



## Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

### Fourth Meeting of the Advisory Committee

*Cape Town, South Africa, 22 - 25 August 2008*

---

Capacity Building:  
Onboard Observer Technical Training, Ecuadorean National Observer Program

Ecuador - Argentina  
- BirdLife International

**Capacity Building:  
Onboard Observer Technical Training, Ecuadorean National Observer Program**

**Project Rationale**

In connection with the development of the Waved Albatross Plan of Action, the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) has recently identified a problem associated with information gaps in the levels of incidental mortality of seabirds in Ecuadorean fisheries. This is strictly linked to the fact that the National Observer Program of Ecuador is currently not gathering information (or is doing so at very basic levels) in relation to the interaction between seabirds and fishing vessels.

Upon discussion of this issue with representatives from the Department of Fishing Resources at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries of Ecuador, the National Fisheries Institute (INP) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and, having discussed the possible mechanisms to enhance the quality of any data gathered, consideration was given to the possibility of developing an educational and training program within the framework of ACAP's Capacity Building efforts.

Argentina has in the past years developed an educational program on incidental by-catch of seabirds, sea mammals and marine turtles aimed at onboard observers within the Onboard Observer and Landing Sampling Sub-Program of the Oceanographic and Fisheries Information System of the INIDEP. This program involved a number of training courses, specific materials preparation and onboard observer training follow-up.

As a result of said enhancement, data sampling protocols were adapted in relation to the incidental by-catch of seabirds and the database was also improved. Institutions which provided support and resources to this program were: the *Universidad de Mar del Plata* and *Aves Argentinas*, particularly in relation to seabird issues. This strength was identified as ACAP for replication between all Spanish-speaking members of the Agreement.-

BirdLife International is also undertaking a global initiative called 'Albatross Task Force' (ATC) with a view to building local capacity in order to reduce the incidental by-catch of seabirds caused by fisheries. Within this region, these groups are operational in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and Argentina and comprise expert local individuals and institutions to address these issues.

**Purpose**

The general goal of this proposal is to strengthen observer programs and assist the personnel of organizations and agencies in Ecuador with jurisdiction on the area, through the development of a technical training program seeking to improve the assessment of incidental by-catch of seabirds in Ecuador's fisheries.

Specific aims are to:

- (1) Transfer all acquired experience within Argentina's Educational Program in relation to the training process of onboard observers, government and non-government experts in Ecuador.

- (2) Provide basic skills on the various types of interactions between seabirds and fisheries and on methods available for an appropriate assessment.
- (3) Provide basic skills for the identification of seabird species which interact with the fisheries and to highlight key aspects of keeping adequate records onboard.
- (4) Exchange ideas regarding the application of onboard sampling protocols and data storage (databases) on the incidental by-catch of the fisheries.

### Project Members

Below is a list of all individuals actively involved in the various stages of the project, such as management, follow-up and monitoring and/or development.

#### Ecuador:

*Gabriela Montoya* (Ministry of the Environment)  
*Director-General for Fisheries* (Department of Fishing Resources, MAGAP)  
*Ramón Montaña* (Director of Projects and International Cooperation Division, Department of Fishing Resources, MAGAP)  
*Sandra Loor Vela* (Aves & Conservación / Birdlife Ecuador)

#### Argentina:

*Corina Lehmann* (Directorate-General of Environmental Affairs, Chancery (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Argentina)  
*Oscar Padín* (Working Group on Aquatic Resources, Department of the Environment and Sustainable Development - SAyDS)  
*Ramiro Sánchez* (Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture)  
*Gabriel Blanco* (Onboard Observer and Landing Sampling Sub-Program, INIDEP)  
*Fabián Rabuffetti* (Seabird Program Coordinator, Aves Argentinas / BirdLife)

#### BirdLife International:

*Esteban Frere* (Coordinator for South America, World Program on Seabirds)  
*Oli Yates* (Coordinator of the Albatross Task Force (ATF))

### Project Description

This is a two-stage project, the first one to be undertaken in Ecuador, the second stage shall take place in Argentina. Stage 1 shall involve the development of a course/intensive type of workshop (for example, a week-long program) in the coastal town of Manta, Ecuador and it will be aimed at local observers (IATTC – Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and Pro-Ecuador, amongst others), and will include field officers from the INP (the National Fisheries Institute of Ecuador) who are actively involved in coastal jurisdictions and in direct contact with fishermen.

This stage will also involve the participation of two to three members of the Argentine team, one to two members of the Ecuadorean team and specialists from BirdLife International who will have direct

involvement with the running of the course/workshop. Amongst those originally identified are Gabriel Blanco (INIDEP, Argentina), Juan Seco Pon (biologist and specialist observer, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata), Fabián Rabuffetti (Aves Argentinas), Tatiana Santander García (Aves & Conservación, Ecuador) y Oli Yates (Birdlife International)).

Once the first stage has been concluded, the second stage will involve the visit of a select group of observers attending the course to the offices of the Onboard Observer Program of Argentina, at the INIDEP, in order to continue exchanging information and experience and to be trained in the management of databases, protocol follow-up and for interaction with technical and scientific personnel. It is expected that visitors will return with the capacity to transfer all acquired knowledge and experiences to the rest of the team in Ecuador. (Subject to the final allocated budget, these visits could be organised in a staged approach so as to ensure an intensive yet productive exchange).

### Schedule

The project will take place during the first trimester of 2009.

### Budget (expressed in US dollars – USD)

	ACAP (Requested)	BirdLife (Committed)
Air tickets Argentina – Ecuador (4 teaching staff)	2.500	1.940
Local travel and per diems for teaching staff	1.300	500
Local travel and per diems for INP* technical staff	500	-
Accommodation and per diems at Manta (c. USD 100 per day)	-	3.000
Air tickets and per diems (BLI representative)	-	1.000
Air tickets Ecuador – Argentina (4 observers)	-	3.400
Accommodation and per diems Argentina (c. USD 70 per day)	-	1.400
Cost of materials and communications (approximate costs)	700	1.000
<b>TOTAL (USD)</b>	<b>5.000</b>	<b>12.240</b>

\* These technical staff comes from the city of Guayaquil.