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## IN-COMMITTEE SESSION MINUTES

## MARINE PROTECTION FORUM MEETING

15<sup>th</sup> MEETING – 2 May 2008

In-committee session occurred in the course of the Forum's 2 May meeting.

## 1. Assessment of Estuaries/Lagoons/River Mouths

Facilitator Sarah Wilson recapped on the session held at the last meeting identifying possible candidate sites amongst estuaries, lagoons and river mouths. Don Neale informed the Forum of the minor refinements he had made to the spreadsheet, such as the consistent use of descriptors; e.g., H/M/L being high/medium/low - now used across the categories of size, adjacent land uses, conservation land, intactness and resilience.

### 2.1 Candidate site Selection - River Mouths

#### Candidate sites

*Whataroa River* – Due to poor road access (only track) the main impact is whitebait fishing.

This site is one of the more difficult to access of the large river mouths.

*Waiho River* – The south bank has been grazed and there is vehicle access to the south side but no whitebait fishery. There is a high sediment loading; it is a 'floury' river that may provide for a specific habitat/ river mouth sub-group habitat.

*Omoeroa River* – Accessible site but not easy access. Historic grazing use but now ceased.

Black sand appears on the beach but overall minimal extractive use at this site.

*Cook River* – Located within the national park. The riverbanks are recovering from historic grazing and logging, now ceased.

*Karangarua River* – A significant whitebait fishery at the river mouth and stands on the banks, also trout and salmon fishery. A Statutory Acknowledgement Area is situated at the lagoon near the coast. The Forum assessed this site as 'high cost' due to the level of extractive uses.

*Makawhio River* – This site has mixed land ownership with some farmland plus Crown land and Maori land. Whitebait stands are located on the riverbanks.

*Moeraki River* – Wildlife Management areas exist nearby such as the Munro Track and beach, with measures such as a ban on dogs. Noted as being a small site. Generally only boat access to the mouth. Whitebait stands further up the river.

*Whakapoai River* – Accepted as a suitable candidate site.

*Haast River* – Considerable areas of private land and multiple river mouth exit sites. Possibly gravel extraction occurs.

*Waikatoto River* – The river mouth now includes an ex-lagoon area as erosion has removed the previous separation of the zones. Noted as having good natural values.

*Arawhata River* – The site is grazed on the northern side but is assessed as otherwise having good natural values.

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*Cascade River* – Whitebait stands occur up to the entrance of The Old Man (a creek). The Forum decided to remove The Old Man as a separate entity from the tidal lagoon candidate sites.

*Hope River* – Noted as having a high level of naturalness.

*Gorge River* - Noted as having a high level of naturalness, although also noted as being a small site. No whitebaiting.

## Discarded sites

*Mahitahi River* – It was noted that the river mouth locality is quite modified including rock protection works.

*Paringa River* – A cluster of bachs is located on the southern bank. It was noted that the river mouth changes often, and that it is one of better whitebait fishing rivers. The river mouth is also used as an access point to the sea by fishers as it is a sheltered site.

*Waia River* – Whitebaiting area with some permanent residents in bachs.

*Okuru/Turnball Rivers* – Highly developed river mouths with large areas of rock protection works, grazed areas and bachs/houses. Resilience was rated as low due to the amount of habitation and protection works.

## Possible sites

*Waikukupa River*- Quite a small site, not so much room for river mouth movement.

## 2. Latitude/Longitude Data

Scott Williamson ran a session on latitude/longitude fishing information, and its limitations. Specific location information; estimated landing by statistical area, for example: 33-34-35 CIFF.

### Summary of Information

#### 1. *Trawl Catch Processing Return*

This method shows the start and stop points only but does not show the exact route. Only vessels greater than 28metres long produce this record. The system has been in operation for five plus years.

#### 2. *Catch Effort Landing Return (CELR)*

This method of recording is for vessels between 6-28 metres in length. Statistics collected since 1989. While general information within a statistical area is available but no specific location data is collected.

#### 3. *Trawl Catch Effort Return (TCER)*

This new system has been in operation since October 2007, replacing the Catch Effort Landing Return system. Recording by vessels between 6-28 metres long.

