

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p>Thirteenth Meeting of the Advisory Committee <i>Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 22 – 26 May 2023</i></p> <p>Outcomes from MoP7 of relevance to the Advisory Committee</p> <p><i>Advisory Committee Chair, Secretariat</i></p>
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SUMMARY

The Seventh Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP7) was convened online between 9 and 13 May 2022. The meeting was hosted and chaired by Australia. This document highlights the outcomes and decisions of MoP7 of relevance to the Advisory Committee and its Work Programme. Its structure follows that of the MoP7 meeting report.

Of note to the Advisory Committee, the Parties agreed:

- to a zero nominal growth budget supported by a one-off draw down of \$550,000 in savings from the General Fund.
- to give priority to implementing ACAP's RFMO Engagement Strategy during 2023 – 2025.
- to endorse the Advisory Committee's list of conservation priorities to address at-sea and land-based threats.

The Parties also expressed their concern that the headline indicators were continuing to show a declining status of ACAP-listed species and were urged to report [to ACAP] on time, to address the conservation crisis and demonstrate global leadership through the use of ACAP best-practice.

RECOMMENDATION

The Advisory Committee is requested to act, in the current 2023 - 2025 triennium, to address and implement the agreed Resolutions, endorsed recommendations and other outcomes of MoP7 relevant to the Advisory Committee's agenda and its Work Programme.

1. BACKGROUND

The Seventh Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP7) met online between 9 and 13 May 2022 and was hosted by Australia. The meeting was opened by the Governor of Tasmania, Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC. Gaia Puleston from the Australian federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) chaired the Meeting. This Session was originally scheduled to be held in 2021 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An intersessional decision-making process was held by

correspondence in 2020 (for the Advisory Committee) and 2021 (for the MoP) to make essential decisions and to extend the Budget and Work Programmes of the 2019 - 2021 triennium to a quadrennium (2019 - 2022).

This document highlights outcomes of MoP7 relevant to the Advisory Committee and its Work Programme. For a full account of the meeting outcomes please refer to the [Report of the Seventh Session of the Meeting of the Parties](#). The Advisory Committee Work Programme (**AC13 Doc 13**) and the Secretariat Work Programme (**AC13 Doc 14**) are addressed in detail under agenda items 14.1 and 5.2 respectively.

2. PROCEDURAL ISSUES

The Parties agreed to reduce the timeframe for intersessional voting from 45 to 30 days. This decision ([Resolution 7.1](#)) amended Rule 24(3) of the Rules of Procedure for the Meeting of Parties.

3. OPERATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

The Executive Secretary presented the Secretariat Report ([MoP7 Doc 07](#)) which highlighted the Secretariat's focus on organising virtual meetings of the Advisory Committee and Working Groups in August-September 2021 and MoP7 in May 2022. The Secretariat and AC officials also continued representing the Agreement at many international meetings in accordance with the RFMO Engagement Strategy. This report noted the outstanding contribution to ACAP by John Cooper on his retirement as ACAP's honorary Information Officer and the engagement of Bree Forrer, as part-time Communications Adviser to the Secretariat.

MoP7 noted the activities undertaken by the Secretariat during the quadrennium (2019 - 2022), thanked the Secretariat for its work, and acknowledged the significance of the assistance provided by the Tasmanian Government.

The MoP adopted Resolution 7.2 on the Secretariat Work Programme acknowledging that budgetary restrictions might prevent complete implementation of the Work Programme.

Parties supported the extension of the Executive Secretary's contract for a further 2.5 year and the Chair and Parties thanked Dr Bogle for all her work to date and her flexibility in adapting to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

MoP7 thanked Argentina, New Zealand and the UK for nominating their AC members to participate in the Recruitment Subcommittee which will undertake the recruitment of a new Executive Secretary towards the end of Dr Bogle's extended term.

4. OPERATION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Chair of the AC presented the Report of the Advisory Committee for the 2019 - 2022 quadrennium ([MoP7 Doc 09](#)). The key activities summarised in this report included the review of ACAP's expert advice; communication and advocacy of ACAP advice; development of indicators of the success of the Agreement; and reviewing progress in the implementation of the Agreement. Communication and advocacy activities included ACAP's engagement with RFMOs and CCAMLR (Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources), and the launching of World Albatross Day on 19 June 2020.

