



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Second Meeting of Advisory Committee

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**REPORT FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE
CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS (ACAP)
2004-2006**

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REPORT FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS (ACAP) 2004-2006

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This first report from the UK is based on the reporting format included in Annex 11 of the record of the first meeting of the ACAP Advisory Committee (AC1).

The UK is a breeding range state for ACAP. This report covers the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI) and the Tristan da Cunha group (the territories), which together support breeding populations of 12 ACAP species including 2 endemic species (Table 1 below).

Information on Antarctic territories and waters is not included in this report on the basis that activities there are coordinated through the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS; including the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) Group of Experts on Birds) and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). To avoid duplication in reporting by ACAP Parties it is suggested that the most efficient and appropriate way for ACAP to receive information on Antarctica is through the ATS (e.g. CCAMLR, SCAR and the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP)) rather than directly through ACAP Parties.

Table 1. ACAP species in the Falkland Islands, SGSSI and Tristan da Cunha

Island Group	Falkland Islands	South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands	Tristan da Cunha
ACAP Species			
Wandering albatross <i>Diomedea exulans</i>		✓	
Tristan albatross <i>Diomedea dabbenena</i>			✓
Grey-headed albatross <i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i>		✓	
Black-browed albatross <i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>	✓	✓	
Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross <i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i>			✓
Sooty albatross <i>Phoebastria fusca</i>			✓
Light-mantled sooty albatross <i>Phoebastria palpebrata</i>		✓	
Southern giant petrel <i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	✓	✓	✓
Northern giant petrel <i>Macronectes halli</i>		✓	
White-chinned petrel <i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	✓	✓	
Spectacled petrel <i>Procellaria conspicillata</i>			✓
Grey petrel <i>Procellaria cinerea</i>			✓

1. Reporting Period

The report covers the period April 2004 (UK ratification of ACAP) to May 2006, but includes earlier information where relevant for context.

2. Overview of Implementation of Agreement and Action Plan

The UK signed ACAP on 19 June 2001 and ratified the Agreement on 2 April 2004. This ratification was extended to the relevant territories. The UK's ratification was also extended to Tristan da Cunha on 13 April 2006 following the adoption by the island group of a new environmental protection law that meets ACAP obligations.

In addition to its annual contribution to the ACAP budget (as per resolution 1.3 of the first Meeting of the Parties to ACAP (MOP1)), the UK has made a number of voluntary donations to the Agreement. These comprised:

1. Part-funding of the secondment of a full-time post to the interim Secretariat between October 2004 and August 2005. Working with staff from the Australian Antarctic Division, the secondee (Helen Riley) assisted with the first Meeting of Parties (MOP1); co-ordinated the implementation of the work programme agreed at this meeting and organised the first meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC1).
2. Provided £45K to fund priority projects identified by the AC.
3. Part-funded, through ACAP, censuses of southern giant, northern giant and white-chinned petrels in South Georgia.

3. Outline of planned actions for national implementation over the next three years

Action plan for the UK implementation of ACAP

An action plan for the implementation of ACAP in and around the territories is being developed. This builds on an international workshop in March 2006 which considered priorities for the conservation of albatrosses and petrels in the South Atlantic. The workshop, run by the environmental NGO Falklands Conservation, was supported with grant aid from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office /Department for International Development Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP). Discussions focused on the responsibilities and obligations of ACAP Parties and aimed to identify priorities for the management and conservation of albatross and petrel species on land and at sea in and around the territories in the South Atlantic. The Meeting also examined the interaction between relevant territories and the mainland UK in order to maximise future co-ordination; and provided an opportunity to forge strong inter-territory relationships. Recognising that fisheries by-catch of albatross and petrel species is a key threat and an international issue requiring multilateral action; representatives from South American countries, South Africa and BirdLife International's Global Seabird Programme attended the meeting to discuss the co-ordinated collection of seabird mortality data in fisheries in the South Atlantic and progress on the implementation of effective mitigation measures. The specific aims of the meeting were to:

1. Define the current level of knowledge within the territories and adjacent regional partners and who holds relevant data.
2. Define the territory/regional stakeholders and the internal process of responsibility and reporting.
3. Establish the relationship between internal reporting and external reporting for the UK, the Advisory Committee and the ACAP secretariat and determine the means of input from the territories and the voluntary sector.

