



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Second Meeting of the Parties

Christchurch, New Zealand, 13 – 17 November 2006

**Action on seabird bycatch and representation at
relevant international meetings**

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ACTION ON SEABIRD BYCATCH AND REPRESENTATION AT RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

At the first meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC1) it was agreed that engagement with regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) was fundamental to improving the conservation status of many albatross and petrel populations. It was also noted that this issue presents significant challenges to both Parties and the Agreement as a whole.

The meeting agreed that the Chair would write to all Parties to ask their approval for ACAP to seek observer status at relevant RFMOs meetings; meetings of the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAP COFI); meetings of Regional Fisheries Bodies; and meetings of the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations. Following the Parties agreement to this course of action, the Secretariat wrote to these bodies and sought observer status for ACAP. As a result the Secretariat has established representation status with the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), the Commission for Highly Migratory Species in the Central and Western Pacific (WCPFC), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), and the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO). Observer status is still being sought with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the negotiation meetings for the establishment of the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC).

The second meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC2) held extensive discussions on seabird and fisheries interactions and identified the potential benefit of addressing at-sea threats in a co-ordinated manner. The meeting agreed to establish a Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG) and adopted Terms of Reference and an indicative work programme for the SBWG.

The meeting drafted a Resolution (Resolution 2.7) to reflect the views of the committee on the key elements of the above discussion for endorsement by the 2nd Session of the Meeting of Parties (MoP2).

A strategy to implement the work programme of the SBWG is provided in [Attachment A](#) for the consideration of MoP2. A key element of this strategy is to develop materials and guidelines that will assist ACAP representatives attending RFMO meetings to maximise their effective participation and the consideration of issues relevant to ACAP.

Parties are requested to:

- Consider and adopt draft Resolution 2.7; and
- Comment, for the broad guidance of the Advisory Committee, on the proposed strategy for implementation of the SBWG work programme.

ACAP Bycatch Working Group - Strategy

1. OVERALL GOALS¹

- Identify actions that will assist in assessment, mitigation and reduction of negative interactions between fishing operations and albatrosses and petrels.
- Develop technical information and products to assist Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and other relevant international and national bodies to reduce negative interactions between fishing operations and seabirds.
- In developing solutions to reduce bycatch of albatrosses and petrels ensure approaches to mitigation do not adversely affect other marine species.

The work of the Bycatch Working Party will include both technical and policy/advocacy elements.

The Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG) will work with ACAP Parties to develop targeted recommendations, positions and advice on technical and policy matters related to bycatch mitigation in fisheries that interact with ACAP listed species. These will then be developed into key messages for delivery to target audiences.

The work of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group should broaden and enhance the existing work of other international and national bodies in the assessment, reduction and mitigation of seabird bycatch and conservation of albatrosses and petrels².

Looking Outward

2. AUDIENCES

The key audiences are both international and national fishery managers. Priorities are:

- (a) Regional Fisheries Management Organisations
- (b) National fishery managers
- (c) United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation

A first key step will be to identify priorities within the key audiences for which the SBWG should develop targeted products.

3. MESSAGES

To facilitate the above audiences in taking steps to reduce bycatch of albatrosses and petrels in their fisheries, key issues for ACAP input to fisheries managers (may) include:

- explanation of the scale and implications of seabird bycatch
- the spatial and temporal nature of seabird bycatch in their fisheries
- the need for, and advice on observer programmes and data collection protocols
- best-practice seabird bycatch mitigation measures
- the need for, and advice on, monitoring compliance

¹ Taken from Terms of Reference

² Given that resources are scarce, duplication would be wasteful and have diminished value. Mediocre or low quality service to many audiences is less preferable to delivering higher quality services to a more focused audience.

- best-practice guidelines for developing and implementing IPOA-Seabirds

4. MESSENGER

Fisheries managers normally have a limited or non-existent knowledge of seabird management issues. For this reason it is important that the information being delivered be scientifically and operationally sound to have credibility. Similarly, the person delivering the message must also have credibility and have a sound understanding of the information being provided. Preferably the messenger should be an appropriate person from the Advisory Committee or the ACAP Secretariat.

5. DELIVERY

Advocacy messages and technical support would be delivered through:

- Concise reports that are ideally based on sound, scientifically supported refereed papers;
- Submission of relevant papers to meetings to support the arguments being conveyed;
- Presentations at meetings
- Face-to-face interaction at meetings;
- Building relations with National Fisheries managers, RFMO Secretariats and UN FAO officials

Looking Inward

6. RESOURCES: ACAP STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Strengths

- Internationally recognised inter-governmental conservation agreement
- Experienced policy-advocates

Weaknesses

- Limited resources and capacity of BWG members to contribute to outputs
- Time taken to develop consensus on outputs of Bycatch Working Group may be too slow to match pace of advocacy opportunities

7. GAPS: What do we need to develop?

- Links to external technical expertise
- Links to RFMO Secretariats and FAO
- Capacity to produce outputs: who to coordinate and undertake work?

8. FIRST EFFORTS: How do we begin?

Short term goals include:

- Prioritisation of RFMOs. Among other factors, this would include the proportion of time spent by albatrosses in each RFMO area but may also include factors such as likely gains to be made.
- Prioritise products to produce

9. EVALUATION

- SBWG Chair to report to Advisory Committee and MoP meetings to report on progress and achievements and outline future steps.