
Conservation Services Programme
Project MIT2016-01:
Protected species bycatch media

Annual Report

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Executive summary

The objectives of Conservation Services Programme project MIT2016-01 are:

1. To produce a newsletter to communicate protected species-related information to commercial fishermen,
2. To produce media suitable for incorporation into third party publications in order to maximise audience exposure, and,
3. To develop and produce identification tools targeted at commercial fishermen to improve their understanding of protected species interacting with their fishing operations.

To address the first objective of this project, four newsletters have been prepared and circulated during the first year of the two-year project term. Articles covered new, emerging, and best practice bycatch mitigation measures, research underway on mitigation, policy developments, current events, and other protected species information relevant to commercial fishing. Newsletters have included key references, to facilitate access to information additional to that presented.

The newsletter circulation included commercial fishers and others involved in the fishing industry, such as those holding fishing quota and annual catch entitlement, Seafood New Zealand's Sector Representative Entities and Commercial Stakeholder Organisations, seafood company representatives, Ministry for Primary Industries regional office staff, the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen, and practitioners working on fisheries bycatch issues. Throughout this reporting period, the newsletter was distributed in html form via email, via Twitter and Facebook links, as an A4 2-page pdf file distributed electronically, and a hard copy newsletter mailed to recipients who did not have an electronic point of contact or specifically requested a hard copy.

Overall, the newsletter reaches approximately 1,575 recipients directly. The html newsletter was opened by an average of 39.4% of recipients during the year, almost identical to the previous year of the project. Twitter was the fastest growing channel for distribution, with around 200 views (range: 123 – 233) per issue. The majority of readers were located in New Zealand (87% or more for each issue), with international readers based in Australia, the USA, Canada, Japan, Greece, and Thailand.

To address the third objective of the project, two seabird identification guides previously produced by the Department of Conservation (the Fisher's Guide to New Zealand Seabirds and the Fisher's Guide to New Zealand Coastal Seabirds) were updated. These were reprinted in hard copy and as web-quality pdfs.

Next steps for the project include:

- Continuing the quarterly production and circulation of the Bycatch Bylines newsletter,
- Addressing the second objective of the project, by producing media for inclusion in third-party publications such as *Seafood* magazine, and,
- Developing and printing a new guide to protected fish and reptile species.

Recommendations for future work include:

- Continuing the production and circulation of the Bycatch Bylines newsletter at a quarterly frequency,
- Producing a pictorial guide for fishers on handling protected species after capture in fishing operations,
- Continuing the production of fact sheets on key bycatch mitigation measures (e.g. line-weighting), and,
- Developing a series of short (e.g. five minute) videos aimed at fishers, on the use of key bycatch mitigation measures such as tori lines, line-weighting and fish waste retention, that feature fishers demonstrating how these measures can be applied safely and effectively on vessels.

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Introduction

Fishers must maintain and apply their knowledge of bycatch avoidance and reduction measures relevant to their fishing method, to ensure that captures of marine protected species are minimised. Maintaining up-to-date knowledge may be challenging, when the management of marine protected species occurs in a dynamic context that involves ongoing developments in legislation, government policies, science, research, and management approaches. With their activities based from ports around the country, fishers themselves may be somewhat distant from the decisions and processes that affect management of the environment in which they fish. Therefore, the challenge and process of communicating new developments relevant to reducing marine protected species bycatch with fishers is an ongoing one.

To help address that challenge, the objectives of Conservation Services Programme (CSP) project MIT2016-01 are:

1. To produce a newsletter to communicate protected species-related information to commercial fishermen,
2. To produce media suitable for incorporation into third party publications in order to maximise audience exposure, and,
3. To develop and produce identification tools targeted at commercial fishermen to improve their understanding of protected species interacting with their fishing operations.

CSP Project MIT2016-01 has a term of two years. This report summarises activities and outputs comprising the project's first year. Broadly, the report addresses activities conducted to meet the three objectives above. It also identifies next steps, to be progressed in the project's second term.

Newsletter

Scope

In the first year of the project's term, a newsletter has been produced and disseminated approximately quarterly. The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate protected species-related information to commercial fishermen. Articles cover legislative and government policy developments relevant to protected species, best practice mitigation methods, new and emerging mitigation measures, work underway to develop bycatch reduction approaches, current events of relevance to fishers, and other protected species information relevant to commercial fishing.

The newsletter is equivalent in length to two sides of A4. It is divided into the following sections:

Headline: This is the leading story of each issue. This section comprises half to two-thirds of the front page of the newsletter. A relevant image is included. The Headline section may address any aspect of the newsletter's scope.

What's Up?: This section features short bullet points on current issues and news relating to protected species and commercial fishing, new ideas for mitigation measures, work done by fishers to address bycatch issues, meetings and forums. A relevant image is also included.

