



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Third Meeting of the Parties

Bergen, Norway, 27 April – 1 May 2009

**Adoption of the FAO IPOA/NPOA-Seabirds Best
Practice Technical Guidelines by 28th session of the
United Nations Food and Agriculture Committee on
Fisheries (COFI)**

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Adoption of the FAO IPOA/NPOA-Seabirds Best Practice Technical Guidelines by 28th session of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Committee on Fisheries (COFI)

Submitted by BirdLife International

Summary

At the 28th Session of the UN FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), March 2-6, 2009 there was strong support from several key FAO Member States for the Best Practical Technical Guidelines (BPTG) and the Committee encouraged the FAO Secretariat to proceed with the publication of the Best Practice Technical Guidelines. It is expected that will result in the BPTG being published in the FAO Series of Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries.

The BPTG provide a new baseline that all NPOA-Seabirds should strive to meet for longline, trawl, and potentially gillnet fisheries. BirdLife strongly encourage ACAP Parties to implement the BPTG to either strengthening their existing NPOA-Seabirds or in developing new plans.

*(For a copy of the BPTG see: FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report 880
<http://www.fao.org/fishery/ipoa-seabirds/npoa/en>)*

Background

At the 27th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2007, considerable attention was focussed on the IPOAs for seabirds in relation to the ecosystem approach to fisheries. Specifically COFI;

- Reported that, best practice technical guidelines to support the elaboration of NPOAs for seabirds should be developed through continuing joint work between FAO and relevant bodies and organizations or an expert consultation;
- Agreed that FAO should, in cooperation with relevant bodies, develop best practice guidelines to assist countries and RFMOs (Regional Fisheries Management Organizations) in implementation of the IPOA-Seabirds;
- Agreed that the guidelines should be extended to other relevant fishing gears (e.g. trawl and gillnet fisheries);
- Noted that many members expressed the view that the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), the Agreement

on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and BirdLife International were relevant bodies in that context.

In response to the directions and recommendations from COFI, FAO planned and organized an Expert Consultation to develop “Best Practice Technical Guidelines supporting the implementation of IPOA-Seabirds and elaboration of NPOA-Seabirds”.

At the third meeting of the Advisory Committee (Valdivia, June 2007) it was agreed that ACAP would provide AUD \$13,000 funding to support the initiative. ACAP was subsequently invited to nominate a representative to be invited to attend the Expert Consultation, which was held in Bergen, Norway from September 2-5, 2008. FAO assembled a group of experts and resource persons on NPOA-Seabirds, the mitigation of the incidental catch of seabirds, and RFMOs. The invited experts, from Member States of the FAO, included; Australia, Brasil, Chile, China, EU, Japan, Norway, South Africa and the USA.

CCAMLR’s Scientific Committee encouraged CCAMLR Members at its October 2008 meeting to support the adoption of the BPTG draft produced by the Expert Consultation at the 28th Session of COFI in March 2009.

Conclusion

ACAP’s work and specifically that of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group highlight the need to 1) extend the IPOA-Seabirds coverage from longlines to other relevant fishing gears, 2) assist countries and RFMOs in implementing IPOA-Seabirds, and 3) assist countries in preparing and implementing more effective NPOA-Seabirds. BirdLife consider the implementation of the BPTG as important to the success of the Agreement and strongly encourage Parties to make every effort to use the guidelines as a template when updating or preparing NPOA-Seabirds.