COMMISSION
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1-5 December 2025
Manila, Philippines (Hybrid)

Review of Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds (CMM 2018-03)

WCPFC22-2025-DP04
31 October 2025

Submitted by FFA Member CCMs

Proposal by FFA

Contents

1 Executive summary

In 2025, New Zealand proposed a suite of recommendations to reduce the impact of longline fishing on seabirds in the Southern Hemisphere. Following further discussion and consultation with CCMs, the proposal has been refined and now recommends amendments that would require the use of two out of three seabird mitigation measures between 25° and 30° south.

In recognition of the practical challenges raised by CCMs, other proposed amendments to CMM 2018-03 would "encourage", rather than require, vessels to use three out of three mitigation measures below 25° south and the use of ACAP recommended branch line weighting. This proposal reflects both the feedback received and our commitment to achieving practical, consensus-based progress.

In the area 25° to 30° south

Recent research has shown that 25 – 30° south is an important foraging area for threatened seabirds, in particular the endangered Antipodean albatross - a species predicted to go extinct in less than 50 years, with fisheries bycatch the main driver of population decline.

Presently, only one mitigation measure is required to be used in this area (branch line weighting, tori lines or night setting). The proposed amendment to CMM 2018-03 would extend the area where two mitigation measures are required to include 25 – 30° south to reflect that new information demonstrates increased seabird risk in this area. As part of this amendment, the exemption for the EEZs of Small Island Developing States and Territories would remain given the extremely low level of longline effort in this area and consequent minimal risk to seabirds.

Throughout the review, CCMs have raised concerns regarding the operational challenges associated with seabird mitigation. These concerns are acknowledged, and New Zealand remains committed to working with members to support the uptake of mitigation measures. However, the Convention requires members to adopt measures to minimize the catch of non-target and endangered species, and the Commission has agreed since 2012 to the use of two out of three mitigation measures as appropriate and practical to reduce seabird bycatch in high-risk areas.

Furthermore, many vessels in the 25 – 30° south area are already voluntarily implementing two out of three mitigation measures, and the majority of vessels fishing in this area also fish below 30° south and are thus fully equipped to transition to using two mitigation measures.

The proposed change requiring two out of three mitigation measures in the 25 – 30° south area would also align seabird mitigation requirements with two other tuna RFMOs. WCPFC is arguably the most important tuna RFMO for endangered Southern Hemisphere albatrosses and was the first to regulate the use of two mitigation methods for important seabird habitat below 30° south. By updating the boundary in line with the latest science, WCPFC can again be at the forefront of seabird bycatch management.

2. Background

Over 2024 and 2025, New Zealand led a review of CMM 2018-03 *Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds*.

In 2024, the process included 1) the collation of relevant scientific papers, 2) two informal virtual meetings with WCPFC Members and Participating Territories, their industry representatives, and WCPFC observers; 3) - bilateral meetings with members, and discussions at SC20, TCC20, and WCPFC21.

WCPFC21 tasked New Zealand to continue to lead the review of the seabird measure in 2025.[1] In May 2025, New Zealand set out the process for the review of CMM 2018-03, consistent with the tasking in paragraph 552 (a) of the WCPFC21 Summary Report.[2]

New Zealand submitted an amended proposal to SC21[3], which took account of discussions in 2024, and further feedback in 2025. In this proposal, New Zealand revised the scope of proposed amendments to CMM 2018-03 and suggested a staged approach to address bycatch risk to the most endangered species and focus on areas where the most benefit can be realised while minimising impacts on fishing. Three priority recommendations for the Southern Hemisphere were discussed at SC21:

1. In the area 25° to 30° south, *require* the combined use of two measures from the following: tori lines, branch line weighting, and night setting. Or use hook shielding devices as a standalone option.
2. In the area south of 30°S, *require* the combined use of three measures: tori lines, branch line weighting, and night setting. Or use hook shielding devices as a standalone option.
3. *Require* branch line weighting specifications in accordance with ACAP recommended best practice.

Although no consensus was reached, SC21 noted the importance of the area south of 25° south, including the area 25° – 30° south, where CMM 2018-03 currently requires the use of only a single seabird mitigation measure.[4] SC21 also noted that the effectiveness of required methods in this area could be improved by the combined use of multiple practices or hook shielding devices.[5]

SC21 requested that TCC21 consider any practicality issues related to the use of combined mitigation methods south of 25° south. New Zealand submitted a delegation paper TCC21-2025-DP09_Rev01. TCC21 noted a range of views on these recommendations and noted that New Zealand would engage further with CCMs on the strengthening of seabird mitigations, with a view to WCPFC22 considering improvements to the seabird measure.[6]

[1] WCPFC21 Summary Report | WCPFC Meetings, paragraph 552.
[2] Circular No. 2025/24: New Zealand's process for reviewing the Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds (CMM 2018-03)
[3] Review of Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds (CMM 2018-03): an update of WCPFC-SC20-EB-WP06.
[4] SC20 Outcomes Document | WCPFC Meetings, paragraph 193.
[5] Ibid.
[6] TCC21 Summary Report - Comments by 7 November 2025 | WCPFC Meetings, paragraph 502.

2 Recommended changes to CMM 2018-03 for WCPFC22 consideration

Taking into account feedback received at SC21 and TCC21, the proposal for amendments to CMM2018-03 has been revised:

1. **Require** longline vessels fishing in the area 25° - 30° south to use at least two of the following mitigation methods in combination: weighted branch lines; night setting; tori lines; or hook-shielding devices.
2. **Encourage** longline vessels fishing south of 25° south, to use all three mitigation methods in combination: weighted branch lines; night setting; tori lines; or hook-shielding devices.
3. **Encourage** minimum weighted branch line specifications to align with ACAP best practices including:
    a) one weight greater than or equal to 40g within 50cm of the hook; or
    b) greater than or equal to a total of 60g attached within 1 m of the hook; or
    c) greater than or equal to a total of 80g attached within 2 m of the hook; or
    d) when weighting is directly attached to, or integrated into the hook, a minimum of total weight of 50 g (i.e., including the hook) is sufficient.

See appendix 1 for full details of the proposed amendments.

3 Rationale for a targeted improvement in the area 25°- 30° south

3.1 The endangered Antipodean albatross faces extinction within 50 years if bycatch is not reduced

Science presented to SC20 and SC21 highlights urgent conservation action is required to halt the ongoing decline and projected extinction of the Endangered Antipodean albatross. In particular:

- The Antipodean albatross is classified as "Endangered" by the IUCN and is listed on Appendix I on the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), which requires immediate protection.
- SC20 noted the Antipodean albatross is at risk of extinction if the current rate of decline continues and are predicted to become extinct in less than 50 years.[7] The projected population decline is illustrated in figure 1.[8]
- Available analyses show that bycatch is likely driving the population decline of the Antipodean albatross. Studies show that 77% of tracked Antipodean albatross overlapped with high seas pelagic longline fishing vessels; [9] and the Antipodean albatross multi-threat risk assessment indicates that bycatch in WCPFC high seas longline fisheries is significant enough to explain the observed population declines.[10]

[7] SC20 Outcomes Document | WCPFC Meetings, paragraph 192.
[8] SC20-EB-WP10: Antipodean Albatross multi-threat risk assessment
[9] SC21-EB-IP-09, SC20-EB-WP10
[10] SC20-EB-IP26

Antipodean Albatross © Oscar Thomas

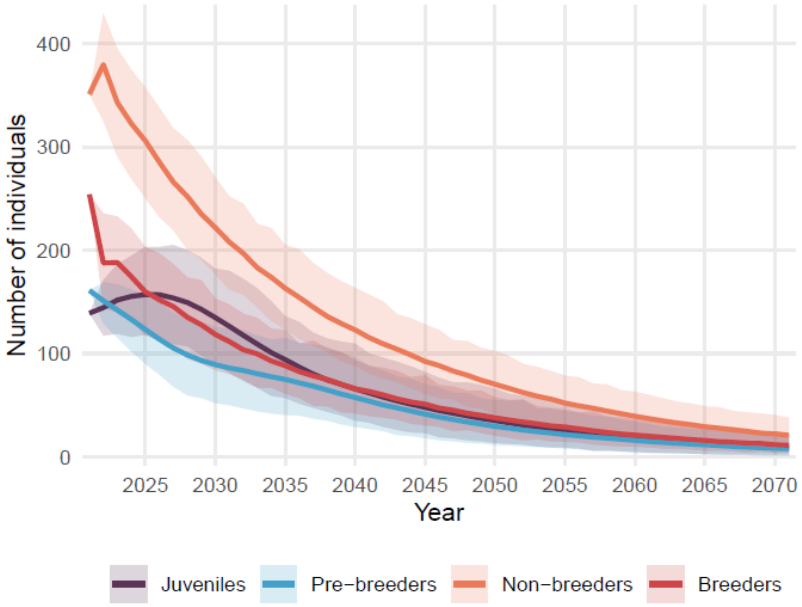

Figure 1. Projected population trend for Antipodean Albatross based on analyses detailed in SC20-EB-IP26.

Non-fisheries threats are not significantly impacting Antipodean albatross. Predators have been irradicated at the breeding colony for decades, and the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has not reached New Zealand colonies. The multi-threat risk assessment found no evidence that plastic pollution or climate change is impacting the Antipodean albatross.[11]

3.2 The Critical habitat of the Antipodean albatross includes 25° – 30° South where only one mitigation method is required

New satellite tracking data shows that the area 25°– 30° south is critical habitat for the Antipodean albatross, and this species is at high risk of bycatch in this area.[12] Figure 2 shows the distribution of the Antipodean albatross (white lines). The incidences where satellite tracked birds overlapped with longline vessels between 25° – 30° south is highlighted red. The areas highlighted in yellow are where the birds are overlapping with longline vessels south of 30° south.

