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**FAO TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES:  
FISHING OPERATIONS – BEST PRACTICES TO REDUCE INCIDENTAL CATCH OF  
SEABIRDS IN CAPTURE FISHERIES**

Summary:

This document is referred to in UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.26.2.3 *Bycatch*, and contains 'Best practices to reduce incidental catch of seabirds in capture fisheries' (number 1, supplement 2) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries.

**FAO  
TECHNICAL  
GUIDELINES FOR  
RESPONSIBLE  
FISHERIES**

**1**

**Suppl. 2**

# **FISHING OPERATIONS**

## **2. Best practices to reduce incidental catch of seabirds in capture fisheries**



*Cover photo:*

Twin streamer (tori) lines to reduce seabird strikes with warp cables on a stern trawler in South Africa. Courtesy of Barry Watkins, BirdLife Albatross Task Force, South Africa.

# **FISHING OPERATIONS**

## **2. Best practices to reduce incidental catch of seabirds in capture fisheries**

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## PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

In response to an increased awareness about the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries and its potential negative impacts on seabird populations, a proposal was made at the twenty-second session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in March 1997 that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organize an expert consultation, using extrabudgetary funds, to develop guidelines leading to a Plan of Action to be submitted at the next session of COFI aimed at reducing the incidental catch of seabirds.

The International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA–Seabirds) was developed through the meeting of a Technical Working Group on Reduction of Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries in Tokyo, Japan, in March 1998, and a subsequent Consultation on the Management of Fishing Capacity, Shark Fisheries and Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries held in Rome, Italy, in October of the same year. The IPOA–Seabirds was adopted by the twenty-third Session of COFI in 1999, which noted that the implementation of the plan should be pursued as high priority.

This document was prepared by the FAO Fishing Technology Service, based on the work of the Expert Consultation on Best Practice Technical Guidelines for IPOA/NPOA–Seabirds, held in Bergen, Norway, from 2 to 5 September 2008.

It has to be stressed that these Guidelines have no formal legal status. They are intended to provide support for the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code or CCRF). Furthermore, in order to present the management process in all its complexity and diversity, the wording and structure of these Guidelines do not strictly follow the language and structure of the Code. Therefore, any eventual differences in the terminology employed should not be understood as intending reinterpretation of the Code. Finally, it should be remembered that, since the Guidelines are intended to be flexible and capable of evolving as circumstances change, or as new information becomes available, they may be further revised and complemented by other guidelines, notes, etc., on specific issues.

FAO.

Fishing operations. 2. Best practices to reduce incidental catch of seabirds in capture fisheries.

*FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries*. No. 1, Suppl. 2. Rome, FAO. 2009. 49p.

### **ABSTRACT**

These Guidelines have been produced to support implementation of the International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA-Seabirds). They are addressed to decision-makers and policy-makers associated with conserving seabirds and with minimizing their interaction with fishing gears, but the Guidelines should also be of interest to fishing industries and other parties.

The IPOA-Seabirds is consistent with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, agreements from the 1995 United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and any applicable rules of international law. It encompasses interactions of seabirds with all fishing gears, whether they are industrial, artisanal or traditional fisheries.

The IPOA-Seabirds is not a full strategic plan for the world, rather it prescribes a process whereby individual States, States participating in subregional arrangements through bilateral and multilateral agreements to minimize the interaction of seabirds with fisheries, and relevant regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) identify national, subregional and regional issues and then develop national and regional “Seabird Plans” to address the issues.

The guiding principles of the IPOA-Seabirds and the Guidelines are that States contributing to mortality of seabirds should participate in their conservation and management.

The Guidelines are intended to provide general advice and a framework for the development and implementation of Seabird Plans and Seabird Monitoring and Assessment Reports prepared at national, regional and subregional levels. They are also intended to provide general advice and a framework for joint Seabird Plans in areas managed by regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements (RFMO/As).

The Guidelines have been prepared to: (i) assist countries in preparing and implementing a more effective National Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (NPOA–Seabirds); (ii) provide RFMOs with guidance on implementing an IPOA–Seabirds within a regional framework; and (iii) address incidental mortality of seabirds from relevant fishing gear. The Guidelines emphasize the importance of a cyclical framework of data collection, research and monitoring to quantify and reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds in an adaptive manner.

The Guidelines cover the following topics: (i) extend the IPOA–Seabirds to other relevant fishing gears including trawls and gillnets; (ii) uptake of seabird measures by RFMO/As; (iii) defining an incidental catch problem; (iv) mitigation measures and related standards; (v) mitigation research; (vi) education, training and outreach; (vii) observer programmes; (viii) seabird incidental catch reduction objectives; (ix) monitoring and reporting framework for NPOA–Seabirds and regional plans; and (x) periodic performance review.



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**Acronyms and abbreviations**

<b>ACAP</b>	Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
<b>BPTG</b>	Best Practice Technical Guidelines
<b>CAMLR Convention</b>	Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
<b>CCAMLR</b>	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
<b>CCRF</b>	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
<b>CCSBT</b>	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
<b>CMS</b>	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
<b>COFI</b>	FAO Committee on Fisheries
<b>ETBF</b>	Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery
<b>EEZ</b>	exclusive economic zone
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>IATTC</b>	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
<b>ICCAT</b>	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
<b>IFF</b>	International Fishers Forum
<b>IGO</b>	intergovernmental organization
<b>IWL</b>	integrated weight line
<b>IMAF</b>	Ad Hoc Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing
<b>IOTC</b>	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
<b>IPHC</b>	International Pacific Halibut Commission
<b>IPOA–Seabirds</b>	International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature
<b>IWL</b>	integrated weight line
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>NPOA–Seabirds</b>	National Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries
<b>RFMOs</b>	regional fisheries management organizations
<b>RFMO/As</b>	regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements
<b>SEAFO</b>	South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization

**UNFSA**

Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks OR United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement

**WCPFC**

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

## **BACKGROUND**

1. From ancient times, fishing has been a major source of food for humanity and a provider of employment and economic benefits to those engaged in this activity. However, with increased knowledge and the dynamic development of fisheries, it has been realized that living aquatic resources, although renewable, are not infinite and need to be properly managed if their contribution to the nutritional, economic and social well being of the growing world's population was to be sustained.
2. The adoption in 1982 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provided a new framework for the better management of marine resources. The new legal regime of the oceans gave coastal States rights and responsibilities for the management and use of fishery resources within the area of their national jurisdiction (EEZs), which embrace some 90 percent of the world's marine fisheries.
3. In recent years, world fisheries have become a dynamically developing sector of the food industry, and many States have striven to take advantage of their new opportunities by investing in modern fishing fleets and processing factories in response to growing international demand for fish and fishery products. It has since become clear, however, that many fisheries resources cannot sustain an often uncontrolled increase of exploitation.
4. Clear signs of over-exploitation of important fish stocks, modifications of ecosystems, significant economic losses, and international conflicts on management and fish trade have threatened the long-term sustainability of fisheries and the contribution of fisheries to food supply. Therefore, the Nineteenth Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), held in March 1991, recommended that new approaches to fisheries management embracing conservation, environmental, social and economic considerations were urgently needed. FAO was asked to develop the concept of responsible fisheries and elaborate a Code of Conduct to foster its application.
5. Subsequently, the Government of Mexico, in collaboration with FAO, organized an International Conference on Responsible Fishing in Cancun in May 1992. The Declaration of Cancun endorsed at that Conference was brought to the attention of the UNCED Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, which supported the preparation of a Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The FAO Technical Consultation on High Seas Fishing, held in September 1992, further recommended the elaboration of a Code to address the issues regarding high seas fisheries.

6. The One Hundred and Second Session of the FAO Council, held in November 1992, discussed the elaboration of the Code, recommending that priority be given to high seas issues and requested that proposals for the Code be presented to the 1993 session of the Committee on Fisheries.
7. The Twentieth Session of COFI, held in March 1993, examined in general the proposed framework and content for such a Code, including the elaboration of guidelines, and endorsed a time frame for the further elaboration of the Code. It also requested FAO to prepare, on a "fast track" basis, as part of the Code, proposals to prevent re-flagging of fishing vessels which affect conservation and management measures on the high seas. This resulted in the FAO Conference, at its Twenty-seventh Session in November 1993, adopting the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas, which, according to FAO Conference Resolution 15/93, forms an integral part of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF).
8. The Code was formulated so as to be interpreted and applied in conformity with the relevant rules of international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (UNCLOS), as well as with the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, 1995, and in the light of, *inter alia*, the 1992 Declaration of Cancun, the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and in particular, Chapter 17 of Agenda 21.
9. The development of the Code was carried out by FAO in consultation and collaboration with relevant United Nations Agencies and other international organizations, including non-governmental organizations.
10. The Code of Conduct consists of five introductory Articles: Nature and Scope; Objectives; Relationship with Other International Instruments; Implementation, Monitoring and Updating and Special Requirements of Developing Countries. These introductory articles are followed by an article on General Principles, which precedes the six thematic articles on Fisheries Management, Fishing Operations, Aquaculture Development, Integration of Fisheries into Coastal Area Management, Post-Harvest Practices and Trade, and Fisheries Research. In addition and as already mentioned, the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas forms an integral part of the Code.

