



*Agreement on  
the Conservation  
of Albatrosses  
and Petrels*

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### Require further information?

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## PREFACE

This booklet has been produced by the ACAP Secretariat and the Advisory Committee's Officials based on the inputs of ACAP Parties to mark the 10 year anniversary of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels. Its purpose is to identify the main achievements of the Agreement and its Parties in improving the conservation status of the species listed in Annex 1, as well as to identify the key challenges remaining in its implementation.

The reports in this booklet reveal the significant progress made by ACAP Parties in addressing threats to the survival of albatrosses and petrels, both on land and at sea. This work has been complemented by the activities of many non-Party Range States, such as Canada, Japan and the United States of America, who have actively participated in and supported the work of the Agreement, even though they are not signatories to it at this point in time. The active support of non-governmental organisations such as American Bird Conservancy, BirdLife International, Humane Society International, Pro Delphinus, Projeto Albatroz, Southern Seabird Solutions and World Wildlife Fund amongst others, has also been instrumental in the success that has been achieved in improving the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels globally.

The Agreement has played a crucial role in bringing together a global network of researchers and managers to identify threats to albatrosses and petrels, to prioritize conservation actions and to find effective solutions to them. Through the work of its Seabird Bycatch Working Group, it has identified effective measures that can be taken to prevent the bycatch of seabirds in longline and trawl fisheries, which together pose the greatest at-sea threat to the survival of many albatrosses and petrels. Similarly, ACAP's Population and Conservation Status Working Group has developed guidelines that identify best-practice methods to address land-based threats at the breeding sites of these species.

Significant progress has been achieved at some important breeding sites, where large-scale pest eradication programmes have been completed. The success of these programmes has in some cases been immediately noticeable, with a number of species returning to breed on these islands following the successful completion of the pest eradication

programmes. Threats from disease and introduced pests still threaten the survival of some species and it is important that the work of ACAP Parties continues at these breeding sites in the years ahead until these threats are addressed.

The Agreement has also been instrumental in coordinating the development of effective seabird conservation measures in both domestic and high seas fisheries, in the latter case, through its Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMO) engagement strategy. As a result of this work, many of the RFMOs whose fisheries overlap with the foraging areas of albatrosses and petrels have now adopted seabird conservation measures, based on ACAP's best practice advice.

The challenge remains however to see the effective implementation of the conservation measures that have now been adopted. A lack of data has made it difficult to evaluate the extent to which these conservation measures have been implemented in many fisheries. To achieve ACAP's objective of achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status of albatrosses and petrels, it is essential that effective observer programmes and/or electronic monitoring programmes be put in place. The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), which has 100% observer coverage in its longline fishing operations, has proven that the reduction of seabird bycatch to nil or negligible levels is possible in high seas fisheries.

ACAP's focus in the coming years must be to see this success replicated in other fisheries, to continue its work in addressing threats at breeding sites and to seek the active participation of those Range States who are not yet engaged in its work.

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ACAP Executive Secretary

**MARCO FAVERO**  
Advisory Committee Chair

**APRIL 2015**

# Introduction to ACAP

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)<sup>1</sup> is a multilateral agreement that seeks to achieve a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels, primarily by coordinating and undertaking international activity to mitigate known threats to their populations.

Development of the Agreement commenced in 1999 and was concluded rapidly. Only two preparatory meetings – held in Hobart, Australia, and Cape Town, South Africa – were required and were attended by 16 countries and five international organizations. ACAP was opened for signature in Canberra, Australia on 19 June 2001 and entered into force on 1 February 2004, at which time all Southern Hemisphere species of albatrosses and seven petrel species were listed under its auspices. Currently (February 2015), there are 13 Parties to the Agreement: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, France, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and Uruguay (see Appendix 1). ACAP is supported by a Secretariat located in Hobart (Tasmania, Australia).

The First Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP1) was convened in November 2004 in Hobart. A key outcome was the establishment of an Advisory Committee to guide the implementation of the Agreement. The Advisory Committee is supported by three working groups on Population and Conservation Status, Seabird Bycatch, and Taxonomy. Sessions of the Meeting of Parties (MoP) are held at three-year intervals, with the Advisory Committee and its working groups meeting in each of the two intervening years.

