

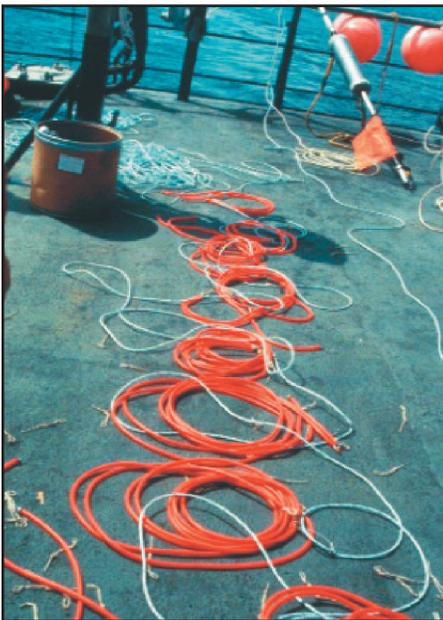


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Threatened and Endangered Species

## *Cooperative Efforts to Conserve Albatrosses and Other Seabirds in Alaska*

Commercial longliners throughout the Pacific accidentally hook thousands of seabirds each year. The Food and Agriculture Organization has identified seabird bycatch as a global problem. A collaborative effort to solve this problem has brought together some unlikely partners. In the past few years, commercial fishing organizations in Alaska have joined forces with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), independent fishermen, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), commercial fishing gear manufacturers, and the University of Washington Sea Grant Program (UW Sea Grant). This group is working together to minimize seabird bycatch, not only in Alaska, but around the world.



*A prototype streamer line lies on deck, ready for deployment. Deterrent devices like this may help troubled seabird populations if their use is adopted by the industry.*



*Two endangered short-tailed albatross perform a mating dance on Torishima Island in Japan. About 1600 of approximately 2000 of these birds nest on the slope of an active volcano. Government and Industry are working together to bring this bird back from the brink of extinction.*

Shortly after the first Alaskan longline vessel turned up a dead endangered short-tailed albatross on one of its hooks, the entire Alaska commercial longline fishing industry spearheaded efforts to minimize take of this, and other seabird species. At their urging, NMFS passed laws requiring the use of seabird avoidance measures while fishing Alaskan waters. With the passage of these laws, the need to know the relative effectiveness of different deterrent devices became instantly acute. In response, NMFS and the Service funded a 2-year study conducted by the UW Sea Grant program to evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of seabird avoidance measures.

The UW Sea Grant study is the most extensive and statistically rigorous seabird avoidance measure study of its kind. All commercial fisheries worldwide have been able to draw on the results of this research. UW Sea Grant's results show that paired streamer lines are a highly effective and inexpensive way to minimize seabird bycatch - reducing bycatch by 88-100%. Consequently, the Service, through its Endangered Species Private Landowner Incentive

Program, has provided over \$1 million worth of tori lines to Alaskan fishermen in cooperation with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission; the goal being paired tori lines effectively installed on every boat in the Alaskan longline fleet. The Service also funded the Alaska Marine Advisory program to develop tori lines for smaller vessels that couldn't effectively deploy the original tori line design.

The Service believes the partnership formed with the commercial fishing industry, other agencies, and individual scientists to conserve the endangered short-tailed albatross on the remote and treacherous high seas of Alaska makes good conservation sense.

*To learn more about this effort or to find out how you can obtain tori lines under this program, please contact Ann Rappoport or Greg Balogh of the Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 605 West 4th Avenue, Room G-61, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 or call 907/271-2888.*

