



**ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS OF NZ INC.**

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Conservation Services Programme

Department of Conservation

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# Submission on Draft Conservation Services Programme Annual Plan 2018/19

## 1.0 Introduction

### Who we are

The Environment and Conservation Organisations of NZ (ECO) is the national alliance of 50 groups with a concern for the environment and conservation. ECO has been involved in issues of environmental management and practice, law and policy since our formation in 1971-2. We were closely involved in the discussions around marine management since then.

ECO supported the mandate and development of the CSP programme in discussions that lead to the 1996 Fisheries Act and changes to associated conservation legislation.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft Conservation Services Programme Annual Plan 2018/19 and services proposed to be delivered as conservation services during the 2018/19 financial year.

## 2. General Comments

ECO welcomes the ongoing development of a CSP Programme. Long-term research programmes are essential in marine research and making decisions for marine management.

### 2.1 The strategy and Mandate

ECO notes that sometime in the next year that Department should initiate a process to review the Strategic Statement which was adopted in 2015.

## **2.2 Annual Reporting**

ECO welcomes the annual reporting (Research Summaries) by the Department this is a very important complementary report to those of the Ministry of Primary Industry.

We welcome the information being published by the CSP programme and the availability of reports on the DoC/CSP website.

We welcome reporting of observed protected species bycatch (including corals and fish species) by different fisheries and commentary of changes between years.

This reporting is critical so that it can be included in decision making on catch limits and fisheries sustainability measures, and other management changes.

## **2.3 CSP Projects vs External Projects**

ECO is concerned at the problems that have arisen with projects that have occurred outside CSP and the MPI. The delays and failures to report on the camera trials assessing black petrel bycatch in the northern snapper and bluenose fishery has further strengthened our view that projects should be covered by CSP or MPI research programmes and not funded separately.

## **3. Proposed Projects**

### **1.1 Administrative costs**

ECO considers the administrative costs in the projects by DoC to be low.

### **A. Interaction Projects**

### **1.2 Observing commercial fisheries**

Observing fisheries is an essential part of the CSP programme. Observers on vessels provide much greater information and feedback than will ever be provided by a camera system on vessels.

The CSP programme has worked well being integrated with MPI Observer Services.

ECO supports the allocation process but considers it essential to extend coverages into fisheries, seasons and methods that previously have been poorly observed (less than 10 percent) or not observed at all.

ECO welcomes the ongoing development of the inshore monitoring programme including set nets, inshore trawl, and bottom longline.

The captures of threatened penguins, marine mammals (including maui and Hector's dolphin) and sharks is an important element in monitoring and assessing the scale of captures in inshore fisheries.

ECO welcomes the monitoring of the trial “Precision Harvesting System” which has yet to be assessed on its merits or efficacy.

### 1.3 **Identification of seabirds captured in New Zealand fisheries**

This project is an essential part of any observation system and provides information for a range of DOC and MPI projects and management obligations.

### 1.5 **Supporting the utility of electronic monitoring to identify protected species interacting with commercial fisheries**

ECO supports this multi-year projects and the reporting to date.

### 1.4 **Identification of marine mammals, turtles and protected fish captured in New Zealand fisheries vessels**

ECO supports this multi-year projects and the reporting to date. This project is an essential part of any observation system and provides information for a range of DOC and MPI projects and management obligations.

### 1.5 **Trialling innovative Electronic Monitoring (EM) systems for small vessels**

The efficacy and benefits and limitations of electronic monitoring (through video and sensor data) on small vessels is an essential part of developing these systems.

We agree that the utility of these systems for monitoring of protected species interactions needs further research. The inshore fisheries in New Zealand have been poorly observed and there are many challenges in getting observers onboard these smaller vessels.

ECO strongly supports the use of pair trialled comparing human observer coverage with cameras on vessels. The failure to report after over a year on other trials means that it is critical from this CSP project to proceed.

This trial should also be carried out in future years in other areas and not just in Northern fisheries.

### 1.5 **Development of observer photograph protocols and curation**

This is a timely project given the amount of information and photographs from observers.

### 1.6 **Improving the collection of data and samples from bycaught basking Sharks**

The collection of biological information from bycaught protected species is an important part of managing and if possible eliminating those interactions.

1.7 **Updated analysis of spine-tailed devil ray post release survival**

Analysis of post-release survival of devil rays in purse seine fisheries is essential to see whether current methods work and whether new approaches need to be developed.

**B. Population Projects**

1.1 **Seabird population research: Auckland Islands 2017-20**

ECO supports this multi-year projects and the reporting to date.

1.2 **Indirect effects on seabirds in north-east North Island region**

ECO supports this multi-year projects and the reporting to date.

1.3 **The age and growth of New Zealand protected corals at high risk**

ECO supports this multi-year projects and the reporting to date.

1.4 **Improved habitat suitability modelling for protected deep sea corals in NZ waters**

Further research on the habitat suitability of protected deep sea waters is an essential part of developing threat status and risk criteria. It also is important for assessing refugia from the impacts of fishing.

1.5 **Hoiho population and tracking project**

ECO welcomes research on hoiho. An assessment of poorly studied colonies and assessment between sites is overdue. The impacts of fisheries on hoiho, especially by set nets, has been well documented.

1.6 **New Zealand Sea Lion: Auckland Islands pup count**

ECO supports this multiyear project which is essential for the monitoring and management of the New Zealand Sea lions.

1.7 **Flesh-footed shearwater: Population Monitoring**

ECO supports this multiyear project which is essential for the monitoring and management of a priority species caught in inshore fisheries.

1.8 **Westland petrel population estimate**

ECO supports this multiyear project on Westland Petrels.

#### 1.9 **Protected coral connectivity in New Zealand**

Further research on protect corals impacted by fishing is supported. These are long-lived taxa which are impacted by fishing both inside and outside the New Zealand EEZ.

### **C. Mitigation Projects**

#### **5.1 Protected Species Liaison Project**

ECO supports this multi-year projects and the reporting to date and its focus on inshore fisheries.

While the objectives have already been agreed there would be benefits in using the liaison officers to help assess the use and effects of cameras on board inshore vessels.

## ***4.0 CONCLUSIONS***

ECO welcomes the opportunity to make this submission. If you require further information could you please contact the ECO office on 385-7545 or contact me on 021-738-807.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Weeber  
Co-Chairperson