

**FISHING VESSEL OWNERS' ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED**

ROOM 232, WEST WALL BUILDING • 4005 20TH AVE. W.
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98199-1290
PHONE (206) 284-4720 • FAX (206) 283-3341

SINCE 1914

COPY

August 12, 2008

Mr. Frank Lockhart
NMFS
7600 Sand Point Way N.E.
BIN C15700
Seattle, WA 98115-0070

RE: Black-footed Albatross and other seabirds incidentally caught with hook-and-line gear

Dear Mr. Lockhart:

It is our understanding that there is increased concern over the take of seabirds in the hook-and-line fisheries off of Washington, Oregon, and California. It is also our understanding that Black-footed Albatross is being reviewed for listing in the near future and have been taken in the hook-and-line operations on the north coast.

The members of the Fishing Vessel Owners' Association (FVOA) that fish limited entry fixed-gear permits and/or participate in the DTL fishery, will be asked to deploy streamer lines beginning in August. We have sent out the enclosed notice to our members. As you are probably aware, streamer line experiments were done in Alaska waters through a Sea Grant project with the University of Washington. We had six (6) of our vessels participate in the experiment with several forms of gear avoidance devices.

Single and double streamer lines can result in a greater than 90% reduction in seabird takes. The longline fleet of Alaska has experienced an overall 80% reduction in seabird takes off Alaska.

Most of the boat owners we represent are currently finishing their Alaska operations and will return by mid-August to late September and begin to fish their limited entry permits off the lower coast. We will send a notice to our members requesting they deploy

streamer lines while fishing in Pacific Council waters if they are not doing so currently. If you should have any questions or requests to make of our members, please let us know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Alverson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Robert D. Alverson
Manager**

RDA:cmb

Cc: Pacific Fishery Management Council

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IMPORTANT!!

**NOTICE TO BLACKCOD PERMIT HOLDERS
THAT FISH OFF WASHINGTON, OREGON AND CALIFORNIA**

Concern is building that the West Coast hook-and-line fleet is taking seabirds incidental to fishing. Most notably, black-footed albatross have been recorded taken in the limited-entry fixed-gear fishery off of Oregon and Washington. This species is being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In addition, the fishery overlaps with the distribution of the endangered short-tailed albatross requiring NMFS to prepare actions that should be taken by the fleet to avoid mortality in the West Coast longline fleet. Given these events, the Association strongly advises that you deploy streamer lines as per the Alaska requirements when fishing on the lower coast for sablefish for the 2008 season. Since most of you already use this gear when you fish in Alaska, using streamer lines in the lower coast fishery should be very doable.

Due to use of streamer lines, the rate of seabird bycatch in the Alaska longline fisheries for groundfish has been reduced by nearly 80% starting in 2002 and no short-tailed albatross have been taken since 1998. Streamer lines are available at no cost from Seattle Marine and LFS to vessels that fish in Alaska. They are not available at this time in Bellingham, but we hope to have them available there soon.

The Alaska seabird bycatch requirements are available at:
<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/guide.htm>

If you have questions about streamer-line gear, call Ed Melvin at Washington Sea Grant (206) 543-9968.

We need to get ahead of the seabird issue on the West Coast as we did in Alaska. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,



Robert D. Alverson
Manager

RDA:cmb
Cc: Frank Lockhart
PFMC