



BirdLife South Africa

Position Statement on the disturbance and harming of seabirds

- Seabirds are commonly found foraging in the same areas as those targeted by fishermen.
- Many species, such as albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters, are natural scavengers and target baited hooks and discards from fishing vessels, as these mimic very closely these species' natural food sources.
- Using bait and “chum” during fishing can lead to conflicts between foraging seabirds and recreational anglers and commercial pole-and-line fishermen.
- BirdLife South Africa opposes the disturbance of seabirds by fishermen using any form of projectile (firearms or other propulsion systems, including ‘paintball’ guns and pellets).
 - This is done to deter the birds from accessing baited hooks, chum or other fishing gear.
 - This practice is likely to cause death (e.g. from direct headshots at close range) and serious injury leading to death (such as a pellet to the eye causing permanent blindness).
- BirdLife South Africa opposes the killing of seabirds by fishermen in order to retrieve hooks that the birds have swallowed.
 - The deliberate killing or disturbance of seabirds is illegal in terms of the Sea Birds and Seals Protection Act of 1973. The regulations for the act, published in 2004 *inter alia* prohibit any killing of seabirds (without a permit) or deliberate disturbance by humans.
- Shooting projectiles and killing seabirds to retrieve hooks are both unnecessary and illegal. Responsible fishermen do not behave like this.
- BirdLife South Africa condemns all such actions in the strongest possible terms.

