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Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

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Implementation Report – United Kingdom

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REPORT FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS (ACAP) 2006-2008

This is the second ACAP implementation report from the UK, and follows the reporting format prescribed in Annex 8 of the record of the third meeting of the ACAP Advisory Committee (AC3). The previous (first) report covered the period 2004-2006; this report covers the period June 2006 to March 2008, but includes earlier information where relevant for context.

The UK is a breeding range state for ACAP. This report covers the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI) and the Tristan da Cunha group (the territories), which together support breeding populations of 12 ACAP species, including three endemic species (Table 1 below).

The British Antarctic Territory (BAT) is included in the UK's ratification of ACAP. However, information on the BAT and waters is not included in this report - except for brief inputs in some sections - on the basis that activities there are co-ordinated through the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS); including the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) Group of Experts on Birds and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). To avoid duplication in reporting by ACAP Parties it is suggested that the most efficient and appropriate way for ACAP to receive information on Antarctica is through the ATS (e.g. CCAMLR, SCAR and the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP)) rather than directly through ACAP Parties.

Table 1. ACAP species breeding in the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, Tristan da Cunha and the British Antarctic Territory

Island Group ACAP Species	**Falkland Islands**	South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands	Tristan da Cunha	British Antarctic Territory
Wandering albatross *Diomedea exulans*		✓		
Tristan albatross *Diomedea dabbenena*			✓[2]	
Grey-headed albatross *Thalassarche chrysostoma*		✓		
Black-browed albatross *Thalassarche melanophris*	✓	✓		
Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross *Thalassarche chlororhynchos*			✓[2]	
White-capped albatross *Thalassarche steadi*		✓[1]		
Sooty albatross *Phoebetria fusca*			✓	
Light-mantled sooty albatross *Phoebetria palpebrata*		✓		
Southern giant petrel *Macronectes giganteus*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern giant petrel *Macronectes halli*		✓		
White-chinned petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*	✓	✓		
Spectacled petrel *Procellaria conspicillata*			✓[2]	
Grey petrel *Procellaria cinerea*			✓	

[1] A male white-capped albatross is currently breeding in a mixed pair with a black-browed albatross at Bird Island, South Georgia. The chick hatched successfully and was still alive as of February 2008. It is as yet unknown whether the chick is a genuine hybrid, or resulted from an extra-pair copulation.
[2] Endemic breeding species.

1. Species Conservation

1.1 Outline of planned actions for national implementation over the next three years	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***

Following a workshop in March 2006, an assessment of the main tasks and actions required to improve the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels in the South Atlantic was published (see 1.5 below). The published report sets out objectives and priority tasks for each of the UK Overseas Territories. These recommendations will be reviewed, and translated into resource-based action plans. These planned actions include not only activities at the breeding sites and territorial waters managed or controlled by the Overseas Territories, but also international action to encourage conservation measures in the waters of other countries, and the high seas, which are used by albatrosses and petrels breeding in the South Atlantic Overseas Territories.

Consistent with the ACAP Agreement and Action Plan, work will be focussed in the following areas:

- management of breeding sites,
- monitoring the status and trends of populations
- analysis of foraging ranges and spatial and temporal overlap with fisheries
- fishery-related issues, including improving the effectiveness of RFMOs, management/patrolling of the EEZ, FAO NPOA-S
- development and implementation of bycatch mitigation
- education and awareness
- data management
- sourcing funding for the implementation of albatross and petrel conservation projects

1.2 Measures to eliminate, control or prevent introduction of non-native species to breeding sites	***Action Plan Reference***		***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	1.4	3	III (1) b)	

Falkland Islands

A Biosecurity Strategy has been developed for the Falkland Islands, although not yet formally adopted by the Falkland Islands Government (FIG). The importing of items into the Falkland Islands is controlled by the Department of Agriculture: Senior Vet (fauna) and Senior Agricultural Advisor (flora); the day to day implementation of biosecurity policy is carried out by a Biosecurity Officer. The importing of live adult poultry into the Falkland Islands is not permitted. Greater focus and attention needs to be directed towards biosecurity and quarantine measures between islands of the Falklands group. In 2007 the FIG Ports and Harbours booklet was updated to highlight better relevant biosecurity measures, and a biosecurity poster was developed for the Falkland Islands Government Air Service (FIGAS) and helicopter services. However, a more strategic approach to biosecurity and quarantine policy and actions is required.

In light of this, a review of the implementation of the Falkland Islands Biosecurity Strategy is in the process of being carried out by the South Atlantic Invasive Species Programme (SAIS), which is co-ordinated by Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) on behalf of the Governments of South Atlantic UK Overseas Territories (RSPB) (and funded by the EU's EDF-9). The strategy is expected to be finalised within the next year. Further, Falklands Conservation is currently investigating the improvement of quarantine measures in relation to rodents (and possibly extended to other taxa by the SAIS), which will be used to provide recommendations for further stakeholder liaison so that practical actions can be identified for key sites. The SAIS programme will also be running a range of public awareness programmes to communicate to stakeholder groups, including military personnel, government, landowners and the general public, about the importance of biosecurity issues at an inter-island level.

Falklands Conservation continues to eradicate rats from key islands. The OTEP-funded Beaver Island Group Restoration Project plans to eradicate rats from Governor Island – home to breeding southern giant petrels - in the austral winter of 2008. Falkland Islands stakeholders will in September 2008 consider the re-prioritisation of further islands for rodent eradication, using the presence of ACAP species amongst the range of criteria.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

A feasibility study to consider the feasibility and implications of a brown rat *Rattus norvegicus* eradication programme has recently been completed by the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI) (Christie 2007). This study concluded that given the size of the task, it would be sensible to proceed in a phased approach, carrying out and evaluating a series of trials to determine what is practically possible for the island as a whole. The study also highlighted the importance of having an effective and robust biosecurity regime in place before initiating an eradication programme, and that islands that are currently rat-free, remain so. The South Georgia Heritage Trust is actively raising funds to implement the next phase of the feasibility process.

GSGSSI has recently introduced a range of Biosecurity Protocols that are enforced through the permitting system, and covers all vessels landing passengers, crew, expedition staff and stores on South Georgia as well as outlining steps for proper inspection of cargo, its packing and consolidation prior to shipping from Stanley. The Biosecurity Protocols are being formally taken up in the GSGSSI legislative review currently underway (see 2.1 below), and will thus have legislative power.

A dead brown rat washed up on a beach of Bird Island in July 2006. Although it was likely to be dead when it came ashore, immediately thereafter, staff of the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) set up poison bait stations around the island as a precautionary measure, and also deployed indicator gnaw sticks. No signs of other rats have been observed, but BAS continue to monitor the situation.

GSGSSI are in the process of studying the impact of reindeer *Rangifer tarandus* on the terrestrial ecology of South Georgia (most relevant for ACAP in terms of the impacts on the quality of nesting habitat for white-chinned petrels). A botanist conducted field work in December 2008 to compare the vegetation in grazed and ungrazed areas, and to build on and update previous field work. This work and further field-work planned for 2008/09 will be used to help inform the management policy for reindeers at South Georgia.

