

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p>Eighth Meeting of the Advisory Committee</p> <p><i>Punta del Este, Uruguay, 15 -19 September 2014</i></p> <p>Advisory Committee Report to the Fifth Meeting of Parties</p> <p><i>Advisory Committee Chair, Vice-Chair</i></p>
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SUMMARY

This report to the Fifth Meeting of the Parties has been drafted as a document in progress for the Advisory Committee by the Chair and Vice-Chair with the assistance of the Agreement's Secretariat. The final version will be prepared after the conclusion of the Seventh Meeting of the Advisory Committee in order to reflect inputs from the Advisory Committee, and actions and decisions taken during this meeting. The Advisory Committee and its Working Groups made excellent progress during the last triennium. The Agreement succeeded in providing expert advice to Parties, Range States and a range of Organisations on actions that can be taken to address threats to albatrosses and petrels, both at sea and on land. A substantial proportion of this information is readily accessible through the ACAP website, including the conservation guidelines for the eradication of predators, and for biosecurity and quarantine, best practice advice for bycatch mitigation measures in longline and trawl fisheries, mitigation fact sheets developed in conjunction with BirdLife International, de-hooking guide, and the review of diseases and pathogens, among others.

Now that effective mitigation measures have been identified for the key fishing activities known to result in the incidental catch of ACAP species, the challenge ahead is to have these mitigation measures used in those fisheries where seabird bycatch is occurring. Another key challenge is to obtain the fisheries data required to improve our understanding and management of seabird bycatch. In this context we have yet to develop an appropriate methodology for the use of this data. As in the past triennium, one of the most challenging difficulties will be the increasing size and complexity of the Agreement's agenda and the asymmetry with the growth of capacity. Such increased workload could be alleviated by the incorporation or engagement of new people to undertake particular actions.

RECOMENDATION

That the Working Groups and the Advisory Committee comment upon and suggest amendments to the Advisory Committee report to the Fifth Meeting of the Parties.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report follows the structure agreed during the First Session of the Meeting of Parties (MoP1, [Resolution 1.5](#), Annex 1) and has been drafted as a document in progress for the Advisory Committee by the Chair and Vice-Chair with the assistance of the Agreement's Secretariat. The final version of this report to MoP5 will be prepared after the conclusion of the Seventh Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC7), in order to reflect inputs from the Advisory Committee, and actions and decisions taken during this meeting. The document will be circulated intersessionally among the members of the Advisory Committee for review and approval prior to MoP5.

1.1 Establishment of the Committee

The Committee was established at the First Session of the Meeting of Parties, held in Hobart, Australia, from 10 to 12 November 2004.

1.2 Election and appointment of Advisory Committee Officers

AC7 constituted the end of all Committee Officers' terms, so all positions required election. Dr Marco Favero (Argentina) was re-elected as Chair, and Mark Tasker (United Kingdom) was re-elected as Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee.

Dr Anton Wolfaardt (UK) was elected as a Convenor, and Dr Igor Debski (New Zealand) and Tatiana Neves (Brazil) were elected as Vice-Convenors of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group.

Dr Richard Phillips (UK) and Dr Rosemary Gales (Australia) were elected as Co-Convenors of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group. Dr Henri Weimerskirch (France) and Dr Flavio Quintana (Argentina) were elected as Vice-Convenors of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group.

Dr Mike Double (Australia) was re-elected as Convenor of the Taxonomy Working Group.

1.3 Members, Alternates, Observers and Experts

The lists of Advisory Committee Members, Alternates, Observers and Experts in attendance at each of the meetings of the Committee in the triennium may be found in Annex 1 of [AC7](#) and AC8 reports.

1.4 Review of rules of procedure

The Committee established its Rules of Procedure (RoP) at AC1 and have reviewed them at subsequent meetings. The [AC's RoP](#) have not been amended since MoP4, so the latest version corresponds to those amended at AC6.

At AC7 the Advisory Committee reviewed the progress of the Intersessional Committee established by MoP4 Resolution 4.8 concerning participation by APEC member economies as observers in sessions of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) and its subsidiary bodies. The amendment of RoP was considered as an option although at this stage no decision was

taken [UPDATE WITH PROGRESS AT AC8]. The AC would follow the lead of the MoP in changing its RoP on this topic.

