

## Maritime briefs ...

■ SAMTRA has trained its first group from Africa. In discussions with the Nigerian Ports Authority, special needs were expressed with regards to the training of their trainee pilots. SAMTRA consequently adapted standard course material to ensure that these training needs were satisfactorily catered for and John Burns, David Wolfaardt as well as Peter Yon have successfully conducted the first tailor made training programme for this group. The training that was undertaken on SAMTRA's full mission bridge simulators, included Bridge watchkeeping, Crisis and Emergency Management and Continuation Training. A General Elements of Shipping Course was also incorporated into the training. Enquires from Mozambique and Angola are currently being assessed.

■ Grindrod Limited is pleased to announce that it has acquired, through Oreport's holding company Seascope Commodities (Pty) Limited, a 50% shareholding in Oreport. Grindrod will subscribe for its shareholding in cash and the effective date of the transaction is 1st July 2005. This transaction is subject to the approval of the shareholders of Seascope Commodities and to certain regulatory approvals including the approval of the Competition Board. Oreport is an international marketing organization specializing in the worldwide procurement, physical movement and distribution of a range of industrial raw materials.

## Seabird mitigation measures do work!

**Marine life, including seabirds, turtles and sharks, can co-exist with longline fisheries, provided that fishing companies, skippers and fishers are rigorous in their use of simple by-catch mitigation measures.**

This was one of the strongest messages conveyed by Samantha Petersen of Birdlife South Africa, who discussed some of the findings of her research at a recent meeting of the South African Network for Coastal and Oceanic Research (SANCOR).

Petersen is based at the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of Ornithology at the University of Cape Town. She is one of the co-ordinators of a project which is assessing the scale of the by-catch problem in regional longline fisheries and devising simple measures to try and avoid the senseless killing of seabirds, turtles and sharks.



■ Samantha Petersen of Birdlife International is trying to find a solution to the seabird bycatch problem.

The project is funded by the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME) Programme and is implemented by Birdlife South Africa and the World Wildlife Fund.

### Extinction a real problem

Petersen paints a grim picture when she notes that 19 of 21 species of albatross are threatened with extinction. Although pollution, human disturbance, habitat destruction and introduced predators such as rats and mice all contribute to the desperate plight of the elegant gliders, it is longline fishing that poses by far the biggest threat to their survival. An estimated 300 000 seabirds die on longline hooks each year.

Petersen's description of turtle by-catch is equally disturbing: around 200 000 loggerhead turtles and 50 000 leatherback turtles are hooked by pelagic longliners globally per annum. Not all of them die.

Leatherback and Hawksbill turtles are critically endangered, while loggerhead, green turtles and olive ridley turtles are endangered.

There is also mounting global concern for sharks which are caught in large numbers by pelagic longliners. Thirty six species of threatened sharks frequent South Africa waters. Nineteen of these are taken as by-catch or directed catch in the pelagic longline fishery.

One of the difficulties facing Petersen and her colleagues as they try to muster support for the use of simple by-catch mitigation measures in the regional longline fishing industry is the fact that the capture of seabirds and turtles is a relatively rare occurrence on longline fishing boats.

Hundreds, or even thousands of fish may be landed before a turtle or seabird is hooked.

The problem is that seabirds and turtles migrate over vast distances – very often they circumnavigate the world.

Their incredible journeys regularly bring them into contact with the global fishing industry. If they're not caught off South Africa, they have a good chance of being caught elsewhere.

"Small numbers add up when we consider the fishing fleet or the region," explains Petersen.



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WEBBER WENTZEL BOWENS  
www.webb.co.za

Cape Town: Tel: +27 21 405 5000 • Fax: +27 21 405 5001

Arthur James: arthurj@webb.co.za • +27 83 700 4087  
Patrick Holloway: patrickh@webb.co.za • +27 82 557 0457  
Andre Bowley: andreb@webb.co.za • +27 83 252 4760  
Roger Field: rogerf@webb.co.za • +27 82 569 3547  
Reinard Dunster: reind@webb.co.za • +27 82 454 0187

### Measures being adopted

South Africa has been relatively progressive about introducing measures to minimise by-catch in its longline fisheries. It is in the process of developing a National Plan of Action aimed at reducing the by-catch of seabirds and sharks in its waters. It has also ratified the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and the Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa.

