



THE QUARTERLY CATCH

E-NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME....

Welcome to our seventh issue of the Quarterly Catch, the BHSFU quarterly E-Newsletter. I trust that every person who receives a copy of this newsletter will find it quite helpful, informative and of course entertaining. All the articles are researched, curated and tailored to what we think will be gratifying and useful to our readers. Thank You!!



Valarie Lanza-Director for High Seas Fisheries

HOW COVID-19 HAVE AFFECTED REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS (RFMOs)

As the Covid-19 Pandemic continues to spread globally many countries have put into place unprecedented lock down measures to contain its impact on public health. However, these measures are having drastic impacts on other domain of commercial activities including fisheries management.

Regional Fisheries Management Organizations such as ICCAT and IATTC are currently experiencing negative consequences on fisheries management within their area of competence. The measure of impact facing these organization differs from little to no impact to possible closure of fisheries. Important annual meetings and intersessional meetings have been canceled or postponed which will affect management processes. Those meetings that are being held virtually are limited to only main topics supporting decision making. Important measures which include quota assignments, FAD closures, stock assessments have been either postponed or carried over to 2021. While communication from the two organizations has not been severely impacted or delayed other organizations have faced communication and decision-making problems due to administration shutdown.

One common problem which these organizations are facing is the use of on-line platforms to carry out virtual meetings and the work of the Commission as this represents a threat to confidentiality and diplomatic exchanges. There is

also impacts to the work being carried out by research projects, field observations and stock assessments.

For those organizations with monitoring, control and surveillance roles, many are experiencing challenges in carrying out inspections and at-sea observations due to travel bans, port access and threat of potential transmission of the virus during inspections. These bans have also impacted the requirement for observer coverage which has been relaxed in some regions while in other areas it has become necessary to suspend as-sea observer coverage. Meeting postponement or cancellations have also affected decision making process regarding measures affecting MSC.

Postponed scientific meetings and research activities, collection of fisheries statistics, observer data will negatively impact species stock assessment processes and the provision of formal advice to the decision-making bodies.

The above impacts are also resulting in financial losses to governments and the Secretariats of these RFMOs. Most unfortunately, it is feared that these organizations may lose some fisheries experts to this virus which will severely impact fisheries scientific expertise.

The relaxation of the RFMO management regimes are expected to result in increased IUU fishing and weakened efforts of members to properly identify and address IUU activities. Like all countries around the world, Belize has been affected by this pandemic in more ways than one, nonetheless, we continue our efforts to ensure that our fleet continue to operate in a compliant and legitimate manner.



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**STAY ALERT, CONTROL THE VIRUS, SAVE LIVES
TOGETHER AGAINST COVID-19**

Beneficial Ownership Training Facilitated by the International Financial Services Commission (IFSC)

By Robert Robinson - Deputy Director



On July 10th 2020, the International Financial Services Commission (IFSC), facilitated a 1-day training session on the nuances of beneficial ownership for the three units of the international financial services sector; i.e. the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit (BHSFU), the Belize International Corporate Affairs Registry (BICAR), and the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE). The training was delivered by Ms. Nelda Tulcey, Deputy Director General of the IFSC. The session focussed on areas including: Standards for Beneficial Ownership set by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF); Definition and Importance of Beneficial Ownership; the Misuse of Legal Entities for Illicit Purposes; Beneficial Ownership in Trusts; and the Standards for the Exchange of Information set by the Global Forum on Transparency and Information Exchange for Tax Purposes.

Some key points that resonated throughout the training session were the definition of beneficial owner(s) which the FATF defines as the natural person(s) who ultimately owns or controls a customer and/or the natural person on whose behalf a transaction is being conducted; and includes those persons who exercise ultimate effective control over a legal person or arrangement. The importance of conducting customer due diligence (CDD) when establishing new business relationships was also emphasized; and CDD measures include using reliable independent information to identify and verify customers' identities. The Standards for identifying Beneficial Ownership that were established by the OECD and FATF serve to level the playing field across jurisdictions to ensure persons doing business will encounter a minimum set of requirements regardless of the jurisdiction they choose to conduct their business. The sharing of information for tax purposes is also an important tool in regulating the industry since the local competent authorities of States will be able to know if a beneficial owner has paid the right amount of taxes for his/her business venture(s).

Corporations and other legal entities provide convenient vehicles to facilitate business transactions and protect owners against risk and liability; however, knowing your client is paramount in the international financial services sector. Often times, clients who seek to hide their true identities behind several layers of 'corporate veils' are the ones who need added scrutiny for tax avoidance, tax evasion, money laundering, terrorism financing and other illicit activities. As regulators, we play a pivotal role in stopping these illicit activities before they start or eradicating them as soon as they are detected.



DID YOU KNOW?

