

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Eighth Meeting of the Advisory Committee <i>Punta del Este, Uruguay, 15 -19 September 2014</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Secretariat Report</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Secretariat</p>
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SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the Secretariat's operations since the Seventh Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC7). A review of the Secretariat's work programme shows that most of the tasks set for the 2013-2015 triennium have been completed, or substantial progress achieved on them, although resource constraints have prevented some tasks from being undertaken and/or completed.

Staffing of the Secretariat remains at two full-time positions, with additional support provided by volunteers, consultancies, secondments and internships, as well as by Advisory Committee officials.

A de-hooking guide and a photographic seabird identification guide for use in tuna RFMOs have been completed, as well as a review undertaken of injuries sustained by fishers in the course of using weighted branchlines.

The Secretariat has participated in ten meetings of international fisheries related management organisations since AC7 and provided support for the attendance of ACAP observers at other fisheries meetings. Key outcomes were the adoption of a seabird conservation measure by the SPRFMO, establishment of a technical group to identify technical approaches for measuring and monitoring the effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures in CCSBT fisheries, promoting the use of e-monitoring in relevant fisheries, and progressing the development of a seabird identification guide for use in tuna RFMOs.

As well, it has continued to provide support to the Advisory Committee (AC) and its Working Groups during the inter-sessional period through the further development of databases, coordinating the AC grants and sponsorships programmes and providing support to the AC Chair and other Officials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Advisory Committee note the progress made by the Secretariat since AC7 and provide it with feedback and/or recommend other actions as appropriate.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the Secretariat's operations since the Seventh Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC7). A report on progress made against individual tasks in the Secretariat's 2013 – 2015 Work Programme since AC7 is provided in AC8 Doc 19.

Additional information on key aspects of the Secretariat's operations is provided below.

2. SECRETARIAT HEADQUARTERS

The Secretariat's office remains at 27 Salamanca Square, Battery Point, Tasmania.

3. STAFFING

Staffing of the Secretariat remains at two full-time positions, consisting of the Executive Secretary and Science Officer positions. Additional support provided by volunteers, consultancies, secondments and internships, as well as by Advisory Committee officials.

Mr John Cooper continues in the position of Honorary Information Officer. Dr Deborah Pardo from the British Antarctic Survey has agreed to act as honorary news correspondent for the European region.

4. CONTRACTS/CONSULTANTS

In order to broaden the scope of technical expertise available to the Secretariat and to make the selection process for contractors/consultants more efficient a consultancy register has been established. The consultancy register enables consultants who are interested in undertaking work for the Secretariat/Agreement to submit an expression of interest, containing details of their qualifications, areas of expertise and an hourly rate for the provision of their services.

5. SECONDMENTS/INTERNSHIPS

Applications for secondments were called for under the revised secondment programme endorsed by MoP4. The Secretariat and Advisory Committee Officials jointly undertook the assessment of the four secondment applications (refer also to AC8 Doc 25). Mr Sebastián Jiménez from Uruguay was the successful applicant. The secondment supported his study at the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge on the overlap of breeding wandering albatrosses from South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)¹ and pelagic longline fisheries in the southwest Atlantic.

Ms Emma McCormack, from the Australian Maritime College, completed a five-week work placement in the Secretariat in January. Emma's work on the review of injuries sustained by fishers in the course of using weighted branchlines (AC Work Programme task 3.a7) has been submitted as a meeting paper to SBWG6 (SBWG6 Doc 15).

Two language students from the School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics at Monash University in Melbourne recently spent a one week placement in the Secretariat, assisting

¹ "A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (Islas Georgias del Sur e Islas Sandwich del Sur) and the surrounding maritime areas".

with the non-official translation of documents, such as information papers, that would not otherwise have been translated.

6. FINANCES

Management of the Agreement's finances by the Secretariat has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Regulations. An interim financial report is provided in AC8 Doc 08.

7. SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES/OUTCOMES

Significant activities and outcomes achieved by the Secretariat since AC7 have been:

- Organisation and support of the current meeting of the Advisory Committee and the preceding meetings of the PaCSWG and SBWG;
- The ACAP guide for identifying bycaught seabirds has been finalised following its distribution to relevant experts and RFMO observer programmes over the past year for their inputs/comments.
- Participation in the 10th meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna's Ecologically Related Species Working Group (CCSBT ERSWG 10). A significant outcome of the meeting was the recommendation to establish an Effectiveness of Seabird Mitigation Measures Technical Group, to provide advice to the ERSWG on feasible, practical, timely, and effective technical approaches for measuring and monitoring the effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures in SBT longline fisheries. ACAP was invited to participate on this technical group, whose work will be undertaken in the intersessional period prior to the next meeting of the ERSWG.
- Participation in four meetings of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, including its Scientific Commission (WCPFC SC9), Technical Compliance Committee (WCPFC TCC9), its Commission meeting (WCPFC 10) and an e-monitoring and e-reporting workshop. Key issues addressed at these meetings of relevance to the Agreement's work was the exemption of fishing vessels less than 24 metres in length from the requirements of the WCPFC seabird conservation measure; progressing the implementation of electronic monitoring; and progressing the development of a seabird identification guide.
- Participation in the second meeting of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO2). A seabird conservation measure was successfully adopted, with the active support of ACAP Parties at the meeting playing a crucial role in this success. The SPRFMO Commission also requested that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) be established with ACAP. A circular has been sent to National Contact Points seeking ACAP Parties' approval for the text of the MoU and for the Secretariat to sign the MoU.
- The Science Officer, in consultation with relevant AC Officials and other experts, has finalised a guide providing advice on how to remove hooks from seabirds incidentally caught in fishing operations.
- Provision of support for the Advisory Committee's Grants Programme. A total of 23 applications were received, with the Secretariat providing support for the call for applications, the assessment process and the notification of outcomes to applicants.

- Provision of support to the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups during the inter-sessional period and in particular providing support to the Chair of the Advisory Committee and other Advisory Committee Officials; and
- Engaging with three non-Party Range States to encourage their accession to the Agreement.