11. The Code is voluntary. However, certain parts of it are based on relevant rules of international law, as reflected in the UNCLOS. The Code also contains provisions that may be or have already been given binding effect by means of other obligatory legal instruments amongst the Parties, such as the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas.
12. The Twenty-eighth Session of the Conference in Resolution 4/95 adopted the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries on 31 October 1995. The same Resolution requested FAO, *inter alia*, to elaborate as appropriate Technical Guidelines in support of the implementation of the Code in collaboration with members and interested relevant organizations.
13. This volume is the second supplement in the series of FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries, No. 1: Fishing operations.

## INTRODUCTION

1. In 2008, 18 of the 22 species of albatrosses were threatened with extinction with six species listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)<sup>1</sup> as endangered and three as critically endangered. Mortality associated with fishing is listed as a threatening process to all 18 species of threatened albatrosses. The IUCN defines albatrosses as one of the most threatened family of birds in the world. In addition, four out of five *Procellaria* petrels are threatened by longline fishing.

2. These Best Practice Technical Guidelines (BPTG) are developed to support the effective implementation of the International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA–Seabirds) and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF).

3. The guidelines provide additional information on types of fisheries and fishing gear<sup>2</sup> where the incidental mortality of seabirds is a concern, summaries of appropriate mitigation measures, and further elaboration of best practices to assist States and regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements (RFMO/As) in developing effective National Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (NPOA–Seabirds) and regional plans.

4. Where a seabird bycatch problem has been identified and where industry has been a partner in a comprehensive bycatch mitigation strategy, dramatic reductions in seabird mortality have been achieved.

### Problem statement

5. Despite international efforts in recent years to reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds in longline fisheries, populations of many affected species continue to decline. Currently, the number of NPOA–Seabirds adopted, their limited implementation and the varying quality of existing plans, including RFMO/As actions, has limited the effective implementation of IPOA–Seabirds. The development and implementation of a more robust and widespread suite of NPOA–Seabirds would assist in reducing the incidental catch of seabirds. Given the existing data that highlight the scale

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<sup>1</sup> The IUCN Red List of threatened species is widely considered an objective and authoritative system for classifying species in terms of the risk of extinction.

<sup>2</sup> For information on fishing gear classification, see FAO Fisheries Technical Paper No. 222, Rev. 1.

of mortality in trawl and gillnet fisheries (which are not addressed by the IPOA–Seabirds), it is important that all relevant gear types are covered by NPOA–Seabirds and regional plans.

### **Purpose statement**

6. The objective of these Best Practice Technical Guidelines is to provide guidance to States and RFMO/As on effective implementation of the IPOA–Seabirds and thereby reduce the incidental catch of seabirds by longline and other relevant fisheries.

7. Fisheries vary widely according to geographical area, target species, fishing gear, vessels and fishing practices. Accordingly, the use of any or all Best Practice Technical Guidelines should be fishery specific.

### **Structure and content of this document**

8. This document is part of the FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries series and is thus structured similarly to previously published Guidelines in this series. More specifically, these Guidelines elaborate the types of information, methodologies and reporting arrangements for States and RFMO/As in preparing and implementing robust NPOA–Seabirds and regional plans.

9. The structure of these Guidelines is to elaborate the important sections of texts within the IPOA–Seabirds followed by explanatory text in support of best practices and a statement of the Best Practice Technical Guideline.

### **Fundamental principles**

10. The following fundamental principles support these technical guidelines:

- Broadening the scope and effectiveness of IPOA–Seabirds by developing NPOA–Seabirds that reduce the incidental catch of seabirds in relevant fisheries.
- Ensuring the effective application by States and RFMO/As of IPOA–Seabirds within a regional framework, including the adoption of technical and institutional measures required to adopt effective mitigation measures by RFMO/As to provide consistent implementation through a regional plan.
- Adopting scientifically proven, practical and cost-effective mitigation measures, or combinations of mitigation measures.
- Conducting collaborative research into the development and testing of mitigation measures.

- Designing and implementing education, training and outreach programmes to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds.
- Using data collection programmes (including observer programmes) and reporting frameworks designed and implemented to provide representative data on the incidental catch of seabirds.

## **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

11. States and RFMO/As should strengthen international cooperation with the aim of supporting developing countries in implementing the IPOA–Seabirds and these Best Practice Technical Guidelines (see Annex 1).

## **INSTRUMENTS SUPPORTING IPOA–SEABIRDS**

12. Several instruments support the IPOA–Seabirds and should be considered (Annex 2).

## **ENHANCING IPOA–SEABIRDS: A NEED FOR BEST PRACTICE TECHNICAL GUIDELINES**

### **Review of early NPOA–Seabirds**

13. In the nine years following adoption of the IPOA–Seabirds in 1999, only ten NPOA–Seabirds were developed. In addition, several countries have advanced drafts that are nearing completion or awaiting implementation.

14. Although the IPOA–Seabirds contains an overview of the steps taken to conduct an assessment of the need for an NPOA–Seabirds and brief technical guidelines on the components that a plan should include, the first generation NPOA–Seabirds varied widely in their objectives, content and effectiveness.

15. Of the NPOA–Seabirds available at the time of publication, the assessment process has taken one of the following four approaches:

- An assessment was conducted followed by the drafting of an NPOA–Seabirds.
- An assessment and NPOA–Seabirds were conducted as one exercise.
- The State adopted an NPOA–Seabirds with an assessment planned to follow at a later date.
- The State adopted an NPOA–Seabirds without a published assessment.

16. Mitigation measures proposed to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds included: (i) prescriptive requirements for the mandatory use of mitigation measures for all, or sections, of their fishing fleet; (ii) measures to follow post-NPOA–Seabirds assessments; or (iii) voluntary codes of conduct, designed to enable the fishing industry to retain ownership of the problem and the solutions.

17. The use of observers to collect independent information at sea as a monitoring tool for seabird mortality varied significantly among the adopted NPOA–Seabirds.

18. The degree of seabird incidental catch monitoring varied considerably with several NPOA–Seabirds lacking clearly stated incidental catch objectives.

19. There was considerable variation between States in the interpretation of what constitutes a “problem” in terms of the incidental catch of seabirds and when to begin to address this through the development of an NPOA–Seabirds.

#### **Other relevant fisheries**

20. The objective of the IPOA–Seabirds to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds is based upon tenets in the CCRF, which does not limit applicability solely to longline gear. To consider this broader applicability when implementing the IPOA–Seabirds, international effort is also required to reduce incidental catch of seabirds in non-longline fisheries. This is because the range of fisheries affecting seabirds and driving the populations of many albatrosses and petrels to decline is broader than initial evaluations. For example, the growing body of literature that highlights the severity of seabird mortality in trawl fisheries (Sullivan, Reid and Bugoni, 2006; Watkins, Petersen and Ryan, 2006; Baker *et al.*, 2007). Seabird mortality in trawl fisheries can be broadly grouped into two categories: (1) birds colliding with trawl warps, netsonde and paravane cables, which particularly impacts larger birds such as albatrosses; and (2) birds becoming entangled in nets during shooting and hauling, which more commonly affect smaller seabirds. There is considerable potential for underestimating incidental mortality because an unknown proportion of birds that are killed by warp strikes are not recovered.

21. In addition, there is some evidence of high levels of seabird incidental mortality in gillnet fisheries (DeGange and Day, 1991; Uhlmann, Fletcher and Moller, 2005). Coastal diving seabirds species such as alcids, penguins, sea ducks, shearwaters, cormorants and gannets (sulids) are susceptible to entanglement. However, in the absence of data on specific fisheries, it is not

possible to determine the magnitude of mortality or the impact gillnet fisheries may have on these seabird populations. This lack of data has also affected the level of research applied to developing suitable mitigation measures in gillnet fisheries (Melvin, Parrish and Conquest, 1999) and remains a fishing gear of concern. Accordingly, while these technical guidelines do not provide the same level of technical detail for gillnet fisheries as they do for longline and trawl fisheries, many of the recommended processes and structures are relevant to those fisheries where gillnets are used and where problems exist with the incidental catch of seabirds by these fishing gear types.

### **Drivers of change to reduce seabird incidental catch**

22. There are a range of factors that influence the interests, motivations and actions of fishers to alter fishing practices to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds. The factors that have contributed to reducing the incidental catch of seabirds to low levels include:

- incentives – economic (positive and negative), operational and political;
- innovation – usually technical solutions driven by incentives;
- leadership – industry, government, scientists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- science – rigorous defensible science, supported by monitoring/observers;
- conservation goals – stakeholders driven by a conservation ethic; and
- collaboration – the overarching common thread that is essential to the drivers of change coalescing into action.

