

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p>Eleventh Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group</p> <p><i>Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 15 - 17 May 2023</i></p> <p>Update on RFMO engagement strategy implementation</p> <p><i>Juan Pablo Seco Pon and Dimas Gianuca</i></p>
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SUMMARY

At SBWG10 the Working Group reviewed progress against the framework for ACAP's engagement strategy with RFMOs and CCAMLR (SBWG10 Doc 07). Prior to SBG9 a one-day workshop was held, which fed into the review. On the basis of the review the Working Group agreed a list of prioritised areas of engagement for the 2022-2025 intersessional period, encapsulated in a revised document (SBWG10 Doc 07 Rev 1). This was endorsed by both AC12 and MoP7. Progress achieved since SBWG10 is presented in Annex 1, together with an updated list of proposed actions for the forthcoming triennium (2023-2025), for discussion by the SBWG and subsequent endorsement by the Advisory Committee. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the period covered (extended by one year) and the ability to achieve the objectives. As in previous versions the current document provides additional information on the background of the ACAP RFMO engagement strategy and considers the challenges and opportunities associated with achieving best practice standards in reducing seabird bycatch.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Seabird Bycatch Working Group is asked to:

1. consider this review of the ACAP RFMO engagement strategy, contribute to the further development of this strategy, and revise the list of priority actions in ANNEX 1.
2. ask the Advisory Committee to support the implementation of these actions, including the provision of resources necessary to achieve this.

REVISIÓN DE LA ESTRATEGIA DE INTERACCIÓN DEL ACAP CON LAS OROP

SUMMARY

En la Reunión GdTCS9, el Grupo de Trabajo examinó los avances realizados en relación con el marco de la estrategia de interacción del ACAP con las OROP y la CCRVMA (SBWG10 Doc 07). Antes de la Reunión GdTCS9, se celebró un taller de un día que aportó a la revisión. Sobre la base de esa revisión, el Grupo de Trabajo acordó una lista de áreas prioritarias de interacción para el período entre sesiones 2022-2025, incluidas en un documento revisado (SBWG10 Doc 07 Rev 1). Los avances logrados desde la GdTCS9 se presentan en el Anexo 1, junto con una lista actualizada de acciones propuestas por realizar en el siguiente trienio (2022-2025), para su análisis por parte del GdTCS y su posterior refrenda por parte del Comité Asesor. La pandemia de la COVID-19 afectó el período comprendido (ampliado en un año) y la capacidad de alcanzar los objetivos. Al igual que en versiones anteriores, en este documento se ofrece información adicional sobre los antecedentes de la estrategia de interacción del ACAP con las OROP y se consideran los desafíos y las oportunidades relativos a lograr estándares de mejores prácticas para reducir la captura secundaria de aves marinas.

RECOMENDACIONES

Se solicita al GdTCS:

1. considerar esta revisión de la estrategia de interacción del ACAP con las OROP, contribuir a seguir desarrollando esta estrategia y revisar la lista de acciones prioritarias que figuran en el ANNEX 1.
2. Solicitar al Comité Asesor que respalde la implementación de estas acciones, incluida la provisión de los recursos necesarios para llegar a tal fin

1. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS TO REVIEW AND UPDATE THE ACAP RFMO ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

1.1. Introduction

Great numbers of ACAP-listed species continue to be bycaught by fisheries managed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). Therefore, engagement with RFMOs has been -and continues to be- a paramount component of ACAP's strategy to mitigate and reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds. As a regular exercise, the Seabird Bycatch Working Group reviews and updates actions listed in ACAP's RFMO engagement strategy at each of its meetings. Based on the discussions during SBWG 10 the Working Group agreed a list of prioritised areas of engagement and activities for the 2022-2025 intersessional period.

The strategy revised and endorsed by SBWG10 and AC12 encompasses the very same three key areas, or themes, as pinpointed by SBWG9, in which ACAP should aim to engage RFMOs to deepen the understating about the nature and extent of seabird incidental

mortality and improve efforts to reduce bycatch to the lowest possible levels. SBWG10 agreed on the following themes:

1. Strengthen implementation of RFMO and CCAMLR seabird conservation measures (including the promotion of the ACAP best practice guidance).
2. Strengthen RFMO and CCAMLR bycatch data collection and reporting requirements, and the inclusion of appropriate seabird bycatch mitigation elements within RFMO compliance monitoring. Focus ACAP inputs through the development of specific ACAP products (for example advice on seabird bycatch indicators, and seabird elements of electronic monitoring).
3. Engage in RFMO and CCAMLR reviews of seabird measures.

