

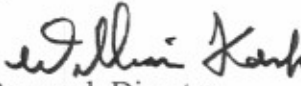


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

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FEB 26 2010

MEMORANDUM TO: Doug Mecum, Acting Administrator,
Alaska Region (AKR)

FROM:  Douglas P. DeMaster, Science and Research Director,
Alaska Region (AKC)

SUBJECT: Use of seabird avoidance measures on observed groundfish
longline vessels during 2007 and 2008

In response to a non-discretionary requirement under the short-tailed albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) biological opinion, your staff requested that the AFSC provide annual summaries of seabird avoidance measures used on observed longline (hook-and-line) vessels. Attached are the summaries for the 2007 and 2008 fishing seasons. Currently, all vessels carrying an observer are required to meet regulations requiring vessels to deploy paired streamer lines except under conditions of high winds (see table footnote).

As other priorities and required duties allow, North Pacific Groundfish Observers spot-check as many longline sets as possible while they are on board. Observers record whether paired, single, or no streamer lines were deployed. If they feel the vessel is not in compliance with regulations, they note the circumstances and fill out an affidavit upon their return. Observers are directed to first work with the vessel captain to address apparent lapses in compliance whenever possible. All affidavits are forwarded to the NMFS Alaska Enforcement Division for processing. There were six affidavits filed for non-compliance with required seabird avoidance measures in 2007 and two in 2008. A previous report indicated there were 13 affidavits filed in 2006 on lack of seabird mitigation gear. Continuing work with observer logbooks after that memo was written has changed this number to 16 for 2006.

The attached table describes the results of observer spot-checks for required seabird avoidance measures. Please contact Shannon Fitzgerald of my staff at (206) 526-4553, if you have any questions.

cc: Balogh – USFWS
Rivera – F/AKR
Heltzel – North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
Adams – Alaska Enforcement Division
Lagerway – Alaska Enforcement Division
Hardesty-Norris – American Bird Conservancy
Melvin – Washington Sea Grant Program
Fitzgerald – F/AKC
Loefflad – F/AKC



Summary of seabird avoidance measures used in 2007 and 2008 by demersal groundfish longline catcher-processor (CP) and catcher (CV) vessels in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI), and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Regions of Alaskan waters¹. Information was collected by NMFS-Certified groundfish observers while on board vessels². Observers spot-checked for avoidance gear during sets but did not monitor the entire setting process.

Region	Vessel Type	2007				Use of Streamer Lines in Examined Sets			
		Total Sets	Sets not checked	Sets Checked	% sets checked	Paired Steamer	Single Streamers	No Streamers	% Paired or Single
BSAI	CV	29	7	22	75.9	16	6	0	100
BSAI	CP	10,287	3,665	6,622	64.4	6,199	347	76	98.9
GOA	CV	927	195	732	79.0	597	105	30	95.9
GOA	CP	1,469	586	883	60.1	856	18	9	99.0
Total		12,712	4,453	8,259	65.0	7,668	476	115	98.6

Region	Vessel Type	2008				Use of Streamer Lines in Examined Sets			
		Total Sets	Sets not checked	Sets Checked	% sets checked	Paired Steamer	Single Streamers	No Streamers	% Paired or Single
BSAI	CV	61	6	55	90.2	55	0	0	100
BSAI	CP	13,649	4,231	9,418	69.0	8,850	205	363	96.1
GOA	CV	907	167	740	81.6	579	143	18	97.6
GOA	CP	1,197	509	688	57.5	646	20	22	96.8
Total		15,814	4,913	10,901	68.9	10,130	368	403	96.3

¹ Current regulations require all demersal longline vessels greater than 55 feet length overall to deploy a paired streamer line in wind speeds up to 30 knots. A single streamer line can be used in wind speeds in excess of 30 knots and no streamer lines are required when wind speeds exceed 45 knots.

² Groundfish demersal longline vessels from 60 to 124 feet length overall must carry an observer for 30% of fishing days within each calendar quarter; greater than 124 feet must have an observer on board for 100% of fishing days. Vessels less than 60 feet have no observer requirements. Some groundfish vessels which participate in the Community Development Quota Program carry 2 observers.