4. Define where gaps in knowledge, conservation and reporting exist and determine how these may be resolved.
5. Prioritise these gaps and examine sources of available funding with a view to establishing a long-term work programme to meet the set priorities.
6. Establish the possibilities for a unified approach to implementing ACAP in the South Atlantic, including through bi and multi-lateral initiatives.

The final report of the workshop will be published later in 2006.

Future voluntary contributions

The UK will contribute £10,000 to help fund the attendance at the second Meeting of Parties (MOP2) of delegates from developing countries or countries with economies in transition. The UK will also make additional voluntary contributions during the intersessional period between MOP2 and MOP3.

4. Species conservation

4.1 Use and Trade and any Exemptions to prohibitions on the taking or harming of albatrosses and petrels (ACAP Article III (3); Action Plan 1.1.1, 1.1.2)

There were no instances of use or trade.

4.2 Single or Multi-Species Conservation Strategies / Action Plans (Action Plan 1.1.3)

The action plan arising from the international workshop on priorities and conservation of albatrosses and petrels in the South Atlantic will apply to all ACAP species occurring within the jurisdictions of the UK (see 3 above).

Falkland Islands

The Falkland Islands draft Conservation and Biodiversity Strategy (Douse, 2005) emphasises the importance of single or multi-species action plans for threatened species and habitats. These action plans will be fully drafted and implemented when the Conservation Biodiversity Strategy is completed and adopted. The aim will be to restore and enhance key species and habitats within the Falkland Islands. At this stage, plans will be prepared for two ACAP species: black-browed albatross and white-chinned petrel. The Falkland Islands Conservation Biodiversity Strategy also recognises the value of monitoring changes in the natural environment, especially those arising from human impacts; and requirements to undertake periodic surveys of the national population of key species. Marine Protected Areas may be considered in the future.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

An Environmental Management Plan for SGSSI was first published in 2000. The plan, which sets out conservation strategies, is currently being revised with publication expected in June or July 2006. Both these documents state clearly the commitment to conserve as far as practicable, the indigenous flora and fauna, ecological associations, and natural environment of South Georgia.

Because bycatch mortality of seabirds in South Georgia fisheries is negligible, National Plan of Action for Seabirds (NPOA-S) is not considered necessary. A formal assessment of seabird mortality to provide a bench mark for future assessments and to ensure that bycatch remains low will however be made.

Tristan da Cunha

The development of a Biodiversity Action Plan for Tristan da Cunha (2003-2006) has involved working with the community to increase their control, ownership and involvement in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity. The emphasis has been on training Tristanians, in particular strengthening their fieldwork skills. The main output has been a biodiversity action plan that includes monitoring protocols for key bird species (Tristan Natural Resources Department and The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, 2006). The monitoring protocols cover all populations on all islands and will allow future monitoring effort to be directly comparable to previous data, permitting estimation of population trends.

4.3 Re-establishment schemes

No re-establishment schemes have been undertaken.

Falkland Islands

One island has been re-colonised naturally by white-chinned petrels following rat eradication

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

A policy of habitat restoration through the removal of rats has started to be implemented and it is anticipated that breeding numbers of white-chinned petrels may increase in areas which become rat-free.

4.4 Legal and policy instruments for species protection of albatrosses and petrels (Action Plan 5.1, I)

Falkland Islands

There are a number of items relevant to this request for information, these are being collated and will be provided to the Secretariat

Tristan da Cunha

Conservation of Native Organisms and Natural Habitats (Tristan da Cunha) Ordinance 2006

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

There are a number of items relevant to this request for information, these are being collated and will be provided to the Secretariat

4.5 Legal and policy instruments for environmental impact assessments (Action Plan 3.1)

Falkland Islands

There are a number of items relevant to this request for information, these are being collated and will be provided to the Secretariat

Developments on land or water that would have a significant adverse effect upon protected species and their habitats would not normally be granted. In other cases conditions may be imposed on development to (i) ensure the survival of individual members of the species; and/or (ii) reduce the disturbance to members of the species to an acceptable minimum. In considering development proposals it is essential that the possible effects on species and their habitat are adequately addressed. This is particularly relevant where species are protected by law. The objective will be to ensure that the most important species are protected from unsustainable development. Consideration of proposals for development or land use will reflect obligations under the UK's Environmental Charter and any Bio-

diversity Action Plan in place at the time. Proposals raising specific environmental concerns relating to habitats or species of recognised importance will be required to be accompanied by an environmental impact statement.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

The policy in place at present is that SGSSI follows the practices of the Environmental Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty in respect of Environmental Impact Assessments. This matter is currently being reviewed

5. Habitat Conservation

5.1 Measures to implement protection and management of breeding sites including habitat restoration (Action Plan 2.2)

Information is being provided via the Advisory Committee Working Group on Breeding Sites.

