



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Second Meeting of Seabird Bycatch Working Group

Hermanus, South Africa, 17 – 18 August 2008

**Title: ACAP Observer Report – BirdLife International
Global Seabird Program Meeting**

Author: Secretariat

ACAP Observer Report – BirdLife Global Seabird Programme

Meeting Title: BirdLife Global Seabird Programme Meeting

Meeting Organisation: BirdLife

Date and Location: 15-18 October 2007, Melbourne, Australia

Website Address: <http://www.birdlife.org/>

Your Name/Affiliation: Barry Baker, ACAP Interim Secretariat

Capacity of Attendance: ACAP representative

Relevant Paper(s) Tabled:

Black, A. and Small, C. Globally threatened seabirds at risk from fisheries: an update.

Sullivan, B. BirdLife Best Practice Guidelines

Albatross Task Force Draft Annual Report

Report of the First Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group of the Agreement On the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, Valdivia, Chile, 17-18 June 2007.

Candidate Marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs) - global status and progress

Working Papers

Not applicable

Background Documents

Not applicable

Information Papers

Not applicable

National Reports

Not applicable

Author(s) and/or Presenter if Different:

Summary of Content:

Black, A. and Small, C. Globally threatened seabirds at risk from fisheries: an update.

This paper reviews the available published and unpublished literature on seabird bycatch and aims to:

- Update the longline bycatch figures presented in Nel and Taylor 2003.
- Review any changes in seabird bycatch figures since 2003.
- Review seabird bycatch in trawl, driftnet and gillnet fisheries, and data on targeted take.
- Identify gaps in the available seabird bycatch data and test scenarios for Asian distant water longline fleets.

Preparation of bycatch estimates on a global scale is difficult task. The paper provided was a working draft of what will be a very valuable resource when the review is completed. Initial results indicate that there have been considerable reductions in the seabird bycatch within many of the longline fisheries listed in the original Nel and Taylor (2003) review. Most of these have come about due to a reduction in seabird bycatch rates and, or, a simultaneous decline in fishing effort. However, significant new sources of mortality have been identified since the Nel and Taylor's 2003 report, particularly in Spain and Namibia. Of particular concern is the Asian distant water pelagic fleet, which accounts for 86% of the albatross bycatch whereas the original review put the figure at about 30%. The paper also suggests that in many areas, trawler related mortality now equals or outweighs that caused by longliners (e.g. Falklands, New Zealand, and South Africa). In several areas e.g. Angola, the Falklands and Peru, the targeted take of albatrosses and other seabirds has been reported, although this practice may be far more widespread.

Albatross Task Force Draft Annual Report

The Albatross Task Force of BirdLife International's Global Seabird Programme is an international team of bycatch mitigation instructors. It was established in 2006 as a collaborative initiative between the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (UK BirdLife Partner), BirdLife International and a range of other stakeholders to meet an urgent need for skilled practitioners to work on 'grass roots' projects with fishermen on-shore and at-sea.

The main focus of the Albatross Task Force (ATF) is working in pelagic longline and trawl fisheries: a) to demonstrate to fishermen, fisheries managers and government the suite of cost-effective mitigation measures that are available to reduce seabird bycatch to negligible levels; and b) to have appropriate fishery-specific measures incorporated into official regulatory frameworks.

The ATF has now been working for a full year in some countries. The initial focus of ATF deployment was in Brazil, Chile and South Africa, where there is a high level of threat (from both longline and trawl fisheries), and where there is sufficient domestic support and industry structures to anticipate relatively rapid, tangible returns. In 2008, the ATF is planning to focus on strengthening its current teams and delivering tangible reductions in bycatch across southern Africa and South America fisheries. It will also investigate the feasibility of expanding into Ecuador and Peru, where large artisanal longline fleets operating from many small coastal ports will require consideration of a variation of the

current ATF model to ensure the impact under these more dispersed and localised conditions is maximized.

Sullivan, B. BirdLife Best Practice Guidelines for NPOA-Seabirds

An update was provided on the development of best practice guidelines for the development of NPOA-Seabirds. In 2006, the BirdLife Global Seabird Programme had a meeting with the FAO Department of Fisheries to discuss improving the implementation of the IPOA-Seabirds, specifically how to address seabird mortality in trawl fisheries under the IPOA-Seabirds. It was agreed that at the COFI meeting in March 2007, BirdLife would seek the support of FAO Member States for a FAO Expert Consultation to develop detailed 'best practice' guidelines for the development of NPOA-Seabirds. This support was obtained and the Expert Consultation is will be held in Bergen, Norway from September 2-5. 2008. FAO has assembled a group of invitees that represent experts on NPOA-Seabirds, the mitigation of the incidental catch of seabirds and RFMOs. Considerable work has been put into developing a draft document for consideration at the Bergen meeting, which has included the involvement of ACAP officers.

Candidate Marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs) - global status and progress

BirdLife International is in the process of developing its Important Bird Areas (IBAs) programme to include the marine environment. Initial work has identified currently designated IBAs that could be extended to the marine environment, to include areas contiguous to breeding sites that would protect key feeding and maintenance areas for many of the seabird populations they contain. This document summarised those IBAs considered marine because of the seabird breeding colonies they contain, and/or because of significant areas of marine habitat within them. The BirdLife Partnership manages, analyses and reports on its site and species specific information through the World Bird Database (WBDB). With information on over 10,000 IBAs, the WBDB is a core component for planning and implementing site-based seabird conservation. So far over candidate marine IBAs have been identified for seabirds and a further 426 IBAs contain a substantial amount of marine habitat.

Outcome (e.g. summary of relevant discussions, resolutions, etc):

I was impressed by the considerable amount of work that BirdLife is doing in the field of seabird conservation. BirdLife continues to support the work of ACAP, particularly through their work in promotion of adoption of seabird bycatch mitigation measures with coastal states and RFMOs, their management of the Global Procellariiform Tracking Database, preparation of global estimates of seabird bycatch and development of approaches to define marine protected areas. Their support of ACAP at RFMO meetings and beyond has been invaluable and to our mutual advantage. BirdLife are keen to continue to build on the relationship with ACAP to further the conservation of seabirds.

Recommended Actions for ACAP:

Maintaining a strong relationship with BirdLife will enhance the work of the Agreement.

Have relevant papers been forwarded to Secretariat:

Yes. Electronic copies of the relevant meeting documents are held by the Secretariat.