While the antipodean albatross spends more time south of 30°, there is a greater probability of birds overlapping with pelagic longline fishing when they fly further north between 25° and 30° south due to the greater amount of longline fishing effort in this area. For example, Antipodean albatross overlap with fishing vessels 12% of the time when they are in this area.[13]

[11] Ibid
[12] SC20-EB-WP10
[13] SC21-EB-IP-09

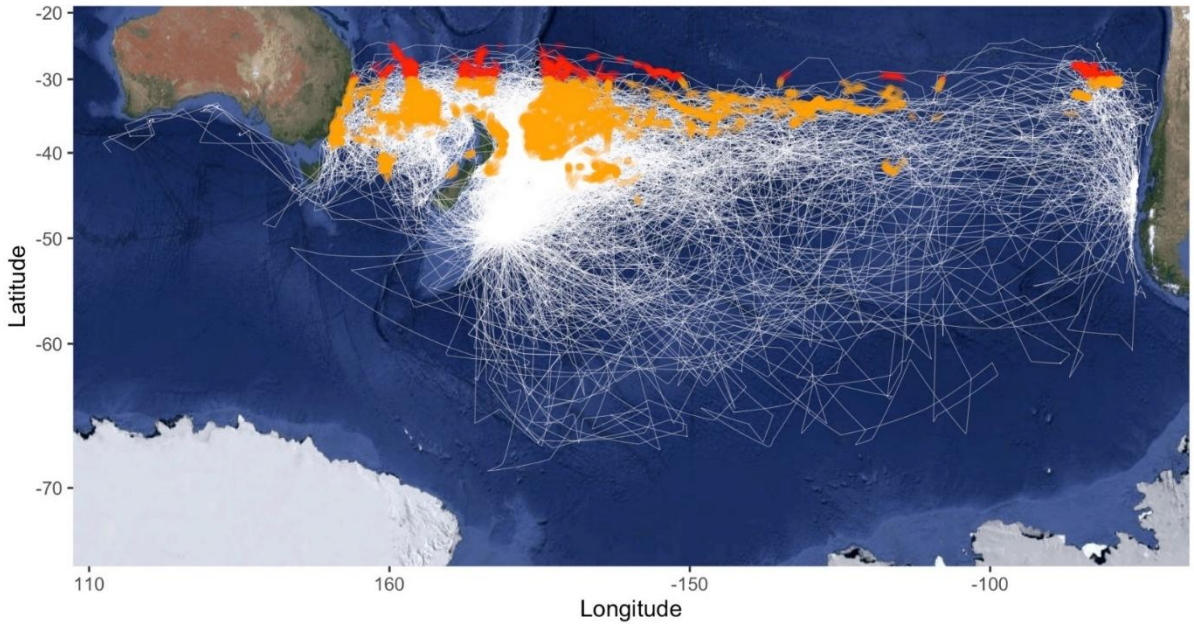

Figure 2. Tracks of 153 Antipodean albatross (white lines) and spatiotemporal overlap with pelagic longline fishing effort south of 30°S (orange circles) and in the area between 30° and 25° south (red circles). Analyses followed steps outlined in WCPFC SC20-EB-WP10.

The area 25° – 30° south is particularly important habitat and foraging ground for the female Antipodean albatross which range further north than males, into waters where there is more fishing effort. Figure 3 illustrates the different ranges of females and males, with the red colour representing a higher proportion of females.[14] This skew results in higher female mortality, which is a key factor driving the ongoing population decline.

Population studies show that female Antipodean albatross have declined faster than males, and at the nesting colony, there are now more than two adult males for every adult female.[15] While there is uncertainty about the bycatch rate of females compared to males, it is likely that the higher overlap with fishing is contributing to the sex imbalance.

Currently only one mitigation method is required in this critical habitat area 25° – 30° south. This means that the bycatch risk associated with the fishing effort here is relatively high. WCPFC has long recognised use of a single mitigation method is insufficient for high-risk areas where susceptible albatrosses and petrels range.

[14] SC20-EB-IP26

[15] SC20-EB-IP26; Elliott. G and Walker, K (2019) Antipodean wandering albatross census and population study on Antipodes Island 2019. Department of Conservation.

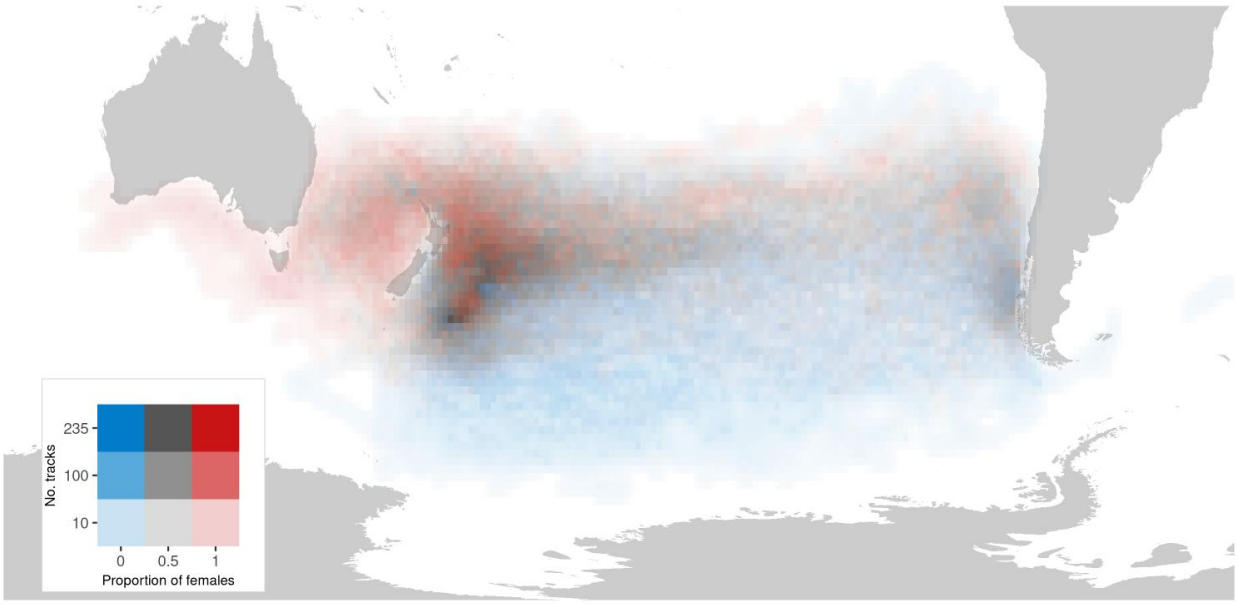

Figure 3. Spatial variability in the sex ratio of Antipodean albatross, derived from tracking data prepared by Richard et al. (2024). The hue shows the sex ratio (red = female, blue = male), the colour intensity indicates the number of tracks from which the sex ratio was calculated.[16]

3.3 The area 25 – 30° south is important seabird habitat for other threatened seabirds

Extensive new science on the distribution of threatened southern albatross and petrels shows that the 30° south boundary where two mitigation methods are required no longer aligns with the science on seabird distribution. Figure 4 shows the distribution of eight seabird species classified as endangered and vulnerable by the IUCN. The shaded areas represent the areas used by seabirds with the intensity of use represented by shade, with highest use being darkest blue. This shows the area 25° - 30° south as important seabird habitat. Besides the Antipodean albatross at least three other threatened seabirds frequent this area: Gibson's albatross, black petrel, and white-chinned petrel.

Gibson's albatross is another species of particular concern. This species has declined by 58% since 2004 and continues to decline at 4% each year.[17] Like the Antipodean albatross, Gibson's albatross overlap with fishing effort in the area 25° - 30° south. Fine scale analysis shows that Gibson's albatross overlap with longline vessels 20% of the time these birds spend in the 25° - 30° south area.[18]

SC21 noted the importance of the area 25° – 30° south for seabirds, where CMM 2018-03 currently requires the use of only a single seabird mitigation. SC21 also noted that the effectiveness of required methods in this area could be improved by the combined use of multiple practices or hook shielding devices.[19]

[16] This is figure C-2 of SC20-EB-IP26
[17] SC20-EB-WP10
[18] SC21-EB-IP-09
[19] See paragraphs 192-196 SC20 Outcomes Document | WCPFC Meetings

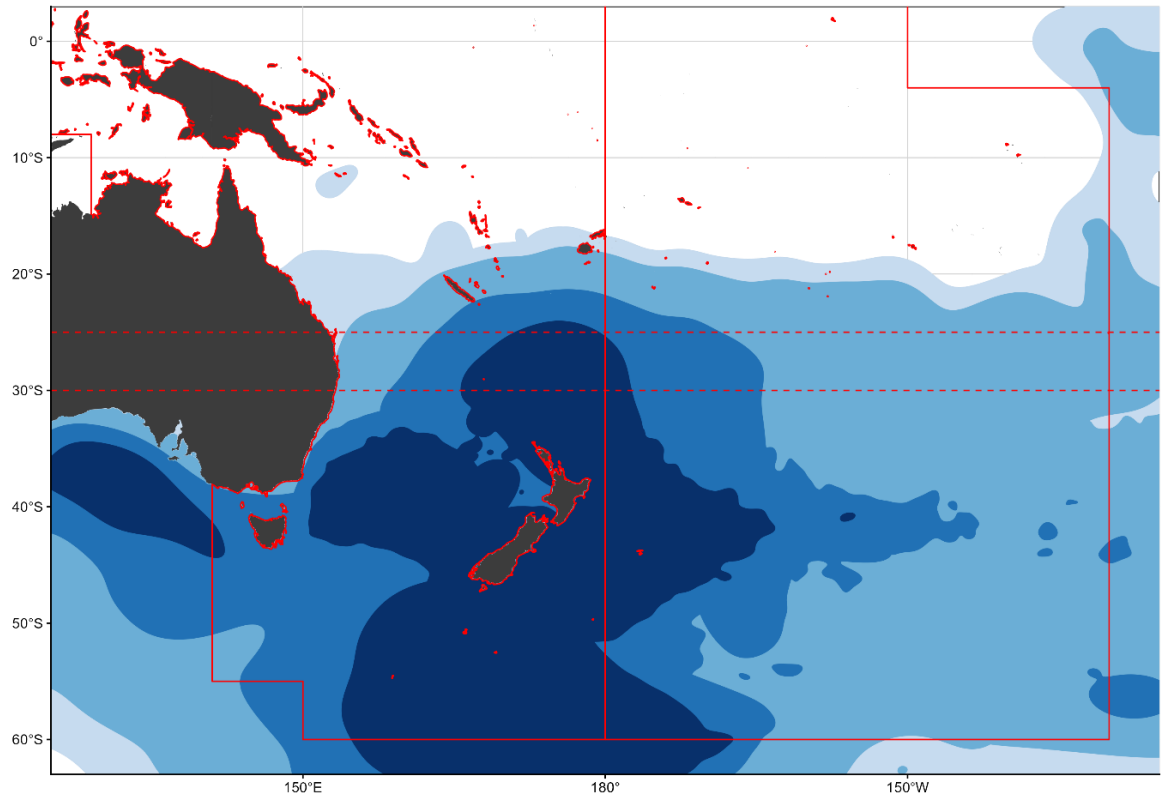

Figure 4. Distribution of eight Southern Hemisphere seabird species that are listed as endangered and vulnerable in the IUCN Red List and are susceptible to bycatch in longline fisheries in the WCPFC Convention Area. The dashed lines represent 25° south and 30° south.[20]

3.4 WCPFC has long recognized the importance of using effective mitigation methods in high-risk areas of the Southern Hemisphere

Since 2012, WCPFC has required longline vessels operating south of 30° south to use at least two of three mitigation methods (CMM 2012-07).[21] In that first decision, WCPFC9 followed advice of the Scientific Committee that there is no single mitigation method that can reliably prevent the incidental mortality of seabirds.[22] Science presented at SC8 showed that south of 30° south is critical habitat for Southern Hemisphere albatrosses and petrels, which are susceptible to longline fishing gear.

