Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels	**Eighth Meeting of the Advisory Committee** *Punta del Este, Uruguay, 15 -19 September 2014* ***Outcomes of projects supported in 2009-2012 AC Grants Programme*** ***Grant Sub-Committee, Secretariat***

1. PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES OF PROJECTS SUPPORTED IN THE 2012 FUNDING ROUND

Five projects were supported during the 2012 call for applications. Progress reports were sought in June 2014 using a standard form developed in previous years and were used to collate a summary of activities undertaken and outcomes achieved to date.

ACAP 2012-03 Seabird mitigation effectiveness of the Smart Tuna Hook in Tuna longline fishing *(Barry Baker, Southern Seabird Solutions Trust; Graham Robertson, Australian Antarctic Division and Hans Jusseit, OceanSmart)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 20 000

Summary of activities/outcomes

We are now conducting an at sea trial in South Africa to demonstrate the efficacy of the Smart Tuna Hook in reducing seabird bycatch whilst improving the catch of target species. The experiment involves a direct comparison of a) conventional surface setting of pelagic longlines with weighted swivels as regulated (minimum of 60 g at 2m from the hook) using hooks without the 'Smart Hook' shield (the conventional method), and b) surface setting of pelagic longlines using the 'Smart Hook' shield (Smart Hook method). Where feasible, the experiment is being conducted during daylight hours so that other data on bait attack rates by seabirds can be obtained as well.

Research Permit RES2013/84 was approved on 1 October 2013 but commencement of the experiment has been delayed because of stock allocation and poor fishing issues, together with difficulties in accessing vessels with skippers willing to participate in the experiment. However these problems now seem to be resolved and the first cruise commenced on 30 July 2014. It is anticipated the experiment will be completed by October 2014.

ACAP 2012-04 Population demography and at-sea distribution of Sooty Albatross at the Prince Edward Islands *(Peter G Ryan, Percy FitzPatrick Institute, DST/NRF Centre of Excellence, University of Cape Town; Robert JM Crawford and Azwianewi B Makhado Oceans and Coast, Department of Environmental Affairs)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 17 600

Summary of activities/outcomes

Dedicated study areas with marked birds were set up to obtain robust estimates of breeding success as well as estimates of survival and breeding frequency. These studies are being replicated on a smaller scale at Gough Island, to provide comparative data for the largest single-island population of Dark-mantled Sooty Albatrosses.

Demographic work:

Dark-mantled (DMSA) and Light-mantled Sooty Albatross (LMSA) colonies are monitored throughout the breeding season (Sept-June). A single DMSA and LMSA study colony was set up in 2012, but breeding success data were compromised by logistical issues. In 2013 the study was extended to three DMSA and two LMSA colonies, with LMSA breeding within DMSA colonies also monitored.

Accessible birds are banded with metal and plastic rings for identification. To date, more than 250 DMSA adults have been banded. More modest numbers of LMSA adults have been banded – 45.The colonies are checked every week or two weeks depending on breeding stage; accessible nests are checked directly and inaccessible nests checked with binoculars. Parental identification and attendance is recorded as well as nest fate and the presence of pollutants. All accessible chicks within the monitoring colonies are banded with a metal band prior to fledging (51 DMSA and 24 LMSA to date).

Breeding success during 2013/14 at the three DMSA colonies averaged 56%. Breeding success of LMSA differed greatly between the coastal site (100%) and inland site (27%), but overall was similar to that in DMSA at Marion (55%). Camera traps deployed at colonies confirm that sooty albatross chicks were killed by giant petrels and Subantarctic Skuas.

Tracking:

Since 2012 GLS devices were deployed on DMSA (35) and LMSA (12) to track the year-round movements of adult birds, and GPS loggers were deployed on breeding adults to determine their fine-scale movements during the different stages of the breeding season. These tracking data are augmented by ongoing deployments of PTTs on fledgling sooty albatrosses by DEA. Of the GLS loggers deployed since 2012, 18 have been recovered and downloaded successfully (16 from DMSA and 2 from LMSA).

During the 2013/14 breeding season 45 GPS loggers were deployed on breeding adults (30 DMSA and 15 LMSA). Of the 30 DMSA devices, 27 were retrieved and 23 had useful data. Of the 15 LMSA devices, 11 were retrieved and 9 had useful data.

