



Report of the Seychelles National Awareness Workshop

for component 3.2.1 of the

Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in the ABNJ

8-9 June 2017
Seychelles Fishing Authority
Victoria, Seychelles

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

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Seychelles National Awareness Workshop for BirdLife component of the GEF funded FAO Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project (Output 3.2.1) 8-9 June 2017, Victoria, Seychelles

BirdLife South Africa report

Aims of the workshop

The broad outcome of the National Awareness Workshop is that 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 (Project Output 3.2.1a). The workshop aims to build the capacity of the national observer programme and industry representatives from Seychelles through presentations and facilitated discussions on Effective Seabird Conservation in Tuna Fisheries and the challenges that this specific fleet faces.

Broad project outline

The Common Oceans Tuna Project, officially named the “Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction” 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 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 (RFMO) 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 elements. This report outlines the outcomes of the Seychelles National Awareness workshop held under Element 1. 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 Seychelles (SEZ).

Background -Seychelles

The Seychelles was identified as a target country where some progress towards strengthening national processes, improved reporting and improved uptake of mitigation measures might be warranted. BLSA requested assistance from the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) to

compile an invitation list and implement the proposed workshop. The Seychelles national fleet operates only within the Seychelles Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which falls well outside the area in which the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) requests that vessels use two out of three best practice mitigation measures (night setting, branch line weighting and bird-scaring lines). However, the fleet also consists of about 44 re-flagged vessel, six of which regularly operate south of 25° South. The workshop was aimed specifically at this portion of the fleet, hereafter referred to as the Distant Water Fleet (DWF).

Participants

Welcome remarks from the host country were delivered on behalf of the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA), by Elisa Socrate. The workshop was attended by government officials (including compliance officers), advisors to the Minister of Fisheries, IOTC secretariat staff and a representative of the DWF.

Three invited experts from BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) delivered key aspects of the workshop.

The workshop was chaired by Dr. Ross Wanless (BLSA). A list of participants can be found in Annex 1.

Summary of presentations and facilitated discussions

The workshop agenda is provided in Annex 2.

The workshop was designed to give a broad understanding of the Common Oceans Tuna Project, an introduction into what is required by the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) in terms of seabird bycatch mitigation measures and an update on current research for each measure. Furthermore, we wanted to inform participants of the options available for implementing best practice seabird bycatch mitigation measures currently available, so as to enable them to decide which measures would work best in their fleet. We covered challenges and possible solutions with implementing an observer programme in their DWF. The Seychelles have also expressed a need to develop and implement a National Plan of Action for Seabirds (NPOA-S).

A summary of each presentation is listed below:

1. FAO Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project: outline of the four components of the project and the aims of the workshop. Participants also had the opportunity to mention what they expected from the workshop.
2. Introduction to seabird biology and IOTC Resolution (Res) 12/06: Basic information on why seabirds are vulnerable to bycatch and explanation of best practice options, including night setting, line weighting and bird-scaring lines, as well as an update on current research on seabird bycatch mitigation measures
3. Description of Seychelles Distant Water Fleet (DWF) and SFA's management approaches: An overview of the SEZ DWF and how the SFA interact with them.
4. IOTC Res 11/04 and IOTC's annual reporting requirements: This presentation offered an opportunity for the IOTC reporting requirements to be presented and for workshop attendees to ask questions and be given clarity on the specific intricacies.
5. Regional and National observer programme: An overview of the current Seychelles observer programme and a discussion on future expansions.
6. Challenges and solutions in dealing with bycatch mitigation for the DWF: This facilitated discussion allowed for concerns to be voiced, and solutions brain-stormed among participants.
7. National Plan of Action – Seabirds (NPOA-S): Background to the development of the NPOA-S and options to assist SFA to develop it's NPOA-S.

8. Southern Ocean seabird bycatch evaluation process – Seychelles' DWF data contribution, needs, challenges and opportunities: A discussion on how SEZ can contribute to Element 4 of the Common Oceans Tuna ABNJ project.
9. Next steps for DWF to comply with RFMO regulations: Another fruitful discussion which led to agreement on future collaborations and assistance offered from BLSA to provide basic training for SFA compliance officers.

