

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Joint Thirteenth Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group and Ninth Meeting of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Swakopmund, Namibia, 26 May 2026</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Overview of progress during the 2023-2025 triennium: ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisations (RFMCOs)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sebastián Jiménez, Dimas Gianuca, Igor Debski, Megan Tierney, Wiesława Misiak, Jonathon Barrington</i></p>
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SUMMARY

ACAP-listed species continue to be incidentally captured 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. In May 2025, the 8th Session of the ACAP Meeting of Parties (MoP8) endorsed a revised ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisations (RFMCO), incorporating updates recommended by the 14th meeting of ACAP's Advisory Committee (AC14). 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. This document reports on how ACAP delivered against the agreed priority actions over the period 2023-2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That SBWG / PaCSWG:

1. Identify any changes to the priority actions of the ACAP RFMCO Engagement Strategy for the period 2026-2028.
2. Recommend that the Advisory Committee explore mechanisms to encourage and support ACAP Parties in promoting the objectives of the RFMCO Engagement Strategy, including the submission and advocacy of relevant proposals within the RFMCOs of which they are members.

Resumen del progreso durante el trienio 2023-2025: estrategia de interacción con las Organizaciones Regionales de Ordenación y Conservación Pesquera (OROCP) del ACAP

RESUMEN

Las especies incluidas en la lista del ACAP siguen siendo objeto de captura secundaria en pesquerías industriales ordenadas por las Organizaciones Regionales de Ordenación Pesquera (OROP) de atún y otras especies. En consecuencia, la interacción con estas OROP y con organizaciones de conservación pertinentes (por ejemplo, la CCRVMA) ha sido un componente primordial de la estrategia del ACAP para mitigar y reducir la mortalidad incidental de aves marinas. En mayo de 2025, la Octava Sesión de la Reunión de las Partes (RdP8) aprobó una estrategia de interacción revisada del ACAP con Organizaciones Regionales de Ordenación y Conservación Pesquera (OROCP), en la que se incorporaron actualizaciones recomendadas por la 14.ª reunión del Comité Asesor del ACAP (CA14). La estrategia establece lo siguiente: los objetivos; las medidas que deben adoptarse; el enfoque de la interacción; la base para colaborar con las OROCP; el desarrollo de enfoques individualizados; y la revisión de los avances realizados. Un componente importante de la estrategia es la presentación sistemática de informes al Comité Asesor y a sus Grupos de Trabajo. Este documento informa sobre cómo el ACAP cumplió con las actividades prioritarias acordadas durante el período 2023-2025.

RECOMENDACIONES

Que el GdTCS y el GdTPEC:

1. Identifiquen cualquier cambio en las actividades prioritarias de la estrategia de interacción del ACAP con las OROCP para el período 2026-2028.
2. Recomienden que el Comité Asesor explore mecanismos para alentar y apoyar a las Partes del ACAP en la promoción de los objetivos de la estrategia de interacción con las OROCP, incluyendo la presentación y defensa de propuestas relevantes dentro de las OROCP de las cuales son miembros.

Aperçu des progrès réalisés au cours de la période triennale 2023–2025 : Stratégie d’engagement de l’ACAP auprès des organisations régionales de gestion des pêches et de conservation (RFMCO)

RÉSUMÉ

Les espèces inscrites à l’ACAP continuent d’être capturées accidentellement dans les pêcheries industrielles gérées par les organisations régionales de gestion des pêches (ORGP) thonières et non thonières. En conséquence, l’engagement auprès de ces ORGP et des organisations de conservation concernées (par exemple la CCAMLR) a constitué un élément clé de la stratégie de l’ACAP visant à atténuer et à réduire la mortalité

accidentelle des oiseaux marins. En mai 2025, la huitième session de la Réunion des Parties (RdP8) a approuvé une version révisée de la Stratégie d'engagement de l'ACAP auprès des organisations régionales de gestion des pêches et de conservation (RFMCO), intégrant les mises à jour recommandées par la 14^e réunion du Comité consultatif de l'ACAP (CC14). La stratégie définit les éléments suivants: les objectifs, les mesures à prendre, les axes prioritaires de l'engagement, les principes régissant l'engagement auprès des organisations régionales de gestion des pêches et de conservation, les approches sur mesure, ainsi que le suivi des progrès réalisés. Un élément important de cette stratégie consiste à rendre compte de manière systématique au Comité consultatif et à ses groupes de travail. Le présent document rend compte de la manière dont l'ACAP a donné suite aux actions prioritaires convenues au cours de la période 2023–2025.

RECOMMANDATIONS

Que les groupes de travail SBWG / PaCSWG :

1. Identifient toute modification à apporter aux actions prioritaires de la Stratégie d'engagement de l'ACAP auprès des RFMCO pour la période 2026–2028.
2. Recommandent que le Comité consultatif étudie les moyens d'encourager et de soutenir les Parties à l'ACAP dans la promotion des objectifs de la stratégie d'engagement auprès des RFMCO, notamment par la soumission et la promotion de propositions pertinentes au sein des RFMCO dont elles sont membres.

1. ACAP RFMCO ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

1.1. Background

ACAP-listed species continue to be incidentally captured 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—and continues to be—a key component of ACAP's strategy to mitigate and reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds. ACAP's Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG), and more recently jointly with the Population and Conservation Status Working Group (PaCSWG), has reviewed and updated the actions listed in ACAP's RFMO Engagement Strategy at each of its meetings and made recommendations to the Advisory Committee.

In May 2025, the 8th Session of the ACAP Meeting of Parties (MoP8) endorsed a revised ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisations ([MoP8 Doc 24](#), see [MoP8 Report](#), paragraph 7.4.5). The revised text incorporates updates requested by AC14 (see [AC14 Report](#), paragraph 14.8). The Strategy sets out objectives (based on the current themes); actions to be taken; focus of engagement; basis for engaging with regional fisheries management and conservation organisations; individualised approaches; and reviewing progress.

A key element of this revised Engagement Strategy is the setting out of outcome-focused individualised approaches for each regional fisheries management and conservation organisation, grouped by the three categories of international organisations identified in [MoP8 Doc 24](#) (i.e. tuna RFMOs, non-tuna RFMOs, and relevant conservation bodies; see Tables 1 to 9 in ANNEX 1 from [MoP8 Doc 24](#)). These individualised approaches provide guidance to

Parties, the ACAP Secretariat, and ACAP officials for engaging with and attending RFMCO meetings about 'what is being requested', and how Party, Secretariat or ACAP official representatives can leverage their capabilities so that identified enabling factors are enhanced and constraining factors diminished.

Another key element of the Strategy is reporting to the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups on the relevant outcomes and activities within individual organisations, and identifying further actions required to achieve the targeted outcomes. This then enables the preparation of an updated list of Priority Actions for the next period of interaction. At AC14, [SBWG12/PaCSWG8 Doc 03 Rev 2](#) set out Proposed Actions of the ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisation for 2026-2028. These were subsequently endorsed at AC14 (see [AC14 Report](#), paragraph 14.3.i) and MoP8 agreed to fully implement these priority actions (see [MoP8 Report](#), paragraph 7.4.5).

[MoP8 Doc 24](#) stipulates that the review process at future meetings of the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups should include a snapshot of progress in achievement of targeted outcomes within each organisation (as provided in ANNEX 1 Tables 1 to 9 and ANNEX 2 from [MoP8 Doc 24](#)) and setting out recommended changes to the individualised approaches for each organisation. This should be implemented at each Advisory Committee meeting.

This document reports on how ACAP delivered against the agreed priority actions over the period 2023-2025.

2. OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS IN THE ACAP RFMCO ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

During the 2023-2025 period, ACAP achieved progress against its objectives related to the current RFMCO Engagement Strategy endorsed at AC13, AC14 and MoP8, by engaging with nine different RFMCOs. These included all five tuna RFMOs, three non-tuna RFMOs, and one conservation organisation:

- 1) Regional fisheries organisations with competence over tuna fisheries (Tuna RFMOs)
 - a. Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)
 - b. International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
 - c. Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)
 - d. Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)
 - e. Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)
- 2) Regional fisheries organisations with competence over non-tuna fisheries (Non-tuna RFMOs)
 - a. Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)
 - b. South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)
 - c. South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO)
- 3) Regional conservation organisations with competence for living marine resources
 - a. Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

During 2023-2025, ACAP's engagement included participation in multiple meetings of these RFMCOs, both in person and online. This participation forms an important part of the implementation of ACAP's RFMCO Engagement Strategy, helping to maintain ACAP's profile across organisations and to support initiatives aligned with ACAP priorities.

During this period, several RFMOs initiated or continued reviews of their seabird bycatch mitigation measures, in some cases after many years without updates. ACAP contributed scientific input to these processes, including advice on how existing measures compare with ACAP Best Practice Advice. Notable developments included the adoption of a new seabird bycatch mitigation resolution by IOTC and ongoing review processes in organisations such as SPRFMO, SIOFA, SEAFO, ICCAT and WCPFC.

In parallel, initiatives such as the CCSBT Multi-Year Seabird Strategy and activities under the FAO Common Oceans programme have supported the implementation and compliance with seabird mitigation measures. In CCAMLR, the reactivation of the Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fisheries (WG-IMAF) has increased attention to seabird bycatch issues.

Across these processes, ACAP continues to be recognised as a key source of expertise on best practice seabird bycatch mitigation. ACAP has also promoted the use of its guidelines on observer data collection and Electronic Monitoring Systems, while working closely with several ACAP Parties that are actively supporting review processes within RFMOs.

ACAP Parties played a key role in advancing seabird conservation across RFMCOs during the 2023–2025 period by providing coordinated scientific input, leading and supporting proposal development, engaging in intersessional processes, and advocating for alignment with ACAP Best Practice Advice. Their contributions were key to initiating and progressing reviews of existing measures, improving technical guidance, and supporting the adoption or strengthening of seabird bycatch mitigation frameworks, although progress remained uneven across organisations. Further consideration should be given to mechanisms to enhance and coordinate Party engagement in RFMO processes to maximise impact.

The next sections summarise how ACAP delivered against the agreed priority actions over the triennium 2023-2025 in each of the RFMCO.

2.1. Regional fisheries organisations with competence over tuna fisheries (Tuna RFMOs)

2.1.1. Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)

ACAP has regularly participated in meetings of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), including the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG) and related technical meetings, the Compliance Committee (CC), and the Extended Commission (EC). During the 2023–2025 period, ACAP attended the ERSWG technical workshop on Southern Hemisphere Seabird Risk Assessment in February 2024 and the Ecologically Related Species Technical Working Group (ERSTWG) meeting in April 2025. ACAP also participated in the Electronic Monitoring (EM) Inception Workshop held in March 2024 as part of the CCSBT Seabird Project. ACAP attended the Compliance Committee meetings in October 2023 (CC18) and October 2025 (CC-20), as well as the Extended Commission meetings in October 2023 (EC30) and October 2025 (EC-32).

The main issues of interest to ACAP in CC18 included the low level of observer coverage and Ecologically Related Species Working Group Data Exchange (EDE) reporting, which limited the ability to determine the impact of Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) fisheries on seabird populations. Some Members did not achieve the required 10% observer coverage and representativeness. High-level guiding principles on electronic monitoring and electronic monitoring systems were recommended to EC30 for adoption. The coordinator of the CCSBT Seabird Project also reported progress, including capacity-building workshops on mitigation measures, compliance mechanisms, and developments in electronic monitoring, as well as plans for an updated Southern Hemisphere seabird bycatch assessment.

During EC30, the Commission adopted all the recommendations from the Compliance Committee, and the CCSBT Secretariat presented an update of the CCSBT's Ecologically Related Species (ERS) alignment resolution, which aligns the CCSBT's ERS measures with those of ICCAT, IOTC and WCPFC. This took note of the IOTC update to its CMM for seabird bycatch through IOTC Resolution 23/07 on reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries, which superseded Resolution 12/06 on 1 July 2024. ACAP also presented updates to its Best Practice Advice and committed to providing further details at ERSWG15.

Development and implementation of the CCSBT multi-year seabird strategy (MYSS) remained a key priority for ACAP. The February 2024 Technical ERSWG meeting focused on advancing the Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment (SEFRA) for 27 ACAP-listed species, identifying priority species, and developing draft management targets. These outputs were intended to inform subsequent CCSBT decision-making processes.

In March 2024 ACAP attend the EM Inception Workshop (in Canberra, Australia), part of the CCSBT Seabird Project, which is funded by the Common Oceans Tuna Project. This element of the project is focussed on supporting the development of electronic systems to collect compliance-ready data. The workshop was an excellent opportunity to engage with Member Fishing Entities around the design and implementation of EM programmes and disseminate advice through the ACAP EM Guidelines to this key target audience. ACAP presented on the resources we have available, briefly summarised the conservation status of ACAP-listed species with a focus on high priority populations and ran through the ACAP EM Guidelines. A large part of the workshop consisted of Member updates on where they were at in EM implementation. Cost and human safety were identified as key drivers behind the development of current full EM in replacement of human observers. Key learnings were shared and discussed. A key lesson was the transformative impact of having an EM system integrated with electronic reporting can bring through significant and sustained improvements in the accuracy of logbook reporting, and the associated high levels of compliance with seabird bycatch mitigation measure use. This led to a general appreciation amongst participants that an important objective of a national EM program is to facilitate behavioural changes among fishers.

In April 2025, the ERSTWG meeting in Wellington focused primarily on agreeing specifications for the SEFRA model. Although agreement was reached, several caveats and areas for future improvement were identified. It was noted that this work may transition to the FAO-funded CCSBT Seabird Project, which plans to run the model and generate results later in 2025. The project also proposed additional seabird population modelling to assess population-level impacts under different bycatch scenarios. This work could complement ACAP's Advisory Committee Work Programme and provide opportunities for collaboration and outputs relevant to seabird conservation.

At CC-20 in October 2025, limited data on the impacts of SBT fisheries on seabirds remained a significant concern, with several Members continuing to fall short of observer coverage and mitigation requirements. While Members reiterated commitments to improve implementation, there was limited progress in addressing compliance issues. Electronic monitoring continued to expand, including ongoing use in Australian longline fisheries and recent implementation in New Zealand longline fisheries.

A key focus at CCSBT-EC-32 was consideration of a proposal to increase the global annual SBT total allowable catch (TAC) by 3,000 t to 23,647 t. ACAP and BirdLife International reiterated their concern that successive increases in the TAC have increased the bycatch of seabirds, especially albatrosses and petrels. Members were unable to agree on the distribution of any increase in the TAC with further consultations to occur between Members intersessionally.

CCSBT-EC-32 received an update on the development of the Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment (SEFRA) and adopted the SEFRA technical report. This report indicated that pelagic longline fisheries directly adversely impacted several ACAP-listed species (Antipodean, Amsterdam, Tristan, Sooty, White-capped, and Southern Buller's albatrosses). While subject to several caveats and uncertainties, the SEFRA highlighted several areas, like the Tasman Sea, where area-based seabird mitigation measures would be beneficial. While ACAP welcomed progress in the development of the SEFRA, it noted that the envisaged ambition of this work has been curtailed due to the lack of robust species-level data concerning seabird bycatch for all pelagic longline fisheries, which will impact any extension of the SEFRA to update the 2016 global seabird risk assessment. CCSBT-EC-32 deferred any consideration of management action until after consideration of the SEFRA outputs by the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG), which next meets in March 2026.