## Species protected under ACAP

Although ACAP's initial focus was to protect 26 Southern Hemisphere albatrosses and petrels, Parties agreed in 2009 and 2012 to include the three North Pacific species of albatrosses and a Mediterranean species of petrel, respectively. The 30 species now protected under ACAP are listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement (see Appendix 2). ACAP-listed species have global threat statuses according to IUCN of Critically Endangered (four species), Endangered (five species), Vulnerable (11 species), Near Threatened (eight species) and Least Concern (two species).<sup>2</sup>

## Main threats to Albatrosses and Petrels

The most significant threat facing albatrosses and petrels is mortality arising from interactions with fishing gear, especially in longline and trawl fishing operations. Many species are also threatened at their breeding sites by introduced predators, diseases, habitat loss or human disturbance. ACAP has developed a range of materials, including best practice guidelines, to assist Parties and Range States in addressing these threats.

ACAP provides a focus for international cooperation and the exchange of information and expertise. The Action Plan (Annex 2 of the Agreement) provides a framework for the implementation of effective conservation measures to address threats to seabirds, both on land and at sea.

In addition to individual nations taking measures to protect albatrosses and petrels, international cooperative action is also required. Albatrosses and petrels are susceptible to threats operating throughout their very wide foraging ranges, which extend across national boundaries and into international waters, and actions by any one nation alone are not sufficient to safeguard their populations. International cooperation on albatross and petrel conservation greatly enhances the prospects for successful conservation measures across their ranges.

1. Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, done 19 June 2001, 2258 UNTS 257 (entered into force 1 February 2004).  
2. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2014.

# ACAP's achievements

ACAP and its Parties have made significant achievements to improve the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels in the decade since ACAP entered into force, by working collectively and individually, and through cooperation with other countries and inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations. Notable in this last category is Birdlife International and its affiliate organisations that have played a major role in ACAP since its inception. The most significant achievements and future challenges are summarised below for the Agreement and, in later sections, for each Party.

## Global outlook

As a broad, global indicator of the task facing ACAP, the table below summarises the threat status of the 30 species listed at February 2015.

**TABLE 1:** ACAP-listed species by level of threat according to IUCN Red List 2014 (for more details of these species and their population trends, refer to Appendix 1)

Level of threat	Albatross species	Petrel species
Critically Endangered	3	1
Endangered	5	0
Vulnerable	7	4
Near Threatened	7	1
Least Concern	0	2

## Achievements

Significant achievements by ACAP and its Advisory Committee (AC) from 2004 to 2014 include:

- Undertaking a range of activities to engage with fishers and fishery managers to assist them in identifying and mitigating threats to ACAP-listed species in fishing operations. Achievements in this regard include:
  - adoption of seabird conservation measures, based on ACAP's best practice advice, by many of the regional fisheries management organisations whose fisheries are known to have bycatch mortalities of ACAP-listed species. This has been achieved through the submission of papers to, and attendance at, scientific, technical and other meetings of these international organisations to negotiate the adoption of these conservation measures.
- Disseminating specialist information on feasible and effective measures that can be taken to prevent seabird bycatch in pelagic and demersal longline fishing operations, as well as in trawl and other fisheries. This information has been used by many ACAP Parties and non-Party Range States in the adoption and implementation of effective seabird conservation measures in their fisheries.
- Setting up a comprehensive, online database on management of breeding sites, threats, population size, bycatch rates and other information used to review progress in research and conservation, and prioritise the work of ACAP.
- Establishing a permanent Secretariat, headquartered in Hobart, in 2008 and developing a range of administrative documents essential to the operations of ACAP, including a Headquarters Agreement with Australia to host the Secretariat, Staff Regulations; Financial Regulations; Rules of Procedure for the MoP and AC; and a rolling triennial Work Program.

