Comparing seabird conservation and management measures

Introduction

Conservation and management measures for seabird bycatch mitigation have been adopted the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). These measures were implemented at differing times, and vary considerably in their language and scope among the tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (tRFMOs). The measures reflect, to varying degrees, practices for seabird bycatch mitigation developed by the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). The advice of ACAP changes over time, in light of new scientific findings concerning feasible, effective and efficient seabird bycatch mitigation techniques and technologies. ACAP advice provided in this document is new, released in 2016, and consequently there has been little opportunity for member States' to review and consider their domestic approaches or for considerations by the tRFMOs. However, the updated advice from ACAP provides a basis for reviewing relevant aspects of existing tRFMO measures within the context of seabird mitigation measures and the needs of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT).

CCSBT has recommended¹ that its Members and Cooperating Non-Members comply with all current binding and recommendatory measures aimed at the protection of ecologically related species, including seabirds, which have been adopted by the IOTC, ICCAT and WCPFC, when fishing in the relevant Convention areas or areas of competence for these tuna RFMOs, irrespective of whether the Member or Cooperating Non-Member concerned is a member of the relevant Commission or otherwise cooperates with it. The relevant binding measures for these tuna RFMOs are presently:

a. Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

Resolution 12/06 On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries (applies in the Convention area south of 25° South latitude).

b. Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

Conservation and Management Measure 2015-03 Conservation and management measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds (different requirements apply in the Convention area south of 30° South latitude, and north of 23° North latitude).

c. International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas

¹ CCSBT (2011) Recommendation to mitigate the impact on ecologically related species of fishing for southern bluefin tuna (updated at the 18th annual meeting of CCSBT, 10-13 October 2011, Bali, Indonesia).

Recommendation 07-07 Recommendation by ICCAT on reducing incidental by-catch of seabirds in longline fisheries (applies in the Convention area between 20° South to 25° South latitude).

Supplemental Recommendation 11-09 Supplemental recommendation by ICCAT on reducing incidental bycatch of seabirds in ICCAT longline fisheries (applies in the Convention area south of 25° South latitude).

Pursuing consistency

Seabird bycatch mitigation in longline fisheries applies a 'shrink and defend' approach (Melvin et al., 2010). Longline fishing operators seek to ensure during line setting that mitigation techniques and technologies are applied continuously while baited hooks sink to below the depth that seabirds ordinarily dive. Additional mitigation measures may also be applied during line hauling to prevent seabirds from attempting to take baited hooks as the line returns to the surface.

ACAP assesses, on an ongoing basis, the available scientific research on implementing seabird bycatch mitigation in a feasible, effective and efficient way (ACAP, 2016). ACAP recommends that three best practice measures (branch line weighting, night setting and bird scaring lines) are applied simultaneously. These measures apply differently to fishing vessels 35 m and over total length (larger fishing vessels), and fishing vessels under 35 m total length (smaller vessels). Two additional measures are also endorsed by ACAP as best practice: hook-shielding devices, and time/area fishery closures. ACAP has assessed other seabird bycatch mitigation techniques and technologies. Some of these mitigation methods are recommended if certain conditions are able to be met, while others are not recommended.

The tRFMOs require longline fishing vessels to employ at least two of the three recommended best practice mitigation methods (branch line weighting, night setting and bird scaring lines): IOTC (south of 25° South), ICCAT (south of 25° South) and WCPFC (south of 30° South). The WCPFC allows a greater range of measures to be employed north of 23° North — longline fishing vessels are required to employ a minimum number of mitigation methods from choices set out in a two-column table. Noting that the three best practice measures are not used in combination, as recommended by ACAP, it is important to ensure that the mitigation methods employed across tRFMOs take account of new information. This ensures that best and improving mitigation methods apply to reduce seabird bycatch in longline fisheries, and mitigation methods that are ineffective are no longer used.

There is value in developing a shared understanding across tRFMOs about how each organisation is using mitigation methods to address seabird bycatch in longline fisheries, and about approaches for maintaining the currency of conservation and management measures for seabird bycatch mitigation. This paper considers the current measures of the tRFMOs for seabird bycatch mitigation and compares these to ACAP practice.