South Georgia Surveys conducted rodent and reindeer surveys during the 2005-06 and 2006-07 ACAP Petrel Surveys of South Georgia, by recording geographical coordinates of over 10 000 giant petrel nest sites around the island and on a number of offshore islands, recording the presence and absence of introduced mammals at each site. Brown rats were discovered to have invaded a previously rat-free offshore island some time during the last 20 years. These data are stored in a GIS database and will be used to compile distribution maps for these species and to predict possible future population expansions. Further fieldwork was conducted by SGS in the 2007-08 austral summer.

Tristan da Cunha

One of the priority requirements for the Tristan group of islands is the development of a Biosecurity Strategy, and capacity building of Tristanians to implement this strategy. Thousands of pounds are being spent on eradication programmes at the Tristan group (see below), which can be reduced or prevented if better control measures are in place. The Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources is responsible for overseeing the importing of items into the Tristan Islands, but there is currently no formal policy in place to deal with biosecurity and quarantine issues. A Biosecurity Officer will be appointed shortly to be based in Cape Town, and will work towards minimising the risks of further introductions (see below).

Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) funds have been provided to eradicate loganberry (*Rubus sp*.) from the Sandy Point area of Tristan da Cunha. Loganberry was introduced to Tristan as a source of food, but has become invasive, and has negatively impacted the terrestrial biodiversity of Tristan, including nesting habitat of Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross. The project is being carried out by the Tristan Government and local residents, with specialist inputs from the (RSPB), the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the University of Cape Town.

The South Atlantic Invasive Species project co-ordinated by RSPB (and funded by the EU's EDF-9) has recently carried out training for Tristanians so that they can implement an immediate response to any rat incursion to Nightingale or Inaccessible Islands (currently rat-free). These islands are nesting sites for Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross, sooty albatross and spectacled petrel (Inaccessible only). Improved rodent control measures are also being put in place around the Settlement on the main island of Tristan; these may help to reduce the risks of rodent stowaways in materials being taken to the offshore islands. Preparations are also underway to appoint a Tristan biosecurity officer to be based in Cape Town. This person would be responsible for checking all goods shipped to Tristan and for taking measures to minimise the risk of hitch-hiking organisms and diseases. They would also advise on import of risk goods such as live animals and plants to Tristan. It is hoped that this appointment will be made by June 2008.

An assessment of the potential for rodent eradication in the Tristan da Cunha Islands Group

A project entitled 'An assessment of the potential for rodent eradication in the Tristan da Cunha Islands Group' is being managed by RSPB, University of Cape Town and the Government of Tristan da Cunha. It is funded by OTEP and ends in March 2008. The SAIS project is funded by the EU and co-ordinated by RSPB on behalf of the Governments of South Atlantic UK Overseas Territories. These two projects have combined to deliver several actions that aim to reduce the impact of invasive alien species on ACAP species on Tristan, and to restore habitats.

RSPB and their contracted consultants have recently (March 2008) produced a feasibility study for the eradication of mice from Gough Island, which is due to be published in the next few months. It reports that while the eradication of mice from Gough may well be technically feasible, there are several areas of uncertainty that need to be resolved before a high level of success can be achieved and a detailed method and Operational Plan can be prepared. To deal with these areas of uncertainty, further research needs have been explicitly identified. OTEP have

recently provided funding to RSPB and the University of Cape Town to undertake the first two elements of this research, which will commence in September 2008, namely:

1. To develop and test poison-baits that are optimal for delivery to mouse populations in winter on sub-Antarctic Islands;
2. To examine whether an aerial bait-drop on Gough Island would put poison-bait into the home ranges of all mice, or whether some mice might dwell entirely within cave systems, and therefore not encounter surface-bait

An RSPB consultant visited Tristan in March 2008 to discuss the outcomes and recommendations of the rodent eradication feasibility studies and operational plans with the Government and residents of Tristan. The Island Council decided that they did not wish to pursue rodent eradication plans at Tristan da Cunha due mainly to concerns about safety of people and livestock during an eradication exercise, but supported the eradication of house mice on Gough Island.

1.3 Report on any exemptions to prohibitions on the taking or harming of albatrosses and petrels	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	1.1.2	III (3)	

Falkland Islands
No exemptions were granted. A number of black-browed albatrosses caught as bycatch from fishing vessels were sent, under research licence, to various European Institutes and Museums for purposes of further research and education. A black-browed albatross egg (empty) was also allowed to be exported under a research licence to a museum in Switzerland for educational purposes.

No exemptions were granted in any of the other Overseas Territories.

1.4 Use and trade	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	1.1.1, 1.1.2	III (3)	

There were no instances of use or trade in any of the Overseas Territories.

1.5 Single or multi-species conservation strategies / action plans	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	1.1.3		

Action plan for the UK implementation of ACAP
Following the international workshop held in the Falkland Islands in March 2006 to consider priorities for the conservation of albatrosses and petrels in the South Atlantic (see previous report), a report outlining the priorities for the management and conservation of albatross and petrel species on land and sea in and around the territories in the South Atlantic has been published (Falklands Conservation 2006). The report provides an assessment of, and prioritises, the main tasks and actions required to improve the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels in the South Atlantic, and relates these specifically to the ACAP requirements as contained in the Agreement, its Action Plan (AP) and any actions agreed by the Meeting of Parties (MOP). The workshop and report dealt explicitly with the priorities and actions for the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, the British Antarctic Territory and the Tristan da Cunha group.

One of the recommendations contained in the report was that an ACAP co-ordinator for the UK South Atlantic Territories should be appointed, and be based in the Falkland Islands for an initial period of three years. Funding for this post has been provided by Defra (via ACAP), the Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI), OTEP, the BAT, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and the FIG. Anton Wolfaardt was recruited by the JNCC following open advertising, and started work on 3 March 2008. The contract is for a period of three years, and the postholder will be responsible for co-ordinating activities in the UK South Atlantic Overseas Territories and metropolitan UK in implementing ACAP, thereby contributing to fulfilling the obligations of the Agreement.

Falkland Islands
A formal review of the tasks that had been assigned in the workshop proceedings for the Falkland Islands was carried out towards the end of 2007. The results of this review are included in this implementation report. Briefly, it was found that progress has been made on all domestic tasks, with substantial progress on all high priority tasks. Of particular mention is progress in the following priority actions:

- Fisheries bycatch mitigation
- Continued implementation of demographic studies of black-browed albatrosses at New Island by New Island Conservation Trust
- Satellite tracking of fledgling black-browed albatrosses from Steeple Jason by Falklands Conservation
- The appointment of the ACAP co-ordinator for the UK South Atlantic Overseas Territories (see above)

The Falklands review highlighted areas which required improvement. These include improved dialogue between FIG and ACAP landowners (i.e. owners of sites where

ACAP species breed) in relation to site protection and management; the development of management plans and site guidelines and improved biosecurity.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
An Environmental Management Plan for SGSSI was first published in 2000. The plan, which provides comprehensive background information on the island and sets out conservation and management strategies, has been revised. The current plan ('South Georgia: Plan for Progress. Managing the Environment. 2006-2010') is not intended to replace the 2000 version, but to complement it, and covers the five year period 2006-2010 (Pasteur and Walton 2006). Both these documents state clearly the commitment to conserve as far as practicable, the indigenous flora and fauna, ecological associations, and natural environment of South Georgia.

