



# ALBERT TIMES

July 2008 Issue 28

*"Don't be warped - trawl for fish, not birds"*

*From the desk of Admiral Albert Ross, MBE (Mighty Big Eater)*

*We have come a full circle. MFish are going to ditch the poorly conceived seabird Gazette Notice for offal control. Seems they finally realised you can't write a "one rule fits all" when it comes to fishing vessels and offal control. The basic laws of safety at sea mean you can't write a half-baked offal control measures which can impact heavily on vessel stability. The stability of any vessel is constantly changing and has to be managed to suit the condition of the vessel and the environment. Writing an offal control regulation that allows vessel operations to seek exemptions for safety reasons was only going to lead to one thing, "every vessel was going to need an exemption". Maritime regulators and vessel surveyors would never approve any decision not to grant exemptions which may stop the vessel captain from making real time decisions due to the changing circumstances out on the water!*

*Fishing is not a constant process, changing weather conditions, changing catching & processing volumes means while control measures may be able to be followed most of the time, there needs to be some flexibility or contingencies when volumes and other capacities placed on the vessel exceeds its equipment and construction parameters to keep the vessel safe. MFish needs to realise sometimes we actually know what we are talking about! Seabird policy people were never going to be able to write vessel operational controls without help. Perhaps next time they might ask for it from the start! Chow Albert*

## Travelling Abroad

We are always careful when travelling abroad - it's never as safe overseas as it is at home! Well it's no different for the albatrosses. About now, many albatross species have migrated to warmer climates. Some albatross head east to Chile and Argentina while others head west to South Africa. Work is done internationally by many organisations to help raise the awareness of these birds and to help to reduce the risks posed by fishing vessels. Here in NZ we are doing what we can and (as the seabird capital of the world) lead the way in seabird mitigation and in the reduction of fishing related mortalities. In some areas overseas the risks of seabird captures are much higher. We need much more information on what risks the birds face in these other areas.

While the birds are concentrated here in New Zealand during the breeding season, we have highly

regulated fishing and seabird standards compared to most other nations. Our seabirds roam the offshore coasts of other fishing nations during our winter months. The risks of capture in these less regulated fishing zones could make a big difference in the numbers of birds returning each season to breed in New Zealand. Many coastal fishing vessels working the Chilean and South African coastline in fairly deregulated fisheries could pose a real risk. Seabird reporting standards in other zones can be poor, we just don't know how big the problem is. We have some reports from other organisations working with seabirds that there is a lot to do in educating these fishermen on the best ways to mitigate seabird captures. Hopefully some of the work carried out here in NZ can be utilized overseas. But as we have found out, mitigation measures and



John Saxon. SSS Photo Competition - Southern Royal, Salvina, Giant and Cape albatross.

seabird standards that may be working well in one fishery or fishing zone do not always work as well in another.

### How do you judge what risk is?

We are now waiting on the results from the batching and mincing trials carried out during the squid season. We hope to have some information on this by October. Until now, there has been very little research work carried out on batching offal. It will be interesting to see if batching/holding offal for 30min intervals reduces the risks of seabird capture when compared to holding offal for 1, 2 or 4 hours. During the winter we will trial a couple of net mitigation procedures, which may



## WHICH COUSIN OF MINE IS THIS?



These cousins can dive to depths of 10m and they are strong swimmers.

If you know the name of this bird then email your answer, name, postal address and date of publication to [albertross@fishinfo.co.nz](mailto:albertross@fishinfo.co.nz)

**BE IN TO WIN:** Albert Ross' cap and the "Field Guide to New Zealand Seabirds"



The cousin of last month:  
Chatham Albatross

help reduce the risk of net captures when hauling and shooting the trawl net. We must always ensure that whatever we trial is both able to be practically put in place by the fishing fleet and offers real results. There is no point in introducing new measures without first knowing they will actually reduce the risks of capture or injury.

Of some concern is the way we measure this. How do we establish if a treatment is more effective in reducing the risk of seabird captures than another (i.e. is counting bird numbers following the vessel a true reflection of the risk of seabird captures during fishing operations)? Birds following a vessel (even by the thousands) are completely safe if there's no contact with the fishing gear. The risk of capture with the warps or the trawl net occurs or is heighten only when a mix of factors come together to bring the fishing gear and the birds in contact. Fishing gear can capture birds, offal does not. Offal will (under certain circumstances) attract the birds closer to the fishing gear and some of this risk can be mitigated. (i.e. tori lines reduce the risk of warp capture). What's effective and what's not is very hard

to get a handle on as captures don't happen frequently and there are so many factors at work that it's hard to do a trial and get a clear-cut answer on what reduces the risk. Work is in progress.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Black petrel colonies were once found on the mountains and hills on the north island and north western south island, but most colonies were lost before the 1950's.

White chinned petrels were called shoemakers by the early sealers because of the clacking and rattling sounds they make in their burrows.

White chinned petrels are the largest burrowing petrel species.

A one year old diving petrel was recently found breeding. This is the youngest breeding age ever recorded for any petrel or albatross.

Common diving petrels frequently dive and "fly" underwater to capture their prey.

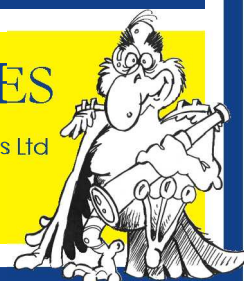
To learn more go to [www.albertross.co.nz](http://www.albertross.co.nz) and pick up this month's issue



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