

Conservation Through Co-operation



Southern
Seabird
Solutions





MALCOLM McNEILL / NZ LONGLINE

"Our vision is, quite simply, to stop catching birds. To get to the point where seabird populations are not declining, but are actually increasing. It is possible. I have no doubt of that.

The truth is that the only people fishermen will listen to are other fishermen. At NZ Longline, we're always trialling new methods

and techniques, and we're investing a lot of money in seabird mitigation. We're involved closely with a fishing gear supplier in Norway who is doing a hell of a lot of work for us. We're involved with a lot of people from around the world, from Alaska to Australia, all working with us to help solve our problems. It's great to be part of a team where we all feel we're doing a very good thing and we've just got to keep on doing it."

The Southern Seabird Alliance

Southern Seabird Solutions is an alliance of New Zealand and international interest groups who are working together to solve the incidental capture of albatrosses and petrels during longline and trawl fishing. The strength of the group comes from its wide representation – government departments, fishers and fishing industry representatives, environmental groups, eco-tourism operators, fisheries trainers, indigenous fisheries interests and others.

This booklet is a compilation of stories produced for Seafood New Zealand magazine since the formation of Southern Seabird Solutions.

Because of the abundance of seabird species in New Zealand, fishing without catching these creatures can be a real challenge. They say necessity is the mother of invention, and luckily New Zealanders are inventive and practical. Many different types of measures to reduce seabird capture have been developed, and tested by New Zealanders. Programmes such as the at-sea observer and seabird autopsy programmes, seabird-safe fishing training, fisheries education officers, and Codes of Practice are also in place. Island pest control programmes and seabird-monitoring projects are also underway.

In New Zealand, many groups have a strong interest in the issue of incidental capture of seabirds during fishing. However, it's fair to say that until recently there has not been as much dialogue between the different groups as is needed to take this issue forward.

This is all changing. In July 2002, a landmark workshop of all interested parties was held in Nelson, New Zealand. What became evident was that all of the parties want the same outcome - widespread use of seabird safe fishing practices. The group named itself "Southern Seabird Solutions".

The major purpose of the workshop was to identify skills and experiences the group could exchange with other countries that New Zealand shares albatrosses and petrels with.

There is a great deal of enthusiasm in the group to develop co-operative projects with other countries that can assist us all towards the widespread adoption of seabird-safe fishing practices. In parallel with this, is an agreed need to continue improving our own standards within New Zealand.



Janice Molloy
Janice Molloy

*Department of Conservation
Southern Seabird Solutions Co-ordinator*

Towards a Global Solution

New Zealand's productive waters and safe offshore islands support more albatross and petrel species than any other country. Although these species breed in New Zealand, many of them are true globe-trotters, spending much of their lives in other parts of the world. This means responsibility for their continued survival is shared by New Zealand and many other countries, most notably Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, South Africa, Namibia and Australia.

Albatrosses and petrels have learnt to follow fishing vessels for food, unaware of the risks of becoming caught on baited hooks or entangled in fishing gear. They may be accidentally caught by any vessel, anywhere that does not use seabird-safe fishing practices.

We aim to foster the widespread use of seabird-safe fishing practices by fleets operating in New Zealand and in other parts of the Southern Ocean.



ALEX EDGAR / NZ MINISTRY OF FISHERIES



MINISTRY OF FISHERIES
Te Haukei i ngā hiri a Tongarewa

"The work of Southern Seabird Solutions to date has emphasised the commitment of the different sectors involved. We welcome the momentum that Southern Seabird Solutions has generated. Several people involved in Southern Seabird Solutions recently attended the annual meeting of the Commission on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. It was particularly positive to see both government officials and industry members working constructively together at an international level to further refine measures to address seabird incidental mortality."



CHRIS HOWE / WWF

"WWF takes a collaborative approach to solving conservation issues around the world. The seabird by-catch issue is no exception, and we are delighted to be involved in the innovative approach taken by Southern Seabird Solutions. While seabird by-catch in New Zealand seas is still too high, a number of fishing companies are making excellent progress towards reducing the numbers of birds caught. Leadership by the companies involved in Southern Seabird Solutions is an important part of securing increased uptake of mitigation measures across the whole New Zealand fleet. This in turn adds considerable weight to the efforts by Southern Seabird Solutions to address threats to seabirds outside the New Zealand zone.

Through our marine programme here and our international network, WWF looks forward to playing an active part in Southern Seabird Solutions."





