Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Fifteenth Meeting of the Advisory Committee

Swakopmund, Namibia, 1 – 5 June 2026

Report of the Joint Thirteenth Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group and Ninth Meeting of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group

SBWG and PaCSWG Convenors and Vice-convenors

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Joint Thirteenth Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group and Ninth Meeting of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group

Swakopmund, Namibia, 26 – 27 May 2026

1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

This Report documents discussions and recommendations of the Joint Thirteenth Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group and Ninth Meeting of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group, held in Swakopmund, Namibia on 26 - 27 May 2026. PaCSWG Co-convenors Marco Favero (Argentina) and Patricia Serafini (Brazil), and PaCSWG Vice-convenor Richard Phillips (United Kingdom), together with SBWG Co-convenors Igor Debski (New Zealand) and Sebastián Jiménez (Uruguay), and SBWG Vice-convenors Dimas Gianuca (BirdLife International, BLI) and Megan Tierney (United Kingdom), welcomed all meeting attendees (**ANNEX 1**) to the Joint Meeting of SBWG13 and PaCSWG9.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Joint Meeting adopted the agenda and meeting documents (**Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 01 Rev 3** and **Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 02 Rev 2)**.

3. OVERLAP OF BIRDS AND AT-SEA THREATS

3.1. Review of tracking studies for risk assessments

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 03 reported on a study in which 500+ individuals of seven ACAP-listed species were tracked to quantify their spatiotemporal overlap with fisheries and identify high-risk areas. Tracks covered latitudes from 18.6°S to 57.2°S across all southern hemisphere oceans. Broad-scale spatio-temporal overlap of tracked birds with pelagic and demersal longline, and trawl fisheries were assessed using fishing effort inferred from Automated Identification System (AIS) data available from Global Fishing Watch (GFW). Tracked birds overlapped with 120,444 hours of fishing activity involving 709 unique vessels flagged to 25 different states. Overlap was most prominent between Antipodean albatrosses and pelagic longlines in the Tasman Sea and near to New Zealand, and the royal albatrosses and trawl fisheries on the Patagonian shelf. Overlap occurred across ten different Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and seven Regional Fishery Management Organisations and CCAMLR. The analyses enabled the identification of priority regions, fisheries, and management bodies where bycatch mitigation would yield the greatest conservation benefit across the Southern Hemisphere.

The meeting congratulated the authors on the scale and extent of this work. The paper provided useful information to refine priority fisheries. All tracking data are publicly available

for further uses, such as the current process to identify MPAs (Marine Protected Areas) in the CCAMLR (Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Resources) region.

The Meeting noted that improvements in analytical techniques now permit greater resolution of seabird-fishery overlap and potential for interactions. The Meeting noted this may facilitate opportunities for vessel-level engagement and outreach, including through supply chain mechanisms. The potential to analyse interactions at the scale of individual vessels now exists, but care would need to be taken in using this information. Fine-scale data on vessel movements can be downloaded from Global Fishing Watch (https://globalfishingwatch.org/our-apis/ , https://github.com/GlobalFishingWatch/gfwr) which is used by the *ShareWater* package (yet to be publicly released).

The problem with longevity of tag attachment (tags fall off with moult, which occurs a few months after birds leave colonies for most species) was discussed. It was noted that this topic would be considered at a workshop at the Fourth World Seabird Conference in September 2026, following which PaCSWG could consider developing guidance, along with summaries of existing tracking technology if such guidance were not to come out of the conference workshop.

In **Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 04**, the overlap of tāiko/Westland Petrel *Procellaria westlandica* with New Zealand domestic fishing effort was evaluated using four consecutive years of broad-scale GLS tracking and two years of fine-scale GPS tracking. Two complementary analyses were undertaken: (i) raster-based overlap, aggregating GLS tracking and fishing data into gridded surfaces to evaluate co-occurrence intensity across space and time, and (ii) point-based spatiotemporal overlap, measuring direct coincidence between bird locations and E-logbook recorded fishing events. These approaches were contrasted with recorded bycatch events (n = 120; 2020-25). GLS data revealed strong seasonal connectivity between Aotearoa New Zealand and South America, but surprisingly, some tāiko remained in New Zealand waters year-round, while others spent more time in Chilean waters. Broad-scale raster-based analyses indicated year-round overlap with domestic fisheries, peaking in austral mid-winter off the west coast of New Zealand, dominated by deepwater hoki trawl and deepwater ling bottom longline fisheries. Fine-scale point-based analyses showed incubating birds spent an average of 2.1 hours per day within 3 km of actively fishing vessels, with >98% of co-occurrence time near trawlers. Contrasting with co-occurrence patterns, recorded bycatch predominantly originated from deepwater ling bottom longline fisheries. The findings indicate that co-occurrence does not always directly translate to risk and that fleet-specific nuances should be considered. Further efforts to reduce bycatch of tāiko in the ling bottom longline fishery are required and fine-scale interaction with industry can now be undertaken for specific fleets, times and areas. Additionally, the deepwater trawl fishery would benefit from improved data collection, particularly to quantify warp strike risks.