Several actions were identified within each of these three areas of engagement. These prioritised areas of engagement and the list of activities within each, are presented in **ANNEX 1** to help facilitate the review process at SBWG11. **ANNEX 1** includes a review of progress achieved against the priority actions agreed at SBWG10 and AC12, and a list of proposed actions for the forthcoming period (2022-2025). A fourth category titled 'Other Actions' has been included in **ANNEX 1** to capture additional recommendations.

ANNEX 1

Theme 1

Strengthen implementation of RFMO and CCAMLR seabird conservation measures (including the promotion of the ACAP best practice guidance).

1a) WCPFC

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

- Future participation in WCPFC meetings, including of the Compliance Committee, to maintain our profile and give support to initiatives in line with our priorities.
- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the inclusion of the underwater bait setting devices and assessment of the Underwater Bait Setter (Skadia Technologies) and Hookpod-mini as seabird bycatch mitigation measures.
- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP guidelines including guidelines on observer programmes and on electronic monitoring.
- Contribute information on updated ACAP advice on improving crew safety when hauling branchlines during pelagic longline operations.
- Work with Australia, New Zealand and other Parties to promote the Antipodean Albatross Action Plan.
- Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.

Review of progress, and further actions required

See also 3 c) below

Meetings attended

WCPFC TCC17, September 2021 (online)

Scientific Committee (SC 18), August 2022 (Online)

Commission (WCPFC 19), November/December 2022 (Da Nang City)

At the SC18, agenda item 03, entitled “Conservation Status of Albatrosses and Petrels and Advice on Reducing their Bycatch in WCPFC Fisheries”, under the agenda section termed Ecosystems and Bycatch Mitigation Theme, was the main item of interest to ACAP. A presentation by ACAP proposed that the SC note the updated conservation status and population trend of albatross and petrel species in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, and consider a detailed review of CMM2018-03 against ACAP best practice advice. The Committee recognized the global population decline of ACAP species and the threats posed

by longline fisheries in the WCPFC area, as well as the importance of a review of the current seabird mitigation measure (CMM 2018-03) against current ACAP best practices. The importance of the latter was highlighted by several members of the Committee, including participants from New Zealand, USA, Australia and Niue (on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency members) and observers like BirdLife International and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The Committee discussed allocating this action to be addressed in 2023 or 2024 agenda.

The WCPFC19 agenda included an item on seabird bycatch mitigation and discussion of CMM 2018-03. The main interest of ACAP in participating was to contribute to discussion of CMM 2018-03 and support recommendations that came from the SC 18 in August 2022, especially the review and updating of CMM 2018-03. There was a substantive discussion on the recommendation for a review, with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), New Zealand, the EU, Australia, the USA, and New Caledonia, as well as ACAP and BirdLife International, all speaking in support. No delegation spoke against the proposal. The Commission noted a global decline in specific ACAP listed species and their vulnerability to threats posed by longline fisheries, and the importance of bycatch mitigation measures. WCPFC 19 agreed to conduct a review of the current measure “in 2023 or 2024” whereby new mitigation studies would be evaluated for effectiveness and compared against current ACAP best practices. This is an excellent outcome from ACAP’s perspective and means that over the coming year or two ACAP will be able to contribute to this review and help in ensuring that the WCPFC seabird measure reflects the most up to date ACAP best practice advice. In this sense, it will be important for ACAP to attend the Scientific Committee and Commission meetings in 2023, where the review of the CMM 2018-03 will be progressed.

1b) CCSBT

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

- Continue to take part in the ERSWG and, well in advance of the next meeting of the ERSWG (2022), engage in discussions with key members, including ACAP Parties, to help shape the agenda. Useful issues for the agenda include: the high levels of seabird bycatch and problems associated with compliance with the use of bycatch mitigation measures and observer coverage requirements (highlighted from recent reporting); and consideration of the need to strengthen bycatch mitigation measures, with CCSBT taking a more active and leading role in this respect.
- Continue to contribute our best practice advice, guidelines, and status reports to ERSWG meetings, including newly approved and updated mitigation measures;
- Contribute material for the future work programme as requested by ERSW.
- Contribute to further development and implementation of the multi-year seabird strategy.
- Contribute to the further development of definitions and thresholds for and management implications of high-risk areas for seabirds.

- Continue to provide inputs to and support for the BirdLife-CCSBT proposal to enhance implementation of seabird bycatch mitigation measures.
- Attend the 2021 meetings of CCSBT's Compliance Committee and Extended Commission, at which the updated proposal(s) will be discussed further.
- Work with Australia, New Zealand and other Parties to promote the Antipodean Albatross Action Plan.
- Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.

