

MEDIA RELEASE: WORLD ALBATROSS DAY, 19 JUNE 2020

Intended release date: 15 June 2020

On 19 June the first ever World Albatross Day will be celebrated online around the globe. The day honours these magnificent birds and highlights the ongoing conservation crisis they face.

The theme for 2020 is 'eradicating island pests', since many albatross species have to contend with threats from introduced mice, rats, cats and pigs on their breeding islands. In recent years, pests have been removed from subantarctic Antipodes and Macquarie Islands, and work continues to eliminate the 'killer' house mice that attack and kill breeding albatrosses and their chicks on Gough and Midway Islands.

But introduced pests are not the only threat for albatrosses. Interaction with fishing gear, in domestic and high seas fisheries, causes the death of thousands of albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters every year.

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, ACAP, has inaugurated World Albatross Day to raise awareness of these birds worldwide, since a global effort is required to protect these global travellers. The day also falls on the date of the signing of the Agreement 20 years ago.

ACAP currently has 13 member countries (known as Parties) and coordinates international activities to mitigate threats to albatross populations through legislation and education. This effort is supported by several non-member states and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). ACAP currently lists 31 species of albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters, most of which have a global threatened status.

Many communities around the world have planned activities to celebrate the day, although because of the COVID-19 pandemic, most will be shared online.

Resources have been made available on the ACAP website for anyone to use for online promotion and media releases about the day. They include free posters, videos, lectures, species summaries, puzzles, games and competitions. The international Great Albigake Bake Off promises to be a delicious way to recognise these iconic birds.

For more information see:

- [World Albatross Day 2020](#)
- [Great Albigake Bake Off](#)
- [Information about ACAP](#)

Contact information

Dr Christine Bogle, ACAP Executive Secretary, christine.bogle@acap.aq

John Cooper, ACAP Information Officer, john.cooper61@gmail.com

ACAP Secretariat, Level 2, 119 Macquarie Street, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia
+61 3 6165 6674

Statements

The following statements in support of the day may be used in media releases.

Christine Bogle

“The inaugural World Albatross Day comes at a time when the world has been turned upside down by a global pandemic. I hope this crisis reminds us how much we must treasure the natural environment of which we are custodians. To paraphrase the words of Sir Geoffrey Palmer (former New Zealand Prime Minister) who in May 1990 was speaking about whales, if we allow albatrosses to become extinct, how can we imagine ourselves capable of solving the many other environmental problems the world faces?”- Dr Christine Bogle, ACAP Executive Secretary

Nathan Walker

“Albatrosses are amazing creatures that can glide effortlessly across vast oceans, but they are susceptible to pests on the islands where they raise their chicks, and can be caught accidentally by fishers. World Albatross Day is a great opportunity to learn more about these beautiful birds and how we can reduce pest and human impact on them.” – Nathan Walker, Chair, ACAP Advisory Committee

Tatiana Neves

"Having a World Albatross Day is a great idea. I have dedicated a lifetime to the conservation of albatrosses and petrels, so having a World Albatross Day, as recognition of the global importance of those magnificent birds and the threats they face, is important in increasing global awareness of the importance of actions to

prevent their extinction." - Tatiana Neves, Founder & General Coordinator, Projeto Albatroz. Brazil; Vice-Chair, ACAP Advisory Committee

<https://projetoalbatroz.org.br/>

Marco Favero

"Albatrosses are globally threatened seabirds that require our urgent attention. Governments and decision makers must understand this urgency and strengthen conservation actions that reverse the negative effects on these species and their habitats" - Dr Marco Favero, Principal Investigator, National Research Council of Argentina (CONICET); former ACAP Advisory Committee Chair and Executive Secretary, current Co-convenor, Population and Conservation Status Working Group

<https://www.conicet.gov.ar/>

Jonathon Barrington

"Let's all take time on World Albatross Day 2020 to ask why the majestic albatrosses are among our most threatened species, what we can do personally, and how we can advocate locally and internationally to help ensure the long-term conservation of these species for present and future generations." — Jonathon Barrington, Australian Antarctic Division, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment; Australia's National Representative to ACAP

<http://www.antarctica.gov.au/>

Verónica López

"Albatrosses unite many countries across the oceans. The threats they face, such as overfishing and plastic pollution, also affect us, so let us work together to create the world in which we wish to live". -Verónica López, Chair, ACAP World Albatross Day Intersessional Group, Chile

ILLUSTRATIONS



1. A Critically Endangered Tristan Albatross *Diomedea dabbenena* on the United Kingdom's Gough Island broods its downy chick. Photograph by Michelle Risi, Gough Island Restoration Programme