The importance of using genetic identification for separating morphologically-similar bycaught species that occur in the same region was raised, and it was noted that samples have been collected from bycaught *Procellaria* petrels in Uruguay which could be made available. Specific training had also been delivered to observers in Chile and was another approach to ensuring accurate identification. The Meeting was informed that so far there were no records of beachcast Westland Petrels *P. westlandica* in Brazil and this would continue to be monitored. Identification of Westland Petrels at sea off South America among the many White-

chinned Petrels *Procellaria aequinoctialis* would be challenging but Westland Petrels will likely be in primary moult for much of the time that they are present in these waters.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 06 recalled that Black Petrels *Procellaria parkinsoni* have a high susceptibility to bycatch in pelagic longline fisheries. The species undertakes extensive trans-Pacific movements, exposing it to fisheries operating across multiple jurisdictions where bycatch mitigation requirements coverage vary substantially. Integrated fine and coarse-scale year-round tracking data from 58 breeding adults was used to quantify spatio-temporal exposure to pelagic longline effort across the species' full range, using multiple fishing-effort datasets. Tracking data revealed pronounced seasonal movements, with adults occurring almost exclusively within the eastern Pacific (e.g., in the IATTC Convention Area and the Peruvian EEZ) during the non-breeding period (June–September). During the breeding season, individuals foraged widely within the New Zealand EEZ and across the high seas within the WCPFC Convention Area. Spatial overlays demonstrated extensive overlap throughout the Pacific. High overlap occurred near New Zealand during breeding, but substantial overlap was also detected in regions where seabird bycatch mitigation requirements are reduced or absent (north of 30°S in the high seas of the WCPFC Convention Area). Notably, a large area of diffuse overlap was identified in the high seas within the IATTC Convention Area as well as a distinct hotspot in the high seas off the coast of Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Information on fisheries in the EEZs of meso-American and Colombian waters were not available. Overlap within the Peruvian EEZ was limited. Most of the overlap hotspots in the East Pacific are not subject to bycatch mitigation requirements. These results indicate that Black petrels experience significant exposure to bycatch-prone fisheries across multiple jurisdictions throughout their annual cycle, often with limited management in place, underscoring the need for consistent, effective mitigation measures capable of preventing access to baited hooks.

The Meeting discussed the importance of Party engagement at IATTC to advance improvements in their management measures, and that updated ACAP Species Assessments should provide clear and concise information on relevant jurisdictions and threats to support such engagement. Further discussions covered the importance of engaging with Columbia and Mesoamerican territories to further seabird conservation across the range of all ACAP species.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 05 noted that artisanal longline fisheries along the Ecuadorian coast are considered an important but poorly quantified threat to ACAP-listed seabirds, particularly Waved Albatross *Phoebastria irrorata* and Black Petrel *P. parkinsoni*. High-resolution GPS tracking of artisanal fishing vessels was combined with seabird tracking and systematic beach-survey data from coastal Ecuador. Between November 2024 and February 2026, 185 fishing trips from five ports in Santa Elena and Manabí provinces were tracked, encompassing demersal longline, pelagic longline, and handline fisheries. Seabird distributions were derived from GPS data for Waved Albatross and GLS data for Black Petrel. Both species overlapped with artisanal longline fisheries, with the strongest overlap associated with demersal longliners. Key hotspots occurred off the Santa Elena Peninsula for Waved Albatross and off Bahía de Caráquez for Black Petrel, primarily in shelf-edge waters within Ecuador's Exclusive Economic Zone. Beach surveys at Mar Bravo recorded 779 seabird carcasses, including hooked Waved albatrosses. Hook size and type were consistent with gear used in both demersal and surface longline fisheries in the area. The findings

identified priority areas, seasons, and gear types for targeted fisher engagement, bycatch mitigation and future monitoring in Ecuadorian artisanal fisheries.

The Meeting acknowledged this excellent work, based on trust between fishers and researchers providing unprecedented levels of insight into these small-scale fisheries that also demonstrated strong capacity building.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 07 described combining extensive biologging data from White-chinned Petrels *P. aequinoctialis* (representing >98% of their global breeding population) with pelagic and demersal longline and trawl fishing effort to map the global distribution and fisheries-overlap hotspots for the most bycaught seabird in the Southern Hemisphere. 132 adults (2006–2018) were tracked and spatial overlap among seven populations comprising three genetically distinct metapopulations were examined. Foraging areas during the non-breeding season were more concentrated than during breeding, with birds from all populations migrating to continental shelf or upwelling zones, but with low spatial overlap among metapopulations. Fisheries overlap differed more among than within metapopulations, underlining that these should be considered separate management units. Overlap with pelagic longline fisheries was greatest for Indian Ocean populations, and from the fleets of South Africa, Japan, Taiwan, and Spain, off southern Africa and in the High Seas. Overlap with demersal longline and trawl fisheries was greatest for Indian and Atlantic Ocean populations, within the Exclusive Economic Zones of South Africa, Namibia, and Argentina, and with the South Korean demersal longline fleet in the High Seas of the South-west Atlantic. This latter hotspot is of particular concern, as it falls outside the jurisdiction of any RFMO. There is also little current information on the historical scale of this fishery. Fisheries-overlap hotspots within RFMOs where there are no seabird-bycatch mitigation requirements (1.5%–53.1% of total overlap within the area of competence of each RFMO) were identified, as were areas where current mitigation regulations need to be strengthened.

