Questions and Answers: further rollout of cameras on commercial fishing vessels

1. What are the next steps for the further rollout of cameras?

Government officials are now working on a business case to determine the best way to implement the on-board camera decisions.

The business case will consider technical options, cost structures, how to sequence the rollout to priority areas, testing the global and domestic market for camera technologies, and changes to regulations.

Officials will talk to suppliers to see what technology exists to support the further rollout of cameras. The ultimate installation and operating costs will be better known after engagement with technology experts, consultation with stakeholders and affected parties.

Cabinet would have to sign off the proposals, there would be public consultation, and new regulations would have to be drafted and approved by Government.

2. What factors will influence the cost of the rollout?

There is still work underway to scope the technology that will be used.

The costs of data storage and review of the footage are the biggest factors in costs of fisheries camera programmes overseas.

Officials are also exploring developments in technology around machine learning and artificial intelligence to help review and identify activities captured by the camera footage.

3. When could the next rollout of cameras start?

It is possible the rollout could begin in late 2021, however specific timeframes depend on other requirements, such as progress developing the business case, public consultation, and approval of new regulations.

4. How will the rollout sit alongside camera programmes already announced, in dolphin habitats off the West Coast of the North Island and Banks Peninsula?

The estimate of 345 vessels with on-board cameras is made up as follows:

- 20 vessels which already have cameras installed and operate in fisheries off the West Coast of the North Island
- 165 vessels in high risk areas. This includes an estimated 50 vessels around the Hector's dolphin habitats of Banks Peninsula. This expanded camera programme was proposed in the revised Threat Management Plan for Hector's and Māui Dolphins announced in June 2020.
- 160 vessels in lower-risk areas will be part of the second tranche of the camera rollout.

5. What other measures are in place to improve the environmental performance of inshore fisheries?

- Electronic catch and position reporting has been fully in place since December 2019. It enables fisheries management and compliance officials to track around 830 fishing vessels within the inshore fisheries
- The revised Threat Management Plan (TMP) for Hector's and Māui's dolphins. The TMP restricts fishing activities that pose the greatest risk to the marine mammals. It is critical to our international reputation and for continued export access to important markets.
- The National Plan of Action on Seabirds was updated in 2020 to bring in better protections for seabirds at risk of fisheries bycatch, including iconic species like albatross and petrel.
- The inaugural Seafood Sustainability Awards created in 2020 are designed to celebrate fishing operators and scientists who promote innovation and sustainability.
- A proposed network of marine protected areas off the south east coast of the South Island. It will increase protection across a range of unique coastal and estuarine habitats and feeding areas for marine mammals, birds, fish and invertebrates.

- Wider non-fisheries measures include legislation to tackle greenhouse gases, phasing out single-use plastics, greater funding for predator and pest control, and support for sustainable tourism growth.

6. How widespread are on-board cameras in international fishing jurisdictions?

On-board cameras are in use in a number of countries in North and South America and Europe, as well as Australia and in international fisheries in the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

The US has cameras on around 600 vessels, followed by Canada with around 300 vessels. In Australia 75 vessels have operated with government-funded cameras since 2015.

7. What support is there for the affected fishing communities?

In a separate decision, Budget20 made $4.6 million available for a fishing industry-led support network to help businesses in challenging times.

It is the first fishing-specific support network. It builds on the existing Rural Support Trusts that already work with farmers.

There is also a range of other regional and national services that can provide fishers help and advice with health, wellbeing, and making business decisions.

For more information, visit www.fisheries.govt.nz/fisher-support

8. What commercial inshore fishing vessels would not be covered by the rollout?

Vessels that pose a lower risk to protected species would not be included in the next rollout. This includes small vessels that use methods like hand lines, diving, potting, and trolling; and others that operate in areas like inner harbours, or that harvest small catches.

9. If a vessel has cameras does it also need to carry fisheries observers? How are observers used in the inshore fleet compared to the deepwater fisheries?

The use of observer coverage is expected to continue, to ensure the on-board cameras are effective and able to detect protected species interactions.

Observers also perform other critical activities at sea, like biological sampling, and these activities will continue. However observer coverage may be adjusted over time.

On-board cameras are a good way to independently verify catch effort across the inshore fleet where it is not possible to have complete observer coverage.

Observer coverage is presently more extensive across the deepwater fleet where there are fewer vessels.

10. Where can I get more information about on-board cameras?

For information about on-board cameras, visit www.fisheries.govt.nz/cameras

For information about the current rollout of on-board cameras on the west coast North Island, visit www.fisheries.govt.nz/camerasWCNI