1.5 Meetings and other correspondence since MOP4

After MoP4, the AC met formally for its Seventh Meeting (AC7) held in La Rochelle, France, from 6 to 10 May 2013, and its Eighth Meeting (AC8) held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 15 to 19 September 2014. Meetings of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group, and the Seabird Bycatch Working Group preceded both AC7 and AC8.

There has been considerable formal and informal correspondence in association with the implementation of the Advisory Committee work programme. Informal meetings of the Advisory Committee's Officials (AC Chair and Vice-Chair, Working Group Convenors and the Executive Secretary) were held on a regular basis to co-ordinate the intersessional activities of the Advisory Committee.

2. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES AND MEETINGS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2.1 Activities of the Chair

2.1.1 Recruitment

No recruitment activities were undertaken during the period covered by this report.

2.1.2 Budgets

The Chair has been consulted by the Secretariat on a number of occasions on issues regarding management of the Agreement's budget. In all cases, agreement was reached.

2.1.3 Consultations with the Agreement Secretariat

The Chair has conducted considerable correspondence with the Secretariat (via e-mail usually on a daily basis, and telephone conversations on weekly basis) and others less frequently. The Vice-Chair maintained periodic correspondence with AC Officials and the Secretariat as well.

2.1.4 Other activities

The Chair, Vice-Chair and other AC Officials have represented the Agreement at a number of meetings of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and at relevant conferences and other international meetings.

2.2 Progress with Actions under Article IX of the Agreement

2.2.1 Provision of scientific, technical and other advice

A summary of progress against the Work Programme for 2013-15 (MoP4 Resolution 4.4) is provided in Annex 1 [TO BE INCLUDED AFTER AC8]. It should be noted that the Work Programme has evolved considerably in AC7 and AC8 and new tasks were added to reflect

the work conducted by the Advisory Committee during this period. The work programme in Annex 1 reflects the latest version, revised at AC8.

This document has also been used as the basis for the development of the Advisory Committee's Work Programme for the 2016-18 triennium, which will be endorsed at AC8 to be submitted to MoP5 for its consideration and final approval.

Scientific and technical advice provided by the Advisory Committee is based in large part on the work produced by its Working Groups:

- Population and Conservation Status Working Group (PaCSWG), Convenors Dr Rosemary Gales (Australia) and Dr Richard Phillips (United Kingdom); Vice-Convenors Dr Flavio Quintana (Argentina) and Dr Henri Weimerskirch (France). This Working Group addresses land-based threats and conservation status of species listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement.
- Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG), Convenor Dr Anton Wolfaardt (United Kingdom); Vice-Convenors Dr Igor Debski (New Zealand) and Tatiana Neves (Brazil). This Working Group addresses at-sea threats for ACAP species.
- Taxonomy Working Group (TWG), Convenor Dr Mike Double (Australia). This Working Group reviews the taxonomic status of taxa listed on Annex 1 of the Agreement.

The Advisory Committee and its Working Groups made excellent progress during the last triennium. Key achievements since MoP4 are summarised below [OUTCOMES TO BE UPDATED AFTER AC8]:

- Effective mitigation measures have now been identified, described and promoted to relevant fisheries managers for those fishing activities known to cause significant incidental mortality to species listed under Annex 1 of the Agreement.
- The further development of the ACAP [database](#) to facilitate the work of the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups.
- Review of current population trends of ACAP species.
- Identification of key gaps in tracking data.
- Use of the prioritisation framework to guide the work of the Agreement.
- Agreement in the identification of preliminary performance indicators for seabird bycatch and agreement to indicators for land-based threats. Further development in the development of performance indicators related to capacity building.
- Ongoing review and update of the ACAP [species assessments](#).
- The effective implementation of a strategy to engage RFMOs and assist in the development and implementation of conservation measures relevant to ACAP species.
- Significant progress achieved with the adoption of seabird conservation measures by relevant RFMOs that are based on ACAP's best practice advice.
- The ongoing review of [bycatch mitigation best practice](#) advice documents for pelagic and demersal longline, and trawl fisheries.
- The ongoing review of the BirdLife International - ACAP [mitigation fact sheets](#) aimed at fisheries managers to assist in reducing bycatch in longline and trawl fisheries. The fact sheets are available on the ACAP website and are available in a number of relevant languages.

- Continued refinement of biosecurity, quarantine and eradication [guidelines](#) for ACAP seabird breeding sites.
- Development of the [de-hooking guide](#).
- Update of a review of diseases and pathogens in albatrosses and petrels.
- Development of translocation guidelines for surface and burrow nesting species.