This view from the stern looking aft shows how the tori line's red streamers show up better during the day. Note the tori line is set well over to starboard. This helps keep the streamers flying directly over the baited hooks while setting with a strong cross wind.

Once set, the tori line can be adjusted from the wheelhouse to ensure the line is positioned directly above the baited hooks in all weather conditions. The winch drum holds 500m of 6mm line - enough for two bird lines if one is accidentally lost. This winch was designed and built seven years ago and has been modified several times since its initial installation

The hydraulic tori line winch is electrically operated with a wandering remote control. A new tori line can be put together in less than 15 minutes. Trained crewmen are designated and responsible for tori line maintenance.



The crewman (Sione Peti) has the winch control in one hand while he removes the streamers with the other as the tori line is set or retrieved. The streamers are stowed close to the operators working position. With an easy to operate system and a no smoking inside policy, there is no shortage of volunteers to operate the tori line winch. At times there are too many volunteers and the job has to be rotated so everyone gets a chance to stretch their legs.

San Aotea II

A vessel must have and use a range of mitigation techniques and keep developing and fine-tuning them daily, says John Bennett, skipper of the San Aotea II.

The seabird mitigation measures on San Aotea II have been developed and fine-tuned over the years to meet the fishing style of this vessel. John believes the single biggest mitigation device is a 'can do' attitude.

Over the years, he and the crew have developed an efficient practical system that works. This includes:

- A positive attitude toward a worldwide problem and a belief that their contributions make a difference.
- Night-setting of fishing gear
- Offal retention at all times.
- A mechanical tori line system that is easy to operate, is not a chore and works!
- The boom and bridal system that allows the tori line to be adjusted at the push of a button from the bridge or stern deck.
- A line jiggler and gas sound cannon operated from the bridge.
- A line weighting system that is safe and effective.
- The weight transfer chute, to transport line weights from the hauling room 30 metres to the baiting machine at the stern.
- A dedicated crew with many years of experience who

will anticipate when and where seabirds can be a problem.

- The will to pass our knowledge on to others.

San Aotea II has operated in the Ross Sea for the last 5 years. "Complying with strict CCAMLR regulations has helped us gain a healthy respect for environmental management," says John. "Our operation is now ISO 14001 compliant. This level of compliance requires us to document all of our operational activities from waste management to crew training, fuel and fishing gear usage and general activity - including seabird mitigation."



The San Aotea II



The weight transfer chute transfers 5.5kg weights 30m from the hauling room to the baiting machine at the stern. Water pressure is used to force the weights aft. A timer controls the amount of water used per weight and there are no valves to open and close. Weights arrive at the stern and are automatically stowed in any one of three locations. It takes approximately 170 x 5.5kg weights to fill a 44-gallon drum (about 930 kg). To set 20,000 hooks in the Ross Sea and achieve a 0.3 metre sink rate it requires around 3.8 ton of weight to be moved about the ship each day.

For the Birds

John Bennett has been fishing for more than twenty-five years – the last ten with Sanford Ltd. He loves fishing. And he isn't comfortable with a cavalier approach to the issue of seabird deaths resulting from fishing methods.

"I don't like catching birds. I don't like killing anything unnecessarily. I think everyone's an environmentalist at heart," he says. A fairly revealing statement about this man's values. Particularly when his livelihood is dependent on a form of fishing that has, in the past, resulted in a considerable number of seabird deaths. But values are only values if you are prepared to do what it takes to keep them. Surprisingly, incorporating seabird mitigation techniques into the standard processes of his longline fishing vessel have not rocked the boat at all and John has achieved a significant 'buy in' to the concept – and the values around them - from the company and his crew.

"We now have a crew that think about environmental problems and react accordingly, without being told," he says. "Seabird mitigation isn't a dirty word, instead it's viewed as another challenge in our daily routine. It's something that's talked about all the time.

It's clear that support from his crew comes partly from a sense of ownership of the issue and the knowledge that they have an input into the process. John has more than imparted his passion and experience; he has demonstrated a willingness to adopt other's ideas.

"At times, the most bizarre ideas from the crew turn out to be some of the easiest and efficient methods to operate. It's very important that their ideas and suggestions are taken seriously as they're usually the ones who need to be motivated. If it's their idea they'll think about it and develop it until it works."

JOHN BENNETT / SANFORD LTD

"There is no single solution to seabird mitigation as each species, in different areas, behaves differently at various times of the day and year. It's important to recognise and understand this."