Agreed changes to the CCSBT ERS Resolution did not include any strengthening of seabird bycatch mitigation. ACAP urged Members to revisit the development of a CCSBT-specific Resolution on Ecologically Related Species. ACAP noted that delays in strengthening of seabird mitigation measures by ICCAT, IOTC and WCPFC, has led to ongoing delays in the implementation of ACAP's Best Practice Advice for seabird bycatch mitigation in SBT fisheries. Such delays have continued despite best available scientific evidence supporting prompt implementation of improved seabird mitigation measures. ACAP welcomed news that New Zealand now implements ACAP's Best Practice Advice in its longline fisheries and urged other Members to follow New Zealand's lead.

Recommendations

ACAP should maintain ongoing engagement in ERSWG, the Commission, and the Compliance Committee meetings. This engagement provides opportunities to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP-listed species and to present updates to ACAP Best Practice Advice for pelagic longline fisheries and other relevant ACAP guidelines. The development and implementation of the CCSBT multi-year seabird strategy (MYSS) should remain as a key priority for ACAP in the engagement strategy with CCSBT. ACAP should continue to engage in CCSBT Seabird Project activities where it can provide meaningful technical input and support the achievement of the project's objectives.

2.1.2. Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

Other priorities meant that ACAP was not able to attend IATTC meetings in 2023 and 2024, however, ACAP worked abreast with BirdLife International to advocate for strengthen seabird conservation measures in IATTC fisheries. During the 2023–2025 period, BirdLife International attended the meetings of the Working Group on Ecosystem and Bycatch (EBWG) in 2023 and 2024, and ACAP attended the EBWG meeting in 2025.

At the EBWG1, in May 2023, BirdLife International presented a joint BirdLife/ACAP [proposal to create an IATTC seabird work plan](#), which among other actions, included the review and update of Resolution C-11-02 on seabird bycatch mitigation requirements. The proposal was well received and the EBWG1 recommended its implementation within the next two years (by 2025) to the Commission (IATTC101). The USA offered to present a draft seabird work plan during the WGEB2 in 2024.

At the EBWG2, in May 2024, attended by BirdLife International, the USA presented its draft proposal of the seabird work plan, which was endorsed by the EBWG2. The agreed seabird work plan would be implemented trough 2024 and 2025, as described below.

In 2024:

1. IATTC Scientific Staff will conduct a seabird assessment for presentation at the EBWG in 2025, including but not limited to:
 - a. Comparison between C-11-02 and mitigation measures in other t-RFMOs.
 - b. Update of [SAR-7-05b] on spatial distributions of seabird species in the IATTC Convention Area, including any geographic hotspots for these species, overlap with lonline fishing effort, and conservation statuses.
 - c. Overview of mitigation measures in use by CPCs in the IATTC Convention Area as required in C-11-02. This should account for all CPCs, including any that may have vessels fishing in areas where bycatch mitigation measures are not required.
 - d. Summary of observed and estimated seabird bycatch rates in the IATTC Convention Area, including geographic information where possible, noting that data are limited.

In 2025:

2. At the EBWG3 in 2025, the IATTC Scientific Staff will present the results of its assessment for discussion by CPCs.
3. Between EBWG3 the IATTC plenary, interested CPCs will coordinate intersessionally on a draft proposal updating C-11-02. Proposed sponsors will present the updated seabird proposal for adoption at the 103rd meeting of the IATTC.

In the follow up of the EBWG2, the IATTC Scientific Staff contacted ACAP and BirdLife International to seek technical support and relevant data to deliver the four actions (a-c) planned for 2024. Hence, ACAP and BirdLife International, among other invited seabird experts, engaged with the process and contributed decisively to progresses in the seabird work plan.

At the EBWG3, in May 2025, ACAP presented in plenary its [updated best practice advice for pelagic longline fisheries](#). The IATTC Scientific Staff presented its progress related to the

seabird work plan in the format of two papers, one reviewing bycatch mitigation options, measures and implementation in IATTC longline fisheries compared to other t-RFMOs ([EB-03-03](#)), and another presenting the results on seabird distribution overlap with longline fishing effort and collation of seabird longline bycatch rates ([EB-03-02](#)). In addition, the USA presented a seabird best handling and release practice guidelines to be implemented in IATTC fisheries ([EB-03-06](#)). Based on the results of the aforementioned documents related to the seabird work plan, the IATTC Staff presented [five recommendations to the Commission](#) aiming strengthen seabird conservation measures in IATTC fisheries, including amendments to the C-11-02. However, despite those recommendations resulted from progress in the seabird work plan and were supported by the best-available science, none of them were endorsed by the Commission. The sole recommendation regarding seabirds that was approved was that the IATTC staff develop a seabird mitigation reporting template relative to compliance with resolutions in force regarding mitigation measures for seabirds for consideration by the SAC, with due consideration to the operational feasibility of data collection.

Recommendations

ACAP should maintain ongoing engagement in EBWG in order to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP-listed species and to present updates to ACAP Best Practice Advice for pelagic longline fisheries and other relevant ACAP guidelines. ACAP should continue to support the implementation of IATTC Seabird Work Plan and advocate for strengthen seabird conservation and management measures in IATTC fisheries.

2.1.3. International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

ACAP has regularly participated in meetings of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), including the Sub-committee on Ecosystems and Bycatch (SC-ECO), the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), and the Commission. During the 2023–2025 period, ACAP attended the SC-ECO meetings in May 2023, May 2024 and May 2025, the SCRS meetings in September 2023, September 2024 and September–October 2025. as well as the ICCAT Commission meetings in November 2023 and November 2025. ACAP also participated in the meeting of the EcoCard sub-group in April 2023.

Regarding seabird bycatch, Recommendation 11-09 (“Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT on reducing incidental by-catch of seabirds in ICCAT longline fisheries”) remains the primary conservation and management measure establishing mitigation requirements for pelagic longline vessels operating south of 25°S in the South Atlantic. Recommendation 07-07 establishes mitigation measures for longline vessels operating between 20°S and 25°S. Although these recommendations were adopted more than a decade ago, a comprehensive evaluation of their effectiveness in reducing seabird bycatch had not been finalised.

At the 2023 SC-ECO meeting, ACAP presented a joint proposal with BirdLife International (BLI) to conduct a review of Recommendation 11-09. The proposal was supported by several Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities, and Fishing Entities (CPCs) and adopted as part of the SC-ECO workplan for 2024. Subsequently, the 2023 SCRS endorsed the SC-ECO proposal to undertake this review. Following an intervention by the United Kingdom, the review was expanded to include Recommendation 07-07. Discussion of seabird issues was not the focus of the 2023 Commission meeting, but the work program of the SCRS was approved.

During the 2024 SC-ECO meeting, the review process of Recommendations 11-09 and 07-07 was initiated. ACAP contributed several documents, including a joint paper with BLI reviewing ICCAT seabird mitigation measures against ACAP Best Practice Advice for Reducing the Impact of Pelagic Longline Fisheries on Seabirds. Additional work, led by scientists from organisations in the United Kingdom, ACAP, and participants from the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), evaluated different combinations and specifications of mitigation measures currently accepted under ICCAT recommendations and compared them with ACAP Best Practice Advice, including consideration of the potential use of hook-shielding devices (HSDs). The meeting acknowledged that several specifications contained in ICCAT recommendations differ from the mitigation measures recommended by ACAP and those adopted in other tuna RFMOs. The SC-ECO also noted that since the adoption of Recommendation 11-09, no review had been conducted on the status of seabird populations interacting with ICCAT fisheries or on the effectiveness of the adopted mitigation measures. Consequently, the SC-ECO recommended that the SCRS continue reviewing and discussing available mitigation measures for ICCAT fisheries interacting with seabirds and consider potential updates to the current recommendations.

At the 2025 SC-ECO meeting, further progress was made in the review process. The Subcommittee recommended that hook-shielding devices, as specified in ACAP best practice advice, be considered as an alternative standalone mitigation measure to those currently accepted under Recommendations 07-07 and 11-09. The SC-ECO also recommended continuing the review of existing seabird bycatch mitigation measures in 2027. This was subsequently endorsed by SCRS in 2025. This recommendation is particularly relevant given the divergence between ICCAT's current branch line weighting specifications and ACAP Best Practice Advice for pelagic longline fisheries.