The Meeting welcomed this work, in particular its utility in targeting of engagement by ACAP with specific flag states, including South Korea, whose vessels have high overlap with this species. Given some of the fishing effort data used were over ten years old, it was noted that updated assessments using more recent data may be useful in supporting such targeted outreach. It was also noted that ACAP-funded work is underway to better understand the overlap of ACAP-listed species with fishing effort in the high seas of the southwest Atlantic.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 09 noted that at South Georgia (Islas Georgia del Sur)[1], the decrease in Wandering Albatrosses *Diomedea exulans* differs among breeding sites and could reflect segregation in foraging areas which leads to differing degrees of overlap with particular fishing fleets and hence unequal bycatch risk. Wandering Albatrosses from two breeding sites, Prion Island and Bird Island, located 50 km apart were tracked. The potential causes of spatial segregation were investigated using species distribution models and by comparing wind conditions among sites. Overlap with fisheries was quantified for each population. Although overall distributions ranged from the Antarctic to the subtropics, virtually all Wandering albatrosses from Bird Island foraged only to the west of the island group, whereas those from Prion Island foraged to the east and west. Preferred habitat characteristics were similar at both colonies, and waters to the east and west provided

[1] A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (Islas Georgias del Sur e Islas Sandwich del Sur) and the surrounding maritime areas.

foraging habitat. Wind conditions when birds departed were also similar at the two sites. Because neither habitat specialisation nor wind conditions appeared to be factors in the observed spatial segregation among colonies, this segregation likely reflected a combination of experience, information exchange, and cultural evolution. Breeding birds from both sites overlapped most with Chinese squid jiggers, Argentinian trawlers, and South Korean demersal longliners, but the spatial segregation led to a higher overlap with demersal longline, demersal trawl, and pelagic longline fisheries by wandering albatrosses at Bird Island, which could have resulted in the faster population decline observed there.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 10 noted that few studies have tested whether spatial segregation among colonies in foraging areas affects bycatch risk. Nonbreeding Wandering albatrosses from Bird Island and neighbouring Prion Island, South Georgia (Islas Georgia del Sur)[1] were tracked to investigate whether differences in at-sea distributions and overlap with fisheries explain the contrasting population trends. Tracked individuals at Bird Island were of known status (immature or nonbreeding adults), and at Prion Island, they were most likely older immatures and potentially a few nonbreeding adults. There was marked spatial segregation between age classes at Bird Island, but the pattern between breeding sites was more complex. The overlap with fisheries was highest in nonbreeding adults from Bird Island, which experienced a faster rate of population decline than at Prion Island, where overlap with fisheries was lower. Overlap was highest with Chinese, South Korean, and Taiwanese squid jiggers, Taiwanese pelagic longliners, and Argentinian and Spanish trawlers.

The Meeting noted the contrast in population trends with the increasing populations of Wandering Albatross *D. exulans* in the south Indian Ocean. The Meeting discussed the high level of overlap with squid jiggers, highlighting the importance of understanding the actual risks posed by this fishing method and noted this subject was on the agenda of SBWG13. In comparing fisheries overlap between colonies, the Meeting noted the overlap with pelagic longline fisheries in the South Atlantic as a major issue for the sharply declining Bird Island population. The value of using such tracking data to identify distribution hotspots related to oceanographic features was also highlighted as useful to inform potential protected area designations, although recognising that these may displace rather than reduce fishing effort and hence bycatch risk.

The following Information Papers were also presented to the Meeting and the authors were thanked for submitting this information to assist in the work of ACAP. The Meeting also noted the usefulness and impact of the ACAP Small Grants Programme and Secondment Scheme in the research behind some of these papers.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 01 Mesoscale ocean dynamics structure fisheries interaction risk for an endangered seabird

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 02 Immersion patterns alone can predict vessel following by albatrosses

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 03 Unseen but not unheard: Animal-borne audio recorders reveal missing interactions between seabirds and untracked vessels

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 04 Navigating uncertainty in fine-scale fisheries overlap to assess bycatch risk of a wide-ranging pelagic seabird

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 05 Environmental and anthropogenic drivers of foraging habitat selection for chick-rearing black-browed albatrosses

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 06 Ecological risk assessment for the effect of commercial longline fisheries to Black-browed albatross and White-chinned petrel populations in Argentina

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 07 Great shearwater *Ardenna gravis* attendance at commercial fisheries in the Argentine economic fishing zone

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 08 Effect of fishing effort on the foraging behaviour of adult and immature Black-browed Albatrosses *Thalassarche melanophris*

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 09 Zonas de riesgo para aves marinas pelágicas en la Zona Común de Pesca Argentina – Uruguaya

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 10 Overview of ACAP species occurrence in Costa Rican waters

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 11 Preliminary results from collaborative satellite tracking of Grey-headed Albatrosses from Campbell Island, New Zealand, and Islas Diego Ramírez, Chile, and plans for expanded multi-site tracking in 2026-27

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 12 Preliminary analysis of the overlap of southern royal albatross with fisheries in the southwest Atlantic

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 13 CCSBT collaborative risk assessment for seabird bycatch with surface longlines in the Southern Hemisphere 2025

