



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

**Second Meeting of the Parties**

*Christchurch, New Zealand, 13 – 17 November 2006*

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**Proposed indicators to measure the success of ACAP**

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## Proposed indicators to measure the success of ACAP

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#### Executive Summary

The objective of this paper is to update Parties on progress by the Advisory Committee towards developing a set of indicators to measure the collective success of the Parties to the Agreement in achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels.

The paper proposes adoption of the BirdLife Red List Index as an interim indicator to measure favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels

In addition, the paper sets out proposals for the development of more dynamic indicators of pressure (threatening processes) and response (conservation action), including recommending close collaboration with relevant Advisory Committee Working Groups.

#### Parties are requested to:

- a) **note** the progress to date by the Advisory Committee in developing indicators to measure the success of ACAP
- b) **agree** to adopt the BirdLife Red List Index as an interim indicator to measure favourable conservation status
- c) **note** the proposed approach to developing indicators of pressure and response set out in this paper
- d) **note** that it is considered premature to recommend ACAP specific indicators of state, pressure and response at this time
- e) **note** that future indicators will be developed in collaboration with relevant Advisory Committee Working Groups

## Requirements under ACAP

Article IX 6(f) of the ACAP Agreement requires the advisory committee to develop a system of indicators to measure the collective success of the Parties to the Agreement in achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement.

Under the Agreement, a species is said to be in favourable conservation status when the following conditions are met:

- i. population dynamics indicate that the migratory species is maintaining itself on a long-term basis
- ii. the range of the migratory species is neither currently being reduced, nor is likely to be reduced, on a long term basis
- iii. there is, and will be in the foreseeable future, sufficient habitat to maintain the population of the migratory species on a long-term basis; and
- iv. the distribution and abundance of the migratory species approach historic coverage and levels to the extent that potentially suitable ecosystem exist and to the extent consistent with wise wildlife management

## Progress to date by the Advisory Committee

The development of a system of indicators to measure the success of ACAP has been progressed at both meetings of the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee have endorsed the following approach:

- The development of indicators relating to all four components of favourable conservation status might be an ambitious and complex exercise that may be considered a medium to long-term goal.
- In the interim, the BirdLife Red List Index (RLI) was identified as an appropriate headline indicator of population trends.
- Further work was required to develop a more immediate indicator of population trend that could show much finer temporal resolution and potentially be updated annually.
- In addition to indicators of conservation status (state indicators), the Advisory Committee recognised the benefits in developing a set of indicators to measure steps taken to improve species conservation status, not just improved status *per se*.
- In light of this, the Advisory Committee endorsed an approach to develop a set of dynamic indicators measuring both pressure (threatening processes) and response (conservation action).
- It was recognised that the outputs from the Breeding Sites, Status and Trends and recently formed Bycatch Working Groups had the potential to be used as the data source for a number of dynamic indicators. However, at the present time the outputs were not yet sufficiently advanced to inform the development of a comprehensive suite of indicators.

- It was therefore agreed at AC II that New Zealand, South Africa and BirdLife International would develop a small number of prototype indicators for discussion at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties and for use as potential interim indicators until the outputs of the Working Groups became more advanced

### **Prototype indicators of state**

In line with the recommendations of the first meeting of the Advisory Committee, it is recommended that until such time as the Status and Trends Working Group has the opportunity to develop an ACAP specific population trend based indicator, the BirdLife Red List Index be adopted as an interim indicator of state.

### **Prototype indicators of pressure and response**

An initial scoping exercise was conducted to develop a small number of indicators of pressure and response that could be used as prototype indicators until the outputs of the working groups became more advanced.

However, the outcome of this scoping exercise was that it was considered premature to recommend even prototype indicators at this time due to the need for closer collaboration with the Advisory Committee Working Groups and a better understanding of the nature of the data being collected and analysed by those groups.

The remainder of this paper is therefore focussed on a proposed process for the future development of indicators of pressure and response, as more data becomes available and as the outputs from the working groups advances.

### **Proposed process for the development of indicators of pressure and response**

At the second meeting of the Advisory Committee a 'long list' of approximately 30 potential indicators of pressure and response was presented, reflecting the broad range of threats facing ACAP listed species and the equal and opposite range of conservation actions that could be taken in response.

These indicators of pressure and response were grouped into four categories relating to threats from habitat loss or disturbance, threats from non-native species, threats from human activities (including marine pollution) and threats from fishing.

In order to align the development of indicators with the responsibilities of the current ACAP Breeding Sites, Status and Trends and Bycatch Working Groups, it is proposed to group all indicators into either site-based threats or threats from fishing.

Furthermore, whilst it may be possible, the proposed approach set out in this paper does not recommend developing separate indicators for each of the many identified site-based threats or responses. Instead, this paper proposes the development of a

simple set of indicators of pressure and response that measure site-based threats collectively (i.e. a composite of habitat loss, non-native species and human activities).

This proposed approach is set out in more detail below.

#### **Site-based indicators of pressure and response**

In developing a database of breeding sites, the Breeding Sites Working Group (BSWG) classified threats to breeding sites into a number of different categories and rated each threat at each breeding site as being either high, medium or low.

In line with the approach set out above, it is proposed that the group working on developing indicators should work closely with the BSWG and Status and Trends Working Group (STWG) to develop a composite, site-based indicator of pressure based on these data.

For example, the site-based indicator of pressure could record the proportion of breeding sites where the *highest* threat was either high, medium or low, thus providing a simple indicator of pressure for each site, based on existing data.

The database also records what management action is being taken to address identified threats. It is therefore proposed to use this information to develop a prototype indicator that broadly reflects the scale or magnitude of conservation action, or response, to the threat.

#### **Fishing-related indicators of pressure and response**

As noted above, indicators of pressure and response from fishing should be developed based on the outputs of the Bycatch Working Group (BWG). However, the BWG has not yet met and is not yet in a position to consider what data it may require from Parties. It is therefore not yet possible to consider in any detail how a set of fishing-related indicators may be developed to utilise these data.

It is likely, however, that the BWG will put into place processes or protocols for the collection of bycatch data that may form the basis of a useful indicator to measure threats from fishing.

Similarly, and in line with ACAP obligations to encourage the implementation by Parties of a National Plan of Action (NPOA) for Seabirds, the BWG may also consider how best to record steps taken by Parties to put into place mitigation or management measures in response to these threats. Such data may form the basis of an indicator to measure responses to fishing-related threats.

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- g) **agree** to adopt the BirdLife Red List Index as an interim indicator to measure favourable conservation status
- h) **note** the proposed approach to developing indicators of pressure and response set out in this paper
- i) **note** that it is considered premature to recommend specific indicators of pressure and response at this time
- j) **note** that future indicators will be developed in collaboration with relevant Advisory Committee Working Groups