

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p>Eleventh Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group</p> <p><i>Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 15 - 17 May 2023</i></p> <p>Report of pre-meeting workshop on seabird bycatch data</p> <p><i>SBWG Convenors, Secretariat, Barry Baker & Mike Double</i></p>
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SUMMARY

A Seabird Bycatch Data Workshop was held on 14 May 2023 to understand and find solutions to the challenges experienced in reporting ACAP seabird bycatch indicators.

The workshop identified a range of challenges faced by Parties in reporting data to inform the current Pressure indicators on seabird bycatch. A number of potential actions that ACAP could take to address some of the challenges were also identified.

The workshop also considered the scope and focus of the current State-Pressure-Response indicators for seabird bycatch and identified some areas for improvement which could allow for more immediate reporting while actions are taken to improve reporting on key Pressure indicators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend Seabird Bycatch Working Group:

1. Review the challenges identified that Parties face in reporting on the current Pressure indicators.
2. Consider the potential actions that ACAP can take to address the challenges faced by Parties in the context of the AC Work Programme and recommend to AC achievable priority actions for the current triennium.
3. Review the current suite of State-Pressure-Response indicators for seabird bycatch and recommend to AC any improvements that could be made to allow for immediate reporting on at least some indicators

Informe del taller previo a la reunión sobre datos de captura secundaria de aves marinas

RESUMEN

El 14 de mayo de 2023, se celebró un taller sobre datos de captura secundaria de aves marinas para comprender y encontrar soluciones a las dificultades que se experimentan en la presentación de informes sobre los indicadores de captura secundaria de aves marinas del ACAP.

En el taller se identificó una serie de dificultades a las que se enfrentan las Partes en cuanto a la presentación de datos para informar los indicadores actuales de presión sobre la captura secundaria de aves marinas. También se identificaron una serie de posibles medidas que el ACAP podría adoptar para abordar algunas de las dificultades.

El taller también consideró el alcance y el enfoque de los indicadores actuales de Estado- Presión-Respuesta para la captura secundaria de aves marinas e identificó algunas áreas de mejora que podrían permitir una presentación de informes más inmediata, a la vez que se implementan medidas para mejorar la presentación de informes sobre indicadores de presión clave.

RECOMENDACIONES

Recomendamos que el Grupo de Trabajo sobre Captura Secundaria de Aves Marinas:

1. Examine las dificultades identificadas que enfrentan las Partes en cuanto a la presentación de informes sobre los indicadores actuales de presión.
2. Considere las posibles medidas que el ACAP puede tomar para abordar las dificultades que enfrentan las Partes en el contexto del Programa de Trabajo del CA y recomendar al CA acciones prioritarias alcanzables para el trienio actual.
3. Revisar el conjunto actual de indicadores de Estado- Presión-Respuesta para la captura secundaria de aves marinas y recomendar al CA cualquier mejora que se pueda implementar para permitir la presentación inmediata de informes sobre al menos algunos indicadores.

Rapport de l'atelier sur les données de la capture accessoire d'oiseaux de mer (préalable à la réunion)

RÉSUMÉ

Un atelier sur les données de la capture accessoire d'oiseaux de mer a eu lieu le 14 mai 2023. Il avait pour objectif de comprendre les défis associés au reporting des indicateurs de l'ACAP en matière de captures accessoires, et d'y trouver des solutions.

L'atelier a recensé un ensemble de difficultés rencontrées par les Parties au moment de transmettre les données destinées à enrichir les indicateurs de pression actuels concernant les captures accessoires d'oiseaux de mer. Des mesures potentielles susceptibles de permettre à l'ACAP de relever certains de ces défis ont également été identifiées.

Enfin, cet atelier a permis d'examiner la portée et l'orientation des indicateurs « pression-état-réponse » actuels pour les captures accessoires d'oiseaux de mer, et a identifié certains domaines d'amélioration qui pourraient permettre une notification plus immédiate, pendant que des mesures sont prises, pour améliorer les rapports concernant les indicateurs clés de pression.