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 14 Progress on the Seabird Bycatch Risk Assessment and Discussions on Management Measures in the CCSBT ERS Working Group. The WG discussed the gravity of the paper illustrating that five flag-states fishing for Southern Bluefin Tuna likely catch >16,000 individuals of ACAP species annually, including Antipodean *D. antipodensis*, Amsterdam *Diomedea amsterdamensis*, Tristan *Diomedea dabbenena*, and Sooty *Phoebetria fusca* Albatross at unsustainable levels, and highlight persistent bycatch hotspots in the Tasman Sea and the southeast Atlantic.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 15 Interspecific trophic comparison through two complementary methods of two sympatric albatrosses at the Austral Patagonian Shelf

PaCSWG Inf 16 Coastal connectivity of marine predators over the Patagonian Shelf during the highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 21 Multi-fishery interactions of sympatric black-browed and grey-headed albatrosses from the Diego Ramírez Islands: An isotopic and tracking approach, was not presented as the authors were delayed.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 22 ACAP Small Grants Final Report – Winter Movements of Black-browed Albatross.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SBWG and PaCSWG jointly recommend that the Advisory Committee:

1. Considers how detailed spatial information on the overlap of seabird at-sea distribution and fisheries can be best used when implementing the RFMCO Engagement Strategy.
2. Encourages the sharing of the standardised workflow for point-based seabird-fisheries overlap analyses within the R package ShareWater to improve comparability and transparency.
3. Notes the updated spatial information for Westland Petrels, including significant time spent in both Chilean and Argentinian EEZs.
4. Encourages Parties and others, when undertaking observations or assessments of seabird bycatch in waters off southern South America attempt to ensure identification of *Procellaria* petrels to species level.
5. Notes that straightforward overlap analyses, combined with spatial insights into bycatch, can offer relevant management information in the absence of advanced risk modelling.
6. Notes the considerable overlap of Black petrels with pelagic longline fisheries and potentially other fisheries in the East Pacific.
7. Encourages Parties to incorporate domestic small scale and artisanal fishing effort when conducting bycatch assessments and taking actions to mitigate bycatch.
8. Notes the need for the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) to improve bycatch mitigation requirements to ensure year-round protection for Black petrels (and other ACAP species), and considers how to use this information when implementing the RFMCO Strategy.
9. Considers the best ways in which ACAP and Parties could engage with Mesoamerican and Colombian jurisdictions to promote the conservation of Black petrels and other ACAP-listed species in their waters.
10. Notes the overlap of Waved Albatross and Black Petrel with Ecuadorian small vessel longline fisheries and the resultant bycatch risk, in particular from the Mahi Mahi fishery that sets hook very close to the water surface.
11. Encourages the further development of mitigation tools for small scale and artisanal longline fisheries.
12. Encourages Parties to fund research and engagement at the grass roots level between researchers and fishers.
13. Encourages Parties to consider the use of inexpensive archival GPS loggers to understand movements of small scale and artisanal vessels and therefore overlap with ACAP species in their waters.

14. Encourages analyses that compare seabird-fisheries overlap inside and outside RFMO areas with differing bycatch-mitigation requirements to identify where more stringent regulations would benefit threatened species;
15. Request Parties to consider how to improve monitoring of seabird interactions, and to ensure seabird bycatch mitigation is implemented by demersal longline and trawl vessels in the High Seas area of the southwest Atlantic that is not covered by a relevant RFMO.
16. Considers ways to encourage the IATTC to amend Resolution C-11-02 to extend the requirement for seabird-bycatch mitigation westward from 85°W to 90°W at 15-30°S to ensure coverage of the Nazca Ridge fisheries-and to improve fisheries mitigation measures required; Notes the particular need to use bird-scaring lines, weighted branch lines and night setting in combination, or hook-shielding devices, in the high-risk areas for White-chinned petrels.
17. Considers a direct approach by Parties and ACAP to the flag states (especially South Korea) whose vessels are operating in the southwest Atlantic to better understand the risk to ACAP species.
18. Encourages studies on spatial segregation and relative fisheries overlap among different seabird populations (breeding sites) within the same island group to identify drivers of bycatch risk and potential links with population changes;
19. Requests Parties and encourages RFMOs to implement ACAP Best Practice Advice and improve monitoring of compliance and seabird bycatch rates in fisheries and regions where bycatch risk may be high for Wandering Albatrosses, particularly demersal longliners flagged to South Korea and China, and pelagic longliners flagged to Brazil, China, and Taiwan.
20. Requests Brazil to require the use of vessel-tracking systems, the implementation of ACAP Best Practice Advice and monitoring of compliance and seabird bycatch rates by vessels in the small-scale fisheries within the EEZ, given the poor understanding of the risk posed to wandering albatrosses and other seabirds;
21. Expresses concern that the SEFRA assessment demonstrates the CCSBT fishery has a considerable, and likely unsustainable impact on several ACAP-listed species.
22. Encourages CCSBT members to immediately implement best practice seabird mitigation measures in all areas known to impact ACAP-listed species.
23. Encourages studies that quantify bird-vessel interactions or identify the factors that influence movements and behaviour of birds and vessels to better understand interaction rates and bycatch risk.

