



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Sixth Meeting of Advisory Committee

Guayaquil, Ecuador, 29 August – 2 September 2011

Summary of projects supported in 2010

Grant Sub-Committee, Secretariat

'This paper is presented for consideration by ACAP and may contain unpublished data, analyses, and/or conclusions subject to change. Data in this paper shall not be cited or used for purposes other than the work of the ACAP Secretariat, ACAP Advisory Committee or their subsidiary Working Groups without the permission of the original data holders.'

Summary of projects supported in 2010

Grant Sub-Committee, Secretariat

Following is a condensation of details on projects supported by the Advisory Committee in 2010 after the selection conducted by the Grants Sub-Committee and approved by the Advisory Committee. Information on project titles, funds granted and objectives is provided.

ACAP 2010-01 - At-sea distribution of the WAAL and overlap with fishing fleets of the central Peruvian coast (Joanna Alfaro-Shigueto & Jeffrey C. Mangel, Pro Delphinus, Peru)

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 11,500

This project will (1) assess the level of overlap of waved albatrosses (WAAL) at their Peru foraging grounds with fishing fleets, (2) update fleet-wide fishing effort data for the ports of Salaverry and Chimbote, and (3) build upon the achievements of our 2009 ACAP project by expanding the distribution of weighted swivels in the port of Salaverry, Peru. The ultimate purpose of this project is to promote the long-term sustainability of the WAAL and Peruvian artisanal fisheries. This can be assisted by developing more accurate information on the WAAL at-sea distribution, the distribution and fishing effort of Peru's artisanal fishing fleets, and how these two overlap and interact. This information will help guide decision making and the implementation of effective seabird conservation measures.

ACAP 2010-03 - Evaluating alternative approaches to predicting at-sea distributions and fisheries overlaps of ACAP species in Ecological Risk Assessments (Richard Phillips, British Antarctic Survey)

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 7,200

The objective of the project is to provide clear guidance on best-practise approaches to evaluating overlap between the at-sea distribution of ACAP species (and in principle, other seabirds) and fishing effort, as part of seabird Ecological Risk Assessments (ERAs) in fisheries. Seabird ERAs have been developed by working groups of various fisheries regulatory bodies, including several tuna commissions, and other working groups have elected or are being encouraged to initiate this process. The purpose of an ERA is to identify the species most at risk and, in most cases, the specific fisheries, areas and times of year when the threat is greatest. This allows fisheries managers and operators to identify and target appropriate management actions, whether this be in the form of advice, poster and other education campaigns, provision of equipment that helps mitigate seabird bycatch, introduction of observer programmes and vessel inspections to check compliance, or the enforcement of seasonal closures in some areas.

ACAP 2010-04 - Concluding six years of research on seabird bycatch reduction through modified discharge management regimes: Is batch discharge better than ad-hoc discharge from trawl vessels? (Johanna Pierre, Ministry of Research, Science and Technology, New Zealand)

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 14,500

Holding fish waste onboard trawl vessels is widely agreed to be the ideal form of waste management for reducing seabird bycatch. However, under current operational conditions, many deepwater trawl vessels worldwide do not have the capacity to hold fish waste for the duration of a trawl tow. Consequently, waste is discharged overboard, increasing the risk of albatrosses, petrels and other seabirds striking trawl warps, and getting caught in trawl nets during shooting and hauling. New Zealand work on reducing seabird bycatch by modifying the management of fisheries waste (offal and discards) began in earnest in 2004. In the past six years, numerous trials have been conducted on deepwater trawl vessels examining the effects of a variety of waste discharge regimes on seabird attendance at trawl vessels, and seabird bycatch. This project is the last in that series of experiments to allow a comprehensive modeling analysis of the data. Preliminary analyses have, alluded to conclusions not subsequently supported by detailed modeling work. Consequently, without modeling analyses, this project will not be complete. The Department of Conservation is unable to fund the modeling analysis required. The results of this project are relevant to reducing seabird bycatch in trawl fisheries worldwide.

ACAP 2010-09 - Internal Consultation Process for the Consolidation of the National Plan of Action for the Conservation of Seabirds in Peru (Elisa Goya, Instituto del Mar del Perú; Arturo Gonzáles Araujo, Dirección General de Extracción y Procesamiento Pesquero, Ministerio de la Producción).

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 15,400

The present project is aimed at conducting a series of internal consultations regarding the base document for the National Plan of Action for the Conservation of Seabirds in Peru, to achieve a document that is participatory and based on consensus, by facilitating and ensuring its effective implementation in order to achieve and maintain a favorable conservation status for seabirds in Peru. This tool will enable to organize, direct and channel efforts amongst all key stakeholders in one same direction, with horizons in the short, medium and long terms. Various stages have been identified in the elaboration of the National Plan of Action; currently under process is a situational diagnosis as well as a base document for the National Plan of Action. A later stage will be to subject the base document to a process of internal consultations amongst the stakeholders involved prior to its final approval. To do this, five regional workshops have been proposed at key locations distributed all along the coast. These workshops seek to identify the problems and the need for a National Plan of Action, the base document will be reviewed and discussed and a positive feedback process shall be implemented. At a later stage, a National Workshop is envisaged to take place for the purposes of final validation of the document.

