



Terms of Reference for the New Zealand Sea Lion/ Rāpoka Forum and Advisory Group

1. The New Zealand Sea Lion/Rāpoka Forum and Advisory Group

Following growing concerns for the New Zealand Sea Lion/Rāpoka, the Ministers of Conservation and for Primary Industries (MPI) directed officials in 2014 to develop a NZSL Threat Management Plan (TMP) which was approved in June 2017. The New Zealand Sea Lion/Rāpoka Forum (the Forum) and the New Zealand Sea Lion/Rāpoka Advisory Group (the Advisory Group - AG) provide opportunities for Treaty Partners, the Crown and stakeholders to come together to discuss and prioritise recovery actions under the TMP. The vision of the TMP is to:

Promote the recovery and ensure the long-term viability of New Zealand sea lions, with the ultimate goal of achieving 'Not Threatened' status.

The principles of mātauranga Māori will be incorporated to achieve the vision of the TMP.

The objectives are to:

1. *Halt the decline of the New Zealand sea lion population within 5 years*
2. *Ensure the New Zealand sea lion population is stable or increasing within 20 years, with the ultimate goal of achieving 'Not Threatened' status.*

The TMP directed the establishment of the New Zealand sea lion/rāpoka Forum and Advisory Group to recommend priorities for each of the 4 workstreams (Engagement, Direct Mitigation, Targeted Research and Evaluation) for the following year, based on the previous year's findings. It is envisaged that there will be at least one meeting of the Forum and Advisory Group per year.

- The Forum will meet in the Southland/Otago region to facilitate discussion between regional representatives. Discussions will focus mainly on concerns and potential actions around the South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura.
- The Advisory Group will meet in the Southland/Otago region and comprise national representatives and advisors. Discussions will be focused on larger-scale issues such as management of the sea lion population as a whole, including disease research, or research into fisheries interactions.

Some groups will have representation at both meetings to facilitate cohesiveness. Recommendations and actions that arise from the Forum will be provided to the Advisory Group in the Chair's Report. Minutes will be shared with both groups. Both meetings will be held in May, to coincide with the completion of project reports from the previous field season and to give sufficient time to discuss and integrate suggested amendments into the work plan for the following field season. The Forum and the Advisory Group will undertake annual and five-yearly reviews of population parameters to ensure that the goals and objectives of the TMP are on track.

DOC and MPI officials and a technical expert will update both the New Zealand sea lion/rāpoka Forum and the Advisory Group, to inform discussions on prioritising resources and research in future.

It is recognised there has been a considerable amount of research on sea lions from different researchers in the past. To make the data more easily accessible for gap analyses and future research, consideration will be given to a central research repository of sea lion data.

The TMP research goals include annual monitoring, tagging, pup counts and tag re-sights at:

- Auckland Islands
- Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku
- South Island/Te Waipounamu: Otago and Southland
- Stewart Island/Rakiura

These research activities are the core work around which other priorities are set. Forum and Advisory Group discussions of these projects will focus on the logistics and sub priorities within these programmes.

2. Functions

New Zealand Sea Lion/Rāpoka Forum	New Zealand Sea Lion/Rāpoka Advisory Group
Consider the results of the previous field season in relation to the 5-year and 20-year goals of the TMP	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review and evaluate the effectiveness of local (Otago, Catlins and Stewart Island) interventions and provide advice on improvements • provide a forum for discussion of proposed approaches to management (including Operational Plans for fisheries) • aid in the establishment of a transparent New Zealand sea lion database and data-sharing process; and • incorporate local community stakeholder feedback into the project prioritisation for the upcoming research season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate recommendations from the Forum and advise on specific actions to be implemented; • utilise advice from researchers on a case-by-case basis; • discuss proposed approaches to management (including Operational Plans for fisheries) • review project descriptions for prioritised projects to enable such projects to be commissioned by DOC, MPI or other organisations.