Review of progress, and further actions required

Meetings attended

CC16, October 2021 (online)

EC28, October 2021 (online)

TCWG3, October 2022 (Online)

EC29, October 2022 (Online)

ERSWG14, March 2022 (Online)

ACAP's profile was maintained through participation in a range of CCSBT meetings, reflecting our awareness that, given its geographical scope and the extent of overlap with ACAP-listed species, CCSBT is one of the most important RFMOs in which to address seabird bycatch. ACAP was granted long-term observer status for Compliance Committee meetings (to supplement our existing agreed participation in the Commission and the ERSWG). ACAP provided information on the updated ACAP best practice advice and guidelines at the ERSWG meeting. In addition, ACAP aimed to continue to support the BirdLife International - CCSBT initiative for enhancing the use of seabird bycatch mitigation measures across the southern Bluefin tuna fisheries. Opening Statements were taken as read and were appended to the Meeting Report. Our statement provided a brief update on ACAP activities, including AC12 decisions.

1c) IATTC

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

- Continue to participate in the IATTC Bycatch Working Group (BYCWG), which provides an opportunity to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP species, and to present to them ACAP's revised best practice advice and conservation priorities.
- Further work to strengthen seabird bycatch mitigation requirements in Res C-11-02 during 2022 meetings should consider the engagement with CPCs, not only those that are ACAP Parties (Chile, Ecuador, France, Peru, Spain), but also the United States and the European Union as strong key players. Actions should be coordinated with BirdLife International.

- Consider attendance at future meetings for the development of the EM programme, and contribute information on ACAP's EM guidelines.
- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the inclusion of the underwater bait setting devices and assessment of the Underwater Bait Setter (Skadia Technologies) and Hookpod-mini as seabird bycatch mitigation measures.
- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP guidelines including guidelines on observer programmes.
- Contribute information on updated ACAP advice on improving crew safety when hauling branchlines during pelagic longline operations.
- Work with Chile and other Parties to promote the Antipodean Albatross Action Plan.
- Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.

Review of progress, and further actions required

Other priorities meant that ACAP was not able to attend IATTC Commission meetings during the period under review. ACAP produced a joint document with BirdLife International on the development of a multi-year seabird strategy and action plan to help guide and evaluate efforts to reduce seabird bycatch in ICCAT fisheries and this was also presented to the IATTC by BLI. This proposal was Group on Ecosystems and Bycatch-EBWG (11-12 May 2023). Among other actions, this seabird work plan included the review and update of the Resolution C-11-02 presented by BirdLife International at the 1st Meeting of the Working. The proposal was well received and the EBWG recommended the development of an action plan for seabird bycatch, including an update of Resolution C-11-02 within the next two years that reflect the best available science on seabird bycatch mitigation techniques with consideration of progress in other tuna RFMOs (particularly CCSBT and WCPFC).

1d) CCAMLR

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

- Continue to participate in the e-group, to discuss the trials examining bird-interactions with the trawl monitoring cable and the effects of any mitigation devices.
- Participate in the CCAMLR Scientific Committee and Commission meetings in 2021.
- Discuss with the CCAMLR Secretariat the possibility of seeking observer status at the Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment FSA-2021, or at least having timely access to relevant papers.
- Continue to prepare briefings and liaise in advance of the meetings with ACAP Parties and observers who participate in CCAMLR meetings, to exchange views.
- Work with CCAMLR Secretariat periodically to monitor the occurrence and magnitude of seabird bycatch events reported in previous seasons largely dominated by White-chinned petrels although with isolated records of albatrosses caught

- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the inclusion of the underwater bait setting devices and assessment of the Underwater Bait Setter (Skadia Technologies) and Hookpod-mini as seabird bycatch mitigation measures.
- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP guidelines including guidelines on observer programmes and on electronic monitoring.
- Contribute information on updated ACAP advice on improving crew safety when hauling branchlines during pelagic longline operations.
- Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.

Review of progress, and further actions required

Meetings attended

CCAMLR-40, October 2021 (online)

CCAMLR-41, October 2022 (Hobart)

CS-CCAMLR-41, October 2022 (Hobart)

WG-IMAF October 2022 (Hobart)

The reconvening of WG-IMAF was the most significant development at CCAMLR-41 from ACAP's perspective. It enabled ACAP to present a number of papers on seabird issues and led to more detailed discussion on seabird bycatch in the Scientific Committee and Commission as well as focused debate in the Working Group itself. Although not all the IMAF recommendations were adopted, they resulted in decisions on intersessional work in some areas, to be reported back to WG-IMAF in 2023. ACAP was given a standing invitation to send an expert to future WG-IMAF meetings.

WG-IMAF

ACAP presented five papers covering an update on the status of the conservation of ACAP-listed species in the CCAMLR area, mitigation advice for trawl and demersal longline, data collection advice and safe handling and release guidelines. The safe handling and release guidelines were endorsed by WG-IMAF and recommended to be incorporated in the SISO manual.

