PROPOSAL FOR INCLUSION OF SPECIES ON THE APPENDICES OF THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS

A. PROPOSAL: Listing of the White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* (entire population) in **Appendix II** of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

B. PROPONENT: Republic of South Africa.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxon

1.1	Class	Aves
1.2	Order	Procellariiformes
1.3	Family	Procellariidae
1.4	Genus & Species	*Procellaria aequinoctialis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
1.5	Common names	English: White-chinned Petrel, Shoemaker
		French: Puffin à menton blanc
		German: Weisskinn-Sturmvogel
		Spanish: Pardela Gorgiblanca

2. Biological data

2.1 Distribution

Circumpolar pelagic range in the Southern Ocean, in southern cool-temperate, sub-Antarctic and Antarctic waters as far north as *c.* 15°S off Angola and Peru. Breeding range between 47-55°S, on cool temperate and sub-Antarctic islands (see Table 1 below) to the north of the Antarctic Polar Front. Historical distribution not known to be different from current.

2.2 Population

No accurate censuses of breeding numbers, and therefore of trends, exist for this burrowing species at any breeding locality. The table below sets out best estimates, mostly made prior to any decreases due to mortality caused by longline fisheries. Over the period 1980/81–1992/93 at-sea surveys have shown an 86% decrease in abundance of White-chinned Petrels in the Prydz Bay region of Antarctica.

Table 1. Estimates of breeding populations of White-chinned Petrels *Procellaria aequinoctialis*

Locality	Responsible authority	Nature Reserve status	Population (breeding pairs)
Prince Edward Islands (Marion, Prince Edward)	South Africa	Yes	10s of 1000s
Iles Crozet			
Ile de la Possession	France	No	10s of 1000s
Ile de l'Est	France	Yes	10s of 1000s
Ile des Pingouins	France	Yes	10s of 1000s
Ilots des Apôtres	France	Yes	10s of 1000s
Iles Kerguelen	France	Yes (part)	100s of 1000s
Antipodes Island	New Zealand	Yes	Plentiful

Auckland Islands Auckland, Adams, Disappointment)	New Zealand	Yes	200 000 (Disappointment only)
Campbell Island (Cambell, Dent, Jacquemart)	New Zealand	Yes	?
South Georgia	United Kingdom	No	2 000 000
Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas	United Kingdom	No	100s

2.3 Habitat

Marine, ranging widely from coastal to pelagic waters, occurring south to the pack-ice zone and north to sub-tropical waters and to the continental shelves of southern Africa and South America. Extensive pelagic foraging includes following ships and scavenging behind fishing vessels. Breeds in burrows excavated in vegetated slopes on islands. Burrows usually have a pool of water at their entrances.

2.4 Migrations

Only observed at breeding localities during the breeding season (mid-September to mid-April). Incubating birds can move more than 3000 km from their breeding localities, into sub-tropical as well as Antarctic waters. Satellite-tracked birds from Iles Crozet and South Georgia foraged 1) within South African and Patagonian (to 41°S) coastal waters, 2) over pelagic waters to the north and south, 3) over the shelf areas surrounding their breeding islands, and 4) at the edge of the Antarctic pack ice (Iles Crozet birds). Birds feeding chicks appear to have smaller foraging ranges but South Georgia birds reach 39°S on the Patagonian Shelf. During winter birds move north to sub-tropical waters (vacating the open ocean south of 44°S) and large numbers are common in the coastal waters of South America, South Africa and Australia.

3. Threat data

3.1 Direct threats

The main threats are from incidental mortality from longline fishing activities (see below) and from predation by introduced predators, especially feral cats *Felis catus* and rats *Rattus* spp., described by breeding island group below.

Prince Edward Islands: Introduced feral cats *Felis catus* on Marion Island preyed heavily on chicks and breeding adults leading to low breeding success during the 1970s and 1980s. Cats had been eradicated on Marion Island by 1991. The smaller population on cat-free Prince Edward Island remained unaffected.

Iles Crozet: Feral cats and Black Rats *R. rattus* have severely affected populations of breeding burrowing petrels, including the White-chinned Petrel, through direct predation on adults, chicks and eggs. Ile de l'Est is the only island of this group that lacks introduced predators.

Iles Kerguelen: Populations of Black Rats and feral cats occur. Although Black Rats are confined to the immediate surrounds of the base, cats are more widespread and have a larger impact.
Auckland Islands: Introduced populations of feral cats and pigs *Sus scrofa* occur on Auckland Island.

Campbell Islands: Introduced populations of feral cats (possibly now extinct) and Brown Rats *R. norvegicus* occur on Campbell Island.

South Georgia: Brown Rats occur and are known to cause losses of eggs and chicks.

