



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Interim Secretariat provided by the Australian Government

First Meeting of Advisory Committee

Hobart, Australia, 20-22 July 2005

Agenda Item No. 3
ACAP/AC1/Doc.6
Interim Secretariat

Report of the Interim Secretariat

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This report details the activities of the Interim Secretariat since the Meeting of Parties in November 2004.

ACTION REQUIRED

The Advisory Committee is invited to note the report of the interim Secretariat.

Overview of the activities of the ACAP interim Secretariat

Since the first Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP1) to ACAP, the interim Secretariat has focussed on implementing the resolutions of this Meeting and preparing for the first meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC1). Other work has involved liaison with Parties, Signatories, Range States and others; and keeping the public up-to-date on ACAP matters through the ACAP website (www.acap.aq).

Office location

The interim Secretariat is moving from its Australian Government-hosted office at the Australian Antarctic Division, AAD (a Division of Australia's Department of Environment and Heritage, DEH) in Kingston, south of Hobart; to a new office hosted by the Department of Economic Development (a department of the Tasmanian State Government) situated in Hobart's Salamanca Square.

The official opening of the new office will be held on the morning of 22 July (the last day of the Advisory Committee Meeting). Delegates to the Meeting are invited to attend the ceremony which will involve the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Commonwealth and Tasmanian State Governments. The ceremony will be hosted by the Hon. Greg Hunt MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, and the Hon. Lara Giddings MHA, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts.

The new ACAP office in Salamanca will be home to the permanent Secretariat for the Agreement once a Headquarters Agreement is negotiated with the Australian Government. This Agreement is under development (see ACAP/AC1/Doc.8).

Staffing of the interim Secretariat

The interim Secretariat is currently staffed by one full time post (Helen Riley, on secondment from the United Kingdom) with part-time assistance from policy staff from the AAD (Barry Baker, Warren Papworth and Cathy Bruce). The secondment of Helen Riley to the interim Secretariat, which began in October 2004, was extended from an initial period of 5 months through until 15 August 2005. The first five months of the secondment were funded by the United Kingdom and the extension funded from the ACAP salary budget. Input of staff time from the AAD to the Agreement between MOP1 and AC1 will not be charged to the Agreement budget but this situation is not sustainable in the long term. As

discussed in the ACAP finance paper (ACAP/AC1/Doc.9) the limited budget for Secretariat Staff is potentially a significant restraint on the future progress of the Agreement.

Budget

An account for ACAP has been established by the Australian Antarctic Division. Budget issues are discussed in paper ACAP/AC1/Doc.9.

Liaison with Parties, Signatories, Range States and others

Significant areas of work have involved:

- Updating Parties, Signatories, Range States and Observer bodies on progress with the implementation of the Agreement
- Establishing official contact points with new Parties to the Agreement
- Providing advice and information to Signatories and Range States who are moving towards ratification of the Agreement
- Liaising with Parties who have agreed to act as observers on behalf of ACAP at international meetings (see section on promotion of the Agreement below)
- Maintaining and updating ACAP contacts (liaising with diplomatic posts and relevant embassies as appropriate)

Liaison with the Advisory Committee and preparation for AC1

This area of work has involved:

- Establishing dates for AC1
- Coordinating the election of a Chair and Vice-Chair for the Advisory Committee
- Coordinating the establishment of Working Groups on Status and Trends, and Taxonomy
- Developing and circulating a proforma to collect information on the breeding sites of albatrosses and petrels (see paper ACAP/AC1/Doc.13)
- Preparing an agenda for AC1 in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair
- Putting in place the arrangements for the meeting (hire of venue, arrangement of interpretation etc)
- Preparing interim Secretariat papers for AC1 and liaising with authors of other papers
- Arranging financial support for representatives of Range States to attend the AC1 meeting;

Promotion of the Agreement

The interim Secretariat has continued to promote ACAP extensively in international fora to engender support for the Agreement. Since MOP1 this has been achieved mainly through provision of briefings to Parties who have agreed to act as observers to the Agreement at other International Meetings (Annex 7 of the MOP1 report refers). This has included providing briefing on links between ACAP and the Antarctic Treaty to the Australian Delegation to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting and Committee for Environmental Protection. A copy of the paper submitted to these meetings by the interim Secretariat is included in Attachment 1.

A report on the implementation of the Agreement was also provided to the 28th Meeting of the Standing Committee to the Convention on Migratory Species (copy in Attachment 2)

Other representations included the provision of ACAP information panels for the Antarctic Tasmania Midwinter Festival (June 2005).