- Regular reviews of the population status and trends of all ACAP-listed species.
- Producing and maintaining Species Assessments that summarise the most recent scientific information for ACAP-listed species. These assessments provide up-to-date data on each species' distribution, population status and trends, threats facing individual populations at breeding sites and at sea, conservation measures in place to protect them, and any gaps in knowledge about the species.
- Developing and regularly reviewing best practice advice to fishers and fisheries managers on mitigation measures to avoid or minimise bycatch of ACAP-listed species by different methods of fishing operations.
- Developing Conservation Guidelines on biosecurity management and quarantine for breeding sites to assist with the development of plans to eradicate introduced vertebrates from breeding sites of ACAP species and to prevent their reintroduction.
- Developing an identification guide to dead seabirds to improve the accuracy of information on seabirds killed in fisheries.
- Developing advice on the removal of hooks from seabirds.
- Preparing advice and guidelines to assist with the development and implementation of plans to count surface-nesting and burrow-nesting ACAP species.
- **Assisting Ecuador and Peru in developing a Conservation Action Plan for the Waved Albatross (*Phoebastria irrorata*) of Ecuador's Galapagos Islands.**
- **Funding 39 research and secondment projects as capacity building initiatives to the value of AUD 580 000.**
- Developing a close, cooperative relationship with inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations relevant to, or with an interest in, seabird conservation. A highlight has been the signing of Memoranda of Understanding with four fisheries management organisations to enhance cooperation and information exchange between them and ACAP.
- Recommending a standard, revised taxonomy for albatrosses – overcoming several taxonomic disputes. This revised taxonomy has been widely accepted by nations and international organisations, including Parties to the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).
- Increasing awareness among the concerned public by way of over 2000 news stories dealing with albatross and petrel conservation and research posted to the ACAP website since 2006, and by daily postings to ACAP's Facebook page, currently with 1900 members.
- Gaining global recognition as the pre-eminent source of expertise and information on albatrosses and petrels listed under ACAP.

## Future challenges for ACAP

ACAP has as its objective achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels. Much more still needs to be accomplished before this objective is achieved. Key challenges include:

- Securing the adoption and effective implementation of best-practice bycatch mitigation measures in all national, regional and international fisheries where significant seabird bycatch is occurring. Particular priorities include high seas longline fisheries for tuna, and trawl fisheries that overlap with the foraging areas of ACAP-listed species.
- Obtaining further data on where and in what numbers seabirds have been and are being bycaught in fisheries operations, including artisanal fisheries, in order to improve the effectiveness of conservation measures.
- Seeking the active involvement of, and accession to ACAP, of Range States (i.e. those States whose fishers overlap with ACAP-listed species and or which have jurisdiction over breeding sites) that are not currently Parties to ACAP or are not participating in the Agreement's work.
- Increasing the level of resources and expertise available to implement priority conservation actions in the ACAP Action Plan and the AC's Work Plan including:
  - further eradication of introduced pests at breeding sites
  - wider implementation of bycatch mitigation measures, especially in priority conservation areas where large concentrations of ACAP species frequently forage
  - further improvements to bycatch mitigation measures to make them more effective and easier and cheaper for fishers to use.
- Improving knowledge of at-sea distribution, and of threats at breeding sites including from introduced species and disease,
- Undertaking censuses of populations to update and improve the accuracy of some older datasets and to fill population data gaps.
- ACAP is well-placed to meet these future challenges. There is strong cooperation among Parties in addressing conservation threats to albatrosses and petrels. The Agreement enjoys a growing international reputation as the source of best and improving practices and advice about conserving these species. There is increasing support among Range States and regional and international organisations for the work of the Agreement.





## Notable actions concerning ACAP

- First preparatory meeting to negotiate and develop the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP): Hobart, Australia.



- First meeting of Advisory Committee (AC1), 20-22 July, Hobart, Australia.



- Second preparatory meeting to negotiate and develop ACAP: Cape Town, South Africa.
- ACAP opens for signature on 19 June 2001 – original signatories were Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, France, New Zealand, Peru, and the United Kingdom.
- Annex 1 to ACAP includes 19 albatross species (covering all Southern Hemisphere species of albatross) and seven petrel species (see Appendix 2).

