

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p>Seventh Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group</p> <p><i>La Serena, Chile, 2 - 4 May 2016</i></p> <p>Developing a guide on removing entangled seabird from nets</p> <p><i>Jonathon H S Barrington</i></p>
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SUMMARY

Entanglement of seabirds occurs across a range of net fishing gear in commercial, artisanal and recreational capture fisheries. Some information is available about removing bycaught seabirds from nets in the bycatch mitigation fact sheet concerning net entanglement in trawl fisheries. Better information about appropriate practices and procedures would assist with the safe handling and disentanglement of seabirds, and would help to maximise the chance of survival of seabirds entangled in nets including albatrosses and petrels. This paper proposes that a best practice guide on removing entangled seabirds from nets be developed. The proposed guide would complement information in the de-hooking guide.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That SBWG considers recommending that a best practice guide on removing entangled seabirds from nets be developed.
2. That SBWG considers recommending core funding from the Advisory Committee budgetary appropriation be allocated to support developing this best practice guide.

Desarrollo de una guía para remover aves marinas que han quedado atrapadas en redes

RESUMEN

Las aves marinas pueden quedar atrapadas en muchos tipos de artes de pesca con redes utilizados en pesca de captura, ya sea en pesquerías comerciales, artesanales o deportivas. En la hoja informativa sobre mitigación de captura secundaria, hay información disponible sobre cómo remover aves marinas enredadas, en especial sobre aquellas capturadas en pesquerías con redes de arrastre. Contar con mejor información sobre las prácticas y los procedimientos adecuados ayudaría a manipular y desenredar las aves marinas de manera más segura, y también ayudaría a maximizar las probabilidades de supervivencia de las aves marinas enredadas, incluidos los albatros y petreles. El presente documento propone desarrollar una guía de mejores prácticas para remover aves marinas enredadas. La guía propuesta complementarí la información incluida en la guía de extracción de anzuelos.

RECOMENDACIONES

1. Que el GdTCS considere recomendar la preparación de una guía de mejores prácticas para remover aves marinas enredadas.
2. Que el GdTCS considere recomendar que los fondos de la partida presupuestaria del Comité Asesor sean destinados para financiar el desarrollo de esta guía de mejores prácticas.

Élaboration d'un guide pour libérer des oiseaux marins capturés dans des filets

RÉSUMÉ

Il arrive que des oiseaux marins soient capturés dans différentes sortes de filets au cours d'activités de pêche commerciale, artisanale et récréative. Des informations sont disponibles sur la libération d'oiseaux marins capturés accidentellement dans les filets dans la fiche pratique de réduction des captures accidentelles qui aborde la question de la capture dans les filets en cas de pêche au chalut. De meilleures informations sur les pratiques et les procédures appropriées contribueraient à une manipulation et à une libération sûres des oiseaux marins et contribueraient à multiplier les chances de survie des oiseaux marins pris dans des filets, y compris les albatros et les pétrels. Ce document propose qu'un guide de meilleure pratique sur la libération des oiseaux marins capturés dans les filets soit élaboré. Le guide proposé viendrait compléter les informations reprises dans le guide de retrait de l'hameçon.

RECOMMANDATIONS

1. Que le GTCA envisage de recommander l'élaboration d'un guide de bonnes pratiques sur la libération des oiseaux marins capturés dans des filets.
2. Que le GTCA envisage de recommander que le financement de base issu des crédits budgétaires du Comité consultatif soit alloué au soutien de l'élaboration de ce guide de bonnes pratiques.

1. CONTEXT

ACAP fact sheets outline technologies and procedures for mitigating seabird bycatch during fishing operations. Bycatch mitigation fact sheet 14 provides information on seabird bycatch mitigation measures in trawl fisheries concerning net entanglement (ACAP, 2014b). Some information is included in the fact sheet about removing bycaught birds from nets, as follows:

Birds caught during hauling are often brought aboard the vessel alive. Care is needed to remove these birds without causing injury. Waterlogged birds should be kept in a dry place (cardboard box) to allow the bird's feathers to dry and be reconditioned prior to release (ACAP 2014b).

Further information is not available about appropriate practices and procedures that would help maximise the chance of survival of entangled seabirds in trawl fisheries, or in other net fisheries.

A preponderance of seabird entangled by nets will either die from their injuries or drown before the net is retrieved by the fishing vessel. Some seabirds will however, be hauled aboard the fishing vessel alive, and entangled in the fishing net (Watkins et al., 2008; Sullivan et al., 2006).

2. NET ENTANGLEMENT

Seabirds are at risk of entanglement in nets in commercial, artisanal and recreational capture fisheries. Various nets pose an entanglement risk including, but not limited to, trawl nets, gillnets and purse seines. For example, entanglement may occur when trawl nets are at, or close to, the surface during shooting and hauling, when seabirds attempt to seize fish from the net (ACAP, 2014b). Seabirds entangled during hauling may be brought onboard the fishing vessel alive (Watkins et al., 2008; Sullivan et al., 2006). In these circumstances every effort should be made to safely disentangle the bycaught seabird, and ensure proper handling prior to release. Consideration should also be given in nearshore fisheries about whether injured seabirds may be returned ashore to care and rehabilitation facilities, such as animal rescue centres.