Comparing seabird bycatch mitigation across tuna RFMOs

The following summarises the seabird bycatch mitigation developed by ACAP, and the current implementation of these measures across the tuna RFMOs.

1. Branch line weighting

ACAP	IOTC	WCPFC	ICCAT
ACAP Branch line weighting Recommended minimum standards for branch line weighting include the following: a. 40 g or greater attached within 0.5 m of the hook; or b. 60 g or greater attached within 1 m of the hook; or c. 80 g or greater attached within 2 m of the hook.	 IOTC Line weighting Line weights to be deployed on the snood prior to setting. a. Greater than a total of 45 g attached within 1 m of the hook; or b. Greater than a total of 60 g attached within 3.5 m of the hook; or c. Greater than a total of 98 g attached within 4 m of the hook; be hook 	 WCPFC Weighted branch lines Following minimum weight specifications are required: a. one weight greater than or equal to 40 g within 50 cm of the hook; or b. greater than or equal to a total of 45 g attached within 1 m of the hook; or c. greater than or equal to a total of 60 g attached within 	 ICCAT Line weighting Line weights to be deployed on the snood prior to setting. a. Greater than a total of 45 g attached within 1 m of the hook; or b. Greater than a total of 60 g attached within 3.5 m of the hook; or c. Greater than a total of 98 g attached within 4 m of the hook; or
	nook.	 a.5 m of the hook; of d. greater than or equal to a total of 98 g attached within 4 m of the hook 	nook.

Comment

There are new ACAP recommendations for branch line weighting. ACAP advises that studies demonstrate that branch line weighting where there is more mass closer to the hooks sink most rapidly and consistently (Barrington et al., 2016), thereby dramatically reducing seabird attacks on baits and most likely reducing mortalities (Jiménez et al., 2013; dos Santos et al., 2016). Studies of a range of weighting regimes, including placing weights at the hook, have shown no negative effect on target catch rates. ACAP advises that branch line weighting improves the effectiveness of other mitigation methods, such as night setting and bird scaring lines, in reducing seabird bycatch.

ACAP (2016) considers that it is important to enhance the priority accorded to line weighting providing certain pre-conditions can be met, among other things: (a) that the weighting regime is adequately specified; (b) safety issues are adequately addressed; and (c) issues concerning application to artisanal fisheries being taken into account.

ACAP (2016) identifies research needs for branch line weighting. These include continued refinement of line weighting configurations (mass, number and position of weights and materials) with regard to effectively reducing seabird bycatch and safety concerns, through controlled research and application in fisheries. Studies should also include evaluations of the effects of branch line weighting on the catch rate of pelagic fish and provide data that allow evaluation of the relative safety and practicality attributes of various weighting configurations.

2. Night setting

ACAP	IOTC	WCPFC	ICCAT
Night setting	Night setting with	Night setting with	Night setting with
Setting of longlines only	minimum deck lighting	minimum deck lighting	minimum deck lighting
at night is highly	No setting between	No setting between	No setting between
effective.	nautical dawn and before	nautical dawn and before	nautical dawn and before
Exceptions apply to	nautical dusk.	nautical dusk.	nautical dusk.
twilight / nocturnal	Nautical dusk and	Nautical dusk and	Nautical dusk and
foragers, bright	nautical dawn are	nautical dawn are	nautical dawn are
moonlight, in high	defined as set out in the	defined as set out in the	defined as set out in the
latitudes during summer,	Nautical Almanac tables	Nautical Almanac tables	Nautical Almanac tables
and when using intense	for relevant latitude, local	for relevant latitude, local	for relevant latitude, local
deck lighting.	time and date.	time and date.	time and date.
	Deck lighting to be kept to a minimum.	Deck lighting to be kept to a minimum.	Deck lighting to be kept to a minimum.
	Minimum deck lighting	Minimum deck lighting	Minimum deck lighting
	should not breach	should not breach	should not breach
	minimum standards for	minimum standards for	minimum standards for
	safety and navigation.	safety and navigation.	safety and navigation.