- First meeting of the Breeding Sites Working Group (BSWG1), 2 June, and First meeting of the Status and Trends Working Group (STWG1), 3 June, Brasilia, Brazil.
- The Twenty-Fifth meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR-XXV) notes that for the first time, no albatrosses were reported taken in regulated longline fisheries in the CCAMLR Convention Area in 2006, and the near zero bycatch of other seabirds. Scientific observers previously reported a peak of over 5700 seabird mortalities in 1996.

- Entry into force of ACAP on 1 February 2004 following the fifth ratification – original Parties were Australia, Ecuador, New Zealand, South Africa and Spain.
- First Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP1), 10 – 12 November, Hobart, Australia.



- First meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG1), 17-18 June, Valdivia, Chile.

1999

2001

2004

2005

2006

2007



- Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Secretariat to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (the Headquarters Agreement) signed on 23 June 2008, and entered into force on 2 December 2008.
- Permanent Secretariat to ACAP established in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.
- First bycatch mitigation best practice advice developed by ACAP for national and international fisheries managers.
- ACAP's online species database becomes operational.



- Annex 1 amended in May 2009 to include the three Northern Hemisphere albatross species: *Phoebastria albatrus* (Short-tailed Albatross), *Phoebastria immutabilis* (Laysan Albatross), and *Phoebastria nigripes* (Black-footed Albatross) extending protection to all species of albatrosses globally.

- ACAP's online national reporting operational.
- Adoption of supplemental recommendation 2011-09 by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) on reducing incidental bycatch of seabirds in ICCAT longline fisheries, based on ACAP's best practice advice.
- The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) adopts Resolution C-11-02 to mitigate the impact of fishing on seabirds for species covered by the IATTC.
- The Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) recommends that Members and Cooperating Non-Members will comply with all current binding and recommendatory measures adopted by the IOTC, ICCAT and WCPFC aimed at the protection of ecologically related species.

- Annex 1 amended in April 2012 to include an additional petrel species: *Puffinus mauretanicus* (Balearic Shearwater).
- The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) adopts conservation and management measure CMM 12-07 for mitigating impacts of fishing on seabirds, based on ACAP's best practice advice for pelagic longline fishing.
- The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) adopts Resolution 12/06 on reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries based on ACAP's best practice advice.

- ACAP in force for 10 years on 1 February 2014.
- Major feral pest eradication (of rabbits, rats and mice) successfully completed on Macquarie Island, Australia.
- Major feral pest eradication substantially completed on South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)<sup>5</sup>. Rats have been likely eradicated, eradication of reindeer is complete, and of house mice is likely complete.
- Rat eradication has been carried out on over 60 islands in the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)<sup>5</sup>, including some ACAP breeding sites.
- The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) adopts CMM 2-04 on minimising bycatch of seabirds in the SPRFMO Convention Area, based on ACAP's best practice advice for demersal longline and trawl fisheries.

5. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (Islas Georgias del Sur e Islas Sandwich del Sur) and the surrounding maritime areas.



2008

2009

2011

2012

2014

# Appendices

## APPENDIX 1: Status list for the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Parties to the Agreement	Date of signature	Date of ratification, acceptance/approval	Entry into force for Parties
<b>Argentina</b>	19 January 2004	29 August 2006	1 November 2006
<b>Australia</b>	19 June 2001	4 October 2001	1 February 2004
<b>Brazil</b>	19 June 2001	3 September 2008	1 December 2008
<b>Chile</b>	19 June 2001	13 September 2005	1 December 2005
<b>Ecuador</b>	18 February 2003	18 February 2003	1 February 2004
<b>France</b>	19 June 2001	28 June 2005 (acceptance/approval)	1 September 2005
<b>New Zealand</b>	19 June 2001	1 November 2001	1 February 2004
<b>Norway</b>		5 March 2007 (accession)	1 June 2007
<b>Peru</b>	19 June 2001	17 May 2005	1 August 2005
<b>South Africa</b>	6 November 2003	6 November 2003	1 February 2004
<b>Spain</b>	30 April 2002	12 August 2003	1 February 2004
<b>United Kingdom</b>	19 June 2001	2 April 2004	1 July 2004
<b>Uruguay</b>		9 October 2008 (accession)	1 January 2009



