



# Report of the First workshop on Seabird Bycatch in the People's Republic of China

for component 3.2.1 of the

## Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in the ABNJ

17 April 2015  
Shanghai,  
China

Prepared by BirdLife South Africa



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

## Workshop Report

**Project:** FAO-GEF Project *Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in the ABNJ* (GCP/GLO/365/GFF)

**Reporting organisation:** BirdLife South Africa

**Report prepared by:** Ross Wanless and Karen Baird

### **Review workshop on seabird bycatch mitigation in China's tuna longline fisheries Shanghai Ocean University, Shanghai, China, 17 April 2015**

#### **BirdLife report**

##### **Objectives**

- To review the seabird bycatch mitigation measures required in all tuna RFMOs
- To introduce the FAO's GEF-funded Common Oceans project
- To describe the various options for fishing operations to become compliant with the measures, including technical descriptions of bird scaring lines and line weighting options
- To provide observer training in seabird identification, data recording, photographic systems for ID, etc.

##### **Background**

ICCAT, IOTC and WCPFC (and by default CCSBT) all have seabird conservation measures for longline effort (below 25-30°S, depending on the ocean). Prof Dai, China's representative at various RFMO meetings, invited BirdLife International to develop a workshop to assist the Chinese observer programme and fishing companies to have a better understanding of the issues relating to seabird bycatch in tuna fishing. Unlike in many other countries, China has delegated responsibility for its observer programme to a university - the Shanghai Ocean University (SOU). SOU undertakes all training, deployment and data management for observers in China's tuna longline fleets. To this end, a workshop on seabird bycatch mitigation was held in China on 17 April 2015, supported by the FAO's Common Oceans Programme (the seabird bycatch component implemented by BirdLife International, through BirdLife South Africa), the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, New Zealand's Department of Conservation and the Shanghai Ocean University.

## **Participants**

There were ~50 participants, including researchers and officials from SOU, representatives of fishing companies and the industry association, fishing captains, and observers. Five experts delivered the workshop content; for the mitigation information dissemination session, Ross Wanless (BirdLife South Africa) and Karen Baird (Forest and Bird) represented BirdLife and the Common Oceans project, Warren Papworth represented ACAP and Kris Ramm represented the New Zealand Department of Conservation. Chris Gaskin (Forest and Bird) and Kris Ramm delivered the observer training component. The Common Oceans funded the participation of Ross Wanless, Karen Baird, Chris Gaskin (seabird experts) and Kris Ramm (observer programme expert)

## **Outcomes**

### Mitigation information dissemination session

Professor Dai from SOU and Mr Davy Chen, representing China's tuna longliner association, both expressed their appreciation for the efforts that everyone had gone to. China has indicated that their fleet capacity has been capped, there will be no further growth in this respect. They also indicated that China has made a strong commitment to achieve sustainable resource use. They further acknowledged the gravity and extent of tuna longline fishing impacts on seabird conservation.

Prof. Dai's data showed that China's various fleets expend relatively little effort in areas where two seabird bycatch mitigation measures are required. However, there is some, and therefore there is a need to fleets to ensure that they are equipped and trained to meet the relevant obligations in each RFMO.

Currently within the SOU staff there is no-one responsible for overseeing seabird bycatch data collection, analysis, and related activities. However, it is within SOU's remit to do these, and existing capacity may be sufficient to start work on this.

Chinese vessels currently use a bird scaring line of their own design. It is likely that this design could be improved somewhat – they only use short (1-m long) streamers spaced at 5-m intervals. There was some lack of understanding from some participants that TWO measures are required by the RFMO conservation measures; i.e. some participants thought that using a bird scaring line alone was sufficient.

### Observer training session

Kris Ramm and Chris Gaskin provided observer training to 15 Chinese observers who attended the workshop. It was emphasised that seabird bycatch is a global issue and scientific observers play important roles in seabird bycatch mitigation. Participants were given instruction in seabird identification, data reporting and how to manage photographic ID systems. They also attended some of the mitigation information dissemination session to learn more about seabird bycatch mitigation measures.

### **Main Conclusions**

1. Further outreach to industry and fishing crew is highly desirable. China will advise on next steps/opportunities
2. Chinese observers all have undergraduate science training and are very well positioned to undertake trials of mitigation measures onboard Chinese vessels. They will require more in-depth training on scientific methods for on-board research
3. No-one within China's observer programme of SOU currently has any data or in-depth knowledge of seabird bycatch management issues. The workshop has initiated a change in this, and further positive engagements on these matters are expected in the coming months, we anticipate that a contact point will be nominated to lead on bycatch matters in tuna longline fisheries and RFMO reporting for China

### **Follow-up actions**

1. None at present, opportunities and needs for further engagements on seabird bycatch will be identified and communicated by Prof Dai or others at SOU

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Systematic M&E efforts were not completed in time for this report, because we were unable to get any responses from participants to the evaluation questionnaire. There seemed to be little direct interest from industry representatives, but the observers were very motivated to learn about seabird identification, bycatch mitigation options, etc. The head of delegation for China's WCPFC meetings, Prof Dai, and the head of the Chinese tuna longline industry association, Mr Davy, were both very appreciative of the efforts. They have indicated that follow-up work will be undertaken. The meeting was a clear success, and we expect that further engagement will be appropriate, including to assist observers to undertake fleet outreach. Chinese authorities have undertaken to include compliance with seabird bycatch mitigation measures as part of their engagements with the industry representatives. BirdLife offered continued support if requested from Prof Dai.

### **Acknowledgements**

Funding for the workshop (participation by experts, catering, etc.) was provided through the FAO's Common Oceans programme. Prof Dai and his staff organised and funded several aspects of the workshop, including securing the venue, managing some participant logistics and some meeting catering. ACAP supported the workshop through the participation by its Executive Secretary, Mr Warren Papworth. Mr Kris Ramm participated as an expert in his capacity as staff of New Zealand's Department of Conservation.

## Workshop agenda

AGENDA	
Morning	BirdLife/ NFRDI/MOF/Representatives of tuna fisheries/Captains and Crews/observers
Time	Session (Presenters)
08:30-09:00	Arrival, tea and coffee available, all presentations copied to Presentation Laptop
09:00-09:05	Welcome from Director of Fundamental Research Department (Dr Jong Keun Shin)
09:05~09:15	Convenor's remarks (Dr Zang Geun Kim)
09:15-09:25	Introductions (All)
09:25-09:35	BirdLife / GEF funding introduction/ assuring confidentiality (Dr Ross Wanless)
09:35-09:50	Feedback on implementing 12/06 including research to date (NFRDI)
09:50-10:30	Discussion on seabird conservation measures
10:30-11:00	Morning tea break
11:00-11:15	Benefits of collaboration work (Yuna Kim)
11:15-11:45	Research proposal (Dr Ross Wanless)
11:45-12:15	Discussion on future work
12:15-12:30	Post-workshop Questionnaire
12:30:14:00	Lunch
After lunch	OBSERVER Training (Attendance of representatives is optional only)
14:00-14:20	Introductions (All) - Sharing experiences onboard
14:20-14:40	Seabird ID (Yuna Kim)
14:40-15:00	Data collection (Yuna Kim)
15:00-15:30	Afternoon tea
15:30-16:00	Experimental protocols - paired studies for true comparison expt vs control, randomisation (Dr Ross Wanless)
16:00-16:30	Discussion on constraints, options and concerns