



The Threatened Species Network is a community-based program of the Australian Government and WWF-Australia.

# Increasing the uptake of de-hooking and line-cutting devices in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) and Southern and Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (SWTBF)

THREATENED SPECIES NETWORK COMMUNITY GRANTS PROFILE



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Ocean Watch Australia's SeaNet Program, in partnership with the East Coast Tuna Boat Owners Association, aimed to give threatened marine species caught in the tuna and billfish fisheries the maximum chance of post release survival through promoting the use of various de-hookers and line-cutters when removing non-target species from fishing lines. Ocean Watch set out to identify and document the most effective release devices and practices; and to promote their uptake by training an initially small number of fishers in the use of the devices.



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## Threatened marine species: sea turtles, albatross and sharks

The de-hooking and line-cutting devices can be used to release and maximise the chances of survival of virtually any non-target species. In particular, it is hoped that the use of these tools will reduce mortality of threatened species such as marine turtles, albatross and shark species.

## Project outcomes

With the assistance of a Threatened Species Network Community Grant, twelve sets of seven line-cutting and de-hooking devices were originally purchased for trial on vessels in the ETBF and SWTBF. However, the interest generated by the release devices amongst the industry exceeded all expectations and many longline operators contacted Ocean Watch to request a set. In the end, over a hundred operators participated in the trial and kept records of how the various devices performed when used to release non-target species. With this information, Ocean Watch identified the three most effective tools for reducing by-catch mortality.

The correct use of the release devices was demonstrated at turtle education workshops and on-board training sessions conducted by SeaNet staff. A sticker, laminated card and video were produced for distribution to each boat to further instruct on the use of the successful devices and training and assistance continues to be provided to fishers. Following the success of this TSN grant-assisted project, Ocean Watch was able to obtain funding to distribute release devices to all operating longline vessels in Australian waters.

### Outputs

Volunteers participated: 110

Person days worked: 85

### Products

- De-hooker report form
- Laminated instruction card and sticker
- Instruction video "Hooks out and cut the line"

### Expenditure

TSN grant funds - \$27,346.00

Proponent - \$41,030.00

Total project - \$68,376.00