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NOAA FISHERIES APPOINTS NATIONAL SEABIRD COORDINATOR
Goals Include Reducing Seabird Bycatch

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA fisheries), an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), today announced the appointment of Kim Rivera, as the agency's first National Seabird Coordinator. Rivera's first order of business includes coordinating the regional implementation of the [National Plan of Action](#) to protect seabirds during fishing operations. The plan outlines specific steps for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries where a problem exists.

"We are concerned about the long-term ecological impacts of seabird bycatch in marine fishing gear throughout the world," said Bill Hogarth, NOAA fisheries assistant administrator. "With the appointment of Kim as National Seabird Coordinator to spearhead our efforts, we have the leadership and experience to drive us closer to reducing seabird deaths."

According to Hogarth, this coordinated effort can best be achieved by working with NOAA fisheries' regions, fishery management councils, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and stakeholders (industry and environmental).

In February 2001, NOAA fisheries released the National Plan Of Action. The United States voluntarily developed the National Plan of Action to fulfill a national responsibility to address seabird bycatch in longline fisheries, as requested in the International Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries. The International Plan was adopted by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1999.

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In January 2001, an executive order was issued that calls for agencies whose actions negatively impact populations of migratory birds to develop and implement a memorandum of understanding to promote conservation of migratory bird populations. This, along with the National Plan of Action, and mandates under the Endangered Species Act serves as a framework within which NOAA fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will work to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries.

As a member of an international seabird working group, Rivera started working with partners on this FAO initiative in 1997. She has been with NOAA fisheries for almost ten years. Rivera earned her masters degree in zoology. In 1996 Rivera began work on the Alaska Region's efforts to regulate the longline groundfish and halibut fisheries to reduce seabird bycatch.

"I am really pleased to be the new National Seabird Coordinator," Rivera said. "I've spent most of my career dedicated to seabird conservation, trying to figure out how it can be achieved in balance with fisheries. My appointment reinforces NOAA's commitment to do the right thing for both birds and fisheries."

The National Marine Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our Nation's living marine resources through scientific research, management, enforcement, and the conservation of marine mammals and other protected marine species and their habitat. Learn more about NOAA fisheries at:
<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>