



IMMARBE

International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize

MEASURES TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF FISHING FOR ALL FISH STOCKS ON SEABIRDS AND SEA TURTLES

TO ALL SHIPOWNERS AND OPERATORS, DEPUTY REGISTRARS & RESIDENT AGENTS.

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Fishing Vessel Notice is to provide all Shipowners, Operators, Deputy Registrars and other parties with requirements and the technical specifications of the measures to be implemented on board Belize-registered Fishing Vessels in order to mitigate the impact of fishing for fish stocks on seabirds and sea turtles.

2. BACKGROUND

Concerned that some seabirds are seriously affected and threatened with global extinction, our Longline and Trawler Fishing Vessels are required to use mitigation measures in order to avoid or reduce the mortality of seabirds.

Recognizing the ecological and cultural significance of all species of sea turtles and noting that the recent international scientific studies on circle hooks show a statistically significant decrease in sea turtle bycatch when such hooks are used in shallow set pelagic longline fishing as well as lead to a decrease in post-release mortality of incidentally caught species.

Our Administration has decided to implement the FAO Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations as well as the relevant Resolutions/Recommendations of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) on this topic.

3. APPLICATION

This Fishing Vessel Notice applies to all Belize-registered Longline and Trawler Fishing vessels with immediate effect.

4. MITIGATION MEASURES FOR SEABIRDS

4.1. Our Administration requires Longline Fishing vessels to implement one or more of the mitigation measures detailed in Table 1.

4.2. Crewmembers are required to adopt measures aimed at ensuring that seabirds captured alive during longlining are released alive and in as good condition as possible and that wherever possible hooks are removed without jeopardizing the life of the seabird concerned.

4.3. Vessel's owners and operators are required to submit along with their Catch Reports, all available information on interactions with seabirds, including bycatches and details of species in the Fishing Log and Fishing Vessel Voyage Report.

4.4. Vessel's owners and operators of all Long Line Fishing vessels are required to indicate in Table 2 the mitigation measures implemented on board. A copy of the Table 2 must be submitted to our Administration duly completed and signed for each vessel.

4.5. Longline Fishing vessels licensed to operate in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Convention area are required by Resolution 2005-04 to use at least two of the mitigation measures shown in Table 1, including at least one from Column A in areas south of 30 degrees South and north of 23 degrees North, in accordance with the minimum technical specifications of the mitigation measures detailed in Annex 1 of Table 1.

4.6. Vessel's owners and operators of Longline Fishing vessels operating in the WCPFC Convention area are required by Resolution 2005-04 to indicate in Table 3 the minimum technical specifications of the mitigation measures implemented on board. A copy of the Table 3 must also be submitted to our Administration duly completed and signed for each such vessel.

5. MITIGATION MEASURES FOR SEA TURTLES

Our Administration requires that:

5.1. Purse Seine Fishing Vessels:

- 5.1.1. Avoid encirclement of sea turtles to the extent practicable and, if encircled or entangled, take all practicable measures to safely release sea turtles.
- 5.1.2. Take all reasonable efforts whenever a sea turtle is sighted in the net to rescue the turtle before it becomes entangled in the net, including if necessary, the deployment of a speedboat.
- 5.1.3. Stop net roll, if a turtle is entangled in the net, as soon as the turtle comes out of the water and, to the extent practicable, assist the recovery of the turtle before returning it to the water.

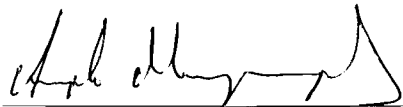
- 5.1.4. Take necessary measures to monitor Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) and to the extent practicable to release any sea turtles that become entangled and consider FAD designs and use that reduce the likelihood of sea turtle entanglement.
- 5.2. Longline Fishing Vessels:
- 5.2.1. Use circle hooks.
- 5.2.2. Carry on board and, when sea turtle interactions occur, employ the necessary equipment, such as: de-hookers, line cutters, and scoop nets for the prompt release of incidentally caught sea turtles.
- 5.2.3. Continue to improve fishing techniques, e.g.: appropriate combinations of circle hooks and bait, setting depth, gear specifications, fishing practices, as well as other measures to reduce the bycatch, injury and mortality of sea turtles.
- 5.2.4. Crewmembers are required to adopt measures aimed at ensuring that sea turtles captured alive during longlining are released alive and in as good condition as possible and that wherever possible hooks are removed without jeopardizing the life of the sea turtle concerned.
- 5.3. Trawler Vessels:
- 5.3.1. Permanently install in their nets Turtle Excluding Devices.
- 5.4. All Vessels:
- 5.4.1. Crewmembers are required to adopt measures as well as appropriate handling methods aimed at ensuring that sea turtles captured alive during fishing operations are released alive and in as good condition as possible.
- 5.4.2. Crewmembers are required to bring aboard, if practicable, any comatose or inactive hard-shell turtles as soon as possible and foster recovery by resuscitation if necessary, before returning it to the water.
- 5.4.3. All Vessel's owners and operators are required to submit along with their Catch Reports, all available information on interactions with sea turtles, including bycatches and details of species in the Fishing Log and Fishing Vessel Voyage Report.

6. INSPECTIONS

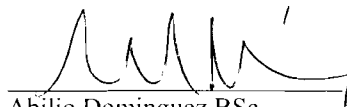
All Belize-registered fishing vessels may be inspected by any of our Flag State Inspectors or Fishing Vessel Observers with or without prior notice. Also, the Resolutions/Recommendations of RFMOs permit the boarding and inspection of fishing vessels by authorized inspectors of other member States of the RFMO.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

It is in the best interests of all concerned that the above-mentioned measures are implemented forthwith; therefore, kindly send to our Administration a completed copy of the Table 2 for each of your vessels and, if your vessel is a Longline Fishing vessel which is licensed to operate in the WCPFC Convention area, Table 3 as well for each such vessel. We will then inform the Secretariats of the relevant RFMOs of your vessel's compliance.



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