

# Working Group: Long-nosed fur seals in the Coorong and Lower Lakes

## Communiqué No. 12

The thirteenth meeting of the working group was held on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in Adelaide. The following representatives were present at the meeting:

- Sandy Carruthers, Group Executive Director Science, DEWNR as Chair;
- Prof. Gavin Begg, Research Chief, SARDI;
- Prof. Simon Goldsworthy, Sub Program Leader Threatened, Endangered and Protected Species, SARDI;
- Dr Belinda McGrath-Steer, Fisheries Manager and Manager Fisheries and Legislation Reform, PIRSA;
- Meryllyn Nobes, proxy for Neil MacDonald, Southern Fishermen's Association;
- Neville Jaensch, Mayor, Coorong District Council;
- Deana Mildren, member, SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board;
- James Brook, proxy for Craig Wilkins, Conservation Council SA;
- Vicki Linton, A/Director Conservation, NRM and Protected Area Policy, DEWNR;
- Michael Garrod, Director Community Engagement, DEWNR;
- Mike Greig, Senior Ecologist Sustainable Use, DEWNR;
- Renate Velzeboer, Ecologist Marine Interactions and Wildlife Biosecurity, DEWNR; and
- Margaret Phillips, Administration Support, DEWNR.

SA Water, the South Australian Tourism Commission, the South Australian Museum and the Alexandrina Council were an apology for the meeting.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

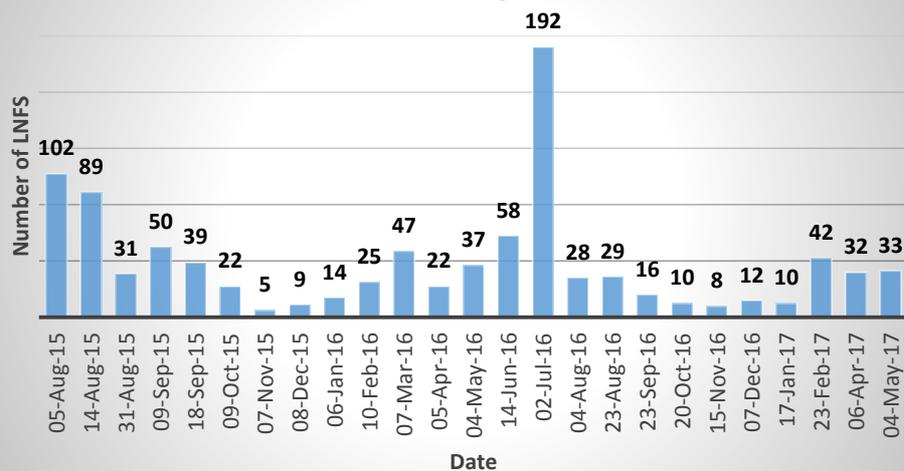
- Interest is currently being sought from the community to reinstate the community phone link-up. Please contact Natural Resources SAMDB on 8532 9100 if you are interested and/or for your enquiry.

### MONITORING THE ABUNDANCE AND MOVEMENT OF LNFS

- DEWNR conducted monitoring for the distribution and abundance of LNFS' in the northern lagoon of the Coorong on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 6<sup>th</sup> April and 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017 (See Figure 1). A total of 42, 32 and 33 LNFS' were counted on these days, respectively. The majority of LNFS' were seen at Goolwa and Tauwichee barrages. The numbers have increased compared to the previous months and reflect the seasonal fluctuation in LNFS numbers in coastal waters observed last year and elsewhere in the state, i.e. numbers peak during winter and then decline prior to the commencement of the breeding season in summer. The number of LNFS' in the Coorong is expected to increase further over the coming months
- DEWNR is looking for trends in the abundance and distribution of LNFS' in the northern lagoon of the Coorong throughout the year. Anyone is welcome to come along on a monitoring trip. Please register your interest by phoning 0429 487 814.
- SARDI is planning to deploy up to seven satellite tags on LNFS' from the Coorong starting as soon as modifications have been made at the fish way at Tauwichee barrage to better catch and tag the LNFS'.



**Figure 1. Number of LNFS' in the northern lagoon of the Coorong**



### MANAGING SEAL-FISHER INTERACTIONS

- The third and fourth set of trials with the power haul net by SARDI and commercial fishers were held in March and April 2017 to test the suitability of this method for the commercial Lakes and Coorong Fishery. Outcomes from the three set of trials will be presented at the next LNFS working group meeting.
- It is anticipated that SARDI and a commercial Lakes and Coorong fisher will conduct another trial with the double-winged fyke net, which has been modified further, in June 2017 to also test the appropriateness of this net for the Lakes and Coorong Fishery.
- DEWNR has met with SafeWork SA and is in the process of designing the permit application process for the safe use of the underwater seal deterrents in frightening seals. DEWNR was working towards a single agency approach using inter departmental delegation, but this is not possible for several reasons. The proposed system of 'twin applications', whilst administratively slightly more burdensome, will be distributed in early June and the underwater seal deterrents can then be rolled out. Only fishers with a fishing licence for the Lakes and Coorong Fishery are eligible to apply for the two permits and use the underwater seal deterrents. The permits will be valid for 12 months. Training on the use of the underwater seal deterrents will be provided.
- Through discussions with Safework SA, a flexible solution to on site bulk storage of the underwater seal deterrents has been developed. Fishers who choose to store a larger quantity of the underwater seal deterrents will be able to apply for a specialist storage permit from SafeWork SA enabling bulk storage at their own facilities. Safework SA have advised that security and storage requirements are easily accommodated and are likely to be achievable by commercial fishermen. SafeWork SA has offered to go and look at any facility that fishers may be considering for bulk storage.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Frequently asked questions, an option for the community to raise a question and the previous Communiques from the LNFS working group can be found on the DEWNR website: [www.environment.sa.gov.au/seals](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/seals).
- The next meeting of the LNFS working group will be held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

