



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
Fourth Meeting of Advisory Committee
Capetown, South África, 22-25 August 2008

Capacity Building in South America

Author:
Brazil, New Zealand, Secretariat

Capacity Building in South America

Summary

During MoP2 the Parties identified Capacity Building among several issues of high priority in the Advisory Committee Work Programme. The ACAP Secretariat now includes in its Working Programme for the triennial 2007 - 2009 activities that assist the Advisory Committee and Parties with technical cooperation and Capacity Building to facilitate the exchange of skills, knowledge, training, and other resources between Parties and Range States. As a first step to achieve this objective, the Secretariat consulted the Parties via a questionnaire and the results were presented in AC3 (Doc. 16).

Although 'Capacity Building' is discussed in the Agreement, the term is not properly defined. The Secretariat recommends that Capacity Building be discussed in AC4.

The Secretariat sent seven proposals for projects on Capacity Building in South America to eleven South American experts for assessment. These experts provided valuable comments and suggestions. After this consultation, four final projects were proposed (Annexes 1 to 4).

The Secretariat understands that the development of an ACAP strategy for Capacity Building is a high priority activity and proposes that AC4 send a recommendation to MoP3 to provide resources to assist in this task and to apply for funds from potential sponsors. The Secretariat also recognises that this proposal for Capacity Building should be extended to other regions in order to support the implementation of the Agreement in other continents.

Introduction

According to the Article IV of ACAP, Capacity Building is necessary to guarantee the implementation of the Agreement in some Parties and Range States. The Agreement recognises the importance of scientific and administrative institutions for research, training and monitoring to ensure implementation of conservation measures.

During MoP2 the Parties identified Capacity Building among several issues of high priority in the Advisory Committee Work Programme. The Parties agreed to address the threats facing waved albatross as a specific high priority issue and to provide Capacity Building support to Ecuador and Peru.

The Working Programme for the triennial 2007 - 2009 includes activities that assist the Advisory Committee and Parties with technical cooperation and Capacity Building to facilitate the exchange of skills, knowledge, training, and other resources between Parties and Range States. The Advisory Committee is recognised as the appropriate body to develop a strategy for Capacity Building, seek advice from Parties and Range States on the difficulties of implementation of ACAP, identify opportunities for assisting Parties and Range States, identify sources of funding for Capacity Building and support applications for funding.

Capacity building projects in South America will increase awareness and encourage the involvement of the community as well as relevant organisations and stakeholders. The lack of interest in albatross and petrel conservation issues is, in some countries a serious threat for the continuity of albatross and petrel conservation action

Background

Since MoP2, when Capacity Building was recognised as a high priority by the Parties, the Secretariat has addressed efforts to consider these initiatives. The Secretariat distributed a questionnaire to the Parties to assist in determining the value of Capacity Building to ACAP and to identify opportunities and possible approaches to develop Capacity Building initiatives in the ACAP context (AC3 Doc. 16). In response to the questionnaire the Parties put forward some useful initiatives for Capacity Building including developing a network of suitably trained scientists and policy-makers, maintaining adequate training of observers onboard fishing vessels and raising awareness of ACAP and NPOA between governments and fishing industries. It was also suggested by Parties that one or two chairs/officers might be appointed to interact with Parties and coordinate development of a Capacity Building strategy (AC3 Doc. 16). In response to this, New Zealand offered funds to support the Advisory Committee to accomplish these activities. South America has been selected as the focus for this project, due to the identified need in the region. Tatiana Neves from Brazil was invited to coordinate the project due to her knowledge and expertise of fisheries in the region. Inviting a South American expert to support Secretariat works was considered an effective way to approach capacity building, both by providing secretariat experience to a Party delegate, and executing the project on capacity building.

Definition of Capacity Building in ACAP context

In the international context, many agreements / organisation have focused on Capacity Building activities to improve its implementation. This is the case, for example, of CMS and UNDP/UN that have provided Capacity Building for their member nations under their technical cooperation programmes.

Considering that ACAP is a multilateral agreement seeking to progress seabird conservation through international cooperation, the ACAP Secretariat proposes the following definition for Capacity Building for consideration by the Advisory Committee:

“Capacity Building means assistance to Parties or Range States for research, administration, training and monitoring for implementation of conservation measures for seabird habitat through funding, training, provision of information and institutional support. Such assistance is an on-going process that will be provided to individuals, communities, organisations/ institutions/ agencies or governments and will facilitate management of the relationship between sectors (public, private and community) in a way to guarantee the implementation of the Agreement”.