Comment

Setting longlines at night is highly effective at reducing incidental mortality of seabirds. ACAP advises that this is because the majority of vulnerable seabirds are inactive at night. The mitigation measure is consistent with best practice for night setting and deck lighting. It facilitates compliance by longline fishing vessels when moving from one area to another, as occurs during fishing for southern bluefin tuna.

ACAP (2016) advises that night setting is not as effective for twilight (crepuscular) and night (nocturnal) foragers. The effectiveness of this measure may be reduced during bright moonlight, and when using intense deck lights, and is less practical in high latitudes during summer, when the time between nautical dusk and dawn is limited. The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Resources (CCAMLR) recommends that wherever possible, setting of lines should be completed at least three hours before sunrise (to reduce loss of bait to/catches of white-chinned petrel, *Procellaria aequinoctialis*).

ACAP (2016) identifies research needs for night setting. These include assessing the effectiveness of bird scaring lines and branch line weighting at night needs to be determined, possibly by way of using thermal or night vision technologies.

3. Bird scaring lines

AC	AP	IOTC	WCPFC	ICCAT
Bire	d scaring lines	Bird-scaring lines (Tori	Bird-scaring lines (Tori	Tori linos
Ro	commendations for	lines)	lines)	TOTTIMES
Ves	sels > $35 m$ total	Bird-scaring lines shall	Bird-scaring lines shall	Tori lines (South of 30°
len	ath	be deployed during the	be deployed during	South)
Sim	ultaneous use of two	entire longline setting to	longline setting to deter	For vessels >=35 m total
BSI	s one on each side	deter birds from	birds from approaching	length
of t	he sinking longline	approaching the branch	the branch line.	Demless at la sat 4 dami
pro	vides maximum	line.	For vessels greater than	I. Deploy at least 1 tori
pro	tection from bird	For vessels greater than	or equal to 35 m:	vessels are
atta	icks under different	or equal to 35 m:	 Deploy at least 	encouraged to use a
win	d conditions. The	 Deploy at least 	1 bird-scaring line.	second tori line at
set	up for BSLs should be	1 bird-scaring line.	Where practical.	times of high bird
as f	ollows:	Where practical,	vessels are	activity: both tori
-	BSLs should be	vessels are	encouraged to use a	lines shall be
	deployed to	encouraged to use a	second tori pole and	deployed
	maximise the aerial	second tori pole and	bird scaring line at	simultaneously, one
	extent, which is a	bird scaring line at	times of high bird	line being set. If two
	function of vessel	times of high bird	abundance or	tori lines are used
	speed, height of the	abundance or	activity; both tori	baited hooks shall
	attachment point to	activity; both tori	lines should be	be deployed within
	the vessel, drag, and	lines should be	deployed	the area bounded by
			simultaneously, one	ii A tori line using long
	materials	on each side of the	line being set	and short streamers
		line being set		shall be used.
•	lo achieve a	A arial automt of hind	 Aerial extent of bird- 	Streamers shall be:
	minimum	 Aerial extent of bird- accring lines must 	scaring lines must	brightly coloured, a
	extent of 100 m	be greater than or	be greater than of	streamers
	BSI's should be	equal to 100 m		a Long streamers
	attached to the	Long stroomore of	 Long streamers of sufficient length to 	shall be placed
	vessel such that	- Long streamers of	reach the sea	at intervals of no
	they are suspended	reach the sea	surface in calm	more than 5 m,
	from a point a	surface in calm	conditions must be	and long
	minimum of 8 m	conditions must be	used.	be attached to
	above the water at	used.	I ong streamers	the line with
	the stern.	Long streamers	must be at intervals	swivels that
•	BSLs should contain	must be at intervals	of no more than 5 m.	prevent streamers from
	a mix of brightly	of no more than 5 m.	For vessels less than	wrapping
	coloured long and	For vessels less than	35 m:	around the line.
	short streamers	35 m:	 Doploy at loast 	Long streamers
	placed at intervals of	Deploy at least	- Deploy at least	Of SUTTICIENT
	no more than 5 m.	1 bird-scaring line		the sea surface
	chould be attached	 Aorial extent must 	 Aerial extent must be greater than or 	in calm
	to the line with	- Acharekteri musi	equal to 75 m	conditions must
	swivels to prevent	equal to 75 m		be used.
	streamers from	Long and/or short	- Long and/or short (but greater than 1 m	b. Short streamers
	wrapping around the	- Long and/or short (but greater than 1 m	(but greater than 1 m	(greater than 1m in length)
	line. All long	in length) streamers	must be used and	shall be placed
	streamers should	must be used and	placed at intervals	no more than
	reach the sea-	placed at intervals	as follows:	1m apart.
		as follows:		III. Vessels shall deploy the tori line to

