



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Fourth Meeting of Advisory Committee

Cape Town, South Africa, 22 – 25 August 2008

Implementation Report – New Zealand

Author: New Zealand

**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS**

Author: New Zealand

Designated Point of Contact: Johanna Pierre

Institution: Department of Conservation

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 10-420, Wellington 6143, New Zealand

Telephone: +64 4 471 3204

Fax: +64 4 381 3057

Email: jpierre@doc.govt.nz

1. Species Conservation

<i>Outline of planned actions for national implementation over the next three years</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
---	------------------------------	------------------------------------	----------------------------

During the next three years, New Zealand will execute the following actions relating to ACAP and the Action Plan formulated under the Agreement:

- Finalise the review and progress the implementation of New Zealand's National Plan of Action – Seabirds, including the associated Research Plan
- Continue fisheries observer programmes to investigate the nature and extent of seabird bycatch in New Zealand fisheries, including bycatch of ACAP species
- Continue population and distributional studies of selected seabird species, with specific reference to the effects of fisheries bycatch
- Continue to undertake analysis of subantarctic seabird foraging patterns with a view to using this information in the development of marine protected areas in New Zealand's EEZ
- Continue predator control operations at priority island sites where albatrosses and petrels breed
- Continue participation in international conventions and agreements and RFMOs relating to albatross and petrel conservation (e.g. CCSBT, WCOFC)
- To implement seabird-related conservation and management measures of RFMOs to which New Zealand belongs
- To implement any interim measures adopted in the context of new RFMOs (e.g. South Pacific RFMO).

<i>Measures to eliminate, control or prevent introduction of non-native species to breeding sites</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	1.4	3	III (1) b)

- Many ACAP species breed on predator-free offshore islands or islets. Visitors to the islands are subject to strict quarantine measures to minimise the likelihood of reintroductions.
- The Department of Conservation office responsible for the subantarctic islands is currently investigating methods to eradicate pigs from the Auckland Islands. The cost is likely to be NZ\$5 – 10 million.
- Ongoing control is undertaken to protect colonies of Westland petrels (Punakaiki), Northern royal albatrosses (Taiaroa Head) and black petrels (Great Barrier Island) from introduced predators.

<i>Report on any exemptions to prohibitions on the taking or harming of albatrosses and petrels</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	1.1.2		III (3)

Although seabirds are protected under the Wildlife Act, sooty shearwaters (*Puffinus griseus*) and grey-faced petrels (*Pterodroma macroptera gouldi*) may be killed subject to conditions set by the Minister of Conservation. Chicks of these two species can be legally harvested at gazetted sites by iwi (indigenous tribal groups) with manawhenua (trusteeship) over these sites.

<i>Use and trade</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	1.1.1, 1.1.2		III (3)

The New Zealand government provides for the cultural use of seabird remains obtained through fisheries bycatch. Maori provide government with a list of seabird species they have interest in, and feathers, bone or other body parts are made available for cultural use. This process is subject to strict permitting.

<i>Single or multi-species conservation strategies / action plans</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	1.1.3		

The *Action Plan for Seabird Conservation in New Zealand* lists priority recovery actions for all seabird taxa breeding in New Zealand (<http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/science-and-technical/TSOP16.pdf> and <http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/science-and-technical/TSOP17.pdf>).

A Recovery and Management Plan has been prepared by the Department of Conservation for the albatrosses of the Chatham Islands, being the Northern royal albatross (*Diomedea sanfordi*), Chatham albatross (*Thalassarche eremita*) and the Pacific Albatross (*Thalassarche nov.sp*) (*sic*). See <http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/science-and-technical/TSRP42.pdf>).

Research Plans identifying knowledge gaps relevant to conservation, and prioritising seabird research for those species occurring in fisheries bycatch was completed in 2004 by both the Department of Conservation (<http://www.doc.govt.nz/Conservation/Marine-and-Coastal/Fishing/010~Conservation-services-programme/pdf/CSP-5-yr-Research-Plan-external.pdf>) and the Ministry of Fisheries, and updated in 2005 by the current draft National Plan of Action – Seabirds Research Plan (<http://www.doc.govt.nz/Conservation/Marine-and-Coastal/Fishing/010~Conservation-services-programme/pdf/NPOA-Research-Plan-draft.pdf>). The implementation of this Plan occurs annually, through Department of Conservation and Ministry of Fisheries, after consideration of newly available information.

New Zealand's National Plan of Action – Seabirds is currently under review.