5.2 Sustainable management of marine living resources which provide food for albatrosses and petrels (Action Plan 2.3.1a)

This is recognised as an important area for ACAP but also one where further consideration is required in terms of the scope of information to be provided. It is understood that further consideration will be given to this at AC2.

Falkland Islands

Fishing around the Falkland Islands is strictly managed and fish stocking levels are continually analysed through the fisheries monitoring process. Fishing seasons have been cut short in past seasons to maintain fish stocks.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

Fishing in South Georgia waters adopts CCAMLR measures as a minimum standard.

5.3 Management and protection of important marine areas for albatrosses and petrels (Action Plan 2.3.2, 2.3.3)

Falkland Islands

Environmental impact assessments are required for developments in marine areas which would have a significant adverse effect on protected species or their habitats (see 4.5 above). The draft Conservation and Biodiversity Strategy (see 4.2 above) applies to marine areas.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

CCAMLR regulations apply (as 5.2 above) and the requirement for environmental impact assessment in accordance with the Environmental Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty.

6. Management of human activities

6.1 Environmental Impact Assessments related to albatrosses and petrels (Action Plan 3.1)

Falkland Islands

No EIA has been produced with reference to ACAP species in its entirety. However the Desire Petroleum EIS of 2005, concerning an upcoming

hydrocarbons exploration phase, does refer to ACAP species, and the avoidance of interactions between industry and seabirds.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

An Initial Environmental Evaluation under the Antarctic Treaty protocol is being carried out to assess the impact of a proposed boardwalk on Prion Island. This is designed to protect the environment and control visitor impacts on all local flora and fauna, including breeding wandering albatross.

Tristan da Cunha

No EIA has been produced with reference to ACAP species.

6.2 Measures to reduce or eliminate incidental mortality in fisheries (Action Plan 3.2)

Falkland Islands – longline fisheries

Seabird bycatch has been estimated yearly for longline vessels operating in the Falkland Islands since 2001/2002. The Falkland Islands fisheries observer programme has reported mortality of seabirds in the longline fishery since 1994. The Falkland Islands [National] Plan Of Action-Seabirds for longliners was adopted in March 2004 with the objective of reducing seabird mortality in the longline fishery to below 0.01 birds/1000 hooks by 2004/05 and further to 0.002 birds/1000 hooks by 2006/07 (Figure 1). The FI longline fleet had reached the 2004/05 FI NPOA-S target by 2002/3. This was achieved through long term observer coverage, good house keeping; including the correct design and use of tori line, correct line weighting regimes, bait thawing, offal management and the use of bird scaring curtains over the hauling hatch. The future objective is to maintain this mortality below 0.002 birds/1000 hooks.

Experimental trials using crab pots for toothfish resulted in zero albatross and petrel mortality over a period of two months and yielded significant catch rates. This fishing method will be encouraged in the future.

Falkland Islands – trawler fisheries

The Falkland Islands Plan Of Action -Trawlers was adopted in March 2004 following the 2003/2004 estimate of mortality in the finfish fishery. During this period an estimated 1,529 seabirds were killed in this fishery, the majority of which were black browed albatross. Birds feeding on discards at the stern of the vessel were struck by warp cables, dragged under water and drowned.

In 2001/2002 Falkland Conservation's Seabirds At Sea Team (SAST) designed and started to test potential mitigation devices. Three mitigation devices were tested in the austral spring of 2003. Four treatments (three mitigation devices and a control treatment where no device was used) were randomly assigned to observed trawls. The analyses indicated that tori lines were by far the most effective at reducing contact rates and thus mortality. The costs of the devices trialled were found to be inversely proportional to their effectiveness. Tori lines were subsequently adopted throughout the Falkland Islands finfish fishery. During 2004/05 subsequent to the implementation of tori lines in the finfish fishery, SAST conducted observations to establish a mortality estimate. Results indicated a reduction in seabird mortality by 90%.

Current evidence suggests that owing to the limited discharge by vessels catching *Loligo gahi* (compared to finfish trawlers) the fleet does not have a serious seabird mortality problem. However, analyses are underway to estimate mortality in this fishery, and to determine whether mitigation measures are necessary.

