



# Report of the South African Observer Training Workshop

for component 3.2.1 of the

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

10 and 12 April 2018  
BirdLife South Africa Seabird Conservation Programme Office  
Cape Town, South Africa

Prepared by BirdLife South Africa

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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 (BLSA)

**Report prepared by:** Nini van der Merwe

**South African Observer Training Workshop for BirdLife component of the GEF funded  
FAO Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project (Output 3.2.1)  
10 and 12 April 2018, Cape Town, South Africa**

### BirdLife South Africa report

#### Aims of the workshop

The main aim of this workshop was capacity building of the national observers responsible for collecting data onboard tuna longline vessels operating out of South Africa. Unlike the training we provided for Namibia and Indonesia, this group already had a very good understanding of fisheries observing. Capricorn Marine Environmental (Pty) Ltd. (CapMarine) is a South African-based observer agency which has been training fisheries observers for years – both locally and internationally. They are also the only operational observer agency in South Africa. We organised this training session in conjunction with them, with a strong focus on seabird identification skills, but we also provided training in RFMOs, ecosystem considerations, and what the data they collect is useful for.

Furthermore, we also wanted to ensure the following through the implementation of this workshop:

- Promote EAF principles and sustainability in the South African tuna longline industry beyond the Common Oceans (CO) Tuna Project
- Continue to foster and build on the good working relationship between BLSA and CapMarine

#### Background – South Africa

In June 2017, BLSA hosted a National Awareness Workshop for South Africa. The meeting was attended by industry, government, a representative from CapMarine and from the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels. At the meeting, it was mentioned by industry that even though there was a requirement in their permit conditions that 20% of trips are observed by government approved observers, this mandate had never been enforced or monitored. After the workshop, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) initiated actions to enforce the mandated observer coverage. Shortly thereafter, under Element 4 of this project, a Bycatch Data Preparation Workshop was hosted in Peru. At this workshop, it became apparent that to improve the quality of observer data, their seabird identification skills had to be improved. The ability of an observer to distinguish between species and even subspecies, greatly adds to the value of the data.

#### Participants

BLSA hosted 8 CapMarine Fisheries Observers, as well as an intern from the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) compliance division.

A full list of participants is provided in **Annex 1**.

### **Summary of presentations and facilitated discussions**

The workshop agenda is provided in **Annex 2**. We also produced a workbook (**Annex 3**) with key-points discussed during the workshop. This was created so that participants could take notes during presentations and had a tangible tool to take home and use for further training.

Annotated list of workshop presentations:

#### **Seabird Biology:**

- Seabird identification: Introduction to seabird biology, and key features to observe when separating seabird species at sea. This was followed by a seabird identification quiz and the pelagic seabird identification excursion allowed for some field training and practise of their newly acquired identification skills.
- A presentation on how to identify dead seabirds was also given, as prolonged exposure to the elements can affect or alter the key features used to identify live seabirds.
- Observers were also taught how to handle live seabirds and, in the case of fatality, how to correctly collect samples for further research.

#### **Data collection and management:**

- Albatross Task Force (ATF)/CapMarine data collection procedures were presented and challenges in collecting seabird and fisheries data simultaneously were discussed with the observers. The ATF has developed a system to collect data, which gives a thorough and complete data set relating to seabird abundance during fishing operations, as well as reporting on any seabird interactions and mortalities the vessel may encounter.
- A presentation on AS@S (Atlas of Seabirds At Sea) and the uses and power of citizen science was also given. BLSA encouraged observers to contribute to the AS@S database, as this is something that can also inform future research.

### **Next steps**

CapMarine and BLSA will continue to work together, along with DAFF, to ensure that good, robust data is collected in the South African Longline Industry.

### Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Survey of workshop participants

A post-workshop questionnaire was developed to assess the usefulness of the workshop and to receive constructive feedback from participants that can be used in the development and implementation of future workshops. All 9 participants completed the questionnaire. The survey and assessment was conducted by Nini van der Merwe. A summary of the questions and responses is included below. The original questions and scoring guidelines are provided in **Annex 4**.