Ever since the 2012 decision, the preamble of the seabird measure has noted "*the advice of the Scientific Committee that combinations of mitigation measures are essential for effective reduction of seabird bycatch*".[23]

[20] SC21-EB-WP-07

[21] WCPFC9 Summary Report Attachments [A-X] | WCPFC Meetings

[22] See SC8 Summary Report (Edited Version) - 21November2012 | WCPFC Meetings paragraph 418 – 422, and WCPFC9 Summary Report Attachments [A-X] | WCPFC Meetings

[23] CMM 2018-03

3.5 Many vessels in the area are already implementing two mitigation measures

Between 25° & 30° south is not a major fishing area with only 3% of all hooks in the WCPFC set in this area. The main fleets fishing in this area are China, Chinese Taipei and Japan.

Observer data reported in part 1 annual reports shows that over two thirds of all effort in this area already uses two or more of the mitigation methods:

- 100% observed Chinese effort in this area only used tori lines in 2024. However, from 2019 - 2023, 100% of effort used two methods in this area.
- Greater than 90% of Chinese Taipei effort in 2024 used two methods (tori line and weighting). During 2019-2023 around 45% used all three methods, 24% used two methods, and 26% used one.
- 10% of Japanese effort in 2024 used all three methods and 50% used two.

Furthermore, 62% of vessels that fish between 25° & 30° south also fish below 30° south where they are already required to use two methods. [24] This means that the majority of vessels are already equipped to implement two methods in the area 25° to 30° south.

3.6 The proposal has practical benefits for fleets – including reducing regulatory complexity within the Convention area and harmonising with the mitigation requirements of other tuna RFMOs

The proposed change would reduce regulatory complexity in the WCPFC convention area. Vessels fishing below 25° south will have one set of mitigation requirements instead of two. It will also streamline monitoring and compliance of mitigation use.

The proposal would also harmonise with the mitigation requirements of other tuna RFMOs. ICCAT requires at least two mitigation methods (night setting, bird scaring lines, line weighting) are used south of 25° south[25]; and IOTC requires all longline vessels use at least two of the three mitigation methods (night setting, bird scaring lines, line weighting) or use hook-shielding devices south of 25° south.[26] The proposed change would reduce regulatory complexity for vessels that fish across different convention areas.

WCPFC is arguably the most important tuna RFMO for endangered Southern Hemisphere albatrosses.[27] It was the first to regulate two out of three mitigation methods for important seabird habitat south of 30° south. By updating the boundary in line with the latest science, WCPFC can again be a leader in seabird bycatch management.

[24] SPC (2025). Pers comm.
[25] 2011-09 SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON REDUCING INCIDENTAL BY-CATCH OF SEABIRDS IN ICCAT LONGLINE FISHERIES
[26] Resolution 23_07 ON REDUCING THE INCIDENTAL BYCATCH OF SEABIRDS IN LONGLINE FISHERIES
[27] SC20-EB-WP10

4 Rationale for retaining the SIDs exemption

Five Small Island Developing States and Territories (SIDS)[28] are exempt from the requirements of paragraph 2 of CMM2018-03 (regulations pertaining to 25° - 30° south). Commission agreed to exempt these SIDs in 2018 because fishing effort within their EEZs to 25° south is minimal and therefore poses minimal risk to seabirds.[29]

Figure 5 highlights that longline effort within the SIDS EEZs is almost entirely above 25° south. This means that the risk to seabirds from fishing within SIDS EEZs below 25° south continues to be very low.[30]

SPC analysis presented to SC21 shows that over 2020 – 2024:

- The percentage of hooks set in the area 25° - 30° south within SIDS EEZs was always less than 0.3% of the total hooks set in this latitudinal band.
- In total, the number of sets below 25° south, across those EEZs ranged from 0 to 45 in any year, with a mean of 20 sets.

Due to the continued very low risk to seabirds from fishing in SIDS EEZs below 25° south, the rationale for the SIDS exemption remains unchanged.

[28] French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Tonga, Cook Islands and Fiji
[29] WCPFC15 Summary Report - Issued 4 May 2019 | WCPFC Meetings
[30] WCPFC-SC21-2025/EB-IP-17

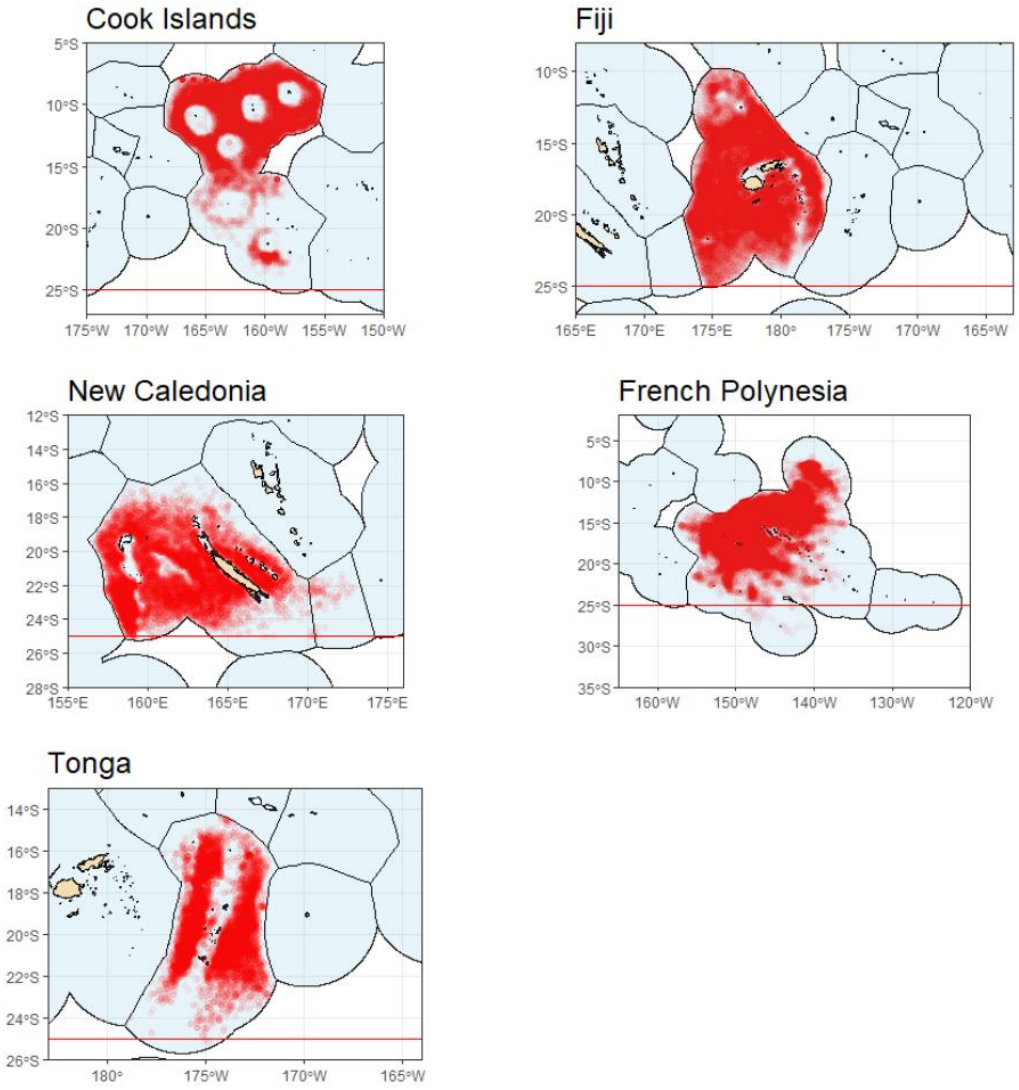

Figure 5: Maps showing distribution of longline fishing activity in the five PICTS EEZs for the period 2020-24, as inferred from operational logsheet data. Each red point denotes an individual longline set and the red line denotes the 25° south latitudinal line.

5 Next steps

The proposed approach represents a pragmatic first step to improve seabird bycatch mitigation in the area 25° - 30° south. This would provide a meaningful improvement of CMM 2018-03 and will specifically help to alleviate fisheries impact on the endangered Antipodean albatross, and at least three other threatened species.

However, as the science presented at SC20 and SC21 shows, there are at least eight well studied southern hemisphere species that are threatened and in long term decline, and further improvements will be required to meaningfully change the population trajectories and improve conservation outcomes for these species. We also note that further work should be conducted to review the Northern Hemisphere requirements of CMM 2018-03.

As agreed at SC20 and SC21, taxa bycaught by WCPFC fisheries, including seabirds, will be discussed at SC every two years. Scientific evidence compiled and presented to SC20, SC21, TCC20, and TCC21 will remain relevant for future reviews. By 2027 new research such as outcomes from the CCSBT Southern Hemisphere Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment for seabirds[31] will also be useful to further refine the WCPFC seabird measure.

6 Annexes for consideration at WCPFC22

1. Proposed amendment to CMM2018-03
2. CMM 2013-06 assessment
3. Audit points checklist

[31] Now published: CCSBT 2025 SEFRA

Annex 1: Proposed amendment to the Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds (CMM 2018-03)

Para no	Text
Preambular	*No change*
1	***South of 25~~30~~° South*** CCMs shall require their longline vessels fishing south of 25~~30~~°S, to use either a) at least two of these three measures: i). weighted branch lines; ii). night setting; iii). tori lines; or b) hook-shielding devices. Table 1 does not apply south of 25~~30~~° South. See Annex 1 for specifications of these measures.
2	~~***25° South - 30° South***~~ ~~CCMs shall require their longline vessels fishing in the area 25°S-30°S to use one of the following mitigation measures:~~ ~~i) weighted branch lines;~~ ~~ii) tori lines; or~~ ~~iii) hook-shielding devices.~~ ~~Table 1 does not apply in the area 25°S-30°S. See Annex 1 for specifications of these measures~~

3	~~The extension of the scope of application of seabird mitigation measures from 30°S to 25°S shall not come into effect until 1 January 2020.~~
4	The requirements of paragraph 1~~2~~ shall not apply in the EEZs of French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Tonga, Cook Islands and Fiji due to the low risk to seabirds. Those SIDS and Territories that have vessels operating south of 25^0 South are encouraged to collect data on seabird interactions, increase observer coverage rate as appropriate, and implement seabird mitigation measures when they operate within their EEZs.
New paragraph	CCMs shall encourage their longline vessels fishing south of 25°S, to, where practicable, use a) all of these three measures in combination: i). weighted branch lines; ii). night setting; iii). tori lines; or b) hook-shielding devices.
New paragraph	CCMs shall encourage their longline vessels to, when using branch line weighting as a seabird mitigation measure, weight all branch lines in accordance with the specifications set out below (when practicable) a) one weight greater than or equal to 40g within 50cm of the hook; or b) greater than or equal to a total of 60g attached to within 1 m of the hook; or c) greater than or equal to a total of 80 g attached to within 2 m of the hook; or d) When weighting is directly attached to, or integrated into the hook, a minimum of total weight of 50 g (i.e., including the hook) is sufficient. The use of lighting devices or other fishing accessories as weights is not recommended unless they are proven to achieve a sink rate of 0.5 m/s to 5 m depth.

