



**Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels**

**Third Meeting of Advisory Committee**

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**RAMSAR Listing of Prince Edward Islands**

Author: **South Africa**



## **SOUTH AFRICA'S SUB-ANTARCTIC PRINCE EDWARD ISLANDS ACCORDED INTERNATIONAL STATUS AS A RAMSAR SITE**

South Africa recently announced the listing of its sub-Antarctic Prince Edward Islands under the Convention on Wetlands of International importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat of 1971 (commonly known as the Ramsar Convention). This is South Africa's 19th Ramsar site and its first away from the African Continent. Importantly, it is the first ever Ramsar site to be situated in the sub-Antarctic Region, although it is not the most farthest south. The announcement was made on 22 May 2007, in celebration of the International Day of Biodiversity. The successful submission of the islands to the Convention was an initiative of the Prince Edward Islands Management Committee.

The new Ramsar Site consists of the whole of the terrestrial areas of the islands of Marion and Prince Edward, along with a 500-m-wide intertidal and kelp-bed zone around each island. The site is listed under Ramsar Criteria 01,2, 3,4, 5 and 6. The designated wetland categories include non-forested peat lands (swamps and bogs), intermittent streams, waterfalls, fresh-water ponds, crater lakes, sea cliffs, rocky marine shores and kelp beds. All of the terrestrial component falls within the Prince Edward Islands Special Nature Reserve, while the marine component (already within a no-fishing zone) is to be included within a large Marine Protected Area, expected to be promulgated in the near future. Further information, including electronic maps, on the Prince Edward Islands Ramsar Site may be found at the convention's web site ([www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org)).

Nine procellariiform species listed within the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) breed at the Prince Edward Islands. These are the Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*, the Grey-headed Albatross *Thalassarche chrysostoma*, the Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross *T. carteri*, the Dark-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebastria fusca*, the Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *P. palpebrata*, the Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*, the Northern Giant Petrel *M. halli*, the White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* and the Grey Petrel *P. cinerea*. The population of Wandering Albatrosses is considered to be of especial significance, as it represents c. 44% of the species' global population.

The Ramsar Secretariat, in announcing the Prince Edward Islands' Ramsar status on its web site (see [www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.southafrica\\_makuleke.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.southafrica_makuleke.htm)) has called for all Contracting Parties to the Convention that have sub-Antarctic territories to follow the example of South Africa and designate Ramsar sites within them.

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