

Summary

From 1996 – 2009, an interagency collaboration among NOAA, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the North Pacific Longline Association and Washington Sea Grant resulted in unprecedented conservation actions for the Short-tailed Albatross- a large seabird listed, in 1970, as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. This is the (brief) story of how one man got motivated and worked with federal agencies to protect a multi-million dollar fishery and along the way help save a species from extinction. (It did good things for other seabirds, as well!) It was what some of us might call...A win-win situation.

Scene 1

Year 1996: North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting: Thorn Smith, then Executive Director of the North Pacific Longline Association (now reassembled as the Freezer Longline Coalition) addresses the Council because a boat in the Alaska longline fishery had killed a short-tailed albatross.

Scene 2

Year 1998 Meeting between NMFS and FWS: FWS delivers their biological opinion to NMFS and the agencies decide what to do next.

Scene 3

Telephone conversation: Ed Melvin with Washington Sea Grant is talking to USFWS and NMFS about ways of preventing albatrosses (and coincidentally, other seabirds) from getting hooked in longline gear. New regulations require the use of bird scaring devices on boats in the longline fishery.

Scene 4

Telephone conversation: Ed Melvin is extolling the virtues of using two streamer lines to reduce seabird bycatch and making suggestions for upgrades the will make the system even better. However, the new regulations weren't working for all segments of the fishery.

Scene 5

North Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings: Kristin Mabry from NOAA explains why areas in Southeast Alaska can be exempt from the use of tori lines.

Scene 6

North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting one year later: Kristin Mabry explains NOAA's decision to subdivide area 4E in western Alaska providing further regulatory relief based on sound science.

*“And a good south wind sprung up behind; The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play, Came to the mariner's hollo!”
(Rime of the Ancient Mariner; C. Coleridge)*

ONE SHOW ONLY! – SEPT 9, 2009

Sand Point Theatre and Pas Deux Productions
Present:

THE BRILLIANT BUBBLE-GUM BIRD BARTER



Sponsored by:

- NOAA Fisheries Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- North Pacific Fishery Management Council
- Washington Sea Grant



Actors

Greg Balogh has been working on short-tailed albatross and fishery issues since 1997. He wrote the grant proposals that resulted in over \$800K going towards making and distributing free tori lines, wrote the biological opinions that set take of short-tailed albatrosses at 2 per year for Alaska's longline fishing industry, worked with Washington Sea Grant on funding their initial seabird avoidance research in Alaska, worked with NOAA fisheries staff on drafting seabird regulations, is the leader of the Short-tailed Albatross Recovery Team, and now represents the USFWS on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. His previous acting experience includes playing the part of a cross-dressing environmentalist in a single performance of a one act play in rural West Virginia.



Bill Wilson has been a fisheries research and management biologist for 35+ years. He has worked in marine fisheries management for decades, and has been on staff at the Council for two stints; one in the late 80s and another since 2003. He works on protected resources issues and coordinates marine fishery management actions to protect seabirds, marine mammals, and ESA-listed species that may interact with commercial crab and groundfish fisheries. Bill's acting experience includes reading to his two granddaughters.



When **Kristin Mabry** isn't teaching yoga, she's data cruncher extraordinaire, assembling massive NEPA documents that few brave souls read in their entirety. Sometimes she gets to act them out at NPFMC meetings. Analyses in 2007 and 2008 resulted in regulatory relief for vessels fishing where seabird bycatch is not a conservation issue, and more efficient requirements in areas where it is. Doesn't everyone do GIS in pigeon pose?



*"At length did cross an Albatross, Through the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul, We hailed it in God's name"*

Kim Rivera (3rd from right) saves seabirds and in her spare time is *uber* triathlete (or wants to be!). She is the National Seabird Coordinator for NOAA Fisheries Service and has been working with the USFWS since 1996 to reduce seabird bycatch in Alaska. She is on the Short-tailed Albatross Recovery Team and has worked on seabirds from about every desk angle that is possible--NEPA documents, reg writing, fishery plan teams, co-convening CCAMLR's seabird bycatch working group. Here she is acting like she's actually having fun after just completing the Aflac Irongirl Triathlon.



Shannon Fitzgerald has been instrumental in providing seabird bycatch data to all interested parties and has facilitated the many special research projects that have resulted in fewer seabirds dying a premature death. In this photo, he is acting like it's summer by only wearing a (blue) baseball cap in the arctic. That's cool, Shannon!



Cast of Characters:

- Greg Balogh**FWS Representative,
Simon Kineen, Fisherman
- Shannon Fitzgerald**.....Thorn Smith, N. Pacific Longline Assoc
Gerry Merrigan, Fisherman
- Bill Wilson** N. Pacific Fishery Mgmt Council Rep
Ed Melvin, WA Sea Grant
- Kim Rivera**NOAA Fisheries Service Rep
Pribilof Representative
- Kristin Mabry**..... Kristin Mabry-NOAA

...and your Narrator

*"It ate the food it ne'er had eat, And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit; The helmsman steered us through!"*