



**Johanna Pierre Environmental Consulting**

**[www.jpec.co.nz](http://www.jpec.co.nz)**

**Progress Report:**

**MIT2012 - 05 Protected Species Bycatch Newsletter**

**30 June 2013**

## **Executive summary:**

Six issues of Bycatch Bylines, the newsletter on protected species developed under Conservation Services Programme project MIT2012-05, have been produced since September 2012. Editions to date have included material covering protected species (seabirds, marine mammals, protected fish, and benthic protected species), bycatch reduction measures, legislative changes relevant to protected species, research on mitigation, and global contexts for these issues. Fishing methods relevant to content to date have included trawl, longline, set net, and purse seine. The current distribution list of the newsletter comprises ~1,000 recipients. This includes 816 fishers who receive the newsletter by email or in hard copy, 16 regional offices of the Ministry for Primary Industries where Fisheries Officers are located, 10 industry associations and Commercial Stakeholder Organisations, ~145 stakeholders of the Conservation Services Programme, and 11 other recipients who have been added to the distribution list on request. In addition, the newsletter is sent to the Observer Services team at MPI, when there are stories particularly relevant to observer duties, e.g., legislative updates, and changes in the recommended design of streamer lines for trawlers. The number of readers is over 1,000, given multiple staff in MPI offices and any onward distribution from Fisheries Officers and CSOs to fishers. The most effective method for communicating the newsletter to fishers appears to be direct contact through email or hard copy, rather than through secondary channels such as CSOs. One CSO has requested to be removed from the mailing list. Seven fishers have requested removal from the mailing list. Changes made to the newsletter content and format as a result of feedback on Bycatch Bylines' predecessor, the Ocean Guardian, have been incorporated in all issues produced. Feedback received has included fisher comments on mitigation measures, general support for the newsletter content and style from practitioners working on bycatch, and government fisheries observers advising that the newsletter has been seen on vessels at sea and that it is being read and discussed by fishers.

## **Introduction:**

The context in which marine protected species are managed often changes. Similarly, methods to reduce the incidental capture of protected species in fishing gear are developed continuously. While they may be somewhat distant from the development of both management context and bycatch reduction measures, fishers must ultimately implement such changes in order for the status of marine protected species to progress and improve. Therefore, the process of communicating new developments with fishers is an ongoing one.

To address this communication challenge, the newsletter entitled Bycatch Bylines was developed under Conservation Services Programme project MIT 2012-05. The objective of this project is to prepare and distribute a newsletter on protected species bycatch to commercial fishermen. Here I report back on the first year of this two-year project.

## **The newsletter:**

The scope of the newsletter includes commercial fisheries using the fishing methods listed below. To date, content has been included relating to the methods marked with \*.

- Trawl\*
- Longline\*
- Setnet\*
- Purse seine\*
- Troll
- Trotline\*
- Pots and traps
- Minor net methods (inshore drift net, Danish seine, beach seine, ring net)

The layout of the Bycatch Bylines newsletter was based broadly on its predecessor, the Ocean Guardian. In addition to the title change, the banner photo was updated and several new sections were added, e.g., a reference section for readers seeking more information on topics in the newsletter. A description of the sections of the newsletter follows.

### ***Page One***

**Banner:** This includes the newsletter title, issue, and a topical illustration. The illustration in the banner will be changed for the second year of this newsletter's production. An annual change to this image will balance brand continuity and freshness of format.

**Headline:** Named both for the top profile news story and the headline of a trawl net, this section appears on the front page of the newsletter. It is the main story of the edition, with at least one photo and focuses on mitigation or a current protected species issue.

**Your Voice:** Also on the front page, a section entitled ‘Your Voice’ reports opportunities for fishers to share their views and knowledge relevant to protected species. It also showcases fishers leading mitigation practice, includes responses to questions from readers, and publicises mitigation competitions, awards and funding opportunities.

**What’s Up?:** This section features short bullet points of current issues and news relating to protected species. Examples of content include highlighting seasonal bycatch risks, new research findings and government initiatives relevant to the newsletter’s scope.

### ***Page Two***

Based on the recommendations from the first year of the *Ocean Guardian* newsletter, Bycatch Bylines features an opinion piece on topical issues called ‘Word on the Street’. This section is alternated between issues with the ‘Who’s Who?’ section (see below).

**Word on the Street:** This section presents different views on a controversial topic relating to protected species interactions with commercial fisheries. It is intended to stimulate discussion amongst fishers, and present views (with rationale) which fishers may not otherwise encounter. Opinions are presented alongside factual information and key references.

**Who’s Who?:** This section is included to personalise the field of protected species bycatch by profiling a leading local or international (with relevance to New Zealand) practitioner. It follows an interview-style question and answer format, with both professional and personal interest questions.

**Want to Know More?:** Following up on the evaluation completed during the first year of the *Ocean Guardian*, this section provides 4-5 key sources of additional information relevant to the stories in the newsletter.

**World Watch:** This section places New Zealand in a global context by covering international issues in the mitigation / protected species arena. For example, topics have included relevant international management developments, international research programmes on mitigation measures and relevant marine species, etc.

**What the FAQ?!** This section has appeared on the first and second page in the past year. It includes a collection of short facts on protected species.

**Feedback:** To provide the opportunity for readers to submit feedback at any time, an email address is included in the footer of the newsletter.

**Distribution network:**

Media can only be effective when appropriate audiences are reached. The direct recipients of Bycatch Bylines number ~1,000, with a wider readership expected through secondary distribution (e.g., from CSOs to their constituents). Recipient numbers follow:

- Commercial fishers (816 fishers)
- Fishing companies, fishermen's associations, CSOs (10 points of contact)
- Stakeholders of the Conservation Services Programme, Department of Conservation (~145 points of contact)
- Ministry for Primary Industries regional offices (16 offices)
- Ministry for Primary Industries Observer Services team
- Individuals on request (11 to date)

Fishers were identified through a data request to the Ministry for Primary Industries. Contact details were requested for fishers using the methods above to land > 1,000 kg of catch, from more than one trip per year.

The most effective method for communicating the newsletter to fishers appears to be direct contact through email or hard copy, rather than through secondary channels such as CSOs. One CSO has requested to be removed from the mailing list. Seven fishers have requested removal from the mailing list.

**Feedback:**

Feedback received has included fishers' comments on mitigation measures and government fisheries observers advising that the newsletter is being seen on observed vessels, as well as read and discussed by fishers. Ministry for Primary Industries staff in regional offices have also made contact to request more detail about the newsletter (e.g., how it originated and the scope). In addition, general support for the content and format has been expressed by several practitioners in the bycatch arena.

**Next steps:**

For the next year, the banner image will be updated. The format and style will be retained as is. Feedback from the Technical Working Group will also be considered.

## **Acknowledgements**

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**Appendix 1. Bycatch Bylines, issues 1 – 6**