

30 June 2014

## **Increase in rates of mollymawk captures in deepwater trawl fisheries - more consistent management of risk required**

In 2012 and particularly 2013 there have been a marked increase in mollymawks capture rates. This is evident both in the squid fishery but also in our certified fisheries and other trawl fisheries.

This trend must be reversed and can be achieved by rigorous tightening up of the measures we currently have.

The attached DWG Mollymawk Mitigation sheet is to raise awareness and will is for inclusion into your vessel's DWG OP manual (VMP section) on board.

### **There are a number of factors possibly leading to this increase:**

- Fleet changes: less offal in total going into water and reduced fleet size leads to increased intensity of bird activity behind vessels
- Changes in oceanographic conditions and number of birds breeding in some years
- More reliance on bafflers than tori lines

The above factors are leading to events where multiple capture events are occurring when management processes slip below par even if briefly, and this is across the fleet and fisheries.

### **We are focussed on those things that we can practically address:**

- While there are now a greater proportion of vessels with meal plants, offal management is below par at times and must be excellent at all times
- Tori lines need to be deployed at times of higher risk
- Mitigation devices need to be built and maintained to standard
- VMPs need to be adhered to

Currently there is a better tori line design and materials available and most of the trawl fleet has taken up on this. We are working (with DOC) on an improved baffler system for deepwater trawlers.

It is imperative that all managers and vessels undertake to markedly improve performance in this area or we will be faced with condition(s) on our certified fisheries.

### **What we need from you:**

- Read the attached Mitigation sheet and be aware of the issues
- Recognise that no part of the fleet is immune from risk at present
- Stress to your skippers and crew the need to improve on offal control – this is the main driver for decreased risk
- Ensure your vessels are well equipped with best available mitigation devices
- Ensure that your vessels are able to and do adhere to their VMPs

If you have any questions, please contact:

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