Facilitated discussions:

Through Element 4 of the ABNJ Tuna project (1st Seabird Bycatch Pre-assessment Workshop held in February of 2017), we already had a basic understanding of the challenges that SEZ were concerned about implementing seabird bycatch mitigation measures in their longline industry. Due to the unique nature of the SEZ longline fleet, we allowed ample time for facilitated discussion, to better understand these concerns, and also allow time to come up with creative solutions.

A few key points that were raised/discussed during these sessions:

- All SEZ flagged longline vessels have compliance inspections board the DWF vessels once a year. Vessels hardly ever dock in SEZ, usually compliance officers go to Singapore/Mauritius. Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) on vessels is used to check for night-setting. The SFA try to adjust their compliance inspection according to information they receive prior to inspection about where boats are/have fished.
- SEZ compliance inspection sheet was discussed – one or two easy alterations were suggested to assist with checking if seabird bycatch mitigation measures were being used. BLSA agreed to assist SFA with finalising the sheet. (Include checking for a Bird-scaring line pole ('Tori' pole) on vessels.)
- Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) were tested in the SEZ purse seine fishery: the challenges with the system were operational, not the usability of EMS. In purse seine industry, each individual haul is very big. This results in hours of footage per haul, which results in days of footage per trip. Vessel owners are in favour of EMS, captains and crew are less supportive.
- The SFA voiced that it is cumbersome to report to IOTC – they compile logbook data at the end of the year, rather than having to report at the end of each trip – this takes too much time. IOTC Res 11/04 currently states that observer trip information has to be reported to IOTC 150 days after the trip – at present, in practice, that is not happening. IOTC suggested that it would be acceptable for SEZ to report twice a year.
- Setting up and maintaining a SEZ observer programme has been a slow process. First they had to train observers in data collection, then they had to train the observers in the operational logistics of the harbour and SFA, then other countries fishing in SEZ EEZ asked for observers, so only now can they start focusing on data collection. Managing the data is daunting, they lack capacity. Maintaining a good team has been difficult due to a very high turnover in observers. The high turnover of observers is due to the length of the trips. Observers do one trip, and then resign.
- BLSA and SEZ discussed possible solutions to high turnover of observer staff. SFA will now focus on intensively training a small group.
- SEZ are considering outsourcing observers for DWF
- SFA was open to assistance with obtaining observer coverage in their DWF. It was suggested by the IOTC secretariat that SEZ try to employ observers from the nationality of the DWF crew, as this will overcome the cultural and language challenges, but it will be expensive.
- Dr Wanless volunteered to assist SFA with training their compliance inspection officers when he visits SEZ for the next IOTC meeting in December 2017.
- IOTC are already ahead of other t-RFMOs, in that they have accepted the science behind hook shielding devices (such as the Hook Pods and Smart Tuna Hooks, which are new mitigation measures that can be used as a stand-alone seabird bycatch mitigation measure). A CPC now needs to propose appropriate wording for single-

measure options in a revision to Res 12/06. SFA staff indicated willingness to consider co-sponsoring a revision with another country.

- SFA has advised vessels not to go into seabird “hotspots”, this has been unsuccessful. SFA have budgeted for developing and implementing a NPOA-S, which they are hoping to get published by the end of 2017. The use of an independent consultant was suggested, and BLSA has offered to assist with this in various ways.
- Majority of re-flagged Asian vessels that fish south of 25° South, fish for oilfish, not tuna. This is good news, as oilfish are bottom feeders, so the use of line weighting and its effect on fishing operations should not be a concern.
- IOTC and SFA discussed the need for IOTC to get all data, not just a percentage. The workshop was very beneficial in aiding communications between the SFA and IOTC.

Survey of workshop participants

A post-workshop questionnaire was developed (see Annex 3) 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. In total, 10 participants completed the questionnaire, however, for certain sections, only 9 participants provided answers. Participants involved in the organisation and implementation of the workshop did not complete the survey. 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 3.

DAY 1

Q1. [*How useful was the information on the following topics presented at the workshop?*] **87%** of participants thought the information was **very useful**, **25%** of participants thought the information presented was **somewhat useful**, no participants thought that the information **was not useful**. The highest ranked topics were: *Challenges and solutions in dealing with bycatch mitigation for the DWF; Developing a NPOA-S for Seychelles and Introduction to Seabird Biology and IOTC Res 12/06.*

Q2. [*How clearly did the organisers present material?*] 69% of participants thought information was presented **moderately clearly**, while 31% thought it was **clearly** presented. No participants thought that it was presented **unclearly**.

