



Fisheries New Zealand

Tini a Tangaroa

2021 OPERATIONAL PLAN TO MANAGE THE INCIDENTAL CAPTURE OF NEW ZEALAND SEA LIONS IN THE SOUTHERN BLUE WHITING FISHERY, CAMPBELL ISLAND (SBW6I)

July 2021

v 1.1

PURPOSE

- 1 This Operational Plan (the Plan) sets out the operational measures that vessels which target southern blue whiting in the Campbell Island fishery (SBW6I) will employ during the 2021 season to manage interactions with New Zealand sea lions (sea lions).
- 2 This Plan also details the additional monitoring that Fisheries New Zealand Observers will undertake in support of these operational measures and to inform the future management of sea lion interactions in this fishery.
- 3 Following an unprecedented number of interactions with sea lions during the 2013 fishing season in SBW6I, additional operational measures were developed that the fleet has adhered to since the 2014 season. Vessel operators have agreed to continue with these measures for the 2021 season. These measures have been effective in reducing captures of sea lions in this fishery.
- 4 The measures contained in this Plan apply in addition to agreed industry requirements and guidelines specified in all relevant Operational Procedures on board deepwater vessels.
- 5 The measures specified in this document have been developed with the Deepwater Group Ltd (DWG) which is the organisation that represents southern blue whiting quota owners.
- 6 These operational measures will give effect to the operational objectives in the southern blue whiting fishery specific chapter of the National Deepwater Fisheries Plan, including:
 - a. **Operational Objective 1.1:** Support the southern blue whiting fishery in achieving and maintaining credible third party certification and ensure any Conditions of Certification are met within the required timeframe
 - b. **Operational Objective 2.2:** Ensure that incidental New Zealand sea lion mortalities, in the southern blue whiting fishery at the Campbell Islands (SBW6I), do not impact the long term viability of the sea lion population and that captures are minimised through good operational practices.

OPERATIONAL MEASURES

- 7 The additional operational measures detailed in this Plan were developed following a review of the information collected during the 2013 season, and after implementing the Plan in the 2014 season.
- 8 The operational measures that will apply in the 2021 SBW6I season include:
 - a. Information gathering by the Fisheries New Zealand Observer Programme;
 - b. Real-time communication between vessels, DWG and Fisheries New Zealand as and when relevant;
 - c. Real-time monitoring based on electronic catch and position reporting, providing more accurate, integrated and timely data; and
 - d. Additional mitigation measures that aim to minimise risk of sea lion capture and any potential for adverse effects on the Campbell Island sea lion population.

Information gathering

- 9 At least one Fisheries New Zealand Observer will be placed on each vessel that operates in SBW6I during the 2021 season.
- 10 Observers will undertake one marine mammal abundance count each day. This count will take place during the first daylight haul as standard practice.
- 11 In addition to standard ID and biological sampling (sex, length, tissue samples, and photos), Observers will aim to take a tooth sample from any sea lion mortality observed.
- 12 Observers will monitor the vessel's adherence to the guidelines specified in the PSRMP and MMOP.

Additional mitigation measures

- 13 SLEDs will be used on every tow in SBW6I during 2021 and vessels will carry at least one spare SLED on board.
- 14 All SLEDs will be audited on shore by an approved net maker before the season commences, to ensure they meet the agreed SLED specifications (Appendix 1).
- 15 SLEDs will be measured and checked by the Fisheries New Zealand observer on board before they are used for the first time targeting southern blue whiting in SBW6I in 2021.
- 16 SLED damage: If at any point during the season the observer or crew have reason to consider a SLED has been damaged:
 - The SLED will not be used until the SLED measurements have been checked and verified by the observer on board as complying with the SLED specifications (Appendix 1)
 - Alternatively if it is confirmed that the SLED is damaged then the spare SLED will be deployed on the next tow undertaken. The damaged SLED will not be used again on the trip unless brought back to specification by repairs onboard.
- 17 Industry have a non-regulatory annual limit that if reached will prompt the fleet to leave the fishery for the year:
 - a limit of 12 female sea lion mortalities or
 - a total of 25 sea lion mortalities (both sexes)

Note that captures of female sea lions are rare, 97% of sea lion captures in SBW6I since 2001/02 have been male¹. The annual limit of 25 sea lion mortalities was set by a Potential Biological Removal (PBR) Assessment for the Campbell Island sub-population of New Zealand sea lions in 2014.²

¹ Of the 66 captures, two were female.

