

ADDITIONAL MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Marine debris

6.1 The Secretariat prepared a paper on the current status of national surveys on monitoring of marine debris and its impact on marine mammals and seabirds in the Convention Area (SC-CAMLR-XXIV/BG/13).

6.2 The CCAMLR marine debris database contains data from 12 sites, predominantly within Area 48. Of these, four sites have data for at least three years that have been collected according to CCAMLR standard methods. Members, locations and durations are as follows:

- (i) beached marine debris: Chile (Cape Shirreff, Livingston Island, South Shetland Islands 1993 to 1997), UK (Bird Island, South Georgia 1989 to present, and Signy Island, South Orkney Islands 1991 to present), Uruguay (King George Island, South Shetland Islands 2001 to present) and South Africa (Marion Island 2004);
- (ii) debris associated with seabird colonies: UK (Bird Island 1993 to present);
- (iii) marine mammal entanglement: UK (Bird Island 1991 to present and Signy Island 1997 to present);
- (iv) hydrocarbon soiling: UK (Bird Island 1993 to present).

6.3 A summary of the trends presented in SC-CAMLR-XXIV/BG/13 indicated that:

- (i) marine debris, principally packaging items and fishing gear, reached a peak in the period from 1994 to 1996 at Bird Island and Signy Island and has declined thereafter;
- (ii) the level of marine debris found in seabird colonies at Bird Island increased between 1998 and 2003 since when there has been a substantial decline, particularly in the relative proportion of fishing gear, such as snoods and hooks;
- (iii) Antarctic fur seal entanglement at Bird Island reached a peak in 1993 and has shown a general decline since that time, with the lowest levels recorded in 2004/05. Plastic packaging bands, synthetic string/longline fragments and fishing net are most frequent entangling materials;
- (iv) the number of seabirds contaminated with hydrocarbons remains low.

6.4 The Scientific Committee recalled its request for papers relating to the methods used for analyses of marine debris data to be submitted for consideration at SC-CAMLR-XXIV (SC-CAMLR-XXIII, paragraph 6.6). As requested, the Secretariat contacted CEP in May 2005 for information relating to marine debris and monitoring methods that might be used or proposed for estimating trends in marine pollution (SC-CAMLR-XXIII, paragraph 6.5); there had been no response from CEP prior to CCAMLR-XXIV.

Reports of surveys of marine debris on beaches

6.5 Standardised surveys of marine debris were reported from Signy Island, South Orkney Islands, in 2004/05 (SC-CAMLR-XXIV/BG/18), and Bird Island, South Georgia, in 2003/04 (SC-CAMLR-XXIV/BG/15). There was an increase in the amount of debris at Signy Island (86%) and at Bird Island (97%) including 11 plastic packaging bands at the latter site, compared to four in the previous year.

6.6 Marine debris surveys conducted at Cape Shirreff, Livingston Island, between 2001 and 2005, reported in SC-CAMLR-XXIV/BG/4, found the highest number of items (1 023) in 2004/05 of which 95% were plastics, many of which showed clear evidence of partial incineration. Plastic packaging bands were present in each year of the study. A single survey at President Head, Snow Island, found 252 items of debris, 78% of which were plastic.

6.7 The Scientific Committee noted the overall reduction in the levels of marine debris, in particular plastic packaging bands, and suggested that this may indicate a change in the behaviour of fishers with respect to waste disposal processes.

6.8 As in previous years, Dr Naganobu reported that no fishing gear had been lost from Japanese krill trawlers and that all damaged nets had been disposed of in the incinerators installed on board all of those vessels.

Entanglement of marine mammals in marine debris

6.9 Standardised reporting of the entanglement of Antarctic fur seals in marine debris was reported from Signy Island, South Orkney Islands (SC-CAMLR-XXIV/BG/18), where two entangled animals were recorded and Bird Island, South Georgia (SC-CAMLR-XXIV/BG/16), where nine entangled seals were recorded between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2005, the lowest number of entanglements recorded since 1991.

Marine debris associated with seabird colonies

6.10 Marine debris associated with seabirds at Bird Island, South Georgia, from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 was reported in SC-CAMLR-XXIV/BG/14. There were 26 items of fishing gear (mostly longlining gear) found in seabird colonies, a substantial reduction from the previous year.

6.11 The Scientific Committee noted the reduction in the incidence of longline-based fishing gear found in association with wandering and black-browed albatross nests in 2004/05 and agreed that this is a positive indication of the effectiveness of the requirement to remove hooks from offal prior to discharge (Conservation Measure 25-02, paragraph 5). In respect of wandering albatrosses, the Scientific Committee noted that some of the fishing gear could be acquired by birds interacting with longline fisheries outside the Convention Area as well as in Subarea 48.3.

Seabirds and marine mammals soiled with hydrocarbons

6.12 Six cases of oil contamination of wandering albatrosses were recorded at Bird Island, South Georgia, between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004, including five birds during a two-week period in March 2005, were reported in SC-CAMLR-XXIV/BG/14.

Management Advice

6.13 The Scientific Committee noted the reduction in the levels of marine debris in some parts of the Convention Area and encouraged all Members to submit data on marine debris to the Secretariat.