



CCSBT-CC/2410/20

Update on Seabird Project to Enhance Awareness of and Implementation of Seabird Measures

1. Summary

The Seabird Project is in full swing, with multiple workshops completed under elements 1-3, and additional workshops planned. Under Element 1 (skipper training), three workshops have been completed, one of the two South African trainings being delivered jointly with the International Sustainable Seafood Foundation, while a second joint skipper training workshop is planned for 17 October in Taiwan. Under Element 3 (EM), the project has commenced delivery of a series of bilateral engagements between Member administrations. These are initially capacity building and roadmapping exercises, but may include more tangible activities/developments as they unfold. Element 4 (risk assessment) is planned to commence after CC19. Members are thanked for their engagements with the project to date.

2. Introduction

The CCSBT Seabird Project commenced in February 2023 and is scheduled to terminate in early 2026. There has been much progress since the Secretariat last reported to this forum (CCSBT-CC/2308/17). Members are thanked for their engagement with the project to date, without which there would be no project.

To remind Members, the project aims to assist Members to meet existing obligations that relate to the recording of and reporting on interactions with seabirds and the use of bycatch mitigation measures. Funding is provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), via the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). FAO and GEF will evaluate the effectiveness of the project against the baselines provided in Annex 1. These are related to GEF's indicator 3.3E for the project.

Indicator 3.3E: *Demonstrated regulatory required compliance of CCSBT members with seabird bycatch mitigation measures, verified by data obtained from adequately trained observers, port inspections and/or a comparable minimum level of review of video footage collected using electronic monitoring, or other suitable measures of independent verification*

The project plan provides an integrated and holistic approach to assist Members to meet the stated ambition of the project, namely to be able to demonstrate that their fleets are using mandatory mitigation measures. The project will build capacity within industry and administrations to:

- Reach or exceed minimum standards;
- Support officials to strengthen data collection and MCS processes; and
- Evaluate seabird bycatch rates in global tuna longline fisheries.

Stakeholder Engagement

Supporting the improved implementation of seabird bycatch requires that fishing masters, captains and other industry representatives are engaged. This is detailed in Element 1, where industry can share experiences and knowledge on mitigation, as well as receive practical advice for how to meet existing obligations.

Building Capacity in Member Administrations

Elements 2 and 3 are aimed at building capacity within national administrations, specifically empowering officials to obtain harmonised and verified data on use of mitigation measures. The Secretariat has developed seabird-specific training for observers and compliance officers (inspectors, coast guard, etc.). The Secretariat also works closely with Member administrations to support inspector training (Element 2) as appropriate. Element 3 (Electronic Monitoring, EM) is aimed at building national capacity.

Global Bycatch Risk Assessment

Element 4 is the global bycatch risk assessment. A key, cross-cutting theme will be to facilitate inter-Member sharing of lesson, examine challenges in a confidential setting, and share updates. It is envisaged that these discussions may be facilitated in the margins of other meeting (e.g. future meetings of the CC or ERSWG).

3. Progress

Since CC18 (2023), there has been significant progress. Members received a comprehensive update at the June ERSWG meeting (CCSBT-ERS/2406/10). Therefore, this report will include all progress since CC18 but will focus on progress since June 2024.

The Executive Secretary and the Project Coordinator attended the Project Steering Committee meeting at FAO headquarters in Rome, 15-17 July 2024. FAO has encouraged projects to find synergies with sibling projects. In CCSBT-CC/2308/17, the Secretariat anticipated formalising such collaborations, which was achieved in July this year with the International Sustainable Seafood Foundation (ISSF). This allows CCSBT and ISSF to deliver training together, maximising the benefits to Members' skippers and other participants.

4. Detailed progress

Element 1:

Specific objective: Promote uptake and use of best practice seabird bycatch mitigation.

Element 1 training was delivered in Japan on 19 and 21 February and in South Africa on 9 and 10 July. In Japan, CCSBT and BirdLife International delivered one workshop, but over two days and in two locations. Details were reported in CCSBT-ERS/2406/10.

In South Africa, two skipper training workshops were delivered, to the tuna longline sector (9 July) and pole-and-line sector (10 July), with both workshops having >50 participants. The former was a joint ISSF-CCSBT workshop, whereas the latter was delivered by CCSBT with support from CapMarine¹.

¹ One of the transshipment observer service providers for the ICCAT and IOTC.

In both Japan and South Africa workshops, officials attended and contributed substantially. This is especially true for South Africa, where officials took the opportunity to have sectoral consultations including sharing updates to national procedures and provided training in the correct use of CCSBT Catch Documentation Scheme and related paperwork.

A second ISSF-CCSBT skipper training workshop is scheduled for 17 October 2024 in Taiwan. Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea have indicated that they have national skipper training processes with seabird experts, and will not request Secretariat training. The Secretariat reiterates its offer to provide training through the Seabird Project to Indonesia.

The educational infographics on seabird mitigation measures for distribution to fishers are available from the [CCSBT website](#).

