

Hooked Seabirds Handling Guidelines*

- Gently lift the bird on board with a long handled dip net and cover it with a clean towel or blanket. This will calm the bird and keep it free from oils, especially fish oil. These materials can affect the bird's ability to recover and fly properly. Do not wrap the bird's body too tightly as this will prevent the bird from breathing. Do not obstruct the nasal openings because this will prevent the bird from breathing.
- Working in teams of two, secure the bird's head and isolate the hooked or entangled area while another person removes the bird from the net. Fold the bird's wings to their natural resting position against the body. **Wear gloves, long sleeves and protective eyewear when handling seabirds. They have sharp beaks and painful bites.**
- Cut all fishing line and remove it from the bird. If the bird is lightly hooked in the bill, leg or wing and the barbed end of the hook is visible, use **BOLT CUTTERS** to pare the hook barb and then thread the hook out backwards. If the bird has been deeply hooked, cut the line as close to the hook as possible and leave the hook in place. **Never attempt to remove a hook from anywhere on a bird by pulling on the leader line.**
- Allow the bird to dry. This will take from 30 minutes to four hours. The bird should be able to stand on its feet, hold its head erect, respond to sound, breathe without noise and retract its wings into a normal folding position.
- Record numbers from any leg bands. Send band numbers and information on type of seabird, date, location of capture, name of vessel and seabird mitigation methods to the National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Area Office, 1601 Kapiolani Blvd., #1110, Honolulu, HI 96814.
- Before releasing the bird, stop the boat. Gently ease the bird onto the water. Do not throw it into the air. Do not motor away until the bird is clear of the vessel.

FOR MORE INFORMATION contact the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop St., #1400, Honolulu, HI 96813 USA; tel. (808) 522-8220; fax (808) 522-8226; www.wpcouncil.org.

*Approved by the International Bird Rescue Research Center



Seabird NOT ready to be released



Seabird ready to be released



If the bird is a short-tailed albatross, call USCG to reach NMFS for handling instructions.

—H. Hasegawa photo