

influence it to the point where the fishermen work with us to develop and implement gear modifications that will reduce albatross bycatch, a significant threat to the species' survival. But there are many steps to that end. Step one is to get to know and win the trust of the fishermen; then we need to make our goals understood; and most importantly, we need to find the overlap between our interests and theirs. Only then can we begin the process of influencing their activities. All three steps involve one very important principle: *you* must go to *them*; hence my trip to this village port.

The first step is all about people. Jodie Darquea, the field coordinator and trainer for the project, is a bright, voluble young woman from a nearby town with a knack for building camaraderie with the fishermen. Jodi was my hostess for this trip and was accompanied by Tato, himself a fisherman whom Jodi has mentored to become a real conservation partner. Interested and motivated people such as this are the backbone of any education project. It was hard for me to divine the origins of Tato's conservation ethic, but it was apparent in every conversation we had with him, whether he was peppering us with questions about the biology of the albatross or speculating about the numerous nature documentaries he had watched. He was greeted by just about everyone who walked by, and got some teasing about his t-shirt, which read "Not only am I handsome, I'm a responsible fishermen too", a gift from ProDelphinus, an ABC partner doing similar work in Peru.

We had started with plans to visit just the port, but a good plan is one that can be changed, and we decided to



Jodie Darquea interviewing fisherman in the small port of Santa Rosa, Ecuador, 2008.
Jodie Darquea, Equilibrio Azul



The fisherman on the left is wearing a t-shirt that says: "Not only am I handsome, I'm a responsible fisherman too". The shirt was a gift from ABC partner ProDelphinus. Photo: J. Mangel, September 2009.

capitalize on the interest we had sparked and visit some of the fishermen as they worked on their gear. Tato and Jodi swung into action, explaining our presence and showing pictures of the birds we work on. The fishermen requested photos, asked questions, looked at the gear with us, and argued energetically about which birds they had seen and their behaviors. Some of the crew obviously liked birds and were interested and engaged when we reviewed methods for safely releasing birds caught on their lines. After an hour, the impromptu workshop was complete, not a flip-chart in sight.

Thanks to the ongoing work of Tato, Jodi, Equilibrio Azul, and the fishing community, we are learning when to anticipate and how to prevent the interactions of Waved Albatross with these small fishing boats. We understand more about the way these small boats use gear, deploy their sets, and handle their catches than anyone outside the fishing community ever has (education goes both ways!).

As the project goes forward, we expect to work with the local fishermen to test different methods of preventing seabird bycatch, such as weighted lines to quickly sink the bait, and reducing its impacts by releasing live birds with minimal damage. Above all, this project has enabled ABC and Equilibrio Azul to build strong relationships with the fishermen, meaning that we will have the ability to make a long-term difference in protecting the Waved Albatross.