



**Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels**

**Fourth Meeting of the Advisory Committee**

*Cape Town, South Africa, 22 - 25 August 2008*

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**Status of the Southern Giant Petrel in the Antarctic Region**  
**Reaching Consensus regarding the List of Threat Criteria of the IUCN at a regional level for**  
**presentation to the Committee on Environmental Protection in 2008**

**Observer's Report**

**Argentina**

**Observer's Report: Status of the Southern Giant Petrel in the Antarctic Region  
Reaching Consensus regarding the List of Threat Criteria of the IUCN at a regional level for  
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Name of Meeting: Status of the Southern Giant Petrel in the Antarctic Region –  
Reaching Consensus regarding the List of Threat Criteria of the IUCN at a regional level  
for presentation to the Committee on Environmental Protection in 2008

Meeting organized by: SCAR (Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research). Chair:  
Steven Chown (SCAR)

Date and venue of meeting: 19 - 20 May 2008, Scientific Committee on Antarctic  
Research, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, UK.

Website address: [www.scar.org](http://www.scar.org)

Participant's Name/Institution: Dr. Flavio Quintana (*Centro Nacional Patagónico -  
Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, Argentina*).

Relevant documents presented: Participants at the workshop presented in anticipation  
various documents with information on population sizes of SGP colonies within their  
areas of study. Current publications were also presented as annexes (Creuwels et. al  
2005, Quintana et. al 2006) as well as manuscripts in press (Patterson et. al, in press).  
Some experts who did not attend the workshop also sent their opinions and comments in  
writing.

Authors and/or speakers:

Documents presented were debated by all participants at the workshop: Stuart Butchart  
(BirdLife International), Steven Chown (SCAR, Chair), Jeroen Creuwels (Netherlands),  
Harry Keys (New Zealand), Donna Patterson (U.S.A.), Hans-Ulrich Peter (Germany),  
Richard Phillips (U.K.) and Flavio Quintana (ACAP).

Summary of Contents:

For the purposes of the workshop, an extensive list was presented of data on  
abundance and population trends of the species in all the breeding sites for which  
information was available. The basis of this work was the data collection undertaken by  
Patterson et al (manuscript in press with data available up to the 1999/2000 breeding  
season). This was updated to the 2007/2008 breeding season with information available  
but not yet published. All data were analysed during the workshop within the context of  
the Red List of Criteria of the IUCN (A to E) and in relation to which conclusions were  
arrived at and a series of recommendations were made regarding the Status of the SGP  
in colonies located South of Parallel 60.

Participants at the workshop shed light on a series of problems with the management of data for these to be reliably used as indicators of population trends and a list of recommendations was established regarding future population estimates for the species.

Outcomes:

A. Main conclusion:

On the basis of data presented at the workshop and on the analysis undertaken by the participants it was concluded that: “data presented and the analysis undertaken do not warrant the designation of the Southern Giant Petrel as a Specially Protected Species pursuant to Annex II of the Protocol on Environmental Protection” (see Addendum to XXXI ATCM WP10).

B. Key findings:

1. Global SGP population would include approximately some 54,086 breeding pairs (21% at south of parallel 60). This estimate recognizes that there are still data not yet available in relation to a few breeding sites and that most recent estimates of some colonies go back to more than 70 years.
2. In the best-case scenario, the estimate of the population trend of this species below parallel 60 demonstrates an increase of 30.7% during the last three generations (1944 to 2008) (Criterion A2 of the IUCN). For their part, the worst-case scenarios would indicate a 7.1% increase. Consequently, and in accordance with the global criteria of the IUCN, the breeding population of the SGP below 60°S is classified as Low Risk. This means it did not qualify under any of the other categories of threat (Critically Threatened, In Danger, Vulnerable, Close to Threat).
3. To the north of Parallel 60, the best of scenarios posed demonstrated a population increase of 13.8% during the last three generations (1944-2008). However, under the worst possible hypothetical conditions posed, the breeding population would have seen a decrease of 10.2% during this period. Both scenarios qualify the breeding population at north (and above 60°S) as Low Risk in accordance with criterion A2 of the IUCN.
4. The combination of data from both regions demonstrated a 17% increase and a 7.2% decrease in the best and worst case scenarios, respectively. Thus, at a global level the breeding population of the SGP can be considered as being of Low Risk in accordance with criterion A2 of the IUCN.
5. Similar analyses also indicated that the species can be considered as being of Low Risk in accordance with the rest of threat criteria of the IUCN (B to E), in relation to both population south and north of 60°S, or in respect of both combined.

6. Despite the general results arrived at, experts at the workshop agreed that existing data demonstrate great complexity in the determination of population trends. This includes, for example, the trend of birds to change their nesting sites if they are persistently disturbed, the absence of distinction between the Northern Giant Petrel and the Southern Giant Petrel in counts prior to the '60s, the lack of accuracy of the same (in some cases, they are merely approximations), the incompatibility of data due to the use of different counting techniques, etc.
7. In light of comments raised in 6 above, the future development of protocols for censuses was recommended as well as more coherent monitoring agreed upon by experts with a view to improving estimates of population trends for this species. It was thus suggested that at a more advanced stage, quantitative demographic models be developed which incorporate new data to those currently available in order to reassess the status of threat to the species, both at regional and global levels.

Opportunities for future participation with ACAP:

The implementation of recommendations listed in the document was recommended (Addendum to XXXI ATCM WP10) to all Parties to the Antarctic Treaty and it was also recommended to submit all population and breeding information relating to the Southern Giant Petrel to the ACAP Secretariat for inclusion into its database.

Recommended actions for ACAP:

To work in an integrated manner and in synergy with the Antarctic Treaty in matters relating to the conservation of albatrosses and petrels and to the habitat and resources on which albatrosses and petrels depend on. In this regard, it is understood as advisable to:

- a) Support the implementation of the Antarctic Treaty and the Environmental Protocol in all aspects relating to the objectives of ACAP for the conservation of albatrosses and petrels, particularly those species occurring within the area of jurisdiction of the Treaty.
- b) Recommend to the Parties of the Treaty to avoid any type of significant disturbance (both scientific and tourist alike) over the breeding areas of ACAP species and to take said species into consideration in the development of environmental impact studies and/or in the development of monitoring plans for such studies.
- c) Request that the Committee on Environmental Protection consults the Advisory Committee of ACAP in all matters relating to ACAP species and their habitat.
- d) Identify opportunities for information exchange, in particular, information relating to population status and trends and the conservation status and management of nesting sites of albatross and petrel species listed in Annex I of ACAP.

Have the relevant documents already been submitted to the Secretariat?: Yes

