

Walk the Line - VAD Staff Exhibition 2007

Fishing the sky

Linda Bruce

The line between conservation and profitable commercial fishing is constantly being tested and challenged. The accidental capture and death of 34 albatrosses by one long-line tuna fishing vessel off the Chatham's Rise in September 2007 crossed the boundary of acceptable practice. The deaths were tragic because they could easily have been avoided by the use of voluntary codes of practice to reduce seabird captures in fisheries. The use of these measures is highly effective, reducing seabird by-catch by near 100 per cent.

The Salvin's Albatross are listed as "vulnerable": 22 were captured and died. The Chatham Albatross are "critically endangered": 12 were captured and died. The next category down after that is "extinction in the wild". A dozen deaths of this species in a single event are a serious threat to the conservation of the species.

Perspex, fish hooks, plastic, paper, photocopy, wire