



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Sixth Meeting of Advisory Committee

Guayaquil, Ecuador, 29 August – 2 September 2011

Report on the Implementation of the Agreement 2008-2011 – Australia

Australia

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Report for the Meeting of Parties - MOP-4 (2012)

Submitted by - Australia

Coverage of report - Australia

1. Overview of implementation of Agreement and Action Plan

- 1.1 Has action been taken to implement the decisions of previous MoPs? Yes
Decisions and actions arising from previous MOPs have been fully implemented, including domestic treaty ratification actions for the amendment to Annex 1 and to give effect to the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement.
- 1.2 Is action for national implementation planned to occur in the next three years? Yes
A range of actions continues to be taken or is planned to implement the key provisions of the Action Plan, including monitoring the status of breeding populations, eradicating non-native taxa at a major breeding site, further improving protection (including biosecurity) of some breeding sites, reducing fisheries bycatch of ACAP-listed species through mandating use of mitigation measures and conducting further mitigation research.

2. Species conservation

- 2.1 Has the Party provided any exemptions to prohibitions on the taking or harmful interference with albatrosses and petrels? No
- 2.2 Has any use or trade in albatrosses or petrels occurred? No
- 2.3 Has the Party implemented any new single or multi-species conservation strategies / Action Plans? Yes
Australia adopted a national recovery plan for albatrosses and giant petrels in 2001. A revised national recovery plan is expected to be finalised and adopted in the next 2 months or so; it will detail key conservation actions necessary to monitor the status of Australia's breeding populations, to reduce at-sea and on-land threats within Australia's jurisdiction, to educate fishers and others and to encourage increased international conservation efforts. The plan will be publicly available once and will be provided to ACAP it is adopted.
- 2.4 Has the Party taken any emergency measures involving albatrosses or petrels? No
- 2.5 Has the Party conducted any re-establishment schemes? No
- 2.6 Has the Party introduced any new legal or policy instruments for species protection of albatrosses and petrels? Yes
See comments under Q 2.3 regarding a national recovery plan for albatrosses and giant petrels.
- 2.7 Has the Party implemented any legal or policy instruments for environmental impact assessments? Yes
No new legal instruments. An environmental impact statement was prepared prior to the commencement of the project to eradicate alien invasive pests at Macquarie Island, a major Australian subantarctic breeding site for ACAP-listed species. A review of the eradication project activities in 2010, including the unexpectedly high impact on non-target species (including ACAP-listed species) was completed in late 2010. A copy of the statement, the review report and other documents for the eradication project can be downloaded at: www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=12997#The%20Eradication%20Plan
- 2.8 Does the Party have any species it would like to submit for addition to Annex 1? No
- 2.9 Are there any other conservation projects for ACAP species not already mentioned? Yes
Baiting operations commenced in 2010 at subantarctic Macquarie Island as part a multi-year project to eradicate alien invasive pests (rabbits, rats and mice). Macquarie Island is a major Australian breeding site for ACAP-listed species. Full details of the project, a review of the first year's baiting and other field activities, and a range of related documents can be viewed or downloaded at: www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=13013. Of particular relevance to ACAP was the impact of baiting on (non-target) ACAP-listed species. In the first season only 8% of bait was able to be spread due to bad weather halting helicopter operations, however 947 poisoned bird carcasses (16 Southern Giant Petrels, 298 Northern Giant Petrels, 226 subantarctic skuas, 385 kelp gulls, 22 mallard and black duck) had been discovered on the island by 9 February 2011, with 4 NGPs (1 banded bird from Macquarie Island) discovered dead in the New Zealand subantarctic and which tested positive for brodifacoum, the bait used at Macquarie Island. An unknown number of other birds is likely to have died at sea. The full eradication (including bait spreading) project is now scheduled to be implemented between April and September 2011, with increased mitigation measures to minimise impacts on non-target species.