<i>Emergency Measures</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	1.2		VIII (11) e)

Not applicable

<i>Re-establishment schemes</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	1.3		

- New Zealand continues to develop and apply techniques to successfully translocate burrow- and surface-nesting seabirds to new sites in order to establish new breeding colonies. Such techniques can potentially be used to establish new colonies of ACAP species.
- The most recent transfer was of 100 Hutton's shearwater (*Puffinus huttoni*) chicks to a new site on the Kaikoura Peninsula. Hutton's shearwaters currently breed at only two sites in the Kaikoura mountains. Whether this translocation has been successful will not be known for several years. Hutton's shearwaters spend little time at their breeding colony in their first few years, and breeding usually commences at four to five years of age. Prior to the translocation of 100 Hutton's in 2008, 95 were translocated in 2007, 83 in 2006 and 10 in 2005.

<i>Any other conservation projects for ACAP species</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>

New Zealand conducts a variety of research and monitoring of seabirds including ACAP species, as follows:

- Long-term demographic study of southern royal albatrosses (*Diomedea epomophora*) on Campbell Island;
- Population studies of Antipodean (*Diomedea antipodensis antipodensis*) and Gibson's (*D. antipodensis gibsoni*) albatrosses;
- Population demography, foraging ecology and breeding biology of black petrels (*Procellaria parkinsoni*) on Great Barrier Island; research recommencing on Little Barrier Island in 2008;
- Population trends, demography and breeding biology of Westland petrels (*Procellaria westlandica*) at Punakaiki, West Coast;
- Population demography, breeding biology and monitoring of Buller's albatross (*Thalassarche bulleri*) at Solander and The Snares Islands;
- Demographic and distributional study of white-capped albatross (*Thalassarche steadi*);

- Population demography and foraging of Chatham Albatross (*Thalassarche eremita*)
- Population estimates and at-sea distribution of grey petrels (*Procellaria cinerea*) breeding at Antipodes Island
- Population estimates and at-sea distribution of Salvin's albatross (*Thalassarche salvini*) breeding at the Western Chain, Snares, population estimates of birds breeding at the Bounty Islands

2. Habitat Conservation

<i>Measures (legal and policy instruments and actions) to implement protection and management of breeding sites including habitat restoration</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	2.1	3	III (1) a)

- All New Zealand seabird taxa are protected by the Wildlife Act 1953 and its subsequent amendments, except for southern black-backed gulls. Seabirds are protected from persecution throughout New Zealand and its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which extends 200 nautical miles (320 km) offshore.
- Many New Zealand seabirds nest on offshore or outlying islands administered by the Department of Conservation. These have a range of legal protection status under the Reserves Act 1977 or Wildlife Act 1953, e.g. National Reserve, Nature Reserve, Wildlife Refuge, Wildlife Sanctuary, Scenic Reserve, Scientific Reserve.
- Management Strategies prepared by regional Conservancy Offices. Access to Department administered islands will be controlled by the requirements of the reserves or local Conservation Management Strategies. Generally only seabird work that is of conservation benefit and can not be done elsewhere will be approved by the local conservator.
- The Department of Conservation office responsible for the subantarctic islands is currently investigating methods to eradicate pigs from the Auckland Islands.

<i>Sustainable management of marine living resources which provide food for albatrosses and petrels</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	2.3.1 a)		

No work undertaken in this area.

<i>Management and protection of important marine areas for albatrosses and petrels</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	2.3.2, 2.3.3	4	