BirdLife International have recently completed an IPOA-S assessment (on behalf of GSGSSI) of the seabird bycatch associated with the Patagonian toothfish, *Dissostichus eleginoides*, mackerel icefish *Champsocephalus gunnari* and Antarctic krill *Euphausia superba* fisheries around SGSSI, to inform GSGSSI whether a NPOA-S for the area is required. This assessment confirms previous findings that seabird bycatch in all three fisheries is negligible, which in the case of the toothfish longline fishery is due to the implementation of a suite of management steps, particularly CCAMLR Management Measures, and consequently that there is no need currently to develop NPOA-S for these fisheries. However, a number of recommendations are provided in the report to maintain and reduce further the low levels of seabird bycatch and to improve the general management of the fisheries. The report highlights that the reduction of seabird bycatch in the toothfish fishery around South Georgia provides a model of best practice in seabird bycatch management of use to other fisheries and administrations.

Tristan da Cunha
The development of a Biodiversity Action Plan for Tristan da Cunha (2006-2010) has involved working with the community to increase their control, ownership and involvement in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity. The emphasis has focussed on training local Tristanians, in particular strengthening their fieldwork skills. The main output has been a biodiversity action plan that includes monitoring protocols for key bird species. The Biodiversity Action Plan provides a framework for, and prioritises, biodiversity action over the period 2006-2010. A review of plan implementation progress has still to be undertaken but actions are underway for objective 4: *The impact of alien species is reduced or eliminated* and objective 5: *The sustainable use and management of the marine environment is enhanced*.

1.6 Emergency Measures	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	1.2	VIII (11) e)	

No emergency measures have been authorised for any of the Overseas Territories.

1.7 Re-establishment schemes	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	1.3		

No re-establishment schemes have been conducted.

1.8 Any other conservation projects for ACAP species	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***

All activities have been included in other sections.

2. Habitat Conservation

2.1 Measures (legal and policy instruments and actions) to implement protection and management of breeding sites including habitat restoration	***Action Plan Reference***		***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	2.1	3	III (1) a)	

Falkland Islands
The FIG is in the process of adopting a Biodiversity Strategy, which aims to restore and enhance key species and habitats within the Falkland Islands. Under this strategy, Species and Habitat Action Plans will be prepared and adopted. The review conducted in 2007 has become the Falklands Albatross and Petrels Species Action Plan, having been adopted by Executive Council in January 2008. See also section 1.2 regarding biosecurity strategy and measures.

Environmental Impact Assessment regulations form part of the Planning Ordinance, which extends to 12 nautical miles offshore. Developments on land or water that would have a significant adverse effect upon protected species and their habitats would not normally be granted. In other cases conditions may be imposed on development to (i) ensure the survival of individual members of the species; and/or (ii) reduce the disturbance to members of the species to an acceptable minimum. In considering development proposals it is essential that the possible effects on species and their habitat are adequately addressed. This is particularly relevant where species are protected by law (Conservation and Wildlife Ordinance 1999). The objective will be to ensure that the most important species are protected from unsustainable development. Consideration of proposals for development or land use will reflect obligations under the Falklands-UK Environmental Charter and the Biodiversity Strategy. Proposals raising specific environmental concerns relating to habitats or species of recognised importance will be required to be accompanied by an environmental impact statement.

Many of the important breeding sites for ACAP species are privately owned, and not designated protected areas. Consequently, although the ACAP species are still covered in the Conservation of Wildlife and Nature Ordinance 1999 and its amendments, conservation

management objectives are best achieved by working with landowners to improve their understanding of the management needs of sites and thus foster voluntary support for management recommendations, including for example management of grazing activities.

The New Island Conservation Trust compiled a Management Plan for the island, which was published in 2007 (Strange 2007) with funding assistance provided by OTEP. The plan is comprehensive, and includes both historical and contextual information as well as visions, strategies and policies for the long-term conservation of the island and its wildlife, including two ACAP listed species.

Falklands Conservation has recently received OTEP funds to develop a Management Plan for Steeple Jason and Grand Jason Islands, within the Jason Islands Important Bird Area (IBA) on behalf of and in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society, who own the islands. The Plan will provide for conservation management of the world's largest colony of black-browed albatross and significant colonies of southern giant petrel. In addition to these two ACAP listed species, six other globally threatened or near-threatened species breed on Steeple and Grand Jason. The Plan will review known biological data, assess environmental threats and recommend mitigation methods and management tasks to minimise these threats and to enhance the two islands' biodiversity, particularly their seabirds. It will establish systems for monitoring the key species and identify research priorities. It will address site obligations under ACAP to the landowner and how these will assist in meeting the overall obligations of the FIG and the United Kingdom (HMG). It will provide a framework to permit the sustainable multi-use of Steeple and Grand Jason for conservation, research, education and eco-tourism whilst ensuring that biological diversity and ecological processes are maintained.

Falklands Conservation has also completed a Management Plan for Kidney Island (with breeding white-chinned petrels), which has been revised by the FIG and should be adopted within six months. The FIG, in collaboration with the lessees of Sea Lion Lodge, is in the process of completing a Management Plan for Sea Lion Island (which has breeding southern giant petrels), building on the original plan developed by Falklands Conservation. This plan is also expected to be formally adopted within six months. These management plans will provide a framework for conservation management activities at these breeding colonies.

In addition, the Environmental Planning Department of the FIG has conducted visits to most ACAP sites as part of their responsibility to oversee licensed activities relating to research and access by cruise vessels, but these inspections are of an *ad hoc* nature. During 2007/08 Barren, New, Governor, Kidney and Steeple Jason Islands were visited by department staff. The FIG provided £2000 towards constructing a new jetty at Barren Island to facilitate safe access and minimise disturbance (including to southern giant petrels) by cruise-liner tourists.

The FIG Fire Service is currently (April 2008) fighting a fire on Dyke Island that resulted from a lightning strike. Southern giant petrels breed on Dyke Island, but the fire is not in close proximity to these breeding areas (which are not currently active), nor is it moving in that direction.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

In addition to the updated Environmental Management Plan (see 1.5), GSGSSI are presently undertaking a review of the current legislation for South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. The review process will produce an integrated and all-

encompassing legislative framework for the islands, and deal with their overall conservation management in a holistic manner. Conservation management policies that deal with site protection, biosecurity, visitor management and pollution, will all be included in the revised legislation, which is expected to be formally adopted within the next year, after approval by FCO.

GSGSSI are investigating the feasibility of fur-seal exclosures as a management tool and to inform management policy.

Tristan da Cunha
The Conservation of Native Organisms and Natural Habitats Ordinance (Tristan da Cunha) was enacted in February 2006, and enabled the UK ratification of ACAP to be extended to Tristan da Cunha on 13 April 2006.

John Cooper (Core Initiatives) is in the process of drafting documents for the UK to submit as nominations for Ramsar wetland status for Gough and Inaccessible Nature Reserves. Funding is being provided by OTEP via the Tristan Government, and the presence of ACAP species forms part of the justification.

