



TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

Third Regular Session

27 September to 2 October 2007
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

OUTCOMES OF THE SMALL WORKING GROUP ON SEABIRDS

WCPFC-TCC3-2007/37
1 October 2007

Prepared by the Chair of the Small Working Group on Seabirds

The Working Group on Seabird By-catch Mitigation measures met and reviewed document WCPFC-TCC3-2007/22.

The Working Group consisted of representatives from Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the United States.

The Working Group noted that SC3 reviewed the scientific aspects of seabird mitigation measures and provided recommendations, but was unable to reach agreement on a number of issues related to minimum technical specifications. The Working Group agreed that the Commission should adopt, as minimum technical specifications, the guidelines as included in WCPFC-TCC3-2007/22. With regard to those where the SC could not reach agreement, the Working Group notes the following.

With regard to Tori lines in section 1a and the recommendation from SC3 which included the bracketed statement “if weather and ocean conditions permit”, the Working Group noted that safety concerns are an important consideration, but reminds the TCC3 that CMM 2006-02 provides a choice of measures that may be applied at the discretion of the CCM. On that basis, the majority of the Working Group thought the bracketed text should not be added. However, if it is added it, should be more specific about what the threshold for weather and oceans conditions would be and what the allowable alternatives would be. Japan stated the bracketed text should be retained because of safety concerns.

The Working Group agreed that 1(a) (v) text should read “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 maximize the aerial coverage over the entire length of the sinking baited hooks”. Japan agreed with the text, but did not agree with the removal of the brackets.

Regarding Section 1b Tori line (light streamers), the Working Group could not reach agreement, however, the majority of the Working Group recommends that if the Commission decides to accept this specification on a 12-month trial basis, then the Commission should require CCMs using this specification to provide to the SC and the TCC adequate information to allow for a rigorous assessment of its potential use in the future, specifically:

- A detailed description of the gear and how it functions in a variety of oceanic and weather conditions
- Its effectiveness in preventing bird interactions with baited hooks
- Detailed size and material specifications
- Operational and safety benefits to fishing operations
- Vessel specifications, including size and towing capability
- Impacts of weather and oceanic conditions on streamer performance
- Its ability to maximize aerial coverage over baited hooks
- General areas of use in the WCPO and whether this impacts performance

Japan did not agree that insufficient information on this specification was provided and insisted that detailed information on the specification, effectiveness and performance of the section 1b Tori line has already been presented in the SC3 and TCC3 (Specification, SC3-EBSWG/IP-14, Material and Methods, Attachment1 and SC3-EBSWG/WP-13, Material and Methods; Effectiveness, SC3-EBSWG/WP-13 and TCC3-2007/DP03; Performance, SC3-EBSWG/IP-14, Table 1.). These data were collected from 47 vessels and more than 700 observed sets and constitute substantial amount of information.

The majority of the Working Group believed the bracketed statement in section 4 (i) for column A and Section 1 (ii) Column B “Following specifications are encouraged”, should be deleted, because it would be inconsistent with the meaning of the term “minimum technical specifications” as used in CMM 2006-02 and further, that this statement may cause confusion with respect to the compliance with the measures within CMM 2006-02. Japan replied that the specification should have some ranges because this Convention has various types of longline vessels and insisted on keeping the bracketed statement.

In relation to the bracketed statement regarding the use of 300 gram core lead line in section 4 of Column A and Section 1 of Column B, the Working Group notes that neither the Commission nor its subsidiary bodies has discussed data regarding the use, efficiency or safety of the specification and that the SC has not reviewed its efficiency at reducing seabird captures. Therefore, the Working Group agreed that in order to assess its efficiency or practicality a more detailed specification would be needed, such as the amount of weight per unit length of branchline and what portion of the branchline would consist of lead core line. The Working Group agreed to leave it in bracketed text.