

Verifying seabird-safe practices WITH HUMAN OBSERVERS

When on duty, human observers can verify presence and use of all types of seabird-safe practices. They can also check whether they are being used to the correct specifications.

Equipment

Measuring tape, scales, camera.

Bird scaring lines

Design specifications to check

- The presence of an adjustable tori pole that allows the streamers of the bird scaring line to hang above where baited hooks land in the water. Hooks usually land to the side of the vessel outboard of the stern quarter.
- Height of the bird scaring line attachment point above the waterline.
- Total length and length of aerial extent of the bird scaring line.
- Number of streamers, length of longest streamer, spacing, and streamer material.
- Presence of an in-water drag section, including materials.
- Presence of spare bird scaring line materials.

What to record per set

- Was a bird scaring line used.
- Was the bird scaring lost or tangled during a set and not immediately replaced.
- Were the streamers hanging over where baited hooks landed in the water.

Line weighting

Design specifications to check

- Type of weight (lead swivel, weighted hook, sliding weight, double weight).
- Mass of weight closest to hook.
- Distance between the hook and the weight.
- Proportion of branchlines with weights.
- Presence of spare weights on board.

What to record per set

- Number of hooks set with and without weights.
- Flybacks of hooks towards the vessel.
- Crew safety procedures in place (description).

Night setting

Design specifications to check

- Was the skipper familiar with night setting practice, and how did they define night setting.

What to record per set

- Location at start of set (latitude and longitude).
- Times for the start and completion of set.



Photo: Francisco Blaha

Hook shielding devices

Design specifications to check

- Name of manufacturer.
- Spare hook-shielding devices onboard.

What to record per set

- Number of hooks set with and without hook shielding devices.
- Number of hooks where hook-shielding devices were not correctly used. For example, not closed over the hook prior to setting.
- Number of lost or damaged hook-shielding devices seen during the haul.

Underwater bait setter

Design specifications to check

- Name of manufacturer.
- Maintenance record.

What to record per set

- Number of hooks set with and without the underwater bait setter.
- Setting depth of baited hooks.

