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|  <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p> | <p>Fifth Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group <i>La Rochelle, France, 1-3 May 2013</i></p> <p>Seabird Smart Training Workshops and Liaison Officer for New Zealand Inshore Fisheries</p> <p><i>Janice Molloy</i> <i>Convenor, Southern Seabird Solutions Trust</i></p> |
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SUMMARY

This paper describes a strategy for engaging with fishermen on issues of seabird biology and bycatch mitigation. The strategy centres around a series of port workshops. Resources were developed to support this and are available to be adapted to other fisheries and regions.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Seabird Bycatch Working Group recognise the value of engagement with fishermen on matters of seabird biology and bycatch mitigation and encourage the development and use of engagement strategies such as that described here.

Talleres de capacitación para el manejo inteligente de las aves marinas y Director de Enlace para pesquerías costeras de Nueva Zelanda.

El presente documento describe una estrategia para trabajar conjuntamente con los pescadores sobre cuestiones vinculadas con la biología de las aves marinas y la mitigación de la captura accidental. La estrategia se centra en una serie de talleres en los puertos. Se desarrollaron recursos de apoyo que también se encuentran disponibles para ser adaptados a otras pesquerías y regiones.

RECOMENDACIÓN

Que el Grupo de Trabajo sobre Captura Accidental de Aves Marinas reconozca el valor del trabajo conjunto con los pescadores respecto de cuestiones vinculadas con la biología de las aves marinas y la mitigación de la captura accidental, y aliente el desarrollo y el uso de estrategias de participación como la que se describe en este documento.

Ateliers de formation intelligente aux oiseaux marins et agent de liaison pour les pêches côtières en Nouvelle-Zélande

Ce document expose la stratégie à suivre pour sensibiliser les pêcheurs aux questions de biologie des oiseaux marins et d'atténuation des captures accidentelles. La stratégie se base sur toute une série d'ateliers menés dans des ports. Des moyens ont été mis en œuvre pour soutenir cette stratégie ; ils peuvent être adaptés à d'autres pêcheries et régions.

RECOMMANDATION

Il est recommandé que le Groupe de travail sur les captures accidentelles d'oiseaux marins reconnaisse la valeur du travail de sensibilisation des pêcheurs aux questions de biologie des oiseaux marins et d'atténuation des captures accidentelles et qu'il encourage le développement et l'utilisation de stratégies de sensibilisation telles que celles décrites ci-après.

1. INTRODUCTION

New Zealand's extensive coastline supports a diverse range of finfish fisheries. The fleets are made up of independent fishers contracted to larger quota holding companies, as well as some owner operators. The vessels are generally 5 – 20 m and use a range of fishing methods including longlining, trawling and set net (gill net). These fleets have been identified as a priority because of their known overlap with a range of albatross, petrel, penguin and shag species, some which face a high risk from fishing.

In 2012 the Southern Seabird Solutions Trust ("the Trust") held a series of half-day education workshops for skippers and crew from these inshore fleets. The primary purpose of the workshops was to build participants' awareness and interest in seabirds and the risks that fishing poses for these species. The workshops also reinforced the government mitigation regulations and other additional measures that fishers can take to avoid capturing seabirds.

In conjunction with the workshops, the Trust has established a liaison officer role to maintain contact with skippers and provide ongoing advice and encouragement. The role also acts as an information conduit, and enables new mitigation ideas or refinements to be shared between fleets, and fed back to the Trust's Mitigation Mentor (Barry Baker).

Nine Workshops were held in 2012 involving more than 158 skippers, crew and associated fishing industry personnel, representing more than 100 vessels. Workshop attendees (mostly skippers) were contacted by the liaison officer on two occasions after the workshop.

Development of the training programme was sponsored by the Department of Conservation, Ministry for Primary Industries, Seafood New Zealand, and Sanford Ltd. The workshop costs were shared by Government, fishing companies and fishing associations.

2. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE WORKSHOPS

Although the workshops were tailored for each fleet, they all had the following components:

- Information on the ecology and lifecycle of seabirds.
- Benefits of being “Seabird Smart” and risks to the fishing industry if this is not achieved.
- Review of mitigation options for each fishing method, including obstacles to their use and solutions.
- Mini sessions on seabird identification (using taxidermy seabird heads and a quiz), handling and release of live seabirds, and other topics that arose.
- Vessel commitments - each skipper filled out a card describing the additional measures that would be taken onboard.
- Resources including boat and car bumper stickers and a seabird booklet.

3. FEEDBACK FROM FISHERS

There was overwhelming positive feedback on the workshops – with an average rating of 4.2 out of 5 on an evaluation scale. Most attendees found the bird identification, biology and ecology the most interesting, especially the global travel of the birds and the fact that New Zealand has such a diverse seabird fauna. The majority of participants reported their motivation to use mitigation was higher having attended the workshop.

Fishers were very keen to receive more resources on seabirds, in particular DVD's, brochures, ID cards and information on the movements and behaviour of seabirds in different fisheries. Many fishers reported they would appreciate further training, mentoring and/or practical demonstrations.

4. KEY SUCCESS ELEMENTS

- The workshop trainers were skilled at creating an atmosphere of openness and trust.
- The presentation on seabird ecology and biology was delivered in a way that was relevant to fishers.
- Most of the workshop was a two way discussion, interspersed with a quiz, demonstrations and other activities.
- The workshops were held locally and supported by the local fishing associations. Industry leaders promoted the workshops in their companies and fishing communities and encouraged participation.
- The Trust helped ensure media stories about the workshops appeared in local newspapers, including interviews of participants and photos.
- Participants were given resources they valued to take away and share with their crew and families.

5. CHALLENGES

- If the weather was fine on the day of the workshop, a proportion of fishers went fishing instead of attending the workshop. Because we used professional trainers, we needed to set dates and stick to them.
- Making contact with fishers after the workshops was very challenging. Most fishers do not use email and are out of phone range for much of the time.
- Using professional trainers added to the cost of the workshop.

6. PLANNED ACTIVITY FOR 2013

The Trust is planning to deliver further training workshops in 2013. If funding is secured, the Trust will also produce a DVD and additional material on the regional and seasonal distribution of seabirds.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION AND SHARING RESOURCES

Further information and images from the workshops are available on the Trust's website. The seabird booklet and seabird handling and release poster are also both available on the Trust's website (www.southernseabirds.org). The Trust welcomes wider use of these resources.