Annex 2: CMM 2013-06 assessment

COMMISSION
Twenty-Second Regular Session
1 - 5 December 2025
Manila, Philippines (Hybrid)

CMM 2013-06 – assessment of the potential impact of proposals to review of 2018-03 on Small Island Developing States and Territories

WCPFC22-2025-xx
1 November 2025

Submitted by XXX

"CCMs shall develop, interpret and apply conservation and management measures in the context of and in a manner consistent with the 1982 Convention and Articles 24, 25 and 26 of the Agreement. To this end, CCMs shall cooperate, either directly or through the Commission, to enhance the ability of developing States, particularly the least developed among them and SIDS and territories in the Convention Area, to develop their own fisheries for highly migratory fish stocks, including but not limited to the high seas within the Convention Area.

The Commission shall ensure that any conservation and management measures do not result in transferring, directly or indirectly, a disproportionate burden of conservation action onto SIDS and territories."

In considering any new proposal the Commission shall apply the following questions to determine the nature and extent of the impact of the proposal on SIDS and territories in the Convention Area:

Who is required to implement the proposal?

The obligations within the proposed new seabird CMM apply to all CCMs engaged in pelagic longline fishing south of 25° south.

However, the proposed recommendations would not apply in the EEZs of Small Island Developing States and Territories in Paragraph 4 (French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Tonga, Cook Islands and Fiji) of the current CMM-2018-03.

Which CCMs would this proposal impact and in what way(s) and what proportion?

The obligations within the proposed new seabird CMM apply to all CCMs with pelagic longline vessels fishing in the area south of 25° South, requiring the use of prescribed seabird bycatch mitigation methods.

These areas are the same as the areas outlined in CMM 2018-03. CCMs have existing requirements to use seabird bycatch mitigation methods on the high seas and in EEZs - unless they are exempt as per Paragraph 4 in CMM 2018-03.

Are there linkages with other proposals or instruments in other regional fisheries management organizations or international organizations that reduce the burden of implementation?

The proposed new seabird CMM follows the approach set out in CMM 2018-03 – it avoids placing a disproportionate burden on Small Island Developing States and Territories by retaining the paragraph 4 exemption. The recommendations are intended to reduce the burden of implementation, while still meeting the objective of protecting vulnerable seabirds across the main area of their distribution.

Does the proposal affect development opportunities for SIDS?

Our assessment is that the proposed recommendations do not affect development opportunities, however we welcome further feedback from Small Island Developing States and Territories.

Does the proposal affect SIDS domestic access to resources and development aspirations?

New Zealand considers that the recommendations do not affect SIDS *domestic access to resources* as proposed recommendations would not apply in the EEZs of Small Island Developing States and Territories named in Paragraph 4 of the current CMM 2018-03.

New Zealand notes that in terms of SIDS *development aspirations* on the high seas the recommendations in the proposed new seabird CMM do include:

I) increased requirements for seabird bycatch mitigation methods in the areas beyond the EEZs of SIDs exempt under Paragraph 4 in CMM 2018-03 in the WCPO south of 25°S.

Consequently, Small Island Developing States and Territories fishing in the high seas beyond their EEZs in areas south of 25°S could be required to increase the application of seabird bycatch mitigation methods under the proposed recommendations. These recommendations do not deviate from the current spatial requirements in CMM 2018-03. We welcome further feedback from SIDS on this assessment and how this proposal may or may not affect development aspirations.

What resources, including financial and human capacity, are needed by SIDS to implement the proposal?

There should be little to no extra cost to most SIDS affected as at least part of the required mitigation methods should already be in use on vessels flagged to those SIDS fishing outside of the EEZs exempt under Paragraph 4 of CMM 2018-03. A number of existing capacity building programmes are available to further support implementation. We welcome further information from Small Island Developing States and Territories about their individual financial or human capacity needs.

What mitigation measures are included in the proposal?

The primary mitigation measure designed to prevent disproportionate burden on Small Island Developing States and Territories is Paragraph 4 in CMM 2018-03. This exempts Small Island Developing States and Territories with EEZs that include areas south of 25°S from the requirements under CMM 2018-03 - and instead encourages the use of seabird bycatch mitigation.

This approach retains the risk-based approach that was employed when CMM 2018-03 was adopted, in which the impact of fishing of Small Island Developing States and Territories within their EEZs south of 25°S on seabirds was assessed as minimal (<1% of fishing effort in 25°S-30°S).

The Pacific Community (SPC) re-evaluated the potential impact of fishing on seabirds in these areas (south of 25°S) within the EEZs of the Small Island Developing States and Territories for SC21. SPC confirmed the fishing effort in the EEZs of Small Island Developing States and Territories are having a minimal impact on seabirds.

WCPFC-SC21-2025/EB-IP-17 found that:

- the total number of sets, below 25°S, across those EEZs ranged from 0 to 45 in any year, with a mean of 20 sets
- the percentage of hooks set in the in the area 25°S - 30°S withing SIDS EEZs was always less than 0.3% of the total hooks set in this latitudinal band

New Zealand considers that requiring Small Island Developing States and Territories to bear the administrative burden of domestic regulation or otherwise, would be disproportionate - not least considering the benefit to seabirds would be minimal.

What assistance mechanisms and associated timeframe, including training and financial support, are included in the proposal to avoid a disproportionate burden on SIDS?

New Zealand welcomes collaboration with Small Island Developing States and Territories who wish to implement seabird bycatch mitigation methods.

New Zealand, in collaboration with others, has been working directly with some Small Island Developing States and Territories to support implementation of seabird bycatch mitigation and is committed to continuing this work. Examples of this include the existing port-based outreach programme in Fiji, a seabird bycatch mitigation implementation workshop run in French Polynesia in January 2024 and a seabird bycatch mitigation trials conducted over 2024 in Fiji.

Furthermore, the proposed continuation of the exemption in Paragraph 4 ensures there is no additional administrative burden for the listed Small Island Developing States and Territories within their EEZs.

Annex 3: Audit points checklist

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WCPFC22-2025-xx
November 2025

Submitted by XXXX

1. To whom does the obligation apply? Set out any proposed exceptions or exclusions.

   CCMs with longline vessels fishing below 25 South.

   The requirements of paragraph 1 do not apply in the EEZs of French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Tonga, Cook Islands, and Fiji

2. What is the scope of the new obligations (i.e., does it apply to a particular geographical area, fishery, stock, species of special interest?)

   The obligations apply to longline vessels and to the area below 25 South

   The obligations involve the deployment of mitigation methods by longline fishing vessels in these areas to prevent the bycatch of seabirds.

   CCMs are required to report on seabird interactions (using information from fishing vessel daily e-logs, observer reports or EM).

3. Are there existing obligations that should be assessed in combination with any of the proposed new obligations? If so, name the CMM and paragraph(s), or other Commission obligation.

   Paragraph 2 (iii) of CMM 2022-06 requires CCMs to ensure that the master of each vessel flying its flag in the Convention Area shall complete an accurate electronic log of every day that it spends on the high seas of the Convention Area, including the following information:

   > *Interaction information about other species not listed in those sections, but required to be reported by CCMs under other Commission decisions such as, inter alia, cetaceans, seabirds and sea turtles.*

4. Which proposed new obligations will require submission of Reports (R) or Implementation Statements (I), impose Limits (L), or have Deadlines (D)? Please fill out the relevant section(s) for each of the proposed new obligations.

I. Deadline

4. Specify what is required and by what deadline.

   See below – Annual Part 1 Report is required one month prior to the Scientific Committee. SciData is required by 30 April annually.

II. Report

5. Specify the type of information that is required, including any specific formats or templates to be used, and whether the information must be complete (100%) or a sub-set of information is sufficient to meet the proposed objective.

   Under paragraph 13, CCMs are required to report on seabird interactions in their Annual Part 1 Report using information from fishing vessel daily e-logs, observer reports or EM. The template for this reporting is in Annex 3 of the CMM.

   Note that CCMs are also required to report as part of the Sci Data requirements on seabird interactions recorded in fishing vessel daily e-logs [paragraph 2 (iii) of CMM 2022-06]. SciData should be submitted electronically, where possible in accordance with the agreed Standards, Specifications and Procedures for Electronic Reporting in the WCPFC – operational catch and effort data [paragraph 4, CMM 2022-06]

6. Is this information already provided wholly or in part through any other data submission requirement, i.e. operational level catch and effort data?

   As above – data is provided via both SciData and Annual Part One Reports. Data may also be provided by observer reports and electronic monitoring.

7. If no, specify the proposed reporting mechanism to be used for submission of new required information (i.e., Annual Report Part 1, Annual Report Part 2, direct to WCPFC Secretariat, other)

   N/A.

8. Can the information provided be verified through another source? If yes, specify what other data or information source should be used. 2

   Observer reports, electronic monitoring reports, HSBI reports, Port State inspection reports.

III. **Implementation**

9. In addition to the required Implementation Statements, list any additional information required to demonstrate CCM's implementation with the proposed new requirement. Describe any data or other information that can be reviewed by the WCPFC Secretariat to confirm or verify implementation.

Paragraph 1 is an implementation obligation.

The current Audit Point is below – and will need to be adjusted once the text for paragraphs 1 is finalised.

Based on CCM identification of which mitigation measures are being applied to CCM vessels in the applicable relevant area, the CCM submitted a statement in AR Pt2 that:

a. confirms CCM's implementation through adoption of a national binding measure that requires its flagged longline vessels to:

i. use at least two mitigation measures in paragraph 1(a) or hook shielding devices when fishing south of 30°S

ii. use one of the mitigation measures in paragraph 2 when fishing in area 25°S-30°S

b. confirms CCM's implementation through adoption of a national binding measure that requires its flagged longline vessels fishing north of 23°N:

i. 24m or more in overall length, to use at least two mitigation measures in paragraph 6, Table 1 CMM 2018-03, including at least one from Column A

ii. less than 24m in overall length, to use at least one of the mitigation measures from Column A in Table 1, CMM 2018-03.

c. describes how it is monitoring and ensuring its fishing vessels comply with seabird mitigation requirements in paragraphs 1,2 and 6 of CMM 2018-03 and how the CCM responds to potential infringements or instances of non-compliance with the relevant requirement.

IV. Quantitative Limit

10. Specify the proposed CCM-level or Collective limit. Specify what verifiable data shall be provided by CCM to confirm its adherence to the limit. Specify what data sources are available to the WCPFC Secretariat to review and confirm CCM's reported limit.

Not applicable

V. Other

11. If none of the other categories are appropriate: Specify the nature of the obligation. Specify how compliance is to be assessed.