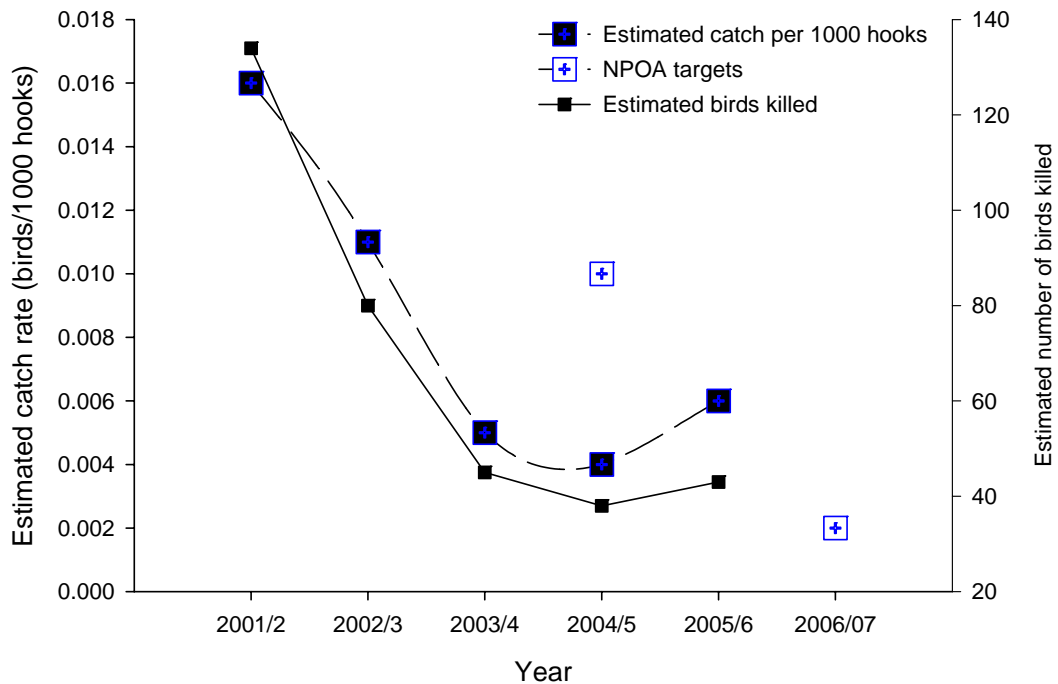


Figure 1: Estimated seabird mortality in longline fisheries and Falkland Islands NPOA-S targets.

Falkland Islands – jiggers

Following observer trips on squid jiggers in the Falkland Island and on the Patagonian Shelf, it is clear incidental mortality associated with this type of fishing gear is minimal. This will continue to be monitored to ensure that by-catch remains low.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

CCAMLR conservation measures are in place. Observers are present on all longline vessels, all trawlers fishing for fin-fish and there is increasing coverage of the krill fishery. It is generally accepted that mortality of all seabirds, including ACAP species, is now negligible in SGSSI fisheries.

Tristan da Cunha

About 70% of fishing vessels operating within Tristan’s EEZ carry observers. The lobster fishery is operated by one concession holder, and there is only one long line licence for whitefish per year. The number of licences for tuna longline vessels is not limited; these vessels only stay for a short period, whilst they are following the tuna migrating through Tristan’s EEZ.

The longline vessels may not fish within 50 nautical miles of Tristan da Cunha, Nightingale, Inaccessible or Gough Islands. Every precaution must be taken to prevent bird or mammal mortality, i.e. shooting at night, using bird streamers, funnel, etc. Any bird mortality has to be recorded in the logbooks.

Supplementary information

The BirdLife International Global Seabird Programme, based in the UK, focuses on advocacy and scientific input to the RFMO meetings to identify the areas where albatrosses and fisheries overlap, highlighting the existence of the seabird bycatch

problem. This work uses the BirdLife Global *Procellariiform* Tracking Database (BirdLife 2004). RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) have also begun working with Defra to strengthen the UK input into the EC position at RFMO and other meetings relevant to bycatch. BirdLife have been commissioned to prepare an information paper to the second meeting of the Advisory Committee (Opportunities for ACAP in making progress in the conservation of albatrosses and petrels through Regional Fisheries Management Organisations) to help target ACAP efforts into reducing seabird bycatch within key RFMOs.