3.2 Offshore energy infrastructure developments and associated risks

The Meeting considered **Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 08** which provided an update from the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Offshore Wind Farms (OWF ICG). The group, led by Dr Helen Wade, has primarily focused on developing a draft structure for the development of ACAP guidelines for Offshore Wind Farm developments with a strong focus on ACAP species. An external consultant has been selected by the Secretariat to develop the guidelines based on a scope providing by the ICG. The draft guidelines will be presented at AC16. The Terms of Reference (ToRs) that have guided the progress of the OWF ICG to date (**ANNEX 2**) will be considered as development of the guidelines progresses. Humane World for Animals was thanked for funding this work. Helen has recently stepped down from her role as Chair of the ICG and was congratulated for her careful leadership. The ICG is looking to nominate a new chair.

In **AC15 Inf 04**, Australia reported on their voluntary contribution of AUD 2.5 million to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels – Renewables Environmental Research Initiative (ACAP-RERI) that will inform the assessment of potential impacts of offshore renewable energy developments on ACAP-listed species. Australia indicated that the ACAP-RERI will be overseen by a Steering Group that includes the Secretariat, representatives from Australia and potentially other interested ACAP Parties, and the Chair of the Advisory Committee. Scientific expertise will be provided by a multi-disciplinary Technical Advisory Group (TAG) including members of ACAP Working Groups. Funds will be distributed through a call for research proposals that will be assessed by the TAG and the Steering Committee. The contribution will support the initiative for up to five years to June 2030. The Secretariat thanked Australia for the voluntary contribution and informed the Meeting that members will be invited to provide expertise to the TAG. Brazil expressed interest in being part of the Steering Group and commented that the CMS Energy Task Force is currently chaired by Brazil. New Zealand also expressed interest in joining the Steering Group. More information will be provided in the second half of 2026.

The Meeting considered **Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 16** which used a large tracking dataset to estimate flight altitude from 5-10 min resolution GPS tags. The large error at this resolution meant that altitude was not estimated reliably. However, albatrosses appeared to have higher median flight altitudes than petrels. It was noted that another project with Australian colleagues is using satellite transmitters and barometric altimeters which will provide more accurate information on flight heights. However, this technology is currently only suitable for albatrosses and giant petrels. Other technologies were mentioned to estimate flight height, including radar and camera images.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 17 described the results of an assessment of seabird strikes with seismic vessels in the southwest Atlantic. Strikes of albatrosses and petrels were recorded with cables perpendicular to vessels. The authors adapted a bird scaring line, which was attached to the cable on one side of vessel, and strike rates were compared with those on the cable on the other side of the vessel with no bird scaring line. Bird scaring lines appeared to reduce strike rates, though the efficacy decreased over time as bird scaring lines became entangled with cables. The authors tried using cameras to monitor strike rates, but they were not effective.

The Meeting discussed the nature of seismic vessel strikes and the fate of birds striking cables, and encouraged the authors to conduct more research and present the findings as a Working Paper to the joint meeting of the working groups in 2027.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 18 presented a new method for calculating flight height from barometric pressure data recorded by biologgers. The method leverages the dynamic soaring behavior of seabirds and the proximity to the sea surface at the bottom of the flight arc, allowing calibration of sea surface height. This work can inform offshore wind farm collision risk modeling and evidence-based mitigation measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SBWG and PaCSWG jointly recommend that the Advisory Committee:

24. Endorses the proposed OWF ICG work programme and its Terms of Reference (ANNEX 2), noting the need for the OWF ICG to continue to AC16.

3.3 Other at-sea threats, including climate change

The Meeting noted **Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 19** which reported the preliminary findings of long-term monitoring of seabird strandings in Argentina. ACAP species were recorded, though strandings were dominated by penguins and shearwaters. A small proportion of individuals showed evidence of interactions with fishing gear, including hooks and lines.

4. ACAP HIGH PRIORITY POPULATIONS

4.1. Review key research and management actions for current ACAP High Priority Populations.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 09 and **Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 10** were discussed under Agenda Item 3.1.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 11 reported on the Action Plan for the Critically Endangered Waved Albatross *P. irrorata*, which was developed more than 15 years ago by ACAP, Ecuador and Peru. The Plan does not systematically incorporate new information or emerging threats. The Meeting noted the need to update the Action Plan with new information on fisheries interactions, emerging threats, population monitoring, and research on the species. It was further noted there are many institutions with responsibility for actions under the Plan and it would be beneficial to establish a single point of coordination.

The Meeting noted that since the last review in 2019 there has been no report on the progress of the Action Plan and suggested this would help identify difficulties or challenges with implementing actions under the Plan. The Meeting recommended that Ecuador provide a progress on actions taken to help focus future conservation efforts under any new revised plan.

The Meeting agreed to include an action in the Advisory Committee Work Programme on the preparation of an implementation report, including the identification of new threat scenarios, concrete actions, and challenges to implementation. It was noted that any new draft report will need to be developed in collaboration with Ecuador.

Joint SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Inf 20 reported good progress towards achieving various fisheries management and research objectives, in particular, the introduction of new domestic fisheries management measures and intensive satellite tracking of Antipodean Albatross *Diomedea antipodensis*. The Meeting noted that progress in addressing high seas fishery bycatch (the greatest threat to the species) remains limited and monitoring shows little sign of population recovery. Accordingly, an updated Concerted Action Plan was agreed at CMS COP15. The updated plan includes a full suite of actions to be taken by the CMS Party Range States and CMS Parties that are Members of, or engage with, key RFMOs.