Workshop materials are readily available in English and Japanese, on request.

Element 2:

Specific objective: Promote harmonised approaches to recording use of and inspecting mitigation measures at sea and in port.

New coursework material for Element 2 was developed, but used material developed for Element 1 training to ensure consistent, harmonised messaging. Contracted external experts (CapMarine) with extensive experience in developing and implementing training within the sector, including for MCS personnel and settings, are commended for their leading role in developing the content. In support of that, a highly experienced Japanese inspector who received CCSBT training in June expressly commended the course for delivering helpful, practical tools. The course clarifies the limitations of port inspection data, and how Members could best use such data.

No additional Inspector Training workshops have taken place since ERSWG 15 (CCSBT–ERS/2406/10), although a workshop is scheduled for 15 October in Taiwan. Members are encouraged to take advantage of the capacity building opportunity that this project provides. Members are reminded that the Seabird Project training is provided at no cost to Members.

Notably, the project’s explicit ambition, to create “harmonised approaches to recording...” will allow port state Members to conduct consistent inspections of foreign flagged vessels that offload SBT (and other catch) in their ports. Members are reminded of the mechanism for sharing port inspection information, Item 36, Annex B of the CCSBT Resolution for a Scheme for Minimum Standards for Inspection in Port. Materials for inspector training are readily available for Members, on request.

Element 3:

Specific objectives: 1) Provide Members with tools to report on compliance-related aspects with robust, independent data, and 2) Strengthen and enhance Members’ EM systems to align with CCSBT and other relevant RFMO rules, requirements, recommendations and ambitions.

The EM Inception Workshop was held in Canberra in early March 2024, and was reported in detail to ERSWG. In brief, arising from that workshop, Members that currently do not have a comprehensive national EM program requested capacity building and/or information exchanges with the administrations of the two Members that do have this – Australia and New Zealand. Australia and New Zealand are thanked for their willingness to share lessons learned and build capacity amongst other Members. The project will meet South Africa, the Republic of Korea, and Indonesia’s requests to the extent possible, initially through facilitating bilateral exchanges. Those initial exchanges are expected to produce roadmaps for further engagement. The Secretariat welcomes requests from other Members in this regard.

Element 4:

Specific objective: Update global seabird risk assessment.

The collaborative work on the Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment (SEFRA) by CCSBT Members will be utilised as the basis of Element 4 activity.

The Fifteenth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG 15), held from 4-7 June 2024 in Tokyo, Japan, agreed to finalise the Report of the Technical Working Group on CCSBT collaborative risk assessment for seabird bycatch with surface longlines in the Southern Hemisphere, and also agreed to recommend the EC to approve the Future SEFRA Workplan that took account of the transition from the CCSBT to this Seabird Project (Attachment 4 and 5 of CCSBT-CC/2410/Rep03, respectively).

This process will activate subject to recommendations from the ERSWG 15 being approved by the Extended Commission.

5. Conclusion

Members are encouraged to engage with the details that FAO has on record (see Annex) and consider what steps may be taken to improve. This includes consideration of areas or aspects where the project can provide support.

Prepared by the Seabird Project Coordinator

Annex 1: Baseline for indicator 3.3E. Note this table will be updated in the Secretariat’s report to FAO in December 2024

CCSBT Member	1. Observer Coverage (in %)	2. Representativeness of observer coverage (in %)	3. Compliant use of seabird mitigation measures (Percentage of observed effort in Members’ long line fleets complying with seabird mitigation measures)			4. Enhancement of data accuracy (number of independent data sources utilized in addition to scientific observer)	Notes
			3/3 Measures	2/3 Measures	Non-compliant		
Australia	8%	0%	63.6%	36.4%	0%	4	Electronic Monitoring used but do not use human observers. 2019 also used port inspection and at-sea inspection, plus aerial surveillance
European Union	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	The EU does not have southern blue fin tuna vessels.
Indonesia	0%	0%	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	0	
Japan	7%	33%	6.5%	41.4%	52.1%	0	No at-sea inspection in 2019/20
Korea	0%	0%	0%	100%*	0%	0	*There is no observer data for Korea for 2020 so figures are for the 2019 fishing season
New Zealand	9%	50%	41.6%	58.4%	0%	3	Port and at-sea inspections plus aerial surveillance
Fishing entity of Taiwan	13%	75%	0%	100%	0%	0	
South Africa*	Unknown	Unknown	100%	0%	0%	Not provided but likely that port inspections are occurring and possibly at-sea inspections	There is no observer data for South Africa for 2019 or 2020 so figures are for the 2018 fishing season.
Scoring	0	0	2			0	

Table 3.3.E-4 Baseline data presentation indicator 3.3E

Minimum standards	Score
Observer coverage of at least 10%	0
Representativeness of observer coverage	0
Compliant use of seabird mitigation measures	2
Enhancement in data accuracy	0
Overall Score (out of 16)	2