The latest data presented by the CCAMLR Secretariat on the incidental mortality associated with fishing activities during the 2022 season demonstrated that CCAMLR demersal longline fisheries are continuing to reduce seabird bycatch towards zero. Not only was this seen in observed bycatch, but also in the recovery of a population of White-chinned Petrel at Possession Island (Crozet Islands) as demonstrated by a highly informative study presented by French participants (WG-IMAF-2022/P01).

Consideration of matters related to the use of net monitoring cables (historically known to be a major source of seabird mortality) in the expanding krill trawl fishery was the focus of seabird-related discussion at the meeting. WG-IMAF assessed the success of recent net

monitoring cable bycatch mitigation development on Norwegian trawlers, with presentation of additional findings to that documented in the tabled papers. WG-IMAF recommended some conditions for extending the current derogation, including the utilisation and refinement of bycatch mitigation measures and minimum levels of observation coverage.

WG-IMAF noted that the low rate of observation for warp strikes during towing may lead to high uncertainty in extrapolated warp strikes. There was lengthy discussion on what an appropriate minimum level of coverage would be but the group was not able to reach agreement on recommending a specific level. However, the WG-IMAF did recommend that SC should consider an increase. Intersessional work items were identified to improve warp strike data collection protocols, a power analysis for observer sampling and approaches for extrapolation.

Following consideration of the latest ACAP best practice advice on seabird bycatch a number of further intersessional tasks were identified to consider the performance of trawl warp mitigation by continuous trawlers, review of mitigation requirements in conventional trawl vessels and review developments in demersal longline mitigation.

Scientific Committee (SC) and Commission

The SC endorsed some of the recommendations from SC-IMAF, including the reintroduction of recording the severity of warp strike on krill vessels. The SC had a lengthy discussion on whether to increase the number of warp strike observation periods conducted by Scheme of International Scientific Observation (SISO) observers on trawl vessels. ACAP outlined the rationale, in terms of improved certainty in extrapolating total interactions, for different levels of observer coverage, as considered during WG-IMAF.

The SC decided that further research was needed to refine the number of warp strike observation periods per day. Further work on this issue is included in the WG-IMAF Work Plan for the coming year, with an intersessional group on the redesign of warp strike observation protocols to be led by Igor Debski and to report back to WG-IMAF 2023. The detailed intersessional work plan for IMAF also includes power analysis of required observer sampling.

The SC and the Commission welcomed news that the provisional data indicated the extrapolated number of seabird mortalities in CCAMLR longline fishing in 2022 was the lowest on record. Both the SC and the Commission also welcomed good news (presented to IMAF in paper WG-IMAF-2022/P01) about the recovery of white-chinned petrels at Possession Island (Crozet Islands), because of mitigation measures at sea and predator control on land, as well as climatic conditions.

As in previous years, a main issue of interest to ACAP was the Norwegian trials of its continuous trawl fishing using net monitoring cables under the derogation from Conservation measure 25-03. The SC recommended, and the Commission agreed, to extend the derogation for a further year, with some extended conditions, and with required reporting back to WG-IMAF in 2023.

In the Commission, during discussion of CCAMLR's cooperation with other organisations, ACAP made a statement thanking CCAMLR for its longstanding cooperation and noting the renewal (in November 2021) of our MOU with CCAMLR. We encouraged CCAMLR Members to continue their efforts to better understand the potential impacts on seabirds from trawl warp and net monitoring cable strikes.

1e) All RFMOs and CCAMLR

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

ICCAT

- Continue to participate in the ICCAT Sub-committee on Ecosystems and Bycatch (SC-ECO), which provides an opportunity to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP species, and to present to them ACAP's revised best practice advice and conservation priorities.
- Keep in touch with ICCAT during the intersessional period to urge the inclusion of seabird bycatch in the agenda for the next meeting.
- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the inclusion of the underwater bait setting devices and assessment of the Underwater Bait Setter (Skadia Technologies) and Hookpod-mini as seabird bycatch mitigation measures.
- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP guidelines including guidelines on observer programmes and on electronic monitoring.
- Contribute information on updated ACAP advice on improving crew safety when hauling branchlines during pelagic longline operations.
- Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.