 surface in calm conditions. Baited hooks should be deployed within the area bounded be the two BSLs. If using bait-casting machines, they should be adjusted so as to land baited hooks within the area bounded by the BSLs. If large vessels use only 	 Short: intervals of no more than 2 m. Long: intervals of no more than 5 m for the first 55 m of bird scaring line. Additional design and deployment guidelines for bird-scaring lines are provided in Annex I of this Resolution. 	 Short: intervals of no more than 2 m. Long: intervals of no more than 5 m for the first 55 m of bird scaring line. Additional design and deployment guidelines for bird-scaring lines are provided in Annex I of this Resolution. 	 achieve a desired aerial extent greater than or equal to 100 m. To achieve this aerial extent the tori line shall have a minimum length of 200m, and shall be attached to a tori pole >7m above the sea surface located as close to the stern as practical. iv. If vessels use only one tori line, the tori line shall be deployed windward
deployed windward of the sinking baits. If			of sinking baits. For vessels < 35 m total
baited hooks are set outboard of the wake, the BSL attachment poin to the vessel should be positioned several metres outboard of the	t		 A single tori line using either long and short streamers, or short streamers only shall be used.
side of the vessel that baits are deployed.			ii. Streamers shall be: brightly coloured
Recommendations for vessels < 35 m total length Two designs have been			greater than 1m in length) streamers must be used and placed at intervals as
 shown to be effective: a design with a mix of long and short streamers, that includes long streamers placed a 			a. Long streamers placed at intervals of no more than 5m for the first 55 m of tori line.
5 m intervals over the first 55 m of the BSL, and			b. Short streamers placed at intervals of no more than 1m
 a design that does not include long streamers. Short streamers (no less than 1 m in length) should be placed at 1 m intervals along the length of the aerial extent. 			 iii. Long streamers shall be attached to the line with swivels that prevent streamers from wrapping around the line. All long streamers shall reach the sea- surface in calm conditions.
In all cases, streamers should be brightly coloured. To achieve a minimum recommended aerial extent of 75 m, BSLs should be attache to the vessel such that they are suspended from a point a minimum of 7 m			 iv. Vessels shall deploy the tori line to achieve a desired aerial extent of 75 m. To achieve this aerial extent the tori line shall have a minimum length of 100m, and shall be attached to a tori pole >6m above the sea

above the water at the		surface located as
stern.		close to the stern as
		practical. If the tori
		m in length, it must
		have a towed object
		attached to the end
		so that the aerial
		over the sinking
		baited hooks.
		 If two tori lines are used, the two lines must be deployed on opposing sides of the
		main line.
		Tori lines (North of 23° North)
		Long streamer
		i Minimum length: 100
		m.
		ii. Must be attached to
		the vessel such that
		a point a minimum of
		5 m above the water
		at the stern on the
		point where the
		hookline enters the
		iii. Must be attached so
		that the aerial extent
		is maintained over
		the sinking baited hooks.
		iv. Streamers must be
		less than 5 m apart,
		long enough so that
		they are as close to
		the water as
		v. If two (i.e. paired)
		tori lines are used,
		the two lines must
		be deployed on
		the main line.
		Short streamer (for
		vessels >= 24 m total
		length)
		i. Must be attached to
		the vessel such that
		a point a minimum of
		5 m above the water
		at the stern on the
		point where the