Brigitte Bardot, Longlining and Solander Fisheries.

It's a riddle – what do these three have in common?

Well, seabird mitigation, actually. Solander Fisheries has had a proactive approach to reducing bird catch as one of its key values since 1992, reflecting the increasing awareness in the industry today.

There is no lack of commitment to the issue, says Charles Hufflett, a director of Solander Fisheries. Solander was recording bird catch on a daily basis from 1995 and towing tori lines was standard for the company long before it became mandatory in 1993.

"We were involved in seabird mitigation years before it became the cause celebre that it is today. We've committed a lot of financial and physical resources to it – some of them successful, others with quite a bit of promise."

Of course, there have been some spectacularly expensive failures, as well – not least the 'Brigitte Bardot' laser gun. The French sex kitten of the 60s may seem a long way from tuna fishing in the wild seas of the Southern Ocean, but her animal rights lobby group, The Brigitte Bardot Foundation, had devised a laser gun to discourage pigeons from nesting in belfries that appeared to have potential for fishing vessels.

"The theory was that if you pointed the laser at a birds head, the light would discourage them and send them packing," said Charles. "We trialled a very expensive marinised version."

Unfortunately, French pigeons must be more sensitive than hardy southern seabirds, as the laser had no effect whatsoever. Tom Mayo, skipper of the Daniel Solander, suggested that paper darts would have been more effective.

The Daniel Solander has an almost legendary status in the industry regarding its seabird by-catch record.

"There are a lot of vessels out there with increasingly good records. But we all keep a pretty close eye on each other and how well we're doing. It's a friendly competition," says Tom.

The 'competition' is part of a self-policing peer control that is, in Tom's opinion, a significant factor in the reduction of seabird deaths across the industry.

"You're always conscious of what your numbers are. We

have a Code of Practice that requires total disclosure – so if you've had a really bad run, you're heading back into port knowing that the other guys are never going to let you live it down. It's a bad feeling – and I have to admit that there've been a few cowboys out there who really weren't up to it with regard to their methods and attitudes towards seabird by-catch. But it hasn't taken that long for the ribbing they get to knock them into line. Believe me, you just don't want to come home when everybody's going to know that you caught a lot of birds!"

Tom adds that it's not just counting how many birds and what species, but he also looks for the reasons that may have brought on the catch.

"If we can isolate the conditions that contribute to a bird catch, then we are better armed to prevent it and determine the best method."

Trialling new mitigation techniques has become routine for the Daniel Solander. Currently, the vessel sports three tori lines, three sonic guns and a shotgun for firing star blasts.

"The sonic guns are mounted on the stern deck and we use two regularly, keeping the third as a back-up," says Tom. "They're similar to those used on vineyards, but bigger. They're different sizes and we usually run one on a two minute cycle and the other on a three minute cycle, so that the birds don't become too familiar with the routine."

The imported star shells that Tom fires from a shotgun are propelled around 60 to 70 metres before exploding with a loud bang and a firecracker type flash. These have proved very effective – but require a firearms licence to use and experience with a shotgun. It also needs a dedicated crewmember for the time it's being used. Tom fires one shell every ten minutes during setting (approximately every 0.6-0.7 of a mile).

Other methods trialled have included the hose, an underwater setting tube, an underwater setting capsule and a line weighting comparison. "It's been great to have Solander Fisheries so willing to trial prototypes on their vessel," says Janice Molloy, Species Protection Officer with the Department of Conservation. "Their vessel is one of the largest in the tuna fleet and this has meant that the methods have been trialled in the roughest of conditions. It's given us a clear direction as to what needs to be refined."

Charles and Tom report 'varying' degrees of success of the prototypes. And Solander's experiences have been significant to the advancement of methods that will reduce bird deaths. It has to be suitable for the vessel - and every vessel is different - and it needs to withstand 365 days a year in all weather conditions, they say.

Unfortunately, the propeller was prone to pick up the line and the nozzles tangled as well. It was expensive to have - around \$35,000 - and to operate. Ultimately, it was not effective. The birds weren't overly scared of it, says Tom.

One of the most promising methods that the Daniel Solander has trialled is blue dyed bait. Tom is keen to test it further.

"This was originally an Hawaiian idea, where they dyed the bait blue because the fish were more attracted to

it, but discovered that the birds don't seem to notice it. We've tested it once on its own and it seemed to work pretty well. But we caught one bird, so we immediately proceeded with our normal methods. I'd like to test it again."