This definition includes:

- a) development of systems for collecting and analysing data, and exchanging information;
- b) exchange of information regarding adoption and enforcement of legislative and other management approaches to conservation of albatrosses and petrels;
- c) implementation of education and awareness programmes for users of areas where albatrosses and petrels may be encountered;
- d) design and implementation of comprehensive programmes for public information in relation to the conservation of albatrosses and petrels;

- e) development and implementation of training programmes on conservation techniques and measures to mitigate threats affecting albatrosses and petrels; and
- f) exchange of expertise, techniques and knowledge.

Projects proposed

The proposed projects on Capacity Building in South America were selected, according to the priorities identified in the guidelines described in AC3 Doc. 16. Consideration was given to previous successful experiences and to major issues identified in seabird conservation issues.

The projects proposed encourage the exchange of experiences between South American countries but do not exclude exchange of knowledge, experiences or expertise between other countries.

Criteria for project selection

In order to ensure an equitable process, projects based on general capacity building activities involving several countries were selected (collective projects). It is noted that some projects, prioritised for the Parties, are already being developed through other initiatives as can be seen in Annex 2. For example, activities concerned with Waved albatross conservation, considered a priority by MoP2, are also being addressed by ACAP through the Plan of Action for the Waved Albatross. The projects recommended in this paper include regional meetings and a network to facilitate the development of ideas for capacity building in South American countries.

Transparency in the project selection process

Seven projects were selected according to the criteria described above and after discussions with New Zealand delegates. During preparation of this paper, the progress was discussed between the ACAP Secretariat and New Zealand delegates through teleconferences and valuable comments and suggestions were provided.

Also, comments were provided by some members of the Advisory Committee. The Secretariat then presented recommendations to thirteen South American experts who provided their analysis, comments and suggestions. The Secretariat also asked the experts' opinions on future potential projects on Capacity Building that could be developed in South America to support ACAP implementation.

Consultation with experts from ACAP Parties and Range States in South America

Eleven South American experts were invited to analyze seven project ideas presented by the ACAP Secretariat. These experts from six countries in South America who sent their comments are: Argentina (Fabián Rabuffetti and Patricia Gandini), Chile (Carlos Moreno and Marcelo García), Ecuador (Gabriela Montoya and Sandra Loor), Peru (Elisa Goya and Joanna Alfaro), Brazil (Leandro Bugoni) and Uruguay (Andrés Domingo). Also the South American coordinator of BirdLife (Esteban Frere) sent important comments. A summary of these comments is provided at Annex 2.

Project selected by South American experts

The South American experts provided important comments on the project proposals and some changes were suggested. As a result of this consultation with the experts the following four projects are recommended:

Project 1 - Improving the seabird data collection from observers programmes in South America

Project 2 - 2nd South American Fishers Forum to Reduce the Seabirds Bycatch (SAFF2)

Project 3 - Exchange experiences for NPOAs-Seabirds elaboration, adoption and implementation in ACAP South American Countries

Project 4 - Network on ACAP implementation in South America

Detailed proposals for the four projects are presented in Annex 1.

Agencies and institutions identified as potential sources of funds

Global Environmental Facilities – GEF www.gefweb.org

BirdLife International / RSPB www.savethealbatross.net

WWF www.wwf.org

Southern Seabird Solutions www.southernseabirds.org

American Bird Conservancy www.abcbirds.org

Petrobras www.petrobras.com.br

ACAP Parties

Framework for the continuation of Capacity Building works on the Secretariat level

The Advisory Committee Work Programme identified the need to develop a Capacity Building strategy. As part of this strategy the Advisory Committee will support applications for funds from various sources such as the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). Capacity Building has been a high priority issue for the GEF council which approved its strategic approach to enhance Capacity Building in November 2003. Also, GEF have been developing national capacity needs self assessment (NCSA) and have been providing reports on capacity developments initiatives for each region (www.gefweb.org).

The Secretariat recommends, as a high priority activity, that ACAP develop a Capacity Building strategy. A person should be dedicated to prepare this strategy and it is suggested that AC4 send a recommendation to MoP3 to allocate resources to undertake this work.