23. In all cases, fisheries that have successfully reduced the incidental catch of seabirds have captured the input of a range of stakeholders and generated a structure, be it a working group or something less formal, that allows differing views and opinions to be aired, discussed and, where appropriate, implemented. Such a structure or process is considered essential to reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in fisheries and should be an integral part of all NPOA–Seabirds and regional plans.

24. As an example of how these different elements have been combined, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) demersal longline fishery for Patagonian toothfish is provided as a case study in Annex 3.

## **Enhanced collaboration between States preparing NPOA–Seabirds and RFMO/As**

25. Seabirds cross national boundaries and spend the majority of their lives migrating and foraging in waters distant from their breeding grounds. Mitigating risk to their populations is therefore an issue that traverses national and international boundaries. Many species susceptible to incidental mortality spend a considerable time on high seas. These areas are outside national jurisdiction, but may fall under areas managed by RFMO/As. BirdLife International (2004) manages a database of remote tracking data for albatrosses and petrels (*Tracking Ocean Wanderers: the global distribution of albatrosses and petrels*) on behalf of a global collaboration of data holders. The analysis of these data has been widely used in RFMOs (e.g. CCAMLR, Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna [CCSBT], Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission [IATTC], International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas [ICCAT], Indian Ocean Tuna Commission [IOTC] and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission [WCPFC]), and in a range of coastal State fisheries to highlight the spatial and temporal distribution of seabirds and their overlap with fishing effort. This has been a critical step in the process toward addressing the incidental catch of seabirds in these fisheries.

26. RFMO/As are the intergovernmental organizations or arrangements through which States collaborate to conserve and manage straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. RFMO/As can act as the link between international policy and regional implementation of best practice for reducing the incidental catch of non-target species.

27. The role that RFMOs play in reducing incidental mortality of non-target species was identified as a priority action at the Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs (Kobe, Japan, 2007).

28. Recent steps taken in the RFMOs (see Table 1 in Annex 5) highlight the progress made in relation to addressing the incidental catch of seabirds. At the Twenty-seventh Session of COFI, seven regional fishery bodies listed their efforts to assist in the implementation of IPOA–Seabirds.<sup>3</sup> These steps included measures requiring the use of seabird incidental catch mitigation measures by longline vessels in areas overlapping with high

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<sup>3</sup> CCAMLR, CCSBT, IATTC, ICCAT, IPHC, SEAFO and WCPFC.

albatross and petrel distribution and recommendations on data collection and dissemination of educational materials.

29. Measures considered as important in reducing the incidental catch of seabirds have been implemented in varying degrees by RFMOs such as CCAMLR, CCSBT, ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC and the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO). The list of measures includes:

- resolutions identifying the incidental catch of seabirds as a problem requiring management;
- specialist working groups to assess incidental catch and ecosystem issues;
- recommended voluntary mitigation measures and/or mandatory measures;
- ecological risk assessment processes;
- monitoring of incidental catch;
- carcass recovery programmes for species identification;
- reporting of incidental catch and target catch and effort information;
- education and outreach programmes for fishers on mitigation and mandatory measures; and
- review of performance at vessel level and fine-scaled reporting of incidental catch.

30. The instruments and technical measures that States apply to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds may be directly applicable (e.g. mitigation measures, data requirements, measures of performance) or could be adapted (e.g. use of conservation and management measures rather than national-level regulations for mandatory measures) for use within RFMOs. The presence of scientific committees, specialist working groups and compliance review groups within RFMO/As can all contribute towards reductions in the incidental catch of seabirds.

### **PREPARATION OF IPOA/NPOA–SEABIRDS BEST PRACTICE TECHNICAL GUIDELINES**

31. These guidelines are designed to assist:

- States assessing the need for, or drafting a new, NPOA–Seabirds;
- RFMO/As developing regional action plans to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds; and
- States undergoing a review process of current NPOA–Seabirds.

32. States with longline, trawl and gillnet fisheries should conduct an assessment of these fisheries to determine if a problem exists with respect to

incidental catch of seabirds. If a problem exists and its nature and magnitude warrants further action, States should adopt an NPOA–Seabirds for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in these fisheries (NPOA–Seabirds).

33. When developing the NPOA–Seabirds, States should review the presence of fisheries in areas adjacent to their exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and determine whether birds overlap with vessels fishing in areas in national jurisdictions and in adjacent areas managed by RFMOs/As. If so, and a potential for interactions with seabirds exists in these adjacent areas, then the State’s NPOA–Seabirds should consider these RFMOs/As.

34. States which determine that an NPOA–Seabirds is not necessary should review that decision on a regular basis, taking into account, *inter alia*: (i) changes in their fisheries, such as the expansion of effort or changes in gear types; (ii) the development of new fisheries; and (iii) improved knowledge of, or changes in, foraging distributions of seabirds. If, based on a subsequent assessment, States determine that a problem exists they should follow the procedures outlined in paragraph 12 of the IPOA–Seabirds and develop and implement an NPOA–Seabirds within two years.

35. The schematic representation of the effective implementation of IPOA–Seabirds using these Best Practice Technical Guidelines is set out in Figure 1.

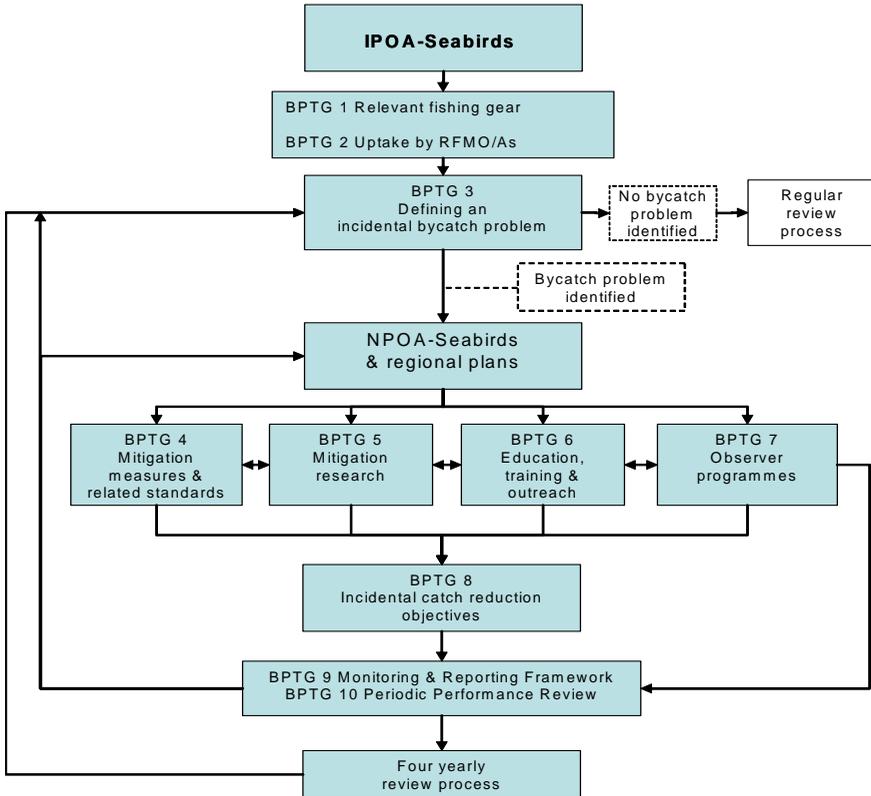


Figure 1. Decision-making and process framework for IPOA/NPOA–Seabirds and regional plans. (BPTG 4–7 reflect the four original recommended elements for NPOA–Seabirds contained in the IPOA–Seabirds.)

**BEST PRACTICE TECHNICAL GUIDELINES****Box 1****Best Practice Technical Guidelines**

- (1) Extend the IPOA–Seabirds to other relevant fishing gear including trawls and gillnets
- (2) Uptake of seabird measures by RFMO/As
- (3) Defining an incidental catch problem
- (4) Mitigation measures and related standards
- (5) Mitigation research
- (6) Education, training and outreach
- (7) Observer programmes
- (8) Seabird incidental catch reduction objectives
- (9) Monitoring and reporting framework for NPOA–Seabirds and regional plans
- (10) Periodic performance review

**Best Practice Technical Guideline No. 1 – Extend the IPOA–Seabirds to other relevant fishing gear including trawls and gillnets**

States and RFMO/As should consider the potential for incidental catch problems in a range of fisheries including those using longlines, trawls and gillnets.

**Best Practice Technical Guideline No. 2 – Uptake of Seabird measures by RFMO/As**

Where actions taken by States through an NPOA–Seabirds would be more effective if extended to areas under the jurisdiction of RFMO/As, the following measures should be considered as contributing to improving the effectiveness of the NPOA–Seabirds and implementation of IPOA–Seabirds.

- (i) States should advise RFMO/As to adopt complementary measures contained in their NPOA–Seabirds, including mitigation measures, where their fisheries and/or seabirds overlap (see Table 1 in Annex 5).
- (ii) Seabird experts should be included as members of State delegations to participate in scientific meetings of RFMO/As

that address seabird incidental catch (e.g. bycatch working group, ecosystem working group).