ACAP 2012-06 NGO action in Santa Rosa, Ecuador to reduce bycatch of Waved albatross (and other seabirds) in artisanal longline fisheries *(Holly Freifeld and George Wallace, American Bird Conservancy; Oli Yates and Esteban Frere, BirdLife International; Jorge Samaniego, Aves y Conservación; and Andres Baquero, Equilibro Azul)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 20 000

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now concluded. The following summary is from a final report provided in November 2013:

Complete Line Weighting Trials: BirdLife and partners completed line weighting experiments to test how fishing operations in this fleet can be improved with regard to limiting the access of vulnerable seabirds to baited hooks without negatively affecting the catch rate of target fish species. One kilogram concrete line weights were tested against a control of ~450 g stone weights. The sink rate and fish catch rate for each treatment was recorded. Heavier weights sank the line significantly faster while no significant differences were found on the catch rate of target fish species. No seabird bycatch was recorded on either treatment.

Chilean longline system: The 'Chilean system' was intended as an alternative gear for trial if mortality persisted through line weighting and rapid setting trials. As no seabird bycatch was observed in these trials and resources and personnel were limited, this system was not tested. Several vessels were seen to be using this method on the hake fishing grounds.

Complete Line Setting Trials for the "Medina" Rapid-setting System: To increase setting speed and efficiency and reduce the time that baited hooks are available to foraging albatrosses, ABC and partners conducted trials with another iteration of the "Medina" setting system in 2012, and then developed and tested a new approach to the problem using a different design. Fishermen liked rapid setting in principle, but the original "Medina" setting box was unwieldy and easily damaged. We have now tested, and finalized the design for, a more efficient PVC-tube system that sets 400 hooks in less than two minutes. We are now outfitting the hake fishery, conducting training and socialization, and will monitoring uptake and performance in 2014.

See also **SBWG6 Doc 14**.

Evaluate the Conversions of Industrial Trawl Vessels to Hake Vessels and Develop Mitigation as Needed: By government decree, all demersal trawl fishing in Ecuadorian waters ceased in December 2012. We tracked the status of the decommissioned trawl fleet to determine whether these would convert to industrial longline hake vessels. In 2012 the government hired a consultant to perform tests with a modified vessel with capability of setting 5,000 longline hooks per set. However, the results of a cost-benefits analysis indicated this conversion would not be plausible and this project was discontinued. To date, there has been no conversion of former trawl vessels to industrial longlining for hake.

Multi-organizational workshop: A workshop was held in Santa Rosa November 30-December 1, 2012. The workshop included information about seabirds and bycatch, presentation of results of the mitigation devices we have evaluated, review of current fishing practices, and solicitation of input from fishermen and government officials. The workshop was attended by 40 of the hake fishermen representing >60% of the demersal longline

fishing community in Santa Rosa and 23 other participants from Ecuadorean government agencies and local and international non-governmental organizations. Workshop discussions indicated a good level of seabird conservation awareness and interest amongst the participants and identified a possible evolution of the fishing gear to include increased weight per meter of line set compared with 2010.

Develop and distribute Safe-release and Offal management flyer to key fisheries: At the 2012 workshop, we distributed to fishermen and the attending government officials a flyer detailing safe-release techniques and recommendation for retaining offal and spent baits during gear retrieval. Fishermen and government officials responded well to the flyer. Another, slightly revised version will be distributed at a December 2013 workshop funded by ABC and hosted by partners.

ACAP 2012-07 Tracking Juvenile Tristan Albatrosses at Gough Island *(Ross Wanless, BirdLife South Africa; Peter Ryan, Percy FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town and Richard Cuthbert, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 20 000

Summary of activities/outcomes

Notice of the award in 2012 came too late for devices to be ordered and shipped to Gough, implementation was delayed with approval until 2013. Five PTT devices were purchased from North Star Technologies, shipped to Gough Island and deployed on juvenile Tristan Albatrosses shortly before they fledged, in December 2013. All five birds fledged successfully and devices worked. Within a few months two devices stopped transmitting – we presume because the birds died. Currently three birds continue to transmit positions. The results to date are very surprising – all birds moved into waters south of South Africa, occasionally entering into SA territorial waters, and predominantly in the Indian Ocean. We expected bird distributions to be centred more in the Atlantic Ocean.