² PBR Assessment for the Campbell Island Sub-population of New Zealand sea lions Prepared for Deepwater Group Limited October 2014, Roberts J, Roux M.J, and Ladronek Y. (NIWA) 27p.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting to Fisheries New Zealand

- 18 Vessel operators must provide the Fisheries New Zealand Observer Programme with **5 days'** notice by email (Appendix 2) prior to the vessel leaving port for each fishing trip where the vessel intends to operate in SBW6I (whether for all or part of the trip). Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays are included in the 5 day notification. Email notification must contain the following information:
- Name of fishing company.
 - Name of fishing vessel.
 - Call sign.
 - Date and time of notification.
 - Name of vessel master.
 - Port of departure.
 - Expected arrival time in port of departure.
 - Expected date and time of departure.
 - Number of approved SLEDs.
 - Estimated trip duration.
- 19 Notification is provided by emailing the notification form in Appendix 2 to the Fisheries New Zealand Observer Programme. The purpose of this notification is to give the Fisheries New Zealand Observer Programme time to organise and place Fisheries Observer(s) on-board the vessel for the upcoming trip.
- 20 Operators of vessels that move into SBW6I part way through any fishing trip are still required to notify the Fisheries New Zealand Observer Programme of their intention to start fishing in SBW6I. Vessel operators are required to give the 5 day notification before entering SBW6I for the first time and vessels may be requested to return to port to allow placement of an Observer on-board. For the avoidance of doubt, notification is only required prior to the first entry into SBW6I in a particular trip, should a vessel enter and exit SBW6I several times within a trip, repeat notification is not required.

OBSERVER COVERAGE

- 21 Fisheries New Zealand intends to provide 100% observer coverage across all tows in the SBW6I fishery. Among other things, Fisheries New Zealand observers will:
- Monitor that each vessel accurately records and reports New Zealand sea lion captures
 - Take biological samples to inform sea lion population modelling and other research
 - Monitor that SLEDs meet the required standard, and are being deployed in the correct manner

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS PLAN

- 22 This Plan will commence at the onset of the 2021 SBW6I season and will be reviewed at the end of the 2021 season. The review will incorporate the information collected by Fisheries New Zealand observers and industry. It will aim to determine which aspects of the Plan can be removed, changed, or continue to be incorporated in the management of sea lion interactions in this fishery.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- 23 If you would like further information on the management measures in place for the SBW61 fishery please contact:

