Ministry for Primary Industries Manatū Ahu Matua

Quantifying Benthic Biodiversity: a factual voyage report * from RV *Tangaroa* voyage TAN1701 to Chatham Rise * 4 January – 2 February 2017 – Supplemental Material *

New Zealand Aquatic Environment and Biodiversity Report No. 185

- D. A. Bowden,
- N. Davey,
- M. Fenwick,
- S. George,
- D. Macpherson,
- C. Ray,
- R. Stewart,
- C. Christensen-Field,
- K. Gibson.

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Email: <u>brand@mpi.govt.nz</u> Telephone: 0800 00 83 33 Facsimile: 04-894 0300

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Uncertainty about the environmental effects of deep-sea resource use, including bottom trawling, is an escalating issue for New Zealand. Species-environment models, which use correlations between environmental variables and records of species' presence to predict distributions, are proposed increasingly to aid management of environmental risk in the deep sea. However, quantitative data on the distribution and abundance of seabed fauna are sparse in New Zealand waters. This situation has resulted in high levels of uncertainty associated with predictive models of communities and species distributions, which in turn have resulted in precautionary management decisions in relation to proposed seabed resource use. Key knowledge required to reduce uncertainty associated with such models is quantitative baseline information about the distribution and abundance of benthic habitats, communities, and species.

The survey reported here (RV *Tangaroa*, TAN1701) was designed to acquire quantitative data about benthic habitats and fauna across Chatham Rise, an oceanic rise extending to the east of New Zealand's South Island, using a towed camera system with high-definition digital video and still image cameras, and a multicorer. Effort was concentrated in areas substantially under-sampled in previous comparable surveys of the area, with the aim of generating data that would improve future predictive models of distributions. A secondary objective to collect seabed camera transects and sediment cores at the head of Kaikōura Canyon was included in the voyage programme in response to the November 2016 Kaikōura Earthquake.

Photographic transects, each of approximately 1 km seabed distance, were completed at 142 sites across Chatham Rise, in depths from 130 m to 1407 m. This effectively doubles the number of sites on Chatham Rise from which high-resolution seabed photographic data are available. Five additional sites were sampled in Kaikōura Canyon, with overall totals of 152 towed camera and 27 multicorer deployments completed successfully. The total seabed distance covered in photographic transects was 161.4 km (approximately 600 000 m² seabed area), with 152 hours of seabed video and 36 500 still images recorded, and more than 70 000 individual observations of fauna recorded to log files. Multicorer deployments yielded a total of 101 individual sediment cores, which will be processed for sediment properties (27 cores), macro-infauna (retained on 300 μ m sieve, 49 cores), and meiofauna/genetics (un-sieved, 24 cores). Multibeam echosounder data and CTD data were also collected routinely throughout the voyage.

This report presents details of activities, timings, samples, and data collected during the survey, together with preliminary descriptions of seabed habitats and faunal distributions across the study area, and a catalogue of representative images from each site. Data from the voyage will take several months to analyse in detail, yielding finer-level taxonomic identifications and more precise population density estimates than were possible at sea. Meticulous auditing and cross-checking will then be required before these data can be combined with those from earlier surveys from Chatham Rise. When this work is complete, however, the combined dataset will provide a spatially extensive, taxonomically detailed, and internally consistent resource for further study of benthic faunal distributions in what is arguably the most commercially and ecologically important deep-sea area of New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone.

This supplement consists of a continuation from the main document of Appendix 3; site summary pages.































































































































































































