



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Third Meeting of the Parties

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**Developing a
Bycatch Data Reporting System**

**Author:
Advisory Committee
&
Seabird Bycatch Working Group**

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Purpose

The ACAP Advisory Committee's Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG) propose, and seek MoP3's in-principle support, for a way to develop a bycatch data collection and reporting system for use by Parties. This proposal stems from discussions held by the SBWG at its 2nd Meeting, held in August 2008 in Hermanus, South Africa.

The ACAP Action Plan calls on the Advisory Committee to regularly review and update data on the mortality of albatrosses and petrels in commercial and other relevant fisheries (ACAP Action Plan 5.1(f)). At present, although ACAP Parties report regularly on the steps taken to implement the Agreement, the SBWG notes that few data are provided to allow a succinct and accurate assessment of the current levels of incidental mortality of ACAP-listed species in fisheries of ACAP Parties. Submission of fishery-specific bycatch information could be included in the Parties' regular reporting of the implementation of the Agreement. Additionally, information could also include whether or not, and what type of, bycatch mitigation measures are used and/or required as knowledge of trends in mitigation use and effectiveness will aid in bycatch reduction efforts.

The 2nd Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP2) acknowledged that the outputs of the various working groups, including the SBWG, could be used in the future development and refinement of a suite of indicators to measure the success of ACAP (MOP2 Final Report, Annex 8, Resolution 2.8). Thus, the bycatch trends for ACAP species could serve as one of the performance indicators for the Agreement.

The SBWG reviewed a draft seabird bycatch data template (SBWG-2 Doc 15) at a meeting preceding AC4 in Hermanus, South Africa, and engaged in extensive discussion regarding the Advisory Committee's collection of seabird bycatch data from the Parties. Key areas of interest regarding the data collection included:

- the purpose (ie objective) of the collection;
- specifying clearly how the data would be used by the Advisory Committee;
- what specific data elements would be collected and at what level of detail; and
- a possible timeframe for developing and implementing this information collection.

The SBWG agreed that prior to the Parties submitting seabird bycatch data (and fishing information pertinent to whether or not seabirds may become bycatch), the following tasks should be completed, sequentially, during the next intersessional period if at all possible:

- 1) develop a written statement of the objectives, principles, application, scope and a timetable for the data collection;
- 2) a survey of the Parties to learn what data are available, including detailed information on how their fisheries are monitored and bycatch data collected (e.g. observer program) or are self-reported (e.g. fishing logbooks);
- 3) create a bibliography (published and grey literature) of bycatch data provided by Parties;
- 4) develop a prototype bycatch data collection form with comprehensive instructions;
- 5) test the prototype data form by having a small sample of Parties complete it;

- 6) evaluate the utility of the form and appropriateness of its questions based on the sample completed forms and revise as necessary; and
- 7) incorporate the revised bycatch data collection form/requirements into the reporting required of Parties under the implementation of the Agreement.

Provided below are the objectives, principles, application and scope of data collection that have been identified through intersessional work carried out by the Seabird Bycatch Working Group. This work has been facilitated by Ms Kim Rivera (USA) and is provided for the information of the Meeting of Parties.

Bycatch Data Collection and Reporting from ACAP Parties

Objectives

To regularly review and update data on the current levels and trends of incidental mortality of ACAP-listed albatrosses and petrels in relevant fisheries and to assess the implementation and effectiveness of bycatch mitigation measures in those fisheries.

To assist in determining the effectiveness of the Agreement.

Rationale for Bycatch Data Collection and Reporting

The rationale for the proposed data collection stems directly from the Agreement and the Action Plan, including:

- 1) Parties' obligations to take measures to reduce/eliminate bycatch (Action Plan 3.2.1);
- 2) the Advisory Committee's obligation to report to the MOP and, in particular, the requirement that reports should include reviews and updating on a regular basis of data on the mortality of albatrosses and petrels in, *inter alia*, commercial, and other relevant fisheries (Action Plan 5.1(f); and
- 3) Parties' obligation to report on implementation of the Agreement (Article IX(6)(d)).

Principles of Bycatch Data Collection and Reporting

As part of their reporting, Parties should annually submit summarized (ie aggregated), fishery-specific information on bycatch and bycatch mitigation to the Secretariat prior to each meeting of the Advisory Committee and each session of the Meeting of the Parties.

This information will form part of Parties' regular reporting on their implementation of the Agreement.

The Advisory Committee and its Seabird Bycatch Working Group will regularly review and update the submitted information and will produce analyses:

- of the levels and trends of the mortality of ACAP-listed species of albatrosses and petrels in relevant fisheries of ACAP Parties; and
- of the use of bycatch mitigation measures by ACAP Parties, including their effectiveness, trends and other relevant aspects, especially those that would assist ACAP and ACAP Parties to take appropriate conservation and management measures to reduce or eliminate bycatch and to identify "best practice".

