

**4<sup>th</sup> International Fisheries Observer Conference**  
**Pre-Conference Workshop: Development of Best Practices for the Collection of**  
**Longline Data to Facilitate Research and Analysis to Reduce Bycatch**

Recent workshops on the bycatch of sea turtles, marine mammals, and sea birds in longline fisheries have generated recommendations regarding the need for standardized data collections to facilitate scientific research and the development and implementation of strategies to reduce bycatch. Consistently collected information would facilitate improved assessments of fishing impacts on bycatch species, while allowing better research and development of gear modifications or changes in fishing practices to reduce bycatch. For example, not all observer programs collect consistent information on number of hooks, types of hooks, use of lightsticks, use of streamers, type of bait, disposition of bycatch, condition upon release, etc. In addition, the reliability of accurate species identification may vary depending on materials available for training and the priority or time available to include adequate training on identification of bycatch species. Consistency in longline data collections would also be helpful for reducing bycatch of other non-target species, such as marine mammals, billfish, sharks, etc.

To facilitate implementation of recommendations regarding consistency in data collections, this workshop proposes to bring together scientists involved in research and data analysis of longline fishery bycatch, managers of longline fishery observer programs, fisheries managers, and other interested parties to identify key data elements and/or biological samples that should be collected in longline fisheries worldwide. Prior to the workshop, the organizers request that managers of longline fishery observer programs provide a list of the data currently being collected (or copies of data forms) for each longline trip and haul so that this information can be compiled and made available to all workshop participants as a starting point for identifying core data elements that should be collected in all observed longline fisheries.

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The 4<sup>th</sup> International Fisheries Observer Conference will be held in Manly Beach (Sydney), Australia, Nov 8-11, 2004. The workshop will be held on November 8. For more information about the conference, go to: [www.fisheriesobserverconference.com](http://www.fisheriesobserverconference.com).