4.2 Development of an ACAP strategy for High Priority Populations – reporting template and priority fisheries

The Secretariat recalled an updated High Priority Populations reporting template agreed at AC13. The Meeting discussed the need for this reporting to provide a summary of key actions taken to address threats to the High Priority Populations not just by Parties with breeding sites, but also relevant Range States. The intention is for the reporting form to be incorporated into the ACAP database prior to AC16 in 2027.

4.3 Proposals for new High Priority Populations

The Meeting noted the work of the Intersessional Group on Trends (IG Trends) which included the application of the standardised framework to the ACAP High Priority Populations assessment process as outlined in **PaCSWG9 Doc 03 Rev 2**. Initial analyses indicated the current threshold (3% annual decline over 20 years) is very high given the generation time of ACAP species, with only one species currently meeting the threshold (Grey-headed Albatross *Thalassarche chrysostoma*) out of those analysed in PaCSWG9 Doc 03 Rev 2.

Possible revisions to the assessment criteria and statistical thresholds were discussed in PaCSWG9, but because not all revised trends of ACAP High Priority Populations were yet available, the IG Trends was tasked with developing updated, standardised criteria. The updated Terms of Reference for the IG are provided in ANNEX 3 of **AC15 Doc 12**.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SBWG and PaCSWG jointly recommend that the Advisory Committee:

25. Endorses the revised ToR of Intersessional Group on Population Trends (IG Trends) to include the development and application of updated, standardised criteria for identifying ACAP High Priority Populations.
26. Urges Ecuador to provide a progress report on actions taken on the Waved Albatross to help focus future conservation efforts under any revised Plan of Action.

5. COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES RELATING TO RFMCOs

5.1 Update on RFMCO Engagement Strategy implementation

ACAP-listed species continue to be bycaught in industrial fisheries managed by tuna and non-tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). Accordingly, engagement with these RFMOs and relevant conservation organisations (e.g. CCAMLR) has been a key component of ACAP's strategy to mitigate and reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds. **AC15 Inf 02** outlined the revised ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisations (RFMCO) adopted at the Eighth Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP8).

The Strategy sets out the following: objectives; actions to be taken; focus of engagement; basis for engaging with regional fisheries management and conservation organisations; individualised approaches; and reviewing progress. An important component of the strategy is systematic reporting to the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups. **SBWG13/PaCSWG9 Doc 12** provided an overview of progress in implementing the ACAP Engagement Strategy with RFMCOs during the 2023-2025 triennium, including detailed reports on how ACAP delivered against the agreed priority actions for each RFMCO.

The Meeting acknowledged the considerable time spent by ACAP officers and the Secretariat in progressing the strategy. It was noted that engagement with RFMCOs was a key conservation management action for ACAP species, and a vital part of the Advisory Committee Work Programme. The Meeting concluded that good progress was being made with ACAP's engagement with non-tuna RFMOs and CCAMLR, however progress in improving seabird bycatch management measures in the tuna RFMOs was the major ongoing challenge. While the Meeting expressed frustration with the limited progress in improving management measures despite extensive engagement efforts, it was noted that small but incremental gains were being achieved.

Given the challenges at the tuna RFMOs it was noted that new approaches to communication and engagement should be considered, and complementary actions such as engagement in tuna supply chains to leverage strong market demand for sustainability. Birdlife International highlighted the potential to leverage the current CCBST Compliance Committee work plan element on harmonising reporting of seabird bycatch and seabird bycatch mitigation measure use across the other tuna RFMOs, given CCSBT defers compliance with seabird measures to IOTC, ICCAT, IATTC and WCPFC. Bringing ICCAT reporting closer to that of CCSBT and WCPFC is considered a priority. Birdlife International also noted that Common Oceans III is in development and will be discussed in Rome in July 2026 which represents an opportunity for collaboration to maintain momentum from the SEFRA work, due for completion in November.

The Meeting agreed that RFMO proposals are significantly strengthened when led by RFMO Members / CPCs and recognise the excellent efforts of some ACAP Parties in recent years. To achieve further progress, it will be important for continued and widened Party leadership, with support from ACAP. The Meeting noted that more time should be allocated to discussing the RFMCO Strategy at SBWG14/PaCSWG10.

Discussion of **AC15 Doc 20** was deferred to SBWG13 Agenda Item 4.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SBWG and PaCSWG jointly recommend that the Advisory Committee:

27. Encourages Parties to promote the objectives of the RFMCO Engagement Strategy, including the submission and advocacy of relevant proposals within the RFMCOs of which they are members.

