

Working Group: Long-nosed fur seals in the Coorong and Lower Lakes

Communiqué No. 1

- The first meeting of the working group was held on Friday, 21 August 2015 in Adelaide with representatives from the
 - o Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR): Sandy Pitcher as Chair, Brenton Grear, Denise Fowles, Mike Greig, Renate Velzeboer
 - o Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA): Alice Fistr, proxy for Sean Sloan
 - o South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI): Gavin Begg
 - o Southern Fishermen's Association (SFA): Marilyn Nobes, proxy for Neil MacDonald
 - o SA Water: Garry Fyfe
 - o South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC): David Lake
 - o Coorong District Council (CDC): Mayor Neville Jaensch,
 - o Alexandrina Council (AC): Barry Featherston, proxy for Mayor Keith Parkes
 - o Conservation Council of SA (CCSA): James Brook, proxy for Craig Wilkins; and
 - o SA Museum (SAM): Peter Shaughnessy.

The Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority (NRA) and DEWNR's Natural Resources South-East (NR S-E) sent their apologies for this meeting but are expected to attend future meetings.

- The working group agreed to terms of reference that will enable it to investigate and explore all the issues surrounding long-nosed fur seals (LNFS) in the Coorong and Lower Lakes area and to identify and implement appropriate short term and long term actions.
- Group members were able to clearly outline their experience, their social, economic and ecological concerns and the impacts being felt by them and the people they represented.
- The group identified that the following activities are underway:
 - o A Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) and SA Government funded project is soon to commence on
 - trialing alternative types of gear, including fishing nets, and
 - different types of non-lethal seal deterrents.
 - o LNFS scats (droppings) are being collected from the Coorong area and analysed to get more information on what they are eating. This is part of a broader FRDC funded project on the "Assessment of the impacts of seal populations on the seafood industry in South Australia"
 - o The fishery is recording all interactions with LNFS in line with their Threatened, Endangered and Protected Species interaction reporting requirements.
 - o Minister Hunter is meeting with the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority to hear their cultural, economic, social and environmental concerns and to discuss issues surrounding LNFS in the Coorong and the Lower.



- Government agencies are meeting with different local community interest groups to hear concerns and to discuss issues surrounding LNFS in the Coorong and Lower Lakes.
- Government has published frequently asked questions from the community and their answers on the DEWNR website: http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/managing-natural-resources/plants-and-animals/Living_with_wildlife/seals. More questions and answers will be added in the near future.
- The working group identified several short term actions that are planned to start in the near future:
 - PIRSA has been working closely with fishing industry representatives and it is expected that temporary changes will be introduced to management arrangements, including changes to gear that will provide further flexibility to operators in the Lakes and Coorong fishery. PIRSA is investigating fee relief as a source of immediate support, to assist fishers in mitigating the financial impacts of LNFS interactions.
 - Setting up cameras to monitor LNFS and pelican interactions at
 - the barrages, and
 - key pelican breeding sites.
 - Surveying and tracking of LNFS in the Coorong and Lower Lakes area.
 - Seeking support from Rural Business Support for counselling to assist those local rural businesses that are affected.
 - SA Water staff, who are on site in the Coorong and Lower Lakes will begin keeping a log of LNFS numbers and interactions.
- The working group will meet monthly with the next meeting planned for September 24.

