

**Global biodiversity mechanisms:
a thematic review of recent developments and future evidence needs**

Strand Palace Hotel, London 20th May 2009

MEA Briefing

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)

May 2009

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Briefing note: Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)

ACAP is an Agreement made under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). The primary objective of the Agreement is to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels (listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement), and for contracting Parties to take measures both individually and together, to achieve this objective. Currently, thirteen Parties have ratified ACAP, Uruguay and Brazil being the most recent parties to ratify. The UK, including on behalf of the relevant Overseas Territories (Falkland Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, the British Antarctic Treaty and Tristan da Cunha) ratified ACAP in 2004, soon after the Agreement was formally established.

The third session of the Meeting of Parties took place in Bergen, Norway, from 27 April to 1 May 2009. Eleven of the thirteen Parties were represented at the meeting, Chile and Ecuador not being able to attend. Three non-Party Range States were also represented (the USA, Canada and Japan). The following NGOs and intergovernmental organisations attended the meeting as observers: United Nations Environmental Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), the CMS, the Africa-Eurasia Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), BirdLife International, Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF). Of these, by far the most interventions came from BirdLife International who, through their albatross task force, have done an immense amount to advance the objectives of ACAP.

As with most Agreement MoPs, the main points of debate were the work programme of the Agreement's subsidiary bodies (Advisory Committee and Secretariat) and the associated budgets (including the scale of Parties contributions for the next triennium). A formal proposal from the UK (with Australia and South Africa) to list the three North Pacific albatrosses (black-footed, Laysan and short-tailed albatrosses) in Annex 1 of the Agreement was supported unanimously by Parties, and now means that all albatross species worldwide are covered by the Agreement and that the Agreement has moved from a southern Hemisphere focus to being truly global in its scope. The need to reduce seabird bycatch in longline and trawl fisheries was highlighted as the key priority for ACAP, together with the need to manage actively the critical threats (largely predation by introduced mammals) at breeding sites, especially where this has already been demonstrated to be a significant threat, such as at Gough Island, where introduced house mice threaten the survival of the endemic Tristan albatross and other seabird species. ACAP's Advisory Committee will be meeting in Argentina in the first half of 2010.

Key Outcomes

- The listing of the three North Pacific albatross species in Annex 1 of ACAP.
- A total budget of about £620,000 per annum for the next triennium.
- Adoption of the work programmes for the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat, including provision of scientific support for the one person Secretariat.
- Adoption of a template for ACAP to enter into formal (but not legally binding) arrangements with Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and other regional bodies. The

aim of these arrangements is to share relevant data and expertise, and thus to progress the objectives of ACAP.

- Support for the process to continue work on the development of a prioritisation framework for ACAP action coupled with a process to develop indicators to measure the success of the Agreement (this latter being led by the UK).
- Support for the process to finalise a capacity building strategy for ACAP.
- Agreement to adapt the annual reporting process by Parties so that it is easier to collate information (including data) and assess more effectively the extent to which actions are contributing to the Agreement's objectives.