

 <p data-bbox="231 548 470 593">Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p data-bbox="614 241 1385 280">Eleventh Meeting of the Advisory Committee</p> <p data-bbox="778 297 1385 336"><i>Florianópolis, Brazil, 13 – 17 May 2019</i></p> <p data-bbox="582 416 1300 459">A proposal for a World Albatross Day</p> <p data-bbox="853 537 1034 571"><i>Secretariat</i></p>
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SUMMARY

A proposal is made to initiate a World Albatross Day, to be marked annually on 19 June, the date in 2001 that the Albatross and Petrel Agreement was signed in Canberra, Australia.

INTRODUCTION

A number of “world animal days” exists to increase international awareness among the general public of the need for conservation of individual or groups of species. Examples include World Whale Day (13 February), International Polar Bear Day (20 February), World Elephant Day (12 August) and World Rhino Day (22 September). There is a preponderance of world animal days for the larger and charismatic terrestrial mammals (<https://www.wakabooks.org/wild-animal-days/>).

For birds, there seems to be fewer international days than there are for mammals. A non-exhaustive search reveals an International Bird Day (1 April), a World Parrot Day (31 May) and a World Migratory Bird Day (which takes place over two days in May with UN recognition). Among seabirds, there seems to be only World Penguin Day (25 April; <https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/world-penguin-day/>), which is growing in stature with a suite of social media postings this year, along with a World Seabird Day (initiated on 3 July 2017, but which does not seem to have been repeated).

PROPOSAL

Although penguins are among the most well-known group of seabirds with the general public, increasing awareness of the global threats facing albatrosses are making them also well known, given the growing amount of coverage they continue to receive in social and other media. To help spread awareness further, it is proposed that a World Albatross Day be initiated and marked annually.

When considering a date for a World Albatross Day avoiding actual or near overlaps with existing international animal days is deemed important. Preliminary discussions via social

media with a half dozen or so marine ornithologists engendered several suggestions based on albatross annual cycles, but given the variations that exist among species across both hemispheres this is probably not the best way to choose a date. Following an initial suggestion, consensus has grown around choosing 19 June, as the date in 2001 that the Albatross and Petrel Agreement was signed in Canberra, Australia. This date does not appear to overlap with any other internationally recognized animal day over a seven-day spread.

A SUGGESTED WAY FORWARD

World or International Days may be more or less “official” in that whereas some are supported by the United Nations, others are not. However, in commencing a World Albatross Day it is suggested it is best to start relatively modestly, using the period to 19 June 2020 to spread the word via social media and websites in selected countries (e.g. in albatross breeding range states and high-seas fishing nations), create downloadable materials (e.g. an A2 poster) and consider which entity might best “host” the day and from where some level of operating funds might be forthcoming.

It is not being suggested here that ACAP should take up this proposal, at least at this stage, noting there are several international NGOs which could take the lead. For the immediate future it seems sufficient for ACAP to take note of the initiative, to support the choice of date, to follow developments over the next 12 months, and be willing to consider the matter further at its meetings in 2020.

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