



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Sixth Meeting of Advisory Committee

Guayaquil, Ecuador, 29 August – 2 September 2011

Secretariat's Report

Secretariat

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Secretariat's Report

Secretariat

This report provides an overview of the Secretariat's operations since the last meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC5), held in Mar del Plata, Argentina in 2010. A detailed report on progress made against individual tasks in the Secretariat's Work Programme is provided in AC6 Doc 21.

Although the ratification of the Headquarters Agreement by the Government of Australia occurred in December 2008 a number of actions had to be taken by the Commonwealth and State Governments to implement its provisions. These actions are now completed providing the Secretariat with an appropriate legal personality and privileges and immunities. One effect has been to provide the Secretariat with an exemption from most direct and indirect taxes, directly benefitting the Agreement's budget.

1 SECRETARIAT HEADQUARTERS

The Secretariat's office remains at 27 Salamanca Square, Battery Point, Tasmania. Use was made of the new office facilities to host two secondments and the visits of Advisory Committee Officials. A number of workshops were also held during the course of the year.

2 STAFFING

No changes have occurred to the Secretariat's staffing since AC4. Mr Warren Papworth continues as Executive Secretary and Dr Wieslawa Misiak as the Science Officer. Mr Barry Baker and Dr Luke Finley have continued to be engaged part-time on a consultancy basis as Technical Advisor and Web Administrator respectively.

Mr John Cooper continues in the position of Honorary Information Officer. He has been successful in engaging a number of regional correspondents for the ACAP news site. Our regional correspondents are Mr Juan Pablo Seco Pon (South America), Dr Lindsay Young (North Pacific), Dr Maite Louzao (Europe) and Mr Matt Rayner (Australiasia).

Other work, such as interpretation and translation services and database development continue to be undertaken on a contractual basis.

3 SECONDMENTS

Two secondments were supported in the Secretariat during 2011. The first was undertaken by Dr Elisa Goya from the Marine Institute of Peru (IMARPE). Dr Goya's main work project centred around the identification and characterisation of artisanal fisheries in South America that may have an impact on albatrosses and petrels.

Another secondment was undertaken by Mr Juan Pablo Seco Pon, from the University of Mar del Plata, who led further work on the development of the process for the identification of conservation priorities. This work was undertaken with the support of funding from the New Zealand Department of Conservation.

4 KEY CHALLENGES

One of the important tasks from the Advisory Committee's Work Programme that the Secretariat assists with is the preparation and coordination of briefing material for relevant

meetings of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). With the important advances that have been made recently in our knowledge of effective mitigation measures in pelagic longline fisheries operations, it will be necessary to increase the coordination on this issue to ensure that Parties and relevant stakeholders are adequately briefed.

France has kindly provided a voluntary contribution to assist in this work, however it is likely that continued funding for this work will be required. The Secretariat does not have the necessary resources to undertake this work within its existing budget.

5 SIGNIFICANT OUTCOMES

The major outcomes achieved by the Secretariat since AC5 have been:

- Further development of the data portal and database to facilitate the submission of information for Parties' Reports on Implementation of the Agreement, as well as data required to support the work of the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups;
- Updating of ACAP's Species Assessments with all assessments now translated into all three official languages;
- Organising the venue and support for the sixth Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC6);
- Continued advocacy for the adoption and improvement of seabird conservation measures in Regional Fisheries Managements Organisations through participation in relevant Working Groups, Scientific Committee and Commission meetings;
- Translation of most of the ACAP Mitigation Fact Sheets into languages relevant to the fisheries in which particular gear types are employed;
- Provision of support to the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups during the intersessional period and in particular to the Chair of the Advisory Committee and other Advisory Committee Officials;
- Organising and supporting a number of workshops on issues such as the conservation prioritisation process, and bycatch data collection;
- Maintenance, marketing and further development of the Agreement's website;
- Writing, coordinating, and publishing news articles on the ACAP website to facilitate information exchange, education and advocacy of the Agreement's work;
- Finalising implementation of the Headquarters Agreement between the Secretariat and the Government of Australia;
- Coordination of the Agreement's activities with governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, such as the Convention for Migratory Species, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations and BirdLife International; and,
- Maintenance of a database of relevant scientific literature

The continued support of the Government of Tasmania in providing office facilities, accounting and administrative support in support of the Secretariat's operations is greatly appreciated. Acknowledgement is also required for the support of the Advisory Committee, and in particular the assistance of its Officials, which has been instrumental to the achievement of many of the above outcomes. Their ongoing support is also greatly appreciated.