Additional discussions relevant to seabird bycatch during the 2025 SC-ECO meeting included the development of ecosystem indicators and the rapid expansion of "trapline" configurations in pelagic longline fisheries across multiple fleets. The SC ECO work plan for 2026 also includes conducting a workshop focused on the Bycatch Research and Data Collection Programme of the Subcommittee. Among the components to be addressed, the program includes the collection of data required for assessments and management advice for bycatch species, including seabirds, as well as the development of bycatch mitigation strategies.

At the 2025 the ICCAT Commission meeting, ACAP supported efforts led by the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil proposing updates to the ICCAT Recommendation 07-07 and Supplemental Recommendation 11-09 on reducing incidental by-catch of seabirds in longline fisheries to allow use of hook-shielding devices as a standalone option. While a consensus was not reached on the proposed changes, the Commission agreed to continue work on revising the recommendations concerning use of hook-shielding devices as a standalone option, and to update branch line weighting configurations, with a view to completing this work by 2027. The Commission also adopted a recommendation on the experimental use of traplines, with a review to be undertaken by 2028.

In April 2023, ACAP participated in the EcoCard sub-group meeting. This group was established to develop an indicator-based Ecosystem Report Card (EcoCard) for monitoring the effects of fishing, environmental variation and climate change on ICCAT species and associated ecosystems. Although seabirds were not explicitly included in the case studies discussed during that meeting, the development of seabird indicators remains a potential area of collaboration. ACAP should continue to engage with SC-ECO participants involved in the

development of ecosystem indicators to ensure that seabird bycatch considerations are incorporated into the EcoCard framework.

Recommendations

ACAP should maintain ongoing engagement in SC-ECO and SCRS meetings. This engagement provides opportunities to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP-listed species and to present updates to ACAP Best Practice Advice for pelagic longline fisheries and other relevant ACAP guidelines. ACAP should engage with relevant CPCs (particularly ACAP Parties) and BirdLife International (BLI) prior to and during SC-ECO, SCRS, and Commission meetings to ensure that the revision of current mitigation measures under Recommendations 11-09 and 07-07 is informed by ACAP Best Practice Advice.

In the short term, ACAP's priorities at ICCAT meetings should include supporting the inclusion of hook-shielding devices, as specified in ACAP Best Practice Advice, as an alternative standalone mitigation measure; advancing the development of a protocol to measure sink rates of branch lines weighting—an essential step for informing potential updates to branch line weighting specifications during the revision of ICCAT mitigation measures; and obtaining and reviewing information on the effects of trapline fishing gear configurations in pelagic longline fisheries on ACAP-listed species.

ACAP should also participate in the SC-ECO workshop on the Bycatch Research and Data Collection Programme and continue engaging with ICCAT processes related to ecosystem indicators, including the development of the Ecosystem Report Card (EcoCard), to ensure that seabird bycatch considerations are adequately reflected.

2.1.4. Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

ACAP has regularly participated in meetings of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), including the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB), the Scientific Committee (SC), and the Commission. During the 2023–2025 period, ACAP attended the WPEB meetings in September 2023, September 2024 and September 2025, and the Scientific Committee meetings in December 2023, December 2024 and December 2025. ACAP also attended the IOTC Commission meeting in May 2023. In addition, ACAP participated in the intersessional Working Group reviewing the Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) minimum data fields during 2024, and in the 4th meeting of the Working Group on Electronic Monitoring Standards (WGEMS04) in June 2024.

Following the review of mitigation measures for IOTC longline fisheries conducted at WPEB18 in 2022, the 25th Scientific Committee meeting (SC25) recommended that the Commission consider including hook-shielding devices as an additional option for seabird bycatch mitigation measures in Resolution 12/06. In May 2023, the 27th Session of the IOTC Commission adopted Resolution 23/07 (On reducing incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries), which entered into force on 1 July 2024 and superseded Resolution 12/06. Resolution 23/07 requires that in the area south of 25°S of the Indian Ocean, CPCs ensure that longline vessels use at least two of three mitigation measures (night setting, bird scaring lines and branch line weighting), or alternatively use hook-shielding devices as a stand-alone mitigation measure.

In September 2023, ACAP presented an update at WPEB19 on ACAP Best Practice Advice for pelagic longline fisheries following the review conducted at SBWG11 and endorsed by AC13. WPEB19 recognised that there are differences between the mitigation measures

recommended by ACAP and those specified in Resolution 23/07. In particular, ACAP recommends the simultaneous use of night setting, bird scaring lines and branch line weighting, whereas the IOTC resolution requires only two of these three measures. In addition, Resolution 23/07 does not include the option of underwater bait setting devices as a stand-alone measure and specifies branch line weighting configurations that differ from those recommended by ACAP.

Resolution 23/07 also requests the Scientific Committee to review advancements and best practices in seabird bycatch mitigation and to provide advice to the Commission on best practice branch line weighting. This issue was considered at the 20th meeting of the WPEB (WPEB20) in September 2024. ACAP presented an update on branch line weighting standards following the August 2024 review and endorsement of ACAP Best Practice Advice at SBWG12 and AC14. The WPEB noted that Resolution 23/07 partially aligns with ACAP advice but that branch line weighting remains a key area of divergence. The inclusion of sink rate considerations in minimum standards for branch line weighting was recognised as a potentially useful approach for fisheries where implementing specific weighting configurations may be challenging. The WPEB agreed that further work is required, including the development of clear protocols for measuring sink rates, and that advice on best practice branch line weighting is expected to be provided to the Commission by 2027.

At SC27 in December 2024, the Scientific Committee reviewed the WPEB20 report and endorsed the continuation of this work. The SC27-adopted WPEB programme of work included the development of a draft IOTC seabird strategy in 2025 and a review of seabird mitigation measures in Resolution 23/07 in 2026.

Further progress was made at WPEB21 in September 2025, where the development of an IOTC Seabird Strategy was a priority agenda item. This initiative originated from a joint submission by BirdLife International (BLI) and ACAP to WPEB18 proposing the development of a seabird strategy and action plan for IOTC longline fisheries, which was subsequently included in the WPEB programme of work and endorsed by SC25. While discussions in 2024 focused primarily on the review of branch line weighting as requested under Resolution 23/07, WPEB21 resumed work on the seabird strategy. ACAP supported this process by submitting a provisional list of elements for the strategy, including improved bycatch mitigation measures, stronger compliance with seabird conservation measures, and enhanced collection and analysis of seabird bycatch data. WPEB21 recognised that the development of an IOTC Seabird Strategy would align with the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) Multi-year Seabird Strategy and strengthen cooperation between RFMOs. The WPEB agreed to develop a draft IOTC Seabird Strategy for consideration at WPEB22 in 2026, and to continue work on branch line weighting during 2026–2027.

The 28th Session of the Scientific Committee (SC28) in December 2025 reviewed the WPEB work programme and confirmed that work on the development of the IOTC Seabird Strategy and the review of branch line weighting will continue during 2026–2027. The SC also discussed trials of modified branch lines incorporating loop gears (trap lines), which may have potential to reduce seabird bycatch and could represent a mitigation option of relevance to ACAP.

In parallel, ACAP contributed to discussions on the revision of the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) minimum data fields, following the adoption of Resolution 23/08 requiring an update of the ROS. SC26 endorsed the establishment of an intersessional process, led through the Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS) and its ad hoc Working Group on Electronic Monitoring Standards (WGEMS), to review the scientific need and status

of each ROS data field and to consider the potential integration of electronic monitoring elements. During 2024, ACAP participated in the pelagic longline subgroup tasked with revising the ROS data fields relevant to this gear. At WGEMS04 (June 2024), the subgroup presented proposed revisions, including general principles for the ROS fields, suggested modifications and removals, and a number of outstanding items without consensus, including fields related to branch line weighting information.