6.3 Measures to combat IUU fishing (Action Plan 3.2.4)

Falkland Islands

Fishery protection vessels and aircraft provide surveillance of the 200 mile zone around the Falklands throughout the year. The level of any IUU activity in this zone is very low. As a consequence, much of the fishery protection effort is focused on ensuring that vessels are complying fully with the requirements of the fishery. In relation to ACAP it is the longliner fleet of two vessels that is most relevant, and Falkland Islands Observers are routinely placed on these vessels to ensure compliance.

The use of mitigation measures (bird scaring lines) by the trawl fleet can be observed and monitored from fisheries protection aircraft. A small number of longliners operate on the North Scotia Ridge to the west of CCAMLR's sub-Area 48.3.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

A dedicated Fishery Protection Vessel patrols the waters throughout the year. In addition, more than one method of alternative remote sensing has been utilised. Details of this have not been made public for obvious reasons. A recent case of illegal fishing involved the FV Elqui which resulted in conviction and a fine. The vessel was surrendered on non-payment of the fine, cleaned to international standards and scuttled in Falklands inshore waters in 2005 to form a haven for fish. It is hoped that this sets an example to operators of illegal vessels.

Tristan da Cunha

Tristan da Cunha has few resources to prevent IUU fishing. The fisheries patrol boat has a range of about 150 nautical miles, this means that it can patrol 75 miles from harbour. This means that the seamounts within the zones around the Tristan da Cunha archipelago where IUU fishing is taking place cannot be patrolled.

6.4 Measures to minimise discharge of pollutants and marine debris (with reference to MARPOL) (Action Plan: 2.3.1b, 3.3)

Falkland Islands

Fishing vessels have to comply with MARPOL regulations and this is monitored by fisheries Observers. The hazards caused by pollutants and marine debris are impressed upon all Fishing Vessel Captains through a mandatory briefing.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

Fishing vessels have to comply with CCAMLR and MARPOL regulations. Compliance is monitored by CCAMLR observers, and fisheries officers.

6.5 Disturbance (Action Plan 3.4.2)

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

All visits to South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands are strictly managed. Tourist visits are subject to the by-laws of the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO). An environmental baseline survey has been carried out and continual monitoring takes place to ensure that any visitor impact can be noted and action taken to stop it. Planned expeditions to the islands are assessed by an independent advisory panel prior to permission being given or refused, this includes an environmental assessment.

7. Research and Monitoring

7.1 Ongoing research and monitoring programmes relating to the conservation of albatrosses and petrels (Action Plan 4.1)

Falkland Islands

Censuses of the black browed albatross population were completed in 2000/2001 & 2005/2006 (including aerial surveys). Censuses of southern giant petrels and white-chinned petrels were completed respectively in 2004-05 and 2005-06. Falklands Conservation has also undertaken annual population monitoring of some black browed albatross sites for the last 3 years and southern giant petrel sites for last 2 years.

Contacts: Nic Huin, Falklands Conservation; Ian Strange, New Island South Conservation Trust

Demographic, behavioural and ecological studies of banded black-browed albatross at New Island, Falkland Islands to determine adult survival rates, individual reproductive success, population trends, diets etc. (2003-present).

Contact: Paulo Catry, New Island South Conservation Trust

Annual population monitoring for all three ACAP species (**black-browed albatross, southern giant petrel and white-chinned petrel**) at key breeding sites will commence in 2006/07.

A **demographic study of the black-browed albatross** at Steeple Jason Island to determine breeding success and mortality is set to begin in November 2006.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

Island wide censuses of all albatross species except light-mantled sooty albatross have been carried out in the last five years. A two year project to count all northern and southern giant petrels and white-chinned petrels was begun during the 2005/6 austral summer. Long term monitoring of ACAP species takes place at Bird Island under the auspices of the British Antarctic Survey. In addition wandering albatross are counted annually at Albatross and Prion Islands. There are plans for white-chinned petrels to be counted annually in future at seven other sites on the north-east coast of South Georgia in the Cumberland and Stromness Bay areas.

Comprehensive demographic studies at Bird Island, South Georgia of banded birds to determine adult and juvenile survival rates, individual reproductive success and population trends for **wandering, black-browed and grey-headed albatross** (1975/76-present), **northern and southern giant petrel** (2000/01-present).

