

 <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>Seabird-Safe Pelagic Longline Fishing Toolkit</p> <p>A resource for the tuna supply chain</p> <p><i>Janice Molloy, Igor Debski, Mandy Leathers and Johanna Pierre</i></p>
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SUMMARY

Southern Seabirds and the NZ Department of Conservation are preparing an evidence-based information toolkit for the tuna vessel-to-market supply chain, (tuna fishing companies, purchasing and retail companies) and tuna industry/NGO partnerships. The toolkit will:

1. Summarise the risk zones for seabirds in the world's oceans.
2. Describe the technical and operational mitigation measures available to reduce seabird mortalities.
3. Describe the extent to which the measures are likely to reduce mortalities of seabirds when used singly and in combination.
4. Outline the auditing tools available to verify the measures are in use and meet the ACAP specifications.
5. Describe the suitability and reliability of these auditing tools in different situations.
6. Provide guidance on audit results in terms of likely reductions in seabird mortality.

The toolkit will provide at-a-glance information for responsible companies seeking to ensure the sustainability of their produce. It may also be useful for governments, NGOs, RFMOs, tuna partnerships and organisations with schemes or initiatives aimed at supporting the tuna fishing industry to meet sustainability goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Working Group:

1. Note the work undertaken to date by Southern Seabirds Trust and the Department of Conservation in developing a Seabird-Safe Pelagic Longline Fishing Toolkit.
2. Consider which ACAP advice or outreach materials could be provided for inclusion as part of the Toolkit resources.
3. Consider whether and in what way ACAP could support the development and promotion of the Toolkit.

Caja de herramientas para una pesca con palangre pelágico segura para las aves marinas

Un recurso para la cadena de suministro del atún

RESUMEN

Southern Seabirds y el Departamento de Conservación de Nueva Zelandia están preparando una caja de herramientas de información basadas en pruebas para la cadena de suministro del atún, que comprende desde los buques atuneros hasta el mercado (empresas de pesca de atún, empresas de compra y venta al por menor) y asociaciones entre la industria atunera y las ONG. La caja de herramientas servirá para lo siguiente:

1. Resumir las zonas de riesgo para las aves marinas en los océanos del mundo.
2. Describir las medidas de mitigación técnicas y operativas disponibles para reducir la mortalidad de las aves marinas.
3. Describir en qué medida es probable que las medidas reduzcan la mortalidad de las aves marinas cuando se utilicen por separado y en combinación.
4. Describir las herramientas de auditoría disponibles para verificar que las medidas se apliquen y cumplan las especificaciones del ACAP.
5. Describir la idoneidad y fiabilidad de estas herramientas de auditoría en diferentes situaciones.
6. Proporcionar orientación sobre los resultados de las auditorías en términos de reducciones probables de la mortalidad de las aves marinas.

El conjunto de herramientas proporcionará información resumida a las empresas responsables que deseen garantizar la sostenibilidad de sus productos. También puede ser útil para los gobiernos, las ONG, las OROP, las asociaciones atuneras y las organizaciones con esquemas o iniciativas destinados a apoyar a la industria pesquera atunera para que cumpla los objetivos de sostenibilidad.

RECOMENDACIONES

Recomendamos que el Grupo de Trabajo:

1. Tome nota de la labor realizada hasta la fecha por Southern Seabirds Trust y el Departamento de Conservación en la elaboración de una caja de herramientas para una pesca con palangre pelágico segura para las aves marinas.
2. Estudie qué materiales de recomendaciones o divulgación del ACAP podrían incluirse como parte de los recursos de la caja de herramientas.
3. Estudie si el ACAP podría apoyar el desarrollo y la promoción de la caja de herramientas y, en caso afirmativo, de qué manera.

Boîte à outils pour une pêche à la palangre pélagique sans danger pour les oiseaux de mer

Une ressource pour la chaîne d'approvisionnement du thon

RÉSUMÉ

Le *Southern Seabirds Trust* et le *New Zealand Department of Conservation* préparent une boîte à outils contenant des informations fondées sur des données probantes pour la chaîne d'approvisionnement du thon, depuis le navire jusqu'au marché (sociétés de pêche au thon, sociétés d'achat et de vente au détail), et pour les partenariats entre l'industrie du thon et les ONG. La boîte à outils contiendra les éléments suivants :

4. Résumé des zones à risque pour les oiseaux marins dans les océans du monde entier.
5. Description des mesures d'atténuation techniques et opérationnelles disponibles pour réduire la mortalité des oiseaux de mer.
6. Estimation de l'efficacité de ces mesures en matière de réduction de la mortalité des oiseaux de mer lorsqu'elles sont utilisées séparément ou combinées.
7. Description des outils d'audit disponibles pour vérifier que les mesures sont utilisées et qu'elles répondent aux spécifications de l'ACAP.
8. Description de l'adéquation et de la fiabilité de ces outils d'audit dans différentes situations.
9. Orientations sur les résultats des audits en termes de réduction probable de la mortalité des oiseaux de mer.