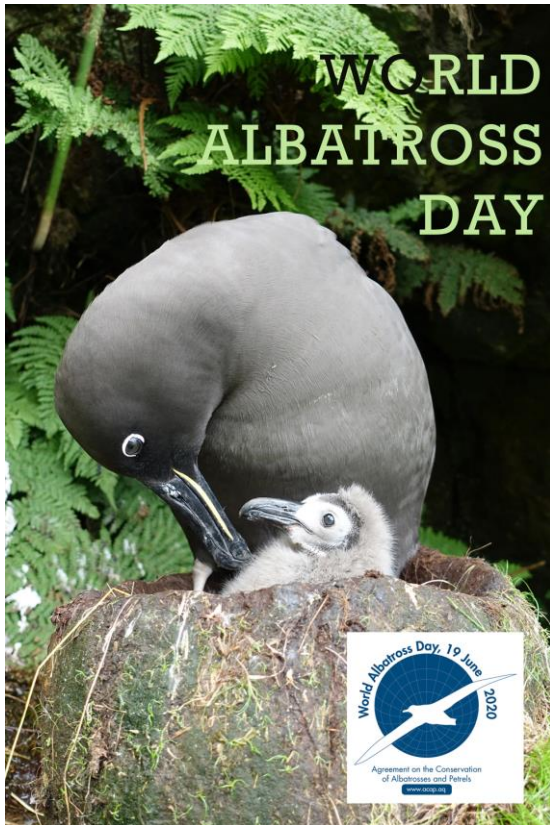
2. Endangered Grey-headed Albatross *Thalassarche chrysostoma* chicks 'scalped' by introduced House Mice on South Africa's Marion Island. Photograph by Ben Dilley, FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town



3. Albatrosses and petrels gather behind a fishing vessel in Argentine waters. Photograph by Nahuel Chavez, Albatross Task Force - Argentina, Aves Argentinas



4. A bird-scaring line with its hanging streamers keep albatrosses and petrels away from the hooks on a Brazilian longliner. Photograph by Dimas Gianuca, Albatross Task Force - Brazil, Projeto Albatroz



5. An Endangered Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria fusca* tends its chick. Photograph by Michelle Risi, Gough Island Restoration Programme



6. Kath Walker and Graeme Elliott, Department of Conservation, New Zealand, with their World Albatross Day banner behind an Endangered Antipodean Albatross *Diomedea antipodensis* on New Zealand's Antipodes Island. Photograph by Kath Walker

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

ACAP Parties (members) and other states

Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, France, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom, Uruguay (13). Non-Party breeding range states are Japan, Mexico and the USA. Regularly attending non-Parties also include Canada and Namibia.

<https://www.acap.aq/en/resources/parties-to-acap>

ACAP-listed Species

31 species, made up of 22 albatrosses, seven petrels and two shearwaters

<https://www.acap.aq/en/resources/acap-species>

ACAP structure

The Agreement's Secretariat is based in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. It is made up of an Executive Secretary, Dr Christine Bogle from New Zealand, a Science Officer, and an honorary Information Officer based in Cape Town, South Africa. ACAP is directed by regular Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP), which are normally held at three-year intervals. The last meeting was held in South Africa in 2018. The Meeting of the Parties is advised by an Advisory Committee (AC) which normally meets twice in every three years. The AC is currently chaired by Nathan Walker (New Zealand). Its last meeting was held in Brazil in 2019. The Advisory Committee is supported by three Working Groups, the Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG) primarily addressing at-sea threats, the Population and Conservation Status Working Group (PaCSWG) mainly addressing land-based threats, and the Taxonomy Working Group (TWG) reviewing the taxonomic status of albatrosses and petrels.

ACAP Seabird Bycatch Working Group

The Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG) was established in recognition of the serious problem posed to seabirds by interactions with fisheries. SBWG advises the Agreement on actions that will assist in assessment, mitigation and reduction of negative interactions between fishing operations and albatrosses and petrels. Although ACAP lists 31 of the most vulnerable species of seabirds, many other seabirds also face similar threats. This means the work we do to conserve ACAP-listed species has wider conservation benefits. For example, ACAP's advice on reducing bycatch in fisheries aims to reduce the bycatch of all seabirds in those fisheries. The working group comprises representatives from ACAP's 13 Parties and invited experts with relevant technical or other expertise.

“ACAP is a trusted provider of practical, effective and best-practice measures that work to reduce seabird bycatch from fishing operations. Best-practice methods currently recommended by ACAP are deployment of twinned bird-scaring lines in both longline and trawl fisheries, line weighting, night setting and use of hook shielding by longliners, and management of discards by trawlers. ACAP has also started

developing a toolbox of approaches to reduce seabird bycatch in artisanal and other small-scale fisheries.”

Dr Igor Debski (New Zealand) & Dr Anton Wolfaardt (South Africa), Co-convenors, ACAP Seabird Bycatch Working Group

ACAP Population & Conservation Status Working Group

The Population and Conservation Status Working Group (PaCSWG) records and considers the population sizes and trends of the 31 ACAP-listed species, along with their conservation status and that of the breeding localities in which they occur. As for the SBWG, the working group comprises representatives from ACAP's 13 Parties and invited experts with relevant technical or other expertise.

“We support applied science and research collaboration to improve our knowledge of seabird populations and bycatch internationally. Our grants and secondment programmes are focused in building capacities in ACAP Parties and enhance international collaboration with Range States and International Organisations. ACAP has developed a range of Best-practice Guidelines to advise relevant stakeholders on methods and issues affecting the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels. These include the eradication of invasive species, census methodologies, biosecurity, translocation, diet analysis and assessment of plastic ingestion. Although they were originally designed for the benefit of ACAP-listed species, the guidelines constitute a great tool for the research and conservation of other seabird species.”

Dr Marco Favero (Argentina) & Patricia Serafini (Brazil), Co-convenors, ACAP Population & Conservation Status Working Group