Fishing is a full-time profession. The act of fishing can be divided into two categories: Sports fishing and Commercial Fishing. Commercial fishing happens at a big scale around the world, helping to feed us all. Many people pursue fishing as sports. The fun thing about sports fishing is that mostly, the caught fish is thrown back into the sea or river.

How Mitigating Devices Help to Reduce Seabirds and Sea Turtles Mortality in Long Line Fisheries

By: Ernie Howe - Fisheries Officer



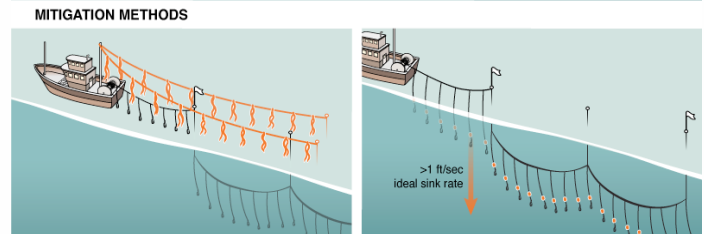
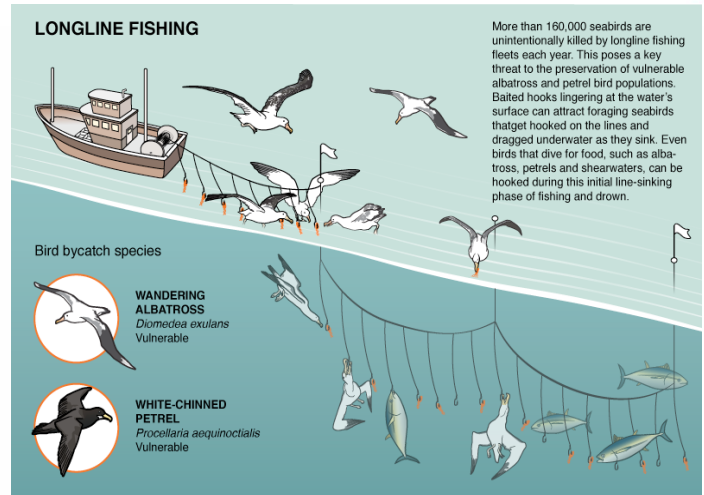
Wherever there is fishing there is bycatches and hundreds of thousands of seabirds and sea turtles are killed each year as bycatch in long line fisheries. Over-exploitation of target species and high levels of bycatch are the main causes of change and loss of global marine biodiversity. Sea turtles, seabirds, cetaceans and other fish species are vulnerable to unsustainable levels of mortality. During normal fishing practices either for personal leisure or

commercial purposes, fishing gears and other types of nets have proven to capture and kill different types of seabirds, sea mammals and sea turtles. Finding effective ways of reducing by-catch mortality have been a long process where different mitigating devices and methods have been developed, tested and proven effective in the reduction of mortality of seabirds and sea turtles

Incidental catches by pelagic long-liners is a major global treat for loggerhead and leather-back sea turtles. Most turtles captured in long-line fishery are mostly alive when the gears are retrieved particularly in shallow set fisheries, so the fate of the turtle after release is a critical factor in determining its mortality. Circle hooks helps reduce mortality of sea turtles because of their shapes and size and the ways the parameter interacts with the size of the turtles interacting with the fishery. It also has been proven that fin-fish bait instead of squid reduces the interaction of sea turtles since they prefer fin-fish instead of squid.



On the other end in order to reduce seabird mortality and its interaction with the fishing gear, several measures have been identified which can be classified into four main categories: avoiding fishing in areas and at times when seabird interactions are most likely and intense, limiting bird access to baited hooks by implementing underwater setting devices, weighted lines, thawed bait, line shooter, bait-casting machine, side setting, deterring birds from taking baited hooks by utilizing streamer (bird scaring) lines, acoustic and olfactory deterrents, water cannons, reducing the attractiveness or visibility of the baited hooks by using artificial baits, blue dyed bait etc.,



STREAMER (TORI) LINES
Towed behind longline vessels, brightly colored streamers flown from a rope can deter birds from feeding on the baited hooks during setting. The waving streamers scare birds away and can reduce so-called bycatch by 80-100% for some species. This is a first line of defense against seabird bycatch, but it does not protect all diving birds. Therefore, a combination of mitigation methods is often necessary.

LINE WEIGHTING
Seabirds can still access the baited hooks from the time they leave the longline vessel until they sink beyond bird diving ranges (0-33 ft.). By adding lead weights to the lines, they sink more rapidly and reduce the chances of birds being snagged. Effectiveness varies depending on the weight, the distance from the hook and the fishing gear, but, when used in conjunction with streamer lines, weights can reduce bycatch by 86%.

