



29 June 2018

Dear Stakeholder

Proposed changes to the Fisheries (Seabird Mitigation Measures-Surface Longline) Circular 2014

The purpose of this letter is to seek feedback on proposed changes to the Fisheries (Seabird Mitigation Measures-Surface Longline) Circular 2014 (the Circular) to apply to all surface longline vessels operating in New Zealand waters. This follows adoption of a revised conservation and management measure at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) in December 2017. The WCPFC is the Regional Fisheries Management Organisation responsible for the management of highly migratory species in the western and central Pacific Ocean region and the convention area includes New Zealand waters. WCPFC is able to establish conservation and management measures (CMM) for highly migratory species, that member states are obligated to implement at domestic level where relevant.

The current New Zealand requirements for seabird mitigation on surface longline vessels are based on the provisions of the previous CMM, and specify the approved mitigation techniques (night setting and tori lines, or line weighting and tori lines) and the specifications for their use. The December changes to the CMM were intended to take into account improved tori line designs suitable for use by smaller vessels (currently defined as less than 35 metres in length) fishing under normal commercial fishing conditions. These changes were also intended to address concerns raised by fishers regarding safety, tangling, and deployment when setting tori lines at night and in poor weather conditions.

Copies of the old and new CMMs can be found on the WCPFC website (www.wcpfc.int). Surface longline vessels operating south of 30° South are required to use tori lines and either set their lines at night or use weights on the branch lines. Both the weighting and the design of the tori lines are subject to specifications outlined in the measure.

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Under regulation 58A of the Fisheries (Commercial Fishing) Regulations 2001, the Director-General of MPI or his delegate is authorised to amend the existing Circular 2014 and specify new standards and requirements for seabird mitigation measures. Specific changes proposed for small vessels are as follows:

- Removing the requirement to attach streamers to the tori line with swivels
- Providing for streamers to be modified over the first 15 metres of the tori line to minimise the risk of entanglement
- Clarifying the 6m suspension point for the tori line must be as close to the stern as possible
- Specifying a minimum aerial extent for tori lines of 75 metres
- Providing for flexibility in how this aerial extent is achieved
- Removing the specification of a minimum tori line length (100m) and the requirement to have a towed object on tori lines less than 150 metres in length

There have been no changes to the tori line specifications for vessels equal to or greater than 35 m length, or to the specifications for weighting of surface longlines.

A further change associated with the proposed revisions to the Circular is the removal of the best practice guidelines to support the implementation of the requirements of the circular. The guidelines are not legal requirements, and their inclusion in the Circular limits the flexibility to review and revise them as new information comes to hand. These guidelines will be promulgated separately in the future and will support an active program to assist and educate fishers on the use of seabird mitigation.

Fisheries New Zealand welcomes written submissions on the proposals outlined above. Submissions must be received no later than 27 July 2018. All submissions are subject to the Official Information Act 1982 and can be released (along with personal details of the submitter) under the Act. If you have specific reasons for wanting to have your submission or personal details withheld, please set out your reasons in the submission. Fisheries New Zealand will consider those reasons when making any assessment for the release of submissions if requested under the Official Information Act.

Submissions can be emailed to: FMsubmissions@mpi.govt.nz

Alternatively, the postal address is:

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Yours sincerely,



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