

**OPERATIONAL PLAN TO MANAGE
THE INCIDENTAL CAPTURE
OF NEW ZEALAND SEA LIONS
IN THE SQUID (SQU6T) TRAWL FISHERY
FOR THE 2008-09 FISHING YEAR**

December 2008

PURPOSE OF OPERATIONAL PLAN

1 This Operational Plan sets out the management measures in place in the SQU6T fishery to manage the interaction between squid vessels and sea lions. All industry operators, intending to fish in the SQU6T fishery during the 2008-09 fishing season, must adhere to these measures.

2 The key elements of the Operational Plan are as follows:

- a) A fishing-related mortality limit (FRML) of 113 sea lions.
- b) A pre-determined strike rate of 5.65% will be used to estimate the total number of sea lion mortalities against the FRML.
- c) Vessel operators have an opportunity to receive a discount of 35% on the predetermined strike rate by deploying an approved sea lion exclusion device (SLED). This discount will provide a strike rate of 3.67%
- d) Monitoring and reporting requirements to support the FRML and discount rate.
- e) Closure procedures in the event the FRML is reached.

3 These monitoring requirements are in place to give effect to the Minister of Fisheries decision of 10 December 2008 on the management of sea lion interaction with the squid fishery in 6T. Under s. 15 (3) of the Fisheries Act 1996 operators are required to provide information relating to the FRML. This Operational Plan sets out the information that is required.

4 Specific details of the Operational Plan are provided below.

FISHING-RELATED MORTALITY LIMIT (FRML) FOR THE 2008-09 SEASON

5 The FRML for the 2008-09 fishing season has been set at 113.

ARRANGEMENTS TO MONITOR THE 2007-08 FRML

Strike rate in the absence of an approved SLED

6 A strike rate is used to monitor vessel performance against the FRML. The strike rate for the 2008-09 season has been set at 5.65%. This means that for every 100 tows undertaken in the SQU 6T fishery, 5.65 sea lion mortalities will be counted towards the FRML.

7 Based on an FRML of 113, a strike rate of 5.65% will permit **2000** tows in the fishery.

Discount factor for vessels deploying an approved SLED

8 Vessel operators can receive a 35% discount on the strike rate by deploying an approved SLED during all tows made in the SQU6T fishery. This discount factor will reduce

the strike rate from 5.65% to 3.67% and will permit **3079** tows in the fishery, before the FRML is reached, provided all operators deploy approved SLEDs appropriately and comply with the Observer notification requirements.

9 Only vessels that deploy an approved SLED are eligible for the discount rate. SLEDs must be of the Mark 3/13 design with the unique SLED identification number stamped into the frame. The specification for the Mark 3/13 design is in Appendix 1.

10 Once vessels are operating in 6T this discount will only apply to tows made by the vessel provided:

- a) The approved SLED has not been modified during the fishing season.
- b) Vessel operators notify the DWG immediately should the SLED become damaged. If the SLED is repaired on board during the trip the discount factor will continue to apply but the SLED will be inspected once the vessel returns to port. If the repaired SLED no longer meets the approved specification the discount factor will retrospectively be removed from the tows made during this trip.
- c) The SLED continues to meet the specifications during the SQU6T season. MFish Observers and fishery officers will be inspecting SLEDs throughout the season.
- d) Vessel operators fulfill the 72 hour notification requirements as detailed in the reporting section below.

11 The SLED must also comply with Regulation 15A of the Fisheries (Southland and Sub-Antarctic Areas Commercial Fishing) Regulations 1986. This regulation prescribes a minimum mesh size of 60mm, for any part of the trawl net when fishing within the Sub-Antarctic Fishery Management Area (including the SQU6T fishery).

12 MFish intends to retrospectively remove the discount rate accreditation for all tows where a non-approved SLED or a modified SLED was deployed, or where the reporting requirements have not been met.

