



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Third Meeting of Advisory Committee

Valdivia, Chile, 19 – 22 June 2007

Observer Report – Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs

Author: Interim Secretariat

ACAP Observer Report – Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs (1st meeting)

Meeting Title: Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs

Meeting Organisation: Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs

Date and Location: 22– 26 January 2007, Kobe, JAPAN

Website Address: no website

Observer/attendee name/Affiliation: Warren Papworth & Barry Baker / (Secretariat)

Capacity of Attendance: Observers

Relevant Paper(s) Tabled:

Documents were not available electronically. There were no documents specifically relevant to seabird bycatch tabled. The Secretariat has paper copies.

Author(s) and/or Presenter if Different: N/A.

Summary of Content:

Most papers presented described the state of the world's tuna stocks, the markets and measures currently in place relevant to management of the stock, and fishing capacity. All five tuna RFMO Secretariats provided a report on their activities.

Outcome (e.g. summary of relevant discussion, resolution, etc):

The members and cooperating non members of the world's five tuna RFMOs met to discuss how they could work together to address the current crises facing many of the world's tuna stocks — in particular, opening remarks highlighted the need for improved management responses to deal with depleted stocks, and manage overfishing, fishing over-capacity and IUU activities. Also on the agenda were other issues of 'concern to the international community' which include the principle threat to albatrosses and petrels, seabird bycatch. Observers were permitted to provide comments during the discussion, but were specifically excluded from two half day sessions, during which a Course of Actions for RFMOs was to be drafted.

The meeting acknowledged that implementation of the precautionary approach and an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, including improved data collection on incidental bycatch of non-target species and establishment of measures to minimise the adverse effects of fishing on ecologically related species, particularly seabirds, turtles and sharks, was a key area and challenge for all tuna RFMOs.

The meeting agreed to establish a Technical Working Group comprising appropriate experts from tuna RFMOs to address IUU fishing and stock assessment issues. However, despite strong statements from a number of delegations, particularly Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway and the United States, ACAP, BirdLife International and WWF, the meeting did not agree to include risk assessment of non-target species and

development of bycatch mitigation measures amongst the issues to be dealt with immediately by the Technical Working Group. Not even the offer by WWF and BirdLife to find the necessary resources to support this work was sufficient to gain the support of the meeting for this approach.

The meeting made progress in establishing a process to deal with fishing over-capacity and stock assessment matters, but the failure to act immediately on the bycatch issue was considered very disappointing.

Outlook for Future ACAP Involvement:

A second meeting is planned for 2009, at which the bycatch issue may be considered a high priority for joint action by the tuna RFMOs.

Recommended Actions for ACAP:

- Consideration should be given to conducting an independent global risk assessment of the fishing activities of all tuna RFMOs on seabirds and other non-target species, similar to the process used by CCAMLR's Incidental Mortality Arising from Fishing (IMAF) Working Group. IMAFs evaluations are carried out on a statistical area basis, leading to the development of appropriate management approaches for each area to ensure bycatch is minimized in each fishery. This could be used by ACAP observers attending the various RFMO meetings to assist in driving appropriate management changes as necessary. It would also serve to lift the profile of ACAP amongst all RFMOs — funding and other support for such an initiative could be sought from CMS, BirdLife International and WWF;
- ACAP needs to continue to engage with individual RFMOs to assist in improving management of bycatch; and
- Individual governments should be encouraged to press for bycatch issues to be given a higher profile at the next joint meeting of the RFMOs.

Have relevant papers been forwarded to Secretariat: Yes, but none are available electronically.