

**Reporting forms for the recording of fisher-reported
Ecologically Related Species data**

**Ministry of Fisheries
New Zealand**

Abstract

Since 1 October 2008, commercial fishers in New Zealand have been required to report any incidental catches of seabirds, marine mammals, marine reptiles, protected fish species and corals, sponges and bryozoans under a new mandatory system designed to collect more accurate information. An example of the reporting form is attached.

Non-Fish/ Protected Species Catch Returns

The new reporting system was developed by the fishing industry, the Ministry of Fisheries, and the Department of Conservation after extensive consultation and trials by fishers. The catch return was designed to provide a uniform, mandatory way for commercial fishers to report incidental catches of marine mammals and marine wildlife. The requirement to report such bycatch arises from existing provisions under the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 and the Wildlife Act 1953.

All commercial fishers are required to declare on their logbook (catch effort) returns whether they have caught any non-fish or protected fish species, and if so, to give details on the new Non-fish/Protected Species Catch Return. This system allows for non-fish or protected species bycatch to be cross-referenced with detailed fishing information (for example location of fishing), but minimises the amount of information that fishers need to repeat between forms. The system also provides for a positive declaration from fishers for fishing trips on which no non-fish or protected species bycatch was taken, without the need for fishers to send in specific nil returns.

The non-fish and protected fish species catches fishers are required to report include:

- seabirds such as albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters, prions, gulls, terns, shags, gannets, boobies and penguins;
- marine mammals such as dolphins, toothed whales, baleen whales, seals and sea lions;
- marine reptiles such as turtles and sea snakes;
- corals, sponges and bryozoans;
- protected fish species — currently great white shark (or white pointer) and spotted black grouper.

The Ministry of Fisheries provided fishers with a full-colour flipchart guide to help them identify and code the species they must report. The guide also gives tips on handling live or injured animals. Due to difficulties with fisher identification of bycatch, fishers may report using species specific codes if known (for example XNR for Northern Royal Albatross), or a generic code (e.g. XAL for albatrosses). The information fishers are required to report also includes whether the animals were alive and uninjured, alive and injured, or dead. Definitions of what “injured” means are provided.

Included below are an example of a non-fish/protected species catch return, and the explanatory notes that accompany the form.

Non-Fish/ Protected Species Catch Return (NFPSCR) EXPLANATORY NOTES (October 2008)

1. You, the permit holder, must provide a completed NFPSCR form if, while fishing, you have an incidental catch of one of the following non-fish/ protected species groups:
 - Seabirds (*for example shags or albatross*); or
 - Marine mammals (*for example dolphins or seals*); or
 - Marine reptiles (*for example turtles or sea snakes*); or
 - Corals; or
 - Sponges; or
 - Bryozoans; or
 - Protected fish species (*for example spotted black grouper or white pointer shark*).

You may authorise someone (*for example, the vessel's master*) to fill out the NFPSCR for you.

2. These explanatory notes often use the words “you” and “your”. From this point on, the words “you” and “your” mean you, the permit holder, or any person authorised by you to fill out a NFPSCR for you.
3. The NFPSCR form is only to report catch of non-fish and protected species caught as an incidental catch. Use an appropriate form for reporting other catch.
4. **It is against the law to fail to complete a NFPSCR in accordance with the Fisheries (Reporting) Regulations 2001.** It is also against the law to provide false or misleading information. The penalties for failing to fill out and provide an accurate NFPSCR form to the Ministry of Fisheries are set out in the Fisheries Act 1996 and the Fisheries (Reporting) Regulations 2001. These include fines of up to \$250,000.
5. These explanatory notes have been written to explain and elaborate on the Fisheries (Reporting) Regulations 2001 and to help you to fill out NFPSCRs. The explanatory notes do not include all of the requirements of those Regulations. It is also possible that the Fisheries (Reporting) Regulations 2001 may have changed since these notes were printed. **Therefore, it is very important that you read and understand those Regulations.**
6. These explanatory notes use the word “Regulations” to mean the Fisheries (Reporting) Regulations 2001.
7. Contact FishServe to find out how to get a copy of the current Regulations. If, after reading the explanatory notes and the Regulations you need further information or are unclear on how to fill out the NFPSCR form, you should contact FishServe or seek legal advice.

