

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p>Tenth Meeting of the Advisory Committee <i>Wellington, New Zealand, 11 - 15 September 2017</i></p> <p>Draft Advisory Committee Report to the Sixth Meeting of Parties</p> <p><i>Advisory Committee Chair, Vice-chair</i></p>
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SUMMARY

This report to the Sixth Meeting of the Parties has been drafted as a document in progress for the Advisory Committee by the Chair and Vice-chair with the assistance of the Agreement's Secretariat. The final version will be prepared after the conclusion of the Tenth Meeting of the Advisory Committee in order to reflect inputs from the Advisory Committee, and actions and decisions taken during this meeting. The Advisory Committee and its Working Groups made excellent progress during the last triennium. The Agreement succeed in providing expert advice to Parties, Range States and a range of Organisations on actions that can be taken to address threats to albatrosses and petrels, both at sea and on land. A substantial proportion of this information is readily accessible through the ACAP website, including the conservation guidelines for the eradication of predators, and for biosecurity and quarantine, best practice advice for bycatch mitigation measures in longline and trawl fisheries, mitigation fact sheets developed in conjunction with BirdLife International, de-hooking guide, and the review of diseases and pathogens, among others.

Now that effective mitigation measures have been identified for the key fishing activities known to result in the incidental catch of ACAP species, the challenge ahead is to have these mitigation measures used in those fisheries where seabird bycatch is occurring. Another key challenge is to obtain the fisheries data required to improve our understanding and management of seabird bycatch. In this context we have yet to develop an appropriate methodology for the use of this data. As in the past triennium, one of the most challenging difficulties will be the increasing size and complexity of the Agreement's agenda and the asymmetry with the growth of capacity. Such increased workload could be alleviated by the incorporation or engagement of new people to undertake particular actions.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Working Groups and the Advisory Committee comment upon and suggest amendments to the Advisory Committee report to the Sixth Meeting of the Parties.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report follows the structure agreed during the First Session of the Meeting of Parties (MoP1, [Resolution 1.5](#), Annex 1) and has been drafted as a document in progress for the Advisory Committee by the Chair and Vice-Chair with the assistance of the Agreement's Secretariat. The final version of this report to MoP6 will be prepared after the conclusion of the Tenth Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC10), in order to reflect inputs from the Advisory Committee, and actions and decisions taken during this meeting. The document will be circulated intersessionally among the members of the Advisory Committee for review and approval prior to MoP6.

1.1 Establishment of the Committee

The Committee was established at the First Session of the Meeting of Parties, held in Hobart, Australia, from 10 to 12 November 2004.

1.2 Election and appointment of Advisory Committee Officers

AC9 constituted the end of all Committee Officers' terms, so all positions required election. Mr Nathan Walker (New Zealand) was elected as Chair, and Mrs Tatiana Neves (Brazil) was elected as Vice-chair of the Advisory Committee.

Dr Anton Wolfaardt (United Kingdom) was re-elected as a Convenor, Dr Igor Debski (New Zealand) was re-elected as Vice-convenor, and Mr Sebastian Jimenez (Uruguay) was elected as Vice-convenor of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group.

Dr Richard Phillips (United Kingdom) and Dr Rosemary Gales (Australia) were re-elected as Co-convenors of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group. Dr Flavio Quintana (Argentina) was re-elected as Vice-convenor and Ms Patrícia Serafini (Brazil) was elected as Vice-convenor of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group.

Mr Mark Tasker (United Kingdom) was elected as Convenor of the Taxonomy Working Group. Dr Mike Double (Australia) was elected as Vice-convenor of the Taxonomy Working Group.

1.3 Members, Alternates, Observers and Experts

The lists of Advisory Committee Members, Alternates, Observers and Experts in attendance at each of the meetings of the Committee in the triennium may be found in Annex 1 of AC9 and AC10 reports.

1.4 Review of rules of procedure

The Committee established its Rules of Procedure (RoP) at AC1 and have reviewed them at subsequent meetings. The AC's RoP were last amended at AC6 (Guayaquil, Ecuador, 29 August to 2 September 2011). At AC8 and AC9, the Advisory Committee continued discussions about amending Rule 20. No agreement was reached on the amendments to the AC Rules of Procedure, so the current RoP was adopted for the meetings.