In reality, however, the implementation of these lofty plans and agreements is less than ideal. Although the deployment of mitigation measures for reducing seabird by-catch is a permit condition in the longline fisheries, Petersen and her colleagues have found that compliance is very low.

Setting lines at night is a permit condition, but fisheries observers have reported that less than 20 percent of the fishing fleet complies with this condition. Similarly, less than 10 percent of the fleet uses bird scaring lines (tori lines).

Fishers are, however, not totally to blame, says Petersen: "Permit conditions are vague," she says, explaining that there's no hard and fast definition of what a bird scaring line is. And, although fishing lines are supposed to be "appropriately weighted", what this actually means is anyone's guess. There is poor enforcement of permit conditions and a low awareness of bird, turtle and shark by-catch issues among skippers and crew.

One of the most attractive aspects of Petersen's research is that she's not just assessing the scale of the by-catch problem, she's also trying to come up with cost-effective mitigation measures that work for fishers.

### Tori lines tested

Petersen and her colleagues are currently testing different types of tori lines with a view to developing a design that is simple to use and works well in South African conditions. They've also been experimenting with various line weighting regimes so that they can make recommendations to fishers about how to get their lines to sink more quickly. If baits sink rapidly to a depth where albatrosses and petrels can no longer dive (13m for white chinned petrels, 7 metres for shy albatross), then the chances of catching seabirds on longline hooks is dramatically reduced.

Tori lines have been shown to reduce seabird by-catch by up to 80 percent, but Petersen emphasises that they must be



■ **Weights help baited hooks to sink fast, keeping them out of the reach of albatrosses and petrels which can dive to depths of 7m and 13m respectively.**



■ **Globally, about 50 000 leatherback turtles are killed by longliners each year.**

Photo by: Claudio Velasquez

deployed correctly if they are to work effectively and not interfere with fishing operations.

Although they have not been tested to the same extent as the seabird by-catch mitigation measures, there are ways in which the fishing industry can avoid catching turtles. For instance, using fish rather than squid as bait and setting gear deeper than 40m can be effective. Tests are underway to see whether the use of circle hooks can make it easier to release turtles alive and tools are available to make this procedure quicker and less damaging to turtles.

### Creating awareness

The biggest challenge undoubtedly lies in raising awareness among fishers. Petersen and her colleagues have been working with fisheries observers to improve awareness of by-catch issues in the longline fisheries and their work with the fishing industry will continue.

"Our work with giant petrels has shown that a well managed fishery, complying with mitigation measures can in fact coexist quite happily with pelagic seabirds," concludes Petersen.

By Claire Attwood

## ZA Trans acquires TRT Shipping from Oceana Group

**Z**A Trans Logistics, a freight forwarding and customs clearing company wholly owned by Barloworld Logistics, has announced the strategic new acquisition of TRT Shipping (TRT).

The acquisition of TRT Shipping (TRT), previously owned by the JSE listed Oceana Group, is effective 1st July and is worth over R20 million. TRT, with offices in Cape Town and Walvis Bay, offers a range of services, from freight forwarding and customs clearing, to bunkering and ships agency, and currently employs approximately 80 people.

The acquisition extends Barloworld Logistics' capabilities in the freight forwarding and customs clearing market, and allows ZA Trans the opportunity to diversify its range of services within the shipping industry to now include bunkering and ships agency.

Says Jürgen Heynemann, MD of TRT, "We are very pleased to come on board as part of ZA Trans and Barloworld Logistics, and we look forward to the opportunity to develop synergies in our combined areas of business."

Adds Warren Erfmann, CEO of ZA Trans, "We are extremely excited about the latest addition to the ZA Trans family, as it also ties in with the first step of our international expansion plans. TRT's office in Namibia will allow us to take advantage of all opportunities offered by the Walvis Bay Corridor and forms part of our strategy to extend our operations into Africa. In addition, we now have tremendous growth opportunities in ship's agency and bunkering, something which we were previously not involved in."

■ **From left to right: Jürgen Heynemann, Managing Director of TRT Shipping, Warren Erfmann CEO of ZA Trans and Rod Nicol, Financial Director of the Oceana Group Limited.**

