



SOUTHERN SEABIRD SOLUTIONS

Conservation through Cooperation

Newsletter Three
July 2003

Our Goal: Southern Seabird Solutions promotes the adoption of fishing practices that avoid mortality of southern hemisphere seabirds.

Inside:

- Response to SEO/Birdlife International competition
- Training for the trainers
- ACAP update
- Seabird video in production
- Dates for our annual meeting

Turning one...

Hard to believe, but Southern Seabird Solutions is one year old.

A lot has happened in the past 12 months. We've started work on a number of projects and we're in the process of seeking funding for several others; we've clarified our goals and our messages; and our list of members and supporters has grown. We've had fishing companies and fishermen from Chile, France, Spain and Australia express interest in joining in with our activities.

Southern Seabird Solutions now has its own communications manager. Cushla Managh has been involved with our group since its inception and has helped develop our communications

strategy. She comes to us with nearly 20 years experience in journalism. You can contact Cushla on +64 4 4713 299 or by email: cmanagh@doc.govt.nz

Best wishes

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Structure and Governance

It's time to start formalising the structure of Southern Seabird Solutions. We're rapidly moving from establishing ourselves as a group to now getting projects underway. We will increasingly need processes and structures in place, particularly in relation to management of funds.

Members at the most recent meeting of Southern Seabird Solutions liked the idea of a trust fund. As a result, a Memorandum of Agreement will be developed, and legal experts will be asked to advise us on the structure of a trust fund.

Project Funding

Southern Seabird Solutions has six international projects scoped out and ready to go once funding is secured. A common theme of all the projects is transfer of technology and knowledge between fleets, and the use of role model fishers to champion new behaviours.

In summary they are:

- Sister Ship Programme – Chile/New Zealand. This project involves crew exchanges between vessels in the two countries, so that practices to minimise seabird capture are shared across the Pacific.
- Sister Ship Programme – South Africa/New Zealand. The same project but with South Africa.
- Regional Fishers Forum – Fisher to Fisher dialogue. This builds on the International Fishers Forum model (www.fishersforum.org) but at a regional level, allowing more fishers to participate. A South American forum is planned.
- Southern Seabird Solutions – exporting the model. The multi-stakeholder alliance is making good progress in New Zealand, and several other countries have expressed an interest in learning how the group works and how it could

be adapted in their country.

This project involves workshops in interested countries to share experiences and practical solutions.

- Seabird/Fisheries Advisory Officers – spreading the word. Advisory officers have been employed in New Zealand and Australia to work alongside skippers and crew as a way to promote awareness of the impact of fishing on seabird populations and ways to avoid seabird capture. This project will employ an Advisory Officer in the South African pelagic longline fleet.
- Website – Bringing it all together. We plan on developing a website that links all of our projects, sponsors and supporters. The site will include project updates, video clips, news on albatrosses and petrels, and other educational material.

If you have thoughts on who we could approach for funding, let us know.

New Zealand News

Capsule Trials

A device with the potential to save the lives of thousands of seabirds is being tested in Australia.

New Zealand inventor and fisher, Dave Kellian, has spent the past eight or nine years developing a machine that

can set baited hooks 10 metres underwater.

“It’s like a big sewing machine except the needle is 10 metres long,” he says. “You put the bait at the top of the stroke and when it gets to the bottom it releases the bait before returning to the top. It mightn’t look very pretty but it’s easy to operate, it doesn’t interfere with other fishing practices, and it has the potential to save lots of birds.”

The Australian trial is a result of Dave’s attendance at last year’s International Fishers Forum in Hawaii. While there he met an Australian tuna fisher who expressed interest in testing the experimental capsule. If these trials are successful, Dave thinks the capsule will be ready for manufacture.

The device was tested most recently on a New Zealand fishing boat, Daren Coulston’s ‘Gold Country’, at sea off the coast of Napier late last year. A Kaikoura-based eco-tourism company, Oceanwings, has also thrown its weight behind the capsule, with owners Dennis and Lynette Buurman selling hundreds of t-shirts to tourists on their seabird encounter trips, and then donating the profits to the capsule’s development.