Review of progress, and further actions required

See 3 b)

Theme 2

Strengthen RFMO and CCAMLR bycatch data collection and reporting requirements, and the inclusion of appropriate seabird bycatch mitigation elements within RFMO compliance monitoring. Focus ACAP inputs through the development of specific ACAP products (for example advice on seabird bycatch indicators, and seabird elements of electronic monitoring)

2a) All RFMOs and CCAMLR

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

Further continuation on the development and update of specific ACAP products that serve to focus ACAP inputs and efforts to strengthen bycatch data collection requirements, and the inclusion of appropriate seabird bycatch mitigation elements within RFMO compliance monitoring. These products should include:

- ACAP review and best practice advice documents on seabird bycatch mitigation (ensuring updated versions are made available).
- ACAP seabird bycatch identification guide (ensuring updated versions are made available).
- ACAP-BirdLife Mitigation Fact Sheets.
- Guidelines for seabird bycatch estimation (informed by the outcomes of the seabird bycatch assessment initiatives that are currently underway).
- ACAP de-hooking and safe release guidelines.

Review of progress, and further actions required

Updates prepared of the following Best Practice Advice documents (will be reviewed at SBWG11):

- ACAP Review and Best Practice Advice for Reducing the Impact of Pelagic Longline Fisheries on Seabirds.
- ACAP Review and Best Practice Advice for Reducing the Impact of Pelagic and Demersal Trawl Fisheries on Seabirds.

Once updates are agreed, all documents will need to be updated in the other ACAP languages.

Mitigation factsheets updated and translated using funding from FAO:

- Introduction to the fishery (pelagic and demersal longlines)
- Bird-scaring lines (pelagic and demersal longlines)
- Improvement of crew safety (pelagic longlines)

Hook shielding factsheet (updated format) will be presented at SBWG12. Next set of factsheets to be converted into new format should be agreed by SBWG11.

- Safe release from entanglement in trawl nets guide is finalised not yet available.
- Update of seabird ID book not yet completed. Need to finalise updates with graphic designer, to be followed by updates to all other languages.
- De-hooking guide translated to five additional languages, but require proofreading and graphic design.
- ACAP Guidelines on Fisheries Electronic Monitoring Systems completed. Need to be followed by updates to all other languages.

Outcomes of seabird bycatch assessment initiatives

ACAP has prepared recommendations on ACAP's continued engagement with RFMOs on matters identified in a final workshop (February 2019) report of the FAO Common Oceans project to conduct a global estimate of seabird bycatch in pelagic longline fishing in the southern hemisphere.

Phase 1 of the Common Oceans project is now completed and Phase 2 has begun, which includes the joint CCSBT/BLI project in which ACAP is a partner.

Proposed Actions 2022-2025

- Continue to develop and update specific ACAP products that serve to focus ACAP inputs and efforts to strengthen bycatch data collection requirements, and the inclusion of appropriate seabird bycatch mitigation elements within RFMO compliance monitoring.
- Prioritise involvement in future seabird bycatch assessments so as to increase of ACAP's understanding of global bycatch rates. In this regard, ACAP is well positioned to input data and advice on RFMO data improvements and harmonization:
- Continued engagement with RFMOs using ACAP advice on data standards and reference to matters identified in the final workshop report.

1. Tracking data: continue to identify species/population/life-history tracking data gaps to encourage their investigation, and encourage data owners to deposit data in the Global Seabird Tracking Database.

2. Population data: update ACAP Species Assessments and/or provide linkage to most recent data reported to ACAP in a way that is readily available through the website.

3. ACAP advice on bycatch estimation and data collection: consider the utility of using estimation methods developed from this process and align advice on data collection with data issues identified in the final workshop report.

2b) All RFMOs and CCAMLR - Compliance

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

Further development of ideas on how to monitor and improve compliance, including through the development of innovative methods. Further engagement with CCSBT Compliance Committee towards contributing efforts to improve compliance in the use of seabird bycatch mitigation measures.

Review of progress, and further actions required

Theme 3

Engage in RFMO and CCAMLR reviews of seabird measures

3a) IOTC

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

- Continue to participate in IOTC meetings, including WPEB and the Scientific Committee, to ensure that seabird bycatch issues do not disappear from the IOTC agenda
- Continue to engage in IOTC initiatives that are relevant to seabirds, to support efforts that will lead to favourable outcomes for ACAP species.
- Consider how best to support the development and submission of a proposal to the IOTC Commission to update Resolution 12/06 to bring it in line with the current ACAP advice. Engage with ACAP Parties to determine whether one or more would put forward such a proposal.
- Support IOTC work to advance seabird bycatch monitoring and mitigation, and associated capacity building, in relevant IOTC processes, such as the initiatives underway (including intersessionally) to identify eco-regions and to develop an IOTC Ecosystem Report Card
- Follow and ideally participate in the (intersessional) initiative to develop the minimum standards for EMS for IOTC. This engagement should aim to ensure that seabird bycatch requirements are usefully incorporated into the IOTC standards, and that the ACAP process to develop best practice guidelines for the use of EM for seabird bycatch monitoring is linked with the IOTC process
- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the inclusion of the underwater bait setting devices and assessment of the Underwater Bait Setter (Skadia Technologies) and Hookpod-mini as seabird bycatch mitigation measures.
- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP guidelines including guidelines on observer programmes and on electronic monitoring.
- Contribute information on updated ACAP advice on improving crew safety when hauling branchlines during pelagic longline operations..
- Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.

