Fisheries New Zealand
Tini a Tangaroa

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Seabird Bycatch Mitigation Standards Guide
Scampi Trawl

What Are Seabird Bycatch Mitigation Standards?

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The seabird bycatch Mitigation Standards were developed alongside the NPOA Seabirds 2020. They document the 'best practice' mitigation methods for reducing the risk of seabird captures in New Zealand commercial fisheries. Each vessel is expected to have a Vessel Management Plan (VMP) that is tailored to their operational needs and works towards achieving the best bycatch mitigation options available.

These Mitigation Standards do not replace or override any fisheries regulations, or legislation on workplace health and safety, maritime safety, or other relevant subject.

Legal Requirements

All trawl vessels over 28m length overall are required to deploy one type of seabird scaring device during all tows in accordance with Seabird Scaring Devices Circular 2010 (*i.e.* bird bafflers, tori lines or warp deflectors).

'Best Practice' Mitigation Methods

1. **Control the discharge of fish waste**
   - No discharging of fish waste immediately before or during shooting or hauling.
   - During the tow, only discharge fish waste that has been minced or is batch discharged.
   - Document a plan for fish waste discharge should there be any equipment failures. Keep a copy on board.
   - Whilst still allowing the free movement and egress of water, maintain a secondary system that prevents uncontrolled fish waste discharge (*i.e.* equipment to minimise fish waste lost to factory floor or deck, grating and/or trap systems in fish sorting and gutting areas that lead overboard).
2. **Protecting seabirds from trawl warps**
   - Have a primary seabird scaring device (*i.e*. baffler, tori line, or a warp deflector) on/near the warp closest to the fish waste discharging side of the vessel; Or both warps, if the vessel is 28m or greater in overall length.
   - Ensure the seabird scaring device is well maintained, with spare parts onboard.
   - Ensure warps are well maintained (*i.e*. not overly greased, splices 'wrapped', sprags removed or 'whipped'), and splices are not near the water's surface when towing.
   - Carry a secondary seabird scaring device (*i.e*. tori line) and deploy if there is an observed increased risk to seabirds (*i.e*. seabird captured on trawl warp, seabird seen striking warps, fish waste management system fails, etc.).
3. **Minimise any attractions or access to the trawl net itself**
   - Ensure all practicable stickers are removed from the net before each shot.
   - Minimise the time the net is at or near the surface of the water. Shoot and haul as quickly as practicable.
   - Ensure when each cod-end is tipped, the remaining cod-ends remain as deep as possible.
   - Fit net restrictors in the middle net of a triple-rig when there is a high risk of seabird captures.
   - Regularly inspect and maintain gear and equipment to reduce the risk of gear failure.
   - Where possible, conduct maintenance during periods of low risk to seabirds and with the net on board.
4. **Minimise deck landings or vessel impacts by seabirds**
   - Keep additional and unnecessary deck lighting to a minimum so as not to attract or disorientate seabirds, especially while sheltering or at anchor.
   - Keep gear and deck clean of any remaining fish waste where possible.
   - Ensure crew are familiar with safe seabird handling procedures (see DOC Handling and Release Guide).

For More Information

Contact your Liaison Officer for any questions you may have. They will be working with you to try and achieve these Mitigation Standards. The full document is available on the MPI website.