



NOAA FISHERIES

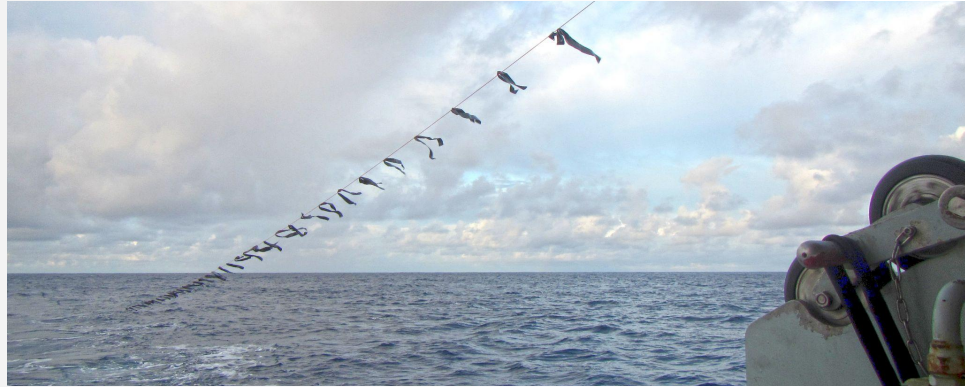
Pacific Islands
Regional Office

Get Involved

NOAA Fisheries is accepting comments on the proposed rule through November 16, 2023. For questions, contact Lynn Rassel, (808) 725-5036.



Proposed Changes to Seabird Measures for the Hawai'i Deep-Set Longline Fishery



Tori lines, or bird-scaring streamers. Credit NOAA Fisheries

Overview

NOAA Fisheries is proposing to modify seabird interaction mitigation requirements in the Hawai'i pelagic deep-set (tuna) longline fishery.

The proposed changes would require deep-set longline vessels that stern-set to employ a tori line system instead of using thawed, blue-dyed bait and strategic offal discharge when fishing north of 23° N latitude. The tori line system would be required to meet certain specifications and be deployed before the first hook is set. Line shooters and weighted branchlines (at least 45 g weight within 1 m of each hook) would continue to be used in conjunction with the tori lines.

Who does the proposed rule affect?

This rule would apply **only** to Hawai'i deep-set fishing vessels setting gear from the stern above 23° N latitude. It would not apply to shallow- or side-setting vessels.

Why is NOAA Fisheries proposing this change?

The proposed action is intended to reduce albatross interactions while streamlining fishing operations and fishery management.

What are the next steps in the rulemaking process?

NOAA Fisheries issued the proposed rule on October 17, 2023, and is accepting public comments on the proposed rule through November 16, 2023. All comments received by this date will be considered. If approved, NOAA Fisheries anticipates that the final rule would be effective approximately 60 days from the end of the comment period.

Provide Comments

Where can people submit comments?

- **Online:** Submit comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to www.regulations.gov, enter NOAA-NMFS-2022-0131 in the search box, and click the "Comment" icon.
- **Mail to:** Sarah Malloy, Acting Regional Administrator, NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg. 176, Honolulu, HI 96818

Proposed Specifications

What are the proposed tori line specifications?