Recommendations

ACAP should maintain ongoing engagement in the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB) and the Scientific Committee (SC) meetings of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). This engagement provides an opportunity to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP-listed species and to present updates on ACAP Best Practice Advice for pelagic longline fisheries and other ACAP guidelines.

ACAP's short-term priorities at IOTC meetings should focus on supporting the development of an IOTC Seabird Strategy and Action Plan, including through intersessional engagement with interested CPCs (particularly ACAP Parties) and BirdLife International.

ACAP should also contribute scientific and technical advice to the ongoing review of branch line weighting specifications requested under Resolution 23/07. In this context, ACAP should develop a protocol to measure sink rates of weighted branch lines for consideration at SBWG13 and AC15, and present the protocol to WPEB22 to support the planned review of branch line weighting.

ACAP should also obtain and review information on the potential effects of trap line fishing gears in pelagic longline fisheries on ACAP-listed species.

2.1.5. Western and Central Pacific Tuna Commission (WCPFC)

ACAP has regularly participated in meetings of the WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC), Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) and the Commission. During the 2023–2025 period, ACAP attended the Scientific Committee meetings in August 2023, 2024 and 2025, the Technical and Compliance Committee meetings in September 2023, 2024 and 2025, and the Commission meetings in November-December 2023, 2024 and 2025.

At the SC19, in August 2023, the most important meeting outcome regarding the ACAP RFMCO Strategy was the initiation of a process to review CMM 2018-03 (on reducing the impact of pelagic longline fisheries on seabirds), which was expected to be updated in 2024. The SC19 endorsed New Zealand's proposal to lead the review of CMM 2018-03, "To ensure that effective mitigation methods are required and applied across the Convention Area where there is bycatch risk to vulnerable seabirds from longline fishing", and its scope would include: I) the spatial extent of required mitigation methods, II) the Southern Hemisphere mitigation options and specifications, and III) the Northern Hemisphere mitigation options and specifications. To ensure a meaningful and collaborative review, New Zealand would organize two online Informal Intersessional Meetings with interested Members, Cooperating Non-Members and Participating Territories (CCMs) and Observers to present reviewed scientific evidence on bycatch mitigation methods and to gather views on the review process, with the goal of submitting a revised CMM 2018-03 to SC20, TCC20 and WCPFC21 in 2024. ACAP has the chance of presenting its updated best practice advice for pelagic longline fisheries ([SC19-EB-IP-21](#)) in the plenary of SC19, including two recommendations as follow: I) that the

SC19 note that the mitigation methods outlined in CMM2018-03 vary from ACAP Best Practice Advice in a number of ways, and II) that the SC19 consider recommending to the Commission that CMM2018-03 be enhanced to more closely align to ACAP Best Practice Advice in order to most effectively mitigate seabird bycatch in WCPFC longline fisheries. Both recommendations were not endorsed by the SC19 though.

At the TCC19, in September 2023, with respect to seabird bycatch, New Zealand (on behalf of Australia, Fiji, France and the United States of America) presented a report on Operation Nasse – 2023 ([TCC19-2023-DP01](#)), which showed that non-compliance with seabird bycatch mitigation requirements was the most common issue identified. New Zealand further noted that, as part of their review of CMM 2018-03, to ensure implementation and enforcement of seabird bycatch reduction through mitigation obligations it would be important to consider ways to improve monitoring control and surveillance of the longline fishery.

At the WCPFC20, in December 2023, New Zealand repeated its proposal to review the CMM-2018-03 and announced dates (in February and May 2024) for the Informal Intersessional Meetings. ACAP expressed support for the review and willingness to participate in the intersessional process. Overall, CCMs spoke in favour of the proposal and there were no opposing comments, therefore the New Zealand proposal was adopted, following recommendations from the Scientific Committee (SC19).

At the SC20, in August 2024, in accordance with the procedures endorsed by SC19, New Zealand presented the results of the process to review CMM 2018-03, which included the data collation of more than 130 relevant scientific papers on seabird bycatch and mitigation methods, two informal intersessional virtual meetings with CCMs and Observers (including ACAP), and several follow-up bilateral meetings with Members. ACAP contributed with a paper summarizing its updated best practice advice for pelagic longline fisheries ([SC20-EB-IP-25](#)). The outcomes of the review process were presented by New Zealand in the format of two papers. One showing the results of a comprehensive meta-analysis on the effectiveness of a range of seabird bycatch mitigation methods ([SC20-EB-WP-11](#)), and another presenting the conclusions of the review process ([SC-20-WP-06](#)), in which New Zealand proposes that the SC20 consider 16 amendment recommendations of CMM-2018-03 to the Commission (WCPFC21), concerning tori line, night setting and branch line weighting specifications; mitigation method options; and effective combinations of mitigation methods. Following long discussion in the SC20 plenary, some CCMs supported, but other expressed concern about the suggested recommendations. Therefore, none of the 16 recommendations presented by New Zealand to update the CMM-2018-03 were endorsed by the SC20, despite the recommendations were supported by the best available science. The SC20 only recommended that TCC20 further discuss the suggested recommendations in terms of technical, practical, and safety aspects and provides advice to the Commission.

At the TCC20, in September 2024, New Zealand presented once again the outcomes of its review of the CMM-2018-03, summarized in two delegation papers, one showing the results of the comprehensive meta-analysis on the effectiveness of a range of seabird bycatch mitigation methods ([WCPFC-TCC20-2024-DP01](#)) and another presenting the conclusions of the review process ([WCPFC-TCC20-2024-DP05_rev1](#)), including 16 recommendations to update CMM-2018-03, as already presented and discussed at the SC20. New Zealand briefly described DP01 and DP05_rev1 and invited delegates to take part in an Informal Small Group discussion before the plenary discussion. Following long discussions at the Informal Small Group and the plenary, some CCMs supported the amendment recommendations, while others expressed concerns and opposed to it, noting that none of the recommendations were

previously endorsed by the SC20. TCC20 commended New Zealand's work in leading the review of the CMM 2018-03 and noted that, based on science and ACAP best practice, New Zealand has advised 16 recommendations to be considered in the preparation of the draft CMM for consideration at WCPFC21. In accordance with agreed next steps, in October 2024, ahead of WCPFC21, New Zealand circulated summaries of the key reasons, both science and technical implications, for each of the 16 proposed amendments to the CMM-2018-03.

At the WCPFC21, in November/December 2024, New Zealand proposal to strengthen CMM-2018-03 was discussed first in a "small working group" (SWG) and then in Plenary, with the expectation that the proposed revisions (or at least some of them) would be adopted by the Commission. Despite all the efforts made by New Zealand and the members of the intersessional group the proposal to review the seabird measure was not adopted (whether in full or partially). It was agreed that New Zealand would continue to lead work on reviewing the CMM-2018-03 over the coming year, presenting it to the SC, TCC and the next Commission meeting.

At the SC21, in August 2025, New Zealand presented an updated proposal to strengthen CMM 2018-03 ([SC21-EB-WP-07](#)), taking into account discussions and feedback from CCMs in 2024, where it proposes amendments to this CMM be presented in stages. Thus, for the first stage in 2025, New Zealand proposes to focus efforts to improve the Southern Hemisphere measures to address bycatch risk to the most imperilled species. The second stage would focus on improving other measures, such as those used in the Northern Hemisphere. For the first stage, New Zealand proposed three amendments to the CMM-2018-03 to improve seabird bycatch mitigation in the Southern Hemisphere: I) to require in the area 25°S - 30°S the combined use of two out of three measures (tori lines, branch line weighting, and night setting), or use hook shielding devices as a standalone option; II) to require in the area south of 30°S the combined use of tori lines, branch line weighting, and night setting, or use hook shielding devices as a standalone option; and III) to adopt ACAP best practice line weighting in the area south of 30°S. Participating small island developing states (SIDS) Territories and the USA supported New Zealand's first recommendation, contingent on maintaining an exemption to the requirements of CMM 2018-03 within the EEZs of SIDS and Territories in the area 25°S - 30°S, where longline fishing effort was negligible compared with effort in the adjacent high seas. New Zealand was unable to garner support for its other two recommendations. Japan proposed a review of the tori line specification in CMM 2018-03 for large longline vessels (<35m overall length) in the southern hemisphere ([SC21-EB-WP-08](#)). This would rewrite the specification, separating minimum, compliance-based standards, from adaptable technical guidelines, which would enable the improvement of tori line implementation and enhance operational flexibility. SC21 requested that TCC21 consider further any practicality issues related to the use of combined mitigation measures south of 25° South.