Fisheries New Zealand – Observer Programme

PO Box 2526

Wellington

Email: observer@mpi.govt.nz

Phone: 04 819 4762

Fisheries New Zealand –Deepwater Fisheries Management Team

PO Box 2526

Wellington

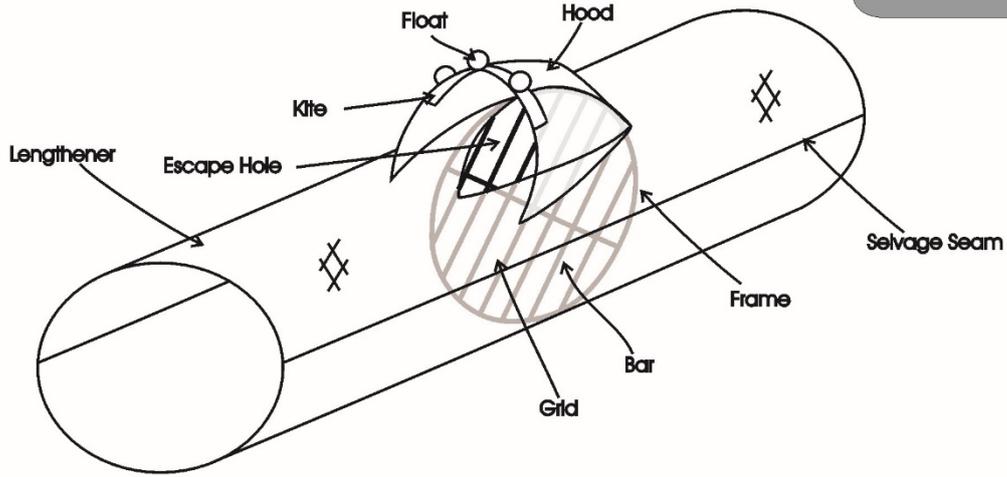
Deepwater.Team@mpi.govt.nz

Appendix 1 DWG AND FISHERIES NEW ZEALAND SLED SPECIFICATION FOR
SBW6I OPERATIONAL PLAN

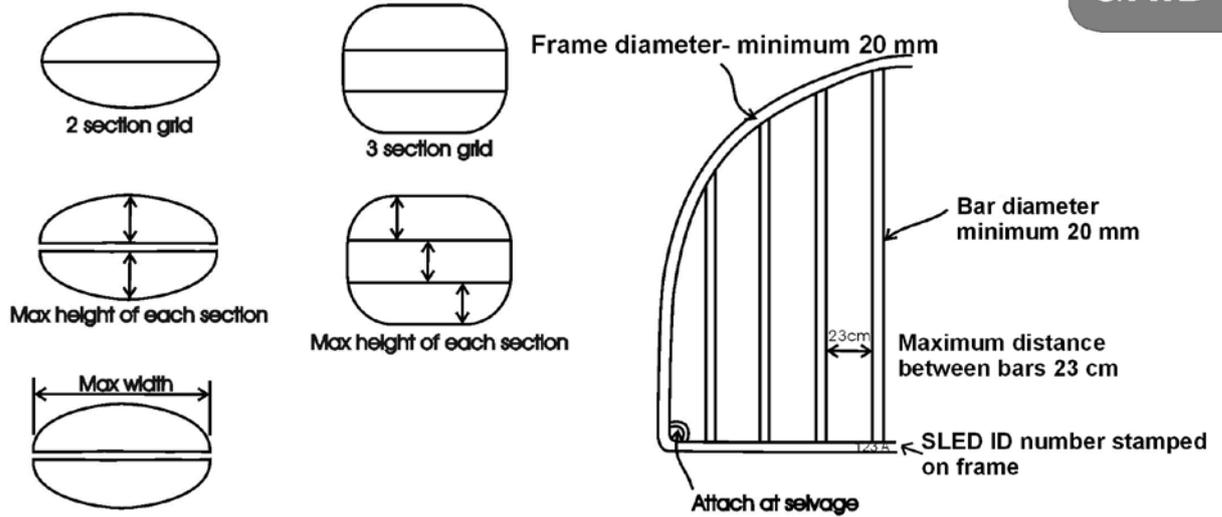
October 2010 MK 3/13 SLED approved by SLED Working Group September 2009. Clause 11 modified by MFish November 2010; clause 7 modified by MAF January 2012; clause 6 modified by MPI July 2012. The SLED required for use by all vessels in the SBW6I fishery is an approved type that meets the following criteria:

1. The SLED must consist of a lengthener section of net, with either 2 or 4 seams, containing a 2 or 3 piece grid, hinged horizontally along the middle. The grid must be set in the net at about $45^{\circ} \pm 5^{\circ}$ from the vertical with the top of the grid closest to the cod end section and continuously sewn to the net meshes around its outer edge.
2. The grid must be constructed of minimum 20 mm outside diameter solid stainless steel bar and should be shaped to conform to the working parameters of the net (refer diagram).
3. Vertical grid bars must be evenly spaced at a continuous maximum distance of 23cm between bars (see diagram). There will be no minimum number of bars, provided they are evenly spaced and do not exceed the required maximum spacing. It may be necessary to have the last spacing between the final bar and the grid frame differing from the rest of the spacings provided they are less than 23 cm apart between bars and frame.
4. The escape hole must be triangular and cut into the upper surface of the lengthener section. This hole must be a minimum of 130 cm wide at the base, measured along the top bar of the grid. The apex of the triangle must be a minimum of 150 cm forward of the base (refer diagram).
5. Above the escape hole, a hood-shaped mesh scoop must be attached with its open (leading) end facing into the water-flow and its closed (trailing) end attached and over stretched to the top bar of the grid. The leading edge of the hood must be a minimum of 90 cm high when fully open. The leading edge rope around the mouth of the hood must be a minimum of 320 cm long after attachment of kite and floats. The hood must be a minimum length of 170cm long (refer diagram).
6. The hood must have a semi rigid kite 220 cm long by 32 cm wide (both measurements + 10%; a piece of thick conveyor-belt is ideal) attached under the meshes of the hood. The kite must be attached to the hood by stitching at regular intervals the leading edge of the hood and the leading edge of the kite using a minimum of eight attachment points. The trailing edge of the kite should also be attached to the hood netting. The leading corners of the hood must extend forward of the escape hole.
7. Three floats of between 19 and 30 cm in diameter (a centre hole float is best) must be each attached to the leading edge on the kite. One float must be in the centre of the kite length and the other two equidistant between the centre float each end of the kite (refer diagram).
8. The SLED should be inserted into the trawl (between the body of the trawl and the lengthener) with the escape hole always on the upper surface when the net is fishing.
9. Each SLED grid frame must have a unique registration number, identifying it as a unit, clearly stamped into the frame bar at each end of each hinge section. Deepwater Group Ltd will record each SLED registration number. DWG's register of SLED numbers must be provided to MPI on an annual basis before fishing commences.
10. Depending on the net for which the SLED is built, there are elements of the SLED configuration that may vary, including: the presence or absence of floats attached to the outside of the grid or back of the kite, the shape, width and height of the grid, the number of vertical bars in the grid, the number of meshes in the hood and the number and size of meshes in the lengthener section.
11. No extra panels or mesh material may be fitted inside the net or lengthener before the SLED. Additional floats may be fitted outside the lengthener to the top of the grid frame. Floats may also be fitted inside the lengthener behind the grid or frame but NOT in front of the grid.
12. Alterations are not to be made to the design outside of this specification. For new builds or major repairs contact Motueka Nets Ltd or Hampidjan NZ Ltd.