Scott Williamson projected summary maps showing compiled data and providing indicative overviews of the fishing effort along the West Coast region over the last five years. He noted that the CELR information covered only four years as this data stream ceased in 2007. The maps demonstrate that trawl fishing effort does occur all along the region and in areas of continental shelf seem to be 'hot spots'. Therefore the idea of 'natural protection' being afforded to the region due to landform does not appear to be substantiated for the trawl fishery.

Eugenie Sage suggested some amendments to the maps, as follows: the use of dots rather than hexagon shapes, differentiation by species, differentiation by method

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(lining/trawling/cray grounds/set net areas). She queried whether it was helpful to include data streams of five years of data with streams of seven months only. Don Neale queried whether the bathymetry lines could be overlaid on the maps.

Stuart Thomson noted that the maps illustrated the degree of fishing effort well offshore, and consequently a MPA extending from the coast to well offshore would not be likely to be supported by the fishing representatives of the sector (as it would cut across lots of fishing effort). Therefore, the Forum should not simply choose a section of coastline with lots of inshore habitats and then extend directly out to the 12nm limit. General discussion followed about what the Protection Standard Guidelines meant in terms of size and connectivity.

Scott Williamson concluded the session with a summary of the amendments to the maps, as follows

- Dots rather than hexagons;
- Separation of data re lining/trawling/set-netting;
- Showing long trawls smaller than 150 kms;
- Look again at the timeframe of data streams (5 years vs 7 months).

### 3. Next Habitat Group

Don Neale commenced this session with explaining the habitats illustrated on the large-scale maps, and also the candidate sites for estuaries/lagoons/river mouths now tagged on the maps. He advised that the inshore areas tend to be sandier and become progressively muddier the further offshore. Similarly, the sediment size progresses from coarser inshore to finer offshore. Don overviewed the split of the immediate offshore habitats along the regional coastline; the most variation of habitat is along the coastal strip. The coastal sequence alternates between rocky headland/points to sandy beaches to gravel beaches, and so on repeatedly. Don Neale also noted there are variations in water temperature and composition from north to south, and that Bruce Bay/Heretanga Point is one of the general transition points. The northern part of the region is the most distinct due to sand scour and siltiness (and so are 'distinct' on a national scale), whereas the southern part of the region is more biologically rich and diverse.

Don Neale also discussed the degree of landward protection along the coastline, illustrating where the maps showed areas of national park, conservation managed land. The section from Greymouth to south of Hokitika is the largest area of the coastline without large areas of landward protection. Suitable MPA areas to the north and south of the region would have the advantage of being assisted by landward protection with large stretches of national park/conservation managed land.

What is the next habitat to consider, was it the rocky coast? Bruce Watson suggested that the Forum look at inaccessible areas first and those adjacent to conservation land/national parks/best estuaries, and then choose the possible rocky coasts. This approach would be more efficient than considering all stretches of rocky coast. Don Neale responded with the suggestion that the rocky coasts out to the 30 metre depth line could be considered. Recreational fishers suggested instead that the line should only go out to 10 metres as a first cut.

It was agreed that it made sense to consider sections of rocky coast that were:

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- Adjacent to conservation land/national parks;
- Inaccessible by road;
- Adjacent to the best estuaries.

Bruce Watson did a rough-cut review of the map and suggested that rocky coast stretches that might meet that criterion included:

- The Kahurangi National Park coastline;
- Small areas of the Paparoa National Park coastline;
- The 5 Mile Creek area;
- The inaccessible Paringa type coastline;
- The Cascade River area coastline.

Don Neale then used felt pen to mark on the large-scale maps the rough demarcation between the broad types of coastline (rocky/sandy/gravel). Re inaccessibility, Don also suggested that the Forum use the access information available via the NIWA Recreational Fishing Survey.

Sarah Wilson wrapped up this session noting that great progress had been made today. It was agreed that Don Neale and other officials would work on mapping the features discussed, as well as a criteria matrix to be developed as a spreadsheet. Carrol Browne asked Don Neale to think about how to add "unique" habitats to "inaccessible" areas. Sarah Wilson asked Forum members to think about future steps and how to reduce the candidate sites to a lesser number of selected sites. She also noted that habitats further offshore than 30 metres had to be found and possibly the fishers could suggest possibilities.

As the session was concluded, the Forum agreed to move out of committee.

**Moved Kerry Egging/Eugenie Sage**

**Carried**

Confirmed  
Bruce Hamilton  
Chairperson