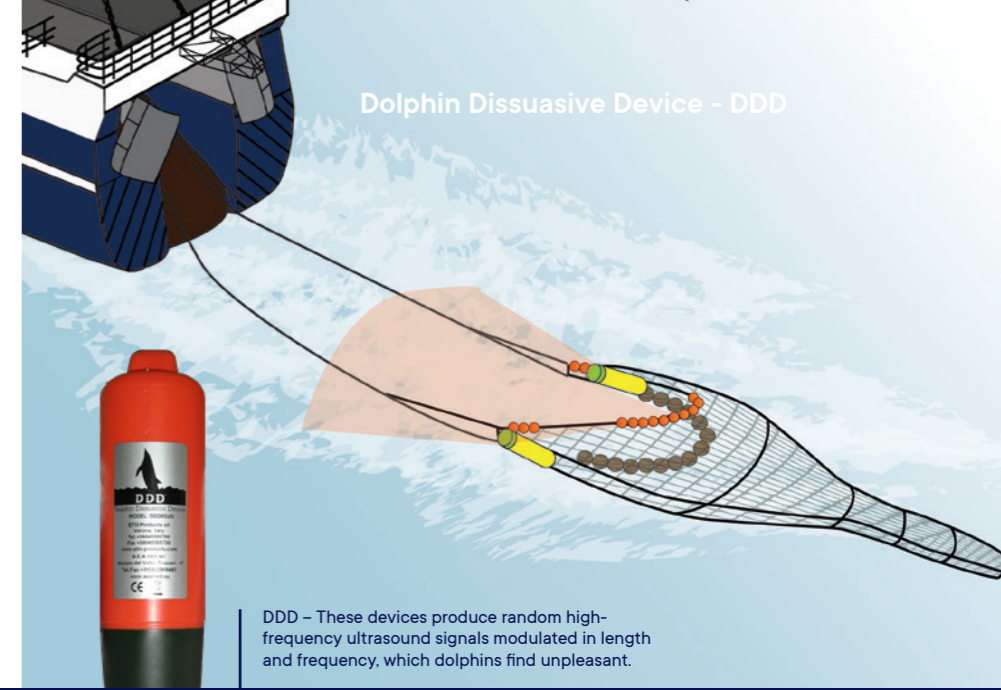
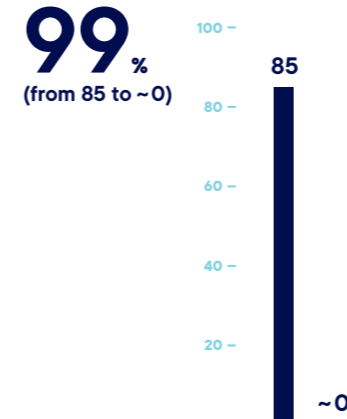


# Reducing harm to common dolphins

Since 2004-05, the estimated number of common dolphins captured annually by deepwater trawlers has been reduced by more than



DDD – These devices produce random high-frequency ultrasound signals modulated in length and frequency, which dolphins find unpleasant.

## The risks

The risk of common dolphin captures is highest in the jack mackerel fishery, offshore of the west coast of the North Island at depths of 60-200m. The risk of capture is highest when the net is near the surface.

Common dolphins should not be confused with Māui or Hector's dolphins<sup>9</sup>, both of which live in shallow inshore waters, not in the deepwater. There is no risk to these small endemic inshore dolphins from deepwater fleets.

## Managing the risks

Deepwater Group's Environmental Liaison Officer (ELO) briefs vessel operators before each jack mackerel season on the factors (i.e. area, depth, time of day) which pose the highest risk of incidental captures of common dolphins. We stay in regular contact with vessel operators throughout the season to ensure those in the fleet remain vigilant.

Risk reduction practices for common dolphins, along with other dolphin species, are specified in Deepwater Group's Marine Mammals OPs. Skippers undertake visual checks to ensure there are no dolphins around the vessel before shooting the fishing gear.

Trawling is not undertaken during the early hours of the morning when the risk of dolphin capture is highest. When trawling takes place, shooting and hauling the fishing gear is achieved as quickly as possible, to minimise the capture of dolphins.

Dolphin Dissuasive Devices (DDD) are used to discourage common dolphins to forage near our trawl nets. These devices produce random high-frequency ultrasound signals modulated in length and frequency, which dolphins find unpleasant resulting in them moving away from the source. The signals do not cause any harm to mammals. Fish are insensitive to the range of frequencies emitted. All jack mackerel trawlers in the deepwater fleet use these devices.

## The outcomes

Since 2004-05, the estimated number of common dolphins captured annually by deepwater trawlers has been reduced by more than 99% (from 85 dolphins to now close to zero). In some earlier years, captures exceeded 100.

To verify our recording of all interactions with common dolphins, around 85% of the fishing effort in the west coast jack mackerel trawl fishery is monitored by Fisheries New Zealand and DOC at sea observers.



Common dolphins in Cook Strait. © Talley's.

9. doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/marine-mammals/dolphins/hectors-dolphin/