



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
Interim Secretariat provided by the Australian Government

Third Meeting of Advisory Committee

VALDIVIA, CHILE, 19-22 JUNE 2007

Agenda Item No .9
ACAP/AC3/Doc.11
Chair, Status and Trends Working Group

**REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW STATUS AND TRENDS OF
SPECIES LISTED ON ANNEX 1 OF THE AGREEMENT**

Meeting 16 June 2007

REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE STATUS AND TRENDS WORKING GROUP OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS, VALDIVIA, CHILE, 16 JUNE 2007

Welcome and Apologies

1. Professor Carlos Moreno welcomed all participants of the Status and Trends Working Group (STWG) to the Universidad Austral de Chile in Valdivia.

The STWG Convenor, Dr Rosemary Gales thanked Professor Moreno and the University for their hospitality, welcomed members and observers (Appendix 1) to the meeting and asked for attendees to introduce themselves. The Convenor asked that all attendees contribute fully to the meeting, and made a call for any new items for the agenda. The draft agenda was then adopted (Appendix 2). Drs John Cooper and Mike Double were appointed *rapporteurs* for the meeting.

Membership and Introductions

2. Apologies were noted from Gabriela Montoya (Ecuador), Martine Bigan (France), Øystein Størkersen (Norway), Stuart Butchart (BirdLife International) and Eric Woehler (Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research).

Terms of Reference

3. The Convenor briefly reviewed the Working Group's Terms of Reference (Attachment 2).

Species Assessments Project

4. At the Second Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC2) in June 2006 the Status and Trends Working Group tabled a proposal for ACAP to facilitate the creation of an ACAP Species Assessment for the 26 ACAP species currently listed. These Species Assessments will address crucial objectives in Articles III, V and VI of the ACAP Agreement. These Articles emphasise the need to collect information about species listed under Annex I of the Agreement and also to disseminate the collated information. Each assessment would include a description of each species including such information as population status and trends, taxonomy, breeding locations, threats and foraging distribution and overlap with fisheries operations and organisations. Importantly, these assessments would also serve the important task of identifying key gaps in information and priorities for actions.
5. This proposal was supported by all Parties (Report of the Second Meeting of the Advisory Committee; Sections 8.1.6 to 8.1.8). A detailed proposal and budget were requested by the AC for provision to the Second Meeting of Parties (MoP2) for further consideration and decision.

6. At the MoP 2 a paper was presented (MoP 2, Info 2) that outlined the proposal to develop comprehensive and contemporary species assessments, together with indicative potential financial implications. In order to illustrate the scope, structure and content of these ACAP Species Assessments, an example Species Assessment for the Shy Albatross (*Thalassarche cauta*) was produced specifically for consideration by MoP2. The MoP endorsed the development of this proposal as part of the Advisory Committees work program 2007-2009 (see MoP2 report paras 3.7.2 and 6.1.22). The indicative funding that was presented to the MoP is presented in Attachment 3.
7. The Convenor summarised progress with the ACAP Species Assessments. The project has been further development with the drafting of three more Species Assessments for the Amsterdam Albatross (*Diomedea amsterdamensis*), Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Thalassarche carteri*) and the Chatham Albatross (*Thalassarche eremita*). These draft Species Assessments were tabled at the current meeting. The production of these Species Assessments required assistance from BirdLife International and photographers and these groups were thanked for their valuable contributions.
8. Specific comments on the four draft Assessments were:
 - that fisheries can be identified where no interaction or bycatch information is currently available;
 - that Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) boundaries need to be provided in addition to RFMO areas of competency;
 - that diving depths should be included if data are available;
 - that at-sea sightings data could be gathered or summarised that would provide a more comprehensive assessment of the species' distribution (paragraph from Ben and Roberto)
9. There was a discussion about the potential benefits of maximising the use of at-sea data sets to determine the distribution of ACAP species. It was noted that in some regions, such data may help with our understanding of albatross and petrel distribution as it relates to seasonal and annual variability on oceanic systems. Some of the WG also highlighted the need to make these data sets more accessible by investigating the feasibility of collating such data into a form of centralised database. These data would then be in a format that would make it possible to start to investigate their compatibility and synergies with remote tracking data. It was recognised that this was a highly specialised task and would require significant expertise and funding.
10. The Convenor reported that the data sets on which the Assessments are based were incomplete for some populations and acquisition of missing data is still required. The STWG agreed that, where necessary, both the data owners (e.g. ACAP Parties through their nominated Working Group members) and data collectors (e.g. academic scientists, private expeditions, etc.) should be approached to acquire data. In some

cases data acquisition may require visits to data holders in their home offices to gain access to existing data. The need to regularly approach both national contact representatives and individual data holders to gather new or missing data was noted. It was also noted that the ACAP Secretariat should be engaged in the data acquisition process.