In parallel, the exercise carried out for South American countries shall be extended for other countries / regions where Capacity Building could be a useful tool for the ACAP implementation.

Project 1

Improving seabird data collection from observer programmes in South America**Background**

The ACAP recognises that reliable collection of data through the use of at-sea observers on fishing vessels is fundamental to estimate with accuracy the nature and extent of albatross and petrel interactions with fisheries. The Agreement therefore encourages the Parties to undertake research and monitoring at sea and on land, in co-operation among Parties if necessary.

In South America, there are basically two types of observer programmes: the National Observer Programmes, developed by the governments sometimes with support of other agencies or universities and other programmes, developed by a particular research/educational project or by non-governmental organisations.

The National Observer Programmes have a widespread coverage, generating a high volume of data, while the specific programmes generally cover smaller numbers of vessels. On the other hand, the smaller projects address specific seabird conservation/research issues, while the National Programmes mostly collect general data about fisheries with no or poor data on seabird bycatch provided.

Given the huge importance of promoting more consistent data collection to facilitate the elaboration of albatross and petrels conservation strategies, and considering the opportunity to collect these data through the National Observer Programmes, the improvement of the capacity of such programmes/observers in collecting better data on seabirds is one of the most important objectives for the Capacity Building projects to be developed in South America.

Considering this and taking into account the multilateral interface of the Agreement and its desire to achieve favorable conservation status for the ACAP species through international co-operation, this proposal also aims to encourage the exchange of information among the countries in order to promote a better collection for seabird data by the Observers Program in South America. Exchange of observer information between the countries will allow observers from one country to be able to work in another country when necessary.

Rationale

Almost all ACAP countries in South America have national observer programmes, however, the level, quality and quantity of information provided on seabird distribution and incidental captures varies significantly. Some countries have produced information on seabirds from their National Observer Programmes, while other countries, although presenting well structured programmes, are not effective in providing seabird information.

This happens for two main reasons: lack of capacity/training of observers, and lack of information or interest by observer programme managers to include the collection of seabird bycatch data in the on board protocols. It is strongly suggested that the observers and managers from the National Observer Programmes exchange knowledge to promote the development of capacity in such programmes.

Objective

To promote a minimum collection standard for seabird data by the Observer Programmes in South America through the exchange of knowledge between ACAP South American Parties.

Activities

1. Develop the South American Seabird Observers Course / South American Seabird Observers Congress;
2. Define a minimum data collection methodology; this work forms part of the agenda for the SBWG2 Meeting, and it is anticipated that minimum standards will be discussed at AC4.
3. Develop a standard methodology for the national authorities responsible for the Observers Programmes;
4. Support the exchange of observers among countries.

Time table / Estimated Budget

The South American Seabird Observers' Course / South American Seabird Observers' Congress shall be held annually and have an estimated budget of 50,000 USD / year. The definition of a standard methodology for a minimum data set for seabird bycatch (Activity 2) shall be defined during the Congress and will include a resolution for the national authorities responsible for the National Observer Programmes. The costs for travel related with the observers exchange among countries can be paid for by fishing industries, sponsors, the observers themselves, or their employers.

Project 2

2nd South American Fishers Forum to Reduce the Seabird Bycatch (SAFF2)

Background

The 1st. South American Fishers Forum (SAFF1) was held in Guarujá, Brazil in December of 2006. The Forum's main aim was to promote information exchange between fishermen, ship owners, researchers, and governmental and non-governmental organisations to illustrate and talk about the fisheries practices to reduce seabird bycatch in South American countries, especially by longline and trawler fisheries.

One important outcome from the SAFF1 was the building of relationships between the main stakeholders involved in the incidental capture of seabirds – fishing sector, research institutions, NGOs, and government. During the event, fishermen, governmental representatives, research, and conservation institutions had the opportunity to talk, strengthen relationships, and contribute to discussions, at a scientific as well as practical level. The SAFF1 was an opportunity to discuss important topics relating to seabird conservation such as: best known mitigation measures for each fishing method used in South America, how to increase the acceptance of on board observers in fisheries, effective ways to introduce fishermen to mitigation measures and strategies to promote sustainable seafood markets for South America. A forum such as SAFF1 could provide an opportunity to identify potential collaboration among countries, building on the experiences of Australia, Argentina and Chile.