8. The NFPSCR form and these notes use the words “permit holder”. “Permit holder” means a person who holds a current fishing permit issued under section 91 of the Fisheries Act 1996.
9. If you catch a marine turtle with a tag on it, then you must report the tag number. Please do this by sending a copy of this return and a letter to:

**Research Data Management
Ministry of Fisheries
PO Box 1020
Wellington 6140
New Zealand**

that includes a description of the tag you found and the number on the tag. If the marine turtle is dead and you can remove the tag, then you should send the tag itself. If you find a tag on any other non-fish or protected species you are not legally required to report the tag, but it would be appreciated if you reported it in the same way.

Section 1

You must fill out a separate NFPSCR for each fishing trip where non-fish/ protected species incidental catch occurs. A non-fish or protected species has been caught when it has become fixed, entangled or checked so that it is prevented from moving freely.

- Do not record sightings on this form.
- Do not record birds that strike the warps unless they are actually caught on the warp.
- Do not record birds that are snagged momentarily, but then manage to free themselves, because they have not been caught.

Section 2

Non-fish/ protected species include:

- Seabirds (*for example shags or albatross*); or
- Marine mammals (*for example dolphins or seals*); or
- Marine reptiles (*for example turtles or sea snakes*); or
- Corals; or
- Sponges; or
- Bryozoans; or
- Protected fish species (*for example spotted black grouper or white pointer shark*).

Section 3: Non-fish/ Protected species incidental catch

You must fill out a new row for each different non-fish/ protected species or species group caught in a fishing event. *For example, if two petrels and one type of sponge were caught in one set or tow then you need to write two lines – one for the petrels and one for the sponge species.*

For each row of Non-fish/ Protected species incidental catch that must be completed, fill out the following information as soon as it becomes evident that a non-fish or protected fish species has been taken.

- Date tow/set began (dd/mm/yy):** Write the date the tow or set started. Write the date as day/month/year. *For example, if the tow started on the 14th of July 2009, write “14/07/09” even if you believe that the non-fish incidental catch actually occurred on the 15th of July.*
- Time tow/set began (24-hr clock):** Write the time at the start of the tow or set in NZST (or NZDT if daylight saving applies) using the 24 hour clock. Write the time between 00:00 and 23:59. *For example, if the set started at nine o’clock in the evening write “21:00” even if you believe that the non-fish incidental catch actually occurred at one o’clock the next day.*
- Form number from catch effort return:** Write the form number of the catch effort return that you used to report the catch and effort for the same tow or set. *For example if the incidental catch occurred on a tow that you reported on TCEPR number 515304 then write “515304” in this box.*
- Species code:** Write the 3-letter species code for the non-fish/ protected species that was caught. Tables of Species Codes are listed in Parts 2A, 2B and 2C of the Regulations, and copies as of October 2008 are printed with these explanatory notes. For birds, mammals and reptiles if you can identify the species that was caught, then use an individual species code. If you cannot identify the species, then choose the most appropriate group code from the table of Species Group Codes. *For example, if you cannot identify what species of seabird was caught, but you know it is some kind of albatross, then write XAL for albatross.* For other protected species such as spotted black grouper and black coral (listed in Part 2C of Schedule 3 of the Regulations) you must use the individual species code.
- Estimated weight of corals, sponges or bryozoans:** If the species that was caught was some kind of coral, sponge or bryozoan then write your estimate of the quantity of the species in kilograms. For other species you should leave this box blank. *For example, if about 40kg of some kind of sponge was caught then write “40”.*

Do not record fractions of a kilogram on a NFPSCR form. You must round weights down to the next lower whole kilogram. *For example, record 17.6kg as “17”.* Record weights of less than 1kg as “0”.

- Seabirds/Mammals/Reptiles/Protected fish - Number alive, uninjured:** If the species that was caught was a seabird, mammal, reptile or protected fish then

write the number that were released alive and uninjured. For other species (i.e. corals, sponges and bryozoans) you should leave this box blank.

- Seabirds/Mammals/Reptiles/Protected fish - Number alive, injured:** If the species that was caught was a seabird, mammal, reptile or protected fish then write the number that were released alive but injured.

A seabird is “injured” if it has one or more of the following:

- Broken or drooping wing (i.e. the seabird cannot fold the wing up)
- Broken beak or leg
- Open wound
- Hook in bird (whether removed or not).

A marine mammal or reptile is “injured” if it has one or more of the following:

- Open wound
- A hook in the animal (whether removed or not)
- Broken flipper, fin or tail
- Broken shell (turtle).

A protected fish is “injured” if it has one or more of the following:

- Open wound
- A hook in the fish (whether removed or not)
- It has been removed from the water

For other species (i.e. corals, sponges and bryozoans) you should leave this box blank.