11. The need to identify missing information was recognised. In order to ensure the population data and figures in the species assessments are as accurate and current as possible, annual population counts will be requested from those Parties that have not yet submitted data (Ecuador), submitted data from only a subset of sites (SCAR), or only the most recent counts (France). Annual data will also be requested for well-monitored single colonies where such time series exist (UK, New Zealand and Australia).
12. The STWG then identified the need to transfer the data to the Secretariat and to be entered into a user-friendly, relational database that will enable curation, updating and reporting of all data compiled by the ACAP Working Groups. The production and maintenance of this database would be managed by the Secretariat. Access rights to the raw or summarised data within the database needs to be considered. The Advisory Committee Chair (Mark Tasker) noted, that the Interim Secretariat was not able to construct and maintain this database with current staffing. The STWG agreed that the need for the Secretariat to develop and maintain a database for the ACAP Working Groups should be communicated to the Advisory Committee.
13. The Interim Secretariat suggested that funds were currently available for contracting someone to do the initial development of such a database system. Australia offered to assist in the initial design and structure of the database, and in particular will investigate the potential mechanisms for processing data and text from the database into web-based Species Assessments and downloadable PDF files. The STWG welcomed this assistance.
14. It was agreed that, in the interim, the STWG Convenor should continue to request and curate population trends data and should not wait until the ACAP data management system is fully implemented. Quality control of incoming data should always remain with the relevant Working Group.
15. The STWG considered the appropriate medium for the Species Assessments and agreed that a web-based, printer-friendly and updatable product was preferable so as to maximise the accessibility and minimise production costs. On the latter aspect, the STWG noted that hard-copy production is costly, become quickly out-of-date, and was not essential, but may be of use in some forums such as high-level meetings. Substantial savings to the indicative budget could be made (ca:\$AUD 14 000) if high quality hard copies are not produced.

16. The STWG noted that documents prepared specifically for RFMO meetings would need to include much of the information contained within the Species Assessments combined with additional information from elsewhere. It was noted that BirdLife International is currently contracted by ACAP to produce documents on overlap between seabirds fisheries for RFMO meetings.
17. The STWG considered how to most effectively and efficiently produce the remaining 22 Species Assessments. It recognised the need for a centrally-coordinated, well-produced and consistent ACAP product. To achieve this the STWG agreed that a contracted employee is essential to manage and progress the production of the remaining Assessments. The STWG recognised that for some species (particularly breeding endemics) the Assessments could be drafted by volunteers or commissioned experts following strict guidelines provided by the ACAP employee. Also, if preferred by the data holders or relevant Party, the ACAP employee could draft the Assessment and then seek further contributions and comments. Either process should seek to involve researchers that have not yet been involved with ACAP.
18. The STWG agreed that a co-ordinating group should be established to guide and support the contracted employee and provide an initial review of draft Assessments, after which all draft Assessments could be circulated to the other ACAP Working Groups and Parties. The co-ordinating group would include the convenors of the four ACAP Working Groups, the Interim Executive Secretary, a Working Group member from Parties with endemic ACAP-listed species (e.g. France, New Zealand, United Kingdom) plus a Spanish-speaking representative. The first task of this group would be to identify those Parties or data holders who may wish to draft or review one or more Assessments.
19. The STWG then discussed if the production of the Species Assessments should follow an order of priority perhaps based on IUCN threat categories. A summary of the current global status of the 26 ACAP albatross and petrel species was presented to the WG to assist in a consideration of prioritisation of development of the species assessments. Three species are currently listed as “Critically Endangered”, all being endemic species that face “*an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild*”. For the six albatross species that qualify as “Endangered”, and hence face a “*very high risk of extinction in the wild*”, the current overall population trends are all documented as decreasing. For the 11 ACAP albatross and petrel species listed as “Vulnerable”, the criteria that most frequently qualifies the species for listing is their restricted breeding range. Reflecting this is the high degree of endemism of these birds, with eight species listed as endemics. Six ACAP species currently have the lowest level of risk of extinction and are currently considered as “Near Threatened”, although the population trends for four of these species are not yet known.
20. The STWG noted that one approach would be to prioritise species according to the severity of their conservation status. However, the STWG agreed it was preferable to complete the Species Assessments for all ACAP species in the near future, in which case prioritisation may not be required. If funding was available to contract an

employee, then a provisional deadline of completing the draft Species Assessments by the next meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC4) was considered achievable.