Management Plans for Gough and Inaccessible Islands are in place, and a management plan for Nightingale Island is being developed by James Glass (ANRD, Tristan). It is hoped that the latter plan will be completed in 2008. The Gough Island Management plan was produced in 1994 and so pre-dates the discovery of the mouse problem. A revision of the plan has been commissioned, but is not yet in place.

2.2 Sustainable management of marine living resources which provide food for albatrosses and petrels	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	2.3.1 a)		

Falkland Islands
The conservation of sustainable fishery resources through effective management is a primary objective for Falkland Islands Government. Fishing activities in and around the Falkland Islands are thus strictly regulated and managed. Whilst the needs of ACAP listed species are not specifically taken into account, the Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance 2005 has as a key objective that exploitation of fisheries resources and related activities are conducted in a manner consistent with the need to have regard for the impact of fishing activities on non target species and the long term sustainability of the marine environment. Falkland Islands Conservations Zones are rich fishing grounds particularly for two squid species, *Illex argentines* and *Loligo gahi,* and a number of finfish species. Daily reporting allows for real time assessment of the two squid species using depletion models, and pre-recruit surveys are conducted prior to each *Loligo* season. If conservations targets are not met for *Illex* and *Loligo* then an early closure of the fisheries results. Finfish species are monitored on a daily basis, assessed annually and recommended catch limits are set in order to maintain stocks.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
Fishing in South Georgia waters adopts CCAMLR measures as a minimum standard. The South Georgia toothfish fishery is certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) as a well-managed and sustainable fishery. With CCAMLR planning to designate krill management areas for Subarea 48.3, GSGSSI plan to employ a higher predator scientist to be based at King Edward Point to monitor the foraging ecology of higher predators, especially in the eastern component of Subarea 48.3 thus complementing the work conducted by BAS in the western area. This work will contribute to the informed management of fisheries in the area.

Tristan da Cunha
A Darwin Initiative Project, **Enabling the people of Tristan da Cunha to extend the CBD to the marine environment (2007 – 2009)**, is currently being implemented. Recognising that the economy of Tristan is almost entirely dependent on its fisheries, the project aims to build on the achievements of the Biodiversity Action Plan by ensuring Tristanians have sufficient knowledge of the marine environment to support sustainable management. The recent stranding of the oil rig off Tristan has highlighted the urgency for this work.

2.3 Management and protection of important marine areas for albatrosses and petrels	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	2.3.2, 2.3.3	4	

Falkland Islands
Environmental Impact Assessments are required for developments in marine areas which could potentially have a significant adverse effect on protected species or their habitats. The draft Biodiversity Strategy (see 2.1 above) applies to marine areas.

The Shallow Marine Surveys Group in partnership with Falklands Conservation and FIG have recently been provided OTEP funding to collect baseline data on the shallow marine environment of the Falkland Islands to *inter alia* help inform the FIG on decisions and appropriate management policies in the inshore coastal zone. Although this project deals specifically with the coastal and inshore environment, it will investigate the importance of transit and maintenance areas for breeding seabirds, especially the marine areas adjacent to seabird (including ACAP species) breeding sites, and will also consider the proclamation and management of Marine Protected Areas.

All Falkland Islands tracking data for ACAP species (see 4 below) have been submitted to the Global Procellariiform Tracking Database maintained by BirdLife International.

Falklands Conservation, BAS and FIG are currently in discussion with various organisations regarding the potential of and funding for a three year research project to identify key at-sea areas for seabirds (including ACAP species) and their representativeness. This project will involve advanced spatial modelling techniques and will make use of currently available albatross and petrel tracking data from the Falkland Islands and South Georgia, at-sea distribution data, and a number of biotic

and abiotic explanatory variables to understand better the drivers of seabird distribution at sea.

A sub-component of this project has been started with a Masters student looking at the foraging behaviour of penguins and black-browed albatrosses in coastal areas, with funding provided by five oil companies involved in the Falkland Islands, FIG and Falklands Conservation.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
Although not specifically for the protection of albatrosses and petrels, three new MPAs have been established (2007/08):

1. west of Shag Rocks
2. north-east of South Georgia
3. between the South Georgia mainland and Shag rocks

The main purpose of these MPAs is for the protection of benthic species and communities, but the benefits may extend to other species.

All processed tracking data (breeding and nonbreeding seasons) for ACAP species (see 4 below) at South Georgia have been submitted by British Antarctic Survey to the Global Procellariiform Tracking Database maintained by BirdLife International.

3. Management of Human Activities

3.1 Report on environmental impact statements related to albatrosses and petrels	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	3.1		

Falkland Islands
An EIA was prepared for exploratory oil drilling in the north Falklands Basin in 2005. The EIA considered the location of breeding and foraging sites to inform the exact location of on-land and at-sea facilities and access routes for air and sea travel. Further mitigation measures were not considered necessary. Further EIAs will be prepared for remaining oil exploration areas to the south east and south.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
The previous report indicated that an Initial Environmental Evaluation under the Antarctic Treaty protocol was being carried out to assess the impact of a proposed boardwalk on Prion Island. This intention of the boardwalk is to protect the environment and control visitor impacts on all local flora and fauna, including breeding wandering albatross, southern giant petrels and burrowing petrels. The Environmental Evaluation has now been completed. It highlighted all of the issues, identified measures to reduce impacts and guide the implementation of the plan. The boardwalk has now been erected (completed in March 2008), and ready for use in the 2008/09 tourist season. Although the main part of the boardwalk was completed, it does not span the access beach. The completion of the beach section may still take place in the future, subject to the availability of further funding. All future visitors

will be required to remain on the boardwalk. GSGSSI is also funding annual surveys to monitor the impact of the boardwalk (see 3.5 below).

Tristan da Cunha

During the reporting period there has been one development on Tristan requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA carried out for the reconstruction of the Calshot Harbour area identified no significant risks to ACAP species, and general environmental risks (e.g. introduction of new invasive species) were monitored and managed by inspections and negotiations with the Ministry of Defence who were in charge of the works. The work was undertaken in February/March 2008.

3.2 Measures to reduce or eliminate incidental mortality in fisheries	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	3.2	6	

Falkland Islands – longline fisheries

The Falkland Islands National Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (FI NPOA-S) was adopted in March 2004 with the objective of reducing seabird mortality in the longline fishery to below 0.01 birds/1000 hooks by 2004/05 and further to 0.002 birds per 1000 hooks by 2006/07 (see previous report). The Falkland Islands longline fleet reached the 2004/05 target by 2002/03, by a combination of long-term observer coverage, the correct design and use of tori line, correct weighting regimes, bait thawing, responsible offal management and the use of bird scaring curtains over the hauling hatch. FIG employs two longline observers to monitor seabird mortality and maintain awareness of seabird bycatch and mitigation measures amongst fishermen at a high level.

The mortality estimate for 2006/07 was 0.0034 birds per 1000 hooks, which is above the target set in the FI NPOA-S (0.002 birds per 1000 hooks). However, it is felt that that the figure for 2006/07 is sufficient to be considered a positive outcome of the ongoing mitigation programme. The objective remains to keep mortality to below 0.002 birds per 1000 hooks. The FI NPOA-S comes up for review in 2008 and the Falkland Islands Fisheries Department is taking the lead in drafting a revised FI NPOA-S.

