Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Meeting:	Ministry of Primary Industries Aquatic Environment Working Group/ Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group Meeting
Date:	10 February 2014
Time:	9:30 am – 5:00 pm
Place:	Ministry of Primary Industries, Pastoral House, Wellington.
Chair:	Ian Angus (ph: 04-471-3081; email: iangus@doc.govt.nz): CSP TWG

Attendance: Richard Wells (DWG), David Middleton (Seafood NZ), Edward Abraham (Dragonfly Science), Rosemary Hurst, Malcolm Francis (NIWA), Martin Cryer, Richard Ford, Adele Dutilloy (MPI), Ian Angus, Igor Debski, Kris Ramm, Katie Clemens (DOC).

Apologies: Rohan Currey (MPI)

Presentations:

1. **MIT2011-01 Survival and depth distribution of spinetail devil rays released from purse-seine catches.**   Malcolm Francis (NIWA)

There was general discussion about the tagging methods, and the survival prospects of the animals being tagged.

DM – do you know the proportion of animals brought on board vs. ones that were released while still in the water?
MF –We asked the observers to record how animals were treated; it was more a case of what happened once they were brought on board and what happened after they were brought on deck. Will clarify in the report.
KR – I know some have been released in the water, but generally that's not the case due to difficulty in lowering the floats and as they are not always detected early in the process.
There was some discussion about whether one could see the rays in the nets prior to hauling them on board, in relation to the number of animals that could be released prior to bringing the nets on board.

There was discussion about whether the tags get fouled or not, and during which circumstances (for example: if a tag floats at the surface for a while it is more likely to become fouled then if it were attached to an animal that was frequently diving deeply).

There was discussion on whether it would be possible to bulk buy tags with the aim of cutting costs while supplying tags for multiple agencies for use in multiple research projects. It was determined that there is a pressing need for researchers to identify exactly what information is needed prior to simply tagging animals for the sake of gaining any information at all, due to the increase in resources necessary to process a bulk dump of information. In the future, bulk buying tags may be considered when developing medium-term research plans.

RW recommended that numerical tags should be routinely applied to identify individual animals handled and released alive.

There was discussion on the number of tags needed to get a good representation of mortality rate, and how, in one study 31 tags were sufficient to get a good estimate, such estimations would vary widely with regards to the different practices on different vessels, different sized braille nets, different catches of tuna, etc.

There was discussion surrounding the failure of the tags, methods for testing them prior to attaching them to an animal, and on the issues surrounding the manufacturer's change in firmware prior to these tags being deployed, and how that could have led to malfunctions in the tags transmissions.

CSP reports tabled

Comments were sought on INT2010-02 and POP2013-05 reports made available prior to the meeting.

INT2010-02 Identification of seabirds captured in New Zealand fisheries. Final report for 2012/2013. Biz Bell (WMIL) (PDF, 2341K) (opens in new window)

ID – it was intended for a presentation to accompany this report but this was not possible as all members of WMIL are presently in the field or overseas. Draft results have been previously presented to the group, and there were no changes in methods or reporting structure.

POP2013-05 Development of coral distribution modelling. Methods, including coral risk assessment framework. Di Tracey (NIWA). (opens in new window)

KR – it was intended for a presentation to accompany this report but this was not possible as all members of this research team are presently on the Tangaroa. We are currently seeking feedback on both the updated modelling and the risk assessment methodology contained within this report.

Other CSP Business

IA – Please note that the second meeting of the CSP Research Advisory Group will be convening on 11 March 2014 where we will be presenting research priorities. We hoped to have a medium-term research plan available for multiple groups, but will focus on seabirds alongside the MPI risk assessment, and also on increasing visibility on strategic planning.

MC – I'm very keen for an analogous meeting for AEWG to take place, either on the same day or the day before or after.

DM queried whether it was still intended that non-CSP research was to be presented to the group?
IA – results from DOC's Maui dolphin survey work had not been presented due to staff restructuring, but results were disseminated, and going forward I hope to present other relevant work.

Further written comments on any of the material presented, or the draft minutes, were welcomed, by email to csp@doc.govt.nz by 24 Feb 2014, or by 10 March 2014 for POP2013-05 (coral distribution modelling).