RECOMMANDATIONS

Nous recommandons que le Groupe de travail sur les captures accessoires :

1. Examine les difficultés identifiées par les Parties dans le reporting des indicateurs de pression actuels.
2. Examine les mesures que l'ACAP pourrait prendre afin de relever les défis auxquels sont confrontées les Parties dans le contexte du Programme de travail du Comité consultatif (CC), et recommande au CC des mesures prioritaires réalisables sur la période triennale en cours.
3. Examine la série actuelle d'indicateurs « pression-état-réponse » pour les captures accessoires d'oiseaux de mer, et recommande au CC toute amélioration potentielle permettant la production immédiate de rapports sur certains indicateurs au moins.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

A Seabird Bycatch Data Workshop was held on 14 May 2023 to understand and find solutions to the challenges experienced in reporting ACAP seabird bycatch indicators following recommendations from SBWG10 ([AC12 Doc 13 Rev 1](#)). The workshop had the following specific objectives:

1. Build experience in the use of ACAP seabird bycatch data reporting framework amongst seabird bycatch data administrators.
2. Establish links between seabird bycatch data administrators across Parties.
3. Identify and discuss the challenges experienced by seabird bycatch data administrators.
4. Recommend actions to overcome the challenges identified.
5. Test the utility of refined seabird bycatch indicators focussed on ACAP priority populations.
6. Identify useful outputs that the reporting on ACAP seabird bycatch indicators can provide.
7. Recommend potential improvements to ACAP's seabird bycatch indicators.

1.2. Bycatch Indicators

The seabird bycatch state-pressure-response indicators, agreed at MoP4 ([MoP4 Doc 23](#)), were developed to contribute to the assessment of the success of the Agreement. Currently the indicators are:

State (S)

- S1 Availability of data for definition of at-sea ranges of ACAP species
- S2 Availability of bycatch data relevant to ACAP species

A State Indicator for Bycatch will measure the currency and accuracy of estimates being provided. As a number of methodological approaches are available and used by Parties to estimate bycatch rates and levels, the indicator should report on the availability of estimates by method over time. Progress would be then measured as an increasing number of Parties and/or fleets reporting bycatch estimates over time, and a change in methods used to those producing most robust estimates. A table will be developed to summarise this information.

Pressure (P)

- P1 Bycatch rates and levels of ACAP species
 - a) the total number of birds killed (bycaught) per year of ACAP species (by species where possible), and
 - b) their bycatch rate, across each of the fisheries of member Parties.

There are a number of issues to consider when estimating and interpreting these two measures, such as undetected mortality, uncertainty in estimation, and uncertainty in species identification.

Response (R)

- S1 Implementation of seabird bycatch mitigation within EEZs
- S2 Engagement with RFMOs on seabird bycatch issues
- A mechanism has yet to be developed to assess the degree of implementation of seabird conservation measures by tuna and other RFMOs.
 - The development and implementation of methods to review the effectiveness of seabird bycatch mitigation measures across tuna and other RFMOs is currently underway.
 - The adoption of recommendations, including changes to bycatch mitigation measures, that arise from these reviews has not yet commenced.
- S3 Research and development for effective seabird mitigation measures
- The relevance of mitigation research reported to SBWG meetings to be assessed as a measure for this indicator.

2. WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

The Secretariat presented the bycatch data submission portal to the workshop. The structure of the portal is based on the fisheries identified by Parties and the data submission forms are based on considerable feedback over many years of development and refinement. However, to date, few data have been entered into the portal despite several attempts to understand barriers to data submission ([SBWG10 Doc 05](#)).

The workshop also considered the priority populations and fisheries table ([MoP7 Doc 10 Rev 1, Table 6](#)). Currently, this table, populated using expert elicitation, and the bycatch data portal operate as separate assessment and reporting tools.

2.1. Challenges

The workshop discussed the many challenges that inhibit both data submission to the portal and also the estimation of seabird bycatch. These include:

Data collection

1. Differing priorities between government fisheries and conservation agencies in relation to resourcing and priorities for observers.
2. Lack of stimulus of professionals from fisheries agencies dealing with matters related to seabird bycatch and/or mitigation.
3. Management and treatment of seabird bycatch related data derived from various sources.
4. Governance of seabird bycatch related data in a scenario comprising several governmental and non- governmental bodies.
5. Capacity of state agencies to sustain a long-term commitment to ACAP's objectives.
6. Priority data collection often focused on target species or bycatch other than seabirds.

7. Identifying bycaught birds to species and population.
8. Electronic monitoring systems not collecting all necessary data.
9. High seas monitoring difficult to achieve to prescribed observer levels (say 5%).
10. Data collection by fishery is difficult when vessels change gear type and target species frequently and often within a single voyage.
11. Fleets of smaller/artisanal vessels can be very large but often cannot accommodate observers; also these vessels can change gear types frequently.
12. Units of data capture can vary between fisheries, requiring conversion to fit ACAP protocols and harmonise within a wider dataset.