21. The STWG recognised that the Assessments should be produced in all three ACAP official languages (English, French and Spanish) and considered that English to Spanish translations should be completed first. The STWG noted that commercial translation services are very expensive and translation assistance from Parties should be requested to minimise such costs. The representatives from Argentina and Chile offered assistance in translation of the Assessments into Spanish. The savings to the indicative budget if fully commercial translations are not required are considerable (ca: \$AUD 36 000). These offers for assistance were gratefully received by the STWG.
22. A revised indicative budget, that took account of the savings to the previous indicative budget for the development of the full suite of the Species Assessments, was developed (see Attachment 4). This revision is based upon an anticipated completion of drafting the Assessments by AC4, and no provision for funding translations (to be provided by Parties), nor printing high quality hard copies. Funding in the order of \$AUD53 000 shall be required to complete development of the web based Species Assessments.

Future Work Plan and Actions Identified

23. Consideration was given to the existing 2007-2009 Work Programme (MoP2 Final report, Appendix A).

Based on the meeting and the discussion of the Species Assessment Project the Work Programme was revised (Attachment 5).

Indicators

24. Following up from papers tabled at AC 1 and 2, (AC 1 Doc 17, AC 2 Doc 20), New Zealand introduced a paper on indicators to measure the success of ACAP. The group was asked to consider how its work could contribute to the development of indicators, while recognising that assessments of status and trend in themselves would be the most appropriate indicator. The group agreed to consult closely with people working on the development of a composite indicator (New Zealand, South Africa, BirdLife) that measures pressure and response indicators to gauge the success of the Agreement.

Reporting to the Advisory Committee

25. The STWG agreed to produce a draft meeting report for comment prior to the Advisory Committee meeting.

Any other Business

26. Roberto Schlatter (Chile) informed the working group that Chile may wish to propose the addition of species to Annex 1 of the Agreement, such as the Pink-footed Shearwater *Puffinus creatopus*. It was agreed this was a matter to discuss at the Advisory Committee. It was noted that Assessments provided to the Convention on Migratory Species (for those CMS-listed species) could be used to help in collating data for proposing the addition of species to Annex 1, as well as for drafting Species Assessments for existing ACAP species.

Meeting Closure

27. In closing the meeting, the Convenor thanked the host and all the participants for their valued contributions. The Convenor also thanked the Rapporteurs for their valuable contribution to recording the discussions of the STWG. The meeting participants thanked Dr Gales for her convenorship of the STWG since its inception and for convening a productive meeting.

Actions by the Advisory Committee

28. The STWG agreed that substantial progress has been made with most major data holders now having submitted data. To progress adequately the work of the STWG, the STWG recommends ACAP Species Assessments be completed before AC4 in 2008. This initiative will continue to enhance the synergy between the four current Advisory Committee WGs. Consequently the Advisory Committee is asked to:

- a) endorse the recommendation that the Secretariat to develop and implement a data management system to curate the data that is acquired by the Working Groups;
- b) endorse the recommendation that the Secretariat engage a contracted person to assist in the development of the full suite of the Species Assessments;
- c) endorse the revised Work Program for the STWG.

**APPENDIX 1:
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF SECOND MEETING OF STATUS AND TRENDS
WORKING GROUP – 16 June 2007**

Convenor

Rosemary Gales (Australia)

Members

John Cooper (South Africa)

Robert Crawford (South Africa)

Marcello Garcia A (Chile)

Richard Phillips (United Kingdom)

Johanna Pierre (New Zealand)

Maria Tombesi (Argentina)

Observers

Spencer Clubb (New Zealand)

John Croxall (BirdLife International)

Mike Double (Australia)

Andrea Fabiano (xx)

Marco Favero (Argentina)

Elisa Goya ((Peru)

Ian Hay (Australia)

