



Agreement on the Conservation
of Albatrosses and Petrels

Eighth Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group

Wellington, New Zealand, 4 – 6 September 2017

Seabird bycatch in purse seine fisheries: Status of knowledge and mitigation measures

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SUMMARY

Purse seine fisheries are globally distributed but scarcely understood in regard to their impacts on non-target species. Knowledge on bycatch issues was restricted to interactions with purse seine vessels targeting tuna and the conservation actions focused mainly on megafauna such as dolphins. We reviewed the available information on seabird bycatch related to purse seine fisheries in different major fishing regions, including descriptions of bycaught seabird species and any mitigation measures tested. Seabird bycatch was identified for seven FAO's marine areas, involving eight countries in North America, South America, Europe and Oceania. A total of 33 seabird and 2 waterbird species were affected as bycatch. Species involved ranged from a single species in Western Australia to 17 species in the Gulf of California. The ACAP-listed pink-footed shearwater *Ardenna creatopus* was affected in the Gulf of California and the Chilean section of the Humboldt Current, and the Balearic shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus* in coastal purse seiners in Portugal. Among the 35 species bycaught, 23 species had a conservation status of Least Concern, eight of Near Threatened, one of Vulnerable, three of Endangered, and one of Critically Endangered. Seabird bycatch in purse seine fisheries occurs on a global scale with some threats identified for industrial and small-scale fisheries but information gaps remain in several regions. Finally, initiatives to mitigate bycatch and other threats to seabirds are necessary.