## APPENDIX 2: Summary of status of ACAP albatross and petrel species

Species name	Common name	Year listed by ACAP	IUCN Status 2014 <sup>1</sup>	Number of sites (ACAP) <sup>2</sup>	Single Country Endemic	Annual breeding pairs <sup>3</sup>	Population Trend 1983-2013 <sup>4</sup>	Trend Confidence
<i>Diomedea exulans</i>	Wandering Albatross	2004	VU	28		8,132	↓	High
<i>Diomedea dabbenena</i>	Tristan Albatross	2004	CR	1	UK	1,650	↓	High
<i>Diomedea antipodensis</i>	Antipodean Albatross	2004	VU	6	NZ	8,274	↓	Medium
<i>Diomedea amsterdamensis</i>	Amsterdam Albatross	2004	CR	1	France	31	↑	High
<i>Diomedea epomophora</i>	Southern Royal Albatross	2004	VU	4	NZ	7,941	↔	Medium
<i>Diomedea sanfordi</i>	Northern Royal Albatross	2004	EN	5	NZ	5,782	?	-
<i>Phoebastria irrorata</i>	Waved Albatross	2004	CR	1	Ecuador	9,615	↓	Low
<i>Phoebastria albatrus</i>	Short-tailed Albatross	2009	VU	2		592	↑	High
<i>Phoebastria immutabilis</i>	Laysan Albatross	2009	NT	17		676,785	↔	High
<i>Phoebastria nigripes</i>	Black-footed Albatross	2009	NT	13		71,592	↑	High
<i>Thalassarche cauta</i>	Shy Albatross	2004	NT	3	Australia	14,618	↑	Low
<i>Thalassarche steadi</i>	White-capped Albatross	2004	NT	5	NZ	100,525	?	-
<i>Thalassarche salvini</i>	Salvin's Albatross	2004	VU	12	NZ	42,219	↓	Low
<i>Thalassarche eremita</i>	Chatham Albatross	2004	VU	1	NZ	5,245	↔	Medium
<i>Thalassarche bulleri</i>	Buller's Albatross	2004	NT	10	NZ	29,948	↔	Low
<i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i>	Grey-headed Albatross	2004	EN	29		97,716	↓	Medium
<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>	Black-browed Albatross	2004	NT	65		673,048	↑	High
<i>Thalassarche impavida</i>	Campbell Albatross	2004	VU	2	NZ	21,648	↔	Low
<i>Thalassarche carteri</i>	Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	2004	EN	6		39,320	↓	Medium
<i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i>	Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross	2004	EN	6	UK	33,650	↔	Low
<i>Phoebastria fusca</i>	Sooty Albatross	2004	EN	15		12,170	↓	Very Low
<i>Phoebastria palpebrata</i>	Light-mantled Albatross	2004	NT	71		12,082	↔	Low
<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	Southern Giant Petrel	2004	LC	119		47,083	↑	Medium
<i>Macronectes halli</i>	Northern Giant Petrel	2004	LC	50		10,318	↑	Medium
<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	White-chinned Petrel	2004	VU	73		1,057,930	↓	Very Low
<i>Procellaria conspicillata</i>	Spectacled Petrel	2004	VU	1	UK	14,400	↑	High
<i>Procellaria parkinsoni</i>	Black Petrel	2004	VU	2	NZ	1,577	↓	Medium
<i>Procellaria westlandica</i>	Westland Petrel	2004	VU	1	NZ	2,827	↔	Low
<i>Procellaria cinerea</i>	Grey Petrel	2004	NT	17		79,649	↓	Very Low
<i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i>	Balearic Shearwater	2012	CR	5	Spain	2,954	↓	Medium

1. IUCN Status: CR = Critically Endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, NT = Near Threatened, LC = Least Concern. IUCN 2014. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <[www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)>.

2. Site: usually an entire, distinct island or islet, or section of a large island

3. ACAP database. <[data.acap.aq](http://data.acap.aq)>. May 2014.

4. Global Trend: ↑ increasing, ↓ declining, ↔ stable, ? unknown









*"I now belong to a higher cult of mortals,  
for I have seen the albatross!"*

- Robert Cushman Murphy, *Logbook for Grace: Whaling Brig Daisy, 1912-1913*

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