

Working Group: Long-nosed fur seals in the Coorong and Lower Lakes – DRAFT for consultation

Communiqué No. 8

The eighth meeting of the working group was held on Thursday, 9th June 2016 in Adelaide with the following representatives:

- Dr. Matthew Ward, a/Executive Director Conservation and Land Management, DEWNR as Chair
- Prof. Gavin Begg, Research Chief, SARDI Aquatic Sciences;
- Prof. Simon Goldsworthy, Sub Program Leader Threatened, Endangered and Protected Species, SARDI Aquatic Sciences;
- Alice Fistr, Manager Fisheries Policy and Management, PIRSA;
- Neil MacDonald, Executive Officer, Southern Fishermen's Association (SFA);
- Garry Fyfe, Senior Manager River Murray Operations, SA Water
- Neville Jaensch, Mayor, Coorong District Council;
- Barry Featherston, Councilor, Alexandrina Council;
- Monique White, member, SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board;
- Dr. Peter Shaughnessy, Honorary Research Associate, South Australian Museum; and
- Michael Garrod, Director Community Engagement, DEWNR;
- Mike Greig, Senior Ecologist Abundant Species, DEWNR;
- Nick McIntyre, Manager Public Lands, Natural Resources South-East;
- Renate Velzeboer, Ecologist Marine Interactions and Wildlife Biosecurity, DEWNR; and
- Miranda Leckie, Administration Support and minute taker, DEWNR

Conservation Council of SA and the South Australian Tourism Commission were an apology for this meeting.

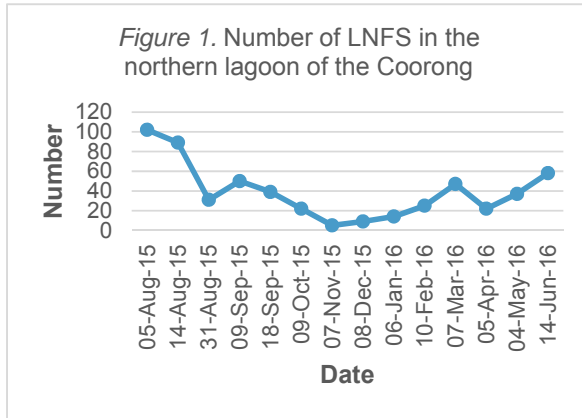
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- DEWNR reported that a series of upcoming community engagement events adjacent to the Goolwa Wharf markets have been held on the 17th April, 15th May and 19th June. 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. DEWNR is exploring how to engage the community at other events now that the Goolwa Wharf markets have finished.
- DEWNR has worked with Ski Racing SA to minimise interactions with LNFS' and speed boats in preparation of the State titles that were held at Murray Bridge during the long weekend in June.
- An opportunity for the community to get engaged in sharing information is through the monthly 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.



MONITORING LNFS'



- The latest monitoring count for the distribution and abundance of LNFS' in the Coorong by DEWNR and by the community has shown an increase in their number. The majority of LNFS' were present at the Murray Mouth. The number of LNFS' counted by DEWNR was 58 in June (See Figure 1). This increase reflects the natural fluctuation in LNFS numbers in coastal waters whereby numbers peak during winter and are expected to decline prior to the commencement of the breeding season in December.

- The working group discussed future monitoring options. SARDI is exploring an App for recording LNFS interactions at fishing nets and will discuss the use of this App with fishers. This App may also provide an opportunity to monitor the distribution and abundance of LNFS in the Coorong and Lower Lakes by the community and DEWNR.
- SARDI is planning to deploy satellite tags on seven LNFS' from the Coorong and Lake Alexandrina to track the seals' movements in the coming months and to determine whether the modifications installed at Tauwitschere barrage have been effective in minimising entry of LNFS' into the lake.

MANAGING SEAL-FISHER INTERACTIONS

- The Lakes and Coorong fishers with SARDI and DEWNR staff have completed nine underwater seal deterrent trials in the Coorong near Goolwa and Tauwitschere barrages. The aim of deploying an underwater seal deterrent is to frighten away the LNFS' from the fishing nets. There were numerous seal interactions at the nets. Underwater seal deterrents were deployed in approximately 50% of the interactions. There will be a Steering Group meeting of the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) Project team towards the end of June, where fishers, SARDI, PIRSA Fisheries and DEWNR will be present to go through the collected data and decide if further trials are required. The



Figure 2. Double winged fyke net being checked (Picture: Jason Earl – SARDI)

results of the underwater seal deterrent trials will be made available when all trials have finished and all data have been analysed.

- Further work is required on the single and double winged fyke nets (see Figure 2), which have been designed and constructed by Lakes and Coorong fishers and SARDI, because they have not been successful in catching fish to date.
- SARDI reported that a Marine Scalefish fisher has made himself available to trial power haul netting and explore the potential to use this fishing method for the Coorong and lakes in minimising interactions with LNFS'.

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.
- The next meeting of the LNFS working group is scheduled for the 14th July 2016.

