



**Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels**

**Second Meeting of Seabird Bycatch Working Group**

*Hermanus, South Africa, 17 – 18 August 2008*

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**Observer Report — IOTC Commission 12 Meeting**

**Author: Secretariat**

*SBWG-2 Doc 21*  
*Agenda Item No 6*

**ACAP Observer Report – 12th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission**

**Meeting Title:** 12th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

**Meeting Organisation:** IOTC

**Date and Location:** 7 – 11 June, 2008 Muscat, Oman

**Website Address:** <http://www.iotc.org/>

**Your Name/Affiliation:** Barry Baker, ACAP Interim Secretariat

**Capacity of Attendance:** ACAP representative

**Relevant Paper(s) Tabled:**

IOTC. Report of the Ninth Session of the Scientific Committee. Victoria, Seychelles, 5-9 November 2007. IOTC-2007-SC-R[E]. 133 pp

IOTC-2008-S12 -PropA seabirds\_Australia. Mitigation of incidental catches of seabirds

IOTC-2008-S12 -PropB seabirds\_EC. Mitigation of incidental catches of seabirds

IOTC-2008-S12-05. Arrangement with the Secretariat for ACAP

**Working Papers**

Not applicable

**Background Documents**

Not applicable

**Information Papers**

Not applicable

**National Reports**

Not applicable

**Author(s) and/or Presenter if Different:**

The report of the Scientific Committee was presented by the Chair of the SC. All other papers were presented by the respective delegations.

**Summary of Content:**

**IOTC-2008-S12 -PropA seabirds\_Australia. Mitigation of incidental catches of seabirds**

**IOTC-2008-S12 -PropB seabirds\_EC. Mitigation of incidental catches of seabirds**

Following its third meeting held in Seychelles in July 2007, the Working Party on Ecosystem and By-Catch (WPEB) advised the Commission through the Scientific Committee that interactions with pelagic fisheries constituted the largest conservation threat to seabirds in the southern oceans and, although several seabird avoidance measures have been trialled to varying degrees, proven and accepted seabird avoidance measures required substantial improvement. These two proposals sought to repeal IOTC's 2006 *Resolution 06/04 On Reducing Incidental By-Catch of Seabirds in longline fishery*, and replace it with stronger measures to address seabird bycatch. In particular, they sought to implement the advice of the WPEB, which had identified and recommended a range of technical measures in reducing seabird bycatch. The WPEB advice had been formulated with strong input from ACAP, which presented the best practice pelagic mitigation advice developed at SBWG Workshop 1.

Both proposals required fishers to select two measures, to be used in combination, from the set of best practice seabird mitigation measures and standards set out in the WPEB report. Both also sought to remove the exemption from using mitigation measures, contained in the existing resolution 06/04, for vessels fishing for swordfish and using the 'American System'. There were many similarities between the two proposals and the proponents, together with other interested members and observers (Japan, Korea, South Africa, ACAP and BirdLife) met in a breakout meeting to harmonise the proposals and refine the technical specifications. This was done and a revised measure was put to the Commission for consideration.

**IOTC. Report of the Ninth Session of the Scientific Committee. Victoria, Seychelles, 5-9 November 2007. IOTC-2007-SC-R[E]. 133 pp**

The report of the Scientific Committee contained the WPEB report as an Appendix. The best-practice advice on pelagic longline mitigation advice, developed at SBWG Workshop 1, was provided to the WPEB and endorsed by the Scientific Committee. ACAP and BirdLife's paper *Analysis of albatross and petrel distribution and overlap with longline fishing effort within the IOTC Area: results from the Global Procellariiform Tracking Database* was also endorsed by the Scientific Committee.

**IOTC-2008-S12-05. Arrangement with the Secretariat for ACAP**

ACAP recently began discussions with the Secretariat of the IOTC with a view of formalizing an agreement with IOTC to facilitate cooperation between the two organisations. This paper presented a draft Agreement developed for consideration by IOTC members.

**Outcome (e.g. summary of relevant discussions, resolutions, etc):**

**Seabird Measure**

The IOTC passed a seabird measure that requires all IOTC longline vessels to use at least two seabird bycatch mitigation measures (one from each column in a two column table) when fishing south of 30°S, with technical specifications for their use. The Resolution (draft version) is attached to this report.

