Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) - Report to PSG ExCo
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As previously reported, ACAP is a multilateral agreement focused on conserving albatrosses and petrels, through coordinating efforts of ACAP Parties, Range States (non-Parties which have breeding populations of, or are visited by, ACAP-listed species) and environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). ACAP’s Advisory Committee (AC) provides implementation guidance; and, the AC is supported by a Secretariat (Hobart, Australia) and three working groups: i) Seabird Bycatch (SBWG); ii) Population and Conservation Status (PaCSWG); and iii) Taxonomy (TWG). John Cooper (honorary ACAP Information Officer) posts information on ACAP activities, conservation issues, etc. to ACAP’s Latest News (ALN): https://www.acap.aq/en/news/latest-news and to ACAP’s Facebook page: www.facebook.com/AlbatrossesandPetrels/. Once again, I’m indebted to John for allowing me to extract excerpts from ALN. The following provides a brief summary of 2019 ACAP news and activities.

On February 14th, the USA renewed its attempt to become an ACAP Party. Congressmen Lowenthal and Fitzpatrick, introduced bill H.R. 1305 “To implement the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, and for other purposes.” to protect imperiled seabirds from international fishing threats while increasing ongoing seabird conservation efforts in the USA and abroad. ALN reported that: “The Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act ties together existing US laws and statutes...” and “…authorize the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to implement fisheries conservation measures, increase international fisheries enforcement...... and cooperate internationally on conservation efforts.” https://www.acap.aq/en/latest-news/3233-the-usa-makes-a-new-attempt-to-become-a-party-to-the-albatross-and-petrel-agreement.


On May 5th, ACAP began the 2019 round of meetings in Florianópolis, Brazil with a 1-day workshop to develop ways for ACAP to engage more effectively with tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMO) to deliver ACAP conservation goals. On May 6th, the 3-day long 9th SBWG meeting began; followed by the 2-day long 5th PaCSWG meeting. Ten (of 13) ACAP Parties (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa, United Kingdom, Uruguay), five Range States (Bahama’s [for the 1st time], Canada, Japan, Namibia, USA) and six NGOs (Associação R3 Animal, BirdLife International, Humane Society International [HSI], Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge, Pro-Delphinus, Projeto Albatroz [PA]), participated in one of or both working group meetings. The RFMO workshop and working group reports are available at: https://www.acap.aq/en/working-groups/seabird-bycatch-working-group/seabird-bycatch-wg-meeting-9/acap-s-rfmo-strategy-workshop, https://www.acap.aq/en/working-groups/seabird-bycatch-working-group/seabird-bycatch-wg-meeting-9 and https://www.acap.aq/en/working-groups/population-and-conservation-status-working-group/population-and-conservation-status-wg-meeting-5.
The 11th meeting of the AC (AC11), also held in Florianópolis (May 13 - 17), was attended by nine Parties (as above except South Africa), four Range States (as above except Japan), two NGOs (HSI, PA), and for the 1st time, Chinese Taipei (a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum), as an observer: https://www.acap.aq/en/latest-news/3299-new-observers-attend-the-eleventh-meeting-of-acap-s-advisory-committee-in-brazil.

During AC11, the committee declared that there was an urgent and continuing conservation crisis for albatrosses and petrels. ALN reported that: “Thousands of albatrosses and petrels ....die every year as a result of fisheries.....Despite efforts that have been put into researching and recommending effective mitigation measures to address seabird bycatch ...”. https://www.acap.aq/en/latest-news/3324-acap-s-advisory-committee-declares-a-conservation-crisis-for-albatrosses-and-petrels.

Also during AC11, a paper was tabled proposing the establishment of a World Albatross Day (WAD). The proposal received great support, as it aligned well with the goal of giving ACAP greater visibility to address the conservation crisis. An Intersessional Group (IG) was formed to move the proposal forward. Post AC11, the IG decided that WAD would be marked annually on June 19th to commemorate the date in 2001 the ACAP agreement was signed in Canberra, Australia. As well, the IG decided that eradicating introduced pests at breeding sites of albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters would be the theme for the inaugural WAD. The full AC11 report is available at: https://www.acap.aq/en/advisory-committee/ac11

On September 2nd ALN announced the call for 2019 ACAP Small Grants Applications for project funding to help ACAP achieve its conservation objectives, with total available funds of approximately $115 000 (AUD). By the close of the application period (October 25th), 15 proposals had been submitted.

Lastly, on October 11th, ALN announced that there was an official WAD logo: https://www.acap.aq/en/latest-news/3412-world-albatross-day-adopts-an-official-logo.