- Seabirds/Mammals/Reptiles/Protected fish - Number dead:** If the species that was caught was a seabird, mammal, reptile or protected fish then write the number that were dead (i.e. showing no signs of life). For other species (i.e. corals, sponges and bryozoans) you should leave this box blank.

For example, if there were four petrels, two alive and uninjured, one alive but with a hook in it and one dead then you would write:

Estimated weight of corals, sponges or bryozoans (kg)	Seabirds/Mammals/Reptiles		
	Number alive, uninjured	Number alive, injured	Number dead
.0kg	2	1	1

Section 4: Catch effort form

Fill out the following information as soon as the first row of Section 3 has been completed.

Enter a cross in one of the circles to show the catch effort form type that you used during the trip to report the fishing. If you used a form other than a TCEPR, a CELR, a LCER, a TLCER or a NCELR then tick the circle headed “Other” and write the initials of the form in the box. *For example, if you did squid jigging and reported your catch and effort on a Squid Jigging Catch Effort Return then tick the circle beside “Other” and write “SJCER” in the box beside the words “Enter the form type used”.*

Section 5: Permit holder and vessel details

Fill out the permit holder and vessel details as soon as the first row of Section 3 has been completed. Sign and date the return after all fishing reported on the return has been completed.

1. **Name of permit holder:** Write the name of the permit holder.
2. **Client number of permit holder:** Write the client number given to the permit holder by the Ministry of Fisheries or FishServe.
3. **Name of vessel:** Write the name of the vessel as recorded on its certificate of registration or licence. If no vessel was used then leave this blank.
4. **Registration number of vessel:** Write the vessel’s registration number. For a N.Z. fishing vessel this is the registration number on its certificate of registration. For a foreign fishing vessel this is the vessel’s international call sign. If no vessel was used then write “NONE”.
5. **Signature of permit holder or authorised person:** The permit holder, or a person authorised by the permit holder, must sign the form. *For example, the permit holder may authorise the master of the vessel to fill out and sign the NFPSCR.*
6. **Date signed:** The person who signed this NFPSCR form must write the date that they signed it here. Write the date as day/month/year. *For example, if the NFPSCR was signed on the 15th of July 2009, write “15/07/09”.*

Notes about the collection of NFPSCR information

1. Information on NFPSCR forms is being collected for reasons relating to:
 - 1.1 the sustainable use of fisheries resources and the protection of the aquatic environment; and
 - 1.2 the administration and enforcement of the Fisheries Act 1996 and the regulations made under this Act.

2. The agency that will collect and hold this information is called FishServe (see address below).
3. This information is then sent to the Ministry of Fisheries.
4. Some personal information is being collected.
5. Under Principles 6 and 7 of the Privacy Act 1993 you have the right to access and correct any personal information that has been provided.
6. You must send your completed NFPSCR forms to FishServe (Commercial Fisheries Services Ltd.). Their postal address is:

**PO Box 297
Wellington 6140
New Zealand**

7. You must make sure that your NFPSCR forms arrive at FishServe by the due date. The due date for the NFPSCR is the same as the due date for the catch effort return that you used to report the effort during which the non-fish or protected species was caught. If the forms are late you may have to pay a late fee.

TCEPR – If you are required to report using a Trawl, Catch, Effort and Processing Return then the NFPSCR is due 15 days after the last day of the fishing trip.

LCER – If you are required to report using a Lining Catch Effort Return then the NFPSCR is due 15 days after the last day of the fishing trip.

TLCER – If you are required to report using a Tuna Longlining Catch Effort Return then the NFPSCR is due by the 15th day of the month following the month in which the fishing trip ended.

NCELR – If you are required to report using a Netting Catch Effort Landing Return then the NFPSCR is due by the 15th day of the month following the month in which the fishing trip ended.

TCER – If you are required to report using a Trawl Catch Effort Return then the NFPSCR is due by the 15th day of the month following the month in which the fishing trip ended.

LTCER – If you are required to report using a Lining Trip Catch Effort Return then the NFPSCR is due by the 15th day of the month following the month in which the fishing trip ended.

SJCER – If you are required to report using a Squid Jigging Catch Effort Return then the NFPSCR is due 15 days after the last day of the fishing trip.

CELR – If you are required to report using a Catch Effort Landing Return then the NFPSCR is due by the 15th day of the month following the month in which the fishing trip ended.

8. If you are unsure about how to fill out a NFPSCR form you should consult FishServe (04 460 9555) or seek legal advice.