A Fishers Forum, with the same format of 1st. South American Fishers' Forum and the 1st International Fishers' Forum held in Auckland, New Zealand in 2000 is recognised as the best way to exchange experiences among fishermen. A fishers' forum is a meeting where government, researchers and fishermen can exchange experiences and encourage collaboration amongst stakeholders. It is also a valuable opportunity for fishermen to compare experiences on the use of mitigation measures. The adoption of mitigation measures is an important objective of these meetings.

Most South American countries, recognise the fundamental importance of environmental education to promote the environmental, social and cultural sustainability of its communities. Understanding this is important for environmental management and some countries have defined their own national environmental education programmes (as in Argentina), national fishing policies (as in Brazil), sub-processes (as in Ecuador) and/or strategies (as in Chile). As result of this, many universities, research centers, NGO's or informal groups have been developing significant environmental education activities in relation to coastal and marine conservation. However, little or nothing has been done to target industrial fishermen who are, in most of cases, responsible for the highest seabird bycatch in South America.

Rationale

The main objective in promoting a South American forum is to discuss the use of environmental education as a tool to encourage fishermen to adopt best practices to reduce the seabirds bycatch in those fisheries. Such discussions should focus on the knowledge and efforts of educational institutions and/or professionals to raise fishermen

awareness of the importance of their fishing methods in relation to seabird conservation and consequently encourage fishermen to change their behavior. A secondary but no less important objective is to increase the involvement of professionals from other areas in joint efforts for seabird conservation. This is to encourage universities, NGOs and institutions that work in education and training to address seabird conservation issues.

Objectives

- Promote the exchange of knowledge between fishermen, experts and governmental officers from the ACAP countries in South America;
- Inform Parties about the action addressed the reduction of seabirds by catch from the ACAP countries in South America;
- Promote the exchange of fishermen between similar fisheries with different levels of seabird interaction. Such a programme could be initiated by NGOs or other organisations.
- Improve the efficacy of education and training projects addressing the introduction of mitigation measures for industrial fisheries in South America.

Activities

1. Provide fishermen with the latest information about efficient mitigation measures and information about new measures under development;
2. Identify regional priorities for the development of fishing techniques and other research needs;
3. Discuss the creation of incentive measures for the adoption of mitigation measures in South American countries;
4. Identify opportunities for fishing fleets to cooperate in testing new or improved mitigation measures;
5. Establish an information network between fishers and ship owners in South America for the continuation of the discussions held at the forum.

Timing

Ideally in December 2009, which is three years after the 1st. South American Fishers' Forum to Reduce Seabird Bycatch held in Brazil.

Estimated Budget

USD 100,000 including travels expenses, accommodation costs, and the production of Proceedings, among other costs.

Project 3

Exchange experiences relating to NPOAs-Seabirds development, adoption and implementation in ACAP South American Countries to facilitate the adoption of these plans in countries where they do not yet exist

Background

The first regional initiative to exchange experiences on the NPOAs-Seabirds occurred during the First South American Workshop on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels organised by BirdLife International in September 2001 in Punta del Este, Uruguay. The participants were encouraged to present assessments and/or data on levels of seabird bycatch mortality. The information compiled indicated that significant numbers of seabirds are caught annually in several longline fisheries in the area. Also, several countries in South America stated in their reports to the 25th COFI meeting that the assessments of their fisheries indicated a need for developing NPOA-Seabirds. Recognising the importance of continuing regional discussions about the topic, FAO and BirdLife International organised the South American Workshop on Implementation of NPOAs-Seabirds and Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels held in Valdivia, Chile, in December of 2003. The meeting was attended by representatives of research institutes, fishing industry, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and government agencies from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru and Uruguay. The participants noted that, compared to the first meeting, there was a higher commitment from government institutions as well as from fishing industries. One of the recommendations of the meeting was that South America should involve countries in the development of NPOA-Seabirds that should join ACAP.

This meeting was an opportunity for the Parties to learn from each others experience with the three phases of NPOAs: development, adoption and implementation. There are countries engaged in different stages of NPOA development in South America. Some countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay have already developed their NPOA. . Although some countries may have developed a plan, it is not yet adopted or approved as a government document and the Government does not therefore recognise the document as a national / official document for seabird conservation. Government adoption of a NPOA is a very complex process. Brazil and Chile have already adopted their NPOA and Uruguay and Argentina are currently in the process of adoption. Also, different countries have been implementing actions at different levels and the workshop provides a forum where the Parties can discuss how this process can be more productive and how they can help each other (capacity building / exchange of experiences, knowledge etc).

