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## RESOLUTION ON REDUCING INCIDENTAL BYCATCH OF SEABIRDS IN LONGLINE FISHERIES

Submitted by Australia

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### THE INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION (IOTC),

RECOGNISING the need to strengthen the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Recommendation 05/09 'On Incidental Mortality of Seabirds';

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

ACKNOWLEDGING that to date some Contracting Parties have identified the need for, and either completed or are near finalising, their associated National Plan of Action;

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

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

ADOPTS, in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, that:

1. The Commission shall, within a year, develop effective mechanisms to enable Parties to record and exchange data on seabird interactions, including regular reporting to the Commission, and seek agreement to implement all mechanisms as soon as possible thereafter;
2. Parties will seek to achieve reductions in levels of seabird bycatch across all fishing areas, seasons, and fisheries;
3. To reduce seabird bycatch, all Parties should ensure effective mitigation measures are used.
4. The Commission shall consider adopting measures for the mitigation of any incidental catch of seabirds (including those applied and tested by the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources) at its annual meeting in 2007;
5. All vessels fishing south of the parallel of latitude 30 degrees South shall carry and use bird-scaring lines (Tori poles):
  - Tori poles shall be in accordance with agreed Tori pole design and use guidelines (refer to Appendix A);
  - Tori poles are to be deployed prior to longlines entering the water at all times south of the parallel of latitude 30 degrees South;
  - 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 must be carried by all vessels and be ready for immediate use.

## **Appendix A – 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 won't 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.

A standard design is detailed in various educational materials available to fishers eg.

*Longline fishing dollars and sense, Catch fish not birds, and Fish the seas not the sky.*