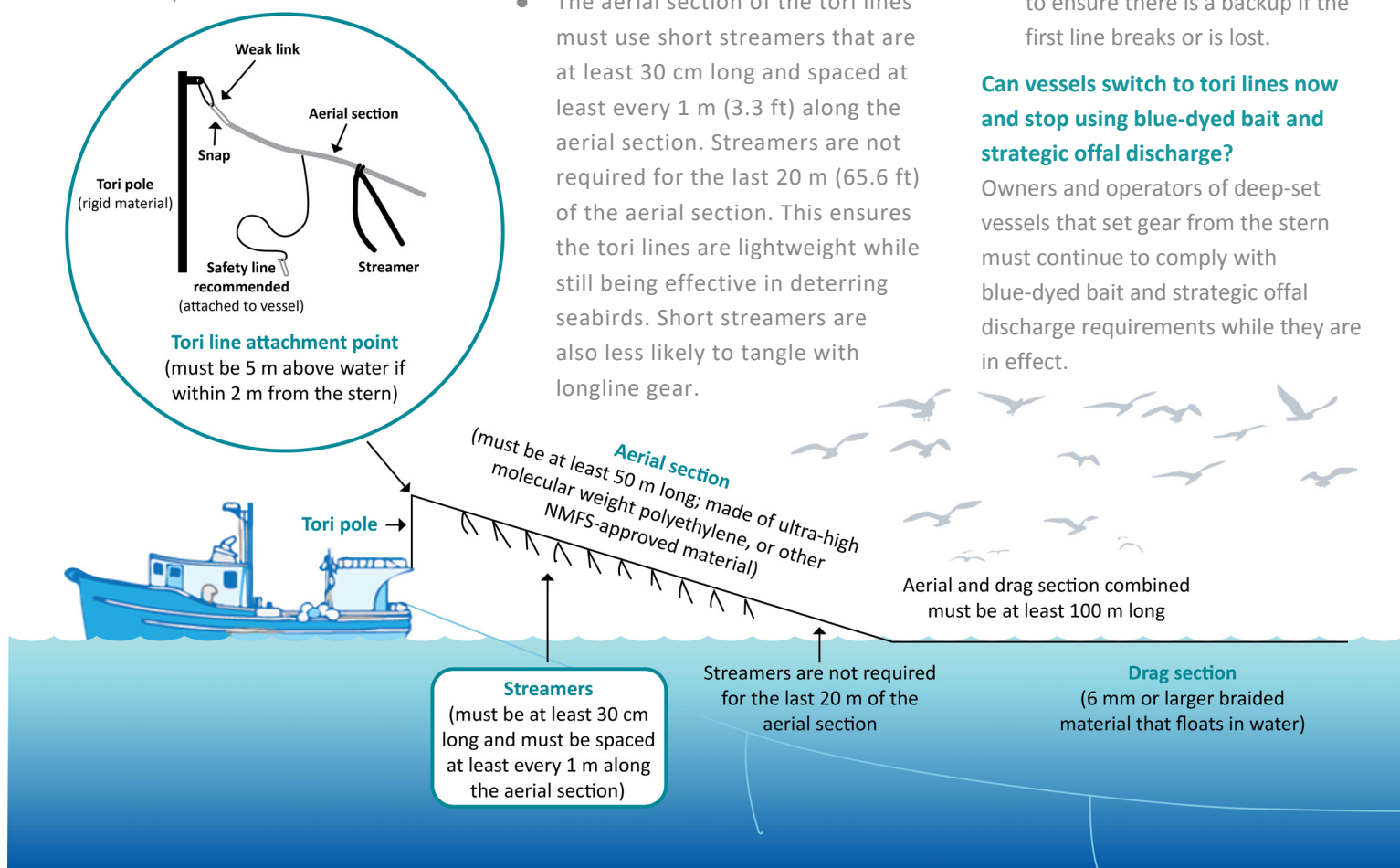
The rule would require a specific design for the tori line. This design is based on expert input, trials, and feedback from fishermen. Proposed length, material, and attachment point specifications include:

- The tori line must have an aerial section with a minimum length of 50 m (164 ft) and a total minimum length (aerial and drag sections combined) of 100 m (328 ft).
- The aerial section must be made of ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene or other NOAA Fisheries-approved material that is lightweight, water resistant, low stretch, and floats in water.
- The drag section must be made of 6 mm or larger braided material that floats in water.
- Monofilament nylon cannot be used in the aerial nor drag sections of the tori line. This ensures the line stays at the surface, even in windy conditions, without having a buoy at the end of the tori line. The specifications do not include a buoy as part of the drag section, and instead are based on a design that uses only a long buoyant rope. This reduces chances of entanglement with longline gear while creating enough drag to keep the streamers in the air.
- The aerial section of the tori lines must use short streamers that are at least 30 cm long and spaced at least every 1 m (3.3 ft) along the aerial section. Streamers are not required for the last 20 m (65.6 ft) of the aerial section. This ensures the tori lines are lightweight while still being effective in deterring seabirds. Short streamers are also less likely to tangle with longline gear.

- The tori line must be attached to the vessel or a fixed structure on the vessel made of rigid material at a minimum height of 5 m (16.4 ft) above the water. If the tori line attachment point is greater than 2 m (6.6 ft) from the stern, the height would need to be increased by 0.5 m (1.6 ft) for every 5 m (16.4 ft) from the stern. Attachment point exemptions for unforeseen events are listed in the proposed rule.
- A breakaway or weak link must be included at the point of attachment as a safety precaution.
- Two tori lines must be on board the vessel at the start of every trip to ensure there is a backup if the first line breaks or is lost.

Can vessels switch to tori lines now and stop using blue-dyed bait and strategic offal discharge?

Owners and operators of deep-set vessels that set gear from the stern must continue to comply with blue-dyed bait and strategic offal discharge requirements while they are in effect.



Proposed tori line system specifications for Hawai'i deep-set longline fishing vessels that stern-set gear when fishing north of 23° N latitude. Credit: NOAA Fisheries



Gina M. Raimondo
U.S. Secretary of Commerce

Richard W. Spinrad
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere

Janet Coit
Assistant Administrator
for Fisheries

National Marine Fisheries Service
Pacific Islands Regional Office
1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg. 176 Honolulu, HI 96818