Rationale

The participants of the South American Workshop on Implementation of NPOA-Seabirds and Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels recommended that the next workshop should be held by the end of 2005. However this has not yet occurred. Also, the meeting attendees agreed that in countries with longline fisheries in the South Pacific and South Atlantic, there exists a good basis for regional cooperation. It was noted that the process of development of NPOA-Seabirds, though the degree of achievements varies from country to country.

There is a need to involve all interested parties in the development of a solution to this problem, particularly the participation of key institutions and their specialists, such as fishery management authorities, fishery research institutions, relevant NGOs, and fishing companies. It is therefore important to identify the stakeholders in each country to take part in this meeting, especially in countries where the NPOA processes have not progressed significantly.

During the proposed meeting the participants should be strongly encouraged to discuss avenues for cooperation between South American countries to develop capacity, at different levels and focusing on different stakeholders, to accomplish the ACAP Plan of Action requisites.

Objectives

- Encourage discussions to identify possibilities for international cooperation for the implementation of the ACAP Plan of Action;
- Support the development, adoption and implementation of NPOA-Seabirds in South America, promoting the exchange of experiences among the countries;
- Promote the exchange of knowledge on legislation regarding the implementation of mitigation measures, observer programmes and other subjects that need attention.

Activities

1. Identify the focal points for NPOA development, adoption and implementation;
2. Promote a meeting between stakeholders in order to exchange experiences on how NPOA development, adoption and implementation occurs in each country;
3. Identify areas where there is a lack of legislation related to conservation and protection of albatrosses and petrels;
4. Reinforce the control mechanisms necessary to ensure the enforcement of laws / rules.
5. Promote communication and understanding of laws at a national level.

Timing

It is proposed that the meeting be held before or immediately after the 2nd. South American Fishers Forum preferably in the same city / place in order to minimise costs. It is recommended that a small number of participants (15 to 20) attend the meeting.

Estimated Budget

USD 25,000 including travels expenses, accommodation costs, and Proceedings production among other costs.

Project 4

Network on ACAP implementation in South America

Background

The term 'network' can have several different meanings. In this context, however, the term shall be understood as a way to communicate through emails to subscribed people interested in a same subject, in this case the implementation of ACAP activities and related issues. This network shall be coordinated by one South American person based in South America with a good knowledge of albatross and petrel conservation issues, a good relationship with the main stakeholders, and is also able to communicate in at least English and Spanish.

The network proposed here shall include a list of contacts of government officers, research institutions, fishing industries, artisanal fishermen, NGOs and other relevant people and organisations of the ACAP Parties and Range States in South America. It is proposed that the coordinator for the network will be responsible for keeping people informed on the implementation of ACAP actions, facilitating contact between people, consulting members for projects/actions, promoting exchange of knowledge, encouraging discussions about pertinent subjects, supporting the Advisory Committee in the organization of meetings, and regional efforts addressing ACAP implementation. In the same way, the listed participants shall have the access to the network to send their comments or information when desirable. Also, the network could identify possibilities / needs for capacity building such as encouraging students from South American Parties and Range States to take relevant post-graduate courses in other South American countries, supporting the development of collaborative research (particularly dealing with the use and testing of mitigation methods), encouraging projects involving education programmes targeting fishermen and their families, encouraging projects concerning the conservation of albatrosses and petrels in breeding sites, and considering the possibility to exchange knowledge with Australia and New Zealand who have broad experience in feral species control, among others.

The network can support ACAP in coordinating its international actions, facilitating the communication between Parties and Range States, and between the fishing sectors, governments, researches institutions and NGOs.

Rationale

Considering the cultural affinities among the South American countries it is desirable to develop a good communication mechanism in order to support the ACAP implementation. It would be possible to share information, for example, about actions addressing seabird conservation in each country and the involvement of countries in the ACAP implementation. The network would also provide an ACAP focal point in South America, which could be extremely positive and would support the Advisory Committee actions in that continent.

Objectives

- Create a network to keep the stakeholders in the ACAP South American Parties and Range States informed about the ACAP implementation activities;

- Support the ACAP Secretariat and the Advisory Committee in organising regional meetings and actions in general.

