



Performance of the 2016 southern blue whiting fishery and compliance with the SBW6I Operational Plan

Monitoring of Operational Plan requirements

The Ministry for Primary Industries' Operational Plan to Manage the Incidental Capture of New Zealand Sea Lions in the 2016 Southern Blue Whiting Fishery at Campbell Island (SBW6I), contained the operational measures set out below. Performance against each operational measure is set out after the description of each measure.

Information gathering

1. At least one MPI Observer will be placed on each vessel that operates in SBW6I during the 2016 season.
 - *Eight vessels participated in the SBW6I fishery during 2016, including one vessel which had not been in the fishery previously. All eight vessels carried at least one MPI observer while operating in the fishery.*
2. MPI Observers will undertake a minimum one marine mammal abundance count each day. This count is taken during the first daylight haul as standard practice. However, some observers also undertook another count during a daylight tow. This differs from last year when observers were instructed to record a second daylight count to gauge a comparison as a matter of course.
 - *The 2016 SBW6I season comprised 10 observer trips. Mammal abundance counts were done daily with some observers doing additional counts beyond the requirements of this year's Operational Plan.*
3. In addition to standard ID and biological sampling (sex, lengths, tissue samples and photos), observers will aim to take a tooth sample from each captured sea lion.
 - *Standard biological sampling was undertaken on all three sea lions captured during the 2016 SBW6I fishery after species identified. The captures included one female animal. No tooth samples were able to be taken from these animals.*
4. Observers will also monitor the operation of Sea Lion Exclusion Devices (SLEDS) in the fishery, specifically

- a. Any issues with crew safety; and
 - b. The behaviour of the SLED in the trawl net
- *Observers did not report any issues with either crew safety or the behaviour of the SLED in the trawl net.*

Additional mitigation measures

5. SLEDs will be used on every tow in SBW6I during 2016

➤ *Observers reported that a SLED was used in every tow during the 2016 SBW6I season.*
6. All SLEDs will be audited on shore before the season commences, to ensure they meet the agreed SLED specifications.

➤ *Based on information provided to MPI by Deepwater Group Ltd (DWG), all SLEDs on vessels that participated in the 2016 SBW6I season were audited prior to the start of the season and met the agreed SLED specifications.*
7. Each SLED will be measured at the beginning of the season by the MPI Observer on board for the first SBW6I trip in 2016.

➤ *MPI Observers on all eight vessels that participated in the 2016 SBW6I season measured the SLEDs on each vessel prior to fishing commencing. Measurements were sent back to MPI. If initial specifications changed, the relevant details were noted and also sent back to MPI.*
8. SLED damage: if at any point during the season the observer or crew have reason to consider a SLED has been damaged, its use will be discontinued until the SLED measurements have been re-checked by the Observer. If the observer is CONFIDENT that the SLED still meets the specifications, its use can be continued. If the observer has ANY DOUBT about whether the SLED meets the specifications, the measurements will be sent as soon as practical to the MPI Observer Programme for verification by the MPI Deepwater Fisheries Management team. Use of the SLED can resume if and when measurements are verified.

➤ *One SLED was damaged badly enough to warrant repairs. It was not used while damaged and the back-up device was used in its stead.*
9. All vessels will pay particular attention to ensuring they abide by the guidelines within both their VMP and the MMOP.

➤ *Observers noted a high level of adherence with each vessel's VMP and the MMOP.*
10. MPI has also been informed that industry had developed a series of sea lion trigger points, including a limit that if reached will prompt the fleet to leave the fishery for the year. Monitoring by MPI observers will assess progress towards these capture trigger points and limits.

➤ *Limits were not reached.*

Communication

11. Each vessel that operates in SBW6I will communicate daily with DWG representatives and DWG agreed to communicate any HSL captures to MPI.

➤ *DWG notified captures to MPI immediately.*

12. Each vessel will have its own digital camera on board to ensure photos of any incidental captures can be sent emailed for identification purposes.

➤ *Based on information provided to MPI by DWG, all eight vessels that participated in the 2016 SBW6I season had a digital camera on board. Photos of all three captures were sent to MPI as soon as they were available to confirm they were HSL.*