

ACAP Bycatch Working Group - Strategy

1. OVERALL GOALS

- Identify actions that will assist in assessment, mitigation and reduction of negative interactions between fishing operations and albatrosses and petrels.
- Develop technical information and products to assist Parties, Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and other relevant international and national bodies to reduce negative interactions between fishing operations and seabirds.
- In developing solutions to reduce bycatch of albatrosses and petrels ensure approaches to mitigation do not adversely affect other marine species.

The work of the Bycatch Working Party will include both technical and policy/advocacy elements.

The Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG) will work with ACAP Parties to develop targeted recommendations, positions and advice on technical and policy matters related to bycatch mitigation in fisheries that interact with ACAP listed species. These will then be developed into key messages for delivery to target audiences.

The work of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group should broaden and enhance the existing work of other international and national bodies in the assessment, reduction and mitigation of seabird bycatch and conservation of albatrosses and petrels¹.

Looking Outward

2. AUDIENCES

The key audiences are both international and national fishery managers, the fishing industry and fishers; and national policy makers. Priorities are:

- (a) Regional Fisheries Management Organisations
- (b) National fishery management agencies
- (c) United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
- (d) Parties and Range States

A first key step will be to identify priorities within the key audiences for which the SBWG should develop targeted products. In developing priorities consideration will be given to:

- the clear differences between Parties (who have a demonstrated commitment to addressing bycatch issues) and other Range States (who may not have the same level of commitment);
- national fisheries where bycatch of endangered and critically endangered species has been clearly identified, or where it is likely occurring but has not been identified (e.g. due to a low levels or a lack of reported monitoring); and
- Regional Fisheries Management Organisations showing a willingness to undertake ecological risk assessments of non-target species and implement effective bycatch mitigation strategies.

3. MESSAGES

To facilitate the above audiences in taking steps to reduce bycatch of albatrosses and petrels in their fisheries, key issues for ACAP input to fisheries managers (may) include:

- explanation of the scale and implications of seabird bycatch
- the spatial and temporal nature of seabird bycatch in their fisheries

¹ Given that resources are scarce, duplication would be wasteful and have diminished value. Mediocre or low quality service to many audiences is less preferable to delivering higher quality services to a more focused audience.

- the need for, and advice on observer programmes and data collection protocols
- best-practice seabird bycatch mitigation measures
- the need for, and advice on, monitoring compliance
- best-practice guidelines for developing and implementing IPOA-Seabirds

4. MESSENGER

It is important that the information being delivered be scientifically and operationally sound to have credibility. Similarly, the person delivering the message must also have credibility and have a sound understanding of the information being provided. Preferably the messenger should be an appropriate person from the Advisory Committee or the ACAP Secretariat.

5. DELIVERY

Information messages and technical support would be delivered through:

- Concise reports that are based on sound, scientifically supported information;
- Submission of relevant papers to meetings to support the information being conveyed;
- Presentations at meetings
- Active participation at meetings;
- Workshops with industry to progress uptake of mitigation in particular
- Building relations with National Fisheries managers, RFMO Secretariats and UN FAO officials

Messages will be delivered by representatives of the Advisory Committee, the Secretariat, and the Parties, with reference to the Meeting of Parties, as appropriate.

Looking Inward

6. RESOURCES: ACAP STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Strengths

- Internationally recognised inter-governmental conservation agreement
- Expertise in conservation and fisheries policy, and seabird population dynamics, monitoring, conservation and fisheries bycatch mitigation

7. GAPS: What do we need to develop?

- Consolidate links to external technical expertise
- Consolidate links to RFMO Secretariats and FAO
- Capacity to produce outputs: who to coordinate and undertake work?
- Structured approaches to ensure the working group meets the pace of advocacy opportunities and achieves optimal integration with existing bycatch initiatives.

8. FIRST EFFORTS: How do we begin?

Short term goals include:

- Review and development of an initial workplan for consideration by AC 3.
- Identification of RFMOs and other fisheries likely impacting albatrosses and petrels, as priority audiences for provision of technical advice and key messages (acknowledging the considerable work already carried out by BirdLife International on this goal)
- Identification of actions for Parties and Range States
- Prioritisation of products to be produced
- Consider how these products/messages/advice can best be delivered

9. EVALUATION

SBWG Chair to report to Advisory Committee meetings on progress and achievements and outline future steps