



**Meeting:** Conservation Services Programme Research Advisory Group

**Date:** 2 December 2015

**Time:** 9:30 am – 1:30 pm

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

**Chair:** Ian Angus

**Attendance:** David Thompson, Rosie Hurst (NIWA), Amanda Leathers (WWF), Richard Wells (DWG), Tom Clark (FINZ), Martin Cryer, Nathan Walker, Greg Lydon, Jenny Oliver, Amanda Richards (MPI), Igor Debski, Paul Crozier, Kris Ramm (DOC).

**Apologies:** Karen Baird (Forest & Bird), Barry Baker (Latitude 42), Biz Bell (WMIL), Graeme Elliot, Kath Walker (Albatross Research), Alan Tennyson, Susan Waugh (TePapa), Jim Roberts (NIWA), Graeme Taylor (DOC), Rohan Currey (MPI)

### **Introduction**

A general reminder of the purpose and scope of the December RAG meeting was presented.

### **MPI Aquatic Environment planning process: update**

MC presented an update on MPI AE projects and planning process.

### **CSP Strategic Statement: 2015 refresh**

ID presented the routine refresh of the CSP Strategic Statement.

TC raised continued concern that it is unclear how CSP fits within the wider management context, and suggested this should be an area for development over the next year.

IA highlighted that work streams such as the DOC seabird prioritisation work will allow us to place fisheries effects in a wider context.

RW raised continued concerns that there was a lack of coordination across all research on CSP relevant species, and updates should be provided to this group.

A number of minor edits were suggested. A final refreshed version will be circulated prior to the Feb 2016 CSP RAG meeting.

### **Presentation of the Annual Report Summary**

PC presented the 2014-15 ARS report.

There was discussion on the scope of observer programme reporting, and this will be reviewed to ensure all widely useful information is included.

RW highlighted that there was some uncertainty around yellow-eyed penguin diet and foraging ecology therefore a recommendation for seabed surveys may be premature.

TC raised a question around the proposed 10 year duration of population monitoring for black petrels and how this would be reviewed in light of any changes to risk. KR clarified that this is a valid research recommendation and decisions of prioritisation of this based on risk fall to future meetings.

RW urged that work in remote locations be considered in a multi species fashion to maximise logistical efficiencies for transportation of researchers and equipment.

There was discussion around aerial survey methods and the use of ground truthing correction factors. It was identified that this was case specific and a trade-off between cost and uncertainty and further investigation was required.

RW highlighted that Southern Buller's albatross would benefit from multiple colony visits to assess fledging success, while additional banding would also be useful.

A number of suggestions were made in relation to New Zealand sea lion research:

- pup reweights should be collected at Enderby, to assess growth, similar to early 2000s
- existing data on searches in other Auckland Island area should be sought and collated
- late season pup mortality at Enderby should be measured
- an updated lit review of diet and nutrition

In relation to the mitigation liaison role, the importance of identifying and reporting on what the current situation is in SLL and what the barriers are to implementing best practice mitigation was identified.

### **Non-CSP update**

An overview of other research and development activities relevant to CSP was presented, and a number of additional activities and gaps were identified:

#### **Interaction:**

Roll out of electronic monitoring by AFMA in setnet and SLL (Australia)

MPI funded observer power analysis – due for presentation at AEWG 3 Dec 2015

New Zealand sea lion interaction rates with trawl fisheries was identified as a gap – a number of options for addressing this are being identified in the TMP process

Cryptic seabird mortality was identified as an ongoing gap:

- is an area being considered in MPI planning, including survival of live-release.
- a statistical analysis of how many birds you would want to confirm outcome for (if using trackers) was suggested as an initial stage.
- band data recovery data of released banded birds should be collated.

#### **Population studies:**

Red-billed gull monitoring could act as an indicator of ocean changes, and may make an interesting comparison to yellow eyed penguins.

It was suggested that projects should pull together different research programmes, such as trawl surveys, to better understand indirect fishery effects. Previous sea lion projects were discussed, and potential new sea lion research may progress as a TMP output.

There has been recent work on white shark bycatch etc in Australia.

NIWA are supporting sea lion diet analysis.

NIWA is supporting benthic impact modelling relevant to protected corals on the Chatham Rise - currently being prepared for publication.

#### **Mitigation:**

Shark bycatch mitigation is being progressed as part of a PhD, and Hookpod Ltd may have a product. The need for a device that can attract fish and deter sharks would be hugely beneficial. A bait setter is being deployed on a New Zealand vessel (with MPI support, plan to assess with observer coverage).

NIWA have a project to mitigate trawl impact on the benthos, with a focus on inshore initially.

There is ongoing industry interest in lasers as a seabird mitigation device (initially trawl).

There were some presentations on net mitigation at the recent world seabird conference

A review of mitigation options to update where they are at in terms of development stage and effectiveness was suggested.

## **Medium-term research plans**

### **Seabirds**

The 5 year CSP seabird plan will be updated once the risk assessment update is complete. Until then, the current 2015 plan will continue to be used for guidance.

It was suggested that there be a cross-government and industry logistics planning discussion to maximise efficiencies to conduct research programmes on sub-antarctic island groups.

### **Protected fish**

The draft CSP fish plan will be updated and finalised prior to the February 2016 CSP RAG meeting.

IA welcomed written submissions on other relevant research that RAG members were aware of or notable research gaps, by email to [csp@doc.govt.nz](mailto:csp@doc.govt.nz)

An initial set of research proposals for 2016/17 and a call for additional proposals will be circulated to the RAG in the lead up to the next meeting in February 2016.

The meeting closed at 1:30 PM.