The report highlighted ACAP's engagement with RFMOs, including a new emphasis on compliance and monitoring, and participation in the review of seafood certification schemes. It also highlighted the conservation crisis facing ACAP species and the need for greater capacity

in the Secretariat to communicate this issue and raise awareness of the availability and value of ACAP advice.

The Chair of the AC noted that the Advisory Committee continued to recommend that Parties, Range States, RFMOs and others promote and implement best practice seabird bycatch mitigation measures; improve the collection and reporting of seabird bycatch data; and implement priority monitoring and tracking studies and schemes to eradicate detrimental non-native species at breeding sites of ACAP species.

MoP7 specifically considered ACAP's RFMO Engagement Strategy ([SBWG10 Doc 07 Rev 1](#)) and recognised the need to give priority to implementing this strategy during 2023 – 2025.

MoP7 endorsed the 2023 – 2025 AC Work Programme ([Resolution 7.4](#)).

5. OPERATION OF THE AGREEMENT

5.1 Implementation

The Secretariat presented the [2018 – 2021 Report on Progress with the Implementation of the Agreement \(MoP7 Doc 10 Rev 1\)](#). The report provides a summary of the information included in the individual Implementation Reports submitted by Parties. The document also reports on the conservation status of ACAP species and changes that have occurred since MoP6.

The report emphasised that the challenges ahead for implementing the Agreement remain unchanged since MoP6: improving the collection of data on seabird bycatch in relevant fisheries; implementation of best practice seabird bycatch mitigation measures in domestic and high seas fisheries; and filling significant data gaps relating to population status and trends.

MoP7 noted progress with the implementation of the Agreement but expressed concern that only half the Parties provided their implementation reports on time. Parties were urged to report on time, to address the conservation crisis and demonstrate global leadership through the use of ACAP best-practice advice.

MoP7 endorsed all the recommendation in **MoP7 Doc 10 Rev 1** (see APPENDIX 1).

5.2 Listing of new species to Annex 1

No proposals were submitted by Parties to MoP7 for the listing of new species on Annex 1 of the Agreement.

5.3 Identification of Priority Conservation Actions

The Secretariat reported on the update of the conservation priorities to address land-based and at-sea threats and thanked all Parties for their Implementation reports and acknowledged the valuable input of non-Party Range States in contributing their data to this process.

The review of at-sea threats identified a number of fisheries and seabird populations as priority targets for action by the Agreement. RFMO-managed fisheries impact many populations of ACAP-listed species and this highlights the importance of ACAP's RFMO Engagement Strategy.

MoP7 also [endorsed the current list of conservation priorities to address at-sea and land-based threats](#) impacting ACAP-listed species (**MoP7 Doc 10 Rev 1**, Table 6 and 9).

5.4 Indicators to Measure the Success of the Agreement

The Secretariat presented a suite of 'State-Pressure-Response' indicators in respect of breeding sites, population status and trends, tracking data availability, and capacity building ([MoP7 Doc 16 Rev 2](#)).

The Red List Index (RLI) indicated a deterioration in the status of ACAP species since 1988 for the 26 species originally listed on Annex 1 in 2004, as well as the 31 species currently listed.

The seabird bycatch indicators continue to be unpopulated due to scarcity of suitable data being submitted to the Secretariat, and lack of agreement on how to utilise the data that is available.

Two capacity building indicators approved at MoP6 were investigated for the first time, but are inconclusive. It appears that Parties find it difficult to report the information in the format envisaged and more work will be required to be able to use these indicators.

MoP7 welcomed the planned workshop on seabird bycatch data to be held before AC13, and expressed concern the Agreement was not yet able to populate the at-sea indicators.

MoP7 urged Parties and cooperating Range States to report the data required to populate the seabird bycatch indicators.

The MoP endorsed the recommendations in **MoP7 Doc 16 Rev 2** (see APPENDIX 1) and encouraged Parties and cooperating Range States to continue to invest in eradication of feral species from ACAP islands, in population monitoring and tracking programmes, as well as in comprehensive management plans for breeding sites of ACAP species.