Not applicable

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Proposal by FFA

Contents

1 Executive summary

In 2025, New Zealand proposed a suite of recommendations to reduce the impact of longline fishing on seabirds in the Southern Hemisphere. Following further discussion and consultation with CCMs, the proposal has been refined and now recommends amendments that would require the use of two out of three seabird mitigation measures between 25° and 30° south.

In recognition of the practical challenges raised by CCMs, other proposed amendments to CMM 2018-03 would "encourage", rather than require, vessels to use three out of three mitigation measures below 25° south and the use of ACAP recommended branch line weighting. This proposal reflects both the feedback received and our commitment to achieving practical, consensus-based progress.

In the area 25° to 30° south

Recent research has shown that 25 – 30° south is an important foraging area for threatened seabirds, in particular the endangered Antipodean albatross - a species predicted to go extinct in less than 50 years, with fisheries bycatch the main driver of population decline.

Presently, only one mitigation measure is required to be used in this area (branch line weighting, tori lines or night setting). The proposed amendment to CMM 2018-03 would extend the area where two mitigation measures are required to include 25 – 30° south to reflect that new information demonstrates increased seabird risk in this area. As part of this amendment, the exemption for the EEZs of Small Island Developing States and Territories would remain given the extremely low level of longline effort in this area and consequent minimal risk to seabirds.

Throughout the review, CCMs have raised concerns regarding the operational challenges associated with seabird mitigation. These concerns are acknowledged, and New Zealand remains committed to working with members to support the uptake of mitigation measures. However, the Convention requires members to adopt measures to minimize the catch of non-target and endangered species, and the Commission has agreed since 2012 to the use of two out of three mitigation measures as appropriate and practical to reduce seabird bycatch in high-risk areas.

Furthermore, many vessels in the 25 – 30° south area are already voluntarily implementing two out of three mitigation measures, and the majority of vessels fishing in this area also fish below 30° south and are thus fully equipped to transition to using two mitigation measures.

The proposed change requiring two out of three mitigation measures in the 25 – 30° south area would also align seabird mitigation requirements with two other tuna RFMOs. WCPFC is arguably the most important tuna RFMO for endangered Southern Hemisphere albatrosses and was the first to regulate the use of two mitigation methods for important seabird habitat below 30° south. By updating the boundary in line with the latest science, WCPFC can again be at the forefront of seabird bycatch management.

2. Background

Over 2024 and 2025, New Zealand led a review of CMM 2018-03 *Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds*.

In 2024, the process included 1) the collation of relevant scientific papers, 2) two informal virtual meetings with WCPFC Members and Participating Territories, their industry representatives, and WCPFC observers; 3) - bilateral meetings with members, and discussions at SC20, TCC20, and WCPFC21.

WCPFC21 tasked New Zealand to continue to lead the review of the seabird measure in 2025.[1] In May 2025, New Zealand set out the process for the review of CMM 2018-03, consistent with the tasking in paragraph 552 (a) of the WCPFC21 Summary Report.[2]

New Zealand submitted an amended proposal to SC21[3], which took account of discussions in 2024, and further feedback in 2025. In this proposal, New Zealand revised the scope of proposed amendments to CMM 2018-03 and suggested a staged approach to address bycatch risk to the most endangered species and focus on areas where the most benefit can be realised while minimising impacts on fishing. Three priority recommendations for the Southern Hemisphere were discussed at SC21:

1. In the area 25° to 30° south, *require* the combined use of two measures from the following: tori lines, branch line weighting, and night setting. Or use hook shielding devices as a standalone option.
2. In the area south of 30°S, *require* the combined use of three measures: tori lines, branch line weighting, and night setting. Or use hook shielding devices as a standalone option.
3. *Require* branch line weighting specifications in accordance with ACAP recommended best practice.

Although no consensus was reached, SC21 noted the importance of the area south of 25° south, including the area 25° – 30° south, where CMM 2018-03 currently requires the use of only a single seabird mitigation measure.[4] SC21 also noted that the effectiveness of required methods in this area could be improved by the combined use of multiple practices or hook shielding devices.[5]

SC21 requested that TCC21 consider any practicality issues related to the use of combined mitigation methods south of 25° south. New Zealand submitted a delegation paper TCC21-2025-DP09_Rev01. TCC21 noted a range of views on these recommendations and noted that New Zealand would engage further with CCMs on the strengthening of seabird mitigations, with a view to WCPFC22 considering improvements to the seabird measure.[6]

[1] WCPFC21 Summary Report | WCPFC Meetings, paragraph 552.
[2] Circular No. 2025/24: New Zealand's process for reviewing the Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds (CMM 2018-03)
[3] Review of Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds (CMM 2018-03): an update of WCPFC-SC20-EB-WP06.
[4] SC20 Outcomes Document | WCPFC Meetings, paragraph 193.
[5] Ibid.
[6] TCC21 Summary Report - Comments by 7 November 2025 | WCPFC Meetings, paragraph 502.

2 Recommended changes to CMM 2018-03 for WCPFC22 consideration

Taking into account feedback received at SC21 and TCC21, the proposal for amendments to CMM2018-03 has been revised:

1. **Require** longline vessels fishing in the area 25° - 30° south to use at least two of the following mitigation methods in combination: weighted branch lines; night setting; tori lines; or hook-shielding devices.
2. **Encourage** longline vessels fishing south of 25° south, to use all three mitigation methods in combination: weighted branch lines; night setting; tori lines; or hook-shielding devices.
3. **Encourage** minimum weighted branch line specifications to align with ACAP best practices including:
    a) one weight greater than or equal to 40g within 50cm of the hook; or
    b) greater than or equal to a total of 60g attached within 1 m of the hook; or
    c) greater than or equal to a total of 80g attached within 2 m of the hook; or
    d) when weighting is directly attached to, or integrated into the hook, a minimum of total weight of 50 g (i.e., including the hook) is sufficient.

See appendix 1 for full details of the proposed amendments.

3 Rationale for a targeted improvement in the area 25°- 30° south

3.1 The endangered Antipodean albatross faces extinction within 50 years if bycatch is not reduced

Science presented to SC20 and SC21 highlights urgent conservation action is required to halt the ongoing decline and projected extinction of the Endangered Antipodean albatross. In particular:

- The Antipodean albatross is classified as "Endangered" by the IUCN and is listed on Appendix I on the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), which requires immediate protection.
- SC20 noted the Antipodean albatross is at risk of extinction if the current rate of decline continues and are predicted to become extinct in less than 50 years.[7] The projected population decline is illustrated in figure 1.[8]
- Available analyses show that bycatch is likely driving the population decline of the Antipodean albatross. Studies show that 77% of tracked Antipodean albatross overlapped with high seas pelagic longline fishing vessels; [9] and the Antipodean albatross multi-threat risk assessment indicates that bycatch in WCPFC high seas longline fisheries is significant enough to explain the observed population declines.[10]

[7] SC20 Outcomes Document | WCPFC Meetings, paragraph 192.
[8] SC20-EB-WP10: Antipodean Albatross multi-threat risk assessment
[9] SC21-EB-IP-09, SC20-EB-WP10
[10] SC20-EB-IP26

Antipodean Albatross © Oscar Thomas

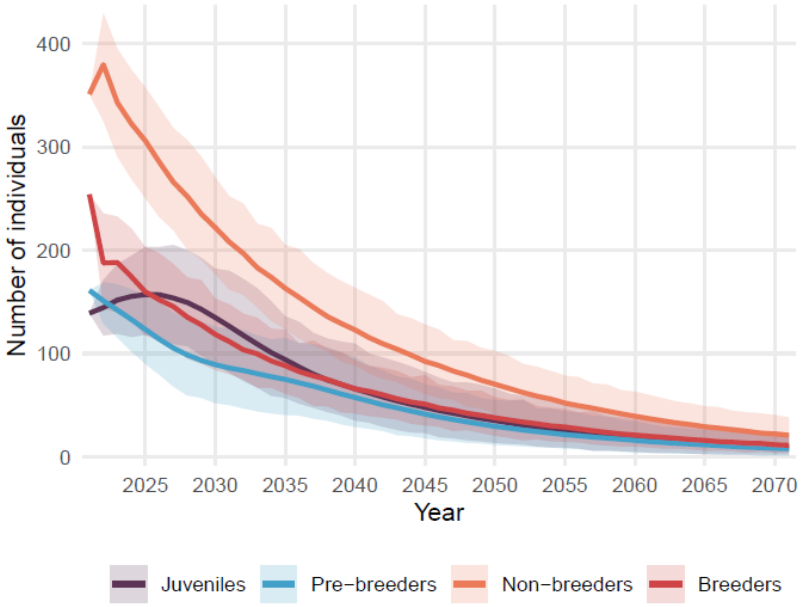

Figure 1. Projected population trend for Antipodean Albatross based on analyses detailed in SC20-EB-IP26.

Non-fisheries threats are not significantly impacting Antipodean albatross. Predators have been irradicated at the breeding colony for decades, and the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has not reached New Zealand colonies. The multi-threat risk assessment found no evidence that plastic pollution or climate change is impacting the Antipodean albatross.[11]

3.2 The Critical habitat of the Antipodean albatross includes 25° – 30° South where only one mitigation method is required

New satellite tracking data shows that the area 25°– 30° south is critical habitat for the Antipodean albatross, and this species is at high risk of bycatch in this area.[12] Figure 2 shows the distribution of the Antipodean albatross (white lines). The incidences where satellite tracked birds overlapped with longline vessels between 25° – 30° south is highlighted red. The areas highlighted in yellow are where the birds are overlapping with longline vessels south of 30° south.