La boîte à outils fournira ainsi un condensé d'informations aux entreprises qui cherchent à assurer une production responsable et durable. Elle pourrait également être utile aux gouvernements, aux ONG, aux ORGP, aux partenariats thoniers et aux organisations proposant des programmes ou des initiatives visant à aider l'industrie de la pêche au thon à atteindre des objectifs de développement durable.

RECOMMANDATIONS

Nous recommandons que le Groupe de travail :

1. Note le travail entrepris à ce jour par le *Southern Seabirds Trust* et le *NZ Department of Conservation* afin de développer une boîte à outils pour une pêche à la palangre pélagique sans danger pour les oiseaux de mer.
2. Examine les recommandations ou les documents de sensibilisation de l'ACAP susceptibles d'être inclus dans la boîte à outils.
3. Envisage le soutien de l'ACAP au développement et à la promotion de cette boîte à outils, ainsi que des manières de concrétiser ce soutien.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2019 ACAP's Advisory Committee declared that a conservation crisis continues for its 31 listed species, with thousands of albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters dying every year as a result of fisheries operations. Despite efforts into researching and recommending effective mitigation measures to address seabird bycatch in fisheries by ACAP and other bodies, the Advisory Committee (AC) noted that in many instances these were not being implemented or were not being fully implemented.

Over the intervening period the Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG) has given high priority to understanding alternative ways to enhance implementation of best practice bycatch mitigation, including identifying additional products that ACAP can provide to support this. Of particular relevance to this paper is ACAP's observation that communicating advice and developing products that lead to more effective and widespread use of bycatch mitigation on the decks of vessels, including assessing mechanisms that are already in place that could be better utilised, will be critical. Amongst the suggested communication, products that could enhance the implementation of measures to reduce seabird bycatch endorsed by AC11 was the concept of a "toolbox of best practices" ([AC11 Report](#)).

2. BACKGROUND

Spurred by the rapid decline of Antipodean albatrosses from high seas fisheries interactions and its recognition as an ACAP priority population for conservation management, the Southern Seabirds Trust reviewed the full range of intervention approaches that could be used to recover the population. We structured our investigation according to the categories the SBWG had used to review of the world's fisheries that have adopted effective seabird conservation measures ([SBWG9 Doc 10 Rev1](#)). From these, we considered the approach that was the best fit for the Trust. The SBWG categories were:

1. Very high levels of monitoring (achieved through onboard observers, port state measure implementation, high seas boarding and inspections, aerial surveillance, high-tech surveillance) and reporting, and
2. Existence of enforceable penalties and punitive incentives for the non-use or ineffective use, namely
 - a. Operational standards (e.g., imposed performance standards through use of certain fishing gear)
 - b. Economic/existential motivators (e.g., desire to avoid a reduction in income or cancellation of fishing licence)
 - c. Political motivators (desire by States to avoid being singled out as non-compliant)
 - d. Reputational issues (e.g. desire to avoid adverse publicity from markets and media).

During the information gathering stage of this review, we learnt there are a number of non-government organisations working cooperatively with the high seas pelagic tuna longline supply chain. These include NGOs, tuna partnerships (formalised NGO/tuna company relationships), and academic institutions. The focus of their engagement is generally around a theme or themes (such as Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing, labour conditions,

electronic monitoring (EM), non-target bycatch, Fisheries Improvement Projects, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification)¹. While these relationships mainly exist where tuna product is destined for discerning markets concerned about sustainability (North America and parts of Europe), we could see the potential for seabird bycatch to be addressed through these partnerships, or by the NGOs that have built trusting relationships with the supply chain companies.

Some of these partnerships already consider non-target species, most commonly turtles and sharks. Where seabirds are specifically included, ACAP recommendations are not necessarily specified, or the chosen measures. As well, there is often no geographic reference to where seabird measures would be beneficial or out-dated seabird distribution data is used. Auditing and public reporting methods vary.

We considered what we could do to make it straight forward for companies or tuna partnerships to incorporate seabirds into their programmes, policies and agreements. Based on discussions with those who work with the supply chain, and from our own observations, we concluded that one of the challenges for them was that the key information is not available in a user-friendly format, i.e. all together as a single package of information communicated in an audience-appropriate way. While the information all exists, it tends to be contained in research papers, databases, websites, and single-subject factsheets.

