



Seabird Bycatch Mitigation Standards Guide

Surface Longline

What Are Seabird Bycatch Mitigation Standards?

August 2021

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. It is expected that by 2025 each vessel will have a Protected Species Risk Management Plan (PSRMP) 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

1. During setting fishers must either:
 - a) use hook-shielding devices on 100% of hooks or
 - b) use a 'fit and proper' tori line and either night set or line weight to legal specifications.
2. Tori line streamers are brightly coloured and spaced $\leq 1\text{m}$ apart along the entire aerial extent.
3. Weighted gear is either: $\geq 40\text{g}$ within 0.5m of hook, or $\geq 45\text{g}$ within 1m of hook, or $\geq 60\text{g}$ within 3.5m of hook, or $\geq 98\text{g}$ within 4m of hook.

'Best Practice' Mitigation Methods

1. **Control the discharge of fish waste**
 - No discharging of fish waste immediately before or during setting.
 - During hauling, either hold or batch discharge fish waste at intervals of no less than 30 minutes.
 - During hauling, retain all used bait on board until hauling has finished.
 - Return live fish (meeting legal requirements) to the sea as soon as practicable.
 - 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. **Minimise seabird access to baited hooks during setting**
 - Either use hook-shielding devices on 100% of hooks or
 - Use a 'fit and proper' tori line that can be adjusted over the hook-bearing line to suit varying conditions,
 - and conduct all setting between nautical dusk and nautical dawn (night set),
 - and weight gear: $\geq 40\text{g}$ within 0.5m of hook, or $\geq 60\text{g}$ within 1m of hook, or $\geq 80\text{g}$ within 2m of hook.
 - Carry a second (back-up) tori line and sufficient materials onboard to effect repairs when necessary.
 - Use sufficiently thawed bait.
3. **Minimise seabird access to hooks during hauling**
 - Minimise the time hooks are at or near the surface of the water. Haul as quickly as practicable.
 - Implement hauling mitigation measures, device(s) and/or vessel manoeuvres when appropriate.
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](#).