

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 Spectacled Petrel *Procellaria conspicillata* (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	<i>Procellaria conspicillata</i> (Gould, 1844)
1.5	Common names:	English: Spectacled Petrel, Ring-eye French: ? Spanish: ?

2. Biological data

2.1 Distribution

Pelagic range in the South Atlantic Ocean between the continental shelves of South America, especially Brazil, and South Africa, between 25-40°S. The only known breeding site is Inaccessible Island in the Tristan da Cunha island group, central South Atlantic Ocean (United Kingdom). May have previously bred on Amsterdam Island (France), southern Indian Ocean, where *Procellaria* petrel bones have recently been found.

2.2 Population

One thousand pairs were estimated to breed on Inaccessible Island in the 1982/83 summer. This estimate may be inflated because burrow occupancy was not confirmed during the census. No subsequent surveys have been made. Populations earlier in the century may have been smaller. The Spectacled Petrel has only recently been considered to be a full species, previously being regarded as a subspecies of the White-chinned Petrel *P. aequinoctialis*.

2.3 Habitat

Marine, ranging from pelagic to coastal waters in the South Atlantic Ocean. Scavenges behind fishing vessels. Breeds in burrows in stream banks and boggy areas on the western plateau of Inaccessible Island.

2.4 Migrations

Poorly understood; no band recoveries exist and no satellite-tracking has been undertaken. Birds migrate to continental shelf waters of South America and the western coast of South Africa, based on sightings at sea and birds caught by longline fishing vessels. During summer this species is the most common seabird attending demersal longline fishing vessels off south-eastern Brazil. However, during winter it is almost totally absent, being replaced by the White-chinned Petrel.

3. Threat data

Proposal II / 9**3.1 Direct threats**

The main threats are from incidental mortality from long-line fisheries (see below), the risk of introduced predators and peat fires. The highly restricted breeding range (a single island) and small breeding population (in the region of 1000 pairs) means the species is extremely vulnerable to stochastic events, both natural and human-induced. It has been suggested that the current population has recovered from significant predation by feral pigs *Sus scrofa* during the 19th century (the extinction of *Procellaria* petrels from Amsterdam Island has been blamed on feral pig predation). The introduction of a mammalian predator or an avian disease to Inaccessible Island could lead to the extinction of this species.

3.2 Habitat destruction

None currently known. It may be assumed that the feral pig population, no longer present, led the uprooting of vegetation and exposure of burrows.

3.3 Indirect threats

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

3.4 Threats connected especially with migrations

More than 200 Spectacled Petrels were killed annually by longline fishing operations off the coast of Brazil during the late 1980s and early 1990s, representing 8% of all fishery mortalities. This mortality rate has since decreased, but is still of great concern given the small population size of this species. Given the large distances (3,000+ km) travelled by breeding White-chinned Petrels equipped with satellite tracking devices and the fact that they only occur in these waters during the summer (the breeding season), it is conceivable that birds killed off Brazil may be breeding birds, as well as non-breeders and juveniles. Spectacled Petrels may also be killed by longline fisheries off the coast of South Africa, as well as by the large tuna fishery operating in the South Atlantic Ocean.

3.5 National and international utilization

None occurs. In the past birds were probably collected by island visitors for human consumption. Requests for tourist visits to Inaccessible Island have to date not been approved by the Tristan da Cunha Government.

4. Protection status and needs**4.1 National protection status**

Inaccessible Island has been declared a nature reserve by the Tristan da Cunha Government but enabling legislation remains lacking. The species is protected from human exploitation by the Tristan da Cunha Conservation Ordinance of 1976, as amended. Tristan Islanders and scientists visit the island under permit, but only rarely.

4.2 International protection status

Not listed by CITES or in *Birds to Watch 2*. The Spectacled Petrel is a candidate species with the category of Endangered in the current revision of the IUCN Red Data Book for birds being

undertaken by BirdLife International.

4.3 Additional protection needs

Inclusion within 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. Inaccessible Island Nature Reserve requires enabling legislation to be passed and a management plan produced that will strictly control human activities. It has been suggested that the island is worthy of inscription as a natural property on the World Heritage List of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

5. Range states^a

Brazil (M), South Africa (M), United Kingdom (B).

^aB = breeding range, M = occurs solely as a migrant.

6. Additional remarks

A new and more accurate census of the breeding population of the Spectacled Petrel on Inaccessible Island (planned for the 1999/2000 summer) is a high priority for its conservation. The species' at-sea distribution requires study, preferably by satellite-tracking breeding birds, as well as by field observations. The species may occur in the coastal waters of Angola, Argentina, Namibia and Uruguay, making them range states.

7. References

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