Solander Fisheries has trialled a new method virtually every year since 1995.

The tori lines have taken some time to develop and Tom says that they are still working towards the ideal tori line for each vessel. It's not all management and skippers, he says, the crew also plays a very important part.

"It's a challenge to find the solutions," says Tom. "There've been some good ideas. All you need to cover is the 300 metres behind the boat and 10 metres on either side of it."



The Daniel Solander has an almost legendary status in the industry regarding its seabird by-catch record.

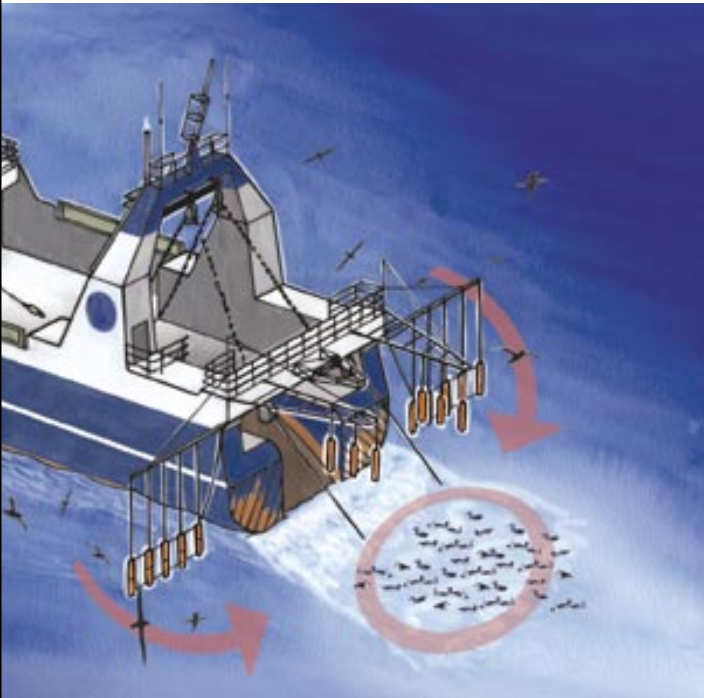
CHARLES HUFFLETT / SOLANDER FISHERIES

"We've committed a lot of financial and physical resources to seabird mitigation - some of them successful, others with quite a bit of promise."



SOLANDER

Baffling Birds Brings Benefits



HOW IT WORKS - The problems with birds and deep-sea trawlers are twofold: birds are sometimes so engrossed with looking for scraps in the vessel's wake that they get run over by the trawl warps; they can also be so caught up with what is going on down below them that they don't notice the warps and fly right into them.

The length of the Baffler arms increases birds' perception of the vessel's size, so keeping them away from the sides and stern of the vessel and out of harms way.

The Brady Bird Baffler is exactly what it sounds like – a seabird mitigation system for trawlers that confuses and perturbs seabirds, created by scientific observer Keith Brady. The Baffler has recently been tested on two trawlers, the San Venturer and the Independent I, with promising results.

Keith – a sucker for challenges – started cogitating the issue of seabird mitigation for trawlers nearly eight years ago.

"It all started in a bar in Nelson," he says. "A bunch of industry people were sitting around talking about the seabird mortality problem and wondering what could be done. I like a puzzle and it really tweaked my interest."

Keith came up with the concept in 1996, began work on the prototype in 1999 and sea-trialled it the following year. It was at this point that it gained its alliterative name. "I had to fill in a form during the sea trial," says Keith, "and so with only a few minutes to think about it, I jotted down the name 'Brady Bird Baffler'. It seems to have stuck, he laughs."

The prototype was trialled on the Tomi 86 and proved more effective than its inventor had hoped for – but has undergone some modification nonetheless.

"The concept is still the same, but we've re-developed it using bird-friendly materials. It's been a real challenge to find materials that were both bird-friendly but also tough enough to withstand the kind of conditions that the baffler may be used in."

Keith used orange plastic road cones in the prototype, but he found that while they might stand up to a Mack truck, they were not hardy enough for a foul-tempered sea. Not many people understand how powerful the weather and the sea can be, he says. The challenge for Keith was to create something that would work, be bird-friendly and user-friendly.

"It has to be easy to use or it won't get used," he says.

