Appendix 4-Memorandum on the Establishment of the NMFS National Seabird Coordinator (September 27, 2001)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RECEIVED
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES
MAILROOM
2001 OCT -3 AM 8:08

15,14.10 Seabirds

THE DIRECTOR

SEP 27 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR: Regional Administrators
Science Center Directors
Office Directors

FROM: William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.

SUBJECT: NMFS Seabird Coordination

An important component of the National Marine Fisheries Services' (NMFS) marine stewardship role is the responsibility to protect seabirds and other migratory birds. This responsibility has been brought into focus through two new directives that offer us an exciting opportunity to enhance our current seabird conservation efforts, the National Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (NPOA), and Executive Order (EO) 13186.

Following the adoption of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Plan of Action on Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA-Seabirds), NMFS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Department of State have worked cooperatively to prepare an NPOA. The NPOA and EO 13186, "Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds," combined with existing law, provide guidance for NMFS to work domestically and internationally to gain a better understanding of seabird bycatch and pursue ways to reduce that bycatch. To be effective in accomplishing these responsibilities, I am taking some initial steps to coordinate NMFS seabird programs.

NMFS Seabird Coordination

The implementation of the NPOA and EO 13186, in combination with existing mandates, will require maintenance of a national perspective through coordinated regional activities. I have asked Kim Rivera of the Alaska Region to serve as the National Seabird Coordinator. She will be working directly under Laurie Allen of my office on seabirds. Kim brings with her an extensive background in seabird issues.

THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
FOR FISHERIES

Attached are draft milestones associated with the NPOA and EO 13186. I have asked Kim to work with the regions to ensure that we meet these milestones and to provide assistance as we adjust to our new responsibilities. To accomplish this, I would like you to respond to the following requests by October 20, 2001:

(1) Designate one staff contact person in each Science Center, Regional and Headquarters office. Please forward those names to Kim, who can be reached at (907)586-7424 or at kim.rivera@noaa.gov.

(2) Review the NPOA and have your regional contact work with Kim to determine what your Region needs to do to begin its implementation. The NPOA and appendices, which are attached, can be accessed from the NOAA Fisheries website at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/.

(3) Please review E.O. 13186 and send your comments and ideas regarding what should be included in the MOU (as discussed in E.O.) to Kim with a copy to Bob Gorrell. Because much of the work on the MOU is unique in its need for frequent meetings with national headquarters of several federal agencies, Bob Gorrell in the Office of Sustainable Fisheries will be handling a lot of the day to day activity on MOU development. Your regional contact may be contacted directly by Bob over the coming months in this effort and you should assist him as necessary in this effort. Bob can be reached at (301)713-2341 or at robert.correll@noaa.gov. (See the NPOA, Appendix VI for the EO.)

NMFS has a very important role in the conservation of migratory birds, including seabirds. You will be hearing more from Kim on these issues in the coming months. I encourage everyone to review the attached documents and to take the steps necessary to ensure an effective program, including working across program lines with other NMFS employees, with other agencies and the regional fishery management councils, and with various stakeholders.

Attachments

cc: Acting Director of USFWS
Stetson Tinkham, U.S. Department of State

DRAFT MILESTONES: NMFS'S REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL SEABIRD DIRECTIVES

Target Date/ Completion Date	Tasks / Activities / Events
01/10/01	EO 13186 issued. Agencies encouraged to implement EO conservation measures immediately, notwithstanding the 2 year target date for MOU completion.
02/28/01	US's Final NPOA-Seabirds issued.
06/28/01	NMFS and GC staff meet with USFWS to develop a schedule for completion of MOU (EO 13186).
08/14/01	NMFS and GC staff meet with USFWS to discuss development of MOU (EO 13186).
09/01	NMFS Seabird Coordinator (Coordinator) assigned. Transmittal of NPOA and EO to RAs/SCDs/ODs and Councils.
10/01	NMFS, GC and USFWS staff meet on continued development of MOU (EO 13186).
09/30/01	RAs/SCDs/ODs identify seabird contacts to Coordinator for NMFS Seabird Team and Interagency Seabird Working Group (ISWG).
11/01	Coordinator site visit to Silver Spring.
11/15/01	Fish Expo in Seattle, WA; Seabird Bycatch Seminar and Panel (WSGP report on effectiveness study, Alaska seabird bycatch initiative); informative seminar for regions newly addressing this bycatch initiative.
by 12/01	1st meeting of NMFS Seabird Team—identify regional needs and develop implementation plan; e.g. characterize regional longline fisheries and needs to conduct seabird bycatch assessment.
by 12/15/01	Region/Science Center contacts review applicable sections of NPOA Appendix II and provide comments and/or updated section to Coordinator.
11/01-04/02	Region site visits by Coordinator.
by 12/01	1st ISWG meeting to coordinate NPOA implementation.
by 12/01	Develop seabird web site, outreach materials, powerpoint on NPOA.
12/01 -	Longline fishery assessments underway, to the extent that existing observer programs already collect seabird bycatch data.

Ongoing	**Guidance developed and provided by Coordinator and NMFS Seabird Team and ISWG to regions/councils (on outreach, education, research, required reporting).**
by 01/03	**Complete MOU with USFWS. Publish notice of availability of MOU in Federal Register (EO 13186).**
by 02/03	**Seabird bycatch assessments in longline fisheries completed (target in NPOA).**
within 1 yr of problem ID	**Regional Seabird Bycatch Reduction Programs adopted (target in NPOA).**
within 2 yr of problem ID	**Prescription of Seabird Measures and other NPOA Action Elements (target in NPOA).**
annual regional SAFE report	**Regional NPOA Implementation Report (target in NPOA). Submitted annually to Coordinator and subsequently compiled into biennial report to FAO. Submissions should coincide with region completion dates for SAFE documents.**
as soon as practicable	**Seabird Bycatch Data Collection incorporated in New and Existing Observer Programs (target in NPOA).**
biennial report to FAO's COFI, 02/03	**NPOA Implementation Report within the US Report to FAO on Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (target in NPOA).**

NPOA-Seabirds and information on NMFS Seabird Initiatives can be accessed from
http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/

The actual implementation schedules for milestones may vary from region to region. Milestones include tasks, activities, or events related to a seabird directives. Travel budgets may affect the ability of the seabird contacts to hold in-person NMFS team meetings or ISWG meetings.