Q1. [How useful was the information presented at the workshop?]

Out of 10 presentations, **3** (*Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries; Seabird biology and Basic Data Collection*) were found to be **very useful** by **100%** of participants. The remaining presentations were found to be either **useful** or **very useful**. None of the presentations were found to be **not useful**.

Q2. [How clearly did the organisers present material?] **88%** of participants thought information was presented **very clearly**, **12%** found it to be **moderately clearly**.

Q3. [Did the organisers allow enough time for the facilitated discussions?] **100%** thought the time allocated was **good**.

Q4. [Was the workshop long enough?] **78%** of participants thought it was **about right**, while **22%** thought it was **too long**.

Q5. [Overall, how would you rate the workshop?] **56%** of participants rated the workshop as **very good** while **34%** rated it as **good**.

Q6. [How would you rate your ability to identify seabirds BEFORE the workshop?] **44%** of participants said their ability was **poor**, **33%** said it was **good** and **22%** said they were **expert**.

Q7. [How would you rate your ability to identify seabirds AFTER the workshop?] **78%** of participants said their ability was **good** and **22%** said they were **expert**.

Q8. [Would you agree that after the workshop, you have a better understanding of Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries (EAF) and why this is important to protect natural ocean resources?] **89%** of participants **agreed** while **11%** **somewhat agreed**.

Q9. [After the workshop, are you confident in your ability to collect samples and take photographs of dead seabirds encountered when out at sea?] **89%** of participants were confident, while **11%** of participants were **somewhat confident**.

Q10. [After the workshop, do you have a better understanding of why the data you collect at sea is important?] **100%** of participants **agreed**.

Q11. [After the workshop, do you have a better understanding of completing the data sheets procedures?] **89%** of participants agreed and **11%** of participants **somewhat agreed**.

Q12. [How likely are you to participate in AS@S when out at sea?] **67%** of participants said they were **very likely** and **33%** said they were **somewhat likely**.

- One participant suggested that the training also be offered to fishermen.
- Two participants expressed that they would need more time and exposure before they were 100% comfortable with their identification skills.

- Three participants expressed that they really enjoyed the workshop and were looking forward to testing out their new identification skills in the field.

### **Suggestions for future workshops**

- Allocate more time for facilitated discussions.
- Provide observers with central accommodation for the evening prior to the pelagic excursion, as this will make it easier for them to attend.

### **Conclusions**

The workshop was very successful. It gave observers a better understanding of their role in fisheries management, how their data are used, and an opportunity to share their experiences with the BLSA team. The workshop was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. The workshop succeeded in improving the identification skills of those present, and also confirmed the good working relationship that BLSA have with CapMarine and DAFF.

### **Acknowledgements**

Mr Victor Ngconco, Stewart Norman and Willem Louw from CapMarine are thanked for their assistance with inviting observers to attend. Mr Ngcongo is also thanked for his presentation during the workshop. Funding for the workshop (including the venue, catering, travel and workshop materials) was provided through the FAO Common Oceans Tuna Project (LoA4).

### **Broad project outline**

The Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project is the largest of four projects that constitute the Common Oceans Program. The objective of the project is to achieve responsibility, efficiency, and sustainability in tuna production and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ (Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction), through the systemic application of an ecosystem approach in tuna fisheries.

With support from BirdLife International, BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) is responsible for the implementation of Output 3.2.1 of the project. The revised objectives of Output 3.2.1 are linked to two outputs:

- **Output 3.2.1a:** *The use of best practice seabird bycatch mitigation measures is enhanced and accelerated by fleets operating in critical fishing areas of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and additional methods to monitor the uptake, use and effectiveness of these measures are tested.*
- **Output 3.2.1b:** *The capacity of national institutions to manage and conduct analyses of seabird bycatch data and the effectiveness of bycatch mitigation measures is strengthened, and assessment methods are harmonised to facilitate a joint tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organization (tRFMO) assessment of the current bycatch mitigation measures contained in the relevant Conservation and Management Measures.*

Output 3.2.1 will be achieved through four separate, but linked, elements. This report outlines the outcomes of the South African Observer Training workshop held under Element 2. The main outcomes under this element are to 1) improve awareness of seabird bycatch and its mitigation; and 2) build capacity of the national observer programme, government representatives and the fishing industry to effectively implement best practice seabird bycatch mitigation based on best practice in South Africa.

