



TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

Third Regular Session

27 September – 02 October 2007
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

SC3 OUTCOMES ON SEABIRD BY-CATCH MITIGATION

WCPFC-TCC3-2007/22
31 August 2007

Paper prepared by the Secretariat

Introduction

1. The Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC3) met at Honolulu, Hawaii from 13 to 24 August 2007. SC3 could not reach complete agreement with regard to the technical specifications for seabird by-catch mitigation. Paragraph 187 of the draft SC3 Summary Report notes that this matter should be considered by the TCC.

SC3 Outcomes on Seabird By-catch Mitigation

2. The SC3 Chair reviewed actions required by the Commission in relation to CMM-2006-02, which requires the Scientific Committee to annually review any new information on new or existing mitigation measures. Where necessary, an updated suite of mitigation measures, specifications for mitigation measures, or recommendations for areas of application, are to be provided to the Commission for its consideration and review as appropriate. The SC is also required to estimate seabird mortality in all fisheries to which the WCPF Convention applies in light of information provided by CCMs and from observer and other monitoring programmes.

3. SC3 reviewed the scientific information available to it and decided that at this time there was no need to amend the suite of mitigation measures, or to make changes to the area of application listed in CMM-2006-02.

4. With regard to the technical specifications for mitigation measures, differing views were expressed by SC members on some specifications and complete agreement could not be reached. There was rigorous debate as to whether the technical specifications should include operational considerations such as weather and oceanic conditions.

Proposed Technical Specifications for Seabird By-catch Mitigation Measures

5. The SC adopted the following proposals (areas of non-agreement in square brackets were proposed by Japan and supported by China and Chinese Taipei but could not be endorsed by the SC because of insufficient scientific data):

Guidelines for Column A mitigation measures.

1a). Tori Lines:

- i. Minimum length: 100m [if weather and ocean conditions permit]
- ii. Must be attached to the vessel such that it is suspended from a point a minimum of 5 m above the water at the stern on the windward side of the point where the hookline enters the water.
- iii. Must be attached so that the aerial extent is maintained over the sinking baited hooks.
- iv. Streamers must be less than 5m apart, be using swivels and long enough so that they are as close to the water as possible,
- v. [If the tori line is less than 150m in length, must have a towed object attached to the end that will create enough drag to meet the 90 meter coverage requirement]
- vi. If two (i.e. paired) tori lines are used, the two lines must be deployed on opposing sides of the main line.

[1b). Tori Line (light streamer):

[Recognizing that the technical approaches used in this measure are currently used in some regions but that little data were presented on vessel size, sink rates and setting speeds for evaluation, this measure is to be applied on a trial basis for one year, to be reviewed and given full consideration at the next meeting of the SC.]

- i. [Minimum length of tori line: 100m or three times the total length of the vessel, if weather and ocean conditions permit]
- ii. [Light-weight streamers (e.g. polypropylene band)].
- iii. [Streamers must be less than 1m apart and be 30cm in minimum length].
- iv. [Must be deployed so that the aerial extent is maintained over the sinking baited hooks.]

2. Side setting with bird curtain and weighted branch lines:

- i. Mainline deployed from port or starboard side as far from stern as practicable (at least 1m), and if mainline shooter is used, must be mounted at least 1m forward of the stern.
- ii. When seabirds are present the gear must ensure mainline is deployed slack so that baited hooks remain submerged.
- iii. Bird curtain must be employed:
 - Pole aft of line shooter at least 3m long;
 - Minimum of 3 main streamers attached to upper 2m of pole;
 - Main streamer diameter minimum 20mm;
 - Branch streamers attached to end of each main streamer long enough to drag on water (no wind) – minimum diameter 10 mm.

3. Night setting:

- i. No setting between local sunrise and one hour after local sunset ; and
- ii. Deck lighting to be kept to a minimum, noting requirements for safety and navigation.

4. Weighted branch lines:

- i. [Following weight specifications are encouraged:]
- ii. Minimum weights attached to all branch lines is 45 grams, with the following options:
 - less than 60 grams weight attached to within 1 meter of the hook or;
 - greater than 60 grams and less than 98 grams weight attached to within 3.5 meters of the hook or;
 - greater than 98 grams weight attached to within 4 meters of the hook; or
 - [greater than total 300 grams of lead core line.]

Guidelines for Column B mitigation measures.

1. Weighted branch lines:

- i. Weights attached to all branch lines:
- ii. [Following weight specifications are encouraged:]
 - minimum of 45 grams weight attached to all branch lines;
 - less than 60 grams weight attached within 1 meter of the hook;
 - greater than 60 grams and less than 98 grams weight attached to within 3.5 meters of the hook;
 - greater than 98 grams weight attached to within 4 meters of the hook; or
 - [greater than total 300 grams of lead core line.]

2. Blue dyed bait:

- i. The Commission Secretariat shall distribute a standardized color placard.
- ii. All bait must be dyed to the shade shown in the placard.

3. Management of offal discharge:

- i. Either:
 - No offal discharge during setting or hauling; or
 - Strategic offal discharge from the opposite side of the boat to setting/hauling to actively encourage birds away from baited hooks.

6. The SC noted it would review this issue at its next meeting and reminded CCMs, as they implement CMM-2006-02 next year, to provide information to the Commission on the specifications of the mitigation measures that they will require their vessels to employ, as well as any data resulting from research undertaken to further develop and refine measures to mitigate seabird by-catch as required by the CMM.

7. SC3 considered the requirement of CMM-2006-02 for estimates of seabird interactions and by-catch in the Convention Area. SC3 noted that this was a complex task, requiring representative observer coverage, fine-scale distribution of the seabird populations, and frequency and interactions between seabirds and fisheries. SC3 reaffirmed that seabird mortality estimates would need to be addressed through the 2008-2010 Work Program.

8. The Secretariat should be requested to:

- i. obtain the available estimates of seabird population sizes and trends for the next meeting of the SC; and
 - ii. include a summary of seabird catch reporting in its coverage of data gaps.
9. Several CCMs reminded the SC that current observer coverage is lower than one per cent in the longline fisheries and that this seriously compromises ability to assess wider ecosystem impacts.

Conclusion

10. TCC3 is invited to:
 - i. note the outcomes of the SC3 meeting on seabird by-catch mitigation; and
 - ii. develop minimum technical specifications for seabird by-catch mitigation measures pursuant to CMM-2006-02.