Monitoring of population trends and productivity for light-mantled albatross (2002/03-present). Contact: Richard Phillips, British Antarctic Survey (BAS)

Monitoring of population trends (1998/99-present) and **productivity** (1998/99-2002/03, 2005/06-present) for **wandering albatross at Albatross and Prion Islands**, South Georgia. Contact: Sally Poncet, South Georgia Surveys

Full censuses at South Georgia of wandering, black-browed and grey-headed albatross (2003/04) and **northern and southern giant petrels** (2005/06 to be completed in 2006/07), and **population trends for white-chinned petrels** (2005/06 to be completed in 2006/07). Contact: Sally Poncet, South Georgia Surveys

Ongoing tracking studies at Bird Island, South Georgia of foraging ecology (chick feeding rates, at-sea distribution and activity during breeding and nonbreeding seasons, overlap with fisheries) of **wandering, black-browed, grey-headed and light-mantled albatross, northern and southern giant petrel, and white-chinned petrels** by BAS. Contact: Richard Phillips, BAS

Tristan da Cunha

Small-scale demographic studies of Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross at sub-colonies on Tristan da Cunha and Gough Island. On Tristan, one sub-colony (mean 34 pairs per year), has been studied from 1984-1992 and intermittently since then. Incubating birds have been counted, with breeding adults and chicks banded, and breeding success determined. These data have been used to estimate adult survival, reproductive output, and population trends. However, the study colony is too small, and recent data too patchy to give confidence in estimating these variables, or in extrapolating to the island as a whole. On Gough, one sub-colony (mean 47 pairs per year) has been studied from 1979-present. Incubating birds have been counted, with breeding adults and chicks banded, and breeding success determined. These data have been used to estimate adult and juvenile survival, reproductive output, and population trends (Cuthbert *et al.* 2003). Contacts: John Cooper, Richard Cuthbert.

Small-scale demographic studies of Tristan albatross at two sub-colonies on Gough Island. Incubating birds have been counted and their identities recorded, adults and fledglings banded, and breeding success determined at one sub-colony in most years since 1976, and at another since 1984. These data have been used to estimate adult survival, reproductive output, and population trends (Cuthbert *et al.* 2004). Contacts: Richard Cuthbert, Ross Wanless, Peter Ryan.

Full censuses of incubating Tristan albatross at Gough Island, January 2001, January 2004 and a near-complete census in January 2005. Whole-island counts of fledglings in September 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2004. This has allowed estimate of breeding population size (incubating pairs) and whole-island breeding success in 2001 and 2004 (Cuthbert *et al.* 2004, Ryan *et al.* 2001, Cuthbert & Sommer 2004). Contacts: Richard Cuthbert, Ross Wanless, Peter Ryan.

Count of Tristan albatross breeding population at Inaccessible Island, February 2000 and of fledglings in November 1999 and 2004 (Ryan *et al.* 2001). Contact: Peter Ryan

Sample-census of incubating Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross on Gough Island, Oct-Nov 2000 and 2003. This census counted ca.10% of the total population, and allowed a statistically robust extrapolated estimate of overall population size (Cuthbert & Sommer 2004). Contact: Richard Cuthbert, Ross Wanless

Sample-census of incubating sooty albatross on Gough Island, Oct-Nov 2000 and 2003. This census counted ca.5% of the total population, and allowed an informal extrapolated estimate of overall population size. In addition, counts of large chicks in Feb 2001 allowed an estimate of breeding success by comparison with the incubating adult count in Oct-Nov 2000 (Cuthbert & Sommer 2004). Contact: Richard Cuthbert; Ross Wanless

Full census of incubating Southern giant-petrel on Gough Island, 2000-1 and 2003-4. These data were used to estimate population size and informally estimate recent population trends (Cuthbert & Sommer 2004). Contact: Richard Cuthbert, Ross Wanless

Full census of breeding spectacled petrel on Inaccessible Island 1999 and 2004, giving population size and trends, combined with searches for any breeding spectacled petrels on Tristan da Cunha, 2004 and 2005 (Ryan & Moloney 2000, Ryan *et al.* in press). Contact: Peter Ryan

Remote (satellite) tracking of Tristan albatross from Gough, 2001, to determine at-sea distribution and overlap with fishing activity during the breeding season (Cuthbert *et al.* 2005). Contact: Richard Cuthbert

Remote (satellite) tracking of a very small sample of Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross from Gough, 2001, to determine at-sea distribution and overlap with fishing activity during the breeding season. Contact: Richard Cuthbert

Remote (geolocator) tracking of a sample (ca.30 birds) of Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross from Gough, 2004-6, to determine at-sea distribution and overlap with fishing activity during the breeding season. In addition, a small number of sooty albatrosses and Tristan albatrosses have been tracked from Gough Island using geolocators (2003-6), but it is currently unclear whether this will be successful. Contact: Richard Cuthbert