3. Chair

The role of Chair will be filled by an independent facilitator appointed by DOC and MPI. The role of Chair is likely to be reviewed by DOC and MPI prior to each meeting in consultation with iwi. The Chair will be responsible for:

- facilitating open and constructive discussion;
- recording conclusions, advice, and action points;
- recording the different views of members where conclusions, advice and action points are unable to be reached by consensus and
- initiating or recommending any further actions that might assist in achieving consensus.

4. Technical and Administrative Support

Technical and administrative support will be provided by DOC and MPI staff. Other relevant government agencies will be invited to provide technical support and input to the Forum and the Advisory Group when required.

A ‘Technical Expert’ role aids in the translation and interpretation of outputs for the use of Forum and Advisory Group members. This role will be filled by an independent scientist appointed by DOC and MPI officials. They will present to the group members but will not have a role in decision making.

5. Participation

The Forum and Advisory Group allow iwi, the Crown and stakeholders to come together to discuss and prioritise recovery actions under the TMP. These groups will therefore include representatives from iwi; central government agencies; regional and local councils; fishing industry; environmental organisations; community groups and selected technical experts where needed. In order to allow open discussion and create a balanced and efficient group, a recommended number of representatives by organisation is proposed.

List of members of the Forum and Advisory Group and recommended number of attendees:

Organisation	Sector – NZSL TMP	Forum*	AG*
Independent chairman	Independent	1	1
Technical Expert	Scientist	1	1
DOC	Partner	Unlimited	Unlimited
MPI	Partner	Unlimited	Unlimited
Ngāi Tahu	Partner	Unlimited	Unlimited
NZ SL Trust	eNGO	2	1-2
WWF	eNGO	1-2	1
Forest and Bird	eNGO	1-2	1
Aramoana (Otago) Conservation Charitable Trust	eNGO	1-2	1
Otago Conservation Board and Catlins Coast Inc.	Conservation Board	1-2	
Southland Conservation Board	Conservation Board	1-2	
Auckland Zoo	Auckland Zoo	1	1
Fisheries Inshore New Zealand	Commercial fisheries	1-2	
Deepwater Group Ltd	Commercial fisheries	1-2	1-2
Dunedin CC / Otago Regional Council	Local/regional government	2	
Invercargill CC / Environment Southland	Local/regional government	2	
Land owners	Land owners	1-2	
Local and subantarctic tourist companies	Companies	1-2	1
Other interested parties	Various	1-2	1-2
Total Attendees		~25 + TMP partners	~10 + TMP partners

* Recommended numbers

It is understood that the makeup of the Forum and Advisory Group may need to be dynamic to reflect changes in the sea lion populations, and priorities within the TMP. As such, current Forum and AG members can make suggestions of new members to be discussed and approved by the Forum and AG. Should a participant not be able to attend a meeting, they may request that a suitably qualified alternate attend as their replacement.

A mailing list will be used to notify participants of upcoming meetings and other relevant matters. Interested parties who wish to participate should ensure their current email address is registered on the mailing list, by sending a request to marine@doc.govt.nz.

It is expected that all members of the Forum and the Advisory Group will be persons contributing in good faith who have relevant knowledge and experience. All members must commit to:

- maintaining confidentiality of meeting discussions and deliberations (unless otherwise agreed in advance, and subject to the constraints of the Official Information Act);
- facilitating an atmosphere of honesty, openness and trust;
- participating in discussions in an objective and unbiased manner;
- adopting a constructive approach; and
- listening to the views of others and treating them with respect.

All participants will be expected to declare their affiliations and contractual relationships to relevant work.

6. Documents

Agendas and background papers will be made available to participants prior to the meeting via email or the relevant meeting page on the Forum and Advisory Group website¹. Where this is not possible, hard copies will be made available at the meeting. Presentations and any other relevant documentation will be made available on the Forum website following the meeting.

Accepted research projects and proposals will be published on the DOC NZSL website, as well as a summary of the fieldwork activities and results from previous years.

¹ <http://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/marine-mammals/seals/new-zealand-sea-lion/new-zealand-sea-lion-ropoka-threat-management-plan/new-zealand-sea-lion-forum-and-advisory-group-meetings-and-reports/>