

## **Seabird Conservation Measures Required by NOAA for Commercial Fishing Vessels**

Commercial fishing vessels using hook-and-line or longline gear in certain Alaska and Hawaii fisheries are required to use specified measures to reduce the likelihood of interactions with seabirds. The Alaska measures can be found at:

<http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/bycatchregs.htm>

The Hawaii measures are available at:

[http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/SFD/SFD\\_seabirds.html](http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/SFD/SFD_seabirds.html)

Measures will vary depending on the type of longline gear that is used. For instance, vessels in Alaska that fish demersal gear (intended to fish on the bottom for bottom-dwelling fish like halibut or Pacific cod) rely on slightly different measures than do vessels fishing in Hawaii that use pelagic gear (intended to fish mid-water for tuna and swordfish).

The principles for avoiding interactions with seabirds are relatively simple---use conservation measures that sink the baited hooks quickly so that birds (that can dive to varying depths) cannot reach the baited hooks (for instance, weighted swivels near the hooks or weighted groundline), and/or prevent seabirds from accessing the area where baited hooks are deployed from the vessel before they've had time to sink to fishing depth (for instance, single or paired streamer lines). Another effective way to avoid seabirds is to fish at night when most seabird species are less active.

In general, operators of longline vessels that use one or more of the following conservation measures will likely interact with seabirds less frequently:

- Use hooks that, when baited, sink as soon as they are put in the water.
- If offal (fish waste) is discharged while gear is being set or hauled, discharge offal in a manner that distracts seabirds from baited hooks.
- Remove hooks from any offal that is discharged.
- Make every reasonable effort to ensure birds brought on board a fishing vessel alive are released alive.
- Whenever possible, remove hooks from birds brought on board a fishing vessel without jeopardizing the life of the birds.
- Use streamer lines or tori lines in accordance with published standards.
- Deploy longline gear at night.
- Deploy longline gear from the side of a vessel rather than the stern (side-setting also involves the use of a bird curtain and weighted branch lines).
- Use blue-dyed, thawed bait.
- Use weighted branch lines.

For additional information about how fishermen can avoid gear interactions with seabirds, see NOAA Fisheries' National Seabird Program website at:

<http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/national.htm>

### **Contact for Questions or Additional Information:**

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