

CSP Project MIT2015-01:  
Seabird bycatch reduction - small vessel longline fisheries



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Final Report: June 2016

A large colony of albatrosses, likely Laysan Albatrosses, is gathered on the deck of a boat. The birds are densely packed, with many looking towards the camera. The background shows the blue water of the ocean.

# Introduction

- Liaison officers part of Government's approach to communicating with fishers since early 2000s
- LOs share knowledge, address questions, resolve issues, and support mitigation implementation
- LOs identified in Action Plans (e.g. BPWG Action Plan)
- 2013/14, 2014/15: FMA 1 snapper fishery
- 2015/16:
  - snapper, bluenose bottom longliners
  - ECNI and WCSI surface liners
- At-risk seabirds caught in these fisheries

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# Objectives

1. To provide one or more liaison officers to the inshore bottom longline and small vessel surface longline fishing fleets, with a focus on the northern North Island, to assist those fleets in reducing their seabird bycatch.
2. To coordinate the seabird liaison officer roles with wider efforts targeted at seabird bycatch reduction in relevant fisheries to achieve the greatest reduction in bycatch possible.

# Methods

- Review of past years' work and recommendations
- Focal vessels identified
- Scope of roles confirmed (LC, LO, OSU)
- Documentation developed (TOR)
- Stakeholder engagement established



*Photo: J. Pierre*

# Bottom longline fisheries

- FMA1:
  - 38 snapper vessels
  - 17 bluenose vessels
- Vessels prioritised for LO visits, sea time
  - likely overlap with at-risk seabirds
  - operational characteristics
- Seabird Management Plans
- Government fisheries observers
- Ongoing contact with fishers



# Surface longline fisheries

- FMA1, ECNI, WCSI
  - 38 vessels
- LO vessel visits, phone and email contacts
- Operational Plans
- Data collection by observers
  
- Other fisheries



*Photo: J. Pierre*

# Results: BLL

- Up to 4 contacts/vessel BNS
- Up to 12 contacts/vessel SNA
- Phone, email, radio, in-person
- 50% SMPs changed BNS
- 70% SMPs changed SNA



Photo: DOC

# Results: BLL

- Range in SMP measures
  - line-weighting regimes
  - tori line use
  - reactive measures
  - stop setting if risk unmanageable
- SMP updates for 2015/16 include +ve and –ve changes



Photo: DOC



# Results: BLL

- Observer feedback
  - meet fishers in port with OSU before LO work starts
  - fishers' attitudes to seabirds diverse
  - turnover amongst crew creates challenge for knowledge retention
  - mentoring recommended for less experienced skippers
  - disincentives to reporting captures



Photo: DOC

# Results: SLL

- Operational Plans
  - Finalised, 18 vessels
  - Draft, 3 vessels
  - Variety of measures
- Common practices:
  - weighting on snood clips, float rope clips
  - tori lines
  - squid bait
  - night-setting
  - slack deployment of snoods



Photo: MPI/DOC

# Results: SLL

- Measures to further reduce bycatch risk:
  - weighting snoods closer to hooks
  - waste discharge practices
  - tori line design/construction
- Observer feedback:
  - range of fisher attitudes, approaches
  - increased interest in bycatch mitigation after cluster of capture events
  - seabird handling could be improved



Photo: MPI/DOC

# Significant capture events

- Five capture events that triggered capture event response protocol
  - Surface longline (WCSI)
  - Inshore trawl (FMA1)
- Follow-up as per protocol
- Excellent engagement with LFRs, industry, stakeholders
- Some operational changes on vessels involved as well as other vessels



# Conclusions

- Focus of liaison programme: continuous improvement
  - SMPs and OPs should reflect this
  - Not all SMP changes towards decreasing bycatch risk
- Focus of LOs: education, knowledge sharing
  - require support to motivate and implement change
  - government, LFRs, industry bodies
  - monitoring (incl. observer information)
- Where to next?

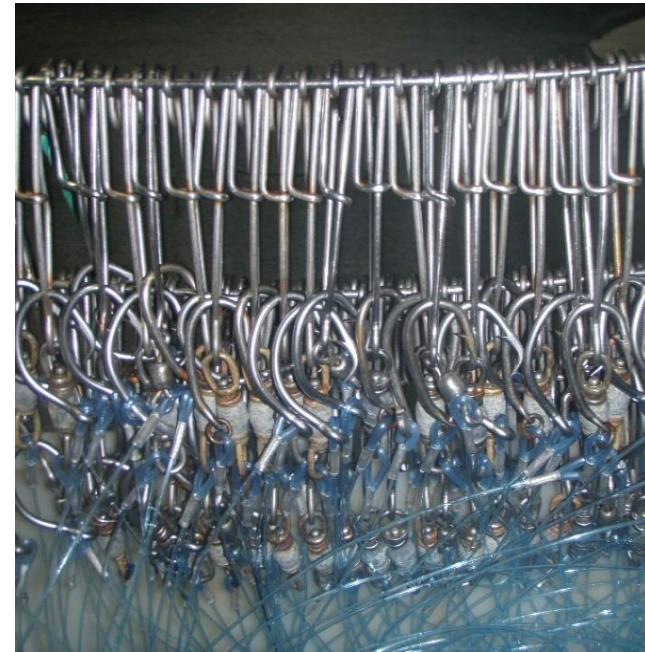


Photo: MPI/DOC

# Recommendations

- Revisit geographic distribution of LOs
  - capacity located closer to WCSI fisheries
  - more visits and follow-up esp. SLL vessels
- Industry briefings prior to liaison work starting
- At-sea time in LO capacity only
- Increased monitoring to demonstrate integrity of OPs, SMPs
- Prioritise higher risk vessel operations for liaison effort in 2016/17
  - deliver demonstrable improvement



Photo: DOC

# Conclusions and Recommendations

- Confirm knowledge transfer with skipper/crew turnover
- Consider FMA1 trawl, FMA9, pending review of fishing effort and bycatch patterns
- Continue to support LO vessel visits with the provision of useful materials for fishers
- Continue and grow the involvement of industry influencers in the programme



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# Acknowledgements

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- Working Groups
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Questions?

