



BELIZE HIGH SEAS FISHING VESSEL CIRCULAR



FVC-12/05

Issued: 24th September 2012

Rev:

Revision Date:

TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, CHARTERERS, MASTER AND CREW, DEPUTY REGISTRARS AND RESIDENT AGENTS

SUBJECT: INCIDENTAL BYCATCH OF SEABIRDS IN LONGLINE FISHERIES

Reference: Issued in accordance with Part II 3 (1)(f) and Part VII 19(1)(2) of the Belize High Seas Fishing Act, 2003

BACKGROUND:

Concerned that some species of seabirds, notably some albatrosses and petrels are threatened with global extinction we have acknowledged the need to strengthen mechanisms to protect endangered seabirds in the Atlantic Ocean consistent with the recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT)

It is the responsibility of the flag State to ensure that our long line vessels operating in the ICCAT area are utilizing the relevant mitigation measures to ensure the reduction of incidentally caught seabirds and that such data are recorded and reported annually.

APPLICATION

1. In the area south of 25 degrees south latitude, operators shall ensure that all longline vessels utilize at least two of the mitigation measures in Table 1.
2. In the Mediterranean, mitigation measures in Table 1 should be implemented on voluntary basis.
3. Mitigation measures used pursuant to 3.1 above shall conform to the minimum technical standards for the measures as shown in **Table 1**.
4. The design and deployment for bird scaring lines should also meet the additional specifications (provided in **Annex 1**.)
5. All vessels fishing south of 20°S shall carry and use bird-scaring lines (tori poles):
 - Tori poles shall be used in consideration of the suggested tori pole design and deployment guidelines (provided for in **Annex 2**);
 - Tori lines are to be deployed prior to longlines entering the water at all times south of

20°S;

- Where practical, vessels are encouraged to use a second tori pole and bird-scaring line at times of high bird abundance or activity;
- Back-up tori lines shall be carried by all vessels and be ready for immediate use.

6. Longline vessels targeting swordfish using monofilament longline gear may be exempted from the requirements of 3.5 above, on condition that these vessels set their longlines during the night, with night being defined as the period between nautical dusk/dawn as referenced in the nautical dusk/dawn almanac for the geographical position fished. In addition, these vessels are required to use a minimum swivel weight of 60g placed not more than 3m from the hook to achieve optimum sink rates.

ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

Ship owners and/or operators are urged to comply with the conditions of this circular by the submission of photographic evidence depicting the mitigation measures employed on their vessels.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS NOTICE

This Fishing Vessel Circular is to be implemented with immediate effect and shall remain in force until further notification by the Belize Administration.

Any queries related to this Circular should be directed to:

International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize
Fishing Vessels Manager
Tel: 501-223-5026/5031/5047
Email: immarbe@btl.net

Belize Fisheries Department
Fisheries Administrator
Tel: 501-223-2187
fisheries_department@fisheries.gov.bz