2.2.2 Progress with standard reference text on taxonomy of species covered by the Agreement

There has been no change in taxonomy of species covered by the Agreement since last report to the Meeting of the Parties.

2.2.3 Recommendations concerning the Action Plan and further research

A draft Advisory Committee Work Programme for the 2013-2015 triennium has been prepared and submitted as MoP5 Doc xx.

2.2.4 Development of indicators to assess progress towards achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels

The development of performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of the Agreement was considered at MoP4 (see [MoP4 Doc 23](#)), and subsequently considered through the past triennium by the AC (see AC8 Docs **TO BE COMPLETED**). Following further discussion at AC8, the Advisory Committee recommends that MoP5 endorse use of the performance indicators detailed in **Annex ?** of the AC8 Final Report.

2.2.5 Progress with collation of information under Section 5 of the Action Plan and identification of gaps in knowledge

A report on progress with implementation of the Agreement which has been produced using the new web-based reporting system is provided as MoP5 Doc xx. The information that Parties are required to provide is being progressively included in the products produced by the Agreement, such as species assessments and reports on fisheries bycatch and will significantly support the work of the Advisory Committee in future years.

2.2.6 Other Activities

The reports mentioned above and in **Annex ?** to this report describe the activities of the Advisory Committee [**TO BE COMPLETED AFTER AC8**].

2.3 Meetings of the Advisory Committee

Reports from the [Seventh](#) and Eighth Meetings of the Advisory Committee can be found on the Agreement's website.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Achievements

The Agreement succeed in providing expert advice to Parties and a range of Organisations on actions that can be taken to address threats to albatrosses and petrels, both at sea and on land. A substantial proportion of this information is readily accessible through the ACAP website, including the conservation guidelines for the eradication of predators, and for biosecurity and quarantine; best practice advice for bycatch mitigation measures in longline (both demersal and pelagic) and trawl fisheries; mitigation fact sheets developed in conjunction with BirdLife International; de-hooking guide; and the review of diseases and pathogens; among others.

The further development of the ACAP database and implementation of the electronic reporting system provides Parties and other users access to essential information for the effective implementation of the Agreement's Action Plan. As data is progressively added to this database it will allow the Agreement to conduct an analysis of its performance, and most importantly, identify the progress achieved and the needs required in different regions, and for individual Parties.

A very large proportion of the actions planned for the 2013-15 triennium were accomplished. Clear examples of the significant progress achieved include: the implementation of the data reporting system and development of the Agreement's database, the development and refinement of conservation guidelines, and the implementation of the strategy to engage RFMOs, among others.

It is expected that the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups will continue to make good progress. Some outcomes expected for the next triennium should include: (1) the access to better data from Parties and other fisheries managers on their fisheries and on levels of seabird bycatch, that will allow improved evaluation of bycatch numbers for each ACAP listed species; (2) a suite of indicators of the success of the Agreement is in use, (3)

(TO BE COMPLETED BY AC8).

3.2 Difficulties found and challenges for the next triennium

Now that effective mitigation measures have been identified for the key fishing activities known to result in the incidental catch of ACAP species, the challenge ahead is to have these mitigation measures used in those fisheries where seabird bycatch is occurring.

Another key challenge is to obtain the fisheries data required to improve our understanding and management of seabird bycatch. In this context we have yet to develop an appropriate methodology for the use of this data.

As noted in the last AC report to MoP ([AC6 Doc 20](#)), one of the most challenging difficulties found in the past triennium and which will continue to be a challenge for the next one, is the increasing size and complexity of the Agreement's agenda and the asymmetry with the growth of capacity (both in terms of funds and human resources). Although, in view of the current global economic situation, monetary resources are likely to be restricted during the next triennium, the workload could be alleviated by the incorporation or engagement of new people to undertake particular actions.

We hope that the recommendations in this paper and those contained in **MoP5 Doc ?** will help the Fifth Meeting of Parties to drive forward the objectives of ACAP and look forward to serving ACAP/the Parties in the next triennium.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING

The following recommendations arising from this report are provided for the consideration of the Meeting of the Parties:

- Review and approve the work programme proposed for the Advisory Committee for the next triennium (refer AC8 Doc 17)
- Endorse use of the performance indicators detailed in **Annex ?** of the AC8 Report.