While the antipodean albatross spends more time south of 30°, there is a greater probability of birds overlapping with pelagic longline fishing when they fly further north between 25° and 30° south due to the greater amount of longline fishing effort in this area. For example, Antipodean albatross overlap with fishing vessels 12% of the time when they are in this area.[13]

[11] Ibid
[12] SC20-EB-WP10
[13] SC21-EB-IP-09

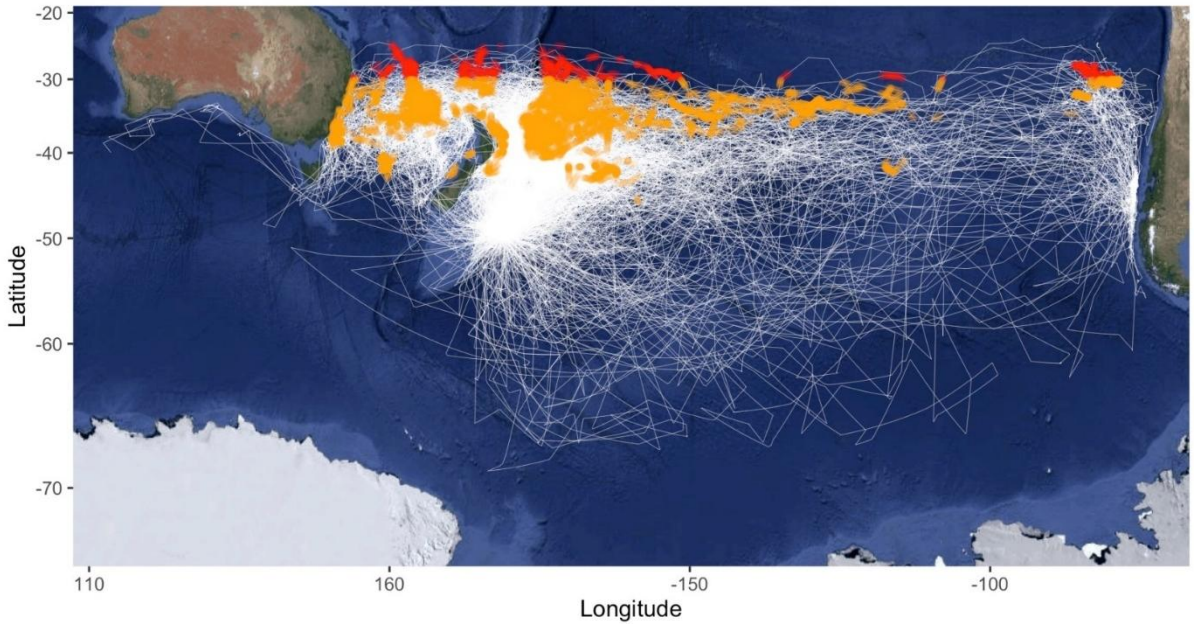

Figure 2. Tracks of 153 Antipodean albatross (white lines) and spatiotemporal overlap with pelagic longline fishing effort south of 30°S (orange circles) and in the area between 30° and 25° south (red circles). Analyses followed steps outlined in WCPFC SC20-EB-WP10.

The area 25° – 30° south is particularly important habitat and foraging ground for the female Antipodean albatross which range further north than males, into waters where there is more fishing effort. Figure 3 illustrates the different ranges of females and males, with the red colour representing a higher proportion of females.[14] This skew results in higher female mortality, which is a key factor driving the ongoing population decline.

Population studies show that female Antipodean albatross have declined faster than males, and at the nesting colony, there are now more than two adult males for every adult female.[15] While there is uncertainty about the bycatch rate of females compared to males, it is likely that the higher overlap with fishing is contributing to the sex imbalance.

Currently only one mitigation method is required in this critical habitat area 25° – 30° south. This means that the bycatch risk associated with the fishing effort here is relatively high. WCPFC has long recognised use of a single mitigation method is insufficient for high-risk areas where susceptible albatrosses and petrels range.

[14] SC20-EB-IP26

[15] SC20-EB-IP26; Elliott. G and Walker, K (2019) Antipodean wandering albatross census and population study on Antipodes Island 2019. Department of Conservation.

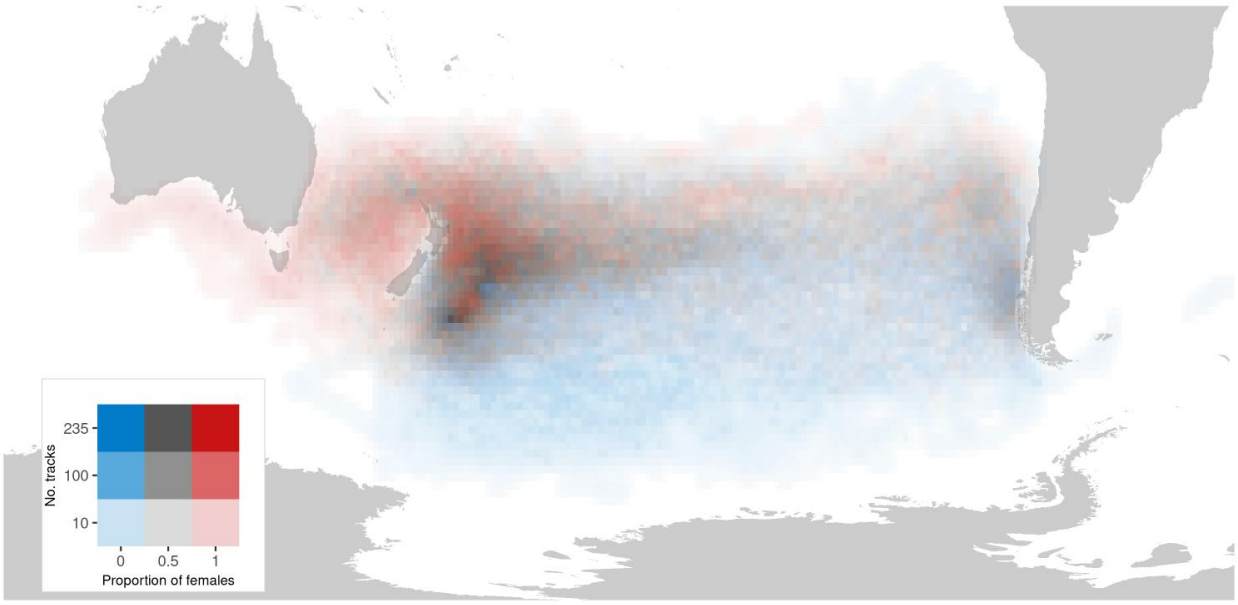

Figure 3. Spatial variability in the sex ratio of Antipodean albatross, derived from tracking data prepared by Richard et al. (2024). The hue shows the sex ratio (red = female, blue = male), the colour intensity indicates the number of tracks from which the sex ratio was calculated.[16]

3.3 The area 25 – 30° south is important seabird habitat for other threatened seabirds

Extensive new science on the distribution of threatened southern albatross and petrels shows that the 30° south boundary where two mitigation methods are required no longer aligns with the science on seabird distribution. Figure 4 shows the distribution of eight seabird species classified as endangered and vulnerable by the IUCN. The shaded areas represent the areas used by seabirds with the intensity of use represented by shade, with highest use being darkest blue. This shows the area 25° - 30° south as important seabird habitat. Besides the Antipodean albatross at least three other threatened seabirds frequent this area: Gibson's albatross, black petrel, and white-chinned petrel.

Gibson's albatross is another species of particular concern. This species has declined by 58% since 2004 and continues to decline at 4% each year.[17] Like the Antipodean albatross, Gibson's albatross overlap with fishing effort in the area 25° - 30° south. Fine scale analysis shows that Gibson's albatross overlap with longline vessels 20% of the time these birds spend in the 25° - 30° south area.[18]

SC21 noted the importance of the area 25° – 30° south for seabirds, where CMM 2018-03 currently requires the use of only a single seabird mitigation. SC21 also noted that the effectiveness of required methods in this area could be improved by the combined use of multiple practices or hook shielding devices.[19]

[16] This is figure C-2 of SC20-EB-IP26
[17] SC20-EB-WP10
[18] SC21-EB-IP-09
[19] See paragraphs 192-196 SC20 Outcomes Document | WCPFC Meetings

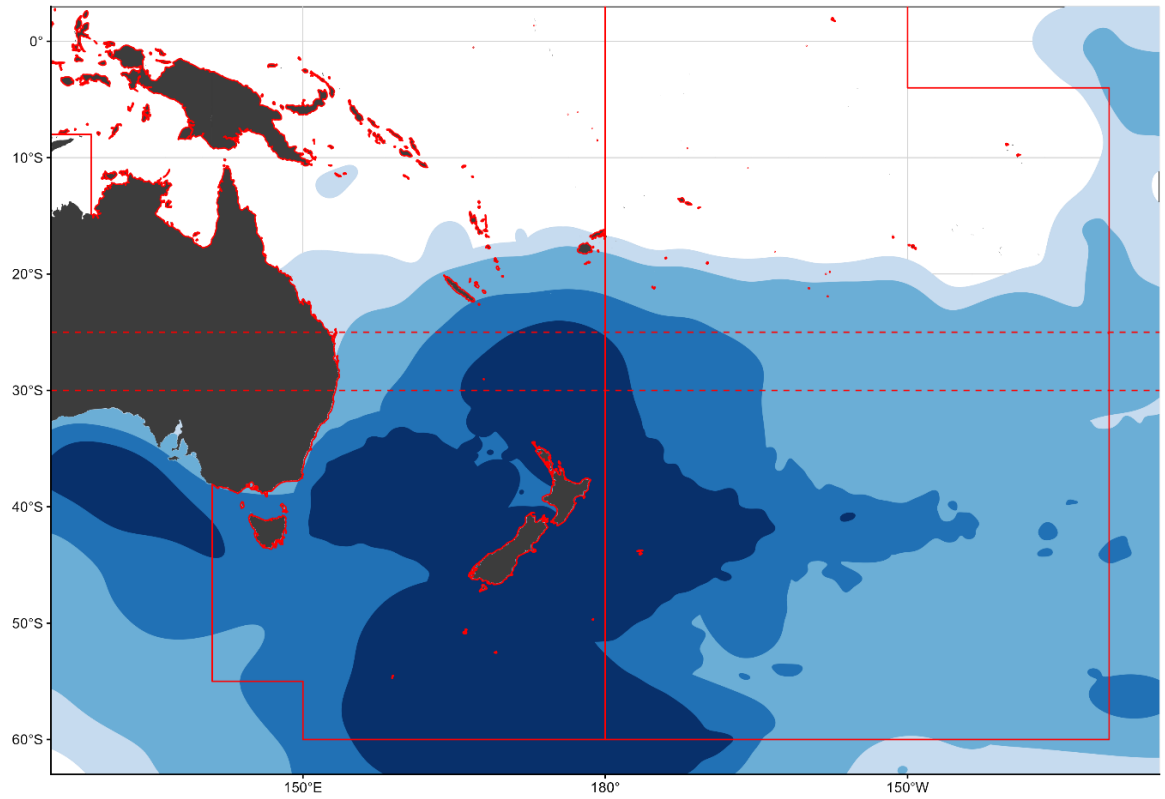

Figure 4. Distribution of eight Southern Hemisphere seabird species that are listed as endangered and vulnerable in the IUCN Red List and are susceptible to bycatch in longline fisheries in the WCPFC Convention Area. The dashed lines represent 25° south and 30° south.[20]

3.4 WCPFC has long recognized the importance of using effective mitigation methods in high-risk areas of the Southern Hemisphere

Since 2012, WCPFC has required longline vessels operating south of 30° south to use at least two of three mitigation methods (CMM 2012-07).[21] In that first decision, WCPFC9 followed advice of the Scientific Committee that there is no single mitigation method that can reliably prevent the incidental mortality of seabirds.[22] Science presented at SC8 showed that south of 30° south is critical habitat for Southern Hemisphere albatrosses and petrels, which are susceptible to longline fishing gear.

