

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Fourth Meeting of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group <i>Wellington, New Zealand, 7 – 8 September 2017</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Identifying areas, seasons and fleets of potential highest bycatch risk to South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)[¥] albatrosses and petrels</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Thomas A. Clay, Cleo Small², Ana P. B. Carneiro³, Berry Mulligan², Deborah Pardo¹, Andrew G. Wood¹, Richard A. Phillips¹</i></p> <p>¹ British Antarctic Survey, Natural Environment Research Council, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0ET, UK</p> <p>² BirdLife Global Seabird Programme, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sandy SG19 2DL, UK</p> <p>³ BirdLife International, The David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, CB2 3QZ, UK</p>
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SUMMARY

South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur[¥], hereafter SG) is an important breeding site for grey-headed (*Thalassarche chrysostoma*), black-browed (*T. melanophris*) and wandering (*Diomedea exulans*) albatrosses, and white-chinned petrels (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*), yet these populations have undergone major declines, largely due to bycatch in pelagic and demersal longline and trawl fisheries.

This paper presents an analysis of tracking data for the four populations and calculates overlap with pelagic and demersal longline and trawl fisheries in the Southern Ocean for the period 1990-2009. We used an unusually comprehensive tracking dataset from all major life-history stages (including juvenile stages), weighted according to the proportion of the population they represented (based on demographic models), in order to generate population-level distributions by month.

[¥] "A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (Islas Georgias del Sur y Islas Sandwich del Sur) and the surrounding maritime areas".

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Hotspots of overlap with pelagic longline fisheries were in the southwest Atlantic (Brazil-Falklands [Malvinas] Confluence region), southeast Atlantic (Tristan da Cunha eastwards to the Benguela Upwelling) and the southwest Indian (north of the Prince Edward Islands) oceans, and with demersal longline and trawl fisheries in the southwest Atlantic (SG, Falkland Islands [Islas Malvinas, hereafter FK] and Patagonian Shelf) and southeast Atlantic Ocean (Benguela Upwelling).

Black-browed albatrosses and white-chinned petrels overlapped most with longline and trawl effort, respectively. Overlap with pelagic longline fleets was highest during winter (May–September; when fishing effort south of 30°S is greatest), and with demersal and trawl fisheries during late summer (January–March) and during winter in the Benguela Upwelling. Overlaps were highest with the pelagic longline fleets of Japan and Chinese Taipei, and also South Korea, Namibia and Brazil; with demersal longline fleets of Chile, Argentina, Namibia, South Africa, FK, and within the CCAMLR region; and trawl fleets of Namibia, South Africa, Argentina and FK. The areas identified largely match areas where high rates of bycatch have been recorded, emphasizing the need for use of bycatch mitigation measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Given sustained population declines of albatrosses from the SG archipelago, we emphasize the need for continued use of bycatch mitigation measures by fisheries in national and international waters within the distributions of the four species.
2. Collection of age-class information for bycatch individuals (particularly in pelagic longline fisheries) would assist in determining which life stages are most at risk.
3. Year-round tracking data is needed of juvenile and immature grey-headed and black-browed albatrosses, and white-chinned petrels.