- (iii) Measures listed in (i) and (ii) are relevant in the situation when RFMO/As are considering developing a regional plan to reduce seabird incidental catch.

### **Defining an incidental catch problem**

36. The list of assessment components provided in IPOA–Seabirds gives a sound framework for identifying the nature and characteristics of a seabird incidental catch problem and therefore the need for an NPOA–Seabirds. An assessment should be based on all available data including, *inter alia*, incidental catch data collected by at-sea observers, seabird data and anecdotal information. Reports of sporadic captures from fishermen or observers outside of formal observer programmes addressing seabird incidental mortality may be the first sign of a more generalized problem.

37. Given the operational and environmental variability associated with fisheries globally, it was not feasible in the IPOA–Seabirds to define what constitutes a “problem” in a generic context. The criteria used to define what constitutes a “problem” should be explicitly defined and developed for specific States and/or fisheries.

### **Best Practice Technical Guideline No. 3 – Defining an incidental catch problem**

When defining a seabird incidental catch problem, States and RFMO/As should consider the following:

- Defining the rationale for determining if a problem does, or does not, exist. The rationale should be based on: (i) the magnitude of seabird bycatch (rate or number); (ii) species that are incidentally caught and their conservation status; and (iii) spatial and temporal overlap of fishing effort with seabirds.
- Reviewing available data relevant to the incidental mortality of seabirds.
- Validating sources of information and, where appropriate, to follow up with more detailed investigations.
- Adopting a precautionary approach where information is lacking or uncertain.

## **Mitigation measures and related standards**

38. Information on the mitigation measures that have been proven to be most effective and a summary of the latest emerging measures in demersal and pelagic longline fisheries and trawl and gillnet fisheries are available in Brothers, Cooper and Løkkeborg (1999); Bull (2007) and Løkkeborg (2008). The work of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) Seabird Bycatch Working Group is recommended as an appropriate means of remaining current with ongoing research into emerging mitigation measures and the refinement of best practice suites of mitigation measures, including fishery specific recommendations. Mitigation measures in longline fisheries are more advanced than for other fisheries.

39. Tables 1 to 3 in Annex 5 summarize the mitigation measures which have been adopted for relevant gear types by different States and RFMOs. In some cases, objective decisions were made based on experimental research and/or effectiveness based on broad-based implementation in fisheries. In other cases, there is only anecdotal evidence to categorize the efficacy of specific mitigation measures.

### ***Longline fisheries***

40. For longline fisheries, a number of mitigation measures have been tested since the early 1990s. The measures available are typically either technical or operational in nature.

41. Løkkeborg (2008) defines a mitigation measure as a modification to gear design or a fishing operation that reduces the likelihood of catching seabirds. Mitigation measures for longline fishing have been classified somewhat differently, but can be divided into four main categories:

- Avoid fishing in areas and at times when seabird interactions are most intense (night setting, area and seasonal closures).
- Limit bird access to baited hooks (e.g. underwater setting chute, weighted lines, thawed bait, side setting).
- Deter birds from taking baited hooks (e.g. streamer [bird scaring] lines).
- Reduce the attractiveness or visibility of the baited hooks (e.g. retention of or strategic dumping of offal, artificial baits, blue-dyed bait).

42. Since the drafting of IPOA–Seabirds, considerable research has been conducted into the effectiveness of various mitigation measures both in

isolation and in combination. There is no single solution to mitigate incidental seabird catch across all longline fisheries as the efficiency of a measure is specific to each fishery. However, a considerable body of evidence shows that there is potential for reducing seabird mortality to negligible levels using mitigation measures. Using a suite of measures is the best way to avoid or reduce seabird mortality in most cases, although a single measure has proven to virtually eliminate seabird incidental catch in a few longline fisheries.

### ***Trawl fisheries***

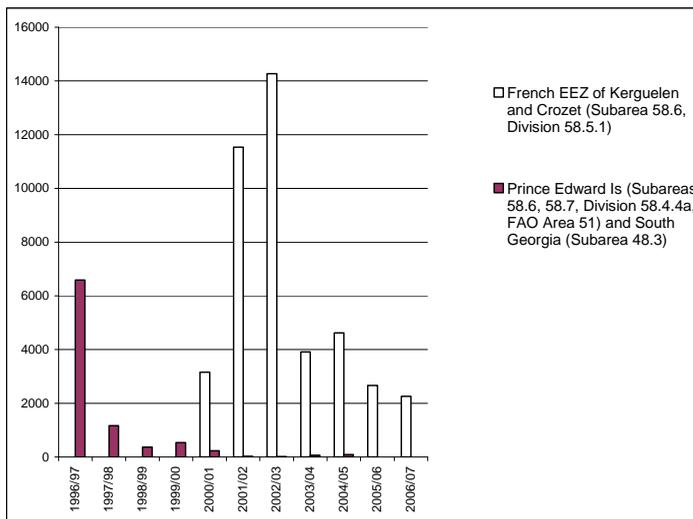
43. Seabird interactions with trawl vessels fall into two broad categories: (1) interactions with trawl warps/netsonde cables, and (2) interactions with trawl netting. For reducing seabird strikes on trawl warps and netsonde cables, the use of bird scaring lines has been proven to be the most effective mitigation measure. However, the retention or strategic management of fish waste (offal and discards) is the most likely long-term solution to reducing seabird incidental catch in trawl fisheries. Effective fish waste management combined with operational measures such as cleaning the net prior to shooting and reducing the time the net is on the surface at shooting and hauling are the best practice measures available for reducing seabird net entanglements.

## Box 2

### CCAMLR fisheries example of mitigation measures

The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) has prescribed a set of conservation measures to minimize seabird bycatch in its demersal longline fisheries targeting Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) and Antarctic toothfish (*D. mawsoni*). These measures include streamer lines, specified line sink rates, strict prohibition on the discharge of fisheries waste during setting operations, and seasonal closure of certain high-risk areas for seabird interactions. Information on fishery performance, implementation of mitigation measures, new and developing mitigation measures, and seabird population and distribution information is reviewed annually by a group of experts in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing (IMAF). In 1996, an estimated 6 500 birds were killed, excluding the Kerguelen and Crozet Islands in the French EEZ. This had been reduced to fewer than 100 birds since 2002, two birds in 2006 and zero in 2007.

While the success of the approach adopted by CCAMLR in demersal longline fisheries may serve as a good model for some other fisheries management bodies, it should be noted that these fisheries operate with a closed season of up to eight months. This period coincides with at-risk seabird breeding season, when seabird interactions are at their highest level and in itself is a very effective mitigation measure that may not be applicable or acceptable in other fisheries.



The incidental mortality of seabirds in the demersal longline CCAMLR fisheries (vertical axis) for *Dissostichus* spp. in the Southern Ocean around Antarctica between the period when management interventions commenced (1996/97) and the most recent year (2006/07, horizontal axis). Two rapid

### *Gillnet fisheries*

44. There are few mitigation measures for gillnet fisheries. Mandatory gillnet mitigation measures are required in two fisheries in the United States of America. In the Puget Sound, Washington, drift gillnet fishery for sockeye salmon, non-treaty fishers are required to use visual barriers on the top of their nets and are precluded from areas where sensitive seabird species are most common. In central California, set gillnets are limited to depths beyond where seabirds and other marine wildlife are most common.

### *Mitigation measures*

45. Advances in some fisheries have been achieved through review and analysis of relevant data by a technical working group. For example, in demersal longline fisheries in the CCAMLR region, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Incidental Mortality Arising from Fishing (IMAF) has been influential in the development of new mitigation standards, and the review of the effectiveness of measures and research around them. This has led to a clear set of effective measures for CCAMLR fisheries.

46. On the other hand, in pelagic longline fisheries, there is still considerable debate about the most effective mitigation measures. There are, however, several promising mitigation measures that when used in combination, and with appropriate training, offer the potential to achieve rapid and extensive reduction in seabird mortality in these types of fisheries.

47. In trawl fisheries, streamer lines and offal management are widely recognized as effective means of reducing seabird strikes on trawl warps. Net binding, net cleaning, net weighting and good deck practice to minimize the time the trawl is on the surface can be effective in minimizing the entanglement of seabirds in nets.

48. There are currently no best practice mitigation measures identified for minimizing seabird incidental catch in gillnet fisheries.

49. In fisheries where single or multiple mitigation measures are known to be effective, they should be prescribed. Technical specifications for their design, construction and performance should be prescribed to optimize their effectiveness. Such specifications may also contribute to assessing compliance with required measures.

50. There are advantages in having a combination of mandatory and voluntary measures. The flexibility provided by additional voluntary

measures can provide opportunities for innovation and improvements in the effectiveness of mitigation measures.

#### **Best Practice Technical Guideline No. 4 – Mitigation measures and related standards**

States and RFMO/As should consider:

- Prescribing appropriate mitigation methods that are proven to be effective, practical and cost-effective for the fishing industry.
- Combining mitigation measures or devices to maximize their effectiveness.
- Providing information for fishers and others that explain the operational aspects of the mitigation devices and their precise operational configuration (e.g. Løkkeborg [2008]).
- Regularly reviewing the implementation and performance of mitigation measures, such as by a technical working group.
- Prescribing technical specifications for their design, construction and performance to optimize their effectiveness.
- Ensuring that plans retain flexibility to allow fishers to use effective combinations of multiple mitigation measures.