Data analysis

1. No agreement on how data should be analysed within each RFMO.
2. Difficulty identifying and/or applying methods to extrapolate mortality data (particularly for data with many zeros).
3. No agreed approaches to estimate cryptic mortality.
4. Need to calibrate electronic monitoring with scientific observer data.
5. Data collected by NGOs and difficult for governments to access this data.
6. Controlling for spatial/temporal/vessel/crew effects in bycatch analyses.
7. High variability in bycatch rates among vessels together with low observer coverage can lead to over- or under-estimates of total bycatch.
8. Difficult to provide bycatch estimates with confidence intervals when overall bycatch levels are low.
9. Extrapolation inappropriate when strata differ significantly eg, data collected in one area used to extrapolate in other dissimilar areas.

Data submission

1. Lack of data collection, observer coverage and analytical capacity reduces ability to submit reliable data.
2. Lack of capacity restricts getting data to government agencies if collected by a third party/NGO.
3. Significant staff changes leading to loss of expertise within fisheries management agencies.
4. Confidentiality of data can restrict data sharing between agencies and jurisdictions.

Subsequent discussions highlighted internal data governance issues within countries, with an acknowledgement that the severity of this problem varied between ACAP Parties.

The workshop also considered whether the data submission could focus on target species or gear type rather than vessels and whether data can be aggregated to facilitate greater reporting. It was noted the data portal has been designed to accommodate different reporting structures and levels of aggregation.

Following discussions within breakout groups the workshop concluded that submission of comprehensive and reliable bycatch data was not possible to achieve within a reasonable

timeframe. However the collection and analysis of comprehensive and reliable bycatch data remains a priority.

2.2. Potential actions for ACAP

The workshop identified a number of potential actions that ACAP could take to address some of the key challenges faced by Parties.

ACAP could develop guidelines on appropriate protocols for data grooming and analysis, to supplement existing guidelines on data collection. Such guidelines would assist with capacity building in relation to analytical techniques and contribute to a more consistent approach to reporting on existing pressure indicators.

ACAP could establish an e-group (virtual) to discuss a handful of relevant questions (between four to five questions) that subsequently may assist in populating a document containing challenges and solutions in a consistent way between Parties. Once this sub-group has agreed these questions, the document would be addressed by each Party with the overall aim of producing a single document encompassing all Parties' points of views. In this way, ACAP would have a holistic view of possible common challenges and solutions among all Parties.

To increase capacity to analyse bycatch data, intersessional workshops were proposed that would include fishery data experts and other stakeholders. It was considered important that attendees were closely involved in fishery management, and particularly with data collection, grooming and analysis. A major objective of these workshops would be to greatly improve interest in the work of ACAP, and to create linkages with other agencies pivotal to fisheries management and conservation. The involvement of ACAP would be highly relevant. The workshops should be progressed on a Party-by-Party basis. The presence of an ACAP representative in these workshops would present an opportunity for Parties to comment on the domestic difficulties with reporting of ACAP seabird bycatch indicators, especially in the case of Parties including small-scale fisheries targeting multiple species and thus varying their fishing gear and target species on a frequent basis. Matters to be discussed at the workshops could include:

1. Developing guidance on methods, possibly a data collection and analysis toolbox;
2. How to address barriers to lack of capacity and guidance;
3. A focus on estimating confidence intervals as well as total bycatch and bycatch rates; and
4. Developing a range of cases studies to inform discussion on capacity limitations and to contribute to the development of possible solutions to Party- specific priorities.

2.3. Further development of bycatch indicators

Acknowledging the slow progress made toward reporting data to inform Pressure Indicators, the workshop agreed there was a need to review and refine the existing State and Response indicators.

While seen initially as a 'softer' response, some of these indicators may be more easily achievable in the short term.

For example:

1. State Indicator 2 (Availability of bycatch data relevant to ACAP species) may be more easily achieved than other indicators. This was seen as an intermediate indicator which ACAP could elevate in priority while further work occurred on Pressure indicators.
2. Response Indicator 1 (Implementation of mitigation within EEZs) could also be a useful interim indicator, and strengthened by changing to “Maximise implementation of mitigation within EEZs”.
3. Response Indicator 2 (Engagement with RFMOs on seabird bycatch issues) could be strengthened by defining the type of, or results from, engagement with RFMOs on seabird bycatch issues. Focusing on implementation of mitigation measures by RFMOs was another possibility.

Workshop participants recalled the slow progress in implementing bycatch indicators since MoP4 in 2012 and recognised the urgency to progress these important indicators on the success of the Agreement.