"Life is hard and busy on a trawler, and the Baffler had to be something you could put out and forget, then bring in again with ease. We've achieved that. It takes moments to set it and you just simply wind it back in on a hand winch when you've finished. You look at it out there and it doesn't look much, really. But it's the old story ... simple is the best way to go."

The secret to the Baffler's success lies in Keith's powers of observation and knowledge of seabird behaviour. The design plays on the behavioural patterns of seabirds and preys on their habits, chiefly their dislike of flying under things or having something over them. It doesn't actually scare birds, but confuses and – yes, baffles – them so that they give it a wide berth.

Trials so far indicate that the constant motion of the Baffler will ensure that the birds do not become familiar with the Baffler.

Skippers wanted something that was easy, worked and was safe. A safety system has been incorporated into the design ensuring that the winch and arms can support a man's weight if need be.

The Brady Bird Baffler was developed and later patented by Keith. It has been given initial Department of Conservation approval and is currently undergoing further sea trials.

One vessel trialling the Baffler is the San Venturer. Skipper Dave Webb is very positive about the system even though it is still in the developmental stages.

"It's stood up to some pretty rough weather conditions and part of the challenge for Keith was to create a system that was sturdy enough without being cumbersome. He's done that."

The San Venturer will be fine-tuning the Baffler for the vessel, but Dave says these will be only slight adjustments.

"The straps tend to lift out of the water when the boat rolls and some of the smaller birds, who are very wary of the shimmering of the straps when they're down to the water, will fly under them when they lift. That's just a case of us getting them the right length for our vessel."

Recently a buyer from Europe was aboard the San Venturer and Dave says that he was taken with the Baffler and its effectiveness.

"They're very interested in the whole aspect of fishing, including seabird mitigation and he was very impressed with our efforts and how well it was working."

Dave is keen to see how effective the Baffler is when they get to fisheries which are inhabited by more of the larger birds.

"We don't generally have a big issue with seabird mortality in our kind of fishing, but it's really important to do our bit and minimise what risk there is. I'm looking out the window right now and the birds - big and small - really keep away from it. It looks like a real go-er."



Independent 1



San Venturer

STEVE BISHOP / SEALORD GROUP

"Unfortunately, good fishing practices and bird death reduction in New Zealand could mean nothing if the issue is not addressed in other Southern Ocean fisheries."



How Deep can they Dive?

Scientists Paul Sagar and Henri Weimerskirch experimented to find out how deep the titi, or sooty shearwater can dive by attaching small capillary tubes to the backs of some birds breeding on The Snares. The tubes' insides were coated with soluble powder and one end was sealed. This meant that the deeper the birds dived the more water was forced up the tube, dissolving the powder.

When the titi returned to land after a trip the tubes were removed and the maximum depth the bird had reached calculated from the powder mark. Amazingly, one bird was found to have reached 67 metres. On average, the maximum depth reached by the titi was 38 metres.

Albatrosses are less proficient divers. The snowy wandering albatross can barely reach a metre, while

black-browed albatrosses can reach closer to 5 metres. The best known diver amongst the albatrosses seems to be the light mantled sooty albatross, which can reach 12 metres.

An important related question for fishers and conservationists is how deep seabirds will dive to chase a baited hook. A skipper in the northern tuna fleet, Dave Kellian, conducted an experiment from his vessel in a bid to find out. He encouraged a group of hungry flesh-footed shearwaters and black petrels in behind his vessel, and released a bag of pilchards at increasing depths. The seabirds readily dived to 8 metres to take the pilchards, but once the pilchards were released at 10 metres the birds did not bother to retrieve them. Dave conducted his experiment during the daytime. Presumably under low light conditions or at night these species will be less likely to dive to these depths.



PHOTO: Kim Westerskov

Tuna Fisher on a Mission

It's fair to say Dave Kellian is a man on a mission. A tuna fisher himself, he has spent the past 12 months as a seabird/fisheries advisory officer, talking with skippers and crew in New Zealand's northern domestic tuna fleet about ways to reduce the risk of accidentally catching seabirds as they go about catching tuna.

The contract job, funded by the Department of Conservation (DOC), was suggested by the fishing industry as a good investment for the Conservation Services Levy.

Dave says ongoing support from the fishing industry has been vital to the success of the position. From July last year, he visited 114 vessels from Mangonui to Bluff and found people receptive to his message. "Guys care about the birds; the will not to catch them is entrenched in just about everyone. They're getting the message from the industry, from TV, they know it's the way of the future. One skipper was telling me about a albatross they caught, and one of his crew began crying. These guys don't want to catch birds."