## **Mitigation research**

### ***Adoption of new technologies developed through research***

51. All research conducted should recognize that fishers are more likely to employ measures that are low cost and operationally practicable for their fishery, regardless of whether these measures are mandatory or voluntary.

52. Mitigation research can be characterized as an iterative process. The first step in the development of new mitigation measures is innovation. This can occur through observation and modification of gear by fishermen, observers or scientists and engineers. The development of new measures is then followed by observations at sea and the analysis of preliminary available data. This is followed by controlled experiments either as part of a commercial fishing operation or on board a charter/research vessel. Where controlled experiments are not done in the context of commercial fishing operations, the final step would include such trials to ensure adoption.

53. When considering a research plan, it is important to consider how to most effectively convert the results of such studies into fleet-based uptake of mitigation measures.

### ***Research and development methodologies***

54. One of the keys to effective mitigation research is to have a clear objective of the outcomes. There has been lively debate among conservationists and scientists about the need to conduct lethal experiments with a control treatment of no deterrent that results in the death of seabirds. From a scientific perspective, a control treatment is required to enable robust statistical analysis and for unequivocal management recommendations to be made. There are ethical issues to be considered when conducting lethal research. In most cases where a control with no deterrent has been incorporated into research protocols, a threshold mortality level has been established, beyond which the control treatment is removed from the trial. When considering the need for experimental trials that could result in seabird mortality, it is important that researchers consider seabird provenance and communicate and/or collaborate with colleagues from areas where seabirds that may be impacted breed. It is also important that political and practical issues be considered when conducting lethal experiments and not simply meeting scientific objectives.

55. Defining information needs is essential to ensure that effective mitigation measures are implemented. NPOA–Seabirds and regional plans

should outline the information required to facilitate research into the identification of fishery specific suites of effective mitigation measures.

### **Best Practice Technical Guideline No. 5 – Mitigation research**

States and RFMO/As should:

- Encourage innovation through collaboration of fishing industry, scientists and resource managers. This should include investigating the operational characteristics of new measures as an initial research step.
- Ensure that plans provide the opportunity for research to test the effectiveness of new mitigation measures and to facilitate the continued refinement of existing mitigation measures.
- Support controlled experiments that investigate the effectiveness of single or combined mitigation measures under commercial fishing conditions.
- Identify and develop new measures to enable adaptation to changing fishing practices.
- Encourage collaborative research between countries with fisheries that overlap with the distribution of seabirds that forage in distant waters.

**Box 3****Research and development of mitigation measures**

Experimental work was conducted in the New Zealand ling *Genypterus blacodes* longline (autoline) fishery in 2002–2003 to examine the effectiveness of measures at reducing bird catch and the effect on the fishery operation of an integrated weight line (IWL). This method replaces the mainline with a line containing additional weights (in this case, lead) to achieve greater sink rates. The experimental outcomes showed not only that line weighting resulted in faster sink rates and a more even sink profile (avoiding lofting between hand-placed weights), but also resulted in increased efficiency (10–20 percent more hooks fished per day) and a highly significant reduction in seabird captures. Eighty-four seabirds were caught on control (unweighted line with external weights added) sets while only one was caught on IWL sets. Longer soak times, seabird catch reductions and improved ease of handling for fishers were documented. The use of this technique has been adopted across the ling autoline fleet.

This method has subsequently been adopted in fisheries for toothfish *Dissostichus* spp. in CCAMLR waters. The information gathered during experimental testing showed that the IWL met the technical standards prescribed in CCAMLR fisheries for line sink rates. Direct implementation with minimal additional testing was possible in CCAMLR fisheries due to the high quality of information available about the study outcomes and prescription for device characteristics and aversion to using attached weights.

**Education, training and outreach**

56. The NPOA–Seabirds and regional plans should establish a programme to raise awareness among fishers, fishing associations and other relevant groups about the need to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds in fisheries. This programme could include educational materials for school groups, the public, as well as the fishing community. For a list of education and outreach material, see Annex 4.

57. Regional and international networks and organizations can facilitate the implementation of the IPOA–Seabirds through shared experience and the exchange of skills and knowledge. There are several networks and organizations that promote seabird-friendly fishing techniques and information exchange and provide training for fishers.

**Best Practice Technical Guideline No. 6 – Education, training and outreach**

States and RFMO/As should:

- Encourage the transfer of skills and information through expanded networks.
- Encourage onshore and at-sea training by practitioners experienced in the use of mitigation measures into their plans.
- Ensure that training programmes are designed to deliver information so that it facilitates knowledge exchange between fishermen.

#### **Box 4**

##### **Initiatives in information exchange and outreach**

It is vital to encourage skills, knowledge transfer and data exchange by maximizing and building on existing networks within regions and internationally.

The Albatross Task Force has been established by BirdLife International as a team of instructors to work with fishing crews to demonstrate the uptake of effective mitigation measures. The instructors also interact with fisheries management agencies. Their focus is to provide instruction in the simple measures that can be used to reduce seabird incidental catch. The programme enhances skills, knowledge and information exchange on an international scale and is designed to feed into the NPOA–Seabirds process on a regional scale. The countries targeted to date have fleets that fish in bycatch “hotspots” – the Argentine Republic, the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Republic of Chile, the Republic of Namibia and the Republic of South Africa.

The International Fishers Forum (IFF) is designed to bring together fishers, decision-makers and NGOs to identify solutions to reduce incidental catch of seabirds, marine turtles, marine mammals and fish. The first four IFF meetings (New Zealand, 2000; Hawaii, 2002; Japan, 2005; and Costa Rica, 2007) resulted in collaborative mitigation research initiatives. In December 2006, the first South American Fishers Forum was held in Brazil. Future regional IFFs are considered by many as an efficient way to deliver tangible results through information exchange and networking at a regional level.

#### **Observer programmes**

58. *“Data collection programmes should collect reliable data to determine the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries and the effectiveness of mitigation measures. Such programmes may make use of on-board observers – IPOA–Seabirds”.*

59. Given the difficulties of identifying seabirds to species, the incidental catch of seabirds is difficult for fishermen to rigorously document. Data collection by well-trained fishery observers has been an important component in the success of fisheries that aim to document and reduce the

incidental catch of seabirds. As an example, the kinds of objectives that can be addressed by observer programmes, and the detail of data types that can be collected at different levels of enquiry into fishery incidental mortality problems, are set out in Table 5 in Annex 6.

60. To derive a balanced picture of incidental seabird catch, observer coverage may need to be spread representatively across the fishing effort in an area. The level of coverage (percentage of effort observed) needs to be tailored to different objectives of fisheries monitoring. Where detailed analyses of efficacy of different mitigation measures are required, a high level of coverage may be necessary. A low level of observer coverage may be adequate if only exploratory information on seabird mortalities is required.

61. Seabird identification is complex and the occurrence of species varies by region and time of year. Training is a key component of a fishery observer programme relative to the incidental catch of seabirds. Further, data collected from necropsies, such as species identification, demographic data and provenance, can be a vital source of data. It is therefore important that observers and/or fishermen recover seabird carcasses for analysis by specialists onshore. Where recovery of carcasses is not feasible, the use of photographs may help identify species.

62. Observer programmes require considerable technical and financial resources to be successful. Observer costs, space to accommodate observers on a vessel, safety issues, logistical constraints, and details of data storage and reporting systems hinder the capability of nations and RFMO/As to put observer programmes into place. Consequently, building capacity to establish and maintain observer programmes is of the utmost importance.

63. Electronic monitoring has been successfully applied in a range of fisheries to monitor target and non-target catch. The application of this technology across a wider range of fisheries has significant potential to reduce observer requirements. Video monitoring, deployed with appropriate regulatory provisions, has potential to be used as an effective audit on fisher self-reporting. Information recorded by fishermen can provide valuable supplementary information. Logbook data, photographs of seabirds caught, retention of carcasses, records of fishery operations and seabird catch mitigation provide critical insight into seabird mortality and possible mitigation approaches. Training and education of fishermen would improve the quality of the information they provide.

## **Best Practice Technical Guideline No. 7 – Observer programmes**

The use of well-trained observers is the most reliable means of monitoring fisheries performance with respect to seabird incidental catch and use of mitigation measures. Thus, States and RFMO/As are encouraged to:

- establish observer programmes to provide independent and representative data;
- design observer programmes that are specific to the following objectives: (i) assessing whether incidental catch is occurring – lowest intensity; (ii) estimating capture statistics – moderate intensity; and (iii) examining the efficacy of different mitigation measures – highest intensity;
- establish programmes that provide training to fishery observers on seabird identification and data collection;
- build capacity by developing the resources to finance and technically support observer programmes;
- investigate opportunities to adopt remote monitoring technology; and
- consider the use of valuable data collected by fisherman via logbooks and other sources.