		hookline enters the water.
	ii.	Must be attached so that the aerial extent is maintained over the sinking baited hooks.
	iii.	Streamers must be less than 1 m apart and be 30 cm minimum length.
	iv.	If two (i.e. paired) tori lines are used, the two lines must be deployed on opposing sides of the main line.
	Sho ves: leng	ort steamer (for sels < 24 m total gth)
	This revie 3 ye impl base	s design shall be ewed no later than ears from the lementation date ed on scientific data.
	i.	Must be attached to the vessel such that it is suspended from a point a minimum of 5 m above the water at the stern on the windward side of a point where the hookline enters the water.
	ii.	Must be attached so that the aerial extent is maintained over the sinking baited hooks.
	iii.	If streamers are used, it is encouraged to use the streamers designed to be less than 1 m apart and be 30 cm minimum length.
	iv.	If two (i.e. paired) tori lines are used, the two lines must be deployed on opposing sides of the mainline.

<u>Comment</u>

The specification of bird scaring lines varies between the tRFMOs. Aerial extent is a key element in effectiveness as a mitigation method by providing protection to baited hooks as

they sink. Use of brightly coloured streamers at regular intervals along the length bird scaring line, particularly long streamers that reach the sea surface in calm conditions, help to scare birds flying to and under the line, preventing them from reaching the baits hooks. It is important to consider the wind conditions and where the baited hooks are set when deploying a bird scaring line.

ACAP (2016) identifies research needs for bird scaring lines. These include developing methods that minimise entanglements of the in-water portion of bird scaring lines with longline floats remains the highest priority for research on bird-scaring lines. Other research priorities include: (1) evaluating the effectiveness of one vs. two bird scaring lines; and, (2) bird scaring lines design features including streamer lengths, configurations and materials, especially for very small vessels.

4. Hook-shielding devices

ACAP

Hook-shielding devices encase the point and barb of baited hooks to prevent seabird attacks during line setting until a prescribed depth is reached (a minimum of 10 meters), or until after a minimum period of immersion has occurred (a minimum of 10 minutes) that ensures that baited hooks are released beyond the foraging depth of most seabirds.

The following performance requirements are used by ACAP to assess the efficacy of hook-shielding devices in reducing seabird bycatch:

- a. the device shields the hook until a prescribed depth of 10 m or immersion time of 10 minutes is reached;
- b. the device meets current recommended minimum standards for branch line weighting
- c. experimental research has been undertaken to allow assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and practicality of the technology against the ACAP best practice seabird bycatch mitigation criteria developed for assessing and recommending best practice advice on seabird bycatch mitigation measures.

Devices assessed as having met the performance requirements listed above will be considered best practice.

Comment

ACAP has recently assessed two hook shielding devices and, on the basis of the assessment, the devices have both been included on the list of best practice measures in pelagic longline fisheries. ACAP's assessment considered factors such as safety, practicality and the characteristics of the fishery when considering the efficacy of these seabird bycatch mitigation measures, and in developing best practice specifications.

At this time, the following devices have been assessed as meeting the performance requirements:

- 1. 'Hook Pod' 68 g minimum weight that is positioned at the hook, encapsulating the barb and point of the hook during setting, and remains attached until it reaches 10 m in depth, when the hook is released (Sullivan et al., 2016; Barrington, 2016a).
- 'Smart Tuna Hook' 40 g minimum weight that is positioned at the hook, encapsulating the barb and point of the hook during setting, and remains attached for a minimum period of 10 minutes after setting, when the hook is released (Baker et al., 2016; Barrington, 2016b).

ACAP (2016) identifies research needs for hook shielding devices. These include conducting further field research to evaluate the relative contributions of the sink rates and hook protection components of hook-shielding devices in reducing seabird bycatch.

