



Agreement on the Conservation
of Albatrosses and Petrels

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Seabird interactions and bycatch in the Argentine freezer trawl fleet targeting Patagonian scallop¹

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SUMMARY

In the Patagonian Shelf the Patagonian scallop (*Zygochlamys patagonica*) is targeted solely by Argentine flagged high seas bottom otter freezer trawlers, with an operative fleet of six vessels between 1998 and 2009, reduced to four vessels since 2010. The fishery was the first scallop fishery in the South West Atlantic certified in 2010 under the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) scheme, recertified in 2012 and renewed in 2017. However, the effect of this certified commercial fishery on marine megafauna such as seabirds remains poorly understood. A project to monitor the interactions between seabirds and freezer trawlers targeting Patagonian scallop began in 2019. This project is a joint venture between seabird researchers of the National Research Council (CONICET) and the Institute for Fisheries Research and Development (*Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo Pesquero*, INIDEP in Spanish). For the project to begin data were recorded by observers belonging to INIDEP which were trained for the identification of seabird species and specifically tasked to conduct observations on seabird interactions on board two freezer trawlers (i.e. 50% of the whole fleet) from early October 2019 to mid-March 2020. This information was recently published in a scientific paper. Still, since samples were obtained during spring and summer, it remained unclear how the sustained fishing effort of the Patagonian scallop throughout the year in Argentine waters would affect top predators during winter when seabirds increase in diversity and abundance, in both central and north Patagonia. In this document we present information of seabird interactions and bycatch in the Patagonian scallop fishery during winter, complementing data already published.

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