Research into the use of baited pots as an alternative to hooks has continued, with a successful potting trial conducted in 2007. It is still unclear how the gear compares to traditional longline methods in greater depths and in the strong currents prevalent around the Falkland Islands. The Falkland Islands longliners are also trialling a longline system called the ‘cachaltera’ or ‘umbrella’ system, primarily designed to reduce impacts from whales (which take fish off the line), but is likely also to reduce seabird bycatch as the sink rate is faster (from trials in Chile). Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is more efficient at catching Patagonian toothfish in the Falkland Islands, but trials will continue over a longer period.

Falkland Islands – trawler fisheries

The Falkland Islands Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Trawl Fisheries 2004 (FI NPOA – Trawlers) is less prescriptive, in terms of target bycatch levels, than FI NPOA-S for longline fisheries. Previous research and monitoring showed that tori lines were the most effective of the mitigation measures for reducing contact rates with seabirds and thus mortality. Subsequently, the trialling and adoption of tori lines has progressed in all Falkland Islands trawl fisheries. A mitigation observer has been employed for the duration of 2008 (with funds from FIG) to further quantify mortality in trawl fisheries (in conjunction with bycatch data being collected by eight FIG fisheries observers) and will contribute towards the redrafting of the FI NPOA-Trawlers in 2008.

Falkland Islands – Jigger Directive

The Falkland Islands *Illex* Jigging Assessment Directive was published in 2004 providing guidance for a thorough assessment of the extent and nature of the incidental catch of seabirds on squid (*Illex argentinus)* jiggers operating in the Falkland waters and the wider Patagonian shelf. The Jigger Directive was assessed by Falklands Conservation in 2006/07. Mortality estimates confirmed earlier fisheries observations that mortality associated with this fishery is minimal. The issue of seabird mortality resulting from jigging is inherently different to that associated with longline and trawl fishing; with jigging it is not the fishing activity itself that is problematic, but the deliberate targeting of seabirds. This is therefore not bycatch in the true sense but the desire of the crew for a variety of protein in their diet that leads to direct targeting of birds from lines deployed behind the vessel specifically for this purpose. Consequently, observers cannot accurately quantify the level of mortality (unless they were present on every vessel) because crew on a vessel will obviously refrain from such activities when an observer is present. The Falkland Islands Fisheries Department have undertaken to act upon any suspicion of targeting seabirds during spot checks (for example, if floating fishing gear was deployed astern or feathers and body parts found aboard). There is substantial variation in the estimates of birds killed in this manner, and is certainly an issue that requires further investigation and attention.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

CCAMLR conservation measures are in place and strictly enforced. Observers are present on all longline vessels and all trawlers fishing for finfish with lower observer coverage in the krill fishery. The recent IPOA-S assessment (see 1.5) conducted by BirdLife for GSGSSI confirmed that mortality of all seabirds, including ACAP species, continues to be negligible in SGSSI fisheries.

Tristan da Cunha

About 70% of licensed fishing vessels within Tristan's EEZ carry observers. There is not full observer coverage on the lobster fishing boats, but this fishery (operated by one concession holder) has relatively little impact on ACAP listed species. There is only one longliner licensed to fish for whitefish at any one time throughout the year. The number of licences for tuna longline vessels is not limited, as these vessels only stay for a short period whilst they are following the tuna through Tristan's EEZ. The longline vessels may not fish within 50 nautical miles of Tristan da Cunha, Nightingale, Inaccessible or Gough Islands. Every effort is taken to prevent bird or mammal mortality, by implementing a range of mitigation measures, including

shooting lines at night and using bird streamers. All bird mortalities have to be recorded in the logbooks.

Since the Head of the Agriculture and Natural Resources returned from the ACAP Workshop in the Falklands during March 2006, further mitigation measures have been implemented. Better weighing of lines and use of streamer lines has lowered seabird mortality. These seabird bycatch data await further analysis. There has been a problem in the past with keeping Tristanian observers on the vessels for the entire period of fishing at Tristan, and/or requiring that vessels return to Tristan to change observers, thus hampering fishing operations. Consequently, the Tristan Government has formalised an agreement of understanding with CAPFISH (South Africa) that, in the event of Tristanian observers not being available, observers from CAPFISH will be placed on longliners operating out of Cape Town and fishing within Tristan's EEZ.

3.3 Measures to combat illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	3.2 4	6	

Falkland Islands
One fishery protection vessel with a Fisheries Officer and one aircraft provide surveillance of the 200 nautical mile zone around the Falklands throughout the year. The level of any IUU activity in this zone is very low. As a consequence, much of the fishery protection effort is focused on ensuring that vessels are complying fully with the requirements of the fishery.

All fisheries have licence conditions which include seabird bycatch mitigation measures. These include line weighting and use of tori lines by longliners and use of tori lines by trawlers. The Falkland Islands Fisheries Department employs two observers for longliners, who spend 60% of their time focussing on seabird mitigation measures and eight observers for the remaining fleets, which spend 5-10% of their time on seabird mitigation measures. Whilst there are two observers for the two longliners, there are only eight observers for up to 20 trawlers and 100 squid jiggers licensed at any one time. Due to the low coverage of observers on trawlers, FIG allocated funds for an additional observer for the trawler fleet, which was contracted out to Falklands Conservation.

Falkland Islands registered vessels fishing outside of Falkland Islands waters may also have to carry a Falklands observer and this occurred for one longliner in 2007.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
A dedicated Fishery Protection Vessel patrols the waters throughout the year. In addition, more than one method of alternative remote sensing has been utilised. Details of this have not been made public for obvious reasons. No illegal fishing activities have been detected during the reporting period.

Tristan da Cunha

Tristan da Cunha has few resources to prevent IUU fishing. The fisheries patrol boat has a range of about 150 nautical miles, which means that it can only patrol 75 miles from the harbour. Consequently, the seamounts around the Tristan da Cunha archipelago where IUU fishing is thought to take place cannot be patrolled. On the basis of the reduction in the number of vessels, especially Tuna boats, applying for fishing licences, it is thought that IUU fishing is ongoing and possibly increasing around Tristan. Previously, applications for fishing licences were received from up to six vessels per year. During the reporting period, the number of vessels applying for licences per year has been reduced to one or none. The island's main crane is presently broken. As a result, the fisheries patrol boat cannot be launched until another crane is installed, which is not expected to be in place for up to a year.

3.4 Measures to minimise discharge of pollutants and marine debris (with reference to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	2.3.1 b), 3.3		

Falkland Islands
Fishing vessels have to comply with MARPOL regulations and this is monitored by Fisheries Observers and Fisheries Officers. The hazards caused by pollutants and marine debris are impressed upon all Fishing Vessel Captains through a mandatory briefing. Despite this, fisheries observers do often report poor waste management on some vessels and there is considerable fisheries debris on beaches around the Falklands.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
Fishing vessels have to comply with CCAMLR and MARPOL regulations. Compliance is monitored by a combination of CCAMLR observers, SG fisheries officers, and GSGSSI officers. GSGSSI is presently investigating the possibility of limiting the transport and use of heavy fuel oil in SGSSI waters, and the extent to which this could be included in the legislative review. The number of passengers allowed onboard vessels visiting SGSSI has been restricted to 500. The ultimate aim of this policy is to restrict the size of vessels in SGSSI waters and thus reduce the extent and severity of potential impacts if an accident were to take place.

