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Seabird Mitigation Measures on Small-Scale Longline Vessels North of 23 North

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United States of America

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Discussion Paper Prepared by the United States of America
for the
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In 2015, the Commission adopted CMM 2015-03, Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for Mitigating Impacts of Fishing on Seabirds, which removed a previous exemption and required vessels less than 24 meters in length to implement seabird mitigation measures north of 23° North[1]. CMM 2015-03 incorporated modified tori-line specifications for vessels less than 24 meters in length, which include the option to use tori lines without streamers. When the streamer-less tori line specifications were adopted, it was agreed, because of a lack of information as to whether the design would be effective, that "the design shall be reviewed no later than three years from the implementation date based on scientific data" (CMM 2015-03, Annex I).

Since that time, a number of papers have been submitted to the Scientific Committee (SC) regarding the use of tori-line designs that may be effective on small-scale longline vessels (<24m), including:

- SC12-2016-EB-WP-10 – *Improving tori line performance in small-vessel longline fisheries*
- SC12-2016-EB-WP-13 – *Examination of effectiveness of seabird bycatch mitigation measures for small-scale longline vessels fishing north of 23° North specified in CMM 2015-03*
- SC15-2019-EB-WP-06 – *Research update about and effective design of tori-line for Japanese small-scale fleet in the North Pacific*

Regarding the results from tori line research that was submitted in 2016, SC12 recommended that the Commission:

- *Note the tori line options reported here (EB-WP-10 and EB-WP-13), developed especially for small longline vessels, and recognise that some of the options may have the potential to be effective in reducing seabird bycatch. SC12 recommends to continue the experimental trials of tori line designs and procedures adapted to the activities of small-scale longline vessels.*
- *Consider these tori line designs, together with the information on their effectiveness in reducing seabird bycatch and usability in actual fishing operations, during the review or*

[1] These requirements have carried over into the most recently adopted seabird measure, CMM 2018-03.

development of any updated tori line specifications, as will be required for the review of specifications set out in CMM 2015-03.

To date, however, there has been no formal review of the streamer-less tori line designs and their efficacy, as required by CMM 2015-03.

Further, in 2019, "NC15 requested members submit further information to SC16 on tori line designs being implemented for vessels less than 24m in length – including any evidence of efficacy as demonstrated by reductions in bycatch and interaction rates – so that SC16 may weigh in on the potential implications of such designs." No such information was submitted from NC members to SC16.

Given that the measure allowing the use of streamer-less tori lines has been in effect for more than three years, it is crucially important for the Commission to complete its review of the efficacy of the design. To that end, the United States proposes the following SC recommendation:

SC17 recommends that Commission Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and participating Territories (CCMs) with small-scale longline vessels (< 24m) operating north of 23° North provide the SC with information on the specific mitigation measures used by those vessels and the associated seabird interaction rates for each mitigation measure, including streamer-less tori lines, and that SC18 review such information, to make findings and recommendations with respect to the effectiveness of the streamer-less tori line designs to inform the Commission's review under CMM 2015-03 (and its successor measures).