### **Seabird incidental catch reduction objectives**

64. There are two primary methods for establishing incidental mortality goals:

- an incidental catch rate expressed, for example, as seabirds killed per 1 000 hooks or other unit of effort; and
- the number of seabirds caught, either at a species specific or generic seabird level.

65. Typically, seabird incidental catch is reported as the number of birds killed per unit effort. While this may be appropriate as a measure of fishery performance, as it relates seabird mortality to fishing effort in a manner that is both transparent and meaningful to fisheries management authorities, effort-based bycatch objectives can be flawed if they do not account for incidental catch levels in relation to fishing effort. For example, incidental catch objectives based on a mortality rate can be ineffective if a reduction in

incidental catch is offset by an increase in fishing effort, causing an increase in the absolute mortality. Further, the capture of a few individuals of highly threatened species, such as those listed by the IUCN Red List,<sup>4</sup> can increase their threat of extinction.

66. Both rate goals and total estimated incidental mortality goals will require an appropriate level of observer monitoring and knowledge of the species composition to ensure that rare species are not impacted by occasional captures. For rare and highly endangered species, adopting a long-term goal of a near-zero level of incidental mortality in all fisheries contexts will assist in achieving the objective of continual reduction in seabird incidental mortality.

### **Best Practice Technical Guideline No. 8 – Seabird incidental catch reduction objectives**

States and RFMO/As should consider:

- establishing attainable objectives that lead to ongoing reductions in seabird mortality;
- both total incidental catch levels and fishing effort when rate-based objectives are established;
- explaining the rationale for establishing such objectives; and
- presenting clearly stated and achievable timelines for these objectives.

### **Monitoring and reporting framework for NPOA–Seabirds and regional plans**

67. Regular review of information about seabird incidental catch is necessary to enable fisheries and fishery managers to improve performance with respect to incidental catch of seabirds. Data-reporting programmes are most effective when data are reported at a fine scale (e.g. set-by-set or in small statistical areas). Due to the evolving nature of fisheries practices and mitigation techniques, an annual review of data on captures and of the effectiveness and implementation of mitigation requirements is recommended to ensure specifications for mitigation devices are current best practice and are appropriately deployed.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org).

68. The IPOA–Seabirds suggests that States conduct an assessment/review of NPOA–Seabirds at least every four years “for the purpose of identifying cost-effective strategies for increasing effectiveness”. To this end, the assessment and review should be part of an overall reporting framework. Such a framework should represent the range of interests of all stakeholders with clear guidelines on responsibilities for monitoring, implementation, evolution and review of NPOA–Seabirds or regional plans.

69. The development of protocols for data-sharing is critical to ensure that data is analysed and reported in a manner that facilitates effective decision-making.

### **Best Practice Technical Guideline No. 9 – Monitoring and reporting framework for NPOA–Seabirds and regional plans**

States and RFMO/As are encouraged to:

- establish a framework including indicators to monitor the implementation and review of plans. Such a framework should include clear reporting formats, protocols and timelines. This process should include a broad range of stakeholders; and
- exchange seabird incidental catch data between regional and national fisheries management bodies at the finest possible resolution feasible.

### **Periodic performance review**

70. There is a need to assess the effectiveness of management actions and to prioritize the treatment of specific parts of the overall problem of interest. The IPOA–Seabirds requires “*States which determine that a NPOA–Seabirds is not necessary should review that decision on a regular basis, particularly taking into account changes in their fisheries, ...*”.

71. A review of the risks posed to seabirds from existing fisheries, their expansion and/or the development of new fisheries is required to ensure that problems with incidental catch of seabirds are comprehensively addressed. The review may trigger a new assessment.

72. It has been shown that a relatively small proportion of vessels are responsible for the majority of incidental catch in particular fisheries. In many cases, actions focused on those vessels have resulted in reducing the incidental catch of seabirds. This is because vessel-specific factors are often

the triggers for multiple incidental catch events, or account for lower levels of chronic incidental mortality.

**Best Practice Technical Guideline No. 10 – Periodic performance review**

States and RFMO/As are encouraged to:

- undertake a review of the risks to seabirds if existing fisheries expand and/or new fisheries develop; and
- consider how to identify those vessels and operators that require training to modify their practices.

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## **Annex 1: Special requirements of developing countries**

The challenge of effectively implementing the IPOA–Seabirds, including through NPOA–Seabirds, is that it places stress on national systems and capacity in most countries, especially in developing countries. Undertaking assessments and reviews to establish whether incidental catch of seabirds exist, and the development and implementation of NPOA–Seabirds, attracts additional burdens in terms of financial and human resources. The problems faced by developing countries in implementing the CCRF is recognized in major international instruments, in particular, Article 5 of the CCRF.

Paragraph 30(c) of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2001 Reykjavik Declaration on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem drew attention to Article 5 of the CCRF and affirmed the commitment of States to strengthen international cooperation with the aim of supporting developing countries in incorporating ecosystem considerations into fisheries management, in particular, in building their expertise.

In this context, States and RFMO/As should strengthen international cooperation with the aim of supporting developing countries in implementing the IPOA–Seabirds and these Best Practice Technical Guidelines. In particular, such international cooperation should aim at:

- (i) building their expertise through targeted education and training for collecting and processing the biological, oceanographic, ecological and fisheries data needed for designing, implementing and upgrading NPOA–Seabirds and regional plans as appropriate;
- (ii) mobilizing resources and ensuring that national and international financial agencies and mechanisms facilitate and contribute to the finances necessary to implement IPOA–Seabirds, NPOA–Seabirds and relevant regional plans; and
- (iii) building long-term national and regional institutional capacity to manage resources sustainably, including through adopting and implementing an ecosystem approach to fisheries for conserving biological diversity.

## **Annex 2: Instruments supporting IPOA–Seabirds**

### **Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF)**

1. The CCRF sets out principles and international standards of behaviour for responsible practices with a view to ensuring the effective conservation, management and development of living aquatic resources, with due respect for the ecosystem and biodiversity. The Code addresses general principles (Article 6), fisheries management (Article 7), fishing operations (Article 8) and fisheries research (Article 12).

2. While not referred to specifically in the Code, seabirds are *de facto* included either as component of the ecosystem, incidental catch or as discards. The following Articles of the Code apply:

- (i) Article 6.6...States and users of aquatic ecosystems should minimize waste, catch of non-target species, both fish and non-fish species, and impacts on associated or dependent species;
- (ii) Article 7.5.1...States should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living marine aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment;
- (iii) Article 7.6.9...States and subregional or regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements should promote, to the extent practicable, the development and use of selective, environmentally safe and cost effective gear and techniques;
- (iv) Article 8.5.1...States should require that fishing gear, methods and practices, to the extent practicable, are sufficiently selective so as to minimize waste, discards, catch of non-target species, both fish and non-fish species, and impacts on associated or dependent species and that the intent of related regulations is not circumvented by technical devices;
- (v) Article 8.5.3...States and relevant institutions should collaborate in developing standard methodologies for research into fishing gear selectivity, fishing methods and strategies;
- (vi) Article 8.5.4...International cooperation should be encouraged with respect to research programmes for fishing gear selectivity, and fishing methods and

- strategies, dissemination of the results of such research programmes and the transfer of technology;
- (vii) Article 12.4...States should collect reliable and accurate data which are required to assess the status of fisheries and ecosystems, including data on incidental catch, discards and waste. Where appropriate, this data should be provided, at an appropriate time and level of aggregation, to relevant States and subregional, regional and global fisheries organizations.

### **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals**

3. In 1983, the United Nations Environment Programme Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) agreement came into force to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. Migratory species are defined by the Convention as those that regularly cross international boundaries, including into international waters.

4. Parties to CMS provide strict protection for endangered migratory species listed in Appendix I, and seek to develop international cooperative agreements for Appendix II listed migratory species, which are those that are considered likely to benefit significantly from such arrangements. Since April 1997 (the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention), all albatross species have been listed in either Appendix I or II.

### **Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)**

5. At the sixth meeting of the Conference of Parties to CMS, the threats posed to a wide range of seabird species, and to albatrosses and petrels in particular by fisheries bycatch and colony-based threats, were noted. It was requested that relevant Parties develop an Agreement under the Convention for the conservation of Southern Hemisphere albatrosses and petrels. This resulted in the drafting of the ACAP, which is a binding agreement with the stated objective to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels by addressing threatening processes on land (in breeding colonies) and at sea (incidental mortality). ACAP Annex 1 currently lists 19 albatross and seven petrel species. ACAP came into force

on 1 February 2004, and currently has 13 Parties<sup>1</sup> and several cooperating Range States. Under the Agreement a State qualifies as Range State based on albatross and petrel distribution and overlap of fishing effort with ACAP listed species.

