the imbalance etc, made it difficult to handle,

BB – the first one had a paravane on it and we tried to steer away from that, quite concerned about them as they have the habit of jumping out of the water when you least expect it

There was discussion on how to deploy the device and whether or not vessels had suitable mounting gear already in place. A small crane may be necessary.

JC – what depth?

BB – 10 m

R – speed?

BB – 3 knts, might need to set at slower speeds. Putting extra weight, it'll sort itself out, might also put a small paravane to direct the force downward, to prevent the device rising in the water. Tried that the other day and did make a bit of a difference

R – if water speed is the cause of the problem then a paravane makes more sense, but the main problem is that they're dynamic

JC – when are you sea trialling

BB – already started, putting it in for ½ a day, pulling it out, tweaking, etc

FT – phase 3 are you going to be testing the gear in a fishing situation, but not phase 2?

BB – yes, not phase 2. Using sink rates as a surrogate method of measuring bird captures, and making sure we have a robust design

KB – you said that normally going to be at 10m

BB – the intent is to try and set it at that depth

KB – potentially set it deeper?

BB – potentially at any depth, but probably wouldn't do so. I'd imagine optimal depth would be 5-10m

FT – how do you keep it down, weight?

BB – ideally, but we currently don't keep it down, the paravane will probably help. For reasons of safety we were trying to not use the paravane

There was discussion on the variable diving depth of birds and whether the setting depth proposed would eventually be deep enough to properly mitigate against birds diving for food. The general idea proposed was that we need to get it functioning properly first, then to focus on adjusting it to different setting depths.

5. INT2013-04 Optimisation of observer data collection protocols. Proposed methods Johanna Pierre (Dragonfly)

KR – having the right information collected is important

FT – presumably you can make recommendations on things

ID – although the data entry and processing side is out of scope, ensuring correct linkages among things might speed up these processes

MB – should consider electronic monitoring & aim to be forward thinking for how to collect samples for stable isotope analysis

BB – tissue for genetic ID

KR – already optimised seabird sampling protocol to enable that

BB – redesign of forms, you'll take care of all that?

KR/JP – yes

KR – getting flexibility in the data management side of things, if is born in mind during collection, that would help with the last step.

6. POP2013-02 White-capped albatross population estimate (Auckland Islands)/POP2013-01 Aerial survey of New Zealand sea lions at the Auckland Islands. Proposed methods

Barry Baker (Lat 42)

R – has the proportion of loafers changed since you've done the December / January counts

BB – yes, but the ones who've failed have typically left by January as well, would be good to have a comparative December and January survey in the same season

R – if there was ever a need for a helicopter go to down to the Auckland Islands in December, it would be a good opportunity to do this calibration

BB – true

KB – will you be doing ground truthing?

BB – extensive ground truthing has been conducted on the sea lions, but ground truthing the white-capped albatross has proved tricky in the past, with some completed at South-west Cape

BB – other possible methodological suggestions have been made such as satellite shots or drones, but issues such as not around long enough (for satellites) and considerable wind issues (for drones) prevent make these unsuitable at present

7. Seabird abundance website

Finlay Thompson (Dragonfly)

KB – will you continue to update this site with new information?

FT – processes are in place to enable this, but will subject to a new contract

8. Introduction of Annual CSP Research Summary Reports

Kris Ramm & Katie Clemens (DOC)

Observer programme section:

KB – will you still put out the older style overall report, I was always interested to read about the tables at the back on observer comments.

KR – Happy to listen to feedback from people, but can have these as the more timely report, and then potentially do the larger ones later on, or add those components most useful (such as the comments tables)

FT – agree that continuing reporting those more qualitative aspects that help understand the protected species capture data produced on the website is important. How much will we be missing out on

KR – missing seasonality stuff (will have narrative in place instead)

MB – this new reporting would work well with all the other things that go out based on same collected info

General comments:

R – the problem that I have is that I always read it, but have never convinced constituents to read it, but I might actually be able to get people to read this

KR – draft reports for both 2011/12 and 2012/13 will be made available in time for the RAG

R – suggestions → add in funding and fish stocks

ID/KR – we'll include an appendix with that information for those who want it

BB – will contractors be supplying the summaries in future?

ID/KR – yes, we will be providing one pg templates for the project participants to fill out

CSP reports tabled

Comments were sought on INT20101-02 and POP2009-01 reports made available prior to the meeting.

ID – it was intended that a methods paper for POP2013-01 would be presented or tabled, but this was not possible, though it will be uploaded on the CSP meeting website soon. Additional work on form and protocol development was still to occur, once a contract is in place.

Further written comments on any of the material presented were welcomed, by email to csp@doc.govt.nz by 6 December 2013.