Q3. [*Did the organisers allow enough time for the facilitated discussions?*] 83% of participants thought the time allocated for the discussions was **good**, while 17% of participants thought it was **too short**.

Q4. [*Was the workshop long enough?*] 79% thought it was **about right**, while 17% thought it was **too short** and 3% of participants thought it was **too long**.

Q5. [*Overall, how would you rate the workshop?*] 21% of participants rated the workshop as **very good**, 75% as **good** and 4% as **average**.

Q6. [*How would you rate your understanding of seabird bycatch BEFORE the workshop?*] 72% of participants said their understanding was **poor**, and 28% said their understanding was **good**.

Q7. [*How would you rate your understanding of seabird bycatch AFTER the workshop?*] 86% of participants said their understanding was **good**, 10% said it was **still poor**, and 3% said they considered themselves **expert**.

Q8. [*Are you supportive toward implementation of the RFMO seabird bycatch mitigations measures after the workshop?*] 97% were **supportive**, and 3% were **neutral** about the implementation of the mitigation measures.

Q9. [Did the workshop help you to improve the ability to implement effectively and efficiently seabird bycatch mitigation measure requirements?] On average, 86% said **yes**, 14% said **no**, it did not improve their ability.

Q10a. [Do you have concerns about implementing bird-scaring (Tori) lines?] On average, 93% had **no concern**, 7% were **somewhat concerned** and no participants were **very concerned**.

Q10b. [Do you have concerns about implementing night setting?] On average, 67% had **no concern**, 26% were **somewhat concerned** and 7% of participants were **very concerned**.

Q10c. [Do you have concerns about implementing line weighting?] On average, 59% had **no concern**, 41% were **somewhat concerned** and no participants were **very concerned**.

Q10d. [Do you have concern about implementing Hook Pods?] On average, 36% had **no concern**, 52% were **somewhat concerned** and 12% of participants were **very concerned**.

Q10e. [Do you have concern about implementing Smart hooks?] On average, 36% had **no concern**, 48% were **somewhat concerned** and 16% of participants were **very concerned**.

Q11. [Would you be interested to participate in such workshops in the future?] 71% of participants were **very interested** and 29% were **neutral** about future workshops.

Q11. [Do you have any other comments or suggestions for future workshops?]

- The workshop was well presented and the content was good and very informative.
- Strengthen collaboration with BirdLife [South] Africa.
- Concerns about the conditions and length of trips on the re-flagged SEZ Distant Water Fleet (DWF) for observers.
- Concerned about lack of observers for the longline fleet.
- Concerned about cultural issues for SEZ observers on the re-flagged DWF vessels.
- Concerned about the language barrier for SEZ observers on the re-flagged DWF vessels.
- It was suggested that continuous training for SEZ observers might prevent them from abandoning the project after one trip.
- Concerns were raised about local implementation and funding.
- Lack of human resources, capacity and cost were raised.

Going forward with the project - next steps

The following next steps for Seychelles were noted from discussions:

- The SFA will be attending the Global Seabird Data preparatory workshop in February 2018, they will send one of their head statisticians.
- SFA will send their port-inspection compliance sheets and logbook sheets to BLSA for comment/assistance on manageable alterations.
- Dr. Wanless (BLSA) will assist SFA with training compliance officers in December 2017.
- SFA will approach and appoint an independent contractor to assist them with developing an NPOA-S.
- SFA need to discuss observer coverage of DWF with re-flagged Asian vessel owners. Howard Tan, agent to the DWF, will need to assist with this.

Suggestions for future workshops

- The nature of this specific workshop, required a small, cohesive group. Small group discussions are suggested for future workshops with countries that have such specific challenges or obstacles.
- Ample time for facilitated discussions is very beneficial in a small group setting.

Conclusions

The workshop provided a useful opportunity to present the current best practice seabird bycatch mitigation measures, recent research results and international Regional Fisheries Management Organizations reporting requirements, as well as get a better understanding of the current situation in the SEZ DWF. Future training is suggested as well as ensuring observer presence in the DWF.

Acknowledgements

The Seychelles Fishing Authority are acknowledged for their assistance with logistics and presentations at the workshop. Funding for the workshop (including the venue, catering, travel and DSA for the 3 BLSA experts and their time) was provided through the FAO Common Oceans Tuna Project (LoA4).