ACAP Website

The Agreement website (www.acap.aq) has been in existence since April 2004. It provides valuable information on albatross and petrel conservation issues; the text of the Agreement; official documents from the Meetings of Parties and the Advisory Committee; contact details of Parties and the interim Secretariat; a news page with details of new developments; links to associated sites; and an image gallery. Many of these webpages and documents are available in the official ACAP languages of Spanish and French as well as English. Most sections of the website can be accessed by Parties and the general public (two secure pages have been created for members of the AC Working Groups) and the site is updated regularly by the interim Secretariat.

The ACAP website is currently hosted by the Australian Antarctic Division but it is likely that it will be transferred to the Tasmanian State Government as progress is made towards the establishment of a permanent Secretariat for the Agreement. The domain name has recently been transferred to the Tasmanian State Government.

ATTACHMENT 1

Report to ATCM XXVIII and CEP VIII from the ACAP interim Secretariat hosted by the Australian Government

XXVIII ATCM
Information Paper
28-IP-xx
Agenda Item: **ATCM 4; CEP 10**
Australia
Original: **English**

**PROGRESS WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE
CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS (ACAP):**

**REPORT TO ATCM XXVIII & CEP VIII FROM THE ACAP INTERIM
SECRETARIAT HOSTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT**

Submitted by Australia



PROGRESS WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS (ACAP)

REPORT TO ATCM XXVIII & CEP VIII
FROM THE ACAP INTERIM SECRETARIAT HOSTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN
GOVERNMENT

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

1. ACAP is a multilateral Agreement that aims to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels. The Agreement entered into force on 1 February 2004. It has been developed under the auspices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).
2. The impetus for the development of ACAP was the recognition that albatrosses and petrels are amongst the most threatened birds in the world, with 83% of the world's albatross species now considered to be endangered, compared with 11% of bird species overall. The most significant threat to many species of albatrosses and petrels is mortality resulting from interactions with fishing vessels; but the breeding areas of many species are subject to a number of threats including non-native species (which may predate nests and breeding adults, compete for nesting space or destroy nesting habitat), avian diseases and climate change.
3. ACAP is the first international Agreement to seek an integrated and holistic approach to albatross and petrel conservation, addressing threats operating at sea and breeding colonies. It currently has a Southern Hemisphere focus, protecting all 21 taxa of southern hemisphere albatross; two species of giant petrel and five

species of *Procellaria* petrel (listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement). In the future Northern Hemisphere species may benefit from incorporation into ACAP.

Membership of ACAP

4. Accession to ACAP is open to any State with jurisdiction over areas inhabited or overflowed by the species of albatrosses and petrels listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement.
5. At present, six Parties have ratified the ACAP Agreement: Australia, Ecuador, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain and the United Kingdom. A further five Countries, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, France and Peru, have signed but not yet ratified ACAP.
6. Parties to ACAP agree to take measures, individually and together, to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels; in particular they agree to implement conservation measures set out in the ACAP Action Plan.
7. Because of the relatively small number of Parties to the Agreement, the resources available to ACAP are currently modest. The interim Secretariat therefore seeks to promote ACAP and encourage more Signatories and Range States to ratify the Agreement and hence further global conservation efforts.

First Session of the Meeting of Parties to ACAP

8. The first session of the Meeting of the Parties to ACAP was held in Hobart, Australia, from 10-12 November 2004. It was preceded by an informal scientific meeting from 8-9 November, also in Hobart.
9. The meeting accepted Australia's offer to host the permanent Secretariat for the Agreement in Hobart, and to continue to host the interim Secretariat until such time as a Headquarters Agreement for the Secretariat is secured with the Australian Government.
10. An Advisory Committee was established to provide scientific, technical and other advice to the Meeting of Parties; and a work programme for this Committee was endorsed.
11. The work programme of the Advisory Committee reflects the areas of the ACAP Action Plan which were identified as priorities for immediate attention. These are fisheries bycatch of albatrosses and petrels; and the management and protection of breeding sites, including in particular any adverse effects of introduced species, habitat loss, climate change or avian diseases. Recognising that much work has been done or is ongoing in these areas, the Advisory Committee will be tasked with recommending the best way to integrate the work of ACAP with existing initiatives. The aim is to enhance and advance current initiatives, not to duplicate them.
12. Other key areas of work to be taken forward by the Advisory Committee include a review of the status and trends of ACAP listed species. This review, which is ongoing, will be carried out in consultation with the SCAR Group of Experts on Birds.

Future ACAP Meetings

13. The first meeting of the ACAP Advisory Committee will take place in Hobart between 20-22 July 2005.
14. The second session of the Meeting of the Parties to ACAP will take place late in 2006. The UK offered to consult with its authorities with a view to making an offer to host this meeting.