[Update if further papers or discussion at AC10]

1.5 Meetings and other correspondence since MoP5

After MoP5, the AC met formally for its Ninth Meeting (AC9) held in La Serena, Chile, from 9 to 13 May 2016, and its Tenth Meeting (AC10) held in Wellington, New Zealand, from 11 to 15 September 2017. Meetings of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group (PaCSWG 3 and PaCSWG4), and the Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG7 and SBWG8) preceded both AC9 and AC10.

There has been considerable formal and informal correspondence in association with the implementation of the Advisory Committee work programme. Informal meetings of the Advisory Committee's Officials (AC Chair and Vice-Chair, Working Group Convenors) and the Executive Secretary were held on a regular basis to co-ordinate the intersessional activities of the Advisory Committee.

2. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES AND MEETINGS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2.1 Activities of the Chair

2.1.1 Recruitment

No recruitment activities were undertaken during the period covered by this report.

2.1.2 Budgets

The Chair has been consulted by the Secretariat on a number of occasions on issues regarding management of the Agreement's budget. In all cases, agreement was reached.

2.1.3 Consultations with the Agreement Secretariat

The Chair has conducted considerable correspondence with the Secretariat (via e-mail usually on a daily basis, and telephone conversations on weekly basis) and others less frequently. The Vice-chair maintained periodic correspondence with AC Officials and the Secretariat as well.

2.1.4 Other activities

The Chair, Vice-chair and other AC Officials have represented the Agreement at a number of meetings of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and at relevant conferences and other international meetings.

2.2 Progress with Actions under Article IX of the Agreement

2.2.1 Provision of scientific, technical and other advice

A summary of progress against the Work Programme for 2016-18 ([Resolution 5.4](#)) is provided in **ANNEX 1** [TO BE INCLUDED AFTER AC10]. It should be noted that the Work Programme has evolved considerably in AC9 and AC10 and new tasks were added to reflect the work conducted by the Advisory Committee during this period. The work programme in **ANNEX1** reflects those revisions.

This document has also been used as the basis for the development of the Advisory Committee's Work Programme for the 2019 - 2021 triennium, which will be endorsed at AC10 and submitted to MoP6 for its consideration and final approval.

Scientific and technical advice provided by the Advisory Committee is based in large part on the work produced by its Working Groups:

- Population and Conservation Status Working Group (PaCSWG) addresses land-based threats and conservation status of species listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement.
- Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG) addresses at-sea threats for ACAP species.
- Taxonomy Working Group (TWG) reviews the taxonomic status of taxa listed on Annex 1 of the Agreement.

The Advisory Committee and its Working Groups made excellent progress during the last triennium. Key achievements since MoP5 are summarised below [OUTCOMES TO BE UPDATED AFTER AC10]:

- The further development of the ACAP [database](#) to facilitate the work of the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups.
- Review of current population trends of ACAP species.
- Further identification of key gaps in tracking data.
- Use of the prioritisation framework to guide the work of the Agreement.
- Further identification of preliminary performance indicators on capacity building, added to the suit of indicators for seabird bycatch and land-based threats.
- Ongoing review and update of the ACAP [species assessments](#).
- The effective implementation of a strategy to engage RFMOs and assist in the development and implementation of conservation measures relevant to ACAP species.
- Advice on effective mitigation measures has been refined and promoted to relevant fisheries managers for those fishing activities known to cause significant incidental mortality to species listed under Annex 1 of the Agreement.
- Progress achieved with the adoption of seabird conservation measures by relevant RFMOs that are based on ACAP's best practice advice.
- The ongoing review of [bycatch mitigation best practice](#) advice documents for pelagic and demersal longline, and trawl fisheries.
- The ongoing review of the BirdLife International - ACAP [mitigation fact sheets](#) aimed at fisheries managers to assist in reducing bycatch in longline and trawl fisheries. The fact sheets are available on the ACAP website and are available in a number of relevant languages.
- Continued refinement of biosecurity, census, and eradication [guidelines](#) for ACAP seabird breeding sites and the hook-removal and Seabird Bycatch ID guides.
- Update of a review of diseases and pathogens in albatrosses and petrels.
- Development of translocation guidelines for surface and burrow nesting species.

- Consideration of best approaches for international cooperation in the conservation of Pterodroma and other small burrowing petrel species at a workshop held in the margins of AC10.

2.2.2 Progress with standard reference text on taxonomy of species covered by the Agreement

There has been no change in taxonomy of species covered by the Agreement since the last report to the Meeting of the Parties [TO BE UPDATED AFTER AC10].

