

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p>Eleventh Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group</p> <p><i>Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 15 - 17 May 2023</i></p> <p>Comparing the performance of one vs two Bird Scaring Lines in reducing seabird interactions in a demersal trawl fishery</p> <p><i>Sebastián Jiménez, Rodrigo Forselledo, Andrés Domingo</i></p>
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SUMMARY

The incidental mortality in trawl fisheries caused by warp cables is a considerable threat for seabirds. The deployment of Bird Scaring Lines (BSLs) is among the best practice to reduce this interaction. A study in the Uruguayan demersal trawl fishery found that one BSL deployed from the discharge vessel's side had a significant reduction in seabird collisions and mortality. The deployment of two BSLs produced little improvement compared to trawl sets with one BSL. However, this result was probably due to the small number of experimental observations with two BSLs. This study report preliminary considerations on the results of an experiment conducted in the Uruguayan demersal trawl fishery to compare the collision rates of seabirds with the warp cables between paired treatments with one and two BSLs. During 77 paired warp dedicated observations (20 min vs 20 min each) a total of 122 (4.75 collision h⁻¹) and 42 (1.64 collision h⁻¹) collisions were recorded with one and two BSLs, respectively. Much of the differences in the collision rates between the two treatments were given the Black-browed albatross. No apparent differences between treatments were observed in the petrels. It was observed that the collision rates were influenced by the seasons. Our results preliminary suggest that outside the season of highest seabird interaction rates, the use of one and two BSLs presents a similar performance. During the main season of interactions (May – November) the use of two BSLs appears to offer additional protection to reduce bird interactions with the warp cables, compared to the use of one BSL. These considerations should be taken with caution since analyses are preliminary, and some sample sizes could be still low.