



Interim Secretariat provided by the Australian Government

First Meeting of the Parties

Hobart, Australia, 10-12 November 2004

*Agenda Items: ScM1 - 6
MOP1 - 10*

ACAP/ScM1/Inf.2
ACAP/MOP1/Inf.4

A paper by BirdLife International

Assessment of role and responsibilities of the Advisory Committee



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Assessment of role and responsibilities of the Advisory Committee

Action Requested

The Scientific Meeting is invited to take note of this paper in regard to its future work

For further details contact:

Dr. Ben Sullivan, BirdLife Global Seabird Programme Coordinator, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 SDL, UK.

ben.sullivan@rspb.org.uk

The text which follows represents an assessment carried out by members of BirdLife International Global Seabird Programme of the potential role and responsibilities of the ACAP Advisory Committee.

It is offered as a contribution to the debate on the topic at the Scientific Meeting preceding the first Meeting of Parties.

Article IX, which establishes the Advisory Committee, contains the following requirements.

1. Establishment.

The Committee (one member per party) to elect chair, vice-chair and establish rules of procedure.

2. Taxonomy.

a. Endorse a standard reference text. *Brooke's (2004)¹ book will probably be a useful default position and basis for any review of the existing taxa in Annex 1.*

b. Maintain a list of taxonomic synonyms. *Set up a small sub-group of experts (see also Action Plan 5 (n) below).*

3. Report to Meeting of Parties on Action Plan, implementation of Agreement and "further research" needs. *There is thus an obligation for the Advisory Committee to report specifically on the Action Plan (see below) and generally on the implementation of the Agreement and the conservation measures undertaken including "synthesis of such information as parties are required to submit". Therefore there is presumably a need to start to define information requirements from parties at the first meeting.*

The general conservation measures are defined in Article III as, in essence,:

1. Habitat conservation and restoration.
2. Eliminate/control detrimental non-natives.
3. Mitigation of adverse influences.
4. Initiate/support conservation research.
5. Training for implementation of measures.
6. Programme of awareness raising.
7. Information exchange for conservation programme.
8. Support implementation of FAO plans.

Of these 8 elements, we suggest that 1,2,3,5 and 8 are most suitable for early attention by the Advisory Committee. Elements 1, 2, 3 and 5 are specified in greater detail in the Action Plan but element 8 contains the only mention of the FAO plans.

4. Develop system of indicators to measure the success of the parties in achieving and maintaining favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels. *This will doubtless need considerable thought as to how to develop an appropriate system adequately to reflect the many elements that need to be combined in addressing this.*

¹ Brooke, > (2004). Albatrosses and petrels across the world. Oxford University Press, New York.

5. Emergency measures

Article 14.7 enables the Committee, on recognising an emergency, in respect of a threat to the conservation status of one or more species, to request a special meeting of parties. At its first meeting the parties are required to adopt criteria to define emergency situations (Article VIII.11a). However, input from the Advisory Committee in developing these criteria may be appropriate, so attempts to adopt criteria at the first meeting of parties might be premature.

Action Plan

The Action Plan is established in Article VI which summarises actions that parties shall take, consistent with the general conservation measures and including:

1. Species conservation;
2. Habitat conservation and restoration;
3. Management of human activities;
4. Research and monitoring;
5. Collation of information;
6. Education and public awareness;
7. Implementation.

The Action Plan has seven major sections.

1. Species conservation (Action Plan 1.1).

1.1. Use and trade (Action Plan 1.1.1)

Report on any exemptions. Should require standing report from all parties at each meeting.

1.2. Multi-species strategies (Action Plan 1.1.2). Should require report when any party has taken any relevant action.

1.3. Re-establishment schemes (Action Plan 1.3). Should require report when any party is planning to undertake such a scheme.

1.4. Non-natives (Action Plan 1.4).

1.4.1 Preventative measures. Appropriate to have an initial report from all parties (and others where appropriate) on their current measures.

1.4.2 Eradication measures/plans. Important to have initial report from all relevant parties (and, indeed, if possible, all breeding range states).

2. Habitat Conservation/restoration.

2.1 General

2.2 Land-based.

*2.2.1 Protection of breeding sites. Need initial report/review of:
a. status of each breeding site/area;*

b. management plans for existing Protected Areas which contain breeding sites. Also note priority accorded to “all breeding sites of international importance” – creating need to define “international importance” (See 5b below).

2.3 Marine.

2.3.1a Sustainability of marine resources required by albatrosses and petrels. This is a direct responsibility of governments/parties within EEZs and their indirect responsibility, via RFMOs, for high seas areas. Advisory Committee would need to determine how best to review the status quo. Both are delicate topics, inviting a review of existing situation within both EEZs and RFMOs. The BirdLife review of RFMOs from bycatch perspectives could be a useful point of departure for the latter.

2.3.1b Avoidance of pollution. Some review of how parties/others implement MARPOL and other relevant instruments in EEZs and high seas would seem appropriate.

Note that in the Agreement there does not appear to be a specific requirement to address issues relating to energy generation at sea (e.g. wind farms). This might be the appropriate place to try to incorporate it.

2.3.2. Management plans for most important foraging and migratory habitats. Both require substantial groundwork in identifying/defining relevant areas. This is a major task for which some existing initiatives (marine IBAs, KBAs etc) are relevant, also including use of BirdLife’s Global Procellariiform Tracking Database.

2.3.3. Conservation of critical marine areas. See 2.3.2 above.

3. Management of human activities.

3.1. Environmental impact assessments. Assumption that henceforth parties will notify of any relevant EIA. Initially, perhaps, request parties having done EIAs where potential impact on albatrosses/petrels was an important consideration, to make these available as useful reference material.