Activities

1. Identify stakeholders (government departments / organisations, researches institutes and universities, fishing industries and fishermen, NGOs)
2. Create a network
3. Contract a person for half time to the network maintenance.

Timing: on going project

Estimated budget: 26,000 USD / year

(Salary: 1,500 USD / month; **Net cost:** 500 USD/year; **Equipment and logistical:** 2000 USD).

Some examples of capacity building initiatives implemented in South America

The following are some examples of initiatives that have been adopted by some South American countries in relation to ACAP implementation.

Action Plan for Waved Albatross / ACAP / Governments of Ecuador and Peru

The Action Plan for Waved Albatross was prepared by ACAP on behalf of the Governments of Ecuador and Peru to prioritise waved albatross conservation measures defined in MoP2. The purpose of the Plan is to provide managers, scientists and stakeholders with a summary of the biology, status and threats, together with actions needed to improve the conservation status of the species. The goal is to increase public awareness of the urgent conservation needs of waved albatross and to promote specific management, research and education actions that will minimise human impacts, prevent further population decline and secure the future of this species. The geographical scope of the Plan includes the Galapagos Archipelago where most nesting grounds are located, the coastal waters of Peru and Ecuador where most feeding activity occurs, and the eastern Pacific Ocean including waters off Panama, Colombia and the north of Chile where birds may occasionally disperse. The management actions include feral animal eradication, colony-based monitoring, at-sea studies, tourism restrictions and establishment of zoning and a marine protected area

BirdLife / RSPB - Albatross Task Force

The Albatross Task Force of BirdLife International's Global Seabird Programme is the world's first international team of bycatch mitigation instructors. It was established in 2006 as a collaborative initiative between the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (UK BirdLife Partner), BirdLife International and a range of other stakeholders to meet an urgent need for skilled practitioners to work on 'grass roots' projects with fishermen on-shore and at-sea to reduce seabird bycatch.

The main focus of the Albatross Task Force (ATF) is working in pelagic longline and trawl fisheries: a) to demonstrate to fishermen, fisheries managers and government the suite of cost-effective mitigation measures that are available to reduce seabird bycatch to negligible levels; and b) to have appropriate fishery-specific measures incorporated into official regulatory frameworks. The South America Albatross Task Force is already established in Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, and there are plans to extend this to Peru and Ecuador in near future.

Ecuador - Argentina - BirdLife International - Educative Project for Ecuadorian Observers

In relation to the development of the ACAP Action Plan for the Waved Albatross, the Agreement recently identified a problem allied to the lack of information on seabird mortality in Ecuadorian fisheries. This is directly linked with the fact

that the Ecuadorian Observers Program is currently gathering no or very basic information about seabird – fisheries interaction. Among ACAP Spanish speaking countries, Argentina was identified as a potential component of the programme, providing expertise in such matters, given that an education programme for observers has been locally run during the last five years with very good results. After making contact with all parties (Governments and NGOs, including Aves & Conservacion and Aves Argentinas), it appears that the agreed approach is to develop a collaborative proposal. The general objective of the proposal is to develop an educational project aimed to teach Ecuadorian observers to communicate the basics of current issues on seabird-fisheries interaction, at-sea seabird observation methods and familiarisation with seabird interaction and mortality data reporting, including sampling protocols.

FAO Best Practice Guidelines on NPOAs preparation, adoption and implementation

FAO expert consultation to develop FAO Best Practice Guidelines to assist countries and RFMOs in preparation, adoption and implementation of the NPOA–Seabirds. Once developed, will provide Capacity Building in accordance with the needs identified by interested parties in order to encourage implementation, particularly in Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, South Africa, (Mozambique, Madagascar), Tristan da Cunha, France, and EC external fisheries.

Southern Seabird Solutions and Argentina – educational materials for local fishing communities

In 2007, Southern Seabird Solutions circulated the group's ten seabird fact sheets (see www.southernseabirds.org) to contacts involved in seabird conservation education in South American countries to see if there was a need for similar educational material on seabirds in South America. Responses were received Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Panama and all expressed a need for this type of information. Southern Seabird Solutions then identified an organisation to oversee the modification, translation and distribution of the fact sheets. Marco Favero from the University de Mar del Plata has agreed to oversee the project, in cooperation with Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (FVSA, the WWF local partner). WWF-New Zealand has contributed \$5,000 seed funding to this project. Further funding will be sought once the project plan is finalised. FVSA have expanded the project to include a training component, and envisage training individuals in fishing communities to deliver the material at a series of meetings, and in fishing schools. The educational material and the training programme will be designed so that it can be used in other South American countries in the future if there is an interest. This project is in the preparation phase and shall be underway later this year.

