

Streamer Line: Streamer lines protect baited fishing gear during the set from bird attacks. The span of the line and streamers lifted off the water (aerial extent) scares birds away from baited hooks. The height of the attachment point above the water (mast, boom, poles) and the amount of drag created by a towed device (no-skid buoy with 10 pounds of weight recommended) determine the aerial extent. The aerial extent should span the distance astern that birds have access to baits—until baits reach a depth of 6 feet. Free streamer lines are available to West Coast longliners (see inside).

Join in Collaborative Research

We're looking for fishermen partners to host and help design research into practical and effective ways to prevent albatross deaths, especially on smaller vessels in the West Coast longline fleet. Our approach will be to adapt streamer lines, which have proven effective in Alaska and other longline fisheries, to the various longline gear configurations used by the West Coast fishery. We will compare the effectiveness of one versus two streamer lines on smaller vessels and evaluate streamer-line designs and performance standards on larger vessels. We will also evaluate the new seabird-bycatch avoidance requirement for larger vessels that takes effect in 2014. And we will explore new mitigation approaches proposed by host fishermen. Those that prove effective and practical will be developed into recommendations, in consultation with fishing-industry partners and other stakeholders, for consideration as management options by NMFS and the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

Tell Us About Your Gear and Vessel, and Help Shape the Research

Does the risk posed to birds and to streamer-line effectiveness vary by longline configuration (weighted vs. unweighted, with or without floats, etc.) and/or longline fishing method (tub, skate-bottom, auto-bait, snap-on, etc.)? These questions could prove important, as longline configurations and methods vary considerably in the West Coast fishery. As a first step toward answering them, we're surveying sablefish limited-entry quota holders to determine the most common gear configurations and vessel capabilities. This information will be used to shape the research program and management recommendations.

Please fill out this brief survey online at seabirdbycatch.washington.edu, or mail it to the address below.

Host Research on Your Vessel

The research will be staged on cooperating longline vessels catching sablefish in the 2014 fishing season. Host vessels will be compensated for each day they fish with researchers aboard. The research program will draw heavily on the experience and expertise of host captains and crews. See seabirdbycatch.washington.edu for details on hosting research on your vessel.

Please indicate your interest in hosting research on the vessel survey form.

For More

For the most up-to-date information on non-regulatory aspects of seabird bycatch, see seabirdbycatch.washington.edu or contact Ed Melvin, Washington Sea Grant, 206.543.9968 or edmelvin@uw.edu.

What To Do if You Hook an Albatross

- Report any injured, sick, or dead short-tailed albatross to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service at 541.867.4558 or 503.231.6179. USFWS will tell you how to handle it.
- Immediately freeze any short-tailed albatross found dead. If freezing is not available, keep it as cold as possible.
- Label it with vessel name, latitude and longitude where hooked, and the numbers and colors of any leg bands. Leg bands must be left attached
- Surrender it as soon as possible, alive or dead, as directed by USFWS. Fisheries observers or, if no observer is on board, boat captains are responsible for carrying out these instructions.



University of Washington
3716 Brooklyn Ave. N.E.
Seattle, WA 98105-6716
wsg.washington.edu

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Albatross Protection and West Coast Groundfish Fisheries

What Fishermen Should Know



Changes Are Coming

The short-tailed albatross is an endangered species, with fewer than 4,000 found in the North Pacific. As a result, recent management actions call for West Coast groundfish fisheries to help protect these birds. These fisheries, including all gear types, can take no more than two short-tailed albatross in a two-year period. Fishermen should also avoid catching the more common black-footed albatross, because their bycatch numbers will factor into management policy.

Starting this year, larger non-tribal longline vessels that are 55 feet or longer will be required to use streamer lines to keep seabirds away from their bait. For details see <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/westcoast.htm>. Longline vessels under 55 feet and tribal vessels are encouraged but not required to use streamer lines. By preventing seabird interactions now, fishermen can avoid additional restrictions in the future.