Nicole LeBoeuf (USA)

Edward Melvin (USA)

Carlos Moreno (Chile)

Ken Morgan (Canada)

Maura Naughton (USA)

Fabien Rabuffetti (Argentina)

Ronnie Reyes (Chile)

Graham Robertson (Australia)

Jorge Ruiz T. (Chile)

Roberto Schlatter (Chile)

Ben Sullivan (BirdLife International)

Mark Tasker (United Kingdom)

Rodrigo Vega (Chile)

ACAP Interim Secretariat

Barry Baker

Diane Erceg

Warren Papworth

**ATTACHMENT 2:
WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW STATUS AND TRENDS OF SPECIES LISTED
ON ANNEX 1 OF THE AGREEMENT – TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Resolution 1.5 of the First Session of the Meeting of Parties ((MOP1) to ACAP provides for the establishment by the Advisory Committee of a Working Group on the Status and Trends of albatross and petrel species covered by the Agreement.

The aim of this group is to collect and collate the most up to date information on breeding numbers of each species of albatross and petrel listed on Annex 1 of the ACAP Agreement and to produce an assessment of the status and trends of each species.

The data for this review will be sought from Parties and Signatories to ACAP which are Breeding Range States for (ie are home to breeding populations of) the ACAP listed species.

The terms of reference include the work programme for the review, details of the membership of the working group, a timetable for actions and details of the conditions for use of albatross and petrel data submitted for the purposes for the review.

ATTACHMENT 3: (extracted from MoP 2 Info 2)

Itemised Budget for the ACAP Species Assessments Project

We anticipate that if funded, Phase One (see below) of the ACAP Species Assessment Project will be completed by the next AC meeting in June 2007. Phase Two will be completed by June 2008.

All amounts are given in Australian Dollars.

Item	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
Compilation of text and data for remaining ACAP listed species	\$18,400	\$18,400	
Payment to <i>BirdLife International</i> for the production of maps of range and satellite-tracking data (see attached Species Assessment)	\$4,200		
Type-setting and graphic design	\$2,500	\$2,500	
Publication on CD ROM and as Portable Document Format (pdf) files on the ACAP web site		\$2,500	
Translation into official ACAP languages	\$18,200	\$18,200	
Design and implementation of a Species Assessment section within ACAP web site		\$11,200	
Publication of all the ACAP Species Assessments as hard copy (based upon 5-6 pages per species)		\$14,000	
Annual review and update of each Species Assessment			\$5,000 (approximately)
Totals:	\$43,300	\$66,800	\$5,000
Completed by:	June 2007	June 2008	ongoing

ATTACHMENT 4:

Indicative Revised Budget for the ACAP Species Assessments Project

It is anticipated that, if funded, all the ACAP Species Assessments will be completed by the next AC meeting in 2008.

Note: There is no budget allocation for translation and printing hard copies in this revised budget.

All amounts are given in Australian Dollars.

Item	
Compilation of text and data for remaining ACAP listed species	\$36, 800
Type-setting and graphic design	\$2, 500
Publication on CD ROM and as Portable Document Format (pdf) files on the ACAP web site	\$2, 500
Design and implementation of a Species Assessment section within ACAP web site	\$11, 200
Total:	\$53, 000
Annual review and update of each Species Assessment	\$5,000 (approximately)

**ATTACHMENT 5:
REVISED FUTURE WORK PLAN FOR THE STWG**

Action	To be completed by	Responsibility
Continue population data collection	2007 and ongoing	Parties and Range States with breeding populations
Progress development of an ACAP database to be held within, and managed by, the Secretariat	July 2007	Australia then Secretariat and WGs
Progress IT framework for web-based Species Assessments	July 2007	Australia
Establish Species Assessments Coordination Group	July 2007	Secretariat and WG Chair
Engage contracted employee for development of Species Assessments	July-August 2007	Secretariat and WG Chair
Seek information from the Secretariat on the progression of the ACAP database	December 2007	WG Chair
Progress translations of Species Assessments	December 2008 and ongoing	Secretariat, WG Chair and Parties
Complete draft Species Assessments	AC3 August 2008	STWG / Parties / Assessment Contractor
Provide and consider annual reports to AC on WG activities	December 2008 and ongoing	STWG
Maintenance of database and updating Species Assessments	AC4, AC5, AC6	STWG and AC