Southern Seabirds Solutions and Chile - share the cachaterloteras fishing method with NZ

In some parts of the world, including NZ, orca and other marine mammals can cause significant loss of fish catch by eating fish from the line during hauling. In Chile, toothfish skippers, in collaboration with Professor Carlos Moreno, from the University of Valdivia developed a method of covering the caught fish with a hooped net that slips up and down the branchline. This has proven to be very successful in eliminating orca predation as well as seabird by-catch.

The reason the method is so effective at reducing seabird by-catch during line setting is because a weight is added near the hook to keep the branchline tight and this increases the sink rate of the branchline. On the haul, unused baits are covered by the net. To date, the method has only been used on large toothfish vessels. Funding has been secured for a New Zealand demersal longline fisherman to visit Chile to see the method first hand, and to assess the feasibility of adapting the method for use in other fisheries.

NOAA Fisheries Service and Pro-Delphinus - Monitoring Artisanal Longline Fisheries in Peru

During 2006-2007 NOAA Fisheries Service continued to support the work of the non-governmental organisation Pro Delphinus (PD) to quantify and characterise seabird interactions with artisanal longline fisheries in Peru. Using a network of onboard and shore based observers PD documented seabird interactions, including interactions with waved albatrosses and white chinned petrels, with the fishery. PD also held a series of educational workshops with fishermen, local officials and researchers to promote awareness of seabird biology, conservation, and the availability of techniques and mitigation measures to reduce seabird interactions and mortalities in fisheries.

Summary of South American experts' comments

The points below are a summary of the comments from consulted South American experts. In many cases the comments are applicable to one or several countries or regions in South America and should not be understood as a consensus.

1. Lack of people available to work on conservation of albatrosses and petrels is one the most critical limitations for ACAP implementation in South America. The suggestion is to raise funds to pay for (and train) people, in order to have more people working in more places, particularly the harbors and at sea.
2. In the same line, it was suggested to encourage students to undertake post-graduate courses in other countries in South America, for example in Chile and Argentina where there are recognised researchers in universities . Also, it was mentioned that there are schemes for research exchange among countries that take part on Mercosur. It was noted that there is a lack of information about this facility and it was suggested that other sources of funds for scholarships for South American post-graduation students should be sought.
3. New opportunities for South American people to work on the Secretariat should be created;
4. Developing concourses in Universities to encourage education programmes targeting fishermen and their families, and in particular projects designed for children;
5. Producing change in a fishing industry is easier when it is well organised as information can be conveyed to fishers more efficiently. An analysis is required of the how well each fishing sector is organised in order to identify those that may benefit from an improved organisational structure.
6. It was also suggested that countries with similar problems should integrate information in one document in order to provide a regional overview of the issue. It was mentioned that this information is available in NPOAs and that Aves Argentina (headed by Fabian Rabuffetti) is already doing a similar job. These examples could provide important background for future actions.
7. An integrated study could involve several species, for example black browed albatrosses and white chinned petrels that are the most captured species in all regions, in both Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It was suggested that some basic biological aspects should be considered, such as genetic analysis for caught birds to determine their origins; and studies with satellite tracking to study species distribution. It was suggested that this kind of

study could be included in post-graduation courses for South American students in South America or overseas universities. These studies necessarily involve several countries, which is in accordance with ACAP objectives, and would develop capacity in South America, building capacity for new people of different areas.