ACAP and the Antarctic Treaty

15. In pursuing its objectives, ACAP seeks to work in an integrated and synergistic manner with other international and national organisations with an interest in the conservation of albatrosses and petrels and the habitats and natural resources on which they depend.
16. The significance of the Antarctic Treaty, which applies to an area of importance for a number of ACAP listed species of albatross and petrel, is recognised in the ACAP Agreement.
17. In working with the Antarctic Treaty ACAP seeks to:
 - encourage the implementation of the Antarctic Treaty and Environmental Protocol in such a way as to be mindful of the objectives of ACAP to achieve and maintain favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels, with particular reference to the populations of ACAP species which occur within the Antarctic Treaty Area (see below);
 - encourage Parties to the Antarctic Treaty to avoid significant disturbance of breeding areas of ACAP species through scientific / technical activity or tourism; and to give consideration to ACAP species when preparing environmental impact assessments and conducting environmental impact monitoring;
 - ask the Committee for Environmental Protection to consult with the ACAP Advisory Committee over matters of relevance to ACAP species and their habitats (Article 12.2 of the Environmental Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty refers); and
 - identify opportunities for information exchange – in particular the ongoing reviews of the status and trends of ACAP species and the protection and management status of breeding sites (see paragraphs 11 and 12 above).

ACAP species occurring within the Antarctic Treaty Area

18. ACAP species which occur regularly within the Antarctic Treaty Area are listed in Annex 1. The majority of these species do not breed but have foraging ranges which overlap with Antarctic Waters.
19. The Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus* is the single ACAP listed species which breeds within the Antarctic Treaty Area. Noting that this species

has been identified by a recent SCAR / BirdLife International / IUCN workshop as critically endangered at the Antarctic regional scale, ACAP would support a proposal to designate the Southern Giant Petrel as an Antarctic Specially Protected Species.

20. Also noting ongoing work by SCAR and BirdLife international towards the identification of Important Bird Areas in Antarctica, ACAP would be interested to hear of any plans to designate as Antarctic Specially Protected Areas any important breeding populations of Southern Giant Petrel which are not currently within ASPAs.

ANNEX 1

ACAP species which occur within the Antarctic Treaty Area:

Breeding

Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*

Foraging

The following ACAP species do not breed within Antarctic Treaty area but are found in waters south of 60° latitude (SC-CAMLR-XXIII/BG/21):

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophrys*

Campbell Albatross *Thalassarche impavida*

Chatham Albatross *Thalassarche erimita*

Grey Petrel *Procellaria cinerea*

Grey-headed Albatross *Thalassarche chrysostoma*

Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria palpebrate*

Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli*

Northern Royal Albatross *Diomedea sanfordi*

Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini*

Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria fusca*

Southern Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora*

Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*.

ATTACHMENT 2

Report from ACAP Interim Secretariat to the 28th Meeting of the Standing Committee to CMS



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS

REPORT FROM ACAP INTERIM SECRETARIAT TO THE 28TH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE TO CMS

Background

1. ACAP is a multilateral international Agreement that aims to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels. The Agreement, developed under the auspices of the CMS, came into force on 1 February 2004.
2. The impetus for the development of ACAP was the recognition that albatrosses and petrels are amongst the most threatened birds in the world, with 83% of the world's albatross species now considered to be endangered, compared with 11% of bird species overall. The most significant threat to many species of albatrosses and petrels is mortality resulting from interactions with fishing vessels; but the breeding areas of many species are also threatened by the presence of non-native species (which may predate nests and breeding adults, compete for nesting space or destroy nesting habitat); as well as avian diseases.
3. ACAP is the first international Agreement to seek an integrated and holistic approach to albatross and petrel conservation, addressing threats operating at sea and breeding colonies. It currently has a Southern Hemisphere focus, protecting all 21 taxa of southern hemisphere albatrosses; two species of giant petrel and five species of *Procellaria* petrel (listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement). In the future Northern Hemisphere species may benefit from incorporation into ACAP.

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6. Parties to ACAP agree to take measures, individually and together, to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels; in particular they agree to implement conservation measures set out in the ACAP Action Plan.
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12. Other key areas of work to be taken forward by the Advisory Committee include reviews of the status and trends of ACAP listed species and the taxonomy of albatrosses and petrels which are being carried out by Working Groups established by the Advisory Committee.

Future ACAP Meetings

13. The first meeting of the ACAP Advisory Committee will take place in Hobart between 20-22 July 2005.
14. The second session of the Meeting of the Parties to ACAP will take place late in 2006. The UK has offered to consult with its authorities with a view to hosting this meeting.

Further information

15. Further information on the ACAP Agreement can be found on the website www.acap.aq.

ACAP interim Secretariat
April 2005