6. LISTING OF SPECIES ON ANNEX 1

6.1. Review criteria for list of candidate species

AC15 Doc 09 provided a summary of the work of the Taxonomy Working Group (TWG), highlighting that a new global avian taxonomy called AviList has been published as the end result of a process undertaken by the Working Group Avian Checklists (WGAC) under the auspices of the International Ornithologists' Union. The work consolidated three previous not-fully compatible world lists, IOC, BirdLife and Cornell/eBird, as noted also in **AC15 Inf 06.** AviList differs from the taxonomy used for ACAP's Annex 1 in three ways, based on the committee's interpretation of the evidence:

(i) Taxon *impavida* (Campbell Albatross) is treated as a subspecies of *Thalassarche melanophris* (Black-browed Albatross)

(ii) Taxon *steadi* (White-capped Albatross) is treated as a subspecies of *Thalassarche cauta* (Shy Albatross)

(iii) Taxon *mauretanicus* (Balearic Shearwater) is treated as a subspecies of *Puffinus yelkouan* (Yelkouan Shearwater)

The TWG recommended the adoption of AviList by ACAP when considering listing new species on Annex 1, while following its own taxonomy for species already listed on Annex 1, including the taxa noted above. The Working Groups agreed that ACAP should engage with AviList and put forward cases for amending AviList based on ACAP's taxonomic approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SBWG and PaCSWG agree with TWG and jointly recommend that the Advisory Committee:

28. Adopts AviList for nominating new species to be listed under Annex 1 instead of IOC list.

29. Endorses the engagement of ACAP to ensure that AviList adopts the ACAP taxonomic approach for species presently listed on Annex 1.

30. Encourages research to provide further support to ACAP's taxonomic approach for the three pairs of taxa Avilist treats differently (*Thalassarche impavida* (Campbell Albatross) vs. *T. melanophris* (Black-browed Albatross); *T. steadi* (White-capped Albatross) vs. *T. cauta* (Shy Albatross*); Puffinus mauretanicus* (Balearic Shearwater) vs. *P. yelkouan* (Yelkouan Shearwater).

6.2. Proposals to list species on Annex 1

AC15 Doc 18 reported that the Fifteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) adopted a proposal presented by Australia, New Zealand and France to list Flesh-footed Shearwater *Ardenna carneipes* on Appendix II of CMS, which will elevate the suitability score of Flesh-footed Shearwater for inclusion on Annex 1 of ACAP. A proposed Concerted Action for the Flesh-footed Shearwater was also adopted. This plan identified a range of actions to address the threats faced by Flesh-footed Shearwaters, with a particular focus on bycatch in fisheries.

The Meeting discussed the benefit of CMS Concerted Action involving a wide range of Parties to archive the desired outcomes and priorities of the Plan. PaCSWG9 and SBWG14 also noted that if there was to be a nomination for ACAP listing of the Flesh-footed Shearwater, it should be brought to AC16 in 2027 so that it could be considered by the Working Groups and the Advisory Committee and recommendations made to MoP9 in 2028.

AC15 Doc 19 reported that the Fifteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) adopted a proposal presented by New Zealand, Australia, Brazil and Chile to list 26 gadfly petrel species, subspecies and geographic populations on Appendices I and II of CMS, which will influence the scoring of suitability for potential listing of species on Annex 1 of ACAP. The CMS listing proposal document has collated a range of information on gadfly petrels, including the threats they face, although a Concerted Action to address these threats has not yet been developed.

The Working Groups agreed an informal ACAP Contact Group on Gadfly Petrels could be established to provide input into the development of a Concerted Action. Mark Tasker expressed interest in participating in any such Contact Group.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SBWG and PaCSWG jointly recommend that the Advisory Committee:

31. Considers the CMS listing proposal document and identifies any additional information that should be included in a potential proposal for listing Flesh-footed Shearwater on Annex 1 that could be brought to SBWG14/PaCSWG10/AC16 for review.

32. Establishes an ACAP Contact Group on gadfly petrels to support the development of a Concerted Action.

7. ACAP FUNDED PROGRAMMES

7.1. Small Grants Scheme

and

7.2. Secondment Programme

AC15 Inf 03 summarised information on recent Small Grants and Secondments supported by the Advisory Committee. In 2024 the ACAP Secondment round received two applications, both of which were successful, with a total of $31,567 awarded. The 2024 Small Grants round received 12 applications from nine Parties, requesting a total of $490,731. Six projects were ultimately selected for funding, receiving a combined total of $287,273. A small number of projects from earlier rounds severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic has also now concluded. The Secretariat thanked all Working Group members who reviewed the Small Grant proposals, and noted that the next application round for both Small Grants and Secondments is anticipated to take place in the second half of 2026.

The Meeting commended the numerous papers presented for the consideration of PaCSWG9 and SBWG13 where the work was supported by an ACAP Small Grant or Secondment, and underscored the value of both programmes to the Agreement.

8. REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS JOINT SBWG/PACSWG MEETINGS

The Secretariat collated recommendations from previous Joint PaCSWG/SBWG meetings into a searchable database which can be used to track recommendations over time to avoid duplication and note progress against agreed actions. Following review and refinement of the list of recommendations by the Working Group Convenors, this resource will be made available prior to Joint PaCSWG10/SBWG14 so that WG members and authors can check the status of existing recommendations in advance of drafting meeting documents.

The Meeting noted the need to refer to the recommendations database in meeting circulars and document templates, and to provide further guidance on the distinction between Information and Working Papers.

9. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

9.1. Review Work Programme 2026 - 2028

The Work Programme for 2026 - 2028 **(AC15 Doc 14)** was updated based on discussions during the meeting, to be considered by the Advisory Committee.