Parties expressed their concern that the headline indicators were continuing to show a declining status of ACAP-listed species

5.5 Arrangements with other organisations

Since MoP6 the Secretariat had entered into two new Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) – one with the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO) and one with the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA). An intersessional resolution adopted by correspondence in 2021 ([Resolution 6.11](#)) authorised the Secretariat to renew or amend existing arrangements between this Agreement and a number of other organisations. In accordance with this Resolution, the Secretariat renewed its arrangements with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), with CCAMLR and with the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT). The Secretariat was currently engaged in discussions about renewing arrangements with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), and the Karen C. Drayer Wildlife Health Centre (UC Davis).

MoP7 expressed its appreciation for the significant progress made in implementing the various arrangements and noted the benefits that had been achieved from them in advancing the Agreement's objectives.

5.6 Agreement budget 2023 - 2025 and Scale of Contributions

The MoP agreed to a zero nominal growth budget supported by a one-off draw down of \$550,000 in savings from the General Fund to support the work of the Agreement in the 2023 – 2025 triennium and adopted [Resolution 7.5](#).

The MoP adopted the Scale of Contributions for the 2023 - 2025 triennium in [Resolution 7.5](#).

5.7 National Plans of Actions

MoP7 welcomed the progress reported on the development and implementation of regional and National Action Plans by Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand and Uruguay.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Australia noted that the Agreement will have been in force for 20 years on 19 June 2024 and proposed that the Secretariat prepare, in consultation with Parties, an updated document on ACAP's Achievements in the First Twenty Years 2004 - 2024.

The MoP expressed support for the proposal, with Ecuador and the UK indicating their willingness to be involved in this initiative.

APPENDIX 1. RECOMMENDATIONS ENDORSED BY MOP7 FROM THE AC'S IMPLEMENTATION AND INDICATOR REPORTS (MOP7 DOC 10 REV 1, MOP7 DOC 16 REV 2).

MoP7 Doc 10 Rev 1 Report on Progress with the Implementation of the Agreement 2018 - 2021

That Parties, and, where appropriate, participating non-Party Range States and APEC Member Economies, continue to:

- i. address at-sea threats, especially those associated with high priority fisheries (see Table 6), and informed by ACAP best practice advice for mitigating seabird bycatch;
- ii. address high priority land-based threats in accordance with the conservation priorities (see Table 9);
- iii. ensure that appropriate mechanisms are established/maintained to identify and robustly assess seabird bycatch in relevant fisheries, and to monitor the implementation of effective bycatch mitigation strategies;
- iv. actively support and participate in the ACAP process to enhance implementation of best practice seabird bycatch mitigation strategies;
- v. review, based on the information provided by the Seabird Bycatch Working Group, the efficacy of seabird bycatch mitigation measures used in the fisheries that they manage, and explore the performance of new mitigation technologies and related safety and other operational issues;
- vi. monitor and provide information on the fisheries that they manage, and the associated seabird bycatch, as part of annual reporting to the Advisory Committee, to enable the assessment and reporting of performance indicators on seabird bycatch;
- vii. support the collection and provision of seabird bycatch data by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and Regional Conservation Bodies (RCBs) that they are members of;
- viii. support their priority population monitoring programmes, including the maintenance of long-term monitoring (see AC12 Doc 11);
- ix. implement best practice monitoring practices that include censuses of breeding sites conducted at a minimum of 10-year intervals, and annual monitoring of population trend and demography at a minimum of one representative site for each island group;
- x. conduct priority tracking programmes to enable a better understanding of at-sea distribution of albatrosses and petrels (see AC12 Doc 11);
- xi. update the ACAP database on an ongoing basis to maintain the currency of information underpinning analyses;
- xii. support the allocation of funds for the operation of the Advisory Committee to enable its effective operation, taking into account the growth in the complexity and number of matters it now addresses;
- xiii. provide the necessary resources for the conduct of the research and conservation programmes identified by the Advisory Committee's Working Groups; and
- xiv. engage in domestic processes to facilitate the effective implementation of the Agreement.

MoP7 Doc 16 Rev 2 Indicators to measure the Success of the Agreement

That the Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Reflect on the success of the Agreement as measured by the IUCN Red List Index, breeding site condition, population status and trends, and tracking data availability indicators;
- ii. Encourage Parties and cooperating Range States to continue to invest in eradication of feral species from ACAP islands, in population monitoring and tracking programmes, as well as in comprehensive management plans for breeding sites of ACAP species;
- iii. Discuss any further action required in relation to the capacity building indicators, and
- iv. Urge Parties and cooperating Range States to report the data required to populate the seabird bycatch indicators.