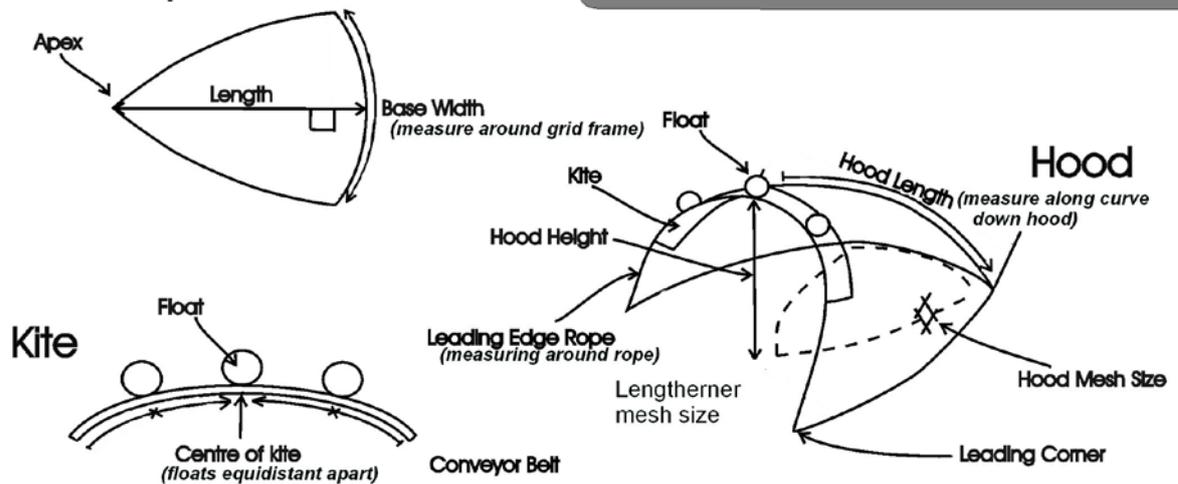
SLED TERMS



GRID



Escape Hole



ESCAPE HOLE and HOOD

APPENDIX 2

5-DAY NOTIFICATION OF PORT CALL OR PORT DEPARTURE FOR ANY VESSEL THAT HAS FISHED/OR INTENDS TO FISH IN SBW6I

Name of Vessel	
Name of Fishing Company	
Call sign	
Date of Notification (day-month)	
Time of notification (hours)	
Name of vessel master	
Name of port of departure	
Arrival time in port of departure	
Number of approved SLED	
Expected departure date	
Expected departure time	
Intend to fish in SBW6I Yes/No	
Estimated duration of trip (days)	

Signature of Vessel Master or Company Representative

Sign:

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Please email this completed form to the Ministry's Observer Programme.

Email: observer@mpi.govt.nz

Completed forms must be received no later than 5 days (120 hours) including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, prior to the vessel departing from the notified port of departure.