### **United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA)**

6. The UNFSA implements the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 by providing the framework for conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. The agreement contains provisions that are relevant for non-target species (both fish and non-fish species including seabirds). It states, *inter alia*, that in order to conserve and manage straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, States shall: apply the precautionary approach in accordance with Article 6; minimize catch of non-target species through measures including, to the extent practicable, the development and use of selective, environmentally safe and cost-effective fishing gear and techniques; protect biodiversity in the marine environment; collect and share, in a timely manner, complete and accurate data concerning fishing activities on, *inter alia*, catch of target and non-target species and fishing effort, as set out in Annex I, as well as information from national and international research programmes; promote and conduct scientific research and develop appropriate technologies in support of fishery conservation and management; and implement and enforce conservation and management measures through effective monitoring, control and surveillance.

### **The FAO Compliance Agreement**

7. The Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (the FAO Compliance Agreement) requires Parties to ensure that vessels entitled to fly their flags on the high seas do not engage in any activity that undermines international conservation and management measures. In this regard, each Party is obligated to, among others:

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<sup>1</sup>Argentine Republic, Australia, Eastern Republic of Uruguay, Federative Republic of Brazil, French Republic, Kingdom of Norway, Kingdom of Spain, New Zealand, Republic of Chile, Republic of Ecuador, Republic of Peru, Republic of South Africa and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

- establish records of vessels entitled to fly its flag and that such vessels are marked in a manner that allows them to be readily identified;
- ensure that each vessel entitled to fly its flag shall provide information on the vessel's operations that is necessary for the Party to fulfil its obligations under the agreement;
- ensure that vessels entitled to fly its flag are not allowed to fish on the high seas without an authorization to fish;
- ensure that it can exercise effective control over vessels entitled to fly its flag before it can authorize such vessels to fish on the high seas;
- take enforcement measures in respect of vessels entitled to fly its flag which act in contravention of the agreement and make such contravention an offence under national legislation;
- share with FAO specified information on vessels entitled to fly its flag; and
- cooperate in the implementation of the Agreement.

The FAO Compliance Agreement would be of particular relevance where there are international conservation and management measures established to address the incidental catch of seabirds by fishing vessels on the high seas.

### **Annex 3: Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources: A case study of economic incentive and industry leadership**

#### **CCAMLR Patagonian toothfish longlining**

The achievements of CCAMLR in reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in the South Georgia Islands region from several thousands seabirds per year to zero in a decade is recognized internationally as a “best practice” model for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds and CCAMLR-style seabird avoidance measures are now being adopted in other parts of the world.

#### **Financial incentive**

Working with some of the world’s leading mitigation scientists, and incorporating expert opinion from around the world, CCAMLR’s Ad Hoc Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing (IMAF) was responsible for prioritizing and supporting mitigation research and experimentation that resulted in the development of a suite of mitigation measures that, when combined, have been proven to eliminate the incidental catch of seabirds. Primary among these measures was the seasonal closure of fisheries in high-risk areas during the seabird breeding season. It is during this period when mortalities are most likely to occur, and that are also most damaging to breeding populations. In 1996, the year of the first, albeit incomplete, monitoring of seabird captures across the CCAMLR area, an estimated 6 500 birds were killed. In the following years, a full range of mitigation measures, including a seasonal closure, were imposed and monitored and seabird bycatch numbers and rates around the South Georgia Islands were reduced tenfold within a single year. The fact that there was consensus on the adoption of such highly prescriptive mitigation and management measures is partly a reflection of the high-value fishery and economic return in securing one of the limited number of licences granted to access the fishery.

This dramatic success was predicated upon a range of other drivers that were influential in reducing mortality to zero, some of which can be traced back to the drafting of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CAMLR Convention).

The following factors have been identified as key drivers to change:<sup>1</sup>

- placement of independent scientific observers on all longline vessels;
- creation of a formal working group which comprised all stakeholder constituencies – fishers, fishery managers, fishery scientists, technical experts, seabird biologists, NGOs – to analyse and assess data and to provide advice;
- collaborative research into practical solutions involving fishing companies and scientists that were supported by governments ensuring that they were made mandatory by the Commission;
- high value of the fishery so that the initial introduction of mitigation measures were neither disproportionately costly nor powerful disincentives to continue to participate in the fishery.

### **Leadership**

The CAMLR Convention was the first in the marine environment to combine the requirements of sustainable harvesting with adequate protection for non-target species potentially affected by harvesting. In order to fully and effectively implement the CAMLR Convention's provisions, while dealing with ecological uncertainties, the Commission adopted an ecological approach to fisheries management grounded in the precautionary principle. This was underpinned by a strong, scientifically based management approach (Cox *et al.*, 2007; Croxall, Rivera and Moreno, 2007). In order to develop and monitor CCAMLR's Conservation Measures and Resolutions, a number of specialist working groups were established, including IMAF.

### **Science**

The achievements of CCAMLR reflect the collective political will of Member States (currently 25) to eliminate the incidental catch of seabirds. This resolve would not have been possible without complete confidence by the Member States in the scientific rigour of the advice provided by the working groups, and the decision-making processes in place. Analyses of this system identify the placement of independent observers on all vessels as a key factor in underpinning the successful

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<sup>1</sup> Waugh *et al.*, 2008; BirdLife International, 2004.

integration of science into management and licensing conditions. The observers have provided high-quality information on the efficacy of management measures, allowing an adaptive management approach to be effectively implemented, rapidly and efficiently.

#### **Annex 4: Video and printed resources on reducing seabird incidental catch**

NB: This is not a complete list of resources, but rather an example of what is available in various regions of the world.

##### **Video resources**

- *Australian Fisheries Management Authority – Catch Fish Not Birds* ([www.afma.gov.au/](http://www.afma.gov.au/))
- *Projecto Albatroz – Trabalhadores do Mar/Sea Workers* ([www.projetoalbatroz.org.br/default.aspx](http://www.projetoalbatroz.org.br/default.aspx))
- *Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife International) – Save the Albatross: keeping seabirds off the hook* ([www.rspb.org.uk/](http://www.rspb.org.uk/))
- *Southern Seabird Solutions – Fishing the Seabird Smart Way* ([www.southernseabirds.org/](http://www.southernseabirds.org/))
- *Washington Sea Grant – Off the Hook* ([www.wsg.washington.edu/](http://www.wsg.washington.edu/))

##### **Printed resources**

- *Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries (OPRT) – Tuna Longlining Fishing: Meets the Challenge* ([www.oprt.or.jp](http://www.oprt.or.jp))
- *Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) – Building a Seabird Friendly Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery* ([www.ccsbt.org/](http://www.ccsbt.org/))
- *Argentinas, Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia Austral and Argenova S.A. – Evitemos la pérdida de carnada y la muerte de aves marinas* ([www.avesargentinas.org.ar/cs/index.php](http://www.avesargentinas.org.ar/cs/index.php))
- *BirdLife International and ACAP – Mitigation Fact Sheet series* ([www.savethealbatross.net/](http://www.savethealbatross.net/) and [www.acap.aq/](http://www.acap.aq/))
- *Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) – Fish the Sea, Not the Sky* ([www.ccamlr.org/](http://www.ccamlr.org/))
- *Washington Sea Grant – Streamer Lines to Reduce Seabird Bycatch in Longline Fisheries* ([www.wsg.washington.edu/](http://www.wsg.washington.edu/))

## Annex 5: Tables

Table 1. Structures and mechanisms used by a range of regional fisheries management organizations to address the issue of the incidental catch of seabirds

<b>Structure/mechanism in place in different RFMOs</b>	<b>CCAMLR (bottom longline fishery)</b>	<b>IATTC</b>	<b>ICCAT</b>	<b>CCSBT</b>	<b>WCPFC</b>	
Current seabird bycatch measures	CM25-02 CM24-02 Resolution 22/XXV	Resolution C-05-01	Resolution 02-14 Recommendation 07-07	Recommendations relating to Ecologically Related Species, 1997 (Attachment E in report of CCSBT3 Part 2; Attachment U in report of CCSBT4 Part 1)	WCPFC Convention Articles 5 and 6, Conservation and Management Measure 2007–04	Reco 05/09 Reso

Table 1 (cont.)

<b>Structure/mechanism in place in different RFMOs</b>	<b>CCAMLR (bottom longline fishery)</b>	<b>IATTC</b>	<b>ICCAT</b>	<b>CCSBT</b>	<b>WCPFC</b>	
Specialist working group which addresses bycatch and ecosystem issues	Working Group on the Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing	Bycatch Working Group	Subcommittee on Ecosystems	Working Group on Ecologically Related Species	Ecosystem and Bycatch Specialist Working Group	Work Ecos Byca
Mandatory mitigation requirements to be applied in areas of high-to-moderate risk of seabird interactions	Line weighting Streamer line Limitation on offal discharge Night setting in high-risk		Streamer line for longline vessels fishing south of 20°S. Swordfish vessels using monofilament gear are exempt if they use night setting and specified line	Streamer line for longline vessels fishing south of 30°S	Longline vessels fishing south of 30°S, or vessels greater than 24 metres in length fishing north of 23°N must use two of the following:	Long fishin 30°S of the stream weig settin mana dyed shoo

Table 1 (cont.)

