

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON REDUCING INCIDENTAL BY-CATCH
OF SEABIRDS IN LONGLINE FISHERIES**

RECOGNISING the need to strengthen mechanisms to protect seabirds in the Atlantic Ocean;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) International Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA-Seabirds), and the IOTC Working Party on By-catch objectives;

ACKNOWLEDGING that to date some Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities (hereinafter referred to as “CPCs”) have identified the need for, and have either completed or are near finalised, their National Plan of Action on Seabirds;

RECOGNISING the concern that some species of seabirds, notably albatross and petrels, are threatened with extinction;

NOTING that the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, has entered into force;

RECALLING the *Resolution by ICCAT on Incidental Mortality of Seabirds [Res. 02-14]*;

CONSCIOUS that there are on-going scientific studies which may result in the identification of more effective mitigation measures and therefore that these current measures should be considered provisional;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. The Commission shall develop mechanisms to enable CPCs to record data on seabird interactions, including regular reporting to the Commission, and seek agreement to implement such mechanisms as soon as possible thereafter.
2. CPCs shall collect and provide all available information to the Secretariat on interactions with seabirds, including incidental catches by their fishing vessels.
3. CPCs shall seek to achieve reductions in levels of seabird by-catch across all fishing areas, seasons and fisheries, through the use of effective mitigation measures.
4. All vessels fishing south of 20°S shall carry and use bird-scaring lines (tori poles):
 - Tori poles shall be used in consideration of the suggested tori pole design and deployment guidelines (provided for in **Annex 1**);
 - Tori lines are to be deployed prior to longlines entering the water at all times south of 20°S;
 - Where practical, vessels are encouraged to use a second tori pole and bird-scaring line at times of high bird abundance or activity;
 - Back-up tori lines shall be carried by all vessels and be ready for immediate use.
5. Longline vessels targeting swordfish using monofilament longline gear may be exempted from the requirements of paragraph 4 of this Recommendation, on condition that these vessels set their longlines during the night, with night being defined as the period between nautical dusk/dawn as referenced in the nautical dusk/dawn almanac for the geographical position fished. In addition, these vessels are required to use a minimum swivel weight of 60g placed not more than 3m from the hook to achieve optimum sink rates.

CPCs applying this derogation shall inform the SCRS of their scientific findings resulting from their observer coverage of these vessels.

6. The Commission shall, upon receipt of information from the SCRS, consider, and if necessary, refine, the area of application of the mitigation measures specified in paragraph 4.
7. This measure is a provisional measure which will be subject to review and adjustment in the light of future available scientific advice.
8. The Commission shall consider adopting additional measures for the mitigation of any incidental catch of seabirds at its annual meeting in 2008 based on the results of the ICCAT seabird assessment which is currently underway.

Suggested Guidelines for Design and Deployment of Tori Lines

Preamble

These guidelines are designed to assist in preparation and implementation of tori line regulations for longline vessels. While these guidelines are relatively explicit, improvement in tori line effectiveness through experimentation is encouraged. The guidelines take into account environmental and operational variables such as weather conditions, setting speed and ship size, all of which influence tori line performance and design in protecting baits from birds. Tori line design and use may change to take account of these variables provided that line performance is not compromised. On-going improvement in tori line design is envisaged and consequently review of these guidelines should be undertaken in the future.

Tori line design

1. It is recommended that a tori line 150 m in length be used. The diameter of the section of the line in the water may be greater than that of the line above water. This increases drag and hence reduces the need for greater line length and takes account of setting speeds and length of time taken for baits to sink. The section above water should be a strong fine line (e.g. about 3 mm diameter) of a conspicuous colour such as red or orange.
2. The above water section of the line should be sufficiently light that its movement is unpredictable to avoid habituation by birds and sufficiently heavy to avoid deflection of the line by wind.
3. The line is best attached to the vessel with a robust barrel swivel to reduce tangling of the line.
4. The streamers should be made of material that is conspicuous and produces an unpredictable lively action (e.g. strong fine line sheathed in red polyurethane tubing) suspended from a robust three-way swivel (that again reduces tangles) attached to the tori line, and should hang just clear of the water.
5. There should be a maximum of 5-7 m between each streamer. Ideally each streamer should be paired.
6. Each streamer pair should be detachable by means of a clip so that line stowage is more efficient.
7. The number of streamers should be adjusted for the setting speed of the vessel, with more streamers necessary at slower setting speeds. Three pairs are appropriate for a setting speed of 10 knots.

Deployment of tori lines

1. The line should be suspended from a pole affixed to the vessel. The tori pole should be set as high as possible so that the line protects bait a good distance astern of the vessel and will not tangle with fishing gear. Greater pole height provides greater bait protection. For example, a height of around 6 m above the water line can give about 100 m of bait protection.
2. The tori line should be set so that streamers pass over baited hooks in the water.
3. Deployment of multiple tori lines is encouraged to provide even greater protection of baits from birds.
4. Because there is the potential for line breakage and tangling, spare tori lines should be carried onboard to replace damaged lines and to ensure fishing operations can continue uninterrupted.
5. When fishers use a bait casting machine (BCM), they must ensure coordination of tori line and machine by:
 - (i) ensuring the BCM throws directly under the tori line protection, and
 - (ii) when using a BCM that allows throwing to port and starboard, ensure that two tori lines are used.
6. Fishers are encouraged to install manual, electric or hydraulic winches to improve ease of deployment and retrieval of tori lines.