Global Coordinator Visits NZ

Biologist Ed Melvin, who was appointed Global Seabird Mitigation Coordinator at last year’s International Fishers Forum in Hawaii, visited New Zealand at the end of May.

Ed is a fisheries biologist with the University of Washington, principal investigator of the seabird mitigation

programme in Alaska’s longline fisheries, and he is currently on sabbatical leave working with the Australian Antarctic Division in Tasmania, Australia.

In a keynote address to the New Zealand Seafood Industry Council’s annual conference in Auckland, he described New Zealand as a ‘hotbed of innovation’ in terms of its mitigation work and praised leaders within the fishing industry for their work on this issue.

At the same time, he indicated that more work is needed to turn lots of small research studies into a collection of effective, science-based best practices which can then be adopted by the fishing industry.

Lights, Camera, Action...!

By the time you read this, we will have nearly completed production of a video about southern hemisphere seabirds, the threats they face from accidental capture in the course of fishing, and the range of solutions available to fishing industries.

The video is being produced in both English and Spanish, for distribution to fishing vessels in New Zealand and other southern hemisphere countries.

The video features lots of interviews with NZ fishers talking about the seabird issue and the mitigation measures which they use on their vessels. It emphasises that New Zealand does not have the issue of accidental capture ‘sorted’ but that there are a range of solutions available

which viewers may be able to adapt to the circumstances of their own vessels.

Many thanks to the New Zealand fishing companies which have provided access to their vessels and crews in order to film fishing operations and to conduct interviews.

Training for the Trainers

A group of fishing industry trainers came together in Wellington recently to learn about a new seabird unit standard for New Zealand vessel operators.

Simon Reid from the Seafood Industry Training Organisation has led the unit standard's development, and he spent a day explaining its contents and aims to trainers from around the country.

Individuals who achieve this unit standard will understand the impact of fishing on seabirds, appreciate the importance of using mitigation measures and will be fully conversant with the suite of measures that are available.

The unit standard will be incorporated into the pre-sea training undertaken by new recruits to the fishing industry.

Several New Zealand companies have already decided to provide the training to their existing crews.

Ling Longline Working Group

The Ling Longline Working Group is designed to bring together fishers, government officials, researchers, fishing gear suppliers and NGOs to find ways to reduce the incidental capture of

seabirds by Ling Longline fishing vessels.

It met recently to review its achievements for the past year, which include:

- The Ling Longline Code of Practice was signed and ratified in November 2002.
- A Ling Longline Fishers Folder and Training Manual has been produced and sent to ling crews to educate fishers about the Code of Practice.
- A significant reduction in seabird capture was recorded in a sea trial undertaken by Sealord/New Zealand Longline Ltd into integrated line weighting.

Fishers Forum – Possibilities

A Southern Seabird Solutions project team is looking at options for either a NZ fishers forum or a travelling roadshow to discuss seabirds and mitigation measures with New Zealand fleets. The idea of a roadshow seems to have a lot of support. We'll keep you posted!

CCAMLR

This year six New Zealand vessels fished in the Ross Sea, which forms part of the CCAMLR area. Once again, no birds have been killed as a result of fishing by NZ vessels. Two of these vessels have ventured beyond the Ross Sea to fish around Heard Island and South Georgia, which are higher risk areas in terms of potential seabird capture, but they still maintained a zero bycatch.

One of those vessels, the Janas (owned by NZLL), trialled an integrated weighted line system around Herd Island, with very positive results. Another vessel, the San Aotea II (owned by Sanford), has just completed a successful trip fishing for toothfish in the South Georgia fishery.

Skipper John Bennett says that nearly a million hooks were set over the course of two months in South Georgia, with two international observers watching 100 percent of setting and 50 percent of line hauling. His vessel used a mix of mitigation measures every set, including the boom and bridle, night setting, line weighting, and offal retention – and no seabirds were caught during the trip.