ACAP 2010-10 - Defining high-risk areas in the Argentinean Continental Shelf: to which extent albatrosses and petrels interact with the Argentine high-seas commercial trawl fleet? (Sofía Copello and Juan Pablo Seco Pon. CONICET-UNMDP, Argentina).

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 14,100

The main objective of this project is to conduct an analysis of the interactions between albatrosses and petrels with trawl fisheries in the Patagonian Shelf in order to develop a comprehensive model to define areas of high risk, and spatio-temporally predict their interactions over the Patagonian Shelf. The transfer of this information to decision makers in local Governmental Agencies will promote and facilitate the development of conservation measures. After conducting a regional review and making the first estimations of mortalities and interactions with the trawl fishery, we are at a stage where a comprehensive study to understand the interactions and identifying key areas in the continental shelf are one of the steps needed to promote the development of responsible fisheries management. The main objective of this project is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the interactions between albatrosses and petrels with fisheries (focusing on the trawl fishery) in the Patagonian Shelf.

ACAP 2010-11 - Improving data collection on seabird incidental mortality associated with fisheries in South American observer programmes: Part II – year 2011 (Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay)

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 10,000

The main objective of this proposal is to improve data collection by observer programmes in South America on incidental mortality of seabirds associated with fisheries. This project was structured in two phases, the first of which was already funded by the ACAP Advisory Committee in 2009. The first phase of the proposal included a three day workshop (held in Buenos Aires in September 2010) for Heads/ Coordinators/ Managers of Observer Programmes and other relevant governmental authorities from South American Parties. The actions for the second stage of this Project will take place in 2011 and comprise regional workshops in the Atlantic and the Pacific for the harmonization of observer protocols and the implementation of exchange and cooperation among observer programmes in the region.

ACAP 2010-13 - Final on-shore development of ‘hook-pod’ to reduce seabird bycatch in pelagic longline fisheries (Ben Sullivan, BirdLife International).

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 25,000

Work funded by this grant would be conducted at Fishtek in the UK and will be completed by March 2011, following further operational at-sea trials scheduled for late 2010. The ‘Hook Pod’ is a capsule for pelagic longline fisheries that prevents seabirds from accessing baits before a pressure sensitive valve operates at a pre-determined depth to release baited hooks. This device is based on capturing the inherently reliable and predictable forces of pressure to operate a release mechanism. At-sea trials funded by ACAP were conducted in the ETBF in December 2009. These trials successfully investigated operational aspects of the hook pod and also highlighted several functional issues that need refinement. Funds from this grant application will address the following: develop a final pressure release mechanism (based on results of 2010 at-sea trials) to ensure a reliable and durable release at a predictable depth; incorporate results of 2010 at-sea trials to ensure the pods are robust and able to withstand forces experienced during line hauling; incorporate a LED light (controlled by an on/off switch) in the pod to replace light sticks, thereby simplifying setting operations and leading to a significant cost saving for the industry, and removal of major source of marine debris; manufacture of 1000 final prototype pods for at-sea trials in mid 2011, which

will be the final step in investigating the operational and functional effectiveness of the hook pod. These trials will include data collection on: -first trialing of the effectiveness of the LED light source, -further sink rate data of the pod -preliminary data on the effectiveness of the pod in reducing seabird bycatch rates -information on the catch rate of target species; -and the overall operational and functional performance of the pod, including reliability and durability.

ACAP 2010-15 - Estimates of the Waved albatross mortality in artisanal fisheries during the critical period of incubation (Jorge Samaniego, GSP BirdLife - Aves & Conservación, Ecuador).

FUNDS GRANTED: AUD 15,000

Currently there is a need to determine the mortality in fisheries happening in other areas of distribution of the species when the birds leave their breeding colonies to feed, specifically on the southern coast of Ecuador. The official fishery observer programs have been trained in gathering information on seabirds during our first year of work on the project on the Conservation of the Waved Albatross, however these programs do not have sufficient staff to direct their efforts to permanent survey on interaction with seabirds, do not cover all fisheries, and are focused on other organisms (turtles, sharks, marine mammals). This study aims to increase knowledge about the Waved Albatross during the critical period of incubation when feeding activity around Espanola Island and the mainland south coast of Ecuador is high. The specific objectives of this proposal are: to form a group of fisheries observers to accompany the deep artisanal longline fisheries; to increase information on seabird interactions, and specifically on Waved Albatross, with demersal artisanal longline fisheries; and to implement mitigation measures to reduce seabird mortality in the fisheries mentioned.