



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Fifth Meeting of Advisory Committee

Mar del Plata, Argentina, 13 – 17 April 2010

Report on the Secretariat's Operations

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Report on the Secretariat's Operations since the Fourth Meeting of the Advisory Committee

This report provides an overview of the Secretariat's operations since the last meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC4). A detailed report on progress made against individual tasks in the Secretariat's Work Programme is provided in AC5 Doc 21.

A significant milestone was reached with the ratification of the Headquarters Agreement by the Government of Australia in December 2008. This action formally established the Secretariat on a permanent basis and provides it with a legal personality and appropriate privileges and immunities. The Secretariat is currently working with the Commonwealth and State Governments to implement the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement.

Secretariat Headquarters

In September 2009 the Secretariat moved to new office accommodation at 27 Salamanca Square, Battery Point, Tasmania. The new office is located next door to the Secretariat's previous office and provides the Secretariat with its own dedicated facilities for the first time. Of particular benefit is that work-stations are now available for staff on secondment to the Secretariat and for visiting experts.

Staffing

The Third Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP3) supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation at AC4 that a full-time Science Officer position be created in the Secretariat for a fixed-term of four years. This decision increases the Secretariat's full-time staff positions from one to two. Two part-time positions, the Technical Advisor (Barry Baker) and Web Administrator (Luke Finley), continue to be engaged on a consultancy basis. The remaining part-time position, that of Information Officer (John Cooper), is being undertaken on a voluntary basis. Other work, such as interpretation and translation services, database development etc. continues to be undertaken on a contractual basis.

Both full-time positions were advertised during this period with Warren Papworth being appointed as Executive Secretary and Wieslawa Misiak as Science Officer.

Significant Outcomes

The major outcomes achieved by the Secretariat since AC4 have been:

- Completion of all ACAP Species Assessments with progress made on their translation into all three official languages ;
- Development of a data portal and database to facilitate the submission and analysis of data;
- Organising and providing support for the Third Session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- Successfully advocating for the adoption and improvement of seabird conservation measures in Regional Fisheries Managements Organisations;
- Negotiation of memoranda of understanding with CCAMLR, IOTC and OLDEPESCA to facilitate liaison and consultation on seabird conservation measures;
- Provision of support to the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups during the intersessional period;
- Organising and supporting a number of workshops on issues such as the Waved Albatross, the conservation prioritisation process, and bycatch data collection;
- Development of a new website for the Agreement following a virus attack which comprised the effective operation of our old site;
- Writing and coordinating news articles on the ACAP website to facilitate information exchange, education and advocacy of the Agreement's work;
- Progressing implementation of the Headquarters Agreement between the Secretariat and the Government of Australia; and
- Coordination of the Agreement's activities with governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, such as the Convention for Migratory Species, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations and BirdLife International.

The continued support of the Government of Tasmania in providing office facilities, accounting and administrative support in support of the Secretariat's operations is greatly appreciated. Acknowledgement is also required for the support of the Advisory Committee, and in particular the assistance of its Officials, which has been instrumental to the achievement of many of the above outcomes. Their ongoing support is also greatly appreciated.