Reporting Requirements

MFish reporting

13 Vessel operators must provide the MFish Observer Programme with 72 hours notice (not including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays) prior to the vessel leaving port for **each** fishing trip where the vessel intends to operate in SQU6T. This notification must contain the following information:

- i) Name of fishing company
- ii) Name of fishing vessel
- iii) Call sign
- iv) Date and time of notification

- v) Name of vessel master
- vi) Port of departure
- vii) Expected arrival time in port of departure
- viii) Expected date and time of departure
- ix) Number of approved SLED
- x) Is the vessel intending to fish in SQU6T
- xi) Estimated trip duration.

14 Notification can be provided by faxing the notification form in Appendix 2 to the MFish Observer Programme. Emails are also permitted provided the email contains the same information as the notification form.

15 The purpose of this notification is two-fold:

- a) To give the MFish Observer Programme the opportunity to place an observer onboard the vessel for the upcoming trip.
- b) To enable SLED inspections to be carried out by either fishery officers or observers.

16 Operators of vessels which move from SQUIT to SQU6T during the same trip are still required to notify the MFish Observer Programme of their intention to start fishing in SQU6T. Vessel operators are required to give the full 72 hours notification before entering 6T. Vessel operators may be requested to return to port to allow placement of an Observer onboard. Vessel operators should also be aware that the SLEDs onboard these vessels will be a priority for inspection when the vessel returns to port.

17 Within 48 hours of the completion of each fishing trip, the master of the fishing vessel is required to notify MFish of any encounter with any marine mammal that results in death or injury. This notification fulfills the reporting requirements under the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978. The preferred method of notification is via the 'Non-Fish Protected Species Catch Return' form. MFish also welcomes real time information on sea lion interactions and encourages all vessel operators to report this information to DWG.

18 MFish also requests that vessel masters retain on board, if practicable, any sea lions that have died so that they can be returned for autopsy. DWG will work with MFish and vessel operators to ensure vessel masters have the appropriate storage bags, Department of Conservation permit requirements and dispatch instructions to achieve this.

DWG reporting

19 All vessels in the SQU6T fishery must report to the DWG. A copy of the reporting form can be found in Appendix 4. Completed forms should be returned to the DWG by 5.30pm **every** Monday and Thursday. The information reported must include:

- i) Each tow undertaken in the SQU6T fishery

- ii) Whether the tow was observed by a MFish Observer
- iii) If an approved SLED was deployed during the tow
- iv) If any sea lions were caught during the tow and whether they were released dead or alive.

20 When 70% of the FRML is reached, vessel operators must report to the DWG on a daily basis. Daily reports must include the information listed in paragraph 19 above.

Observer Coverage

21 MFish intends to provide a minimum of 30% observer coverage across all tows in the SQU6T fishery in the 2008-09 season. MFish Observers will monitor that:

- a) Each vessel accurately records and reports any New Zealand sea lion captures
- b) SLEDs are in good working order, have not been modified and are being deployed in the correct manner.

Pound Grids

22 All vessels targeting squid within the SQU6T fishery are encouraged to cover the pound entrance from the trawl deck with a grid that is sufficient to prevent any sea lion from entering the pound. This grid should include a bar spacing of no greater than 23 cm.

FISHERY CLOSURE PROCESS

23 MFish will work with the DWG to monitor performance against the FRML. Once the FRML is about to be reached MFish will advise the Minister who may close the fishery by gazette notice.

24 Closure of the SQU6T fishery will be undertaken without consultation but MFish will work with the DWG to ensure all participants in the fishery are kept updated on levels of fishing activity against the FRML throughout the fishing season.

FURTHER INFORMATION

25 If you would like further information on the management measures in place for the SQU6T fishery for the 2008-09 season please contact:

MFish Observer Program

PO Box 1020

Wellington

Email: observer@fish.govt.nz

Fax: 04 819 4775

Phone: 04 819 4762

Aoife Martin or Jeremy Helson

Deepwater Team

Ministry of Fisheries

PO Box 1020
Wellington
Tel 04 470 2600

Richard Wells
Deepwater Group Ltd
PO Box 1460
Nelson
Tel 03 545 7020
Mobile: 021 457 123

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aoife Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aoife Martin
Manager Deepwater Fisheries
Ministry of Fisheries