What You Can Do

Scientists at Washington Sea Grant and Oregon State University are researching ways to prevent seabird bycatch and working to share existing information and the information they develop with the West Coast longline fleet. We want to equip longline fishermen with practical tools and information to avoid catching albatrosses.

Save Birds, Save Bait: How to Prevent Seabird Interactions With Longlines

These simple measures will reduce seabird bycatch and costly bait loss:

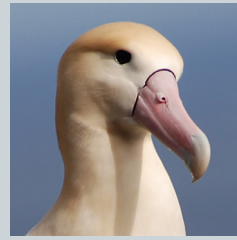
- Use streamer lines. Two lines – one on either side of a sinking longline – are more effective than one. Lifting the streamers above the water is key to scaring away birds. Maximize the aerial extent of streamers by attaching them high on the vessel and affixing a float and weight to the end to create drag.
- Sink hooks as quickly as possible by making lines less buoyant, typically by adding weight. Slowing the setting speed shrinks the distance the streamer lines must protect.
- Set gear at night when seabirds are less active and less able to locate baited hooks.
- Manage discharged offal and bait to avoid attracting seabirds. Remove hooks before discharging. Avoid discharges while setting lines if possible; otherwise, direct them to draw birds away from sinking hooks. When hauling in lines, discharge aft of the hauling station or on the other side of the vessel.

Attend Albatross-Bycatch Avoidance Training

Training in the use of streamer lines and other methods to avoid seabird bycatch will be offered at Newport, Charleston and Port Orford the first week of March 2014; Westport and Astoria the third week of March; at Eureka and Fort Bragg the first week of April; and at other ports TBD. See seabirdbycatch.washington.edu for details on these meetings, the research program, albatrosses, seabird bycatch prevention, and more.

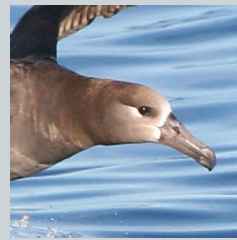
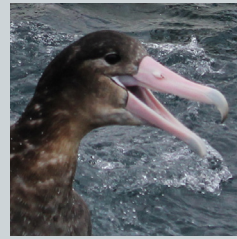
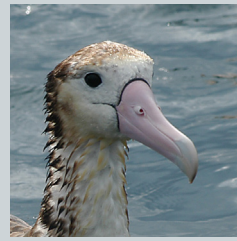
Get Free Streamer Lines

Free streamer lines are available from LFS, 206.789.8110, seattle@lfsinc.com, or starting March 1 at Englund Marine Supply outlets.



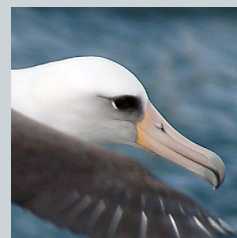
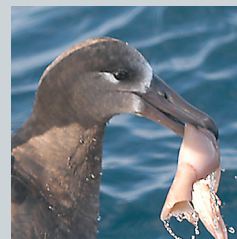
Endangered short-tailed albatross:

Large size and big, bright, bubble-gum-pink bills identify these birds, which are almost twice the size of other North Pacific albatrosses. Head and body feathers are initially dark brown. As they age, short-tailed albatross slowly acquire white plumage, but older, light-colored birds are very rare in this region. Younger, darker birds can be mistaken for the more common black-footed albatross.



Black-footed albatross:

Head and body feathers are dark brown. Bills are typically dark with a white band of feathers at the base. As the birds age, this white band expands and the feathers near the tail whiten.



Laysan albatross:

Head and body are mostly white with dark wings, dark eye patches, and pale bill. Laysan albatross are seen less often than black-footed albatross in this region.

Take the test. Identify the albatrosses on this page and the cover.

This page, top left, clockwise: Short-tailed (adult); Black-footed; Laysan; Short-tailed (young). Cover: Among the smaller Northern Fulmars, top: three Laysan, Short-tailed (bottom) and Black-footed Albatrosses.