Studies of mouse ecology and the impact of mouse predation on chick survival of Tristan albatross, Oct 2003 – Sept 2004. Nest cameras and direct observation were used to confirm that mice are major predators, and to study the ecology of the mice and their interaction with albatrosses. The aim is to confirm the predation, examine why it has evolved on Gough, and hence to understand the implications for albatross conservation on Gough and elsewhere (Cuthbert & Hilton 2004, Jones *et al.* 2003, Wanless in prep., Angel *et al.* 2005, Wanless *et al.* 2005). Contact: Ross Wanless, Richard Cuthbert

Examination of population genetics of spectacled petrel, 2004-6. The aims are (1) to compare the genetic make-up of birds attending longlines in Brazilian waters with those of Inaccessible breeding birds, in order to assess whether all the birds in Brazil are from Inaccessible birds, or whether there might be an undiscovered breeding population elsewhere; (2) to use population genetic models to reconstruct the poorly-known recent history of the spectacled petrel population on Inaccessible, to determine whether there is any evidence of a recent bottleneck or population expansion. Contact: Peter Ryan

Estimation of longline mortality rates of spectacled petrel in Brazilian waters, 2004-5. Observers were placed on longlining vessels to estimate numbers of spectacled petrels (and other ACAP species) attending vessels and being caught as bycatch. The aim was to provide an updated estimate of spectacled petrel bycatch in this fishery (Projecto Albatroz 2006).

Contact: Leandro Bugoni, Tatiana Neves, Geoff Hilton, Peter Ryan

Desk review of the impact of rodents on biodiversity (including ACAP species) on Tristan and Gough, and a feasibility study for their control or eradication. This sets out the scale of the confirmed and inferred impacts, the predicted effect of removing rodent impacts, and the feasibility of eradicating rodents from the two islands (Angel *et al.* 2006). Contacts: Geoff Hilton, John Cooper, Andrea Angel, Derek Brown

Development of repeatable long-term monitoring protocols and manuals for ACAP species on Gough, Inaccessible Tristan and Nightingale. Monitoring manuals have been written for all populations on all islands. These will allow future monitoring effort to be directly comparable to previous data, permitting estimation of population trends (Cuthbert & Sommer 2003, Ryan 2005, Tristan Natural Resources Department and The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds 2006). Contacts: Richard Cuthbert, Erica Sommer, Peter Ryan

Research into the ecology of rats on Tristan da Cunha, 2005-6. Rat diet, seasonal and spatial variations in abundance, and breeding phenology were studied, in order to better understand their probable impacts on albatrosses and petrels, and to elucidate the methods required to eradicate them. Contacts: Erica Sommer, Geoff Hilton

Assessment of the feasibility of reducing rodent impacts on Gough Island and Tristan da Cunha. This involves field research into the ecology and impacts of rodents, desk review of likely impacts, and expert assessment of feasibility of control and eradication options. A feasibility study for eradication of rodents from both islands has been produced. An Operational Plan for the removal of rats from Tristan da Cunha is in production, and an Operational Plan for the removal of mice from Gough may be produced if considered feasible (Angel *et al.* 2006). Contacts: Geoff Hilton, John Cooper, Andrea Angel, Derek Brown

Other projects

Large-scale (20 site) collaborative study of population genetics (including clarification of specific status of some populations) **of northern and southern giant petrels.** Contacts: Richard Phillips (BAS) and Peter Ryan (University of Capetown)

7.2 Observer programmes to monitor fisheries bycatch of albatrosses and petrels (Action Plan 4.2)

Falkland Islands

Nine seagoing scientific fishery observers are employed in the Falklands fisheries. Two of those observers are specifically tasked to monitor seabird interactions with longliners (there are only two longliners operating in Falklands waters at any one time). The remainder concentrate on the biological analysis of target and bycatch species. They are also tasked with observing seabird interactions associated with trawl gear as time permits and required to report any incidental mortality of seabirds and/or mammals during a trip. The Seabirds at Sea Team (SAST, Falklands Conservation) employ a seabird observer to investigate mortality and to continue to develop mitigation devices and measures. See 6.2 above for details of seabird bycatch rates recorded.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

Observers, operating to CCAMLR regulations, are placed on all longline vessels and all fin-fish trawlers; and there is increasing coverage of the krill fishery. Second observers have also been deployed on vessels fishing for icefish (*Champsocephalus gunneri*) in an attempt to reduce still further the seabird mortality that can occur as a result of warp impacts.

