



Alternatives for "One Fleet" Communication to Reduce Fisheries Bycatch Solicitation for Contributions

The Blue Ocean Institute, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, and Hawaii Longline Association have initiated a project to describe alternatives for fleet-wide communication protocols that enable commercial fisheries to reduce and manage bycatch levels. Instituting fleet communication systems to report real-time observations of problem fishing grounds to be avoided by vessels in the fleet has the potential to allow commercial fisheries to operate as a coordinated "One Fleet" to significantly reduce the fleet-wide capture, injury, and mortality of protected bycatch species, including finfish, seabirds, sea turtles, and marine mammals. This helps the conservation status of the protected species per se, and can provide a substantial economic benefit to industry by reducing the risk of exceeding government-established bycatch thresholds.

Please consider contributing to the project by providing information for case studies of fishery communication programs designed to manage bycatch. If you have information on a fleet communication program designed to reduce bycatch, and you are willing to share this information so that other fisheries can learn from your experiences, please complete the enclosed case study questionnaire and submit it to project manager Eric Gilman at ericgilman@earthlink.net, 2718 Napuaa Place, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822 USA

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Case Study Questions

- Name, affiliation, and contact information:
- Name of the fishery for which you are describing a fleet communication programme:
- The fleet communication protocol aims to reduce the bycatch of which species?
- Date the fleet communication programme was initiated:
- Is the program still in operation today? If not, when and why was it discontinued?
- What methods are used for fleet-wide communication (e.g., VMS, short or long-range radio, email)?
- What information is communicated amongst the fleet?
- What are incentive(s) for industry participation in a fleet-wide communication program (e.g., avoid exceeding a government threshold after which the fishery is closed)?
- What percent of active vessels participate in the fleet communication program?
- Is the program a voluntary industry initiative, required by the government, or a result of something else?
- What organization established and manages the program?
- Has the effectiveness of the programme been evaluated? If yes, please explain how effectiveness was determined (e.g., comparing bycatch per unit of effort before and after the program was instituted).
- Estimate the economic benefit from the program. Please explain the basis for the estimate. For instance, if the fleet has a seasonal bycatch limit, how much longer is the fishery open each year as a result of implementing the fleet communication programme, and how much is this worth?
- What is the annual cost to operate the fleet-wide communication programme? Please itemize expenses, such as cost for the method of communication (e.g., via radio, email, or VMS), and cost for personnel or a private company to manage operations.