Alex Edgar from the New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries says MFish was impressed with Sanford's attitude in the South Georgia fishery in that they entered the fishery with an intention to catch no birds and used mitigation measures that were over and above the requirements of their permit and CCAMLR Conservation Measures.

John Bennett also dropped off a Bird Baffler to Port Stanley in the Falklands, for testing by one of the trawlers in that area.

Seafood Industry Conference

Seabirds featured prominently on the agenda for this year's annual NZ Seafood Industry Conference in Auckland, a key meeting for commercial fishers. Several speakers talked about seabirds and the mitigation measures available to avoid accidental mortality.

Also, Southern Seabird Solutions had an exhibition stand at the conference, featuring a short promotional video and brochures about our activities and aims.

International News

ACAP

Just one more ratification is required for the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels to come into force – and that's expected to happen very soon.

ACAP promotes cooperation between countries on the conservation of albatrosses and petrels, particularly in addressing the major threat of incidental capture in fishing operations.

So far it has been ratified by four countries – Australia, New Zealand, Ecuador and, most recently, South Africa. Another six countries have signed the Agreement – Spain, Brazil, Chile, France, Peru and the UK. If ratification by the UK happens soon, as expected, the first meeting of the parties to ACAP will take place either later this year or early next year.

IAATO Funding

Applications for another round of IAATO funding have closed and the recipients will be announced shortly. Birds Australia, a partner of Birdlife International which runs a global campaign to save albatrosses, administers funds raised on ships operated by the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO).

Last year the funding was awarded to an innovative New Zealand fishing industry experiment into the use of integrated line weights which make baited long-lines sink faster than usual.

This year approximately \$NZ 36,000 has been raised from donations following lectures to cruise ship passengers during the Antarctic tourism season.

Fund organiser Graham Robertson says passengers are presented with information about the threats to albatrosses from fishing, along with slides, notes and a separate video prepared by the UK Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

An international panel of conservation experts – including two members of Southern Seabird Solutions – is currently deciding which projects to fund.

SEO/Birdlife Competition

87 fishers and fishing companies from 11 countries have taken up the SEO/Birdlife International challenge to invent new mitigation measures to prevent the accidental capture of seabirds.

That's how many have entered an international competition which closed at the end of June. The competition was open to fishers from all countries and carries a prize of \$NZ 36,000 for the design judged to have the most potential.

Spain put forward the most entries (60), followed by New Zealand (6), Australia (4), Alaska/Hawaii (4), Chile (3), Portugal (3), Argentina (2),

Columbia (2), Uruguay (1), Canada (1), and Ireland (1).

An international panel of seabird experts, conservationists and fishers will now assess the entries. We'll let you know the results.

In brief...

South Africa. Deon Nel reports: "We've been busy with a line sinking trial on the tuna boats, we've put together some awareness materials (pelagic seabird identification posters) and have just initiated an observer training programme, which aims to train the observers to be champions of seabird mitigation and to be able to articulate this to the crews of fishing vessels. We're also in the process of developing a training video for both observers and crews."

Deon Nel from Birdlife International's Seabird Conservation Programme in South Africa is joining WWF-South Africa to manage that organisation's Marine Programme.

Chile. Carlos Moreno from the Austral University of Chile reports: a research project looking at mammals and seabird interactions with fishing fleets in the Chilean EEZ is in its final stages. Following a preliminary report, NGOs, the University, scientists and leaders within the fishing industry plan to spend the next 10 months developing a Mitigation Plan based on consensus between stakeholders, experts and fishery managers. The Plan will draw

on expertise from New Zealand,
Australia and the USA..

For the diary...

The annual meeting of Southern Seabird Solutions will be held in New Zealand on **November 18 and 19, 2003**. It will be an excellent opportunity to make contacts, celebrate our achievements and chart the way forward – and we'd love to see you there! We'll send out more information once some of the details have firmed up but if you're keen to attend, let Janice know on jmolloy@doc.govt.nz.