



WESTERN  
PACIFIC  
REGIONAL  
FISHERY  
MANAGEMENT  
COUNCIL

## Press Release

For Immediate Release

March 11, 2002

Contact: Kathy Cousins 522-6044

---

### Catch fish, not birds

Working together, the longline fishing industry, environmental organizations and government have discovered a way to significantly reduce the unwanted catch of seabirds in the Hawaii longline fishery. The underwater setting chute, previously tested in New Zealand and Australia, is now the subject of an experiment in the fishing grounds north of Hawaii. Instead of setting baited hooks on the surface of the water, where albatross and other seabirds are at risk of being hooked or entangled, the chute delivers the hooks so they first emerge underwater out of sight and reach of the diving seabirds.

Over the past 15 years, national governments, regional organizations and longline industries have developed comprehensive mitigation measures, including changes in fishing gear, fishing practices, fishing operations, and vessel layout to reduce seabird bycatch in longline fisheries. None have been as successful as the underwater setting chute appears to be. "After years of testing different methods to reduce the catch of seabirds, it is thrilling to see one that is so effective," notes Jerry Ray, captain of the fishing vessel used in the experiment. "Over 6,000 baited hooks were set using the chute, and not one seabird was killed."

#### Press Conference Invitation

A press conference will be held to discuss the results of the experiment when the vessel returns to port. In addition, the Hawaii Longline Association will take anyone interested on a short cruise (1.5 hours) off the Oahu coast to see firsthand how the chute operates.

**When: 10:00 a.m., Monday, March 11, 2002**

**Where: The docks at Pier 35, on the fishing vessel Katy Mary**

Partners in the project include the Hawaii Longline Association, Audubon's Living Oceans Program and the National Audubon Society Living Oceans Program, the National Marine Fisheries Service Honolulu Laboratory, Albi Save (the Australian company who manufactures the chute), Captain Jerry Ray and the crew of the Katy Mary, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

For additional information contact:

Kathy Cousins, The Western Pacific Fishery Council, 522-8176; [Kathy.Cousins@noaa.gov](mailto:Kathy.Cousins@noaa.gov)  
Eric Gilman, National Audubon Society's Living Oceans Program, [egilman@lava.net](mailto:egilman@lava.net)  
Dr. Chris Boggs, U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, [christofer.boggs@noaa.gov](mailto:christofer.boggs@noaa.gov)  
Jim Cook, Hawaii Longline Association, 537-2905  
Dave Chaffey and Nigel Brothers, Albi Save, [tuna@southcom.com.au](mailto:tuna@southcom.com.au)