

Statement to Panel 4 by BirdLife International

BirdLife International welcomes the United Kingdom's ***Draft Recommendation by ICCAT to amend Recommendation 07-07 and Supplemental Recommendation 11-09 on reducing incidental bycatch of seabirds in ICCAT longline fisheries*** (PA4-811/2025).

Critically endangered and threatened albatross and petrel species breeding in the Atlantic continue to decline, with many populations at critical levels (PLE_123/2025). Bycatch in pelagic longline fisheries is a primary driver, with populations known to overlap with ICCAT longline fisheries ([SCRS_2024_079](#)).

Hook shielding devices

BirdLife International welcomes the proposed inclusion of hook shielding devices in PA4-811/2025.

Hook shielding devices are an effective seabird bycatch mitigation method, proven to reduce seabird bycatch to very low levels ([SCRS_2024_079](#)) whilst not impacting catch ([ACAP 2024](#)).

Hook shielding devices have been recommended by the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) as an effective seabird bycatch mitigation measure for several years ([ACAP 2024](#)) and are already recommended by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission ([WCPFC 2018-03](#)) and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission ([IOTC Resolution 23/07](#)) as a mitigation method.

Hook shielding devices are currently an optional mitigation measure for some ICCAT members in their fisheries permitting conditions.

In 2025, the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) Subcommittee on Ecosystems and Bycatch (SC-ECO; [SC-ECO 02/2025](#)) recommended hook shielding devices as an alternate, standalone measure to the measures outlined in ICCAT Recommendations [07-07](#) and [11-09](#).

BirdLife International calls on members to adopt PA4-811/2025 to ensure hook shielding devices are added to the suite of seabird bycatch mitigation measures available to CPCs.

Seabird bycatch mitigation measure review

BirdLife International welcomes text in PA4-811/2025 providing clarity, direction and a timeline for completion of the ongoing seabird bycatch mitigation measure review.

Recommendation 11-09 stipulated a review of seabird mitigation measures should take place in 2015. Instead, this review was initiated in 2024. As such, ICCAT

Recommendations on reducing incidental bycatch of seabirds in ICCAT longline fisheries are out of date and do not reflect best available scientific evidence.

Updates to Recommendations 07-07 and 11-09 are urgently needed to ensure ICCAT management measures are as effective as possible.

In 2025, the SCRS recommended SC-ECO continue the seabird bycatch mitigation measure review and provide advice in 2027 (PLE_104/2025).

BirdLife International calls on members to adopt PA4-811/2025 to ensure the timely completion of the seabird bycatch mitigation measure review and to ensure the Commission receives informed advice, underpinned by the best available scientific evidence.

BirdLife International thank Panel 4 for the opportunity to contribute and thank the Secretariat, Chair and Members for their preparations for this meeting.