

SEABIRD BYCATCH MITIGATION

Abstract

The CCSBT needs to ensure that interactions between seabirds and vessels fishing for SBT are minimized. Bycatch of seabirds by pelagic longline vessels is widely recognised as a key threat to the conservation status of these species, particularly albatrosses and petrels. Over the past two years other relevant tuna regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) have adopted measures to mitigate seabird bycatch. The Commission can draw on these measures in developing an expeditious and effective response to this issue.

Preamble

1. The International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catches of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA-Seabirds) was agreed in 1999 and calls on all States to cooperate through regional and subregional fisheries organizations or arrangements to reduce incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries.
2. Seabird bycatch measures have been adopted by all RFMOs in whose areas of competence SBT vessels fish. The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) adopted a revised seabird bycatch mitigation measure at its annual meeting in June 2008.
3. The 2007 meeting of tuna RFMOs in Kobe, Japan, recognised the benefits of harmonising arrangements. Building on this concept, the attached draft text of a CCSBT seabird bycatch mitigation resolution seeks to ensure vessels fishing for SBT comply with measures adopted by other relevant RFMOs.

2008 seabird bycatch resolution:

4. Although the area of competence of the CCSBT extends throughout the range of the SBT stock, and therefore has no geographical convention area, there is little or no gap in geographical coverage of the area between the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission.
 - a. Additionally, both of these RFMOs have adopted measures to reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds during longline fishing.
5. The draft resolution requires SBT vessels to comply with the seabird bycatch mitigation measures currently in force in the area of competence of the RFMO in which they are fishing.
6. The implementation date is from the date of adoption.
7. The resolution does not include reference to waters falling under the mandate of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), noting that discussions are continuing between the Commission and CCAMLR towards finalising the relationship between the two organisations.

Background

8. The incidental catch of seabirds by longline fisheries represents the greatest threat to the survival of a number of species of albatrosses and petrels. Urgent action to

address the decline in seabird bycatch was recommended in the 2007 United Nations General Assembly Sustainable Fisheries Resolution 62/177, paragraphs 75-76.

9. A number of other international actions have been taken to promote action to mitigate the impact of fishing on seabird populations, including the adoption of measures by the WCPFC and most recently IOTC, and the entry into force in 2004 of the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels.
10. The foraging range of a number of albatross species includes grounds where vessels target SBT, including Indian yellow nosed albatross, Wandering albatross and Amsterdam albatross.

Attachments

11. Draft text of seabird bycatch mitigation resolution attached for adoption at CCSBT15.

Resolution to Mitigate the Impact on Seabirds of Fishing for Southern Bluefin Tuna

The Extended Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna,

Concerned that some seabird species, notably albatrosses and petrels, are threatened with global extinction,

Determined to mitigate incidental harm to seabirds caused by fishing for southern bluefin tuna,

Noting the importance of harmonising conservation and management measures with other organisations responsible for managing international fisheries, as agreed at the at the Kobe Meeting of Joint Tuna RFMOs on 26 January 2007,

Agrees, in accordance with paragraph 3(b) of Article 8 of the CCSBT Convention, that:

Implementation of International Plan of Action-Seabirds

1. Members and Cooperating Non-Members shall, to the extent possible, implement the International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catches of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA-Seabirds) if they have not already done so.
2. Members and Cooperating Non-Members shall report annually to the Extended Commission on their implementation of the IPOA-Seabirds, including, as appropriate, the status of their National Plans of Action for Reducing Incidental Catches of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries.

Implementation of IOTC and WCPFC obligations

3. Members and Cooperating Non-Members shall comply with all current binding measures, and to the extent possible with all current recommendatory measures, aimed at the protection of seabirds from fishing and adopted, from time to time:
 - a) by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, when fishing in its Convention Area, and
 - b) by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, when fishing in its Convention Area,irrespective of whether the Member or Cooperating Non-Member concerned is a member of the relevant Commission or otherwise cooperates with it.
4. With their report under paragraph 2, Members and Cooperating Non-Members shall report annually to the Extended Commission on their compliance with paragraph 3 of this resolution.