

Recommendation paper

Title: Discard Management as a Seabird by-catch Mitigation Measure

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1. Background:

- 1.1. As a party to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), FIG has an international obligation to develop and implement measures to mitigate the adverse effects of fishing activities on seabirds.
- 1.2. In 2004, FIG adapted a National Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Trawlers (FI-NPOA-S-T) which outlined a range of short and longer term mitigation measures for adoption with a set time frame.
- 1.3. The most effect long-term seabird bycatch mitigation measure for trawlers is the management of fish waste discharge which is highly attractive to seabirds and is the primary reasons for their fatal interaction with fishing vessels.
- 1.4. Bird scaring devices such as tori-lines and Fixed Aerial Array (FAA) have the potential to reduce seabird contacts with the fishing gear but numerous issues have been identified.

2. Presentation and consultations:

- 2.1. Striving for a sustainable fishery with minimal ecological impact, FIFD, in collaboration with FIFCA and ITQ holders, developed a discard management policy for trawlers operating in Falkland Islands waters and for FI flagged vessels operating in International waters.
- 2.2. To provide a framework for focused policy decision, the developmental process of this policy involved both an evidence based approach from available research (ACAP 2018, Kuepfer 2017b) as well as consultative approach with Industry involving a one year fleet-wide investigation into suitable discard management options, followed by a 4.5 months consultation period relating to specifics of the proposed policy (FIFD 2017).

3. Recommendation:

- 3.1. It is recommended that all vessels operating in the Falkland Islands fishery should be fitted with the discard system as soon as reasonably practicable and in any case, not later than 1st January 2021.
- 3.2. Vessels operating in the Falkland islands fishery at 1st January 2021 will be provided with a minimum of 3 months lead-in period (initially 1st April 2021 but changed to the 1st June 2021) to allow for necessary mechanical adjustments and adaptation of crew and captain to new work practice.

- 3.3. Existing vessels must hold a storage tank which allows the storage of all factory waste (whole fish discard and processing offal) for the duration of a trawl or if that is impossible due to technical reasons, for a period of a minimum of 2 hours. In exceptional circumstances due to vessel design, safety or similar considerations, a dispensation for a storage period of minimum 30 minutes may be granted.
- 3.4. New vessels must have a storage tank which allows the storage of all factory waste for the duration of a trawl.
- 3.5. Filtered factory water may continue to be discharged during storage periods
- 3.6. Unless the vessel has received dispensation, stored waste must always be discharged between trawls as soon as the fishing gear is out of the water, even if the tank has not yet reached capacity.
- 3.7. Discharges during fishing activities by vessels that have received dispensation to do so must be no less than 3.5 m³/min and must be as fast as possible as speed is of the essence. Gravity-fed discharge is highly recommended.
- 3.8. In the event of large catches of unwanted whole fish/other marine organisms which cannot be stored in the dedicated storage tank for the minimum specified storage period given the volume of this catch, the vessel must cease fishing activities until this bycatch has been discharged, either directly from deck or otherwise, and the minimum specified storage period can be achieved again. It should be noted, however, that such wasteful fishing should be avoided.
- 3.9. Discharge from storage tanks must be halted at least five minutes prior to the start of shooting and hauling activities in order to avoid the presence of previously discharged waste when shooting or hauling activities commence. As per existing licence condition, no discharge is allowed during hauling, shooting, or turning activities.
- 3.10. If stored waste is macerated prior to being discharged, the mode of discharge must be below or close to the waterline such as to avoid spraying birds in fish oil/waste.
- 3.11. An extension to the implantation date may be granted by the Director of Natural resources, following representation by individual fishing companies.



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