



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Second Meeting of Seabird Bycatch Working Group

Hermanus, South Africa, 17 – 18 August 2008

Title: FAO Expert Consultation to Develop Best Practice Guidelines for NPOA-Seabirds

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Submitted by: BirdLife International

In May 2006, the BirdLife Global Seabird Programme had a meeting with the FAO Department of Fisheries to discuss improving the implementation of the IPOA-Seabirds, specifically how to address seabird mortality in trawl fisheries under the IPOA-Seabirds. It was agreed that at the COFI meeting in March 2007, BirdLife would seek the support of FAO Member States for a FAO Expert Consultation to develop detailed 'best practice' guidelines for the development of NPOA-Seabirds.

At the 27th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries in 2007, considerable attention was focussed on the IPOAs for seabirds in relation to the ecosystem approach to fisheries. Specifically COFI ;

- Reported that, best practice technical guidelines to support the elaboration of NPOAs for seabirds should be developed through continuing joint work between FAO and relevant bodies and organizations or an expert consultation.
- Agreed that FAO should, in cooperation with relevant bodies, develop best practice guidelines to assist countries and RFMOs in implementation of the IPOA-Seabirds;
- Agreed that the guidelines should be extended to other relevant fishing gears;
- Noted that many members expressed the view that the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and BirdLife International as relevant bodies in that context.

In response to the directions and recommendations from COFI, FAO planned and organized an Expert Consultation to develop "Best Practice Technical Guidelines supporting the implementation of IPOA-Seabirds and elaboration of NPOA-Seabirds".

At the third meeting of the Advisory Committee (Valdivia, June 2007) it was agreed that ACAP would provide AUD 13,000 funding to support the initiative. ACAP were subsequently invited to nominate a representative to be invited to attend the Expert Consultation, which will be held in Bergen, Norway from September 2-5. 2008. FAO have assembled a group of invitees that represent experts on NPOA-Seabirds, the mitigation of the incidental catch of seabirds and RFMOs. The invitees represent the wide array of COFI Member States.

NPOA-Seabirds provides a vehicle for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds through the provision of a cyclical framework of data collection, research and monitoring to quantify and reduce (mitigate) the incidental mortality of seabirds, while continually refining mitigation measures and their implementation. The guidelines will be prepared to; (1) assist countries in preparing and implementing more effective NPOA-S and (2) provide RFMOs with guidance on implementing IPOA-Seabirds within a regional framework, (3) and to address the incidental catch of seabirds in other relevant gears (e.g. trawl and gillnet).