Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Sixth Meeting of Advisory Committee

Guayaquil, Ecuador, 29 August – 2 September 2011

Progress and outcomes of projects supported by the Advisory Committee in 2009

Secretariat, AC Officials

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Eight projects were supported during the 2009 call for applications. A progress report was sought in February 2011 using a standard form developed for the 2008 round of applications. All projects have made significant headway in meeting the outcomes indicated in the initial applications as summarised below. Standard progress reports were not submitted for projects 2009-01 and 2009-05, instead, project 2009-01 is addressed in the Secretariat Report (AC6 Doc 6) and a short update on project 2009-05 was provided by the Principal Investigator via email, as the start of the project was delayed until October 2010. Project 2009-11 also experienced some delays, but this has not been a major setback in terms of the overall success of the study.

The projects supported in 2009 have already delivered good outcomes addressing tasks in the AC Work Programme, and the overall process of project evaluation and funding allocation is working well.

ACAP 2009-01. Development of ACAP database-generated Implementation Reports (ACAP Secretariat).

Funding provided: AUD$ 5,000

Summary of activities/outcomes: A standard reporting template was developed as discussed at AC5 (AC5 Doc 16) and integrated into the ACAP database. Parties were invited to access and complete their reports online via the ACAP data portal. As expected, users identified some minor problems with the system and suggested improvements, but overall the web-based process worked well. Now that the foundations of the new system are in place, further refinement can be introduced to the format as needed.

ACAP 2009-02. Improving Waved Albatross Conservation: Monitoring Changes in Population Size and Vital Rates (Kathryn Huyvaert, Colorado State University, USA).

Funding provided: AUD$ 16,950

Summary of activities/outcomes: Fledgling birds were banded at Punta Cevallos and at Punta Suárez in late 2009 and late 2010. The primary outcome of the continued monitoring at Punta Cevallos is an updated, more precise estimate of annual adult survival. In addition, this will provide estimates of post-fledging survival and age-specific breeding probabilities, two parameters that have never been estimated before and will serve to better define a robust estimate of population growth rate.

The goals at the newly rediscovered interior Central Colony are to establish several monitoring plots, to band all breeding adults on these monitoring plots, and to develop a mark-resight protocol for use in 2012 to estimate the population size for the entirety of Española. Project activities to date have included development of the methods.

The third objective is an estimate of the rate of recruitment of juveniles to the breeding population. A new graduate student will use the data supported by this current grant, as well

as those collected by the PI since 1999, to estimate age-specific breeding probabilities as a part of his thesis.

The remainder of the budget will be spent to repeat a second year of data collection for vital rates at Punta Cevallos and to cover a trip to the Central Colony.

An overarching outcome of this work is the implementation of population-level monitoring activities outlined in the Waved Albatross POA.

ACAP 2009-04. Responding to the evolution of Peru's artisanal longline fleet: characterising fleet mechanisation and introducing weighted swivels (Jeff Mangel & Joanna Alfaro-Shigueto, Pro-Delphinus, Peru).

Funding provided: AUD$ 20,974

Summary of activities/outcomes:

- Assessment of longline fleet characteristics and mechanization in the ports of Callao (2 mechanised vessels), Chimbote (4 vessels), and Pucusana (1 vessel).
- Distribution of weighted swivels to longline fishermen; 3750 swivels distributed to 13 vessels in the ports of Salaverry, Chimbote and Ilo. Additional 900 swivels were distributed in July to two vessels, one in Salaverry and one in Chimbote.
- Continued monitoring by onboard observers of seabird interactions with the driftnet fleet of Salaverry - 30 driftnet fishing trips (176 sets). No WAAL were observed bycaught during the study period.
- Continued monitoring by onboard observers of waved albatross abundance and distribution.
- Worth noting that follow-up communications with fishermen who were provided weighted swivels (and with those contacted regarding gear mechanization) was exceedingly difficult - owners, captains and crew are constantly moving between ports and/or at sea and regularly change telephone numbers, and are frequently too busy to talk.
- It will be important to continue to monitor the introduction of line pullers and mainline spools, but also to begin monitoring fishing operations by these vessels using onboard observers. Work introducing weighted swivels will also require additional years of effort

Full report was submitted to the Secretariat in October 2010.

ACAP 2009-05. Seabird interactions with trawl fishery for Peruvian hake in northern Peru (Liliana Ayala, APECO, Peru).

Funding provided: AUD$ 20,056

Summary of activities/outcomes: The project commenced in mid-October 2010 with the preparation of observer manuals, data collection forms, and guidelines for the identification of birds, turtles and marine mammals. In late November observations began aboard trawlers engaged in industrial fishing of hake in Paita. So far we have observed 67 fishing trips over 153 fishing days in the second 2010 hake season. So far we have recorded the bycatch of seven southern sea lions *Otaria flavescens*, two turtles *Lepidochelys coriacea,* and one juvenile blue-footed booby *Sula nebouxii*.

ACAP 2009-06. Fact sheets for best practice techniques to mitigate seabird bycatch in pelagic longline, demersal longline and trawl fisheries (Ben Sullivan, BirdLife International).

Funding provided: AUD$ 18,216

Summary of activities/outcomes:

As the initial ACAP project proposal (2009) was radically different from objectives agreed under AC5 (2010), we highlight some of the revised objectives below.

