



## 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

*Harnessing the power of innovation and partnerships to reduce bycatch of sensitive species*

[Tuesday 28 June, 1 - 3 PM, Online]

Organized by: SPEA - Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds and  
BirdLife Europe & Central Asia

### **Background on the event (one paragraph)**

Bycatch of sensitive species in commercial fisheries is a marine conservation issue of global concern. Seabirds, cetaceans and other taxonomic groups (such as sea turtles and sharks) are facing severe impacts on their populations due to this incidental capture in fishing gear. In Europe alone, 200,000 seabirds are captured every year in fishing gear. In the Mediterranean, a staggering 44,000 sea turtles are estimated to be killed each year. This undermines the environmental sustainability of the fishing sector which, at the same time, suffers economic losses while dealing with the release of unwanted captures and from damage to fishing gear.

Fortunately, in recent years, there has been significant efforts dedicated to research on this issue, benefitting from cooperation between the fishing sector, academics, civil society organizations and governmental authorities, to better understand the problem, assess its impacts, and investigate potential mitigation measures.

### **Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

This event showcased some of the existing solutions available to reduce bycatch of sensitive species and explored the role of partnerships in stimulating innovation for new solutions and for the rollout of proven solutions at the level needed to achieve significant reductions in the level of bycatch.

- Paolo Carpieneri from GFCM brought a wide geographical view between Europe and Northern Africa in Medbycatch project.

- Cristián G. Suazo from BirdLife International presented a successful project of fishing gear modifications in Chilean purse-seiners.
- Simone Niedermüller showcased solutions to minimize elasmobranch bycatch based on WWF's work in the Mediterranean.
- Pete Kibel, Co-founder of Fishtek Marine presented technical solutions developed to resolve global marine bycatch issues such as hoopkods, led lights, etc.
- Lotte Kindt-Larsen from DTU-Aqua in Denmark presented solutions to minimize cetacean bycatch and novel ways of monitoring on board using CCTV systems.

### **Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)**

- Active engagement of stakeholders creating strong and trustful relations
- Integration of local knowledge
- Standardization of data collection for multi taxa (highlighting the importance of fisheries observers)
- Strong supporting regulation
- Linkage with research and technology
- Eco-labelling schemes

### **Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)**

#### We will substantially reduce seabird bycatch in target fisheries

Incidental bycatch in marine fisheries remains the highest impact and most pervasive threat to seabirds. We will work in collaboration with BirdLife International, taking on from their success in dramatically reducing bycatch in certain regions of the globe, to extend our work to new fisheries.