Bycatch levels and trends for ACAP listed species and the use and effectiveness of bycatch mitigation measures will be used as indicators of the effectiveness of the Agreement.

Next steps for the Advisory Committee's SBWG will be to:

- 1) learn what types of bycatch data are available from the Parties through a survey,
- 2) develop a prototype bycatch data collection form, and

- 3) test the prototype on a representative sample of ACAP Parties.

All surveys and prototype tests will be distributed and administered by the Secretariat.

Timetable for Bycatch Data Collection

Action	Proposed timing
Develop written statement of the objectives, principles, application and scope of the data collection.	This paper
A survey of the Parties to learn what data are available including detailed information on how the fisheries are monitored and bycatch data collected (e.g. observer program, fishing logbooks) (see <u>Attachment</u>).	2009
Create bibliography of ACAP Parties' bycatch data.	2009
Develop a prototype bycatch data collection protocol (see <u>Attachment</u>).	2009
Test prototype on a sample of ACAP Parties.	2009-10
Revise prototype as required.	2010
Progress Report to Advisory Committee	AC5 2010
Agreement by Parties to revise reporting requirements to include bycatch data collection system	2010
Incorporate the adopted bycatch data collection system into Parties' reporting.	2010-2011
Develop methods for analyses of data relating to (as above): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the levels and trends of the mortality of ACAP-listed species • the use of bycatch mitigation measures by ACAP Parties 	2010-11
Conduct analyses of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the levels and trends of the mortality of ACAP-listed species • the use of bycatch mitigation measures by ACAP Parties 	2011 and ongoing

Recommendation

Recognizing the importance of the collection and analysis of bycatch data for the implementation of the Agreement, the Meeting of the Parties is requested to:

Support the proposed development of a bycatch data reporting system, including the annual collection of bycatch data, in a form to be determined by the Advisory Committee, in consultation with its Seabird Bycatch Working Group.

Attachment

Key Elements of an ACAP Bycatch Data Collection System

1. Collection of data on bycatch of ACAP-listed species in Parties' fisheries.
2. Collection of data on use and effectiveness of seabird bycatch mitigation measures used in Parties' fisheries.
3. Indicate how these data can be used by Parties to improve their implementation of obligations under the Agreement (eg Articles III(1)(c), V(a), and IX(6)(d)) and Action Plan (eg 3.2.1) to take operational and management measures to reduce/eliminate bycatch.
4. Collation of data such that Parties are more informed regarding the extent to which best practice measures are used to reduce bycatch.
5. Ensure that the collection, analysis, and reporting of this data is done such that the Advisory Committee's responsibilities are met (Action Plan 5.1, especially subparagraphs d), e) and f)).

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Survey of Parties to Learn Bycatch Data Availability

A simple questionnaire to all Parties would be administered in order to determine what seabird bycatch data are available and for what time periods (ie how many years). Questions would pertain to each of the fisheries that are monitored for bycatch of ACAP listed species. Parties would also be asked to identify any other fisheries which are not presently monitored but which might pose a risk of bycatch of ACAP listed species.

Requests for detailed information on how fisheries are monitored and what bycatch data are collected; for each fishery monitored, could include:

- how the fishery is monitored (ie observer or logbooks or both)
- the proportion of observer coverage relative to that fishery's fleet and effort, eg % of fleet observed/able to be observed, if a longline fishery it could be % of all hooks that are observed or if a trawl fishery it could be % of sets/tows/shots/hauls observed
- details of the observer data (across more than one year where available?)
- details of the logbook data (across more than one year where available?)

Parties could also be requested to attach any observer data collection forms or logbook forms along with their completed survey forms to the Secretariat.

Development of a Prototype Bycatch Data Collection Protocol

Development of the bycatch data collection protocol will require consideration of the survey results. It will also be necessary to consider what the most appropriate spatial and temporal parameters and resolution of the data collected would be.

Some of the possible data collection variables could include:

- Fishery information (location, vessel, gear/fishing method, vessel speed during gear deployment, branchline length and materials, hook type, bait, presence or absence of line shooter and bait-casting machine [and any other pertinent factors that may contribute to a vessel's susceptibility to catching seabirds], summary of fishing catch and effort)
- Monitoring information (type of record [logbook/general fishery observer or specialist seabird observer/electronic monitoring], observer coverage, proportion of hooks/tows observed)
- Number of ACAP-listed birds killed, by species
- Age, sex and provenance of bycatch birds
- Type of interaction (e.g. hooking, entanglement)
- Mitigation measures used/required (both where these differ)