



Digital Monitoring update – June 2019

On-board cameras for key commercial vessels fishing in Māui dolphin habitat

Kia ora

As you may have heard, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has announced that commercial fishing vessels that have the highest chance of interacting with Māui dolphins will be required to operate with on-board cameras from 1 November this year.

This affects up to 28 vessels (trawlers under 29 metres and set-netters over 8 metres) that fish the inshore area off the west coast of the North Island between Whanganui and Kaitaia (Tauroa Point). This covers Fisheries General Statistical Areas 40 – 42, 45 and 46. You'll find a map on our website www.fisheries.govt.nz/cameras.

These vessels have been identified based on their activity in the 2017/18 fishing year, however the final number requiring cameras will depend on whether they continue to fish in the area using trawl or set nets.

The government will cover the costs of getting affected vessels set up with an on-board camera system. This includes purchasing the camera system, and the associated costs for at least one year, such as for technical support and maintenance.

How it affects you

Vessels that fished outside of the identified area in the 2017/18 fishing year will not require on-board cameras, however ongoing monitoring of catch and position reporting will show if new vessels enter this area. Fisheries New Zealand will consider if either observers or on-board cameras are required on these vessels, based on the chance of them interacting with Māui dolphins.

This roll-out is driven by the need for more accurate information about any fishing interactions with Māui dolphins, which are critically endangered, and will help ensure that measures to protect this fragile population are effective.

As you'll probably be aware the Hector's and Maui dolphin Threat Management Plan is being reviewed and is expected to go out for consultation shortly.

This roll-out of on-board cameras will also allow time to refine systems and processes before any consideration is given to a wider camera programme across more of the commercial fleet.

Working with affected fishers

We've contacted all permit holders and vessel operators who are potentially affected, to let them know about the announcement and talk through next steps.

If you think you might be affected, but haven't heard from us, please get in touch as soon as possible by email at digital.monitoring@mpi.govt.nz

We know this is a major change for the fishers affected, and we'll work closely with them to make sure they are ready for November, including making sure a camera system is properly configured for their vessel.

More information

To find out more, see our website www.fisheries.govt.nz/cameras or get in touch with the digital monitoring team through our email digital.monitoring@mpi.govt.nz

Ngā mihi

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