Ever since the 2012 decision, the preamble of the seabird measure has noted "*the advice of the Scientific Committee that combinations of mitigation measures are essential for effective reduction of seabird bycatch*".[23]

[20] SC21-EB-WP-07

[21] WCPFC9 Summary Report Attachments [A-X] | WCPFC Meetings

[22] See SC8 Summary Report (Edited Version) - 21November2012 | WCPFC Meetings paragraph 418 – 422, and WCPFC9 Summary Report Attachments [A-X] | WCPFC Meetings

[23] CMM 2018-03

3.5 Many vessels in the area are already implementing two mitigation measures

Between 25° & 30° south is not a major fishing area with only 3% of all hooks in the WCPFC set in this area. The main fleets fishing in this area are China, Chinese Taipei and Japan.

Observer data reported in part 1 annual reports shows that over two thirds of all effort in this area already uses two or more of the mitigation methods:

- 100% observed Chinese effort in this area only used tori lines in 2024. However, from 2019 - 2023, 100% of effort used two methods in this area.
- Greater than 90% of Chinese Taipei effort in 2024 used two methods (tori line and weighting). During 2019-2023 around 45% used all three methods, 24% used two methods, and 26% used one.
- 10% of Japanese effort in 2024 used all three methods and 50% used two.

Furthermore, 62% of vessels that fish between 25° & 30° south also fish below 30° south where they are already required to use two methods. [24] This means that the majority of vessels are already equipped to implement two methods in the area 25° to 30° south.

3.6 The proposal has practical benefits for fleets – including reducing regulatory complexity within the Convention area and harmonising with the mitigation requirements of other tuna RFMOs

The proposed change would reduce regulatory complexity in the WCPFC convention area. Vessels fishing below 25° south will have one set of mitigation requirements instead of two. It will also streamline monitoring and compliance of mitigation use.

The proposal would also harmonise with the mitigation requirements of other tuna RFMOs. ICCAT requires at least two mitigation methods (night setting, bird scaring lines, line weighting) are used south of 25° south[25]; and IOTC requires all longline vessels use at least two of the three mitigation methods (night setting, bird scaring lines, line weighting) or use hook-shielding devices south of 25° south.[26] The proposed change would reduce regulatory complexity for vessels that fish across different convention areas.

WCPFC is arguably the most important tuna RFMO for endangered Southern Hemisphere albatrosses.[27] It was the first to regulate two out of three mitigation methods for important seabird habitat south of 30° south. By updating the boundary in line with the latest science, WCPFC can again be a leader in seabird bycatch management.

[24] SPC (2025). Pers comm.
[25] 2011-09 SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON REDUCING INCIDENTAL BY-CATCH OF SEABIRDS IN ICCAT LONGLINE FISHERIES
[26] Resolution 23_07 ON REDUCING THE INCIDENTAL BYCATCH OF SEABIRDS IN LONGLINE FISHERIES
[27] SC20-EB-WP10

4 Rationale for retaining the SIDs exemption

Five Small Island Developing States and Territories (SIDS)[28] are exempt from the requirements of paragraph 2 of CMM2018-03 (regulations pertaining to 25° - 30° south). Commission agreed to exempt these SIDs in 2018 because fishing effort within their EEZs to 25° south is minimal and therefore poses minimal risk to seabirds.[29]

Figure 5 highlights that longline effort within the SIDS EEZs is almost entirely above 25° south. This means that the risk to seabirds from fishing within SIDS EEZs below 25° south continues to be very low.[30]

SPC analysis presented to SC21 shows that over 2020 – 2024:

- The percentage of hooks set in the area 25° - 30° south within SIDS EEZs was always less than 0.3% of the total hooks set in this latitudinal band.
- In total, the number of sets below 25° south, across those EEZs ranged from 0 to 45 in any year, with a mean of 20 sets.

Due to the continued very low risk to seabirds from fishing in SIDS EEZs below 25° south, the rationale for the SIDS exemption remains unchanged.

[28] French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Tonga, Cook Islands and Fiji
[29] WCPFC15 Summary Report - Issued 4 May 2019 | WCPFC Meetings
[30] WCPFC-SC21-2025/EB-IP-17

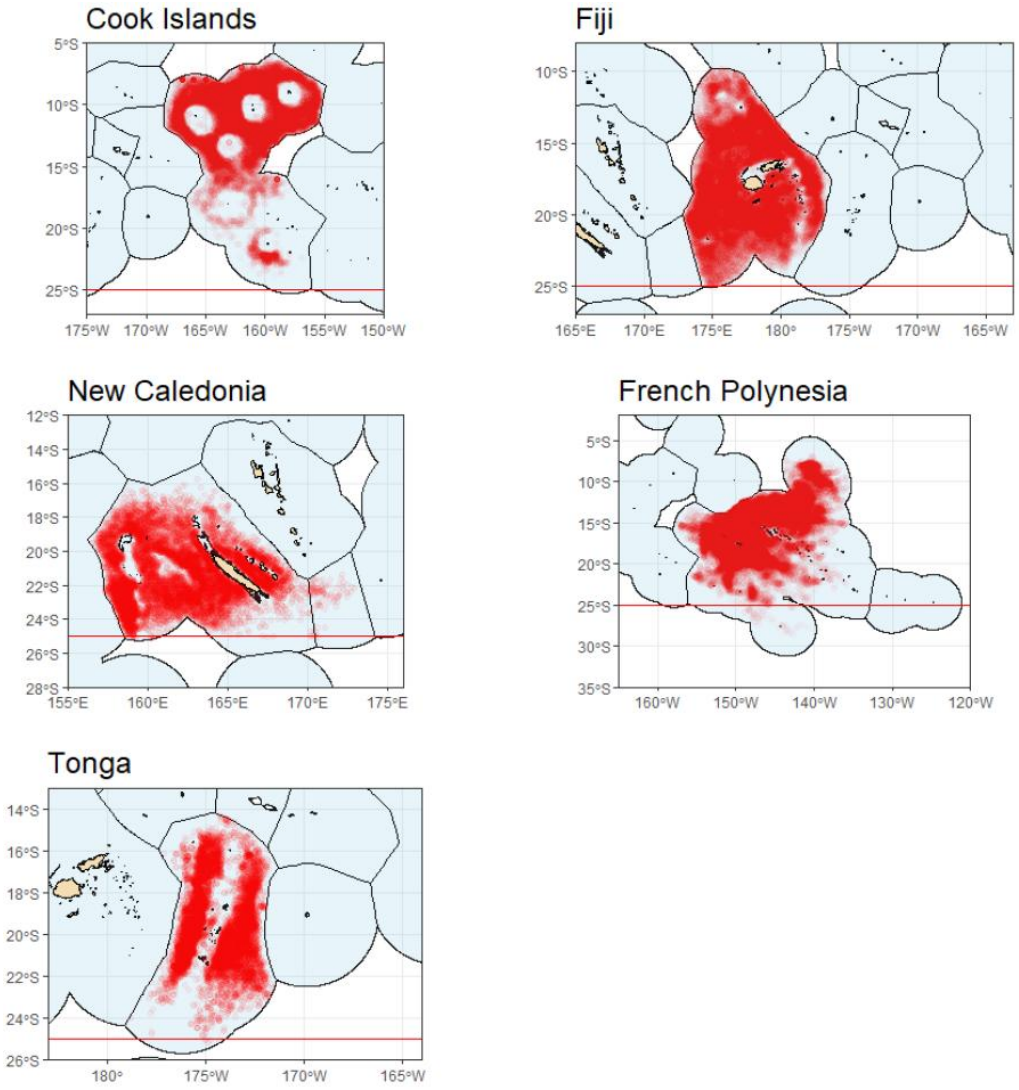

Figure 5: Maps showing distribution of longline fishing activity in the five PICTS EEZs for the period 2020-24, as inferred from operational logsheet data. Each red point denotes an individual longline set and the red line denotes the 25° south latitudinal line.

5 Next steps

The proposed approach represents a pragmatic first step to improve seabird bycatch mitigation in the area 25° - 30° south. This would provide a meaningful improvement of CMM 2018-03 and will specifically help to alleviate fisheries impact on the endangered Antipodean albatross, and at least three other threatened species.

However, as the science presented at SC20 and SC21 shows, there are at least eight well studied southern hemisphere species that are threatened and in long term decline, and further improvements will be required to meaningfully change the population trajectories and improve conservation outcomes for these species. We also note that further work should be conducted to review the Northern Hemisphere requirements of CMM 2018-03.

As agreed at SC20 and SC21, taxa bycaught by WCPFC fisheries, including seabirds, will be discussed at SC every two years. Scientific evidence compiled and presented to SC20, SC21, TCC20, and TCC21 will remain relevant for future reviews. By 2027 new research such as outcomes from the CCSBT Southern Hemisphere Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment for seabirds[31] will also be useful to further refine the WCPFC seabird measure.

6 Annexes for consideration at WCPFC22

1. Proposed amendment to CMM2018-03
2. CMM 2013-06 assessment
3. Audit points checklist

[31] Now published: CCSBT 2025 SEFRA

Annex 1: Proposed amendment to the Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds (CMM 2018-03)

Para no	Text
Preambular	*No change*
1	***South of 25~~30~~° South*** CCMs shall require their longline vessels fishing south of 25~~30~~°S, to use either a) at least two of these three measures: i). weighted branch lines; ii). night setting; iii). tori lines; or b) hook-shielding devices. Table 1 does not apply south of 25~~30~~° South. See Annex 1 for specifications of these measures.
2	~~***25° South - 30° South***~~ ~~CCMs shall require their longline vessels fishing in the area 25°S-30°S to use one of the following mitigation measures:~~ ~~i) weighted branch lines;~~ ~~ii) tori lines; or~~ ~~iii) hook-shielding devices.~~ ~~Table 1 does not apply in the area 25°S-30°S. See Annex 1 for specifications of these measures~~

3	~~The extension of the scope of application of seabird mitigation measures from 30°S to 25°S shall not come into effect until 1 January 2020.~~
4	The requirements of paragraph 1~~2~~ shall not apply in the EEZs of French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Tonga, Cook Islands and Fiji due to the low risk to seabirds. Those SIDS and Territories that have vessels operating south of 25^0 South are encouraged to collect data on seabird interactions, increase observer coverage rate as appropriate, and implement seabird mitigation measures when they operate within their EEZs.
New paragraph	CCMs shall encourage their longline vessels fishing south of 25°S, to, where practicable, use a) all of these three measures in combination: i). weighted branch lines; ii). night setting; iii). tori lines; or b) hook-shielding devices.
New paragraph	CCMs shall encourage their longline vessels to, when using branch line weighting as a seabird mitigation measure, weight all branch lines in accordance with the specifications set out below (when practicable) a) one weight greater than or equal to 40g within 50cm of the hook; or b) greater than or equal to a total of 60g attached to within 1 m of the hook; or c) greater than or equal to a total of 80 g attached to within 2 m of the hook; or d) When weighting is directly attached to, or integrated into the hook, a minimum of total weight of 50 g (i.e., including the hook) is sufficient. The use of lighting devices or other fishing accessories as weights is not recommended unless they are proven to achieve a sink rate of 0.5 m/s to 5 m depth.