Revised Objectives

- Translation into Spanish, French, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese, and Korean.
- Translation of individual factsheets will be based on target fisheries and gear types relevant for each language, and which will assist in the conservation of ACAP listed species.

The factsheets to be co-branded as ACAP/BirdLife International product in all seven languages, published on the ACAP website and downloadable in pdf format.

Outcomes to date

- A full set of 15 English seabird bycatch mitigation factsheets (covering pelagic longline, demersal longline, and trawl fisheries) were reviewed at AC5 and a timeline for revisions set out.
- Since AC5, the factsheets have been translated into four languages (Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Japanese).
- Revisions for a sub-set of factsheets identified for 2011 have been completed, and these revisions have been translated into the Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Japanese versions.
- Japanese translation work is continuing and is expected to be completed by Sept 2011.
- Production of electronic pdf versions of Japanese, Korean, and Mandarin factsheets is expected to be complete by Oct 2011.
- The technical language for some of the Asian languages has been difficult to accurately ascertain, and changes are still being made to the Japanese translations at the current time (March 2011). Unfortunately, this will not be completed by AC6 as it also involves sensitive discussions with Japanese Government agencies. At AC6 we would like to discuss a role for ACAP in these discussions and general acceptance of the series of Fact Sheets in Japan.

ACAP 2009-09. Implementation of a Scientific Observer Programme to Evaluate the Interaction of Seabirds with Demersal Fisheries in the South of Chile (Jorge Azocar, Instituto de Fomento Pesquero, Chile).

Funding provided: AUD$ 10,000

Summary of activities/outcomes: The objective of the project was to increase capacities in the body dealing with the gathering of data on seabird interactions in the Fisheries

Institute. Three workshops were held in southern Chile: Talcahuano, Puerto Montt and Punta Arenas, with 72 participants, with the main group consisting of scientific observers.

The training was divided into modules, which addressed legislation, identifying the main species interacting with fishing operations, as well as biology and ecology of seabirds. To support species identification, a guide designed to withstand fieldwork conditions was produced.

Regular visits are scheduled to be introduced to monitor the collection of information on interactions in the different fleets that operate in southern Chile. The first phase of this project is completed with forms already developed to record this information.

The original schedule was changed due to the dynamics of the fleet; the course was offered when the different fleets were less busy with operations so that a greater number of observers could participate.

ACAP 2009-10. Regional workshop "Improving data collection on incidental mortality of seabirds from South American Observer Programmes" (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay).

Funding provided: AUD$ 23,000

Summary of activities/outcomes: The workshop took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina between 14th and 16th September, 2010. The objective of the workshop was to standardize criteria for data collection of seabird mortality in South American observer programmes. The event was the first collaborative effort between the observer programme managers (or those with similar responsibility) to develop the topic within the region.

The most important outcomes of the workshop were:

1) Assessment and analysis of different onboard observer programs in the region;
2) Review of gear configuration and fishing gear in the South American fleets;
3) Review of the framework for identification of ACAP conservation priorities, using as a reference document doc AC5 15.
4) Standardization of data needed to estimate and monitor the incidental mortality of seabirds. A list of basic minimum fields that should be recorded in fisheries where there is any possibility of bycatch of seabirds was agreed on.
5) Identification of the objectives and methods to be included in the second phase of the project, to be carried out in 2011, where various aspects from the first stage will be elaborated on.

The final report of the workshop can be downloaded from:
http://www.ambiente.gov.ar/archivos/web/GTRA/file/Aves%20marinas/informe%20final%20taller%20sudamericano.pdf

ACAP 2009-11. A stepped approach to evaluating the effectiveness of a fast sinking line-weighting regime (Graham Robertson, Australian Antarctic Division, Australia).

Funding provided: AUD$ 5,850

Summary of activities/outcomes: We conducted a head-to-head comparison of catch rates of gear configured with 60 gm leaded swivels 3.5 m from hooks (the conventional configuration) with gear configured with 120 g safe leads 2 m from hooks. The trial was conducted on the F/V Samurai, operated by Mr Nick Williams, out of Mooloolaba, Queensland. AFMA was very supportive of this trial and committed 70 days observer time to the study.

No effect of the new gear on fish catch rates could be detected. It should be noted, however, that the trial stopped when the number of observer days allotted by AFMA was exhausted. However, for the commercial species (tunas, rudder fish, makos, swords) the data strongly infers that branch lines with 120 g 2 m from hooks do not affect the catch rates of these species compared to branch lines with 60 g at 3.5 m from hooks.

During the conduct of this trial Mr Williams came up with the idea of conducting a second trial using leads placed right at the hook. Based on previous research (Robertson *et al*. 2010) I suggested 40 g leads at the hook. The “40 g lumo hook leads” are cylindrical in shape and are covered with a plastic coating that glows in the dark. I contracted Fishtek to make the leads. The trial has cost $12,000 to resource thus far, which I have covered from my AAD funds and external funds. AFMA have committed 80 observer days to the trial. The second trip in the trial commenced in mid February 2011.

There were numerous delays to the commencement date, largely due to the supplier (Fishtek, UK) of the 120 g safe leads being way over schedule in delivering the gear. And the leads arrived with a design fault which had to be rectified.

A report on the results of both these trials will be submitted to the next meeting of the SBWG.