Review of progress, and further actions required

Meetings attended

WPEB17, September 2021 (Online)

WGEMS, November 2021 (Online)

WPDCS17, November/December 2021 (Online)

SC24, December 2021 (Online)

WPEB18, September 2022 (Online)

SC25, December 2022 (Victoria)

WGEMS3, March 2023 (Online)

S7, May 2023, (Online)

Engagement with the IOTC is an important component of ACAP's strategy to mitigate and reduce the bycatch of seabirds.

A main objective for ACAP at the WPEB17(AS) meeting was to make available to the IOTC the most recent advances in the review of the best practices recommended for pelagic longline fisheries. ACAP provided a presentation summarising the recent review conducted at the AC12 and the preceding SBWG10. A review of Resolution 12/06, which is the only CMM relating to seabird bycatch in the IOTC, was scheduled for 2022 but is now scheduled for 2023. Therefore, the scheduled review of the current resolution to mitigate seabird bycatch in IOTC fisheries would be an excellent opportunity for ACAP to continue cooperating with IOTC and recommending the most recent ACAP review and advice to mitigate seabird bycatch in pelagic longline fisheries.

Regarding the WGEMS and WPDCS17 meetings, Electronic Monitoring is in a very early stage of development in IOTC, with several of their contracting parties undertaking pilot projects. It is therefore a very good time for ACAP to promote its guidelines on EMS and work with IOTC to try to ensure their standards meet ACAP needs.

IOTC has at present only mandated electronic monitoring for scientific data collection purposes. However, ACAP, along with several other meeting participants) noted that there was overlap between scientific and compliance monitoring, for instance in use of seabird bycatch mitigation devices. Although neither of the two meetings could decide to extend the scope of electronic monitoring, both meetings requested that this be considered by higher level relevant bodies in IOTC. EM work will be considered both by the IOTC Compliance Committee and by the IOTC Scientific Committee (that we propose should be attended by ACAP).

A main objective for ACAP at the SC24 meeting was to continue promoting collaboration with IOTC in line with ACAP's RFMO engagement strategy. Among the most relevant agenda items to ACAP were National Reports from CPCs, the Reports of the 2021 IOTC Working Party Meetings, and the Program of Work and Schedule of Working Party and

Scientific Committee meetings. Due to time limitations, National reports from CPCs were not presented, yet several of them contained relevant information on seabird bycatch and its mitigation. The most relevant topic to ACAP on the agenda was the Report of the 17th Session of the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (IOTC–2021–WPEB17–R). The discussion on this report during SC24 regarding mitigation measures for seabirds in pelagic longline fisheries is detailed in the present report. The draft assessment schedule for the IOTC WPEB 2021–2025 included among its tasks for 2022 the review of the Resolution 12/06 “On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries”, which is the current Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) relating to seabird bycatch in the IOTC. This schedule was endorsed by SC24.

The WPEB18 had recommended to the SC25 to consider the inclusion of hook-shielding devices as an option to mitigate seabird bycatch in Resolution 12/06 (Res 12/06). This is the current Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) relating to mitigating seabird bycatch in the IOTC longline fisheries. The main objective for ACAP at SC25 was to contribute to discussions and support the inclusion of hook-shielding devices as an additional option for seabird bycatch mitigation measures in Res. 12/06. The outcome of SC25 was positive for ACAP objectives, especially as the recommendation about hook-shielding devices was referred to the IOTC commission meeting in 2023 (and was agreed at that meeting). In particular, the SC recommended that the Commission consider including hook-shielding devices as an additional option for seabird bycatch mitigation measures in Res.12/06.

IOTC has an existing Resolution on Seabird Bycatch (12/06). This covers night-setting, bird scaring lines and line weighting. Australia brought forward to the S7 a Proposal to add hook-shielding devices to the options for mitigation in line with ACAP Advice. This follows consideration and support in IOTC’s Scientific Committee (SC25). IOTC Parties are also introducing voluntary Electronic Monitoring Systems on fleets, and have been working on IOTC standards that are needed for this implementation. At the Commission meeting, IOTC27 in May 2-23, a resolution introduced by Australia on Seabird Bycatch was adopted. This added hook-shielding devices to the list of mitigation required by IOTC. The wording followed that of WCPFC on the same topic, and the involvement of ACAP AC in reviewing and adopting particular makes of these devices was written in explicitly, in order to avoid duplication of effort within IOTC – this is a strong vote of confidence in ACAP’s processes.