No data analysis will be attempted until the devices end transmissions. On the original timetable it was expected that devices would terminate in 2014. However the 1-year delay means that we now expect devices to terminate in 2015, at which point data analysis will be conducted and a final report prepared.

ACAP 2012-09 Assessing the impact of demersal trawl fisheries on seabirds in Uruguay *(Andrés Domingo, Dirección Nacional de Recursos Acuáticos; Sebastián Jiménez, Martin Abreu and Rodrigo Forselledo, Dirección Nacional de Recursos Acuáticos and Proyecto Albatros y Petreles – Uruguay (NGO CICMAR)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 20 000

Summary of activities/outcomes

Standard progress report not received. Refer **SBWG6 Inf 11** instead.

2. PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES OF PROJECTS SUPPORTED IN THE 2009 AND 2010-2011 FUNDING ROUNDS

Eight projects were supported during the 2010 - 2011 call for applications. No further progress reports were received following those sought in December 2012. Eight projects were also supported resulting from the 2009 call for applications. A progress report on those proposals was sought in February 2011. No further reports were requested or received regarding the 2009 projects since then, as most were concluded (or largely so) at that time. For all projects, more recent and/or detailed information might have been reported in other documents. The Secretariat welcomes any other updates regarding further developments or relevant publications to which these projects have contributed.

ACAP 2010-01 At-sea distribution of the WAAL and overlap with fishing fleets of the central Peruvian coast *(Joanna Alfaro-Shigueto & Jeffrey C. Mangel, Pro Delphinus, Peru)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 11,500

Summary of activities/outcomes

The original satellite tags component was not funded and was removed. This project is now concluded. A summary of activities and outcomes was presented in **AC7 Inf 01**.

ACAP 2010-03 Evaluating alternative approaches to predicting at-sea distributions and fisheries overlaps of ACAP species in Ecological Risk Assessments *(Richard Phillips, British Antarctic Survey)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 7,200

Summary of activities/outcomes

The work is scheduled to start by the end of 2014, with completion of a report expected by mid-2015.

ACAP 2010-04 Concluding six years of research on seabird bycatch reduction through modified discharge management regimes: Is batch discharge better than ad-hoc discharge from trawl vessels? *(Johanna Pierre, Ministry of Research, Science and Technology, New Zealand)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 14,500

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now concluded and the results are published in:

Johanna P. Pierre, Edward R. Abraham, Yvan Richard, John Cleal, David A.J. Middleton. 2012. Controlling trawler waste discharge to reduce seabird mortality. *Fisheries Research* **131– 133:** 30– 38.

An abstract was provided in **AC7 Inf 01**.

ACAP 2010-09 Internal Consultation Process for the Consolidation of the National Plan of Acton for the Conservation of Seabirds in Peru (*Elisa Goya, Instituto del Mar del Perú; Arturo Gonzáles Araujo, Dirección General de Extracción y Procesamiento Pesquero, Ministerio de la Producción).*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 15,400

Summary of activities/outcomes

A transfer of funds for this project has not yet been requested.

ACAP 2010-10 Defining high-risk areas in the Argentinean Continental Shelf: to which extent albatrosses and petrels interact with the Argentine high-seas commercial trawl fleet? *(Sofía Copello and Juan Pablo Seco Pon. CONICET-UNMDP, Argentina).*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 14,100

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now concluded. A summary of activities and outcomes was presented in **AC7 Inf 01**. Preliminary results were presented at a workshop of the PAN-AVES Argentina (http://www.ambiente.gob.ar/archivos/web/GTRA/file/Aves%20marinas/TALLER%20SEGUIMIENTO%20PAN%20AVES%20JUNIO%202012.pdf)

ACAP 2010-11 Improving data collection on seabird incidental mortality associated with fisheries in South American observer programmes: Part II – year 2011 *(Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 10,000

Summary of activities/outcomes

At AC7 in May 2013 Uruguay advised that despite delays for a variety of logistical reasons the project is still scheduled to go ahead in December 2013.

ACAP 2010-13 Final on-shore development of 'hook-pod' to reduce seabird bycatch in pelagic longline fisheries *(Ben Sullivan, BirdLife International)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 25,000

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now successfully concluded. A progress report of this project was presented in 2011 in **SBWG4 Doc 10 Rev 1.** See also **SBWG6 Inf 12** for an update on the current status of the Hook pod.

