
**Report: Technical workshop for the implementation of measures to reduce seabird bycatch
in IOTC longline fisheries
Busan, Korea, 29-30 November 2013**

Background

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) strengthened its seabird bycatch mitigation requirements in April 2012 to require longline vessels fishing south of 25°S to use two bycatch mitigation measures, chosen from tori lines, night setting or line weighting. The new IOTC seabird conservation measure (Resolution 12/06) becomes mandatory on 1 July 2014, and recognises the need for engagement with national fleets prior to implementation. There was agreement that a technical workshop would be a key step towards assisting fleets with implementation of Resolution 12/06, and this was included in the Resolution. This work is of relevance to and enhances the Global Environmental Facility project on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction to improve sustainable management and biodiversity conservation in tuna fisheries.

The goal of the IOTC seabird bycatch workshop was to provide longline fishing captains, fishery observers, and fishery managers with practical advice for implementation of the new IOTC measure. Three explicit objectives are as follows:

- To provide training and demonstration of the seabird bycatch mitigation options in IOTC Resolution 12/06, which will come into force on 1 July 2014.
- To address concerns that may be held in relation to implementation of the seabird bycatch mitigation measure requirements in terms of crew safety, operational aspects and fish catch rates of target species.
- To highlight and provide training on data collection and reporting obligations relevant to longline fishing vessels in the southern Indian Ocean.

Participation

There were 32 delegates from 3 CPCs (Republic of Korea, Japan and Mauritius) represented at the workshop. The Rep. of Korea and Japan sent representatives from across the spectrum, including national fisheries department officials, scientists, fishing captains, scientific observers and industry representatives. Mauritius, which does not itself have longline effort south of 25°S but is an important port for various fleets which do operate south of 25°S, sent a representative from the national fishery department. In addition, expert presentations on data recording and reporting, seabird bycatch and mitigation measures were delivered by Dr David Wilson (IOTC), Dr Anton Wolfaardt (ACAP) and Dr Ross Wanless (BLI). Ms Yuna Kim (BLI) provided translation between English and Korean. A number of other experts in seabird bycatch mitigation were invited to participate but were not available for the workshop dates.

Outcomes

Bird scaring lines (BSL), also known as tori lines, were discussed, including basic design principles (materials, towed devices, etc.), and performance measures (aerial extent, distance between streamer lines, etc.). Both Japanese and Korean fishermen and observers confirmed that they were familiar and comfortable with BSLs, and that the use of this measure did not represent a problem for their respective longline vessels.

Night setting is widely used, but it was noted that there are occasions when this is not practical due to catch rate concerns. However there's no technical obstacle to using this as a measure.

Branchline weighting presents the biggest concern to fishing captains. Two technologies – the Japanese double weight design and the BirdLife sliding lead designs were presented. Mr Yoshida-san from Japan tuna association brought examples of the double weight system. Dr Zang Geun Kim presented results of an at-sea trial of sliding weights onboard a Korean longliner, conducted in collaboration with BirdLife International

and Sajo Industries. Delegates from both Japan and Rep. of Korea agreed that weighting branchlines was a key component in reducing seabird bycatch in longline fishing.

Data and reporting

Japan noted that although they had failed to meet the 5% observer coverage required for the Regional Observer Programme, they had increased the annual budget so as to achieve the minimum coverage.

The Rep. of Korea currently has observer coverage in excess of 5% of longline effort, but nevertheless it requires that seabird bycatch is recorded in vessel logbooks.

It was noted when seabird (and other non-target groups) bycatch is reported, for example in CPCs National Reports to the Scientific Committee, that these be presented in association with the relevant observer effort, so that bycatch rates can be estimated.

Steps towards becoming compliant with 12/06

The Rep. of Korea currently provides training to fishing captains when they return to Busan port.

Japan had disseminated information about the double weight system to its distant water fleet. Participants expressed the view that challenges remain to get fleets, other than those present at this workshop, to comply with 12/06. Both Korea and Japan stated they were ready for full implementation of 12/06 in their fleets by 1 July 2014.

Acknowledgements

BirdLife International received funding from the David and Lucille Packard Foundation for the workshop. Yuna Kim assisted logistical matters and provided English/Korean translation during the workshop.