

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

## Communiqué No. 7

- The seventh meeting of the working group was held on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016 in Adelaide. In attendance were:
  - o Sandy Pitcher, Chief Executive, DEWNR as Chair;
  - o Prof. Gavin Begg, Research Chief, SARDI Aquatic Sciences;
  - o Prof. Simon Goldsworthy, Sub Program Leader Pelagic Ecosystems, SARDI Aquatic Sciences;
  - o Neil MacDonald, Executive Officer, Southern Fishermen's Association (SFA);
  - o Deana Mildren, member, SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board;
  - o Michael Shelton, Coordinator Barrages, SA Water;
  - o Neville Jaensch, Mayor, Coorong District Council (CDC);
  - o Craig Wilkins, Chief Executive, Conservation Council of SA (CCSA);
  - o Barry Featherston, Councillor, Alexandrina Council;
  - o Dr. Matthew Ward, a/Executive Director Conservation and Land Management, DEWNR;
  - o Michael Garrod, Director Community Engagement, DEWNR;
  - o Mike Greig, Senior Ecologist Abundant Species, DEWNR;
  - o Renate Velzeboer, Ecologist - Marine Interactions & Wildlife Biosecurity;
  - o Miranda Leckie, Administration support and minute taker.

PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture, South Australian Museum and the South Australian Tourism Commission were an apology for this meeting.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



- DEWNR reported that a series of upcoming community engagement events adjacent to the Goolwa Wharf markets has commenced. Two events have been held on the 17<sup>th</sup> April and the 15<sup>th</sup> May. The community and DEWNR shared information on the issues and non-lethal actions taken or proposed by the South Australian government to mitigate the impact of Long-nosed fur seals (LNFS') in the Coorong and lower lakes. The next event will be held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June at Signal Point next to the Goolwa Wharf Market.

- Another opportunity for the community to get engaged in sharing information is through the fortnightly phone link-up with DEWNR. Anyone with an interest in the LNFS' in the Coorong and Lower Lakes can ring in by dialing the free call number 1800 151 624 followed by the pin number 675 372 479#.

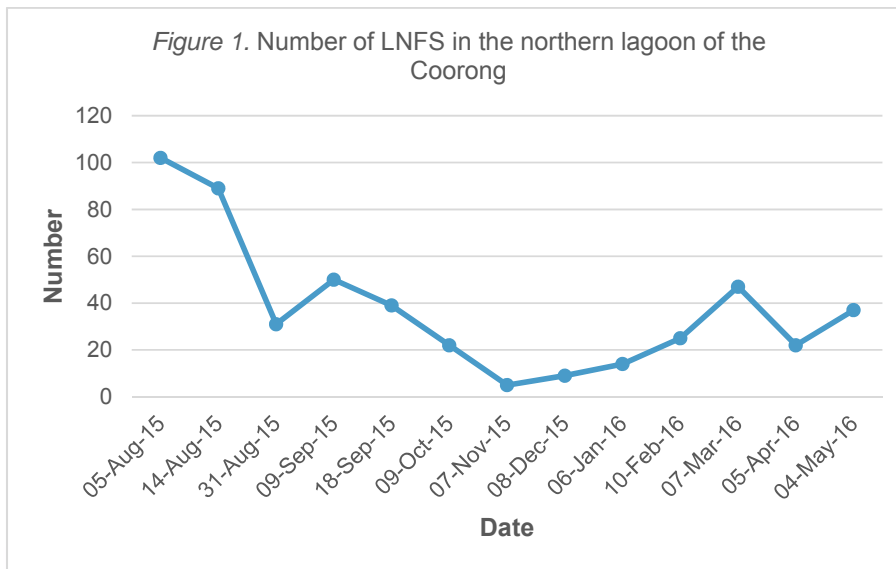
Please contact Natural Resources SAMDB on 8532 9100 to find out when the next phone link-up will be held.

DEWNR is looking into organising other events to engage the community once the Goolwa Wharf markets have finished.



## DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE OF LNFS'

- DEWNR provided an update on the long-nosed fur seal (LNFS) distribution and abundance in the Northern lagoon of the Coorong. The number of LNFS counted was 37 in May 2016. This was an increase from the 22 LNFS' found in April (See Figure 1). The majority of LNFS' were found near Goolwa barrage, which might indicate that the modifications made at Tauwitchee barrage and fishway by SA Water has minimised the number of LNFS' hauling out in this area. LNFS' prefer to haul out on hard surfaces, such as fish ways and barrages and monitoring the trend in distribution and abundance has therefore focused on the Northern lagoon of the Coorong, where most of these man-made structures are found. This area also includes the Murray Mouth where the LNFS' enter and leave the Coorong and lower lakes. A community member from Meningie assisted DEWNR with the monitoring. DEWNR has conducted monitoring since August 2015.
- Information from community monitoring of other areas within the Coorong and lower lakes is shared with DEWNR to further enhance the understanding of LNFS distribution and abundance.



## MANAGING SEAL-FISHER INTERACTIONS

- The Lakes and Coorong fishers with SARDI and DEWNR staff started the underwater seal deterrent trials in late April to measure LNFS interactions with the fishing gear and the behaviour of the LNFS upon deployment of an underwater seal deterrent. The aim of deploying an underwater seal deterrent is to frighten away the LNFS' from the gill net. Five trials have been conducted in the Goolwa area. There were numerous seal interactions at the net and underwater seal deterrents were deployed in approximately 40% of the interactions. Further trials have been planned for the Goolwa area and in the Meningie area for May and June. The results will be made available when the trials have finished and the results have been analysed.

## 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 is scheduled for the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

