Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

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Reducing bycatch of threatened megafauna in the East Central Atlantic (REDUCE)

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SUMMARY

The REDUCE project aims to minimize bycatch of Endangered, Threatened, and Protected Species (ETPS) in industrial EU fisheries operating in the East Central Atlantic Ocean (ECAO). The project focuses on purse-seine, longline, and trawler fleets, particularly from Spain, France, and Portugal, which significantly contribute to bycatch in this biodiversity hotspot. REDUCE will employ interdisciplinary scientific approaches to enhance fishery monitoring, understand bycatch dynamics, and develop effective mitigation strategies. Key objectives include improving bycatch data collection through advanced electronic monitoring and machine learning, assessing post-release mortality, and evaluating bycatch risks through integrated modeling. The project also aims to quantify bycatch impacts on ETPS populations and collaborate with stakeholders to co-design sustainable bycatch solutions. Emphasizing international cooperation and capacity-building, REDUCE aligns with the goals of the UN 'BBNJ' treaty and EU conservation policies. By piloting innovative bycatch mitigation measures and promoting marine spatial planning, REDUCE seeks to transform bycatch management and ensure sustainable fishery practices in the ECAO, potentially setting a precedent for global fisheries.

KEYWORDS: Bycatch mitigation, East Central Atlantic Ocean, endangered species, sustainable fisheries, species distribution models, electronic monitoring, marine spatial planning