At the TCC21, in September 2025, New Zealand presented its new proposal to update the CMM-2018-03 following a two-stages approach ([WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP09_Rev01](#)), as already presented and discussed at the SC21. Following long discussions in plenary, some CCMs supported partially or totally the New Zealand proposal with three recommendations for the Southern Hemisphere, while some members expressed concerns and opposed to all recommendations. TCC21 thanked New Zealand for continuing to lead the review of CMM-2018-03 and noted a range of views on the proposed recommendations, and that New Zealand will engage further with CCMs on the strengthening of seabird bycatch mitigation requirements, with a view to WCPFC22. TCC21 thanked Japan for its delegation paper on revised tori-line specifications for large longline vessels in the South Pacific under CMM 2018-03 ([TCC21-](#)

[2025-DP04_Rev01](#)) and encouraged CCMs to continue discussions with Japan on its proposal for consideration at WCPFC22.

At the WCPFC22, in December 2025, the WCPFC Commission has adopted changes to strengthen CMM-2018-03. The Commission agreed to extend the current requirements to use 2 out of 3 seabird mitigation measures (branch line weighting, night setting, tori lines), or 'hookpods' as a standalone measure, to the Convention Area between 25°S and 30°S, westwards of 175°W. Other changes introduce minimum standards and technical guidelines for tori lines on longline fishing vessels ≥ 35 m total length. The amendments will enter into force on 1 January 2028. Thereafter, a review of the changes will occur within 3 years. The negotiations were led by New Zealand, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), and Japan. ACAP provided guidance and expert advice to assist in advancing the negotiations to a conclusion.

Recommendation

ACAP should continue and enhance engagement with the WCPFC and meeting attendees, maintaining engagement in the Scientific Committee (SC), Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) and the Commission. This engagement provides an opportunity to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP-listed species and to present updates on ACAP Best Practice Advice for pelagic longline fisheries and other ACAP guidelines, as well as to advocate for strengthen measures to monitor and mitigate seabird bycatch in WCPFC fisheries. In this context, ACAP should maintain ongoing close collaboration with key CCMs and BirdLife International ahead of future WCPFC meetings. ACAP should develop positions that address counterarguments raised by CCMs to oppose strengthen seabird CMMs.

2.2. Regional fisheries organisations with competence over non-tuna fisheries (Non-tuna RFMOs)

2.2.1. South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)

ACAP has regularly participated in meetings of the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO), including the Scientific Committee (SC), Compliance Committee (CC) and Commission (COM). During the 2023–2025 period, ACAP attended the SC in November 2023, November 2024 and November 2025, and the CC and COM meetings in November 2024 and November 2025. In addition, ACAP participated in the intersessional group that conducted a technical review of SEAFO Conservation Measure on Reducing Incidental By-catch of Seabirds in the SEAFO Convention Area in 2025. ACAP participation at meetings in 2023 and 2025 were online, while those in 2024 were in-person.

In November 2023, ACAP presented an update to SEAFO SC19 on ACAP activities and its advice for reducing the bycatch of albatrosses and petrels in SEAFO demersal longlining and trawl fisheries ([Doc/SC/11/2023](#)) emphasising the need to maintain implementation of these best practises, even if low seabird bycatch rates have been observed or recorded. An update was also provided on the conservation status of the 16 ACAP species which overlap in their distribution with the SEAFO Convention Area, as well as the two ACAP High Priority Populations which have been shown to spend $>5\%$ of their time in the SEAFO area, and both of which are also showing continuous population declines. Even though records of seabird bycatch in SEAFO fisheries has been minimal since CM25/12 came into force (2012), and that CM 25/12 is broadly consistent with previous iterations of ACAP best practice advice, the

SEAFO SC agreed that a review of the updated ACAP best practices in particular with regard to its safety, practicality and feasibility in the context of SEAFO, would assist in the evaluation of the SEAFO seabird conservation measure. Unfortunately, ACAP was not able to attend the SEAFO COM29 meeting in 2023, and so not able to follow-up on the SC discussions regarding a review of CM 25/12.

In November 2024, ACAP presented ([Doc/SC/16/2024](#)) the latest updates to ACAP's Best Practice Advice relevant to demersal longline and trawl fisheries (as reviewed by SBWG12 and endorsed by AC14) and the guidelines on data collection for observers and the use of electronic monitoring systems. Given the evolution of ACAP Best Practice Advice since the adoption of CM 25/12, ACAP suggested again that it may be timely for SEAFO to consider revising the measure in line with current best practices. The European Union supported this recommendation and welcomed ACAP's continued involvement. Subsequently, the Commission authorised the SC to review the seabird bycatch mitigation measures in CM 25/12, taking into account the practices of other international organisations and guided by ACAP Best Practice Advice ([DOC/COM/07/2024](#)). A specific task for this review was added to the SEAFO SC Work Programme for 2025.

During the 2024-2025 intersessional period, ACAP and the SEAFO European Union representative met virtually to undertake the following three tasks: 1) a comprehensive structural review of CM 25/12 to enhance overall clarity; 2) a technical review of the longline and trawl specifications to update them in light of the most recent ACAP Best Practice Advice documents; and 3) a comparative review of CM 25/12 with seabird conservation measures adopted by other RFMCOs (in particular SPRFMO, SIOFA and CCAMLR) to identify opportunities for harmonisation and alignment with international best practices across these organisations.

In November 2025, further progress was made at SC21 and COM22 by ACAP in collaboration with the European Union towards updating CM 25/12. While a consensus was not achieved on the proposed changes, Members agreed to continue working intersessionally with a view to reconsidering adoption of an updated measure in 2026. Members were requested to provide additional comments on the proposed changes to the conservation measure by 13 April 2026, ahead of an intersessional meeting (hybrid) on 13 May 2026 that will consider feedback from Members. The proposal will then be reconsidered at SC22 in November 2026.

In addition, the MoU between ACAO and SEAFO was renewed at COM21 (November 2024) for a further 6-years ([DOC/COM/14/2024 Rev 1](#)). This MoU facilitates cooperation and information-sharing, particularly regarding seabird bycatch mitigation. At SC21 (November 2025), ACAP also highlighted the on-going conservation crisis of albatrosses and petrels together with the adoption of ACAP [Resolution 8.5](#) ([Doc/SC/12/2025](#)), noting that this resolution specifically encourages Parties who are Contracting Parties or Cooperating non-Contracting Parties to RFMCOs, whose fisheries pose bycatch risks to albatrosses and petrels, to promote the adoption and implementation of ACAP's Best Practice Advice to minimise seabird bycatch. Further, given the SEAFO Secretariat is based in Swakopmund, Namibia where AC15 and the ACAP Working Group meetings will be held in 2026, ACAP has invited the SEAFO Secretariat to attend AC15 as Observers. An (informal) joint meeting between the SEAFO Secretariat and the SBWG Convenors immediately prior to SBWG13 will also be held to discuss other areas where ACAP may be able to provide support or input to SEAFO on seabird conservation matters.

Recommendations

ACAP should maintain ongoing engagement in SC, CC and COM meetings. This engagement provides opportunities to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP-listed species and to present updates to ACAP Best Practice Advice for demersal longline and trawl fisheries, as well as other relevant ACAP guidelines. In this context, ACAP should maintain ongoing close collaboration with key Contracting Parties (CPs) ahead of future SEAFO meetings, and ensure that ACAP develop positions that address counterarguments raised by CPs to oppose strengthening seabird Conservation Measures.