Best Practice Baselines: This is a short section highlighting recognised best practice mitigation measures applicable to New Zealand commercial fishing methods. Material is presented in bullet point form with an image illustrating the measure discussed.

The Big Picture: This section highlighted the broader context of New Zealand protected species and bycatch mitigation issues, for example, government policy developments (e.g., the Ministry for Primary Industries' Future of Our Fisheries programme), technical work influencing or underpinning policy (e.g. the marine mammal risk assessment), updates from regional fisheries management organisations that encompass New Zealand fisheries, and broader protected species management initiatives.

World watch: This section presents international developments relating to New Zealand protected species, e.g., bycatch management approaches. Its intent is to illustrate the global nature of bycatch issues, and show how activities in New Zealand relate or can be progressed drawing on international experience and expertise. The two most recent issues have taken a "snapshot" approach to this section, presenting more than one item and covering each in less detail. The intent is to include more items of potential interest to the newsletter's readership.

What the FAQ?: This section includes a snapshot of unique or quirky characteristics of a protected species or species group, and a relevant image. It highlights diversity amongst New Zealand protected species with the goal of promoting increased knowledge and appreciation of these species.

Want to Know More?: This section linked readers to key sources of additional information relevant to the articles in the newsletter.

Circulation

The target audience for the newsletter comprises fishers and others involved in the fishing industry. Fishers were identified in two ways. First, the contact details of quota holders undertaking more than one trip per year and landing > 1,000 kg of catch were requested from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) for the two most recent fishing years for which data are available. Fishers using the trawl, longline, setnet, purse seine, troll, trotline, pot and trap, and minor net (inshore drift net, Danish seine, beach seine, ring net) methods were included in this request. Second, the contact details of all holders of Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE) in all Quota Management Areas (QMAs) (i.e., for all fishstocks) were requested from MPI.

Others included in the distribution list were seafood company representatives, Seafood New Zealand's Sector Representative Entities and Commercial Stakeholder Organisations representing members using the above fishing methods, MPI regional offices, the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen, and individuals or groups working in the fishing industry or on fisheries bycatch issues. Recipients were also added to the list on request on an ongoing basis throughout the project term.

In addition, the newsletter was posted on Twitter and Facebook. Various hashtags were used with the Twitter post depending on the content, and with #bycatch used every issue.

Readership

Circulation of the newsletter reached around 1,575 recipients directly. The newsletter was distributed to the majority of recipients by email using an html-format newsletter, or in hard copy. Throughout the first year of the project term, and consistent on average with previous years, 37.9 – 41.2% of the emailed recipients (mean = 39.4%) viewed the html circulation. The majority of readers (87 - 98%) of the html newsletter were New Zealand-based, with international readers based in Australia, the USA, Canada, Japan, Greece, and Thailand. Twitter was the fastest growing channel for distribution, with around 200 views on average (range: 123 – 233) per issue. However, the proportion of hits that the target audience account for is unknown.

Identification guides

Protected species can be difficult to identify, especially when seen infrequently or only in brief glimpses at sea. To increase fisher awareness of protected species, and facilitate their attempts to identify them, the scope of this project includes developing identification tools for fishers to use. In the first year of the current project, two seabird guides were revised with updated information and images. These are the Fisher's Guide to New Zealand Coastal Seabirds, and the original Fisher's Guide to New Zealand Seabirds. (The first versions of these guides were produced by DOC in the early 2000s).

As well as being updated, these guides were also printed in hard copy as part of the project, and provided to DOC for distribution amongst the target audience. Updated web-quality pdfs were also prepared. It is anticipated that the updated guides will be made available for download from DOC's website.

Next steps

There is one more year in the term of CSP Project MIT2016-01. Next steps for the project include:

- Continuing the quarterly production and circulation of the Bycatch Bylines newsletter,
- Addressing the second objective of the project, by producing media for inclusion in third-party publications such as *Seafood* magazine, and,
- Developing and printing a new guide to protected fish and reptile species.

Beyond the current project term, there are additional opportunities to improve resources available for fishers working to reduce the risks that commercial fishing presents to protected species.

Recommendations for future work include:

- Continuing the production and circulation of the Bycatch Bylines newsletter at a quarterly frequency,
- Producing a pictorial guide for fishers on handling protected species after capture in fishing operations,
- Continuing the production of fact sheets on key bycatch mitigation measures (e.g. line-weighting), and,
- Developing a series of short (e.g. five minute) videos aimed at fishers, on the use of key bycatch mitigation measures such as tori lines, line-weighting and fish waste retention, that feature fishers demonstrating how these measures can be applied safely and effectively on vessels.

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