Annex 1: List of workshop participants

(Presenters are marked with *)

Name	Organisation
Howard Tan	Re-flagged Asian vessels manager
Stephanie Radagonde	Ministry of Fisheries policy analyst
Sarah Martin	IOTC
Alex Tirant	SFA
Sharon Roselie	SFA – compliance officer
Marie-Antoinette Saminadin	SFA – compliance officer
Ross Wanless	BLSA*
Vincent Lucas	SFA*
Nini van der Merwe	BLSA*
Andrea Angel	BLSA*
Elisa Socrate	SFA*
Roy Clarisse	Special Advisor to Minister of Fisheries
Roddy Allisop	SFA, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Manager

Fig 1



Fig 2



Figures 1 and 2: Fig 1 shows all participants holding up a demonstration model of a bird-scaring line. Fig 2 shows SFA representatives, a member of the IOTC Secretariat, compliance officers, NGO's and other stakeholders discussing seabird bycatch mitigation measures at a National Awareness Workshop in Victoria, Seychelles.

Annex 2: Workshop Agenda

Day 1	DATE
Time	Session (Presenters)
09:00-09:05	REGISTRATION, all presentations copied to Presentation Laptop
09:05-09:30	Welcome from the host country (Elisa Socrate, Seychelles Fishing Authority)
09:30-10:00	Introductions (all) Welcome from BirdLife and explanation of workshop purpose (Ross Wanless, BLSA)
10:00-10:30	FAO ABNJ Common Oceans programme introduction and expectations from participants (Nini van der Merwe, FAO/BLSA)
10:30 - 11:00	Introduction to seabird biology and IOTC Res 12/06 (Andrea Angel, BLSA)
11:00-11:30	Morning tea break
11:30-12:00	Description of Seychelles' DWF and SFA's management approaches and challenges (Elisa Socrate, SFA)
12:30-13:00	IOTC Res 11/04 and IOTC's annual Reporting requirements - presentation and discussion (Ross Wanless, BLSA)
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-14:30	Regional and national observer programme (Alex Tirant, SFA)
14:30-15:30	Challenges and solutions in dealing with bycatch mitigation for the DWF: facilitated discussion (Ross Wanless, BLSA)
15:30-16:00	Afternoon tea
16:00-16:40	Developing an FAO National Plan of Action – Seabirds for Seychelles (Ross Wanless, BLSA)
16:40-17:00	Summary of the day and announcements (Nini van der Merwe, FAO/BLSA)
Day 2	
08:30-09:00	Attendees arrive, morning coffee
09:00-09:10	Recap of Day 1/announcements (Nini van der Merwe, FAO/BLSA)
09:10-09:30	Southern Ocean seabird bycatch evaluation process - Seychelles' DWF data contribution needs, challenges and opportunities (Ross Wanless, BLSA)
09:30-10:30	Next steps for DWF to comply with RFMOs regulations (Ross Wanless, BLSA)
10:30-11:00	Morning Tea break and group photograph
11:00-11:30	Workshop monitoring and evaluation (Nini van der Merwe, FAO/BLSA)
11:30-12:00	Closing remarks and workshop wrap-up

6. How would you rate your understanding of the necessity for a National Plan of Action BEFORE the workshop?

- 1) Poor 2) Good 3) Expert

7. How would you rate your understanding of the necessity for a National Plan of Action AFTER the workshop?

- 1) Poor 2) Good 3) Expert

8. Are you confident to report on bycatch data according to IOTC methods and standards?

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

9. Do you have concerns about implementing an observer programme in the Seychelles Deep Water Fleet (DWF)? Please rank your concerns and reasons (e.g. cost, capacity, etc.):

1 = no concern, 2 = somewhat concerned, 3 = very concerned

Concerns	1	2	3	Reason
Lack of interest to work on DWF from current observer pool				
Costs of implementation				
Length of trips				
Continuity (Will trained observer stay with the project, or abandon it after one trip?)				
Training capacity				

10. Are you supportive of the Next Steps discussed during the workshop?

- 1) Supportive
2) Neutral
3) Not supportive

11. Do you have any other comments, suggestions or future topics you would like included in future workshops?

Thank you for your time 😊