A Resolution on electronic monitoring was also adopted. The standards under this resolution do not include seabird monitoring, so CPCs to IOTC will need to continue to monitor in other ways. ACAP will need to be alert to seabird bycatch requirements not being left out by any future changes in IOTC regulations.

3b) ICCAT

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

Continue to work with CPCs (especially those that are ACAP Parties) and ICCAT towards a revision of Rec 11-09 that is informed by the current ACAP best practice advice.

ACAP Parties/AC Members commit to working to further ACAP objectives in ICCAT.

Review of progress, and further actions required

Meetings attended

SC-ECO, May/June 2022 (Online)

23rd Special Meeting (Vale do Lobo)

SC-ECO, May 2023 (Madrid)

At the 2022 SC-ECO meeting, ACAP performed a joint presentation along with BirdLife International on the development of a multi-year seabird strategy and action plan to help guide and evaluate efforts to reduce seabird bycatch in ICCAT fisheries. The Subcommittee recognized the importance of taking actions to address the bycatch of seabirds and specifically recalled that the review of Rec. 11-09 is still pending. The importance of starting to discuss a strategy was highlighted by the Subcommittee. The following task for the 2023 SC ECO was included in the workplan: “Discuss and continue to make progress on seabird bycatch issues”.

The ACAP objective in the 23rd Special Meeting was to continue and enhance engagement with ICCAT in line with ACAP’s RFMO engagement strategy as updated at AC12. And to talk in the margins to delegates from ACAP Parties and others including ICCAT Secretariat contacts and meeting Chairs, to encourage the start of a process in 2023 to review and update ICCAT’s seabird bycatch measure (Rec 11-09) in line with ACAP best practice advice.

At the 2023 SC-ECO, a joint proposal was presented by ACAP and BirdLife International proposing that a review of Rec 11-09 be carried out at the Subcommittee’s next meeting in 2024. The document briefly provided the current recommended best practices to reduce seabird bycatch in pelagic longline vessels. The Sub-Committee fully supported doing conducting a review of Rec. 11-09 in and including it as part of its work plan for 2024.

3c) WCPFC

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

- Work with relevant ACAP Parties, and attend SC/TCC meetings to encourage adherence to reporting requirements and to seek ways to improve the situation, given the concerns raised through Project 68.

Review of progress, and further actions required

See 1 a)

3d) Joint tuna RFMO review/Initiatives applicable to multiple RFMOs

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

- Continue to highlight the conservation crisis, our willingness to cooperate with RFMOs, and the fact that there are solutions that do work, even though they are constantly subject to improvement as best practice evolves
- AC members commit to working to convey ACAP's messages to RFMOs.
- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the inclusion of the underwater bait setting devices and assessment of the Underwater Bait Setter (Skadia Technologies) and Hookpod-mini as seabird bycatch mitigation measures.
- Contribute information on new and updated ACAP guidelines including guidelines on observer programmes and on electronic monitoring.
- Contribute information on updated ACAP advice on improving crew safety when hauling branchlines during pelagic longline operations.
- Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.

Review of progress, and further actions required

Overall progress reported through other sections of Theme 1 and Theme 3.

SPRFMO

Meetings attended

9th Annual Meeting of the Commission (COMM11), January/February 2021 (Online)

And 11th Annual Meeting of the Commission (COMM13) February 2023 (hybrid, attended online)

SPRFMO is a relatively new RFMO, formally established in August 2012. ACAP's engagement with SPRFMO has been sporadic, with input made initially during the development of their Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) and with papers presented to the Scientific Committee on occasion thereafter. In October 2014 the two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which is based largely on the template used by ACAP for MoUs with other RFMOs, proposing areas of cooperation.

In 2014, the SPRFMO Commission adopted a Seabird CMM, most recently updated in 2017 (CMM 09-2017), setting out mitigation measures for demersal longline and trawl fishing. It includes a reference to ACAP best practice and also to the SPRFMO Scientific Committee considering the advice from ACAP's Advisory Committee. SPRFMO also has a measure on data standards, CMM 02-2022.

ACAP's main objective at COMM was to encourage SPRFMO to undertake a review of their CMM-09-2017 against ACAP's current best practice advice and to review the implementation of provisions of CMM 02-2022 relevant to data collection, reporting and verification. ACAP had been specifically asked by the SPRFMO Executive Secretary to provide this meeting with updates of its best practice advice and guidelines as endorsed by

AC12, so as to enable SPRFMO Members to consider whether a review of the relevant SPRFMO measures should be undertaken. New Zealand spoke in support of ACAP's suggestion for a review and will work (together with the US, other interested Members and ACAP) on developing a review for presenting to the SPRFMO Scientific Committee. The review now forms part of the Scientific Committee's workplan for 2023.

