

COMISIÓN INTERAMERICANA DEL ATÚN TROPICAL  
INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

**WORKING GROUP ON BYCATCH**

**5<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

BUSAN, KOREA  
24 JUNE 2006

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**SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES**

**SUMMARY OF SEABIRDS AND FISHERIES IN THE IATTC AREA**  
**(Document SAR-7-05c)**

**Submitted to**

**7th MEETING of the WORKING GROUP on STOCK ASSESSMENT**  
**OF THE INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION**

**And a Brief Report on the Meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Agreement on the**  
**Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels**

The USA presented a report, *Seabirds and Fisheries in the IATTC Area* (Document SAR-07-05c) to the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group to Review Stock Assessments in La Jolla, California (USA), 15-19 May 2006. A summary follows: The report addressed the indirect and direct effects of fisheries on seabirds in the IATTC area, some of the key seabird species affected by fisheries interactions, monitoring bycatch, bycatch estimates, mitigation measures, and priorities for scientific research. Information was presented in the context of IATTC Resolution C-05-01 on seabirds and the United States' implementation of the FAO International Plan of Action on Seabirds. The conservation status of several key seabird species was reviewed. Seabird bycatch estimates for various US longline fisheries range from 0.004 to 0.23 birds per 1,000 hooks, partly depending on whether mitigation measures are used. Bycatch of the waved albatross appear to contribute to recent, dramatic declines in the breeding population. Recent research in Hawaii and Alaska longline fisheries has resulted in mandatory mitigation measures, side-setting and paired streamer lines, respectively. Other research efforts for pelagic longline gear include an underwater bait-setting capsule, a streamer line system, an underwater setting chute, and a bait-setting pod). Two population modeling studies are underway (one by IATTC staff) to assess whether past and present levels of bycatch are likely to affect the populations of black-footed and Laysan albatross. Priorities for scientific research on seabirds include collection of seabird bycatch data by observers, data analysis of seabird flock associations with tuna schools in the EPO, improved understanding of the movements and the overlap of albatrosses with fisheries, and continued development of seabird mitigation measures for pelagic longline vessels.

Of interest to the IATTC, a Seabird Bycatch Working Group was newly established by the Advisory Committee (AC) to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) at its second meeting held in Brasilia, Brazil, 5-8 June 2006. After extensive discussions on seabird/fishery interactions, the AC recognized the benefit of addressing the at-sea threats faced by ACAP seabird species in a coordinated manner, thus the formation of this working group. Some of the work items identified were: review information on seabird mitigation measures, initially focusing on pelagic longline methods; and develop products to assist RFMOs and other relevant international and national bodies in reducing seabird bycatch. The AC2 meeting report and an annex including the terms of reference of this Seabird Bycatch Working Group will be available on the ACAP website [www.acap.aq](http://www.acap.aq) ACAP has applied for observer status at IATTC and other RFMOs.