3.5 Measures to minimise disturbance in marine and terrestrial habitats	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	3.4		

Falkland Islands
As indicated in 2.1, many of the ACAP breeding sites are privately owned, and so measures to minimise disturbance to ACAP species (and more broadly) must involve constructive communication and engagement with landowners, industry and various government departments.

Research carried out in the Falkland Islands requires a research licence from the FIG Environmental Planning Department. Applicants must submit details regarding their research, regarding information related to the ethics of the research, for approval by the Environmental Committee. Landowner permission is also required. The FIG only issues visitor permits to access some Crown land where there are clear scientific or educational benefits and the permit conditions are stringent and in line with International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) guidelines. All landowners enforce the Falkland Islands Countryside Code, which has a minimum approach distance for wildlife of 6 m. Landowners with giant petrels are request to enforce a minimum approach distance for this species of 200 m.

All cruise vessels have completed Post-Visit Reports (PVRs) for landings outside of Stanley for the 2006/07 and 2007/08 seasons and FIG has requested a PVR from all visitors to Crown land for the 2007/08 season. The PVR includes, *inter alia*, details regarding the number of passengers, duration of visit, and places visited.

Tourism infrastructure at two sites with breeding southern giant petrels have been improved – one included the maintenance of a viewing hide (Sea Lion Island) and the other a small jetty for offloading cruise ship passengers (Barren Island). The new landowners at Dunbar Farm have obtained funds from the SAIS Programme (EC funded) to fence off the only Falklands mainland black-browed albatross colony. The erection of the fence will take place during the winter of 2008.

Prior to the 2006/07 cruise season, a viewing path with tussac grass fringe was constructed at West Point Island by Roddy and Lily Napier and Michael Clarke to allow tourist access and viewing of the black-browed albatross colony at Devils Nose without causing undue disturbance to the nesting birds. Prior to the 2007/08 cruise season, a tourism brochure providing information and wildlife viewing guidelines was printed and distributed to visiting passengers. Both these initiatives were funded by the owner with assistance from the Conservation Grant Scheme of Falklands Conservation.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

All visits to South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands are strictly managed. Tourist visits are subject to the by-laws of IAATO. All expeditions to the islands are assessed by an independent advisory panel prior to permission being given or refused.

In the 2004/05 tourist season a decision was made to close Albatross Island to tourists because of observations of human disturbance. The island remained closed to tourist during the reporting period. All tourist visits to wandering albatross colonies are presently restricted to Prion Island and Cape Rosa, where tourist access is actively managed (see 3.1). In addition to the boardwalk which has recently been completed, Prion Island is temporarily closed to tourists during the fur seal breeding season – late November to early January. Although this measure is intended to minimise disturbance to breeding fur seals, it will also minimise disturbance to wandering albatrosses at Prion Island during this period, which coincides with egg-laying and early incubation. If the beach section of the boardwalk is built in the future (which would minimise disturbance to breeding fur seals), GSGSSI may consider allowing tourists to visit Prion Island during the fur seal breeding season.

South Georgia Surveys (largely funded by GSGSSI) implements a long-term monitoring programme at Albatross and Prion Islands, and includes in the monitoring any impacts of visitors (at Prion Island) and fur-seals on ACAP species.

GSGSSI are in the process of developing site-specific, rather than generic, visitor management plans and protocols. Prior to this, a Code of Conduct was established for visits to Cape Rosa.

Aircrew on every visiting warship equipped with a helicopter receive a low flight avoidance briefing (and are issued with a map) by GSGSSI, to prevent flight disturbance to key bird species.

Tristan da Cunha
Visits to the Tristan Islands are strictly limited, mainly due to the remoteness and heavy seas surrounding the islands. The islands are visited by a maximum of six to eight vessels each year, each usually carrying less than 500 passengers. Landing on Gough and the other outer islands requires permission from the Tristan government. Visitors to the outer islands are always accompanied by a local guide or sometimes an expert from on board a cruise vessel (maximum of eight visitors per guide). The local conservation team carries out monitoring of ACAP species (Atlantic yellow-nosed and sooty albatrosses) on Tristan and Nightingale, and there is a long-term monitoring project for Tristan albatrosses underway on Gough, being carried out by researchers from the University of Cape Town and the RSPB.

4. Research and Monitoring

4.1 Ongoing research programmes relating to the conservation of albatrosses and petrels	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	4.1		

Falkland Islands
Counts of black-browed albatross and southern giant petrel populations were completed in 2006/07 at New Island by New Island Conservation Trust as part of their annual monitoring programme. Of interest is the finding that the New Island black-browed albatross population has increased in size since survey work began in 1978, in contrast to results reported for Steeple Jason Island 70 miles to the north-west (see below). Falklands Conservation conducts monitoring on a five year cycle with a complete, island-wide, census every five years and counts of selected representative colonies annually in intervening years. The last island-wide censuses of black-browed albatrosses and southern giant petrels took place in 2005/06 and 2004/05, respectively. Counts of southern giant petrels at Sea Lion Island and Steeple Jason Island, and of black-browed albatrosses at Steeple Jason show a continuing increase in numbers of southern giant petrels and a decline in the numbers of black-browed albatrosses.
Contacts: Ian Strange, New Island Conservation Trust; Nic Huin, Falklands Conservation

Aerial surveys of Falkland Islands black-browed albatross colonies have been carried out by Ian Strange of New Island Conservation Trust since 1964. Island-wide

surveys were carried out in 1986 and in 2005/06. A full report of this work will be published shortly. However, the results of the aerial-surveys show an increasing total population of black-browed albatrosses in the Falkland Islands, again in contrast to the results obtained by Falklands Conservation using different census methodologies. The discrepancies in these results clearly require further investigation (assessing differences attributable to the actual census methods, timing of survey and other possible factors), so that the reasons for the discrepancies can be understood, and factored into the planning and implementation of future census work.
Contact: Ian Strange, New Island Conservation Trust

Annual monitoring of population size and demography of black-browed albatrosses took place at New Island (as part of a long-term population dynamics and breeding ecology study that was initiated in 2003), and was initiated at selected colonies at Steeple Jason Island in November 2006 by Falklands Conservation. The aims of these projects are to determine annual survival rates, monitor breeding success, population trends and other demographic parameters. The existence of more than one study site at which demographic monitoring is taking place will enable a better understanding of spatial variability in demographic parameters and other factors, such as predation and disease.
Contacts: Paulo Catry, New Island Conservation Trust, Nic Huin, Falklands Conservation

Satellite tracking of black-browed albatross fledglings was conducted by Falklands Conservation on three fledglings from Steeple Jason Island from April to August 2007. All three birds showed rapid dispersal to Brazilian shelf waters. These data have been presented in the 2007 FISMP report, and submitted to BirdLife for inclusion in the Global Procellariform Tracking Database.
Contact: Nic Huin, Falklands Conservation.