It should be noted that:

- Vessels shall not use the same measure from Column A and Column B, thereby ensuring the use of paired streamer lines can only be considered to be one of the two mandatory measures;
- the technical specification does not provide for the use of 'light' bird scaring lines; and
- there is no exemption for vessels using the American longline system to target swordfish exemption, unlike the situation that existed with an earlier resolution (Resolution 06/04).

The resolution would have been stronger if the use of line shooters had not been included, but there was some strong recognition in the meeting that refinement of seabird measures will be a continuous process, with new data being incorporated as it becomes available.

**Arrangement to promote cooperation between IOTC and ACAP**

A draft non-binding Arrangement to promote cooperation between the IOTC and ACAP was tabled at the meeting. I made a presentation to the meeting on paper at the request of the IOTC Secretariat.

During the presentation I highlighted the value of cooperative arrangements between the two organisations, and pointed out that a similar arrangement had recently been put in place with the WCPFC, using nearly identical wording. The meeting agreed to maintain the informal arrangements that currently existed, and requested that ACAP re-submit a paper outlining the arrangement in sufficient time for Commission 13 meeting next year.

**Recommended Actions for ACAP:**

Further involvement in the work of the IOTC is recommended. ACAP certainly has a good relationship with the Secretariat and members of the Working Party and it would be productive to build on this to enhance the work of the Agreement.

Consideration should also be given to the benefits of entering in a non-binding Arrangement with the IOTC to promote cooperation on issues relevant to seabird conservation.

**Have relevant papers been forwarded to Secretariat:**

Yes. Electronic copies of the meeting documents are held by the Secretariat.



## PropA-rev2 [E]

### ON REDUCING INCIDENTAL CATCH OF SEABIRDS ARISING FROM A SMALL WORKING GROUP

**The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),**

RECALLING *Resolution 06/04 On reducing Incidental Bycatch of Seabirds in longline fisheries*, and in particular, its paragraph 7:

RECOGNISING the need to strengthen mechanisms to protect seabirds in the Indian Ocean;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA-Seabirds);

NOTING the recommendations of the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch on measures to mitigate seabird interactions as outlined in their 2007 Report;

ACKNOWLEDGING that to date some Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (hereinafter referred to as “CPCs”) have identified the need for, and have either completed or are near finalizing, their National Plan of Action on Seabirds;

RECOGNISING the concern that some species of seabirds, notably albatross and petrels, are threatened with global extinction;

NOTING that the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, which opened for signatures at Canberra on 19 June 2001, has entered into force;

NOTING that the ultimate aim of the IOTC and the CPCs is to achieve a zero bycatch of seabirds for fisheries under the purview of the IOTC, especially threatened albatrosses and petrel species in longline fisheries;

ADOPTS in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, that:

1. CPCs shall seek to achieve reductions in levels of seabird bycatch across all fishing areas, seasons, and fisheries through the use of effective mitigation measures.
2. Fishing operations shall be conducted in such a way that hooklines<sup>1</sup> sink beyond the reach of seabirds as soon as possible after they are put in the water.

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<sup>1</sup> Hookline is defined as the groundline or mainline to which the baited hooks are attached by snoods.

3. CPCs shall ensure that all longline vessels fishing south of 30°S use at least two of the mitigation measures in Table 1 below, including at least one from Column A. Vessels shall not use the same measure from Column A and Column B.

Table 1: Seabird mitigation measures

<b>Column A</b>	<b>Column B</b>
Night setting with minimum deck lighting	Night setting with minimum deck lighting
Bird-scaring lines (Tori Lines)	Bird-scaring lines (Tori Lines)
Weighted branch lines	Weighted branch lines
	Blue-dyed squid bait
	Offal discharge control
	Line shooting device

4. In all other areas, CPCs may require that longline vessels use at least one of the measures in Table 1.
5. Mitigation measures used shall conform to the minimum technical standards for the measures as shown in Annex 1.
6. The design and deployment for bird scaring lines shall meet the specifications provided in Annex 2.
- 7.
8. CPCs shall provide to the Commission, as part of their annual reports, information on how they are implementing this measure and all available information on interactions with seabirds, including bycatch by fishing vessels carrying their flag or authorised to fish by them. This is to including details of species where available to enable the Scientific Committee to annually estimate seabird mortality in all fisheries within the IOTC area of competence.
9. The Scientific Committee, based notably on the work of the WPEB and information from CPCs, will analyse the impact of this Resolution on seabird bycatch no later than for the 2011 meeting of the Commission. It shall advise the Commission on any modifications that are required, based on experience to date of the operation of the Resolution and/or further international studies or research on the issue, in order to make the Resolution more effective.
10. *Resolution 06/04 On Reducing Incidental Bycatch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries* is superseded by this Resolution.

