INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

81ST MEETING

ANTIGUA (GUATEMALA)
27 SEPTEMBER – 1 OCTOBER 2010

PROPOSAL A-2

SUBMITTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

RESOLUTION FOR REDUCING THE INCIDENTAL BYCATCH OF SEABIRDS IN LONGLINE FISHERIES

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The Antigua Convention asks the Commission to adopt, as necessary, conservation and management measures and recommendations for species belonging to the same ecosystem and that are affected by fishing for, or dependent on, or associated with, the fish stocks covered by the Convention itself, with a view to maintaining or restoring populations of such species above levels at which their reproduction may become seriously threatened.

The IATTC adopted in 2005 *Resolution C-05-01 on incidental mortality of seabirds*, which required Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non Contracting Parties (CPCs) to exchange data on interactions of longline vessels with seabirds.

A Technical Meeting on Seabirds took place at the initiative of the IATTC Secretariat in Del Mar (US) in May 2009 in order to further examine these interactions and take stock of existing mitigation measures against seabird mortality.

Furthermore, the Advisory Committee to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) has reported during its Fifth Meeting that "many populations of albatrosses and petrels are threatened with extinction as a result of being killed or injured in fishing operations managed by tuna RFMOs".

Based on the above, it is clear that proven and accepted seabird avoidance measures require proper application in order to minimise as much as possible the incidental bycatch of seabirds by longline vessels during their fishing trips.

This Resolution repeals Resolution C-05-01, proposing a set of best practice seabird mitigation measures and standards.

RESOLUTION FOR REDUCING THE INCIDENTAL BYCATCH OF SEABIRDS IN LONGLINE FISHERIES

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC):

Taking into account the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA-Seabirds);

Recalling that IATTC Resolution C-05-01 on Incidental Mortality of Seabirds urges each member and cooperating non-member to implement, if appropriate, the IPOA-Seabirds if they have not yet done so;

Further recalling that other tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations have adopted measures to mitigate the accidental bycatch of seabirds in long line fisheries;

Noting the recent Working Group on Stock Assessment which should present to the Commission an assessment of the impact of incidental catch of seabirds resulting from the activities of all the vessels fishing for tunas and tuna-like species in the Convention Area;

Recognizing 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 signature in Canberra on 19 June 2001, has entered into force;

Mindful that the Antigua Convention calls for the adoption of conservation and management measures and for recommendations for species belonging to the same ecosystem and that are affected by fishing for tunas in the Convention Area;

Recognizing that the IATTC has examined proposals for mitigation measures whose ultimate aim is to achieve an almost zero bycatch of seabirds in fisheries under the purview of the IATTC, especially threatened albatrosses and petrel species in longline fisheries;

Resolves as follows:

1. Members and cooperating non-members shall seek to achieve reductions in levels of seabird bycatch across all relevant fishing areas, seasons, and fisheries, through the use of effective mitigation measures.
2. Fishing operations shall be conducted in such a way that hooklines[1] sink beyond the reach of seabirds as soon as possible after they are put in the water.
3. Members and cooperating non-members shall ensure that all longline vessels fishing south of 30°S use at least two of the mitigation measures in Table 1 below, including at least one from Column A. Vessels shall not use the same measure from Column A and Column B.
4. In all other areas, members and cooperating non-members may require that longline vessels use at least one of the measures in Table 1.
5. Mitigation measures used shall conform to the minimum technical standards for the measures as shown in Annex 1.
6. The design and deployment for bird-scaring lines shall meet the specifications provided in Annex 2.
7. Members and cooperating non-members shall provide to the Commission, as part of their annual reports, information on how they are implementing this measure and all available information on interactions with seabirds, including bycatch by fishing vessels carrying their flag or authorized to fish by them. This is to including details of species where available to enable the Scientific

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

Committee to annually estimate seabird mortality in all fisheries within the Convention Area.

8. The Scientific Advisory Committee, based notably on information from Members and cooperating non-members and other appropriate sources, will analyze the impact of this Resolution on seabird bycatch no later than for the 2012 meeting of the Commission. It shall advise the Commission on any modifications that are required, based on experience to date of the operation of the Resolution and/or further international studies or research on the issue, in order to make the Resolution more effective.

9. The Scientific Advisory Committee will also consider the need of extending the present Resolution to other fleets operating in the Convention Area.

Table 1: Seabird mitigation measures

Column A	**Column B**
Night setting with minimum deck lighting	Night setting with minimum deck lighting
Weighted branch lines	Bird-scaring lines (Tori Lines)
	Weighted branch lines
	Blue-dyed squid bait

ANNEX I

Mitigation	**Measure**	**Description Specification**
Night setting with minimum deck lighting	No setting between nautical dawn and before nautical dusk. Deck lighting to be kept to a minimum.	Nautical dusk and nautical dawn are defined as set out in the Nautical Almanac tables for relevant latitude, local time and date. Minimum deck lighting should not breach minimum standards for safety and navigation.
Bird-scaring lines (tori lines)	A bird-scaring line shall be deployed during longline setting to deter birds from approaching the branch line.	Design and deployment for bird-scaring lines are provided in Annex 2 of this Resolution.
Weighted branch lines	Weights must be attached to all branch lines in accordance with specifications provided	- minimum of 45 grams weight attached to all branch lines; - less than 60 grams weight must be within 1 metre of the hook; - 98 grams or greater must be within 2 metres of the hook
Blue-dyed squid bait	All bait must be dyed to the colour and shade shown in the placard provided by the IATTC Secretariat.	The standardized colour shall be equivalent to bait dyed using “Brilliant Blue” food dye (Colour Index 42090, also known as Food Additive Number E133) mixed at 0.5% for a minimum of 20 minutes.

ANNEX II

DESIGN AND DEPLOYMENT OF BIRD SCARING LINES (TORI LINES)

Design of bird-scaring lines

1. The bird-scaring line shall be a minimum of 100 m in length and if less than 150 m in length will include an object towed at the seaward end to create tension to maximise aerial coverage. The section above water shall be a strong fine line of a conspicuous colour such as red or orange.
2. The above-water section of the line shall 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. Streamers for the bird-scaring line shall be made of material that is conspicuous and produces an unpredictable lively action (*e.g.* strong fine line sheathed in red polyurethane tubing) and shall be suspended in pairs from a robust three-way swivel attached to the bird-scaring line and shall hang just clear of the water.
4. There shall be a maximum of 5 m between each streamer pair.
5. The number of streamers shall be adjusted for the setting speed of the vessel, with more streamers necessary at slower setting speeds.

Deployment of bird-scaring lines

1. The line shall be deployed before longliners enter into the water.
2. The line should have an aerial coverage of at least 100 metres. To achieve this coverage the line shall be suspended from a point a minimum of 5 metres above the water at the stern on the windward side of the point where the branch line enters the water.
3. The bird-scaring line shall be set so that streamers pass over baited hooks in the water. The position of the object towed shall be maintained so as to ensure, even during crosswinds, that the aerial extent of the bird-scaring line is over the branch line as far astern of the vessel as possible.
4. Because there is the potential for line breakage and tangling, spare bird-scaring lines shall be carried onboard to replace damaged lines and to ensure fishing operations can continue uninterrupted.

FIGURE 1. Diagram of Bird-scaring Streamer Line.