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|  <p data-bbox="220 548 459 589">Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p> | <p data-bbox="596 241 1390 338">Tenth Meeting of the Advisory Committee <i>Wellington, New Zealand, 11 – 15 September 2017</i></p> <p data-bbox="515 414 1382 607">Report of the Taxonomy Working Group <i>Taxonomy Working Group: Mark Tasker (Convenor), Mike Brooke, Geoff Chambers, Mike Double, Peter Ryan, Paul Scofield, Alan Tennyson</i></p> |
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SUMMARY

A summary of progress by the Taxonomy Working Group is provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Taxonomy Working Group recommends that:

1. Advisory Committee members consider the nomination of additional experts to the Taxonomy Working Group.
2. Advisory Committee to take note of TWG's progress and to comment if required.

1. MEMBERSHIP

Following his election, the Convenor attempted to contact all listed members of the Taxonomy Working Group and also put out a call for new nominations of experts. All but one listed member (Diego Montalti) responded. Geoff Chambers responded to state that he wished to no longer be an official member of the Working Group, but would be happy to respond to queries on a case-by-case ad hoc basis. Paul Scofield and Alan Tennyson were nominated to join the Working Group. The Taxonomy Working Group would be happy for further experts to be nominated.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Taxonomy Working Group was asked to carry out the following actions in the current (2016-18) triennium.

1. Keep the Taxonomy Working Group's bibliographic database updated
2. Continue the establishment of a morphometric and plumage database
3. Maintain a database of site-specific information on the availability of samples relevant to studies of population genetics of ACAP species

4. Consider taxonomic issues relating to species proposed for addition to Annex 1 of the Agreement
5. Respond to queries on taxonomic issues relating to ACAP species

2.1. Bibliographic database

There does not appear to be a separate ACAP bibliographic database for taxonomy issues, though all members have their own databases or access to resources. The Secretariat maintains a searchable database of references accessible via the data portal (<https://data.acap.ag>) that includes many relevant taxonomic sources. TWG proposes to use this database, perhaps with tags, as its bibliographic database and members will supply suitable references to the Secretariat for uploading. TWG is also considering how a very large bibliography developed by the late John Warham covering all albatrosses and petrels might be made available for ACAP use.

2.2. Morphometric and plumage database

A pilot database of samples from dead birds was established a few years ago using Australian information, but this database has not been developed further. TWG notes that if a central database of morphometrics were to be established, there would be a need to ensure standardisation of methods for conducting measurements as there is evidence of considerable variation between scientists carrying out such measurements. TWG agree that it would be very useful to have a catalogue of standardised images of known-age and sex birds from various populations, ideally tracking the same individuals over time, so that it might finally be possible make some headway on field identification of difficult taxa, for example *Diomedea dabbenena* and *D. antipodensis* in relation to *D. exulans*.

2.3. Genetic samples database

Following a lack of progress on the issue in the past, PaCSWG decided at AC9 that ACAP should just produce a list of nodes/contact institutions that people could use to find samples/dead birds. This became Task 2.14 in the AC Work Programme. It is unclear to TWG if this task should be dropped from TWG's work given that it has been taken over by PaCSWG.

2.4 Additions to Annex 1

There have been no proposals for Addition to Annex 1.

2.5 Queries on taxonomic issues

The Taxonomy Working Group considered the issue of a standard taxonomy for use by ACAP in considering species not listed on Annex 1. A paper (**AC10 Doc 22**) recommended the adoption of the taxonomy supported by the International Ornithological Congress. The Taxonomy Working Group will monitor relevant changes in the IOC taxonomy and keep the Advisory Committee fully informed.

3. OTHER ISSUES

3.1 Buller's Albatross

Members of the Taxonomy Working Group are aware of research pointing towards the separation of the northern *Thalassarche bulleri platei* and southern *T. b. bulleri* forms of Buller's Albatross into two separate species. It is expected that this work will be published in the peer-reviewed literature in the near future. TWG recommends that it should be asked to review this issue once the evidence becomes available, and to make a recommendation to ACAP.

3.2 Use of the name *Diomedea exulans*

Two of the Taxonomy Working Group were co-authors on a paper resolving a taxonomic conflict in use of the name *Diomedea exulans* for different taxa of Wandering Albatross complex. This was resolved by neotypification, fixing the name to the large subantarctic form formerly often known as *D. chionoptera* Salvin, 1896. The paper also provided an annotated synonymy for the large subantarctic form, a list of available names for smaller, temperate-zone forms, and un-available and otherwise invalid names referable to the complex are identified. There were no consequences for the current ACAP taxonomy.

Schodde, R., Tennyson, A.J.D., Groth, J.G., Lai, J., Scofield, P., and Steinheimer, F.D. 2017. Settling the name *Diomedea exulans* Linnaeus, 1758 for the Wandering Albatross by neotypification. *Zootaxa*, 4236: 135–148.