For further information, please contact:

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### Annex 1: List of workshop participants

(Presenters are marked with \*)

Name	Position	Institution
Ross Wanless*	Seabird Conservation Programme Manager	BirdLife South Africa (BLSA)
Bronwyn Maree*	Outreach and Compliance Coordinator	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Nini van der Merwe*	International Liaison Officer	BLSA
Philip Augustyn*	Port-based Outreach Officer and Seabird Bycatch Instructor	BLSA
Reason Nyengera*	ATF Instructor	BLSA
Andrew de Blocq*	Coastal Seabird Conservation Project Officer	BLSA
Victor Ngongo*	Director	CapMarine
Stewart Norman	Large Pelagics Observer Program Co-ordinator	CapMarine
Siyamkela Sigaba	Marine Observer	CapMarine
Manciya Ncebekazi	Intern	DAFF
Siyalibonga Njokweni	Marine Observer	CapMarine
Vuyani Vara	Marine Observer	CapMarine
Knowledge Xuba	Marine Observer	CapMarine
Julian Cooke	Marine Observer	CapMarine
Xolisile Ngqokotyá	Marine Observer	CapMarine
Sivuylie Mbambalala	Marine Observer	CapMarine
Mondolozí Vutula	Marine Observer	CapMarine

Fig 1





Fig 2



Figure 1. South African Observers and some BLSA staff at the end of the theoretical section of the workshop.

Figure 2. Participants and presenters at the end of the pelagic excursion to test their identification skills.



## Annex 2: Workshop Agenda

### Day 1: Theory training

Time	Presentation	Presenter
Day 1		
08:00-08:25	Introduction to Observer Training Programme and participant introductions and expectations	Nini van der Merwe
08:25-08:55	Where do observers fit in - broad outline	Victor Ngcongco
08:55-09:25	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF): A broad-scale perspective	Bronwyn Maree
09:25-09:45	Seabird biology – Why seabird biology is different from fish biology	Nini van der Merwe
09:45-10:00	<i>Tea</i>	
10:00-12:00	Seabird identification	Ross Wanless
12:00-12:30	Quiz	Nini van der Merwe
12:30-13:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30-13:50	Dead seabird identification	Reason Nyengera
13:50-14:10	Handling live/dead birds, labelling samples and taking photographs	Reason Nyengera
14:10-14:30	Basic data collection- bird counts	Philip Augustyn
14:30-15:00	How is the data you collect used by government?	Henning Winker*
15:00-15:30	<i>Tea</i>	
15:30-15:50	AS@S and brief introduction to citizen science	Andrew de Blocq
15:50-16:00	Monitoring and Evaluation	Nini van der Merwe
16:00	Closing	Nini van der Merwe

\*Mr Winker was unable to attend, so Ross Wanless presented this topic

### Day 2: Pelagic sea trip, at sea-training

Time	Activity	
06:45	Pelagic sea trip training – seabird identification	Ross Wanless

**Annex 3: Workshop workbook**

**Day 1: Marine Ecosystems & Seabird Biology**

1. Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF): A broad-scale perspective – Bronwyn Maree

An ecosystem is made up of living and non-living parts each dependent on the other to a greater or lesser extent. Examples of marine ecosystems include open oceans, coral reefs, rocky shores, and sandy beaches. Fisheries ecosystems are complicated and include tiny plants and animals at the bottom of the food web (phytoplankton and zooplankton) all the way up to top fish predators, marine mammals and seabirds. Humans are an important part of the ecosystem. Living things depend on one another to survive. A food chain simply shows how each living thing gets food. Food webs exist in a delicate balance. If one animal’s food disappears, many other animals in the food chain are affected. Humans are at the top of the food chain and are often responsible for disrupting food webs.