Despite current and emerging technologies and industry acknowledgment of the issue, by-catch remains a huge problem. It causes unnecessary deaths and injuries and the fishing methods being utilized can be harmful to the marine environments where they are employed. Belize is willing to do our part by implementing policies and following guidelines adopted by management organizations. We have enacted a National Plan of Action for Seabirds and have issued Sea Turtle Handling Guidelines to our vessel operators which implements seabird and sea turtle measures for our fishing fleet.

References

1. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No.1040
2. World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
3. Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
www.acap.aq

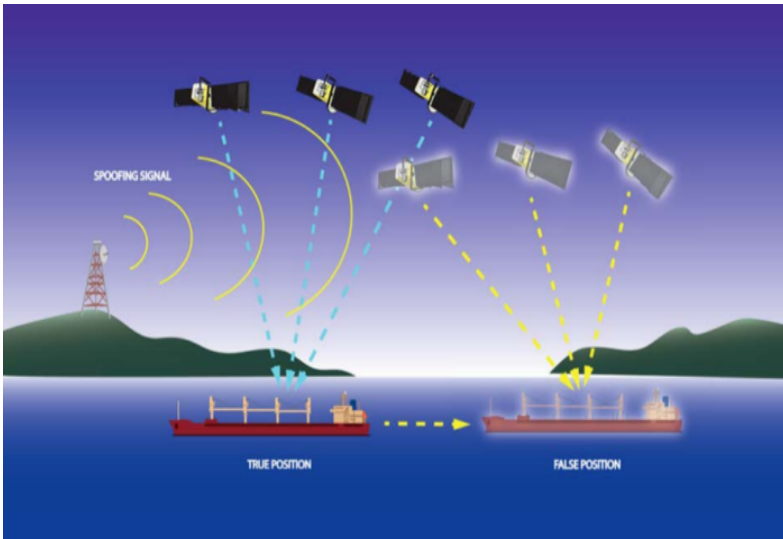
SPOOFING and How it Affects Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

By: Stanley Burgess- Fisheries Monitoring Officer



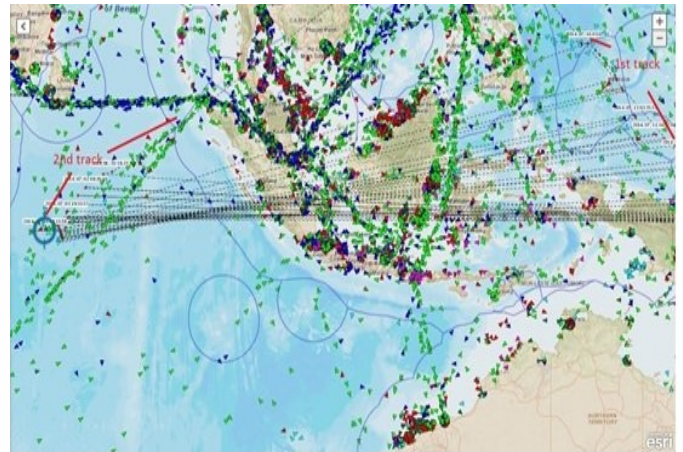
What is "Vessel Spoofing"? Vessel Spoofing is when a vessel is presenting a wrong reading of its position or masquerading its true identity, resulting in hiding or transmitting false position data so that the vessel appears to be operating legitimately, thus making it very difficult for an FMC or MSC officer to identify the exact location or identity of the vessel.

Spoofing occurs mostly with Automatic Identification Systems (AIS). Because AIS are self-reporting they are prone to spoofing and because operators must manually enter messages into their transponders, this leaves room for intentional or accidental errors. One simple error in a number sequence entered can cause unintentional spoofing to occur. This could translate to multiple vessels simultaneously reporting as one vessel making them indistinguishable from each other.



www.safety4sea.com

One of the most concerning things about spoofing is that it is difficult to detect due to the high volume of data being received. Many times, the vessel's positions mirror an ordinary tracking position of a vessel and only upon closer investigation can you identify that something is not right with the positions or details of the vessel. Because of spoofing, monitoring personnel must be more vigilant when examining vessels to ensure that what they are monitoring is the correct vessel and its position.



www.globalfishingwatch.org

The good news is that most FMC and maritime authorities can now utilize multiple platforms and techniques to easily identify when the tracking position data of a vessel do not correspond or provide irregular positions. It is a lot easier to "Spoof" using an AIS system versus a standard vessel monitoring system (VMS) that is specifically designed to monitor a set fleet or vessel. For this reason, Belize's FMC utilizes our FIS platform in addition to other AIS platforms for more robust and accurate monitoring.

Correctly detecting spoofing can help FMCs and maritime authorities efficiently and effectively detect illegal activities so that the safety of the sea and the industry can be guaranteed.

DID YOU KNOW?

The largest fish in the world is actually a shark. Specifically, the Whale Shark, which grows to more than 50 feet long and may weight several tons. The second largest is the Basking Shark, which can measure 35 to 40 feet long.