

**A novel purse seine bycatch mitigation measure – innovation and recognition in ‘Oceans’ category for Best 500 Environmental Initiatives in Latin America**



***Seabird bycatch in the purse seine fishery***

In 2013, the Albatross Task Force in Chile (ATF-Chile) started characterising seabird bycatch in the small-scale purse seine fleet and developing novel mitigation measures for the fishery: the “Modified Purse Seine” (or MPS) as a measure to reduce seabird entanglement in purse seine nets.



Supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), field experiments comparing real-time sets with the Modified Purse Seine and unmodified control nets showed a seabird bycatch reduction of 98% by entanglement in structures of fishing gear. This also included a

reduction in excess netting material and modifications of the buoy mounting system.

The development of the “Modified Purse Seine” as an alternative to traditional purse seine gear is aimed at reducing seabird bycatch for plunge and pursuit diving seabird species. Among the target species are the Peruvian pelican (*Pelecanus thagus*), Peruvian booby (*Sula variegata*), pink-footed shearwater (*Ardenna creatopus*), and Sooty shearwater (*Ardenna grisea*) because there is a hotspot of negative interaction between Arica (~18° S) and Valdivia (~39° S) in the Humboldt Current System.

### ***Premios Latinoamérica Verde (Latin American Green Awards)***

Since 2015, “[Premios Latinoamérica Verde](#)” has recognized achievements within the categories of Energy, Forests & Flora, Sustainable cities, Waste management, and Human Development (inclusion and equality) to the *Best 500 Environmental Projects in Latin America*. In 2018, approximately 2,733 projects were assessed from 38 different countries including initiatives from Latin America, Canada, USA and Spain. Among these, the top 500 are to be selected by a committee of 150 experts from 20 countries.

The “Modified Purse Seine” project has been selected in the *Oceans* category as a unique contribution addressing fisheries bycatch. This is an important international recognition of the collaborative work amongst fishermen, fishing gear manufacturers and seabird scientists. A presentation of this joint effort from South America was made during a Special Paper Session for Purse Seine Fisheries at the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Pacific Seabird Group in La Paz, Mexico in 2018.



This Latin American Green Award highlights the importance of the issue of seabird bycatch in fisheries and the need for improvements in mitigation measures. This recognition brings much needed attention to a continent-wide agenda for innovative, environmental solutions to seabird bycatch in the purse seine fishery.



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