



**Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels**

**Second Meeting of Advisory Committee**

*Brasilia, Brazil, 5 – 8 June 2006*

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**BirdLife International: Reports from attendance at meetings of  
Regional Fisheries Management Organisations May 2005 – May 2006**

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**Summary**

Over the past year, BirdLife International has provided input to the bycatch working groups of a range of RFMOs as follows:

- **CCAMLR** – BirdLife submitted a paper to the IMAF 2005 meeting on the distribution of breeding albatrosses and petrels within the CCAMLR Convention Area. Ben Sullivan attended the meeting.
- **CCSBT** – BirdLife submitted a paper to the ERSWF 2006 meeting on the overlap between the distribution of breeding albatrosses and petrels with CCSBT longline fishing effort.
- **IATTC** – BirdLife submitted a paper to the Stock Assessment Group on the distribution of albatrosses within the IATTC area. Cleo Small attended the Stock Assessment Group meeting
- **ICCAT** – BirdLife submitted a paper to the SCRS 2005 meeting, highlighting the distribution of albatrosses and petrels within the ICCAT Convention Area. Cleo Small attended the SCRS meeting
- **IOTC** – BirdLife submitted a paper to the first meeting of the IOTC Bycatch Working Group in July 2005. Cleo Small attended the meeting.
- **WCPFC** – BirdLife submitted a paper to the first meeting of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group in August 2005 and assisted the WCPFC Secretariat in preparing a seabird paper for the first meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee, November 2005. The paper used data from *Tracking Ocean Wanderers* to highlight the importance of the WCPFC area for albatrosses and petrels in both northern and southern areas, and the overlap with longline fishing effort.
- **South Pacific RFMO** - BirdLife International prepared a seabird case study for the first preparatory meeting of the new RFMO in the South Pacific. Barry Weeber attended the meeting.

Summaries of the CCAMLR, CCSBT and IATTC meetings have been presented to AC2 by the Secretariat and the US. Below are a few additional notes on the meetings at ICCAT and IOTC.

**IOTC: First meeting of the IOTC Bycatch Working Group, Phuket, 20 July, 2005**

The first meeting of the IOTC Bycatch Working Group was chaired by Kevin McLoughlin (Australia), assisted by Geoff Kirkwood (Chair IOTC Scientific Committee). The Bycatch Working Group was established with the intention of having an initial focus on sharks, but the IOTC resolutions in 2005 on seabirds and turtles effectively broadened its mandate.

Cleo Small (BirdLife) gave a presentation on the problem of seabird bycatch, the extent of the overlap between albatrosses and IOTC longline fisheries. Samantha Petersen (South Africa, and BirdLife South Africa) gave a presentation on data from South Africa on bycatch of seabirds, turtles and sharks (including bycatch from Korean vessels), and the issue of low compliance with regulations and measures that can be taken to address this.

It was established that seabirds will be a regular agenda item for the bycatch group. The four Recommendations made by the Bycatch WP included one specifically on seabirds, which recommends that seabird bycatch issues are addressed through a collaborative (i.e. with BirdLife and seabird experts) and regional approach.

In terms of observer programs: throughout the week it was clear that a key problem within IOTC is the lack of size/frequency data for fish species, as well as lack of bycatch data. A regional observer program would bring vital benefits for fish stock assessments as well as bycatch issues.

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#### **ICCAT: ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics, Madrid 3-7 October 2005.**

Approximately 100 scientists were present at the ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), including about 30-40 delegates from the EC and about 6 from the United States. BirdLife was the only NGO present. BirdLife International presented a paper to the meeting, highlighting the distribution of albatrosses and petrels within the ICCAT area and overlap with fishing effort. This was the first seabird presentation to ICCAT.

While ICCAT has had a Sub-Committee on Bycatch since 1996, it was established with a principal focus on sharks and has been essentially mono-specific. This is why the Bycatch meeting in 2005 considered only the shark items within the Bycatch Sub-Committee agenda, and the other items (seabirds, turtles etc) were instead discussed within the main Scientific Committee meeting. In 2005 it was decided that the Environment and Bycatch Sub-Committees would merge to form an Ecosystem Working Group, and that a separate Shark Working Group would be formed.

Brazil, Uruguay and South Africa reported on their observer programs and progress in relation to seabird bycatch. South Africa has had a mandatory observer program since 1998, with an aim of 20% coverage. Current coverage is 4-10%. Brazil has 40 observers permanently at sea. Uruguay is developing NPOAs for sharks, seabirds and turtles. The US also submitted seabird bycatch reports. It has 3-5% observer coverage, and is running an experiment to look at circle hooks and turtle bycatch in the Gulf of Mexico. It does not have fishing effort in the area overlapping with albatross and petrel distribution.

The EC reported that an observer program in the Atlantic has started, both for longlines and for tropical purse seines. The longline observer program will collect data on discards and bycatch, and also will conduct experiments with different hook and bait types for turtles.

Japan's observer program is focused in the North Atlantic Ocean (Atlantic Bluefin Tuna). Japan reported that it doesn't have an observer program in the Southern area, but there are some observer data from the CCSBT fishery. Japan stated that their vessels use Tori lines and blue-dyed baits, but that there is a problem of not 100% implementation. Taiwan did not report on seabird bycatch.

The Bycatch Sub-Committee recommendations reiterated those made in several previous years:

- To encourage members to include seabird and turtle experts in their delegations to Bycatch Sub-Committee
- That ICCAT hire a bycatch coordinator
- That members collect observer data on bycatch

As in previous years, these recommendations were passed to the Scientific Committee, but weren't included in the SCRS recommendations to the Commission. The US delegation will work to include materials on seabirds and turtles within the ICCAT field manual ([Mauricio.Ortiz@noaa.gov](mailto:Mauricio.Ortiz@noaa.gov)).