- New Zealand has a whole-of-government *Biodiversity Strategy* to protect marine and terrestrial biodiversity, in line with its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). To contribute to delivery of the strategy, the New Zealand government has committed to create a network of marine protected areas (including marine reserves and other forms of protection) that represent the full range of New Zealand’s ecosystems and habitats, by 2020. New Zealand is committed to protecting 10% of our marine environment (including the EEZ) by 2010. The desired outcome for the marine area as a whole at 2020 is that habitats and ecosystems are in a healthy functioning state, degraded habitats are recovering and harvesting is done in an informed, controlled and ecologically sustainable manner.
- In January 2006, New Zealand’s Conservation and Fisheries Ministers released a joint *Marine Protected Areas Policy and Implementation Plan*. This Policy outlines how New Zealand will choose sites and methods to protect marine habitats and ecosystems in the future.
- The New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries has developed a *Strategy for Managing the Environmental Effects of Fishing*. The strategy establishes the framework, including principles and processes, for the setting of environmental standards that specify the limits of acceptable environmental effects of fishing on the marine environment. The standards will be set by the government, in consultation with stakeholders. Fisheries must be managed in with a way that meets the standards.
- In 2000 New Zealand closed 19 seamounts to fishing for the purposes of biodiversity protection. The closures cover an area of 11.5 million hectares and include both fished and unfished features. There are also Benthic Protection Areas in New Zealand’s Exclusive Economic Zone, which are closed to certain fishing methods.
- The Department of Conservation and the Ministry of Fisheries are investigating high level marine protection options out to the 12 nautical mile Territorial Sea limit of the Bounty, Antipodes and Campbell Islands. The project was initiated in 2003 as a priority identified in the Department of Conservation’s Subantarctic Islands Conservation Management Strategy (1998–2008) which advocates for the further protection of marine ecosystems around the subantarctic islands and in response to calls from the international community to seek further protection following the declaration of these islands as World Heritage Sites in 1998. Protection for the remainder of the wider sea area above the southern plateau (i.e. the Campbell Plateau and Bounty Platform) will be explored at a later date as part of the Offshore Marine Protected Area planning process.

3. Management of Human Activities

<i>Report on environmental impact statements related to albatrosses and petrels</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	3.1		

No work undertaken in this area

<i>Measures to reduce or eliminate incidental mortality in fisheries</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	3.2	6	

In line with the FAO International Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA Seabirds), in April 2004 New Zealand published a National Plan of Action to Reduce the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in New Zealand Fisheries (NPOA Seabirds). The NPOA Seabirds sets out a strategic framework for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in New Zealand's domestic commercial and non-commercial fisheries and in high seas fisheries in which New Zealand flagged vessels participate. The NPOA Seabirds contains a mix of management measures, centred around the development of voluntary Codes of Practice and supported by regulations, where necessary. Whilst the NPOA has been successfully implemented in some fisheries, seabird bycatch remained high in other fisheries. These findings have highlighted the need for the NPOA framework to better deliver robust outcomes for dealing with fishery-seabird interactions. The NPOA Seabirds is therefore currently being reviewed. New Zealand has recently completed consultation on a revised management framework for the NPOA Seabirds. The key elements of the proposed framework are:

- Setting objectives for each fishery using a maximum acceptable level or rate of seabird bycatch
- A risk assessment process to determine what management measures are necessary to meet objectives and whether measures should be voluntary or regulated
- Minimum requirements for monitoring to ensure that performance against objectives can be measured
- A transparent analysis and decision-making process to determine an appropriate response for fisheries that do not meet objectives

In addition, mandatory minimum acceptable mitigation measures have been introduced for all trawl and longline fisheries in New Zealand. Measures for longline fisheries include mandatory use of streamer lines and a requirement to use line weighting or to fish at night. Measures for trawl vessels include prohibition of offal and discards during shooting and hauling, and limitations on discharge at all other times during the tow. Larger (28 metre plus) trawlers are also still required to deploy paired streamer lines or other mitigation devices.

Finally, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission conservation and management measure that relates to seabirds (CMM 2007-04) has been implemented outside of the New Zealand EEZ zone by way of high seas fishing permit conditions. In line with that CMM, every high seas permit holder fishing for highly migratory species in the Western and Central Pacific Convention Area by the method of surface longline shall use at least two seabird mitigation measures. The measure applies from 1 January 2008 to large scale longline vessels of 24 meters or more in overall length in areas south of 30

degrees south; from 30 June 2008 to large scale longline vessels of 24 meters or more in overall length in areas north of 23 degrees North, and from 31 January 2009 to longline vessels of less than 24 meters in overall length in areas south of 30 degrees South.

<i>Measures to combat illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	3.2.4	6	

- New Zealand is working closely with Pacific Island countries on the development of a Regional Fisheries Management and Development Strategy, and a corresponding Regional MCS Strategy, which should lead to improved fisheries governance within the Pacific region.
- New Zealand has a number of measures related to detecting and reducing IUU fishing activity. Measures include monitoring fishing vessels and their operations, VMS, at-sea and port inspections, aerial and seagoing patrols

<i>Measures to minimise discharge of pollutants and marine debris (with reference to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL))</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	2.3.1 b), 3.3		

No new work undertaken in this area

<i>Measures to minimise disturbance in marine and terrestrial habitats</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	3.4		

No new work undertaken in this area

4. Research and Monitoring

<i>Ongoing research programmes relating to the conservation of albatrosses and petrels</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	4.1		