Dave spent his first two months with skippers who have developed seabird-friendly techniques, looking for best practice ideas to pass on to others. "The skippers that have been around for a long time have a high degree of awareness, and the new ones are keen to learn."

One of the best practices Dave discovered was Auckland skipper Laurie Hill's design for a bird scaring 'tori' line. Along with night setting, tori lines have been the most

common technique used to reduce seabird by-catch and, since 1993, New Zealand has required all pelagic tuna fishing vessels to carry one at all times. Sea tests showed Laurie's tori line design was much more visible, active and effective than any other design. It was so good in fact, that Dave built 120 and distributed them to every vessel involved in the study, encouraging skippers to make further improvements to meet their own vessels' specifications.

Dave says this flexibility should lead to new best practices, and is happy to report this is already happening. About six months into his contract he came across the trick of attaching chemical light sticks on to the vertical streamers to make them even more visible to birds at night time, and a few skippers are now using green-dyed squid to catch fewer seabirds and more tuna.



BRENT MARSHALL / MOANA PACIFIC FISHERIES

"This is an issue that deserves the full attention of those who can contribute and solve the unintentional capture of seabirds. The New Zealand fishing industry is committed to that outcome."



Best Practice in Ling Longlining

It rolls off the tongue – the Ling Longline Code of Practice – but this is more than just a pretty name. Hopes are high that the code will make a huge difference in reducing the number of seabirds caught and killed in the ling longline fishery.

Instigator and advocate, Malcolm McNeill, says the code of practice pulls together current industry best practice, and spells out minimum standards for the skippers to follow. “Boats are now expected to work to these standards all of the time. It’s a beginning point that everyone can achieve now, and we expect to improve on the code over time.”

Malcolm, vessel manager for Sealord Group, is chair of the ling longline working group which initiated the code. This group came together in early 2001 after growing concerns about the number of seabirds caught by that fishery. He decided to bring people from the industry together to pool ideas, and the code of practice arose from that.

Diving species are most affected by the demersal ling longliners, particularly the white-chinned petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*) and the grey petrel (*P. cinerea*). White-chinned petrels are classified as vulnerable, while too little is known about the grey petrel to assign it a ranking.

Malcolm says both species can dive up to 50 metres, and chase the baits on their way down to the longline soak depths of between 300 and 700 metres.

While there is not yet enough information about the seabird species to know exactly why some trips by the ling boats catch none and others catch too many, it seems that catches relate to where and how they fish. Ling longliners fish the Chatham Rise and deep sea areas to south and west of there, round to Puysegur Bank off the south-west coast of New Zealand. And they use 'autoline' systems to shoot up to 30,000 baited hooks a day.

Many interests have been involved in developing the code. Representatives from each boat are there, along with, DoC, fishing gear suppliers, the Seafood Industry Council, MFish and NIWA.

Involving others gives an insight into how the government agencies are thinking, while the fishing gear suppliers gain an understanding of the issues fishers face so they

can come up with ideas for new gear, Malcolm says. One supplier has put finance into helping with trials.

While not mandatory, and not enforceable, following the code is non-discretionary for anyone who signs up - and all five fishing companies have. Malcolm says there is a lot of peer pressure. “It behooves the industry to take action before it is forced on them. One of the biggest drivers is the government jumping up and down.”

One mitigation measure employed by skippers is weighting the lines to make them sink more quickly. But weights can be an issue. At five to six kilograms each, skippers are concerned about the extra tonnage they have to carry, when there is no guarantee they will meet seabirds on any one trip. Crew safety can also be a concern, if the heavy weights come back over the side too fast during the haul.

These issues may be helped by a trial involving Janas, a boat owned by New Zealand Longline, a Sealord and Amaltal joint-venture company. The company has just won an \$11,000 scholarship to trial an integrated weighted line.

Other mitigation measures in the code include:

- Using the seabird scaring device, tori lines, 100 per cent during the set, not just when birds are around;
- No offal going over the side during setting; and
- Reducing the amount of light shone during night sets, so that birds are not attracted.

The code also says seabirds false-hooked on the haul must be released alive, and that every capture of a seabird is recorded, with the species identified – honesty, Malcolm says, is the best policy.

As well, all boats carry information explaining the code, and a training package has been put together for crew, with information about seabird species and the importance of stopping their capture.

