



23 April 2019

Dear Stakeholder

Proposed changes to the Fisheries (Seabird Mitigation Measures-Surface Longlines) Circular 2018

The purpose of this letter is to seek feedback on proposed changes to the Fisheries (Seabird Mitigation Measures - Surface Longlines) Circular 2018 (the Circular) to apply to all surface longline vessels operating in New Zealand waters.

This follows adoption of a revised conservation and management measure (CMM) at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) meeting in December 2018 to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds.

The WCPFC is the Regional Fisheries Management Organisation responsible for the management of highly migratory species in the western and central Pacific Ocean region. The convention area includes New Zealand waters and member states are obligated to implement agreed measures domestically.

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 and the specifications for their use.

The CMM agreed at the December 2018 WCPFC meeting introduced a new option for surface longline fisheries, allowing for the use of hook-shielding devices as a stand-alone seabird mitigation measure. Hook-shielding devices encase the point and barb of baited hooks to help prevent seabird captures when lines are being set.

The hook-shielding devices that are approved by the WCPFC for use on surface longlines are set out in the new CMM. Approved devices must comply with the following performance characteristics:

- a) The device encases the point and barb of the hook until it reaches a depth of at least 10 metres or has been immersed for at least 10 minutes;
- b) The device meets current minimum standards for branch line weighting as specified in the Annex to the CMM; and
- c) The device is designed to be retained on the fishing gear rather than being lost.

Fisheries New Zealand

Fisheries Management

Charles Fergusson Building 34-38 Bowen Street

Wellington 6011, New Zealand

Telephone: 0800 00 83 33, Facsimile: +64-4-894 0300

www.fisheries.govt.nz

Copies of the old and new CMMs can be found on the WCPFC website (www.wcpfc.int).

Minor changes to the provisions relating to the use of tori lines are also being proposed in order to clarify the requirements of the WCPFC measure.

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

- Providing for the use of WCPFC approved hook-shielding devices as a stand-alone seabird mitigation measure;
- Clarifying that vessels under 25 metres in length can use long and short steamers or short streamers only; and
- Clarifying that vessels over 35 metres in length must use long and short steamers only.

Attached you will find a draft copy of these proposed changes to the Fisheries (Seabird Mitigation Measures-Surface Longlines) Circular 2018.

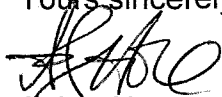
Fisheries New Zealand welcomes written submissions on the proposals outlined above. Submissions must be received no later than 10 May 2019. All submissions are subject to the Official Information Act 1982 and can be released (along with personal details of the submitter) under the Act. If you have specific 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:

Highly Migratory Species Team
Fisheries Management
Fisheries New Zealand
PO Box 2526
Wellington 6011

Yours sincerely,



Arthur Hore
Manager Offshore Fisheries
Fisheries New Zealand