3e) SIOFA

Actions agreed for 2022-2025

- Support consideration of SC6 recommendations to MoP8.
- Work intersessionally with France, and any other interested Parties, to review CMM 2019/02 and CMM 2019/13 against ACAP advice, and further develop a seabird ecological risk assessment. This work should consider all relevant fishing methods including demersal longline, trawl and pelagic longline.
- Continue participation at future SIOFA meetings, including SERAWG, SC, the Compliance Committee and MoP.

Review of progress, and further actions required

Meetings attended

MoP8, July 2021 (Online)

WHSOP, October/November 2021 (Online)

PAEWG4, March 2022 (Online)

SC7, March 2022 (Online)

The Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) came into force in June 2012. ACAP interaction with SIOFA has developed since 2018 when the two organisations signed a MoU to facilitate cooperation to minimise incidental bycatch of albatrosses and petrels. In 2019, the MoP6 of SIOFA adopted a CMM following a proposal submitted by the European Union (EU). The EU proposal was based largely on ACAP's best practice advice for reducing the impacts of seabird bycatch in demersal longline and trawl fisheries. However, the trawl components of the proposal were largely not included in the final CMM adopted by SIOFA. No measures were proposed for pelagic longline, despite some effort reported by one CPC. Following COVID-19 related delays, consideration of work to develop a seabird ecological risk assessment, strongly supported by France, and consideration of ACAP advice was commenced in 2021, when recommendations were endorsed to progress delivery of risk assessment and review SIOFA CMMs against ACAP advice.

The WHSOP workshop was convened to provide advice to the Scientific Committee on how to ensure that observers working in SIOFA fisheries operate using a consistent set of standards for observation and measurement. It also considered the opportunity for e-monitoring schemes to support scientific observation. ACAP presented two information papers, on guidelines for observer programme data collection and electronic monitoring

systems. Much of the workshop concerned the sharing of experiences in the organisation, infrastructure, training, funding and so on of observer programmes, and a multi-year work plan was proposed for consideration by the Scientific Committee. It was also recommended that a review of relevant e-monitoring systems be made by the Scientific Committee in 2023. A useful opportunity was identified for ACAP to present a review of current SIOFA data standards against the new ACAP observer programme data collection guidelines to the Scientific Committee in early 2022, which aligns closely the objectives of ACAP's RFMO Engagement Strategy.

Both PAEWG4 and SC7 considered the results from contracted ecological risk assessment for seabirds (and other bycatch species), which provided evidence of potentially high risk, including risk to Critically Endangered albatrosses, and with highest risk for seabirds from interaction with pelagic longline fishing. ACAP presented two information papers, one providing a general update on the conservation status of ACAP-listed species in the SIOFA area together with updates on range of ACAP advice and products (SC-07-INFO-10) and one specifically reviewing SIOFA seabird bycatch mitigation and data standard CMMs against ACAP advice (SC-07-INFO-09 rev 1/ PAEWG-04-INFO-03). Based on consideration of this work, the SC recommended that pelagic longliners operating in the SIOFA area follow IOTC Resolution 12/06. Whilst some CCPs, including ACAP Parties France and Australia, recommended extending the seabird bycatch mitigation measures to all fishing gears based on the ACAP assessment, the SC finally recommended holding a 1-2-day workshop with scientists, managers, industry representatives and observers to consider how seabird bycatch mitigation measures may be progressed further.

Proposed Actions for the current triennium (2023-2025 triennium)

- Pay attention to other work to harmonise observer programmes, and any development of e-monitoring, so as to identify relevant future opportunities to engage regarding the collection of seabird bycatch data in this RFMO.
- Work with interested CCPs to develop detailed proposed changes to seabird bycatch mitigation and data standard CMMs to achieve better alignment with ACAP advice for consideration at SC8.

4 Other actions

4a) SEAFO

- Carry over the actions proposed for 2019-2021.

[These were: "Given the recent (2018) formalisation of the MoU between the two organisations, it will be useful to remain formally engaged. It is proposed that this take the form of 'keeping a watching brief' and determining the value of attending specific meetings on a case-by-case basis. Generally, the Scientific Committee meetings are the ones that will be of interest to ACAP. Given the recent (2018) signing of the MoU, it would probably be worth attending the next (2019) Scientific Committee meeting, which will likely take place in November 2019, or alternatively submitting a series of updated ACAP advice and guideline

documents that could be presented by one of the ACAP Parties present at the meeting or the SEAFO Secretariat.”]