
RESOLUTION ON REDUCING INCIDENTAL BYCATCH OF SEABIRDS IN
LONGLINE FISHERIES

Submitted by the EC

Explanatory Memorandum

The IOTC adopted in 2006 *Resolution 06/04 On Reducing Incidental By-Catch of Seabirds in longline fishery*, which developed mechanisms to enable Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non Contracting Parties (CPCs) to record an exchange data on seabirds interaction.

Through the adoption of Resolution 06/04, CPCs also committed themselves to consider adopting additional measures for the mitigation of any incidental by-catch of seabirds in subsequent IOTC Annual Meeting.

During its third meeting held in Seychelles from 11 to 13 July 2007, the Working Party on Ecosystem and By-Catch (WPBE) considers that the interactions with pelagic fisheries constitute the largest conservation threat to seabirds in the southern oceans, and although several seabird avoidance measures have been trialled to varying degrees, proven and accepted seabird avoidance measures require substantial improvement.

The Working Party on Ecosystems and By-catch identified and recommended to the Scientific Committee a range of technical issues in order to be considered in future revision of Resolution 06/04 On reducing incidental by catch of seabirds in longline fisheries:

The EC on the basis of the conclusion of the IOTC Scientific Committee during its 2007 session, which endorsed the WPEB recommendations, has tabled a new draft Seabird Resolution which would repeal Resolution 06/04, proposing a set of best practice seabird mitigation measures and standards.

In particular, this includes requiring fishers to select two measures, to be used in combination, from the range of seabird mitigation technical measures as indicated in WPEB report.

**EC PROPOSAL FOR
RESOLUTION ON REDUCING INCIDENTAL BYCATCH OF SEABIRDS IN
LONGLINE FISHERIES**

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

RECALLING *Resolution 06/04 On Reducing Incidental By-Catch of Seabirds in longline fishery*, and in particular, its paragraph 7;

RECOGNISING the need to strengthen mechanisms to protect seabirds in the Indian 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 Bycatch objectives;

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

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

NOTING that the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, which opened for signatures at Canberra on 19 June 2001, has entered into force;

NOTING that the ultimate aim of the IOTC and the CPCs is to achieve a zero bycatch of seabirds, especially threatened albatross and petrel species, in longline fisheries;

NOTING the conclusions of the 10th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee;

ADOPTS, in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, adopts the following additional measures to reduce the possibility of incidental mortality of seabirds during longline fishing.

1. CPCs shall seek to achieve reductions in levels of seabird bycatch across all fishing areas, seasons, and fisheries through the use of effective mitigation measures.
2. CPCs shall collect and provide all available information to the Secretariat on interactions with seabirds, including incidental catches by their fishing vessels.
3. Fishing operations shall be conducted in such a way that hooklines¹ sink beyond the reach of seabirds as soon as possible after they are put in the water.
4. All vessels fishing in waters south of 30°S are required to use at least two of the mitigation measures in Annex I, including at least one obligatory measure and one complementary measure.

¹ Hookline is defined as the groundline or mainline to which the baited hooks are attached by snoods

5. All the measures in both Annex I and II should be used in conformity with the minimum standard shown in Annex II.
6. Further guidelines for technical specifications for design and deployment of bird scaring (tori-lines) are provided in Appendix III.
7. Regular reviews of information on new or existing mitigation measures, or on seabird interactions from observers or other monitoring programs, will be undertaken by the WPEB and the Scientific Committee.
8. The Scientific Committee will also analyse the impact of this Resolution on seabird by-catch at 2010 IOTC meeting
9. Resolution 06/04 *On Reducing Incidental By-Catch of Seabirds in longline fishery* is superseded by this Resolution

ANNEX I

Obligatory Measures

- A) Night setting with minimum deck lighting
- B) Bird-scaring lines (tori-lines)
- C) Weighted branch lines
- D) [Line-throwing devices (line shooters and bait casting machines)]

Complementary Measure

- A) Night setting
- B) Blue-dyed bait
- B) Offal discharging control

ANNEX II

<i>Mitigation measures</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Minimum standard</i>
Night setting with minimum deck lighting	Setting and retrieving the gear at night shifts fishing operations to between nautical dawn and dusk, a time when the seabirds are less active and reduces the visibility of bait.	Setting restricted to between the hours of nautical dusk and nautical dawn, as set out in the Nautical Almanac tables for the relevant latitude, local time and date
Bird-scaring lines	A system of streamers is deployed to keep seabirds away from the areas where the longline enters the water.	A minimum aerial coverage of 100m is required for this measure to be effective. Deployment should occur prior to longlines entering the water. Current minimum standards for pelagic fisheries are based on CCAMLR Conservation Measure 25-02
Weighted branch lines	Weighted lines sink the baited hooks more rapidly and reduce the time the baited hooks are available to the birds.	60 g placed < 3 m from hook; or 100 g placed < 4 m from hook
Blue-dyed squid bait	Colouring bait reduces contrast with the water making it more difficult for the seabird to see.	Mix to standardized colour placard or specify (e.g. use 'Brilliant Blue' food dye (Colour Index 42090, also known as Food Additive number E133) mixed at 0.5% for a minimum of 20 minutes)
Management of offal discharge	Fishermen avoid discarding offal while the longline is being set to reduce the attraction of seabirds.	No discard of offal during setting. During line hauling, storage of waste is encouraged. If offal must be discharged, this must occur on the opposite side of the vessel to the hauling bay.

ANNEX III

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. Ongoing 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:

a) ensuring the BCM throws directly under the tori line protection and b) 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.