How will they know if it's working? “Although there's not full observer coverage in the fleet, we should see a reduction in the numbers of seabirds caught on the Janas, which does carry an observer 100 per cent of the time,” he says.

Although it is early days, Malcolm is already looking at

the next steps. "While we have to get it up and working, and vessels and crews have to be happy that it's workable, the aim is to keep improving the code over time." The industry will keep trialling new fishing methods that could reduce the incidental capture of seabirds.

It will then be introduced to skippers of smaller boats that fish for ling as part of their portfolio. Eight are on the books, but Malcolm thinks there may be more. "We need to talk with small boat owners to sort out what issues small boats face. The code has been written for auto-liners so we need to make sure it is effective for the small boats as well."

The National Plan of Action on seabirds is also likely to influence the ling longline code. This may be released for discussion in December 2002.

Hopes are to eventually take the code of practice to the world, as seabird issues become ever bigger on the international stage. This will be raised at November's international forum of industry and non-government organisations (International Fishers' Forum). And there is potential for exchanges, with New Zealand skippers going to problem areas overseas and talking with fishers there about the issues and what they can do.

The need for research into seabird species has also been raised. "The code is a beginning, but everyone is clear that there's a lot more work to be done."



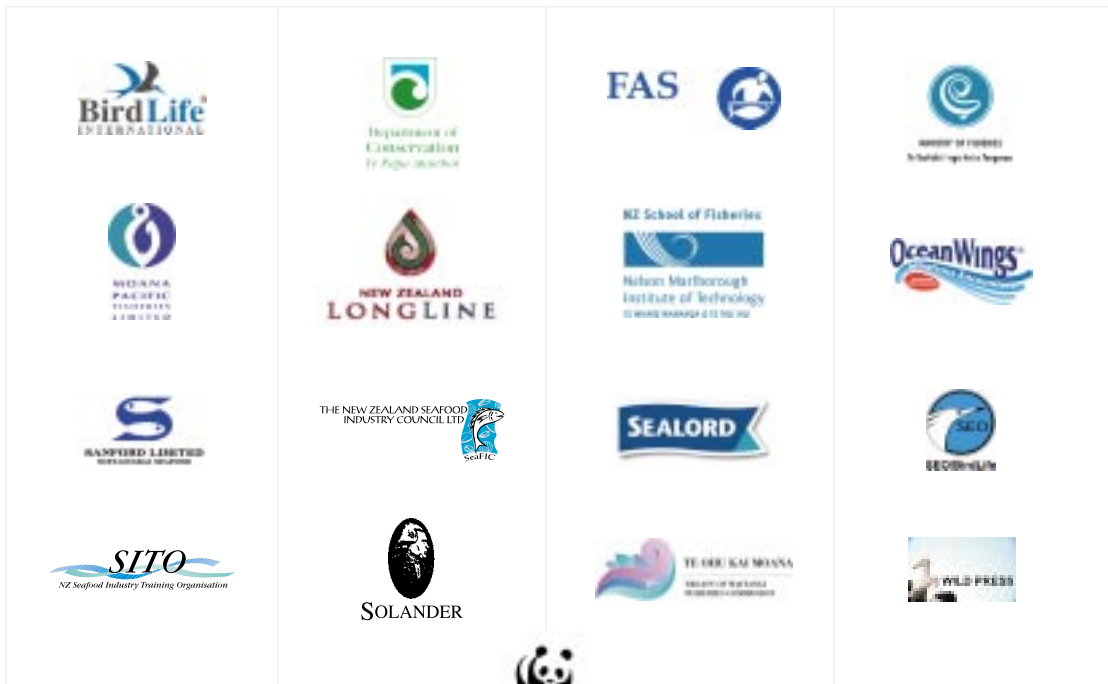
MALCOLM McNEILL / NZ LONGLINE

"Auto-line vessels are now expected to work to these standards all of the time. It's a beginning point that everyone can achieve now, and we expect to improve on the code over time."



CARLES CARBONERAS / BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL

"As a seabird conservation professional, what I praise most in Southern Seabird Solutions is the strong commitment of all its members. From industry to government, and from NGOs to research specialists, everyone is putting everything they can into minimising seabird mortality and changing the fate of albatrosses and petrels. BirdLife International is happy to be part of Southern Seabird Solutions and glad to see this unanimous commitment happening precisely in New Zealand, the albatross capital of the world. We hope to reproduce similar initiatives in places like South America, where many seabirds breeding in New Zealand also live."



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