3.2 Habitat destruction

Destruction of coastal breeding habitat (*Paradiochloa flabellata* tussock), the main breeding habitat of the White-chinned Petrel at South Georgia, by Antarctic Fur Seals *Arctocephalus gazella* is likely to be significantly reducing the breeding population. Domestic sheep (now extirpated) on Campbell Island greatly affected vegetation by grazing and trampling. The effects of this on White-chinned Petrels is unknown. Similarly, the feral pigs on Auckland Island uproot vegetation and may thus affect White-chinned Petrels.

3.3 Indirect threats

Entanglement in marine debris and fishing gear and consumption of plastic particles; accumulation of chemical contaminants; fluctuations in numbers of important prey species; oceanographic change.

3.4 Threats connected especially with migrations

The principal threat to White-chinned Petrels during their breeding and non-breeding migrations and movements is incidental mortality from longline fishing. White-chinned Petrels are at risk, 1) over the shelf areas surrounding their breeding colonies, 2) on the continental shelf areas surrounding South Africa, Australia and South America, and 3) in pelagic waters to the north of their breeding colonies.

Several longline fisheries occur on the continental shelves surrounding South Africa, South America and Australia. All the seabird mortalities reported from the South African demersal longline fishery for hake *Merluccius* spp., were White-chinned Petrels. An estimated 8000 White-chinned Petrels are caught annually by this fishery. White-chinned Petrels are caught in potentially similar numbers by mid-water and demersal longline fishing operations off the coast of Brazil. Catch rates were highest there during the winter, when White-chinned-Petrels were most frequently sighted. White-chinned Petrels are also being caught in large numbers by pelagic longline fishing for tuna *Thunnus* spp. It has been estimated that up to 800 White-chinned Petrels may be caught each year by the tuna longline fishery around Australia. Observers on tuna longline vessels off Africa have also reported substantial catches.

The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) has estimated that, in the unregulated longline fishery for Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* in the Convention Area in 1998, 31 000-56 000 White-chinned Petrels were caught. This level of bycatch represents a substantial proportion of the species' population and is unlikely to be sustainable. Longline fishing is concentrated on the shelf areas surrounding the main breeding colonies. More than 70% of the seabird bycatch of this fishery are White-chinned Petrels. White-chinned Petrel mortality peaked during the chick-rearing period (mid-February to mid-March) in the Prince Edward Islands fishery, whereas no bycatch of this species was recorded during the winter months. At South Georgia, White-chinned Petrels also were not caught on longlines after mid-April. More than 80% of the birds caught in the Prince Edward Islands fishery were adult males. A similar male bias has been observed in a small sample from the South Georgia fishery.
Because White-chinned Petrels forage actively at night, mitigation measures that restrict longline setting to hours of darkness (required by fisheries within CCAMLR waters to reduce albatross mortality) will not completely eliminate mortality.

Incidental mortality of White-chinned Petrels has also been reported for the squid trawl fishery operating on the shelf and slope waters around the cool-temperate breeding islands south of New Zealand.

3.5 National and international utilization

Birds have been taken in the past for human consumption aboard fishing vessels in South African waters, but the current level of exploitation, if any, is unknown. White-chinned Petrels, together with other sub-Antarctic wildlife, collectively support a burgeoning interest in Southern Ocean tourism.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1 National protection status

New Zealand, some parts of French, and South African breeding islands are formally protected as nature reserves. New Zealand and South African breeding islands have current management plans controlling human activities. Accorded Near Threatened status in the current update of the South African Red Data Book.

4.2 International protection status

New Zealand breeding islands are inscribed (1998) as natural properties on the World Heritage List of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. CCAMLR regulations aim to reduce mortality in the Patagonian Toothfish longline fishery. Not listed by CITES or in *Birds to Watch 2* (1994), but is a candidate species with a Near Threatened status in current revision of the IUCN Red Data Book for birds being undertaken by BirdLife International.

4.3 Additional protection needs

Inclusion in Appendix II of the Bonn Convention and within a range-state Agreement for Southern Ocean seabirds at risk from longline fisheries. Inclusion within National Plans to be produced by longline fishing range states as part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries. Unregulated fishing for Patagonian Toothfish needs to be halted and CCAMLR regulations strictly enforced. All unprotected breeding localities require nature reserve status and management plans which strictly control introduction of predators as well as human disturbance from logistical, scientific and tourist activities. Feral cats should be eradicated at all breeding localities where they are present, as was achieved successfully at Marion Island.

5. Range States[a]

Angola (M), Argentina (M), Australia (M) Brazil (M), Chile (M), France (B), Mozambique (M), Namibia (M), New Zealand (B), Norway (Bouvet Island, M), Peru (M), South Africa (B), Uruguay (M) and United Kingdom (B).

[a]B = breeding range, M = occurs solely as a migrant.

6. Additional remarks

Population sizes and trends in numbers of breeding birds are inadequately known. Although the White-chinned Petrel is still abundant, the high levels of mortality from longline fisheries and from introduced predators strongly suggest the species is at conservation risk.

7. References

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