3. SEABIRD-SAFE PELAGIC LONGLINE FISHING TOOLKIT - A RESOURCE FOR THE TUNA SUPPLY CHAIN

We have secured funding to prepare an evidence-based information toolkit for tuna partnerships, as well as for the fishing, purchasing and retail companies that form the vessel-to-market supply chain. The purpose of the toolkit is to provide information to help the users make informed decisions that meet their sustainability objectives. It is important to note that the toolkit does not tell them what decisions to take.

We envisage that the toolkit will:

1. Summarise the information on risk zones for seabirds in the world's oceans.
3. Describe the technical and operational mitigation measures available to reduce seabird mortalities.²
4. Describe the extent to which the measures are likely to reduce mortalities of seabirds when used singly and in combination.
5. Outline the auditing tools available to verify the measures are in use and meet the ACAP specifications.
6. Describe the suitability and reliability of these auditing tools in different situations.
7. Provide guidance on audit results in terms of likely reductions in seabird mortality.

¹ Southern Seabirds plans to prepare a summary of the main organisations and their programmes.

² The measures will mirror best practice advice provided by ACAP.

While the toolkit will be designed to provide at-a-glance information for companies and tuna partnerships, it may also be useful for Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), governments, NGOs, and other organisations with schemes or initiatives aimed at supporting the tuna fishing industry to meet sustainability goals.

4. TOOLKIT CONSULTATION

We have sought feedback on the toolkit concept from those tuna partnerships and NGOs who have trusted relationships with fishing companies, tuna suppliers and retailers. They have expressed their support for the toolkit and have offered to assist us as the work proceeds. They made several key points that we have incorporated into the toolkit planning:

1. Different parts of the supply chain have different information needs. For instance, most large retailers have environmental procurement policies, and the companies who supply product to these retailers are required to meet these. So, in terms of the toolkit, we were advised that retailers only need high level, outcome-focused information that they can use to inform their policies. At the other end of the supply chain, a fishing company will want very specific information, such as the seabird mortality outcome of using different suites of measures, and the technical aspects of auditing and reporting. In summary we were advised to design the toolkit in a layered way, with each layer tailored to a different audience in the supply chain.
2. To the extent possible, ensure the toolkit layout aligns with and supports existing sustainability tools, frameworks and schemes. The supply chain is tackling a host of issues, so we need to design the toolkit so it complements other work. This could occur in a range of ways; such as sharing platforms, a module of a broader scheme, or presenting information in a way that matches another schemes' measures.
3. The toolkit needs to be global in scale to fit with other schemes.
4. The toolkit needs to cover national jurisdictions as well as high seas, so that distant water fishing fleets don't feel unfairly targeted and to ensure appropriate coverage of risks to seabirds.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOOLKIT

1. Stage One (Current)

Prepare background documents that summarise relevant information on the various inputs to the toolkit.

- a. Seabird bycatch mitigation measures (effectiveness, practical and operational factors, economic benefit, impact on target and non-target catch). A review is provided as **SBWG11 Inf 06**.
- b. Seabird risk zones (distinct from a seabird/fisheries risk assessment).
- c. Seabird bycatch mitigation monitoring, audit and reporting processes (port, at sea and remote methods, and guidance on interpretation of monitoring findings – i.e. level and degree of certainty of seabird capture reductions achieved).

Continue to consult with tuna partnerships and sustainability scheme holders whose work could intersect with this project, to align the toolkit with their schemes or processes.

2. Stage Two

Seek input from seabird, mitigation, fishing and auditing experts to provide advice on the development of the toolkit. The background documents prepared under Stage One, will be an information source for the experts to draw on. Feedback from supply chain members will be taken account of in the design of the toolkit, as well as opportunities to align with any relevant schemes or processes identified in Stage One.

3. Stage Three

Promote the toolkit with relevant tuna supply chain participants, particularly those whose tuna is sourced from the identified seabird risk zones.

Identify fishing or retail companies prepared to pilot the toolkit.

6. ACAP ENGAGEMENT

Given the close alignment of the toolkit with ACAP's current and intended communications products we welcome ACAP's consideration of outreach materials could be provided for inclusion as part of the toolkit resources and whether, and in what way, ACAP could support the development and promotion of the toolkit.

Relevant current ACAP communication products or information include:

1. Bycatch mitigation review and advice documents
2. Bycatch mitigation factsheets
3. Bycatch monitoring guidelines
4. Species assessments
5. Data on seabird populations