In the short-term ACAP should participate at the inter-sessional meeting on the review of CM 25/12 scheduled for May 2025 and continue to support the development of any updated proposal submitted to the SC.

The opportunity for in-person discussions between the SEAFO Secretariat and ACAP regarding seabird conservation matters relevant to SEAFO should also be undertaken during AC15 and the preceding Working Group meetings which are due to be held in the same location (Swakopmund, Namibia) of the SEAFO Secretariat headquarters.

2.2.2. Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

ACAP has regularly participated in the Scientific Committee meetings of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)/ During the 2023–2025 period, ACAP attended the SC in March 2023, March 2024 and March 2025. ACAP participation at each meeting was online.

Because of the lack of intersessional progress (partly due to COVID-19 related delays) no seabird bycatch relevant papers were considered at SC8 (March 2023). However, ACAP was given the opportunity to recapitulate on previous ACAP advice to SC7. France-OT and some observers voiced strong support for progressing with the (previously) planned seabird bycatch workshop so that progress could be made towards addressing gaps in SIOFA's current seabird bycatch and data standards CMMs, although other CPCs noted that as most of the seabird bycatch risk was from pelagic longline and since that was addressed through adoption of IOTC Resolution 12/06 any further consideration could be delayed until more data showing risk to seabirds from other methods was available. SC8 agreed to include a focused agenda item on seabird data collection and bycatch mitigation measures at SC9. The SC also requested the Secretariat to prepare and present a paper summarising available information about SIOFA seabird bycatch mitigation measures and seabird interactions.

In March 2024, a paper co-authored by the SIOFA Secretariat and ACAP detailing seabird interactions recorded in SIOFA, current seabird mitigation measures in force in SIOFA, a comparison of these with other RFMOs, as well as identifying outstanding ACAP advice with respect to mitigation measures in use was presented by the SC Chair on behalf of the Secretariat (SC-09-22) to SC9. ACAP also presented a paper which provided an update on ACAP activities and Best Practice Advice on reducing the bycatch of albatrosses and petrels in SIOFA longlining and trawl fisheries (SC-09-24). The ACAP paper emphasised the importance of the SIOFA Convention Area to ACAP species by highlighting that six ACAP High Priority Populations occur within the area, and that at least two populations spend >35% of their time there. During discussions at SC9 it was highlighted that improvements could be made to the way SIOFA asks CPCs to collect and report seabird bycatch, with the SIOFA Secretariat being tasked to: i) provide a summary of incidental bycatches reported from the vessel logbooks and the observer logbooks; and then ii) identify any potential data gaps, potential improvements that could be made for data collection and reporting by CPCs, and potential amendments to CMM 02(2023) that would clarify what information should be collected from the two types of logbooks.

At SC10 (March 2025), ACAP tabled a paper that, among other things, highlighted how SIOFA's seabird bycatch mitigation measures could be more closely aligned with recommended ACAP Best Practice. This was well-received with SC10 recommending improving the reporting system for observer reporting of seabird bycatch in CMM-02 on Data Standards, especially for trawl vessels, and improving CMM-13 (2022) to include seabird band information when reporting seabird bycatch, with the Cook Islands agreeing to put forward a proposal to the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) that would add trawl mitigation requirements to CMM 13 (2022). France was particularly vocal about seabird issues throughout the meeting, and are keen to work with ACAP (and EU-Spain and Cook Islands) on reviewing the seabird mitigation measures as a whole and presenting to the next SC.

ACAP was unable to have direct representation at the 12th Meeting of Parties (June 2025), however the Cook Islands and France Territories presented a joint proposal to amend CMM 13(2022) which included implementing recommendations from SC10 for more effective seabird bycatch mitigation in SIOFA fisheries based on the latest scientific advice (e.g. from ACAP) and including the addition of mitigation requirements for trawl vessels (which were previously lacking from CMM 13). Negotiated discussions at MoP12 resulted in adoption of CMM13, but due to concerns from one CCP (Japan) the proposed measures for trawl fisheries were restructured as only voluntary guidelines in the Annex of the CMM.

Recommendations

ACAP should maintain ongoing engagement in SC meetings and when relevant the Meeting of Parties. This engagement provides opportunities to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP-listed species and to present updates to ACAP Best Practice Advice for demersal longline and trawl fisheries, as well as other relevant ACAP guidelines. In this context, ACAP should maintain ongoing close collaboration with key Contracting Parties (CPs) ahead of future SIOFA meetings, and ensure that ACAP develop positions that address counterarguments raised by CPs to oppose strengthening seabird Conservation Measures.

In the short-term ACAP should work intersessionally with any interested CPCs (most likely France-OT and Australia) to further progress a review of SIOFA's seabird CMM and data collection CMM. ACAP should also continue to advocate for the trawl mitigation measures to become mandatory. As ACAP has or is currently involved with the review of the SPRMO and SEAFO seabird CMMs, ACAP could help to make sure any relevant findings/outcomes from those reviews are considered by SIOFA, thereby helping to achieve alignment between the non-tuna RFMOs.

2.2.3. South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO)

ACAP has regularly participated in meetings of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Organisation (SPRFMO), including the Scientific Committee (SC) and Commission (COM). During the 2023–2025 period, ACAP attended the SC in September 2023 and September 2025, and the COM meetings in January 2023 and January 2024. In addition, ACAP participated in the intersessional group that conducted a technical review of SPRFMO Conservation and Management Measure on Minimising By-catch of Seabirds in the SPRFMO Convention Area in 2025. ACAP participation at the SC meetings in 2023 and 2025 and the COM meeting in 2024 were in-person, while the COM meeting in 2023 was online.

ACAP's main objective at COM11 (2023) was to encourage SPRFMO to undertake a review of their seabird conservation measure (CMM-09-2017) against ACAP's current best practice advice and to review the implementation of provisions of CMM 02-2022 relevant to data collection, reporting and verification. ACAP had been specifically asked by the SPRFMO Executive Secretary to provide this meeting with updates of its best practice advice and guidelines as endorsed by AC12 ([COMM11-Obs04](#)), so as to enable SPRFMO Members to consider whether a review of the relevant SPRFMO measures should be undertaken. New Zealand supported the suggestion to review the SPRFMO CMMs and welcomed the participation of ACAP. Subsequently, a review of seabird bycatch mitigation measures in CMM 09-2017 and the seabird related data collection requirements in CMM 02-2025 was included in the Scientific Committee's 2023 workplan as adopted by the Commission ([COMM11-WP17_rev1](#)). Accordingly, ACAP presented a comprehensive review of relevant SPRFMO CMMs against ACAP Best Practice Advice to SC11 ([SC11-Obs04](#)) in 2023, and a workshop to prioritise and draft amendments to CMMs 09 and 02 presented in SC11-Obs04 was included in the Scientific Committee 2024 Workplan as adopted by the Commission at COM12 ([CMM12-Doc6_rev1](#)).

This intersessional workshop was to be coordinated by New Zealand and Peru in 2024. Although timelines shifted, ACAP collaborated with New Zealand, Peru, Chile, and Australia before SC13 (September 2025) to refine recommendations for updating SPRFMO CMMs 09 and 02, and identifying research priorities.

At SC13 New Zealand presented the review of the measures (SC13-DW08), and ACAP provided updates on species conservation and activities (SC13-Obs1). The SC acknowledged the seabird conservation crisis declared at ACAP MOP8 and urged members to support research and report on mitigation effectiveness. Most recommendations for changes to the CMMs were adopted, including:

- Closing or tightening loopholes in trawl and demersal longline fisheries by requiring combined best practice measures and minimum observer/EM coverage.
- Updating mitigation specifications for better alignment with ACAP advice.
- Encouraging light management procedures to reduce seabird bycatch.
- Minor improvements to seabird interaction data collection to align with ACAP advice.
- Further intersessional work on key areas such as data collection on jig vessels.

