



**COMMISSION**

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Suva, Fiji (Hybrid)

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**BirdLife International Statement to the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Western and Central Pacific  
Fisheries Commission (WCPFC21)**

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**WCPFC21-2024-OP05  
12 November 2024**

**Submitted by BirdLife International**

# BirdLife International Statement to the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC21)

November-December 2024, Suva, Fiji

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BirdLife International thanks our generous hosts, Fiji for the incredible location for the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Commission. We also thank the WCPFC Secretariat for the meeting arrangements and Members for their commitment to sustainably managing WCPFC fisheries and its impacts on ecologically related species. BirdLife International are grateful for the opportunity to participate in these important discussions.

BirdLife International emphasizes Article 10 *Functions of the Commission*, paragraph (c) “adopt, where necessary, conservation and management measures and recommendations for non-target species and species dependent on or associated with the target stocks, **with a view to maintaining or restoring populations of such species above levels at which their reproduction may become seriously threatened**”. Noting paragraph’s 143 and 146 of the SC20 outcomes document [WCPFC21-2024-SC20-01](#) that reads:

Para 143: “*SC20 noted that at least eight albatross species that breed in New Zealand show significant, long-term, and ongoing population declines, which, for some, are most likely caused by bycatch in commercial pelagic longline fisheries.*”

Para 146: “*SC20 noted that studies (SC20-EB-IP-26) suggest that the Antipodean Albatross is at risk of extinction if the current rate of decline continues and is predicted to become extinct around 2070.*”

**Fisheries bycatch is the key driver of the precipitous declines of these species. Thus, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission has an obligation to adopt measures that manage this impact.**

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BirdLife International asks only one thing of the Commission this year:

## **ADOPT THE PROPOSED SCIENCE-BASED AMENDMENTS TO CMM 2018-03**

- 3/3 South of 25°S
- 1/3 between 25°S - 20°N
  - Tori line specifications
  - Night setting definition
- ACAP line weighting specifications
- Drop ineffective measures north of 23°N

**These amendments will reduce seabird bycatch**

## THE SCIENCE IS DEFINITIVE

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At the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC20) in Manila, New Zealand presented a detailed analysis of the complete body of scientific evidence available on seabird bycatch mitigation measures and their effectiveness. The evidence presented in [EB-WP-06](#) included more than 130 relevant research papers. Along with a suite of supporting analyses that were submitted as information papers to the SC20. These analyses are further supported by the scientific review conducted by the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), that many Members of the WCPFC are signatories to, who every year to update advice on seabird bycatch mitigation measures. This body of information unequivocally constitutes **the best available science** and perhaps the most exhaustive, robust, and transparently produced collection of any evidence that has been brought before the Scientific Committee.

## WHERE THERE IS A WILL, THERE IS A WAY

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BirdLife is already supporting WCPFC Members to meet their obligations under CMMs related to non-target species bycatch. We highlight to the TCC20 paper [WCPFC-TCC20-2024-OP01](#), which presents five years of data on our port-based outreach activities in Suva, Fiji to support vessels to implement seabird bycatch mitigation. While there is more work to be done, we are seeing increased awareness of obligations and technical implementation improving. To hear more about this initiative and support available from other organisations, we kindly invite Members to join us in the breakout room at the Vodafone Arena a special seabird side event:

### Kava and Q&A for Seabirds Side Event on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November at 5.30pm

Hosted by BirdLife International and the New Zealand Government, with our colleagues from ISSF, we will discuss opportunities and resources available to support improved implementation of seabird bycatch mitigation measures in your fleets and answer any questions you may have. To facilitate this discussion, we will be offering bowls of Kava, a traditional drink used across the Pacific to foster and strengthen friendships. Please join us.



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