Structure/mechanism in place in different RFMOs	CCAMLR (bottom longline fishery)	IATTC	ICCAT	CCSBT	WCPFC	
	areas		weighting		side setting; streamer line; line weighting; night setting; offal management; blue-dyed bait; underwater setting chute, of which at least one must be from the first four of these	at least from of the
Estimation of seabird bycatch at the level of the convention area or for the totality of fisheries managed under	Conducted annually by the IMAF Working Group	Addressed in 2006 and 2007 meetings of the IATTC	An estimate will be produced as part of ICCAT seabird assessment, due	Estimates reported by member States for their fisheries	CMM-2007-04 requires annual submission of all available information to	None

Table 1 (cont.)

<b>Structure/mechanism in place in different RFMOs</b>	<b>CCAMLR (bottom longline fishery)</b>	<b>IATTC</b>	<b>ICCAT</b>	<b>CCSBT</b>	<b>WCPFC</b>	
the agreement		Working Group on Stock Assessments	March 2009		enable a seabird mortality estimate by the Scientific Committee	
Ecological risk assessment	Reviewed annually	Addressed in 2006 and 2007 meetings of the IATTC Working Group on Stock Assessments	Being developed as part of ICCAT seabird assessment, due March 2009	None in place	Part of WCPFC's Ecological Risk Assessment (2007-2010)	None
Observer monitoring of seabird bycatch	Mandatory	Encouraged. Not routinely	Encouraged	Levels of >10% coverage encouraged	Regional observer programme	Encouraged

Table 1 (cont.)

<b>Structure/mechanism in place in different RFMOs</b>	<b>CCAMLR (bottom longline fishery)</b>	<b>IATTC</b>	<b>ICCAT</b>	<b>CCSBT</b>	<b>WCPFC</b>	
		undertaken			under development, with initial aim of 5% coverage for all fleets	
Carcass recovery	Mandatory	None in place	None in place	None in place	None in place	None
Seabird bycatch target	Near zero levels	None in place	None in place	None in place	None in place	Near
Reporting of seabird bycatch and catch and effort information	Mandatory	Encouraged	Reporting of available information recommended under Recommendation 07-07. Format for reporting not	Encouraged	Encouraged	Reso requi of av infor annu Form repor speci

Table 1 (cont.)

Structure/mechanism in place in different RFMOs	CCAMLR (bottom longline fishery)	IATTC	ICCAT yet specified	CCSBT	WCPFC	

Table 2. Examples of mitigation requirements for demersal longline fisheries exhibiting a range of requirements

Mitigation measure or practices	United States of America (Alaska) <sup>1</sup>	New Zealand	Chile <sup>2</sup>	Australia (Macquarie Island)
Seasonal area closure			x <sup>3</sup>	
Bird bycatch limit				Species-specific bycatch levels based on conservation status
Night setting		x <sup>6</sup>	x	x
Streamer lines	x <sup>8</sup>	x	x	x
Line weighting/minimum sink rate		x	x	x

<sup>1</sup> Groundfish and halibut fishery off Alaska.

<sup>2</sup> If a trot line system is used, these measures are not required.

<sup>3</sup> Introduced as a target species conservation measure, not specifically for seabird conservation purposes.

<sup>4</sup> Not required for low- or low-to-medium risk areas; applies from 1 September to 30 April for medium-high and high-risk areas.

<sup>5</sup> Except waters adjacent to Prince Edward Islands and Kerguelen and Crozet Islands.

<sup>6</sup> Night setting to be used unless line weighting is employed.

<sup>7</sup> Not required for low- or low-to-medium risk areas.

<sup>8</sup> Streamer lines of specified standard and paired streamer lines required on vessels over 55 feet in length.

Table 2 (cont)

<b>Mitigation measure or practices</b>	<b>United States of America (Alaska)</b>	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Australia (Macquarie Island)</b>
Full offal retention				x
No offal discharge at setting		x	x	
No offal discharge from the side of the vessel where hauling occurs	x	x	x	
Haul mitigation <sup>9</sup>				
Minimization of deck lighting				
Removal of hooks from discards	x		x	

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<sup>9</sup> Encouraged, not mandatory.

<sup>10</sup> Not mandatory for low-to-medium risk areas.

Table 3. Examples of mitigation requirements for pelagic longline fisheries showing a range of requirements. Bird bycatch limits are not regulated in WCPFC

Mitigation measure or practice	Australian ETBF (S of 25°S)	Hawaii swordfish fishery	USA (tuna fishery in Pacific N of 23°N)	New Zealand	Chile	South Africa	WCPFC <sup>1</sup>	CCSBT
Bird bycatch limit	0.05 birds/ 1 000 hooks for fleet					25 birds per vessel		
Night setting	x	x <sup>2</sup>		x <sup>3</sup>	x	x <sup>4</sup>	(x)	
Streamer lines (single)	x	x <sup>6</sup>		x	x	x	(x)	x

<sup>1</sup> Choice of two measures, including one of those bracketed.

<sup>2</sup> Required when the vessel is not side setting.

<sup>3</sup> Night setting to be used unless line weighting is employed.

<sup>4</sup> Not required for swordfish vessels, unless the threshold of 25 bird mortalities is reached, when it becomes a requirement.

<sup>5</sup> Swordfish vessels only if not using a streamer line (must also use line weighting)

<sup>6</sup> Specific bird scaring lines designed for use with side setting are described.

<sup>7</sup> Swordfish vessels exempted from this requirement; if they do not use streamer line, then they must night set and use specified line weighting.

Table 3 (cont)

Mitigation measure or practice	Australian ETBF (S of 25°S)	Hawaii swordfish fishery	USA (tuna fishery in Pacific N of 23°N)	New Zealand	Chile	South Africa	WCPFC	CCSBT
Line weighting/minimum sink rate	x	x	x	x	x	x	(x)	
Side setting and bird curtain		x					(x)	
No offal discharge at setting	x				x	x	x	
Strategic offal dumping <sup>9</sup>		x				x	x	
Thawed baits	x	x	x		x	x		
Blue-dyed bait		x	x				x	
Underwater setting devices							x	
Line shooter		x	x				x	

<sup>8</sup> Swordfish vessels only if not using a streamer line (must also night set).

<sup>9</sup> Involves dumping of offal from the opposite side of the setting or hauling area in order to attract birds away from the hook line.

Table 4. Examples of regulated or mandatory mitigation requirements for trawl fisheries showing a range of requirements

<b>Mitigation measure or practice</b>	<b>Chile<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>South Africa</b>	<b>CCAM</b>
Bird bycatch limit (annual)				(20 birds/vessel)
Discharge restrictions:				
– during shooting and hauling			x	x
– prior to shooting	x			
Netsonde cables prohibited		x		x
Streamer lines		x <sup>3</sup>	x	
Baffles or warp scarers		x <sup>4</sup>		
Minimize net time at surface				x
Net cleaning	x			x
Minimization of deck lighting				x

<sup>1</sup> Applies to trawl fishing for hake and ling only.

<sup>2</sup> Limit applies to icefish trawl only.

<sup>3</sup> May be used if bafflers or warp scarers are not in place.

<sup>4</sup> May be used if streamer lines are not deployed.

## Annex 6: Data collected by fishery observers

An example of data collected by fishery observers at sea in relation to seabird incidental catch

Objective of monitoring	Data type collected in longline/trawl/gillnet fisheries
<p><b>1. To characterize a fishery and assess if seabird bycatch problems exist</b></p>	<p><i>Fishery characteristics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vessel characteristics (name, registration, nationality)</li> <li>• Fishing trip and event characteristics: target fish species, trip number, event number, fishing method and gear used</li> <li>• Date, time of observations</li> <li>• Fishing effort during observed period (hooks/tows/sets) proportion of effort observed</li> <li>• Location of fishing event observed (latitude, longitude)</li> <li>• Mitigation used (compared to that required for the fishery)</li> </ul> <p><i>Seabird catch characteristics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seabird mortality events (time, event number, number of individuals caught)</li> <li>• Species composition of incidental catch (species group, species, as possible)</li> <li>• Condition of seabird on capture (dead/alive/injured)</li> <li>• Retention or discarding of seabirds caught</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. To examine the precise nature of incidental catch of seabirds, and thereby identify specific mitigation solutions for the particular fishery</b></p>	<p><i>Fishery characteristics (at event level)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offal management capacity of vessel</li> <li>• Mitigation measures used</li> <li>• Deployment of offal management (frequency/type of discharge)</li> <li>• Monitor the use of mitigation measures</li> <li>• Other mitigation used by fishing event (detail of the design and use of these)</li> <li>• Comments detailing the nature of capture events and factors that may act to avoid them</li> </ul> <p><i>Incidental catch characteristics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed injury characteristics and which part of the fishing event the seabirds were recovered from</li> <li>• Species composition and abundance of seabirds attending the vessel (in relation to mitigation use and offal management)</li> </ul>

These Guidelines have been produced to support implementation of the International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA-Seabirds). They are addressed to decision-makers and policy-makers associated with conserving seabirds and with minimizing their interaction with fishing gears, but the Guidelines should also be of interest to fishing industries and other parties.

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