GPS tracking of black-browed albatross adults was conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Society, in collaboration with Falklands Conservation. GPS units were deployed on two adult black-browed albatrosses at Steeple Jason Island in January 2008 to track their foraging trips during the early chick-rearing period. This is a pilot study to determine the feasibility of using these GPS devices on black-browed albatrosses.
Contacts: Wildlife Conservation Society, Nic Huin, Falklands Conservation

Monitoring of avian diseases in the Falkland Islands was carried out at Steeple Jason Island as part of a global programme of avian flu surveillance (GAINS). Work conducted in the Falklands in 2003 (Steeple Jason, Saunders Island, East Falklands) of black-browed albatross, gentoo penguins, rockhopper penguins, and Magellanic penguins showed these populations to be remarkably free of exposure to infectious diseases when compared to similar work conducted on the mainland of South America. This suggests that the Falkland populations to date have not been exposed to common infectious agents found elsewhere and these populations may be naïve and susceptible to the introduction of these organisms. Follow-up work on black-browed albatross and rockhopper penguins took place in January 2008 to add to the baseline health data collected in 2003 and to monitor for changes in disease

exposure over this five year period. The collected samples have been sent for serological testing for a variety of avian infectious diseases.
Contacts: Marcela Uhart, Wildlife Conservation Society, Nic Huin, Falklands Conservation

A small scale investigation into the cause of death of black-browed albatross chicks was carried out at New Island by a Masters student at the University of London, in collaboration with the New Island Conservation Trust. None of the 10 carcasses examined were found to have been affected by disease, but most of the carcasses had large numbers of external ticks (*Ixodes uriae),* which is thought to have contributed in some way to their deaths.
Contacts: Paulo Catry, New Island Conservation Trust

FIG has contributed funding (£2000) to a large scale (20 site) collaborative study on the population genetics of northern and southern giant petrels (see below). One of the desired outcomes of this study is that the provenance of birds caught on fishing vessels can be determined, and so the foraging ranges and movements of birds from particular colonies better understood. However, there is currently no programme or funding to conduct routine genetic analysis on samples of incidentally captured birds to determine their provenance. There is therefore a critical need for fisheries programmes, RFMOs and global programmes to instigate a programme of genetic collection and testing and source the funds necessary to conduct such a programme.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
Island wide surveys at **South Georgia** of northern and southern giant petrels, and white-chinned petrel took place in the 2005/6 and 2006/7 austral summers. These data are currently being analysed and final figures for the archipelago should be available by mid-late 2008. Long term monitoring of wandering, black-browed, grey-headed and light-mantled sooty albatrosses and northern and southern giant petrels takes place at Bird Island under the auspices of the British Antarctic Survey. In addition wandering albatrosses, light-mantled sooty albatrosses, southern and northern giant petrels are counted annually at Albatross and Prion Islands.
Contacts: Sally Poncet, South Georgia Surveys; Richard Phillips, British Antarctic Survey (BAS); Tony Martin, BAS.

Comprehensive demographic studies at Bird Island, South Georgia of banded birds to determine adult and juvenile survival rates, individual reproductive success and population trends for **wandering, black-browed and grey-headed albatross** (1975/76-present), **northern and southern giant petrel** (2000/01-present). **Monitoring of population trends and productivity** for **light-mantled albatross** (2002/03-present). **Contact:** Richard Phillips, BAS.

Monitoring of population trends (1998/99-present) and **productivity** (1998/99-2002/03, 2005/06-present) for **wandering albatross at Albatross and Prion Islands**, South Georgia.
Contact: Sally Poncet, South Georgia Surveys

Ongoing tracking studies at Bird Island, South Georgia of foraging ecology (chick feeding rates, at-sea distribution and activity during breeding and nonbreeding seasons, overlap with fisheries) of **wandering, black-browed, grey-headed and**

light-mantled albatross, northern and southern giant petrel, and white-chinned petrels by BAS. **Contact:** Richard Phillips, BAS.

White-chinned petrel monitoring sites were set up at Prion Island, Husvik, Corral Bay and Maiviken by South Georgia Surveys in December 2006, and checked again in January 2008. The aim of this project is to determine population trends and breeding success of white-chinned petrels with and without introduced mammals (rats and reindeer). The future funding of the project is uncertain.
Contact: Sally Poncet, South Georgia Surveys

Tristan da Cunha

Complete-island censuses of incubating Tristan albatross at Gough Island were conducted in 2007 and 2008. A total of 1279 incubating Tristan Albatrosses was counted in January/February 2007, and 1763 in January 2008. These figures compare to earlier censuses made with the same methodology of 2400 in 2001, 1869 in 2004, and 1366 in 2006.
Contact: John Cooper, Core Initiatives c/o University of Cape Town

Small-scale demographic studies of Tristan albatross at two sub-colonies on Gough Island were continued in 2007 and 2008. Initial estimates from the counts of incubating birds in January/February and of chicks in September 2007, indicate a breeding success for study nests of 58%, and for the whole island of 33%, much lower than would be expected for a large albatross. The low breeding success figures for 2007 highlight the significant impact of predation by the introduced House Mouse *Mus musculus.*
Contacts: John Cooper, Core Initiatives c/o University of Cape Town

Small-scale demographic study of Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross at a sub-colony on Gough Island was continued in 2007 and 2008. This study has been conducted from 1979-present. All chicks present in the colony in March of 2007 and February of 2008 were metal-banded. A number of metal-banded non-breeding birds of known age was caught during December-January 2007/08 within and close by the study colony, of which 31 were then colour-banded as part of this long-term study, now in its 26th year.
Contacts: John Cooper, Core Initiatives c/o University of Cape Town; Richard Cuthbert, RSPB.

A southern giant petrel chick census at Gough Island was carried out in 2007/08. A total of 63 nests containing eggs was counted at one colony in Giant Petrel Valley in September 2007. At the same colony, a total of 36 large feathered chicks was counted in January 2008, representing a breeding success of 57.1% (assuming no further loss of chicks) – the first estimate of breeding success for the species at Gough, its most northerly breeding locality.
Contact: John Cooper, Core Initiatives c/o University of Cape Town, Richard Cuthbert, RSPB.

Sample censuses of incubating Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross on Gough and Nightingale Islands were conducted in 2007. Although formal analysis is still pending, the data indicate an increase in the populations at Gough (apparently driven by an increase in adult survival) and Nightingale, where initial estimates suggest an increase of ca. 20% in 2007 in the Ponds area compared with the previous census in 1999.
Contact: Peter Ryan, University of Cape Town

The impacts of the introduced house mouse on seabirds of Gough Island were assessed in Ross Wanless' PhD, which was completed in 2007.
Contact: Ross Wanless, University of Cape Town

Other projects

An **assessment of the impact of Atlantic tuna fisheries on seabirds,** part-funded by Defra (WSSD Implementation Fund) and CSIRO (Hobart) is being carried out on behalf of the ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna)

Ecosystems Working Group by British Antarctic Survey, CSIRO (Hobart) and BirdLife International. The main focus of this study will be on ACAP species breeding at South Georgia and Tristan da Cunha.
Contacts: Richard Phillips (BAS), Cleo Small (BirdLife International)

Large-scale (20 site) **collaborative study of population genetics** (including clarification of specific status of some populations**) of northern and southern giant petrels**.
Contacts: Richard Phillips (BAS) and Peter Ryan (University of Cape Town)

Numerous collaborations involving the deployment of British Antarctic Survey geolocators to track **nonbreeding distributions** of ACAP species breeding at sites under the jurisdiction of other ACAP Parties.
Contact: Richard Phillips (BAS).

