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ACAP global review of nature and extent of trawl net captures

ACAP

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Brief introduction

A significant proportion of incidental seabird mortality in commercial trawl fisheries involves net captures. Seabirds can dive into the net when pursuing prey or become entangled when the net is on the water's surface during shooting and hauling of the net. Net captures include seabirds from the large *Diomedea* albatrosses to the small petrels, shearwaters, and prions.

The ultimate purpose of this project is to mitigate the incidental capture of seabirds in trawl nets. Developing mitigation methods to reduce seabird entanglement in trawl nets requires information on the nature and extent of seabird captures in trawl nets^[1]. Regional projects have focused on the level of interactions and understanding factors that contribute to trawl net captures (e.g. in New Zealand^[2,3]) but internationally, there is little literature on trawl net captures and net-capture mitigation.

To provide broad global context for regional action addressing net captures, this project will compile and summarise information on the nature and extent of net captures, and assess the availability and utility of data on net captures. Data collection is a first step towards developing mitigation measures to reduce net captures of seabirds in trawl fisheries.

Objectives

- a. Produce a global review of literature on the nature and extent of seabird trawl net captures
- b. Summarise the nature of net-capture data collection
- c. Develop advice on suitable protocols for future data collection to better understand the extent of trawl net captures and inform the development of mitigation.
- d. Where possible, identify opportunities for development of trawl net capture mitigation methods to reduce or eliminate net captures.

Scope

Seabird species listed by the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). Review of data collection to include ACAP parties and other relevant jurisdictions. The project lead is Parker Conservation (Graham Parker, Kalinka Rexer-Huber) in collaboration with the New Zealand Department of Conservation (Igor Debski). The project is funded by ACAP.

References

- [1] ACAP 2017. ACAP review and best practise advice for reducing the impact of pelagic and demersal trawl fisheries on seabirds. AC10. Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, Hobart
- [2] Baird SJ 2008. Net captures of seabirds during trawl fishing operations in New Zealand waters. NZ National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research, Wellington
- [3] Baird SJ and Doonan IJ 2018. Characterisation of seabird captures in trawl nets in New Zealand fisheries, 2008–15. NZ National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research, Wellington