8. It was recognised that pelagic fisheries are the most important issue for seabird conservation in South America, from the Seabirds Bycatch Working Group perspective. Notwithstanding, it was also considered that artisanal fisheries are greatly important, especially for Ecuador and Peru where the interaction between seabirds and fisheries occurs mostly in artisanal vessels.
9. It was considered that, in Ecuador and Peru, as a first step, it is necessary to develop field work to acquire basic information about the interaction between seabirds and fisheries to subsidise work of education and introduction of mitigation measures.
10. Regarding Ecuador and Peru, it was considered a necessity to develop, adopt and implement the NPOAs, and to consider action on environmental education, and eradication of feral species in colonies, especially of Waved Albatross. It was pointed out that ACAP could facilitate the negotiation between these countries and other Parties that have large experience in those areas, for example New Zealand and Australia who developed programmes for feral species control on oceanic islands.
11. It was cited problems for conservation of another flag-species, the Tristan Albatross, that is affected by the Brazilian and Uruguayan fishing fleets operating on Rio Grande Plateau area and nearby. Action addressing Tristan Albatross conservation should also involve South Africa and possibly Namibia. However, it was highlighted that other fleets such as Spanish, Japanese and South Korean are also causing mortality for this species in the South Atlantic. It was suggested that studies with satellite tracking of species captured at sea should be promoted. With this study it would be possible determine where the distribution and range (e.g. if the reproductive birds fly to the Southwestern Atlantic) overlaps with the South American and other fishing fleets.
12. It was suggested that some efforts to identify lack of legislation for the conservation of albatrosses and petrels be made. A workshop to analyse the existing legislation relevant to the fisheries in the Parties and Range States, especially relevant to the fishing and environmental authorities, was recommended. A potential outcome of this workshop could be a judicial analysis by ACAP, leading to a resolution that ACAP Parties adopt legal measures.
13. Also, regarding the same issue, it was strongly suggested that countries should strengthen / improve mechanisms of control. It was also suggested the creation of an Awareness Plan to improve the understanding of relevant legislation at the national level.

14. Among the project proposals, Project 1 regarding Observers Programmes received more comments. These comments are summarized below:

a. Regarding the standardisation of methodologies it was commented that:

- i. It could be useful in a national context, however some comments consider that it would be virtually impossible to implement standardisation among countries and that the needs of each country/region/fishery and their capacity to manage the issue should be considered. It was therefore suggested that the standard methodology should be considered as an ideal situation and that the countries should have the right to decide what is feasible to do among the methods suggested.
- ii. Some comments were very supportive of the standardisation of methodologies on board and the creating of a common data platform to support the programme at a regional level.
- iii. It was mentioned that Argentina is advancing on this matter. The observers from different jurisdictions are working on the unification of training processes and data collection methodologies.
- iv. Another point identified was that participation of observers on courses, workshops or other kind of meetings can also, as secondary effect, encourage the improvement of their performances.
- v. The standardisation of data collection methods by Rede ASO (Rede Atlântico Sul Ocidental) mostly in relation to sea turtle conservation in Southwestern Atlantic was referred to. Although the Rede ASO didn't achieve the standardisation as desired, the exercise was very productive considering that groups from different countries shared experiences and adopted ideas from each other. This resulted in improving the data collection systems as a whole. It was therefore suggested that a workshop instead a course for observers be promoted.

b. It was mentioned that Peru and Ecuador don't have any observer programmes and, because of this, the proposal doesn't meet the needs of these countries. The following comments about this point were provided:

- i. It is necessary to encourage the first steps such as the creation of observer programmes and subsequent training of the observers for seabird data collection. It was also suggested that data from these countries could be acquired to assist in identifying where NGOs and other programmes are monitoring fisheries and offer standardisation to those programmes. Government agencies, such as IMARPE in Peru, could be charged with facilitating this job.

- ii. Considering that the problems in these countries are basically concerned with artisanal fisheries, it is of particular interest to know the sample methods and the analysis tools in order to define ways to reach consistent estimates. It is necessary, however, to consider that the artisanal fishing fleet is composed mostly of small vessels that frequently change the fishing gears, fishing area and fishing efforts, which make the job more complex.
 - iii. In conclusion, for Peru and Ecuador it was recognized that it is necessary to have a methodology focused on artisanal fishing, distinct from other countries focusing on industrial fleets.
 - iv. Also it was suggested that the methodology should also involve other fishing operations, apart from longliners, such as gill nets, trawlers, etc.
15. Some countries expressed their support for the exchange of fishermen among countries with similar fisheries in a way to share information on the mitigation measures. However, it was highlighted that this exercise can be expensive and complex, considering that fishermen will stop their activities during the travel period. If funds are not a limitation, this activity could be an excellent opportunity to substantially reduce the seabird bycatch of the countries. In this way the creation of a network could also have positive effects on fishermen.
16. For the last, it was commented that implementation of NPOAs – Seabirds (FAO concept) is part of the Agreement (Article III, item 'h') and the Parties shall implement NPOAs under the coordination of the Advisory Committee.