



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS

REPORT FROM ACAP INTERIM SECRETARIAT TO THE 28TH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE TO CMS

Background

1. ACAP is a multilateral international Agreement that aims to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels. The Agreement, developed under the auspices of the CMS, came into force on 1 February 2004.
2. The impetus for the development of ACAP was the recognition that albatrosses and petrels are amongst the most threatened birds in the world, with 83% of the world's albatross species now considered to be endangered, compared with 11% of bird species overall. The most significant threat to many species of albatrosses and petrels is mortality resulting from interactions with fishing vessels; but the breeding areas of many species are also threatened by the presence of non-native species (which may predate nests and breeding adults, compete for nesting space or destroy nesting habitat); as well as avian diseases.
3. ACAP is the first international Agreement to seek an integrated and holistic approach to albatross and petrel conservation, addressing threats operating at sea and breeding colonies. It currently has a Southern Hemisphere focus, protecting all 21 taxa of southern hemisphere albatrosses; two species of giant petrel and five species of *Procellaria* petrel (listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement). In the future Northern Hemisphere species may benefit from incorporation into ACAP.

Membership of ACAP

4. Accession to ACAP is open to any State with jurisdiction over areas inhabited or overflowed by the species of albatrosses and petrels listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement.
5. At present, six Parties have ratified the ACAP Agreement: Australia, Ecuador, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain and the United Kingdom. A further five Countries, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, France and Peru, have signed but not yet ratified ACAP.
6. Parties to ACAP agree to take measures, individually and together, to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels; in particular they agree to implement conservation measures set out in the ACAP Action Plan.
7. Because of the relatively small number of Parties the resources available to ACAP are currently modest. The interim Secretariat therefore seeks to promote ACAP and encourage more Signatories and Range States to ratify the Agreement and hence further global conservation efforts.

First Session of the Meeting of Parties to ACAP

8. The first session of the Meeting of the Parties to ACAP was held in Hobart, Australia, from 10-12 November 2004. It was preceded by an informal scientific meeting from 8-9 November, also in Hobart.
9. The meeting accepted Australia's offer to host the permanent Secretariat for the Agreement in Hobart, and to continue to host the interim Secretariat until such time as a Headquarters Agreement for the Secretariat is secured with the Australian Government.
10. An Advisory Committee was established to provide scientific, technical and other advice to the Meeting of Parties; and a work programme for this Committee was endorsed.
11. The work programme of the Advisory Committee reflects the areas of the ACAP Action Plan which were identified as priorities for immediate attention. These are fisheries bycatch of albatrosses and petrels; and the management and protection of breeding sites, including in particular any adverse effects of introduced species, habitat change, climate change and avian disease. Recognising that much work has been done or is ongoing in these areas, the Advisory Committee will be tasked with recommending the best way to integrate the work of ACAP with existing initiatives. The aim is to enhance and advance current initiatives, not to duplicate them.
12. Other key areas of work to be taken forward by the Advisory Committee include reviews of the status and trends of ACAP listed species and the taxonomy of albatrosses and petrels which are being carried out by Working Groups established by the Advisory Committee.

Future ACAP Meetings

13. The first meeting of the ACAP Advisory Committee will take place in Hobart between 20-22 July 2005.
14. The second session of the Meeting of the Parties to ACAP will take place late in 2006. The UK has offered to consult with its authorities with a view to hosting this meeting.

Further information

15. Further information on the ACAP Agreement can be found on the website www.acap.aq.

ACAP interim Secretariat
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