10. REPORTING TO THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

The Chair of the Advisory Committee reminded the Joint Working Group Meeting of the revised approach for Advisory Committee reporting to the Meetings of Parties (AC13 Doc 17). This now includes specific papers on ‘Status of ACAP species, populations, and breeding sites’ (MoP8 Doc 13), ‘Threats to ACAP species and mitigation actions’ (MoP8 Doc 14) and Priority Conservation Actions for 2026 - 2028 (MoP8 Doc 15). The Chair requested both Working Groups to engage in redrafting of these papers prior to AC16, especially the ‘Threats’ paper. He emphasised the importance of providing informed and up-to-date information on the threats to ACAP species to Meetings of Parties.

The Working Groups supported this request and Convenors noted that the new format of the reports to the last MoP was very effective, triggered good discussions, greater engagement, and stronger support for the work of the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

12. REPORTING TO AC15

This report was prepared for consideration by the Advisory Committee.

13. CLOSE OF MEETING

The PaCSWG and SBWG Convenors and Vice-convenors thanked those present, and the authors of papers and rapporteurs, for their valuable contributions to the meeting. Meeting attendees, the ACAP Secretariat and ACAP officials were thanked for their work during and in preparation of the meeting. Convenors gratefully acknowledged the host country for their hospitality, Cecilia Alal and Sandra Hale for their interpretation services, and the sound technicians for their assistance during the meeting.

ANNEX 1. LIST OF JOINT SBWG13/PaCSWG9 MEETING PARTICIPANTS

SBWG/PaCSWG Members	
Igor Debski	SBWG Co-convenor, Department of Conservation, New Zealand
Sebastián Jiménez	SBWG Co-convenor, Dirección Nacional de Recursos Acuáticos, Uruguay
Megan Tierney	SBWG Co-vice-convenor, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, United Kingdom
Dimas Gianuca	SBWG Co-vice-convenor, BirdLife International
Marco Favero	PaCSWG Co-convenor, Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras, CONICET-UNMDP, Argentina
Patricia Pereira Serafini	PaCSWG Co-convenor, CEMAVE - National Center for Wild Bird Research and Conservation, ICMBio/Ministry of Environment, Brazil
Richard Phillips	PaCSWG Vice-convenor, BAS, United Kingdom
Barry Baker	Charles Darwin University, Australia
Johannes Fischer	Department of Conservation, New Zealand
Gustavo Jimenez	Charles Darwin Foundation, Ecuador
Mandi Livesey	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Australian Antarctic Division
Azwianewi Makhado	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, South Africa
Tatiana Neves	Projeto Albatroz, Brazil
Mark Tasker	Joint Nature Conservation Committee, United Kingdom/ TWG Convenor
Invited Experts	
Johannes Chambon	University of Otago
Thomas Clay	Environmental Defense Fund

Advisory Committee Members, Representatives and Advisors	
Pedro Albuquerque	Representative, Brazil
Gabriel Canani Sampaio	Advisor, Brazil
Thando Cebekhulu	Alternate Representative, South Africa
Lawrence Chlebeck	Advisor, Australia
Mike Double	AC Chair
Makhudu Masotla	Alternate Representative, South Africa

Observers	
Andrea Angel	BirdLife International
Chris Bartholomae	Namibia
Sarah Becker	University of Colorado Bouler
Zoe Jacobs	BirdLife International
John Kathena	Namibia
Anja Kreiner	Namibia
Samantha Matjila	Namibia Nature Foundation
Elia Nambahu	Namibia Nature Foundation
Clemens Naomab	Namibia Nature Foundation
Daisuke Ochi	Japan
Sarah Paulus	Namibia
Etienne Rouby	INSTAAR, CU Boulder
Desmond Tom	Namibia
Lizette Voges	SEAFO
Oliver Yates	BirdLife International

ACAP Secretariat	
Jonathon Barrington	Executive Secretary
Wiesława Misiak	Science Officer

Interpreters
Cecilia Alal
Sandra Hale

ANNEX 2. PROPOSED OFFSHORE WIND FARM INTERSESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE GROUP WORK PROGRAM AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Proposed OWF ICG work program

- Appoint new OWF ICG Chair
- Review draft guidelines developed under the Consultancy
- Identify further work including whether the guidelines should be minimum standard versus best practice advice and consider the benefits of more detailed topic-specific companion documents and identify any additional resource needs
- Determine the content and value of seeking additional funding through ACAP-RERI grant program
- Consult with National Contact Points to determine further amendments
- Submit draft guidelines to AC16

The OWF ICG is yet to consider whether the development of more detailed, topic-specific companion documents on issues such collision risk modelling and monitoring would complement and support the generally high-level guidelines.

Offshore Wind Farm Intersessional Correspondence Group Terms of Reference

To develop guidelines for Offshore Wind Farm (OWF) developments the Intersessional Group will:

1. Review the principles and suggested best practice advice provided in SBWG12/PaCSWG8 Doc 09;
2. Consider the applicability for ACAP species of existing OWF development guidelines and risk assessment methods (e.g. from the Northern Hemisphere);
3. Review methods that enable studies of flight height behaviours of ACAP species;
4. Review methods that enable studies of fine-scale distributions of ACAP species;
5. Review approaches to identify areas with high concentrations of seabirds (e.g. near breeding colonies, flight corridors, and migration routes);
6. Explore ways to coordinate the work of the ICG with the CMS Energy Task Force;
7. Develop draft ACAP guidelines for OWF development for consideration at AC15 or intersessionally.