



Preventing Seabird Bycatch in Pelagic Longline Fisheries

NIGHT-SETTING Factsheet

Updated May 2019

What is it and how does it work?

Seabirds generally detect food at close range by sight. Consequently, they feed mostly during daylight hours and are least active at night. Setting lines at night is therefore a simple but highly effective way of reducing seabird bycatch and bait loss. Although the majority of vulnerable seabirds are inactive at night, some species, such as the White-chinned Petrel, actively forage at night. Night-setting is therefore less effective for these species.

Night-setting is particularly effective on moonless nights. The effectiveness of night-setting is reduced during bright moonlight and when using powerful deck lights.

ACAP recommends that for night-setting to be effective, line setting should not commence until after nautical dusk and should be completed before nautical dawn, when the sun is still below the horizon. The exact times of nautical dusk and dawn are set out in the Nautical Almanac tables for the relevant latitude, local time and date. It is important that the entire set is completed at night. Many seabirds are active at dusk and dawn, and research has shown that sets that occur largely at night but continue into twilight and daylight hours are often associated with high levels of bycatch.

Deck lighting should be kept at the minimum level appropriate for crew safety and directed inboard so the line is not illuminated as it leaves the vessel.

Problems and troubleshooting

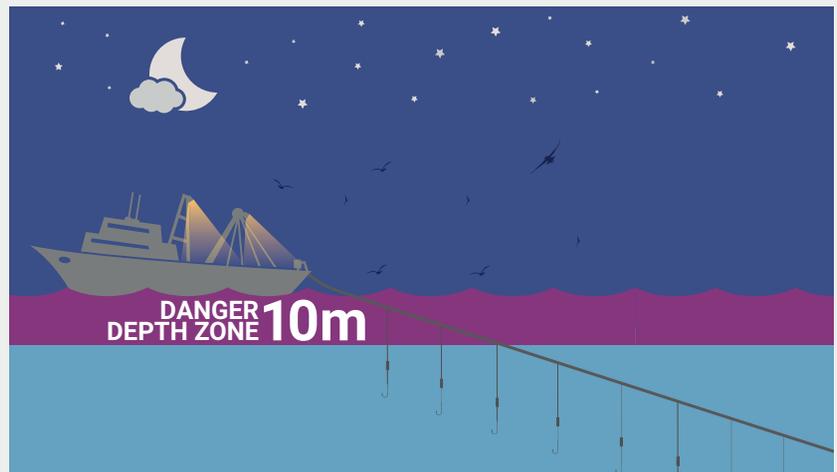
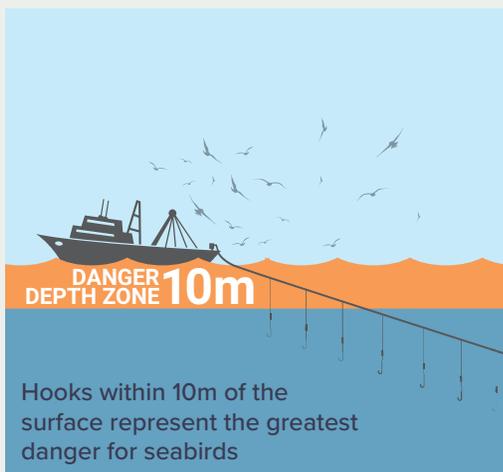
Night-setting is only truly effective on dark nights.

In the highest latitudes during the summer months, the time between nautical dusk and dawn is limited.

The time of setting may have unfavourable consequences for the catch rates of target species, or other taxa caught as bycatch.

Combination with other measures

Due to variations in the moon-phase, and the ability of some seabird species to forage at night, night-setting should be combined with **line-weighting** and **bird-scaring lines**.



CONTACTS

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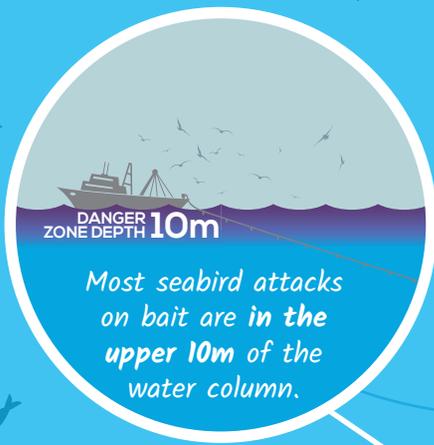
Albatrosses and petrels are the birds most impacted by longline and trawl fisheries.



Night setting helps to limit bycatch as there are fewer birds around.



Bird scaring line
This helps to scare birds away from the danger zone.



DANGER ZONE DEPTH 10m

Most seabird attacks on bait are in the upper 10m of the water column.

Line weighting
Sinking hooks out of the danger zone as quickly as possible reduces bycatch.