



Meeting: Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group
Date: 18 May 2016
Time: 9:20 am – 4:00 pm
Place: Level 4 Conference Room, Conservation House, 18-32 Manners St, Wellington.
Chair: Ian Angus (ph: 04 471 3081; email: iangus@doc.govt.nz)

Attendance: Charles Edwards, David Thompson, Jim Roberts (NIWA), Richard Wells (DWG/FINZ), David Middleton (Trident, DWG/FINZ), Karen Baird (Birdlife International/Forest & Bird), Rochelle Constantine (Auckland Uni), Bruce Robertson (Otago Uni), Laura Boren, Kris Ramm, Katie Clemens-Seely, Freydis Hjorvarsdottir, Graeme Taylor, Kristina Hillock (DOC), Nathan Walker, Bethany Hinton, James Andrew, Erin Breen, Mark Chambers, Ben Sharp, Rohan Currey, Martin Cryer, Amanda Richards (MPI), Yvan Richard, Katrin Berkenbusch, Edward Abraham, Finlay Thompson (Dragonfly), Janice Molloy (SSST), Jack Fenaughty (Sanford), Martin Cawthorn (Cawthorn associates), Simon Childerhouse (Blue Planet Marine), Tom Burns.

Apologies:

CSP TWG presentations:

- 1 **Maui's abundance – field report – Joint DOC/MPI project** **Rochelle Constantine (Auckland University)**
 - FT – How far offshore is the furthest south sightings?
 - RC – Probably a couple of km's
 - FT – Appears to be around 10 km off the coast, judging on the scale on the map.
 - RC – Must be an anomaly as the field team did not go out that far, will confirm the location details.
 - FT – Are you not exploring offshore distribution?
 - RC – No
 - DM – 2015 stands out as the highest number of individuals and highest concentration of sightings, why is that?
 - RC – This was a year of exceptional weather which means individuals are easier to track, resulting in less repeated sampling.
 - MC – Is less randomisation going to skew your sample?
 - RC – Heterogeneity not such an important factor in this case as this is such a simple model, but would be worth investigating down the track.
 - RC – The field work is constrained by only having 50 biopsy samples that they are allowed to do.
 - JR – Are they aggregated to specific areas?
 - RC – Yes by prey, water turbidity etc. Also social factors, such as mating/calving, may have an effect.

2 **POP2015-05: New Zealand sea lion population project (Auckland Islands) – Final results** **Simon Childerhouse (Blue Planet Marine)**

- RW – Is the feedback from Mark Hindell available to the group?
 - SC – Will check and circulate as appropriate
- RW – Have there been any changes to the Dundas Island topography, in particular the extent of the beach?
 - SC – No
- RW – What’s the break (minimum) point in resighting effort?
 - JR – This was analysed by year previously and the 2013 season was found to be a lot lower but not specifically calculated to have a minimum
- RW – Suggest developing protocol to eliminate the risk of double counting dead pups (marking but not moving)
- JR – Some small bursts of pup mortality apparent in the data – where there any obvious reasons for this?
 - SC – Not obvious but this will be investigated as a part of Sarah Michael’s PhD work.
- JR – Previously most mortalities towards the end of the field season were bacterial infection, is this still the same?
 - SC – Good point – due to timings of field seasons the years are not directly comparable, but yes that trend would seem to hold.
 - Tom – The expected spike at the end never really took off though, could potentially have missed that.
 - LB – Sarah Michael and Wendy Roe are working through these samples.
- BS – Is it typical for pinnipeds to have such high levels of bacterial pup mortality?
 - JR – No doesn’t seem to be typical in other pinnipeds
 - SC – Some other species have shown spikes, but never so sustained
- JR – Is isolation a factor in the high levels of disease due to low levels of immunity?
- RW – Useful to look at electronic data collection to reduce the risk of paper loss
- MCaw – Are chips harder to read?
 - SC – Yes

Further discussion around the value of moving back to tagging all animals and the mortality effect of this.

3 **Survey of New Zealand sea lion pups at Port Pegasus, Steward Island, January 2016 – Draft final report (Joint DOC/MPI project)** **Laura Boren (DOC)**

- RW – Worth noting that some work was done here by Helen Connell in the late 90s
- MCaw – Can you use dogs on Stewart Island to search?
 - LB – Theoretically, yes
- RW – Is there surveying of the Titi Islands themselves?
 - LB – Not at the moment, though potentially in the future
- RW – All tagged resights of animals tagged there?

- LB - Yes
- SC - Have genetic samples been collected at any point?
 - LB - Not to our knowledge

Discussion around searching for alternate sites, for example with helicopters.