The arising recommendations will be considered by the SPRFMO COM in March 2026 (COM14). ACAP's attendance is advised to support progressive seabird bycatch management.

Recommendations

ACAP should maintain ongoing engagement in SC meetings and when relevant COM meetings. This engagement provides opportunities to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP-listed species and to present updates to ACAP Best Practice Advice for demersal longline and trawl fisheries, as well as other relevant ACAP guidelines. In this context, ACAP should maintain ongoing close collaboration with key Contracting Parties (CPs) ahead of future SPRFMO meetings, and ensure that ACAP develop positions that address counterarguments raised by CPs to oppose strengthening seabird Conservation Measures.

In the short-term ACAP should participate at COM14 to support and encourage adoption of the SC recommendations to update SPRFMOs seabird conservation and data standard CMMs.

2.3. Regional conservation organisations with competence for living marine resources

2.3.1. Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

ACAP has regularly participated in meetings of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), including the Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing (WG-IMAF), the Scientific Committee (SC-CAMLR), and the Commission. During the 2023–2025 period, ACAP attended WG-IMAF, SC-CAMLR-42 and CCAMLR-42 in 2023. In 2024, ACAP attended the Scientific Committee (SC-CAMLR-43) and the Commission (CCAMLR-43), although it was not possible for ACAP to participate in the joint Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment and Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing (WG-FSA-IMAF). In 2025, ACAP attended the Scientific Committee (SC-CAMLR-44) and the Commission (CCAMLR-44), held in Hobart, Australia.

In 2023, the main issues of interest to ACAP related to trawl fisheries, particularly the use of net monitoring cables in continuous krill trawl fisheries and the absence of seabird bycatch mitigation requirements for trawl fisheries more broadly. A derogation from Conservation Measure (CM) 25-03, renewed annually, continued to allow trials of continuous trawl fishing using net monitoring cables, with a requirement to trial mitigation measures. Norway and China reported on trials during the fishing season. ACAP contributed to seven WG-IMAF documents, including intersessional work on warp strike observations, seabird bycatch mitigation, and updates on ACAP activities and advice. Uncertainty remained regarding the magnitude and nature of warp strikes due to limitations in observation data.

Among outcomes of the WG-IMAF meeting were:

- a recommendation to the Scientific Committee for observer coverage to reach a minimum of 5% of fishing time on a per-vessel basis ideally from the 2024/25 season onwards.
- encouragement of further development of mitigation devices and a request that ACAP provide intersessional advice to assist in further improving seabird mitigation devices that had been developed.
- a recommendation to the SC that CCAMLR maintain the existing derogation of the prohibition on use of the net monitoring cable in Conservation Measure 25-03, with new clarification that video footage review may be used to achieve required observation rates.
- a recommendation that the SC encourage the development and use of warp and net cable mitigation measures on trawl vessels during the 2023/24 fishing season (e.g. paired streamer lines on conventional trawl vessels, and warp scarers or 'socks' on continuous trawl vessels), and the introduction of mandatory mitigation measures on trawl vessels once suitable mitigation specifications have been developed.
- A recommendation that the SC encourage CCAMLR Members to apply the light pollution guidelines developed by Australia and New Zealand.
- a recommendation that CCAMLR Members at relevant regional fisheries meetings emphasize CCAMLR's performance history, given that CCAMLR's seabird incidental mortality mitigation efforts in demersal longline fisheries are an exemplar of best practice and what can be achieved.

The SC-CAMLR 42 endorsed most of the recommendations from WG-IMAF (and all the seabird-related ones), including on the development and use of warp and net monitoring cable

mitigation measures on trawl vessels for the 2023/2024 fishing season, and the introduction of mandatory mitigation measures on trawl vessels once suitable mitigation specifications have been developed. The SC-CAMLR 42 and the CCAMLR-42 agreed on the continuation for a further year of the derogation of CM 25-03, with ongoing trials of mitigation measures in continuous trawl using net monitoring cables. Relevant outcomes of the SC-CAMLR 42 and CCAMLR-42 discussions also included positive feedback from several delegations on ACAP's contributions to WG-IMAF, highlighting the value of ACAP's scientific input. There was also considerable discussion on warp strike observations, with agreement reached on the level of observation recommended by WG-IMAF. In addition, discussions addressed High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI), emphasising the need for coordination among relevant organisations and CCAMLR Members to develop guidance, share information, and monitor outbreaks.

In 2024, ACAP participated in SC-CAMLR-43 and CCAMLR-43. Although ACAP experts were unable to attend the joint WG-FSA-IMAF meeting due to logistical arrangements that limited participation of observer organisations, ACAP submitted papers through the IMAF Co-Chair, including updates on ACAP activities and a proposal for seabird abundance observation protocols. IMAF-related issues remained the primary focus for ACAP, particularly those associated with trawl fisheries.

IMAF reported to the Scientific Committee (SC-CAMLR-43), with recommendations, and SC-CAMLR-43 reported to the Commission.

- IMAF information and recommendations forwarded to the SC included:
- Recommending that the SC task the Secretariat to develop a survey on various stick water related questions and circulate it to Members. The SC tasked the Secretariat accordingly.
- Expressing concern at the decline of three assessed species outlined in the ACAP update paper (WG-FSA-IMAF 2924/44) and asking members to collect and submit any information on them and other ACAP species.
- Discussions on the seabird warp strike bird abundance observation protocol developed by ACAP (in paper WG-FSA-IMAF-2024/53 Rev.1) intended to be incorporated into the Scheme of International Scientific Observation (SISO) tasking. The SC agreed to this inclusion in SISO tasking.

As in previous years, the derogation to Conservation Measure 25-03 remained a key issue during SC-CAMLR-43 and CCAMLR-43.

Following discussion, the Commission adopted a revised derogation with differentiated requirements depending on the level of mitigation trials and reporting provided by vessels. The revised text provides differing requirements for:

- vessels that had provided a detailed report on trials of mitigation devices which have been reviewed by WG IMAF and approved by the Scientific Committee.
- vessels that had provided required reporting but on the advice of the Scientific Committee were required to continue to improve the mitigation measures
- and
- vessels which used a net monitoring cable and had not undergone trials of mitigation devices.

The derogation will be reviewed at CCAMLR-45 in 2026 following advice from WG-IMAF and the Scientific Committee. The Scientific Committee also agreed that the next WG-IMAF

meeting would be held in conjunction with the Working Group on Ecosystem Monitoring and Management (WG-EMM) in 2026.

In 2025, discussions within CCAMLR continued to reflect divergent views among Members regarding scientific and policy underpinnings to decision-making. The harvesting of krill has been affected by the lapse of a spatial management measure leading to a concentration of krill fishing particularly in the Gerlache and Bransfield Straits (CCAMLR Sub-area 48.1) that is potentially detrimental to associated and dependent species including seabirds. A consensus is also lacking about area-based management, particularly the modalities for establishing additional marine protected areas (MPAs).

Concerning seabirds, further trials were reported by China under a derogation to the ban on use of net monitoring cables in conventional trawl and continuous trawl fisheries. Use of a snatch block appears to mitigate the effects on seabirds from the use of a net monitoring cable, but warp wire mitigation would benefit from additional innovation to ensure minimisation of bird strikes, especially small petrel species, which continue at significant levels. The findings from the trials will be reviewed by WG-IMAF when it meets in mid-2026.

Recommendations

ACAP should maintain ongoing engagement in WG-IMAF, SC-CAMLR and CCAMLR meetings to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP-listed species and to present updates to ACAP Best Practice Advice for demersal longline and trawl fisheries, as well as other relevant ACAP guidelines. This engagement will also provide opportunities: to monitor progress of trials by Norway and China on mitigation measures for continuous trawl fishing vessels using net monitoring cables; to encourage improvement to observation programmes to resolve uncertainty about the magnitude and nature of warp strikes especially for small petrel species; and to review the findings of the survey on stick water discharges in CCAMLR fisheries.