Tristan da Cunha

Fishing is the mainstay of the economy. Until recently, commercial fishing has been largely restricted to Tristan rock-lobster *Jasus tristani*, and has relatively little impact on the island's globally important seabird populations (Ryan 1991). There is increasing pressure, however, to diversify fisheries and licences have been issued to foreign longline vessels to target pelagic and demersal fish species. A previous study based on limited observer data, suggested that the demersal fishery at least had little impact on seabirds (Glass *et al.* 2000). Fishery returns for 2003/04 reported only 13 great shearwaters *Puffinus gravis* killed from 2.08 million hooks set; an average bycatch of 0.006 birds per 1,000 hooks which compares favourably with previous estimates for Tristan waters. Once observers were placed on ships however, a different picture emerged. Between January and May 2005 two observers recorded 650 great shearwaters, 3 sooty albatrosses, and one wandering albatross killed on 1.09 million hooks set. This average rate of 0.601 birds per 1,000 hooks is 100 times more than that recorded from fishery log books. Vessel effect was minimal, with bycatch by the same vessel used in all previous fishing averaging 0.675 birds per 1,000 hooks. Part of the difference may be the greater seasonal spread in the earlier data; bycatch rates probably decrease in winter when most great shearwaters migrate into the North Atlantic Ocean. However most bycatch reported in fishery logbooks took place in winter. It seems likely that voluntary reporting greatly underestimates the bycatch of seabirds, as has been found globally with most similar voluntary schemes.

Observers operating on longlining vessels in Brazilian waters are investigating levels of spectacled petrel bycatch in this fishery (see also 7.1 above).

7.3 National institutions (lists of authorities, research centres, scientists and non-governmental organisations) involved in albatross and petrel conservation (Action Plan 5.1 k)

List attached as Annex 1.

8. Education and public awareness

8.1 Dissemination of information / training for 'user audiences' e.g. scientists, fishermen, conservation bodies, and decision-makers (Action Plan 6.1)

The UK Government provided funds to the CMS Secretariat in mid 2006 to produce a publication on best practice for bycatch mitigation. This is to be drawn up in consultation with CMS daughter agreements.

Falklands Islands

Falklands Conservation maintains education and awareness as one of the priority objectives of the organisation and produces materials for the fishing fleet. In 2003/4 an educational video was produced in Spanish to facilitate implementation of the tori lines on finfish trawlers. Copies of the video were provided to all vessels. This was followed in 2005 by an educational leaflet describing albatross and petrel biology and ecology plus best practice guidelines for the use of tori lines. A poster reiterating correct usage of tori lines is now being circulated to all trawlers.

Additionally, over twenty reports have been written and eight of these published in peer-reviewed journals since the outset of the SAST. Details are listed in the bibliography.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

As there is no resident population, education is targeted at visitors and fishermen. An Environmental Management Plan was published in 2000 and is being revised. In addition a book on fisheries including issues of seabird conservation has been produced (Agnew 2004). A handbook is issued to visitors which contains a section about seabird mortality and mitigation measures.

Supplementary information

The BirdLife Global Seabird Programme, based in RSPB in the UK, is in the process of developing an international team of mitigation instructors (Albatross Task Force) to work with fishermen and fisheries managers in global seabird bycatch 'hotspots'. This involves conducting at-sea trips and holding on-shore workshops with fishermen and fisheries managers. This on-going project has deployed two instructors in South Africa (based in Cape Town with BirdLife South Africa) and is currently negotiating with Projeto Albatroz to deploy a further two instructors in Brazil. There are plans to deploy a further two personnel in Chile by the end of 2006 and, by 2007, to have a team of 10 people placed around the Southern Ocean.

8.2 Dissemination of information to the general public (Action Plan 6.2)

Falkland Islands

Locally, weekly radio talks keep the public updated as to the current issues. Frequent articles are printed in the local newspaper, reaching the majority of the population. Outside the islands, the monthly FC newsletter reaches a wider audience.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

A briefing film for visitors to the island has been produced and there is also a website with a very strong environmental focus.

Supplementary Information

In 2005/06, the Volvo Ocean Race adopted the BirdLife Global Seabird Programme 'Save the Albatross Campaign', based at RSPB in the UK, as their environmental partner for the race. This involved the development of numerous educational materials and in-port events in various Southern Ocean ports. This collaboration has enabled us to reach a new global audience with our messages.

9. Bibliography

A list of publications relevant to ACAP and ACAP species is included in Annex 2.

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