4.2 Observer programmes to monitor fisheries bycatch of albatrosses and petrels	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	4.2	5.1	

Falkland Islands
Nine seagoing scientific fishery observers are employed in the Falklands fisheries. Two of these observers are specifically tasked to monitor seabird interactions with longliners (there are only two longliners operating in Falklands waters at any one time). The remainder concentrate on the biological analysis of target and bycatch species on trawler and jigging fleets. They are also tasked with observing seabird interactions associated with trawl gear as time permits and required to report any incidental mortality of seabirds and/or mammals during a trip. Currently FIFD fisheries observers monitor hauls for incidental mortality every fourth day in order determine a mortality estimate. The Albatross and Petrel Programme (APP Falklands Conservation) employed a seabird observer during 2006/07 to investigate mortality and to continue to develop mitigation devices and measures. Falklands Conservation has funding from FIG to continue the employment of a dedicated trawler observer for one year (2008) to further quantify mortality and update the NPOA-Trawling. See also 3.2 and 3.3 above.

In addition FIG and Falklands Conservation observers were placed on a vessel conducting exploratory longline fishing for kingclip in shallower waters of the shelf.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
Observers, operating to CCAMLR regulations, are placed on all longline vessels and all finfish trawlers, with lower observer coverage in the krill trawl fishery.

Tristan da Cunha
Lack of resources has constrained the implementation of a programme to monitor fisheries bycatch of seabirds. The observers used (see 3.2) are fisheries observers, although on longline vessels the observers do spend some time conducting seabird observations and mitigation work. There is not full observer coverage on the lobster fishing boats, but seabird bycatch is not an issue with this fishery; some seabirds die as a result of bird strikes on misty nights, but this is minimised by ensuring that all

deck lights are kept to a minimum. There have been no licensed trawlers operating in the Tristan waters for the past four to five years.

5. Education and Public Awareness

5.1 Dissemination of information / training for 'user audiences' e.g. scientists, fishermen, conservation bodies, and decision-makers	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	6.1		

Falkland Islands

Falklands Conservation maintains education and awareness as one of the priority objectives of the organisation and produces a range of materials for the fishing fleet. A newsletter is produced twice a year, which is distributed to companies and boats to update them on the Albatross and Petrel Programme of Falklands Conservation and on any recent news or outcomes. Generic guidelines for site management and protection at various stages of the breeding cycle have also been provided.

Although not specifically focussed on ACAP issues, the Environmental Planning Department of the FIG has recently established a mechanism to communicate more effectively with the rural community of the Falkland Islands, including owners of ACAP breeding sites, through the Rural Business Association. Future plans include an ACAP landowners get together during Farmers Week 2008.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

The updated Management Plan (Plan for Progress 2006-2010) has been published and disseminated to a range of specialist groups, and has also been made available on the website of GSGSSI (www.sgisland.gs). This website is constantly updated with information, reports and news stories. Staff members of GSGSSI make annual presentations to IAATO on tourism management policies, and also hold an annual fisheries science meeting with industry representatives.

The BAS website (www.antarctica.ac.uk) provides general information about South Georgia and Bird Island and updated details of research programmes and findings, which feature regularly in the UK press, and in high-profile scientific journals (see Annex 2). South Georgia Surveys maintains a website (www.southgeorgiasurveys.org) with information about its research programmes, including its monitoring work at Albatross and Prion Island.

5.2 Dissemination of information to the general public	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***
	6.2		

Falkland Islands

ACAP work and achievements in the Falkland Islands were highlighted in a five-part series of articles in the weekly newspaper, Penguin News, between September 2007

and January 2008. The newspaper is widely read in the Falkland Islands and generated a lot of interest in ACAP and albatross and petrel conservation generally.

Environmental education is a top priority and well advanced in the Falkland Islands. All ages of school children benefit from the inclusion of environmental and native wildlife issues in their school curriculum. The Falklands Conservation Watch Group, a children's environmental interest group, organises a range of extra curricula activities including visits to ACAP breeding sites.

Albatrosses have been the focus for units of work in both the senior and junior schools with funding provided by the FIG to visit albatross colonies on Saunders Islands for the entire 5/6 and 8 classes taking part in the programme.

A two-year OTEP funded programme has recently been completed by Falklands Conservation to adapt aspects of the UK curriculum to the local environment including information on albatross and petrels.

The plight of the Falkland Islands population of black-browed albatrosses was highlighted in a BBC documentary in the Saving Plant Earth series, and were also featured in a one hour documentary programme made by Nigel Marven.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

Members of GSGSSI and South Georgia Surveys are often interviewed by the local (Falkland Islands) radio station about conservation initiatives, including ACAP-related matters, and also provide ad hoc information to third parties when requested. Recently information on the impact of reindeer on the terrestrial ecology of South Georgia was provided for use in an article in Scientific American. A number of articles have been submitted to conservation periodicals, such as the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum Newsletter. GSGSSI, BAS and South Georgia Survey websites (see above) all have a strong environmental focus and are regularly updated. All fee paying visitors receive a visitor pack, which includes information on the conservation of ACAP species and biosecurity measures.

The biology and conservation of albatrosses at South Georgia was the subject of a BBC4 documentary on the visit by international yachtswoman Dame Ellen Macarthur to South Georgia in the company of Sally Poncet (South Georgia Surveys) that was broadcast in June 2007. The 60 minute documentary included interviews with Sally Poncet, Ben Sullivan (BirdLife International) and scientists at the British Antarctic Survey base at Bird Island.

Tristan da Cunha

The school curriculum includes Tristan Studies, which incorporates a range of environmental issues. All children visit an albatross colony, and the conservation officer provides a talk annually to school groups. All tourist vessels visiting Nightingale Island are required to collect a guide (one per eight tourists) from Tristan, with a maximum of 100 passengers permitted to access the island at any one time.

A field guide to the animals and plants of Tristan da Cunha and Gough Island was published in 2007. The book is edited by Peter Ryan of the University of Cape Town,

and includes information on 15 species of albatrosses and petrels listed within ACAP.

ACAP and the Tristan Agriculture & Natural Resources Department co-produced (with ACAP funding) a poster featuring the Tristan albatross in 2007.

6. Implementation

Summarise progress to implement decisions of previous Meetings of the Parties	***Action Plan Reference***	***AC Work Programme Reference***	***Agreement Reference***

Breeding sites database

The ACAP Working Group on Breeding Sites has recently requested that the previously submitted data on threats to breeding sites be revised in order to facilitate a more standardised approach to the assessment of these threats. This will enable better analyses of relative threats at the species or regional level and thus help inform management priorities. Revised data and information for the Falklands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands have been submitted to the Working Group by Falklands Govt., Falklands Conservation and South Georgia Surveys.

7. National Institutions (lists of authorities, research centres, scientists and non-governmental organisations) involved in albatross and petrel conservation (Action Plan 5.1k)

List attached in Annex 1

8. Bibliography

A list of publications relevant to ACAP and ACAP species is included in Annex 2.

9. Acknowledgements

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