

**ADDENDUM TO THE SEABIRD IDENTIFICATION CARDS FOR FISHING VESSELS
OPERATING IN THE INDIAN OCEAN**

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ABSTRACT

IOTC Seabirds Identification Cards for Fishing Vessels Operating in the Indian Ocean covers seabirds mainly from Southern and Central Indian Ocean and includes only three species i.e. flesh-footed shearwater, wedge-tailed shearwater and masked booby from Northern Indian Ocean (Arabian sea). In addition, existing IOTC Seabirds Identification Cards does not include some species of sea birds which are associated with tuna school such as tropic birds, noddies, gulls and terns. Considering these lacunae, WWF-Pakistan has drafted a Seabirds Identification Cards which will be equally helpful to observers, skippers and scientists from not only Northern Indian Ocean but will cover entire IOTC area of competence.

INTRODUCTION

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission has published five species identification guides covering tuna and tuna like species, marine turtles, sharks and rays, billfishes and seabirds. Identification cards for fishing vessels operating in the Indian Ocean mainly cover species occurring in the Southern and Central Indian Ocean. It includes only three species that occur in the Northern Indian Ocean (Arabian Sea) i.e. flesh-footed shearwater (*Puffinus carneipes*), wedge-tailed shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) and masked booby (*Sula dactylatra*). The IOTC identification guide for sea bird, therefore, is not helpful in the identification of sea birds associated with tuna fishing or found in the offshore waters in the northern Indian Ocean. Some species groups such as gulls, terns, noddies and tropicbirds are not covered by the Seabirds Identification Cards for Fishing Vessels Operating in the Indian Ocean.

WWF-Pakistan initiated an crew based Observer Programme in October, 2012 and since then this programme is continuing. The observers posted on the tuna gillnet vessels which operate in offshore waters of Pakistan, in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and in the Area Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) regularly encountered seabirds associated with tuna schools, interacted with fishing gears or followed the fishing vessels. They have complained that with the exception of masked booby and wedged-tailed shearwater, the species of seabirds cannot be identified using IOTC Seabirds Identification Cards for Fishing Vessels Operating in the Indian Ocean.

In order to assist, the observers, WWF-Pakistan decided to develop to expand IOTC Seabirds Identification Cards for Fishing Vessels Operating and to include bird groups and species which were not covered.

ADDENDUM TO THE IOTC SEABIRD IDENTIFICATION CARDS

WWF-Pakistan has drafted cards which may be added to the existing IOTC Seabirds Identification Cards for Fishing Vessels Operating in the Indian Ocean to enhance their usage by the observers, skippers and scientist working. Identification cards have been designed to include the groups of seabirds not covered in the IOTC Seabirds Identification Cards for Fishing Vessels Operating in the Indian Ocean as well as those species groups which although have representatives from Southern and central Indian Ocean but do not have species from northern Indian Ocean. The drafted Identification cards includes distribution of these species in the entire area under IOTC. It also includes species which are found in Southern and Central Indian Ocean but not included in the IOTC Seabirds Identification Cards for Fishing Vessels Operating in the Indian Ocean.

Some of the groups covered under the proposed amendments include tropic birds, noddies, sea gulls, terns, pelican, flamingoes, raptors, skuas, shearwaters, jaegers and cormorants. Some of the species may be considered as coastal in their general distribution, however, these were included because of their occurrence in offshore waters or associated with tuna schools, or follow fishing vessels in offshore waters.

As an example, Identification cards for tropicbirds and noddies are given here. WWF-Pakistan will seek endorsement of the addendum to the IOTC Seabirds Identification Cards for Fishing Vessels Operating in the Indian Ocean and may also request Bird International or any other organization/person to vet the Identification so these may be printed and circulated. WWF-Pakistan also seek permission to include existing cards from IOTC Seabirds Identification Cards for Fishing Vessels Operating in the Indian Ocean into a consolidated version. Alternatively the species already covered may also be separately designed and included in a new IOTC Seabirds Identification Cards for Fishing Vessels Operating in the Indian Ocean.