DWG and MFish SLED Specification for SQU 6T 2009 Operational Plan

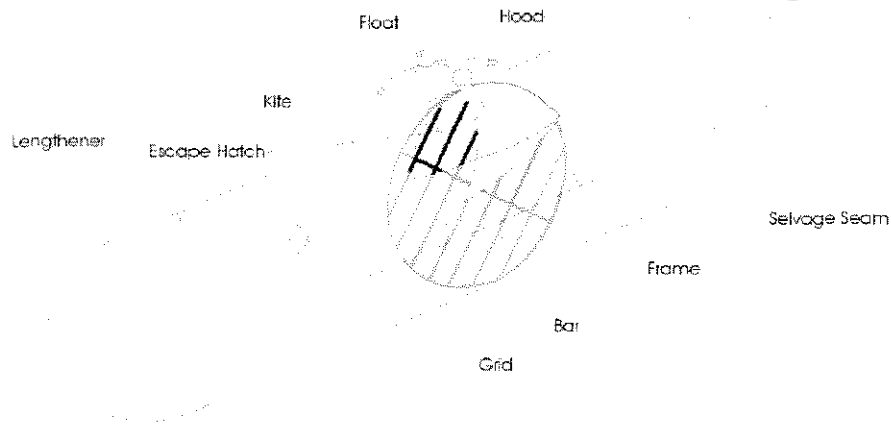
DRAFT

October 2008 MK 3/13 SLED approved by SLED WG April 2008

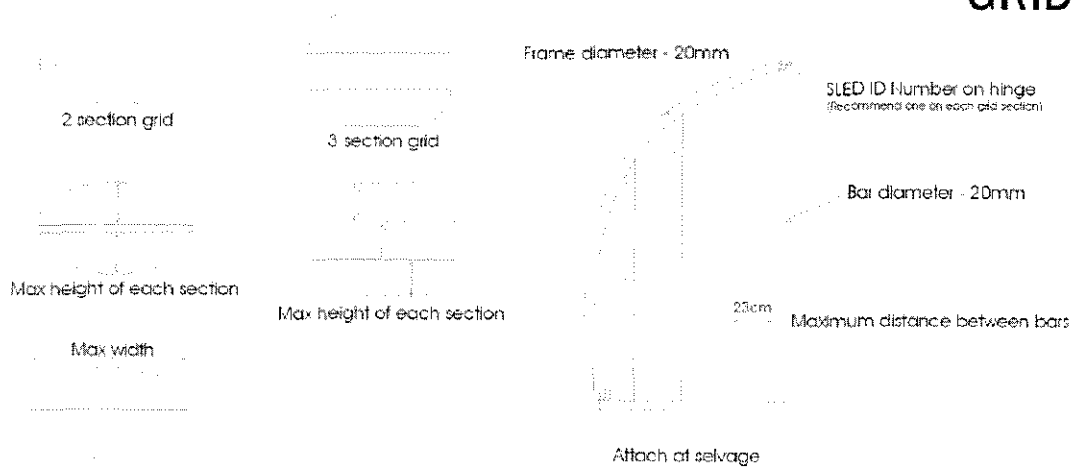
The SLED required for use by all vessels in the 6T squid fishery is an approved type that meets the following criteria:

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 should be set in the net at about $45^{\circ} \pm 5^{\circ}$ from the vertical with the top of the grid closest to the codend section and continuously sewn to the net meshes around its outer edge.
2. The grid must be constructed of **minimum 20mm 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 recommended 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 23cm** apart between bars and frame.
4. The escape hole must be triangular and let into the upper surface of the lengthener section. This hole must be a **minimum of 130cm wide at the base**, measured along the top bar of the grid. The apex of the triangle must be a **minimum of 150cm 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 & over stretched to the top bar of the grid. The leading edge of the hood must be a **minimum of 90cm high** when fully open and the leading edge rope around the mouth of the hood must be a **minimum of 320 cm long, the back edge must be overstretched when fitted to the grid & minimum length of 170cm long** (refer diagram).
6. The hood must have a semi rigid kite 220cm long by 32cm wide (both measurements $\pm 10\%$) (a piece of conveyor-belt is ideal) attached under the meshes of the hood. The leading edge of the kite must be continuously stitched to the leading edge of the hood and the back edge also attached to the hood netting. The leading corners of the hood must extend forward of the escape hole.
7. A three floats of between 20cm & 30cm in diameter (a centre hole float is best) must be each attached to the centre and outside edges of the leading edge on the kite.
8. The SLED must be inserted into the trawl (between the body of the trawl and the lengthener) with the escape hole 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 MFish on an annual basis before fishing commences.
10. 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, depending on the net in which the SLED is inserted.
11. No extra panels or mesh material may fitted inside the net before the SLED. Additional floats may be fitted inside the lengthener behind the grid or frame.
12. Alterations are not to be made to the design outside of this specification. For new builds or major repairs contract Motueka Nets Ltd or Hampidjan NZ Ltd.

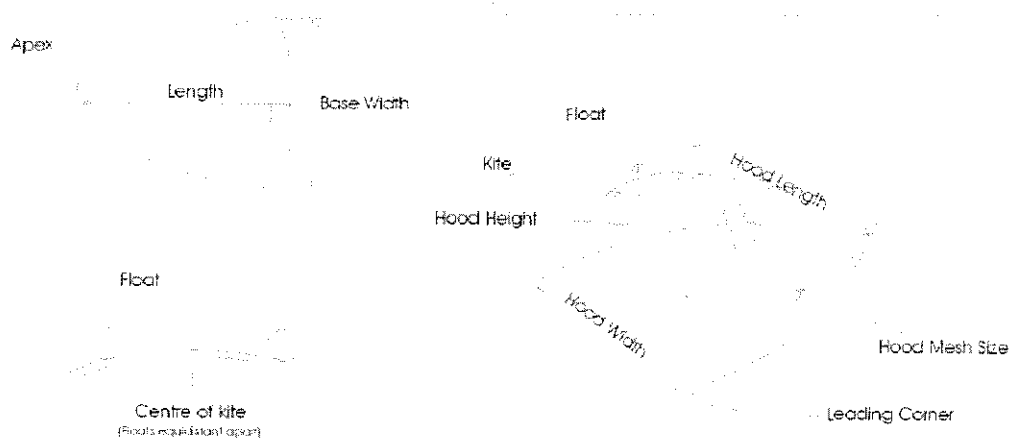
SLED TERMS



GRID



ESCAPE HATCH and HOOD



72 –HOUR NOTIFICATION OF PORT CALL OR PORT DEPARTURE FOR ANY VESSEL THAT HAS FISHED/OR INTENDS TO FISH IN SQU6T

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 SQU6T Yes/No	
Estimated duration of trip (days)	

Signature of Vessel Master or Company Representative

Sign:

Please FAX/email this completed form to the MFish Observer Programme.

Fax Number: 04 460 4675;

Email: observer@fish.govt.nz

Completed forms must be received no later than 72 hours (not including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays) prior to the vessel departing from the notified port of departure.

Deepwater Group Ltd Reporting Form

Indicate number sealions as 0 (for none), 1 or more than 1 for multiple captures in same tow / Remember to include information about status and location for each sealion for tows with multiple captures

Fax to: Deepwater Group Limited, Nelson, Fax 03 545 7021

Vessel _____

By 5:30 PM every Monday and Thursday OR daily if requested

Call sign _____

Person Completing Form _____

Date _____												
Tow Number	Area	MFish observer present?	Independent/Co. observer present?	SLED used?	Cover net tied down?	Number of Sealions caught?	Status of Sealions caught?	Location of sealion?	Seabirds captured on warp?	Seabirds captured in net?	Type of mitigation used?	
1T/6T Port/Not Fishing		Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Number	Alive/Dead	Before grid/Cover net /Cod end	Number	Number	See note at bottom of page	
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												

Date _____												
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1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												

Seabird Mitigation codes: Tori lines (T), Warp deflector (W), Bird Baffler (B) (please list all devices used if more than one per tow was deployed)