Annex 2: CMM 2013-06 assessment

COMMISSION
Twenty-Second Regular Session
1 - 5 December 2025
Manila, Philippines (Hybrid)

CMM 2013-06 – assessment of the potential impact of proposals to review of 2018-03 on Small Island Developing States and Territories

WCPFC22-2025-xx
1 November 2025

Submitted by XXX

"CCMs shall develop, interpret and apply conservation and management measures in the context of and in a manner consistent with the 1982 Convention and Articles 24, 25 and 26 of the Agreement. To this end, CCMs shall cooperate, either directly or through the Commission, to enhance the ability of developing States, particularly the least developed among them and SIDS and territories in the Convention Area, to develop their own fisheries for highly migratory fish stocks, including but not limited to the high seas within the Convention Area.

The Commission shall ensure that any conservation and management measures do not result in transferring, directly or indirectly, a disproportionate burden of conservation action onto SIDS and territories."

In considering any new proposal the Commission shall apply the following questions to determine the nature and extent of the impact of the proposal on SIDS and territories in the Convention Area:

Who is required to implement the proposal?

The obligations within the proposed new seabird CMM apply to all CCMs engaged in pelagic longline fishing south of 25° south.

However, the proposed recommendations would not apply in the EEZs of Small Island Developing States and Territories in Paragraph 4 (French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Tonga, Cook Islands and Fiji) of the current CMM-2018-03.

Which CCMs would this proposal impact and in what way(s) and what proportion?

The obligations within the proposed new seabird CMM apply to all CCMs with pelagic longline vessels fishing in the area south of 25° South, requiring the use of prescribed seabird bycatch mitigation methods.

These areas are the same as the areas outlined in CMM 2018-03. CCMs have existing requirements to use seabird bycatch mitigation methods on the high seas and in EEZs - unless they are exempt as per Paragraph 4 in CMM 2018-03.

Are there linkages with other proposals or instruments in other regional fisheries management organizations or international organizations that reduce the burden of implementation?

The proposed new seabird CMM follows the approach set out in CMM 2018-03 – it avoids placing a disproportionate burden on Small Island Developing States and Territories by retaining the paragraph 4 exemption. The recommendations are intended to reduce the burden of implementation, while still meeting the objective of protecting vulnerable seabirds across the main area of their distribution.

Does the proposal affect development opportunities for SIDS?

Our assessment is that the proposed recommendations do not affect development opportunities, however we welcome further feedback from Small Island Developing States and Territories.

Does the proposal affect SIDS domestic access to resources and development aspirations?

New Zealand considers that the recommendations do not affect SIDS *domestic access to resources* as proposed recommendations would not apply in the EEZs of Small Island Developing States and Territories named in Paragraph 4 of the current CMM 2018-03.

New Zealand notes that in terms of SIDS *development aspirations* on the high seas the recommendations in the proposed new seabird CMM do include:

I) increased requirements for seabird bycatch mitigation methods in the areas beyond the EEZs of SIDs exempt under Paragraph 4 in CMM 2018-03 in the WCPO south of 25°S.

Consequently, Small Island Developing States and Territories fishing in the high seas beyond their EEZs in areas south of 25°S could be required to increase the application of seabird bycatch mitigation methods under the proposed recommendations. These recommendations do not deviate from the current spatial requirements in CMM 2018-03. We welcome further feedback from SIDS on this assessment and how this proposal may or may not affect development aspirations.

What resources, including financial and human capacity, are needed by SIDS to implement the proposal?

There should be little to no extra cost to most SIDS affected as at least part of the required mitigation methods should already be in use on vessels flagged to those SIDS fishing outside of the EEZs exempt under Paragraph 4 of CMM 2018-03. A number of existing capacity building programmes are available to further support implementation. We welcome further information from Small Island Developing States and Territories about their individual financial or human capacity needs.

What mitigation measures are included in the proposal?

The primary mitigation measure designed to prevent disproportionate burden on Small Island Developing States and Territories is Paragraph 4 in CMM 2018-03. This exempts Small Island Developing States and Territories with EEZs that include areas south of 25°S from the requirements under CMM 2018-03 - and instead encourages the use of seabird bycatch mitigation.

This approach retains the risk-based approach that was employed when CMM 2018-03 was adopted, in which the impact of fishing of Small Island Developing States and Territories within their EEZs south of 25°S on seabirds was assessed as minimal (<1% of fishing effort in 25°S-30°S).

The Pacific Community (SPC) re-evaluated the potential impact of fishing on seabirds in these areas (south of 25°S) within the EEZs of the Small Island Developing States and Territories for SC21. SPC confirmed the fishing effort in the EEZs of Small Island Developing States and Territories are having a minimal impact on seabirds.

WCPFC-SC21-2025/EB-IP-17 found that:

- the total number of sets, below 25°S, across those EEZs ranged from 0 to 45 in any year, with a mean of 20 sets
- the percentage of hooks set in the in the area 25°S - 30°S withing SIDS EEZs was always less than 0.3% of the total hooks set in this latitudinal band

New Zealand considers that requiring Small Island Developing States and Territories to bear the administrative burden of domestic regulation or otherwise, would be disproportionate - not least considering the benefit to seabirds would be minimal.

What assistance mechanisms and associated timeframe, including training and financial support, are included in the proposal to avoid a disproportionate burden on SIDS?

New Zealand welcomes collaboration with Small Island Developing States and Territories who wish to implement seabird bycatch mitigation methods.

New Zealand, in collaboration with others, has been working directly with some Small Island Developing States and Territories to support implementation of seabird bycatch mitigation and is committed to continuing this work. Examples of this include the existing port-based outreach programme in Fiji, a seabird bycatch mitigation implementation workshop run in French Polynesia in January 2024 and a seabird bycatch mitigation trials conducted over 2024 in Fiji.

Furthermore, the proposed continuation of the exemption in Paragraph 4 ensures there is no additional administrative burden for the listed Small Island Developing States and Territories within their EEZs.

Annex 3: Audit points checklist

COMMISSION
Twenty-Second Regular Session
1 - 5 December 2025
Manila, Philippines (Hybrid)

Review of Conservation and Management Measure to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds (CMM 2018-03)

WCPFC22-2025-xx
November 2025

Submitted by XXXX

1. To whom does the obligation apply? Set out any proposed exceptions or exclusions.

   CCMs with longline vessels fishing below 25 South.

   The requirements of paragraph 1 do not apply in the EEZs of French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Tonga, Cook Islands, and Fiji

2. What is the scope of the new obligations (i.e., does it apply to a particular geographical area, fishery, stock, species of special interest?)

   The obligations apply to longline vessels and to the area below 25 South

   The obligations involve the deployment of mitigation methods by longline fishing vessels in these areas to prevent the bycatch of seabirds.

   CCMs are required to report on seabird interactions (using information from fishing vessel daily e-logs, observer reports or EM).

3. Are there existing obligations that should be assessed in combination with any of the proposed new obligations? If so, name the CMM and paragraph(s), or other Commission obligation.

   Paragraph 2 (iii) of CMM 2022-06 requires CCMs to ensure that the master of each vessel flying its flag in the Convention Area shall complete an accurate electronic log of every day that it spends on the high seas of the Convention Area, including the following information:

   > *Interaction information about other species not listed in those sections, but required to be reported by CCMs under other Commission decisions such as, inter alia, cetaceans, seabirds and sea turtles.*

4. Which proposed new obligations will require submission of Reports (R) or Implementation Statements (I), impose Limits (L), or have Deadlines (D)? Please fill out the relevant section(s) for each of the proposed new obligations.

I. Deadline

4. Specify what is required and by what deadline.

   See below – Annual Part 1 Report is required one month prior to the Scientific Committee. SciData is required by 30 April annually.

II. Report

5. Specify the type of information that is required, including any specific formats or templates to be used, and whether the information must be complete (100%) or a sub-set of information is sufficient to meet the proposed objective.

   Under paragraph 13, CCMs are required to report on seabird interactions in their Annual Part 1 Report using information from fishing vessel daily e-logs, observer reports or EM. The template for this reporting is in Annex 3 of the CMM.

   Note that CCMs are also required to report as part of the Sci Data requirements on seabird interactions recorded in fishing vessel daily e-logs [paragraph 2 (iii) of CMM 2022-06]. SciData should be submitted electronically, where possible in accordance with the agreed Standards, Specifications and Procedures for Electronic Reporting in the WCPFC – operational catch and effort data [paragraph 4, CMM 2022-06]

6. Is this information already provided wholly or in part through any other data submission requirement, i.e. operational level catch and effort data?

   As above – data is provided via both SciData and Annual Part One Reports. Data may also be provided by observer reports and electronic monitoring.

7. If no, specify the proposed reporting mechanism to be used for submission of new required information (i.e., Annual Report Part 1, Annual Report Part 2, direct to WCPFC Secretariat, other)

   N/A.

8. Can the information provided be verified through another source? If yes, specify what other data or information source should be used. 2

   Observer reports, electronic monitoring reports, HSBI reports, Port State inspection reports.

III. **Implementation**

9. In addition to the required Implementation Statements, list any additional information required to demonstrate CCM's implementation with the proposed new requirement. Describe any data or other information that can be reviewed by the WCPFC Secretariat to confirm or verify implementation.

Paragraph 1 is an implementation obligation.

The current Audit Point is below – and will need to be adjusted once the text for paragraphs 1 is finalised.

Based on CCM identification of which mitigation measures are being applied to CCM vessels in the applicable relevant area, the CCM submitted a statement in AR Pt2 that:

a. confirms CCM's implementation through adoption of a national binding measure that requires its flagged longline vessels to:

i. use at least two mitigation measures in paragraph 1(a) or hook shielding devices when fishing south of 30°S

ii. use one of the mitigation measures in paragraph 2 when fishing in area 25°S-30°S

b. confirms CCM's implementation through adoption of a national binding measure that requires its flagged longline vessels fishing north of 23°N:

i. 24m or more in overall length, to use at least two mitigation measures in paragraph 6, Table 1 CMM 2018-03, including at least one from Column A

ii. less than 24m in overall length, to use at least one of the mitigation measures from Column A in Table 1, CMM 2018-03.

c. describes how it is monitoring and ensuring its fishing vessels comply with seabird mitigation requirements in paragraphs 1,2 and 6 of CMM 2018-03 and how the CCM responds to potential infringements or instances of non-compliance with the relevant requirement.

IV. Quantitative Limit

10. Specify the proposed CCM-level or Collective limit. Specify what verifiable data shall be provided by CCM to confirm its adherence to the limit. Specify what data sources are available to the WCPFC Secretariat to review and confirm CCM's reported limit.

Not applicable

V. Other

11. If none of the other categories are appropriate: Specify the nature of the obligation. Specify how compliance is to be assessed.

Not applicable

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