



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

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14<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 12 – 17 February 2024  
Agenda Item 10.3

**REPORT BY THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF  
ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS (ACAP)**

*(Prepared by the ACAP Secretariat)*

Summary:

This document provides an update on developments in ACAP's work on the conservation of albatrosses and petrels since COP 13 (February 2020).

## REPORT BY THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS (ACAP)

### Background

In February 2024, the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) is celebrating the twentieth anniversary of its entry into force, after having opened for signature in 2001. ACAP is an intergovernmental conservation agreement and is part of the CMS family. ACAP's objective is to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels. The Agreement has 13 Parties and is keen to attract more members. Several countries, entities and NGOs attend our meetings as observers.

ACAP provides a framework for coordinating and undertaking international activity to mitigate known threats to albatross and petrel populations. There are currently 31 species listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement, comprising all 22 of the world's albatrosses, seven species of petrels and two species of shearwater. Most species listed in Annex 1 have extensive at-sea distributions. The greatest threat to these species is incidental mortality (bycatch) in fisheries. Awareness of this on-going threat resulted in a Conservation Crisis being declared by ACAP in 2019.

### ACAP Meetings

1. Over the past four years, ACAP has held the following meetings, attended by Parties and Observers:
  - The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC12), held online in August-September 2021, preceded by meetings of its Working Groups on Seabird Bycatch and on Population and Conservation Status.
  - The 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties (MoP7), held online in May 2022.
  - The 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC13), in Edinburgh, United Kingdom, in May 2023, preceded by meetings of its Working Groups on Seabird Bycatch and on Population and Conservation Status, as well as a joint meeting of the two working groups.
  - The reports of these meetings are available on the ACAP website ([www.acap.aq](http://www.acap.aq))

### Meeting outcomes

2. ACAP produces best practice mitigation advice for industrial fishing gear types (principally pelagic and demersal longline, and trawl gear), which is regularly updated at meetings of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG) and endorsed by the Advisory Committee. The updated advice is then shared with Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and other related entities. As a result of this collaboration, many RFMOs and national authorities have in place some measures to reduce seabird bycatch, and several are currently working on updating them.
3. ACAP's latest advice for reducing the bycatch of seabirds associated with trawl and longline fisheries is available on the ACAP website (<https://www.acap.aq/bycatch-mitigation/mitigation-advice>) This includes updates endorsed by AC12 and AC13.
4. AC12 also endorsed [Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife](#) developed by Australia. The guidelines aim to raise awareness of the potential impacts of artificial light on wildlife and provide a framework for assessing and managing these impacts. (These guidelines were also adopted by CMS COP13).

5. AC13 endorsed the inclusion in the best practice advice of information strongly discouraging the use of lasers to deter seabirds, since there is currently no evidence of effectiveness and serious concerns remain about the potential impacts on the health of individual birds.

#### Other ACAP activities and resources

6. Other ACAP activities over the past four years have included commemoration on 19 June of World Albatross Day, to highlight the seriousness of the crisis facing these iconic migratory species.
7. ACAP also took part in the first phase of the FAO/GEF ABNJ Common Oceans (tuna) project and is now supporting seabird conservation-related activities included in Phase 2 of the project.
8. ACAP continues to review current population trends of ACAP species, priorities for land-based conservation actions at their breeding sites, and key gaps in tracking and monitoring data. The most recent assessment of population status and trends was carried out in 2021.
9. [ACAP Species Assessments](#) provide comprehensive information on distribution, biology, threats to the populations both at breeding sites and at sea, as well as the conservation measures that are in place to protect them. These are currently being updated.
10. A number of other guidelines are also available, including [ACAP-BirdLife bycatch mitigation factsheets](#), and the [Seabird Bycatch Identification Guide](#). 'Sampling guidelines to assess plastic ingestion in ACAP species', [Guidelines for working with albatrosses and petrels during H5N1 avian influenza outbreak](#), and [Field collection protocols for DNA dietary analysis of seabird scats](#) have been added since COP 13.
11. ACAP continues to support the development of national and regional cooperation plans to protect seabirds. Examples of these are the Action Plan for the Waved Albatross *Phoebastria irrorata* of Ecuador's Galapagos Islands; the Regional Action Plan-Seabirds between Argentina and Uruguay, and the Australia/Chile/New Zealand Action Plan for the Antipodean Albatross *Diomedea antipodensis* (supported by the CMS Concerted Action Plan for the Antipodean Albatross, adopted in 2020).

#### Recommended action

12. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to take note of this report.