**What is an Ecosystems approach?**

- It is a management approach which seeks to protect and enhance the marine ecosystem health as a whole, on which life and human benefits depend.
- It is based on a transparent and participatory management system which tries to look at ecosystem health, different social needs, and economic development, and aims to address the shortfalls of the single species approach
- If an activity is sustainable it can continue forever. Over-fishing is not sustainable!




2. Seabird biology – Why seabird biology is different from fish biology – Nini van der Merwe

Seabirds vary in size, but they all use the ocean as their dominant habitat. They spend most of their life at sea and have adapted to the marine habitat by evolving unique features to help them survive.

Seabirds	Fish

3. Seabird identification and Quiz – Ross Wanless and Nini van der Merwe

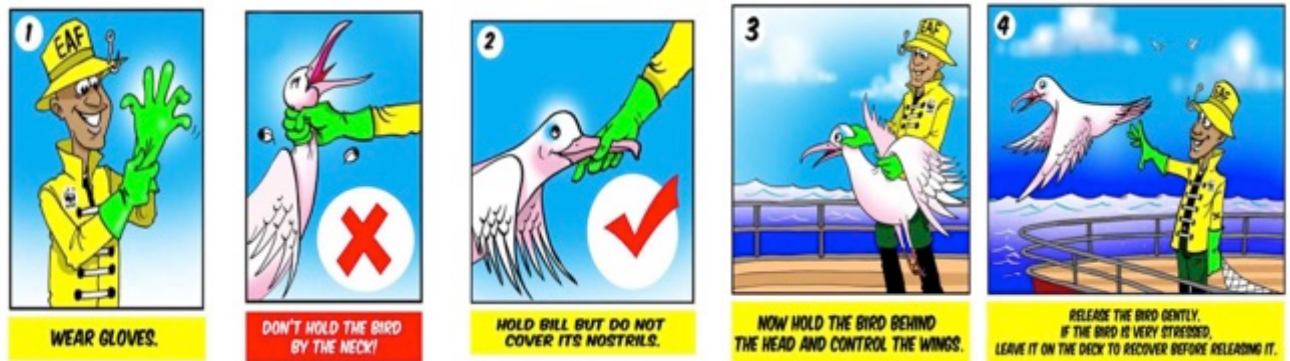
While it might seem daunting to remember all the different aspects necessary to correctly identify a seabird, there are a few tips and tricks that make it a bit easier. Write down some notes to help you later.


4. Dead seabird identification – Reason Nyengera

Identifying a live seabird is very different from identifying a dead seabird. There are however some identifying markers to look out for:


5. Handling live/dead birds, collecting samples and taking photographs – Reason Nyengera

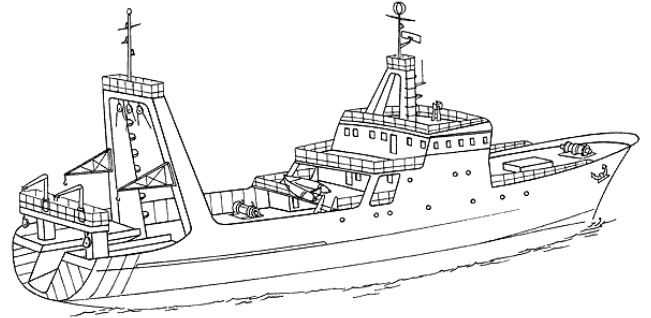
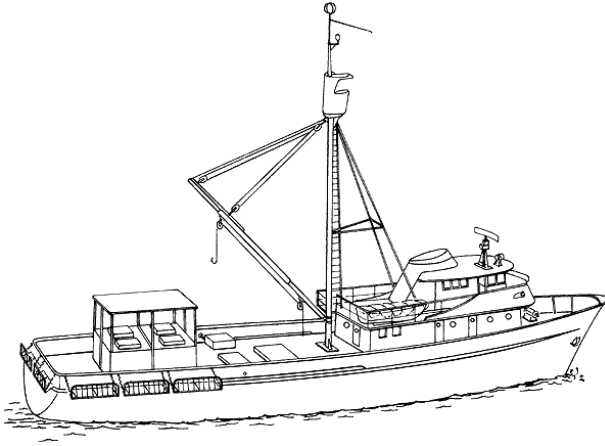
How to handle a live bird:



How to collect samples from a dead seabirds:


6. Basic data collection - CapMarine reporting procedures – Philip Augustyn

Fill in the data sheets provided.



7. Data recording and reporting and how observer data are supporting National Reporting to RFMOs and improving the sustainable and ecosystem-based management approaches for tuna fishing on the high seas – Henning Winker

The work you do, as an observer who collects data, is very important. It is the connection between scientists - who want to save species, and governments – who impose mitigation. The data that you collect out at sea gives an important insight into the field and what is really going on in the oceans.


8. AS@S : Atlas of Seabirds at Sea Andrew de Blocq


**Annex 4: Post-workshop questionnaire**

**South Africa Observer Training Workshop  
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Post-workshop Feedback**

Ensuring we provide quality workshops and engagement for our projects is very important to BirdLife and the FAO. We appreciate your feedback on this workshop.

**Name (Optional):**

**Occupation:**

**1. How useful was the information presented at the workshop?**

Please rank: 1 = not useful, 2 = somewhat useful, 3 = very useful

<b>Topic</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF): A broad-scale perspective (Bronwyn Maree)			
Where do observers fit in – a broad outline (Victor Ngcongco)			
Seabird biology – Why seabird biology is different from fish biology (Nini van der Merwe)			
Seabird identification (Ross Wanless)			
Quiz (Nini van der Merwe)			
Dead Seabird Identification (Reason Nyengera)			
Handling live/dead birds, collecting samples and taking photographs (Reason Nyengera)			
Basic Data Collection (Philip Augustyn)			
How is the data you collect, used by government? (Henning Winker)			
AS@S and a brief introduction to citizen science (Andrew de Blocq)			

**2. How clearly did the organisers present material?**

- 1) Very clearly                                      2) Moderately clearly                                      3) Not at all clearly

**3. Did the organisers allow enough time for questions?**

- 1) Too short    2) Good    3) Too Long

**4. Was the workshop long enough?**

- 1) Too long    2) About right    3) Too short

**5. Overall, how would you rate the workshop?**

- 1) Very good                                  2) Good                                  3) Average  
4) Poor    5) Very poor

**6. How would you rate your ability to identify seabirds BEFORE the workshop?**

- 1) Poor                                  2) Good                                  3) Expert

**7. How would you rate your ability to identify seabirds AFTER the workshop?**

- 1) Poor                                  2) Good                                  3) Expert

**8. Would you agree that after the workshop, you have a better understanding of EAF and why this is important to protect natural ocean resources?**

- 1) Agree                                  2) Somewhat agree                          3) Don't agree

**9. After the workshop, are you confident in your ability to collect samples and take photographs of dead seabirds encountered when out at sea?**

- 1) Confident                                  2) Somewhat confident                          3) Not confident

**10. After the workshop, do you have a better understanding of why the data you collect at sea is important?**

- 1) Agree                                  2) Somewhat agree                          3) Don't agree

**11. After the workshop, do you have a better understanding of completing the data sheets procedures?**

- 1) Agree                                  2) Somewhat agree                          3) Don't agree

**12. How likely are you to participate in AS@S when out at sea?**

- 1) Very likely                                  2) Somewhat likely                          3) Not likely

**13. What would prevent you from completing AS@S cards when out at sea?**


**14. Do you have any other comments; suggestions or topics you would like included in future workshops?**


Thank you for your time