3.2. Incidental mortality in fisheries. The text here (Action Plan 3.2.1 and 3.2.2) would seem to require reviews of:

a) current status of implementation by parties of mitigation measures (i.e. the operational, management and other measures of Action Plan 3.2.1):

- i. within their EEZ*
- ii. conforming to recommendations of RFMOs within their areas of jurisdiction/competence;*
- iii. exceeding recommendations of such RFMOs;*
- iv. in other areas (e.g. by flag vessels on high seas etc);*

b) status of mitigation measures currently recommended (whether mandatory or voluntary) by RFMOs (and/or by parties in other areas) – particularly as a prelude to outreach as indicated in 3.2.3 of the Action Plan..

c) IUU. *Review parties existing undertakings with respect to additional measures to combat IUU. (Action Plan 3.2.4)*

3.3. Pollutants and marine debris.

a) *Review relevant measures (see Action Plan 3.3.1), including those which implement or exceed MARPOL (see 2.3.1b above);*

b) *Review procedures and practices etc relevant to mineral (especially hydrocarbon) exploration and exploitation (Action Plan 3.3.2).*

3.4 Disturbance.

a) *Review parties existing (or best-practice) recommendations for managing tourist activities (including approach distances, behaviour etc) in relation to albatrosses and petrels, especially at breeding colonies (see Action Plan 3.4.2).*

b) *Review practices for risk assessment in relation to disturbance caused by scientific research activities (see Action Plan 3.4.3).*

4. Research and monitoring.

Need brief overview of existing research and monitoring (including by at-sea observers) by parties and others and particularly to indicate extent of collaboration/coordination of activities/methods. The CCAMLR Ecosystem Monitoring Programme (black-browed albatross is a selected species), BirdLife initiatives (e.g its coordination and analysis of data as the listing authority for the IUCN Red List for Birds and in respect of its Global Procellariiform Tracking Workshop and Database) and the North Pacific Albatross Group may all have experiences of particular relevance here.

5. Content of Advisory Committee Report.

This covers much, but not all, of the foregoing. It is worth considering each element in turn.

a) Status and trends (review). *BirdLife may be the best point of departure here with its documentation of all species in the latest BirdLife/IUCN Red List for Birds (2004).*

b. Internationally important sites. *Update the Gales (1998)² tabulation; use this to evaluate consequences of using 1% and 5% criteria for defining “internationally important populations”.*

c. Foraging range, migration routes (review). *Two possible approaches:*

a) *use coarse-scale standard text (e.g. Harrison³, Brooke 2004);*

b) *use empirical data e.g. BirdLife Global Procellariiform Tracking Database. Latter more likely productive for identifying areas at relevant scales.*

d. Threats (review). *Relevant part of BirdLife texts for the IUCN Red List are a useful précis starting point. Need to guard against this topic becoming a massive*

² Gales, R. (1998) Albatross populations: status and threats. In Albatross Biology and Conservation (eds. Robertson, G. and Gals, R.), pp 20-45. Surrey Beatty and Sons, Chipping Norton, NSW.

³ Harrison, P. (1985). Seabirds: an identification guide. Croom Helm Ltd. Kent.

review exercise, deflecting attention from action on known existing problems and priorities.

e) Avoidance/mitigation of threat (review). *Same concerns as above. Need very succinct summaries of known applicability of existing (and envisaged) mitigating measures for longline fisheries, trawl fisheries, other fishery threats and against detrimental non-natives.*

f) Bycatch data for albatrosses and petrels (review). *The proposed review of this by Lewison, Nel, Tuck et al was initiated but funding applications have been unsuccessful so far.*

g) Fishing effort data (review). *Currently this is encapsulated in the Tuck et al (2003)⁴ publication and database potentially closely linked to f) above. Needs further consideration of additional data availability and best way to proceed.*

h) Non-natives (review). *Need review of distribution of these in relation to albatross and petrel breeding sites and of recent/existing/planned eradication programmes.*

i) Protection arrangements (review). *This is best tackled when some of the elements of the above are available; a simplified overview may then be useful.*

k) Contacts database. *Presumably task for Secretariat to develop with assistance from members of Advisory Committee.*

l) Legislation directory. *Presumably task for Secretariat to develop with assistance from members of Advisory Committee.*

m) Education and information programme review. *Would seem sensible for Secretariat to develop on basis of an initial trawl of information from members of Advisory Committee.*

n) Taxonomy. *Article IX is more explicit here and a small advisory sub-group of specialists might be useful/appropriate.*

6. Education and public awareness. *Develop education and communication strategies after collation (by Secretariat) of existing initiatives by parties, supplemented by information from other sources.*

7. Implementation.

7.1 Conservation guidelines for implementation. *May take a while to reflect on how these might be developed and will need to await completion of some of the other review tasks.*

⁴ Tuck, G. N., Polacheck, T. and Bulman, C. M. (2003). Spatio-temporal trends of longline fishing effort in the Southern Ocean and implications for seabird bycatch. *Biological Conservation* 114: 1-27.

7.2 Collaboration with others. *Need to consider how best to facilitate exchange, interchange and standardisation. May have to await completion of at least some of the other review tasks.*

7.3 Recognition by others. *Initially presumably best undertaken by Secretariat and parties.*

7.4 Resources. *Secretariat might produce overview of known and potential international funding mechanisms.*

7.5 Actions by non-parties. *Maintain inventory of such actions and responses for regular review/consideration.*