Recommendations concerning other mitigation measures

5. Side-setting with branch line weighting and bird curtain

ACAP	IOTC	WCPFC	ICCAT
ACAP Side-setting with line weighting and bird curtain Side-setting must be used in combination with ACAP best practice recommendations for line weighting in order to increase sink rates forward of the vessel's stern, and hooks should be cast well forward of the setting position, but close to the hull of the vessel, to allow hooks time to sink as far as possible before they reach the stern.	-	 WCPFC Side setting with bird curtain and weighted branch lines i. Mainline deployed from port or starboard side as far from stern as practicable (at least 1 m), and if mainline shooter is used, must be mounted at least 1 m forward of the stern. ii. When seabirds are present the gear must ensure mainline is deployed slack so that baited bailed bailing is deployed stack so that baited bailing is deployed back so that baited bailed bailing is deployed back so that bailed back so that bailed back so that bailed back so that bailed back so that balled back so that back so	-
Bird curtains, a horizontal pole with vertical streamers, positioned aft of the setting station, may deter birds from flying close to the side of the vessel. The combined use of side-setting, line weighting and a bird curtain should be considered as a single measure.		 hooks remain submerged. iii. Bird curtain must be employed: Pole aft of line shooter at least 3 m long; Minimum of 3 main streamers attached to upper 2 m of pole; Main streamer diameter minimum 20 mm; Branch streamers attached to end of each main streamer long enough to drag on water (no wind) – minimum diameter 10 mm. 	

Comment

ACAP advises that research into side-setting with line weighting and bird curtain conducted in the North Pacific indicated that side-setting was more effective than other simultaneously trialled mitigation measures, including setting chutes and blue-dyed bait (Gilman et al., 2003).

ACAP considers that this mitigation method requires testing in the Southern Ocean with deeper-diving species, and at a larger spatial scale, before it can be considered as a recommended approach beyond the pilot fishery. The tests were conducted in a single pilot scale trial of 14 days in the Hawaiian pelagic longline fishery for tuna and swordfish with an assemblage of surface-feeding seabirds (Gilman et al., 2003).

6. Offal discharge

АСАР	ЮТС	WCPFC	ICCAT
Offal and discard discharge management Offal and discards should not be discharged during line setting. During line hauling, offal and used baits should preferably be retained or discharged on the opposite side of the vessel from that on which the line is hauled. All hooks should be removed and retained on board before discards	-	 Management of offal discharge i. Either no offal discharge during setting or hauling; ii. Or strategic offal discharge from the opposite side of the boat to setting/hauling to actively encourage birds away from baited hooks. 	-
are discharged from the vessel.			

Comment

ACAP considers managing discharging of offal and discards should be considered good practice, and a supplementary measure to be used in addition to best practice mitigation measures (McNamara et al., 1999; Cherel et al., 1996). ACAP advises that offal and discards should not be discharged during line setting, and that offal and used baits should be retained during line hauling, then discharged on the opposite of the vessel from where line hauling occurred. All hooks should be removed and retained before discards are discharged from the vessel.

Mitigation measures that are not included in ACAP advice

The following summarises mitigation methods that are not recommended by ACAP, but which remain among the techniques and technologies under existing conservation and management measures of tRFMOs.

7. Blue-dyed bait

ACAP	IOTC	WCPFC	ICCAT
NOT RECOMMENDED No experimental evidence of effectiveness in pelagic longline fisheries.	-	 Blue-dyed bait i. If using blue-dyed bait it must be fully thawed when dyed. ii. The Commission Secretariat shall distribute a standardized colour placard. 	-
		iii. All bait must be dyed to the shade shown in the placard.	

8. Line shooters

ACAP	IOTC	WCPFC	ICCAT
NOT RECOMMENDED No experimental evidence of effectiveness in pelagic longline fisheries.	-	Deep setting line shooter i. Line shooters must be deployed in a manner such that the hooks are set substantially deeper than they would be lacking the use of the line shooter, and such that the majority of hooks reach depths of at least 100 m.	-

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