2.2.3 Recommendations concerning the Action Plan and further research

A draft Advisory Committee Work Programme for the 2019 - 2021 triennium has been prepared and submitted as MoP6 Doc 00 [TO BE UPDATED AFTER AC10].

2.2.4 Development of indicators to assess progress towards achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels

MoP5 approved a list of breeding sites and status and trend indicators, as well as indicators on tracking data availability, and noted progress concerning SBWG indicators. (see [MoP5 Doc 20 Rev 1](#)). Following further discussion at AC10, the Advisory Committee recommends that MoP6 endorse use of the capacity building indicators detailed in Annex [] of the AC10 Final Report [TO BE COMPLETED AFTER AC10].

2.2.5 Progress with collation of information under Section 5 of the Action Plan and identification of gaps in knowledge

A report on progress with implementation of the Agreement which has been produced using the new web-based reporting system is provided as MoP6 Doc 00. The information that Parties are required to provide is being progressively included in the products produced by the Agreement, such as species assessments and reports on fisheries bycatch and will significantly support the work of the Advisory Committee in future years [TO BE COMPLETED AFTER AC10].

2.2.6 Other Activities

The reports mentioned above and in Annex [] to this report describe the activities of the Advisory Committee [TO BE COMPLETED AFTER AC10].

2.3 Meetings of the Advisory Committee

Reports from the [Ninth](#) and Tenth Meetings of the Advisory Committee can be found on the Agreement's website. [Provide links after AC10]

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Achievements

The Agreement succeed in providing expert advice to Parties and a range of Organisations on actions that can be taken to address threats to albatrosses and petrels, both at sea and on land. A substantial proportion of this information is readily accessible through the ACAP website, including guidelines for designing burrowing petrel studies; conservation guidelines for the eradication of predators, and for biosecurity and quarantine; translocation guidelines; best practice advice for bycatch mitigation measures in longline (both demersal and pelagic) and trawl fisheries; mitigation fact sheets developed in conjunction with BirdLife International; seabird bycatch ID guide, de-hooking guide; and the review of diseases and pathogens; among others.

The further development of the ACAP database and implementation of the electronic reporting system provides Parties and other users access to essential information for the effective implementation of the Agreement's Action Plan. As data is progressively added to this database it will allow the Agreement to conduct an analysis of its performance, and most importantly, identify the progress achieved and the needs required in different regions, and for individual Parties.

A very large proportion of the actions planned for the 2016-2018 triennium were accomplished. It is expected that the Advisory Committee and its Working Groups will continue to make good progress. Some outcomes expected for the next triennium should include: (1) the access to better data from Parties and other fisheries managers on their fisheries and on levels of seabird bycatch, that will allow improved evaluation of bycatch numbers for each ACAP listed species; (2) a suite of indicators of the success of the Agreement is in use, (3) [TO BE COMPLETED FOLLOWING AC10].

3.2 Difficulties encountered and challenges for the next triennium

Now that effective mitigation measures have been identified for the key fishing activities known to result in the incidental catch of ACAP species, the challenge ahead is to have these mitigation measures used in those fisheries where seabird bycatch is occurring.

Another key challenge is to obtain the fisheries data required to assess the level of implementation and effectiveness, as well improving our understanding and management of seabird bycatch. In this context, we have yet to develop an appropriate methodology for the use of this data.

As noted in the last AC report to MoP ([MoP5 Doc 09](#)), one of the most challenging difficulties found in the past triennium and which will continue to be a challenge for the next one, is the increasing size and complexity of the Agreement's agenda and the asymmetry with the growth of capacity (both in terms of funds and human resources). Although, in view of the current global economic situation, monetary resources are likely to be restricted during the next triennium, the workload could be alleviated by the incorporation or engagement of new people to undertake particular actions.

[UPDATE WITH OUTCOMES FROM THE PTERODROMA WORKSHOP AFTER AC10]

[UPDATE WITH OUTCOMES OF THE DISCUSSION ON SMALL GRANTS AND
SECONDMENT PROGRAMMES AFTER AC10]

We hope that the recommendations in this paper will help the Sixth Meeting of Parties to drive forward the objectives of ACAP and look forward to serving ACAP/the Parties in the next triennium.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING

The following recommendations arising from this report are provided for the consideration of the Meeting of the Parties:

- Review and approve the work programme proposed for the Advisory Committee for the next triennium (refer AC10 Doc 17)
- Endorse use of the performance indicators detailed in Annex [] of the AC10 Report.

[UPDATE AFTER AC10]