3. Habitat conservation

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- 3.1 Has the Party introduced any legal or policy instruments or actions to implement protection and management of breeding sites, including habitat restoration? Yes
Refer to Q2.9 above regarding the Macquarie Island Pest Eradication Project
- 3.2 Has the Party implemented any sustainable management measures for marine living resources which provide food for albatrosses and petrels? Yes
While no specific provision is made in fishery management arrangements for food for albatrosses and petrels, Australia's fisheries are managed according to ecosystem-based management principles which seek to ensure that maximum sustainable yields for target species are not exceeded and that there is adequate escapement of target species to maintain ecosystem relationships, including with dependent and associated species (such as seabirds).
- 3.3 Has the Party implemented any management or protection of important marine areas for albatrosses and petrels? No
No further areas protected since last report.

4. Management of human activities

- 4.1 Has the Party completed any new environmental impact assessments related to albatrosses and petrels? Yes
Refer to Q2.7 above for details of the environmental impact statement completed prior to the commencement of the Macquarie Island Pest Eradication Project and the Review of the project's first season of baiting operations.
- 4.2 Has the Party implemented any new measures to minimise discharge of pollutants and marine debris (MARPOL)? No
- 4.3 Has the Party introduced any new measures to minimise the disturbance to albatrosses and petrels in marine and terrestrial habitats? No

5. Research programmes

- 5.1 Does the Party have any ongoing research programmes relating to the conservation of albatrosses and petrels not already reported on? Yes
Long term population monitoring and research programs on ACAP species continue at subantarctic Macquarie Island and at all three breeding sites around mainland Tasmania for Shy albatross. Several research projects are underway to develop improved mitigation of bycatch in pelagic longline fisheries. These include the development of a device to set hooks underwater and further evaluation of different line weighting options to achieve fast sink rates with weight sizes that are acceptable to fishers. The use of automated cameras to assess populations levels and trends at a southern giant petrel breeding site in east Antarctica (Hawker Island) is also continuing.
- 5.2 Does the Party have any additional national institutions (authorities or research centres), or NGOs involved in albatross and petrel conservation? Yes
The Australian Maritime College, a national tertiary institution that delivers a wide range of maritime training courses, is providing specialist assistance (in the fields of hydro-dynamics and fisheries technology) to Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) research aimed at developing improved mitigation measures for pelagic longline (tuna) fisheries. Several institutions, including the AAD; the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and the Environment; the CSIRO and the University of Tasmania continues their involvement in a range of research programs covering bycatch mitigation, population monitoring and demography, and fisheries bycatch and effort, and post-graduate (PhD) research into the population status and foraging ecology of Shy albatrosses, and White-capped albatrosses population status and demography of Shy albatrosses.

6. Education and public awareness

- 6.1 Has the Party conducted training or provided information for user audiences (eg scientists, fishers, etc)? Yes
Information sessions provided to all tuna fishers about the effectiveness of present mandatory mitigation measures and how these might be improved to further reduce seabird bycatch. Information training sessions given to at-sea observers prior to their deployment. Training sessions to explain how to undertake at-sea observer tasks, including observation techniques, data collection and recording, were run for scientific observers about to be deployed on fishing vessels.
- 6.2 Has the Party conducted training or provided information to the general public? Yes
A range of seabird conservation information, including the Threat Abatement Plan to reduce seabird bycatch from longline fishing operations, is made available to the general public, principally through publishing on websites. Examples of this information can be viewed at:
www.antarctica.gov.au/science/southern-ocean-ecosystems/seabird-bycatch
www.antarctica.gov.au/science/southern-ocean-ecosystems/seabird-bycatch/threat-abatement-plan-seabirds

7. Other

Does the Party have any new information to report on research into observed impacts, or mitigation of, climate change on albatrosses and petrels? No

1) Robertson et al 2010 (Assassin).pdf (size 505513 bytes)  [↗](#)
2) Robertson et al 2010.pdf (size 224389 bytes)  [↗](#)

8. Additional Comments

Final submission details

Report is closed for editing.

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