ACAP 2010-15 Estimates of the Waved albatross mortality in artisanal fisheries during the critical period of incubation *(Jorge Samaniego, GSP BirdLife - Aves & Conservación, Ecuador).*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 15,000

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now successfully concluded. A summary of activities and outcomes was presented in **AC7 Inf 01**. See also **SBWG5 Doc 55** for more information.

ACAP 2009-01 Development of ACAP database-generated Implementation Reports *(ACAP Secretariat)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 5,000

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now successfully concluded. A summary of activities and outcomes was presented in **AC6 Inf 08**. See also **AC6 Doc 16 Rev 1** for more detailed information on the web-based reporting system.

ACAP 2009-02 Improving Waved Albatross Conservation: Monitoring Changes in Population Size and Vital Rates *(Kathryn Huyvaert, Colorado State University, USA)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 16,950

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now successfully concluded, including collection of mark-recapture data at Punta Cevallos, Española, and a trip to the Central Colony where 10 individuals were banded. A stratified sampling scheme and double observer protocol for estimating population size was also applied in 2011 to the greater Punta Cevallos colony; the estimate of the number of breeding adults was substantially lower than the last estimate which was made in 2007.

Results of analyses of the mark-recapture dataset at Punta Cevallos and the 2011 population size estimate are reported in Phillip Street's Master's Thesis: *Abundance, Survival, and Breeding Probabilities of the Critically Endangered Waved Albatross.* Two manuscripts are in the process of being published in peer-reviewed journal outlets. Aspects of the work supported by these funds have also been presented at The Wildlife Society Annual meetings in 2012 and 2013, at the Colombian Ornithological Congress in 2013, and to community members, researchers, and Galapagos National Park Directorate personnel every year since the inception of the project.

A final report for this project will be submitted in September.

ACAP 2009-04 Responding to the evolution of Peru's artisanal longline fleet: characterising fleet mechanisation and introducing weighted swivels *(Jeff Mangel & Joanna Alfaro-Shigueto, Pro-Delphinus, Peru)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 20,974

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now successfully concluded. The final report was presented in **SBWG4 Doc 36**.

ACAP 2009-05. Seabird interactions with trawl fishery for Peruvian hake in northern Peru (Liliana Ayala, APECO, Peru)

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 20,056

Summary of activities/outcomes

Following a progress report in July 2011 this project sought and was granted an extension until mid-November 2011.

ACAP 2009-06 Fact sheets for best practice techniques to mitigate seabird bycatch in pelagic longline, demersal longline and trawl fisheries *(Ben Sullivan, BirdLife International)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 18,216

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now successfully concluded. A progress report was presented in **SBWG4 Doc 37** and a summary of activities and outcomes was presented in **AC6 Inf 08**. See also **SBWG5 Doc 15** and **SBWG6 Doc 19** for more recent Fact Sheet status update**.**

ACAP 2009-09 Implementation of a Scientific Observer Programme to Evaluate the Interaction of Seabirds with Demersal Fisheries in the South of Chile *(Jorge Azocar, Instituto de Fomento Pesquero, Chile)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 10,000

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now successfully concluded. A progress report was presented in **SBWG4 Doc 38** and a summary of activities and outcomes was presented in **AC6 Inf 08**.

ACAP 2009-10 Regional workshop "Improving data collection on incidental mortality of seabirds from South American Observer Programmes" *(Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay).*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 23,000

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now successfully concluded. A progress report was presented in **SBWG4 Doc 39** and a summary of activities and outcomes was presented in **AC6 Inf 08**. The final report of the workshop can be downloaded from:

http://www.ambiente.gov.ar/archivos/web/GTRA/file/Aves%20marinas/informe%20final%20taller%20sudamericano.pdf

ACAP 2009-11. A stepped approach to evaluating the effectiveness of a fast sinking line-weighting regime *(Graham Robertson, Australian Antarctic Division, Australia)*

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 5,850

Summary of activities/outcomes

This project is now successfully concluded. A report on the results of the trials was submitted as **SBWG4 Doc 05.** A summary of activities and outcomes was presented in **AC6 Inf 08**.