3. DEVELOPING A GUIDE ON REMOVING ENTANGLED SEABIRDS FROM NETS

It is proposed that a best practice guide on removing entangled seabirds from nets be developed. A similar guide on hook removal from seabirds has already been developed (ACAP, 2014a). The de-hooking guide provides clear, step-wise advice about, and cartoon illustrations concerning the safe handling of bycaught seabirds that have been hooked during fishing operations. It is designed to be readily laminated and placed onboard fishing vessels for use when required. It is suggested that the guide on removing entangled seabirds from nets should closely match the style and layout of that concerning hook removal.

Various procedures have been developed to assist with the safe removal of entangled seabirds from nets (see e.g., Department of Primary Industries (New South Wales), 2016; Ocean Watch Australia & SeaNet, 2016), and some procedures on de-hooking seabirds will also be applicable (ACAP, 2014a). These procedures indicate that the following are important:

- a. Crew safety is a priority. Appropriate safety gear should be worn, such as gloves and eye protection. At least two crew members should be involved in efforts to release the entangled seabird.

- b. A release kit should be carried by fishing vessels. This should include: gloves and protective eyewear for the crew; towels or a blanket to wrap the seabird in; cutting equipment, such as scissors, knife, stitch cutters, pliers and bolt cutters, to free the seabird from the net; and a perforated box in which to keep the seabird in while it is recovering or being transported ashore.
- c. The entangled seabird should be handled with care at all times to prevent further injury. Efforts should be made to gently bringing the entangled seabird onboard. Care should be taken to avoid further injury to the seabird while it is onboard.
- d. Oil-based contamination of the seabird should be avoided while the seabird is onboard. Such pollutants adversely affect the survival of the seabird. Efforts to disentangle the seabird should occur in an area of the deck that is free from oil-based contaminants.
- e. It is important to avoid pulling an entangled seabird through the mesh. This may led to further injury. Either cut the net to free the seabird, or pull the seabird back in the direction it entered the net.
- f. Care is important when restraining the entangled seabird. When holding the bill it is important to allow the bird to breathe. The bill should be left slightly open and external nostrils left uncovered (if present). This avoids stress to the seabird from being unable to breathe, and ensures the bills are not twisted. The bird may be wrapped in towels or a blanket, but not too tightly. The eyes should be covered if possible.
- g. Monitoring of the seabird is important when attempting to disentangle it from the net. Ensure it is breathing freely. If it vomits then release the bill or the seabird may suffocate.
- h. It is important to check for any remaining entanglement. Once free of the net check the seabird for any remaining net entanglement. Remove this if present.
- i. Consider the health status of the seabird before releasing it. If the seabird is stressed, exhausted or waterlogged, it should be placed in a loosely covered box in a quiet shaded place to recover for an hour or two.
- j. The seabird should only be released if it appears healthy. The feathers should be dry and the bird should hold its head erect and stand with wings in a normal folded position and react to sound.
- k. Care should be taken when releasing the seabird. The seabird may be slowly lowered by hand onto the water. It should never be thrown into the air. The seabird should be allowed to move away from the fishing vessel before proceeding with fishing operations. Alternatively, the seabird may be placed on the deck to allow it to fly away at will.
- l. Consideration should be given to bringing an injured seabird ashore to a care and rehabilitation facility, such as an animal rescue centre. During the return to port keep in a loosely covered box in a warm, quiet shaded place. Avoid disturbing the seabird. It may not be practical to keep an injured seabird onboard for extended periods.

It is proposed that the above procedures should be reviewed and reworded into clear, simple instructions that may be included in a best practice guide on removing entangled seabirds. It is also proposed that cartoon images be developed illustrating key steps in the procedures, noting that some may be drawn from the existing de-hooking guide (ACAP, 2014a). The guide should be made available in a range of languages.

4. RECOMMENDATION

The development of a best practice guide on removing entangled seabirds is recommended noting that it would:

- complement the de-hooking guide
- be beneficial in trawl, gillnet and other net fisheries
- be of value to commercial, recreational and artisanal fisheries
- benefit the conservation of albatrosses and petrels listed under the Agreement, as well as seabirds generally.

Funding for work concerning developing the best practice guide is recommended from the appropriation of the Advisory Committee, and is recommended to proceed as part of the core funding arrangements.

REFERENCES

ACAP (Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels) (2014a). *Hook Removal from Seabirds* (ACAP Conservation Guidelines).

Version: 10 March 2014

Available on the internet: <http://www.acap.aq/en/resources/acap-conservation-guidelines/2177-hook-removal-from-seabirds-guide-a4/file>

ACAP (2014b). *Trawl Fisheries Net Entanglement* (ACAP Bycatch Mitigation Fact Sheet No 14)

Version: September 2014

Available on the internet: <http://www.acap.aq/en/bycatch-mitigation/bycatch-mitigation-fact-sheets/1713-fs-14-trawl-fisheries-net-entanglement/file>

Department of Primary Industries (New South Wales) (2016). *First responders resource guide for seabird emergencies*.

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Ocean Watch Australia Ltd and SeaNet (2016). *South Coast Purse Seine Managed Fishery Manual*.

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www.environment.gov.au/system/files/.../purse-seine-appendix4b.pdf

Sullivan BJ, Liddle GM and Munro GM (2004). *Mitigation trials to reduce seabird mortality in pelagic trawl fisheries (Subarea 48.2)* (Paper presented to WG-FSA 04/80, SC-CAMLR XXVII CCAMLR, Hobart, Australia)

Watkins BP, Petersen SI and Ryan PG (2008). Interactions between seabirds and deep-water hake trawl gear: an assessment of impacts in South African waters. *Animal Conservation*, 11, 247-254