ANNEX 1

Mitigation Measure	Description	Specification
Night setting with minimum deck lighting	No setting between nautical dawn and before nautical dusk. Deck lighting to be kept to a minimum	Nautical dusk and nautical dawn are defined as set out in the Nautical Almanac tables for relevant latitude, local time and date. Minimum deck lighting should not breach minimum standards for safety and navigation.
Bird-scaring lines (tori lines)	A bird-scaring line shall be deployed during longline setting to deter birds from approaching the branch line.	Design and deployment for bird-scaring lines are provided in Annex 2 of this Resolution.
Weighted branch lines	Weights must be attached to all branch lines in accordance with specifications provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– minimum of 45 grams weight attached to all branch lines;</li> <li>– less than 60 grams weight must be within 1 metre of the hook;</li> <li>– 60 grams or greater and less than 98 grams must be within 3.5 metres of the hook; and</li> <li>– 98 grams or greater must be within 4 metres of the hook</li> </ul>
Blue-dyed squid bait	All bait must be dyed to the colour and shade shown in the placard provided by the IOTC Secretariat.	The standardized colour shall be equivalent to bait dyed using “Brilliant Blue” food dye (Colour Index 42090, also known as Food Additive Number E133) mixed at 0.5% for a minimum of 20 minutes.
Management of offal discharge	No offal discharge during setting. Strategic offal discharge may occur during hauling.	No offal discharge during setting. Offal discharge during hauling should be avoided if possible. If offal discharge is essential during hauling, it must be from the opposite side of the boat to hauling activity.
Line-setter or line-shooter	Permits a mainline to be set slack (no tension astern)	Position line-setter as close to the water line as feasible. Ensure mainline is pulled at a constant speed and slightly faster than the speed of vessel during line-setting, to ensure lines are set slack to aid sinking rate. Avoid setting into propwash.

## ANNEX 2

### **DESIGN AND DEPLOYMENT OF BIRD SCARING LINES (TORI LINES)**

#### **Bird-Scaring Line Design**

1. The bird-scaring line shall be a minimum of 100 m in length and if less than 150 m in length will include an object towed at the seaward end to create tension to maximise aerial coverage. The section above water shall be a strong fine line of a conspicuous colour such as red or orange.
2. The above water section of the line shall be sufficiently light that its movement is unpredictable to avoid habituation by birds and sufficiently heavy to avoid deflection of the line by wind.
3. Streamers for the bird-scaring line shall be made of material that is conspicuous and produces an unpredictable lively action (e.g. strong fine line sheathed in red polyurethane tubing) and shall be suspended in pairs from a robust three-way swivel attached to the bird scaring line and shall hang just clear of the water.
4. There shall be a maximum of 5 m between each streamer pair.
5. The number of streamers shall be adjusted for the setting speed of the vessel, with more streamers necessary at slower setting speeds.

#### **Deployment of Bird scaring Lines**

1. The line shall be deployed before longlines enter into the water.
2. The line should have an aerial coverage of at least 100 metres. To achieve this coverage the line shall be suspended from a point a minimum of 5 metres above the water at the stern on the windward side of the point where the branch line enters the water.
3. The bird scaring line shall be set so that streamers pass over baited hooks in the water. The position of the object towed shall be maintained so as to ensure, even during crosswinds, that the aerial extent of the bird-scaring line is over the branch line as far astern of the vessel as possible.
4. Because there is the potential for line breakage and tangling, spare bird scaring lines shall be carried onboard to replace damaged lines and to ensure fishing operations can continue uninterrupted.

Attachment One – Diagram of Bird-scaring Streamer Line.