New Zealand conducts a variety of research and monitoring of seabirds including ACAP species, as follows:

- Long-term demographic study of southern royal albatrosses (*Diomedea epomophora*) on Campbell Island;

- Population studies of Antipodean (*Diomedea antipodensis antipodensis*) and Gibson's (*D. antipodensis gibsoni*) albatrosses;
- Population demography, foraging ecology and breeding biology of black petrels (*Procellaria parkinsoni*) on Great Barrier Island;
- Population trends, demography and breeding biology of Westland petrels (*Procellaria westlandica*) at Punakaiki, West Coast;
- Population demography, breeding biology and monitoring of Buller's albatross (*Thalassarche bulleri*) at Solander and The Snares Islands;
- Demographic and distributional study of white-capped albatross (*Thalassarche steadi*);
- Population demography and foraging of Chatham Albatross (*Thalassarche eremita*);
- Population estimates and at-sea distribution of grey petrels (*Procellaria cinerea*) breeding at Antipodes Island;
- Population estimates and at-sea distribution of Salvin's albatross (*Thalassarche salvini*) breeding at the Western Chain, Snares, population estimates of birds breeding at the Bounty Islands;
- Research into nest-site protection for petrel and albatross species on-going at many sites.

Research projects relating to reducing seabird bycatch include:

- Mitigating seabird captures in trawl fishing nets
(<http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/MultiPageDocumentTOC.aspx?id=46325>)
- Fish waste management on trawl vessels to reduce seabird bycatch
(<http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/MultiPageDocumentTOC.aspx?id=44569>)
- Surface longline mitigation measures including blue-dyed bait, line-weighting and tori line design trials

<i>Observer programmes to monitor fisheries bycatch of albatrosses and petrels</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	4.2	5.1	

- The New Zealand government deploys dedicated fisheries observers who quantify and identify bycaught seabird species within our EEZ, and return the carcasses for necropsy and identification onshore. These observers also provide critical feedback from their work at sea, allowing monitoring of seabird issues and fisheries operations, as well as the identification of new issues in seabird bycatch that need to be addressed.
- For detailed information,
<http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/conservation/marine-and-coastal/fishing/csp-0708-approved-annual-plan.pdf>.
- New Zealand deploys observers to monitor seabird by catch on its CCAMLR, CCSBT, SPRFMO and WCPFC fishing vessels.

5. Education and Public Awareness

<i>Dissemination of information / training for ‘user audiences’ e.g. scientists, fishermen, conservation bodies, and decision-makers</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	6.1		

- Department of Conservation runs observer training programmes to teach observers how to identify the seabirds they encounter.
- The Department of Conservation produces reports to stakeholders describing outputs of the Conservation Services Programme (the section of DOC that works on fisheries issues and especially seabird bycatch mitigations). These reports include observer findings, reports on population and mitigation studies done by the Programme and its contract staff.
- The Department of Conservation produced a Fisher’s Guide to New Zealand Seabirds (<http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/MultiPageDocumentTOC.aspx?id=45217>) to help fishers identify seabird species.
- New Zealand government departments provide a briefing to vessel masters and crew on New Zealand-flagged CCAMLR vessels, including on seabird mitigation requirements, at the start of each fishing season
- The Ministry of Fisheries ensures that all New Zealand-flagged CCAMLR vessels carry on board relevant seabird publications such as “Fish the sea not the sky”.
- Southern Seabird Solutions produced Seabird Fact Sheets and Lesson Plans for primary school children (<http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/MultiPageDocumentTOC.aspx?id=42926>), and has undertaken to conduct a demersal longline skipper exchange between New Zealand and Chile.

<i>Dissemination of information to the general public</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>
	6.2		

No work undertaken in this area, beyond the Department of Conservation and Ministry of Fisheries reporting pertinent information relating to seabird bycatch. Such reports occur predominantly through the agencies’ websites.

6. Implementation

<i>Summarise progress to implement decisions of previous Meetings of the Parties</i>	<i>Action Plan Reference</i>	<i>AC Work Programme Reference</i>	<i>Agreement Reference</i>

In addition to the initiatives relating to ACAP and seabird conservation described above, New Zealand provided a voluntary contribution to ACAP for work on capacity building, which has been identified as a priority work area for the Agreement. With this

contribution, Tatiana Neves from Brazil undertook a three month secondment to the Secretariat to work on capacity building in South America.