

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p>Fourteenth Meeting of the Advisory Committee <i>Lima, Peru, 12 – 16 August 2024</i></p> <p>ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisations</p> <p><i>Intersessional Correspondence Group:</i> <i>Dimas Gianuca, Sebastián Jiménez, Igor Debski, Megan Tierney, Mark Tasker, Marco Favero, Christine Bogle, Jonathon Barrington, Nicola Beynon, Helen Wade, Oliver Yates.</i></p>
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SUMMARY

Great numbers of ACAP-listed species continue to be bycaught by fisheries managed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). Therefore, engagement with RFMOs has been -and continues to be- a paramount component of ACAP's strategy to mitigate and reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds. Following discussion at SBWG11, the Working Group agreed that a clear and updatable summary of developments and a clear engagement strategy for RFMOs were needed. Recognising that MoP7 had given great priority to successful engagement with RFMOs, AC13 endorsed the establishment of an intersessional correspondence group (ICG) to undertake a review of the RFMO Engagement Strategy. Among its tasks, the ICG would review the aims of the current RFMO engagement strategy and the theme-based format of the strategy; and develop an updated list of priority actions. A revised ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisations was drafted by the ICG, which is presented in ANNEX 1. The aims of the Strategy are:

1. Strengthen implementation of measures by regional fisheries management and conservation organisations to prevent, minimize or reduce the incidental taking of seabirds.
2. Strengthen implementation of measures by regional fisheries management and conservation organisations that ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of fishing operations to prevent, minimize or reduce the incidental taking of seabirds.
3. Ensure the ongoing review by regional fisheries management and conservation organisations of measures to prevent, minimize or reduce the incidental taking of seabirds to update such measures in the light of changes in best practice.

The document also establishes the Actions to be taken, the Focus of engagement (three categories of international organisations), the Basis for engaging with regional fisheries management and conservation organisations, and a proposal for Developing individualised approaches with target outcomes for each regional fisheries management and conservation organisation. The document proposes that the engagement strategy be reviewed at periods of no more than every three years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Advisory Committee is asked to:

1. review the ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisations detailed in ANNEX 1;
2. review the template for the individualised approaches describing the target outcomes for each regional fisheries management and conservation organisation;
3. endorse a revised ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisations.

1. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS TO REVIEW AND UPDATE THE ACAP RFMO ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Large numbers of ACAP-listed species continue to be bycaught by fisheries managed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). Accordingly, engagement with RFMOs has been - and continues to be - a paramount component of ACAP's strategy to mitigate and reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds. On a regular basis, the Seabird Bycatch Working Group reviews and updates actions listed in ACAP's RFMO Engagement Strategy at each of its meetings. Based on discussions at SBWG 11, the Working Group agreed a list of prioritised areas of engagement and activities for the 2023-2025 intersessional period.

Following discussion of SBWG11 Doc 09, the Working Group agreed that a clear and updatable summary of developments and a clear engagement strategy for RFMOs was needed. SBWG11 recommended to AC13 that a small intersessional group be established to undertake these tasks.

Recognising that MoP7 had given priority to successful engagement with RFMOs, and noting the SBWG11 recommendation, AC13 endorsed the establishment of an intersessional correspondence group (ICG) to undertake a review of the RFMO Engagement Strategy. AC13 agreed that the ICG would 1) review the aims of the current RFMO Engagement Strategy with a view to updating them as necessary; 2) review the theme-based format of the Strategy and decide whether a different format might be preferable; 3) develop an updated list of priority actions concerning advocacy, communications and education to be reviewed on a rolling basis; and 4) report back to SBWG12 and AC14.

2. UPDATE THE ACAP RFMO ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

ANNEX 1 presents a proposed revised ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisations produced by the intersessional correspondence group (ICG). The document sets out objectives (based on the current themes); actions to be taken; focus of engagement; basis for engaging with regional fisheries management and conservation organisations; developing individualised approaches; and reviewing progress.

Apart from the Engagement Strategy itself, another key element of this revised strategy is a proposal to produce a document setting out the outcome-focused individualised approaches for each regional fisheries management and conservation organisation, grouped by the three categories of international organisations identified in **ANNEX 1**. A template for the individualised approaches with the targeted outcomes for a given regional fisheries management and conservation organisation for the triennium 2026–2028 is presented in Annex I of the revised ACAP Engagement Strategy. This Annex provides an example for IOTC. The audience for this document is the ACAP Official/ACAP Secretariat attending relevant meetings of the international organisation, and the ACAP Parties who are members of the organisation. The individualized approaches make it clear to ACAP officials attending meetings of regional fisheries management and conservation organisations 'what is being requested', and how the ACAP representative(s) can leverage their capabilities so that identified enabling factors are enhanced and constraining factors diminished.

Another key element of the Strategy is producing a report on the relevant outcomes and activities within individual organisation, and identifying further actions required to achieve the targeted outcomes. Two separate documents were prepared to be considered. **Joint SBWG12/PaCSWG8 Doc 04** describes the actions agreed in the current RFMO Engagement Strategy for the triennium 2023-2025 and progress achieved since SBWG11. Based on this progress, **Joint SBWG12/PaCSWG8 Doc 03** details the Proposed Actions of the ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisation for 2026-2028. The latter document also provides a list of ACAP Parties that are members of each Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisation and an active list of Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) for mitigating seabird bycatch in all these international organisations. The current Strategy (endorsed at AC13) uses a format based on three themes or key elements. The revised Strategy proposes a format based on three categories of international organisations (see **ANNEX 1**). Accordingly, **Joint SBWG12/PaCSWG8 Doc 03** and **Joint SBWG12/PaCSWG8 Doc 04** use the proposed new format.

Once the revised ACAP Engagement Strategy proposed in this document (with any amendments decided by AC14) is established, we recommend that a future document be prepared, consisting of a Working Paper with a snapshot of progress in achievement of targeted outcomes within each organisation, and setting out recommended changes to the individualised approaches for each organisation. This should be implemented on a regular basis for each Advisory Committee meeting.

ANNEX 1. ACAP ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY WITH REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS

ACAP Engagement Strategy

Objectives of the engagement strategy

The engagement with regional fisheries management and conservation organisations aims to:

1. Strengthen implementation of measures by regional fisheries management and conservation organisations to prevent, minimize or reduce the incidental taking of seabirds.
2. Strengthen implementation of measures by regional fisheries and conservation organisations that ensure the effective implementation, monitoring and reporting of fishing operations to prevent, minimize or reduce the incidental taking of seabirds.
3. Ensure the ongoing review by regional fisheries management and conservation organisations of measures to prevent, minimize or reduce the incidental taking of seabirds to update such measures in light of changes in best practices.

Actions to be taken

ACAP Parties' engagement with regional fisheries management and conservation organisations will:

1. Develop and maintain relationships with regional fisheries management and conservation organisations on matters concerning the conservation and management of seabirds.
2. Provide advice and guidance to regional fisheries management and conservation organisations about actual and potential changes in the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels.
3. Provide advice and guidance to regional fisheries management and conservation organisations about best current practices to prevent, reduce or eliminate the mortality of albatrosses and petrels resulting incidentally from fishing activities.
4. Influence the development by regional fisheries management and conservation organisations of best practice measures by those organisations to prevent, minimize or reduce the incidental taking of albatrosses and petrels.
5. Influence the development of best practice measures by regional fisheries management and conservation organisations for ensuring the effective implementation, monitoring and reporting of measures to prevent, minimize or reduce the incidental taking of albatrosses and petrels.

The ACAP Secretariat's engagement with regional fisheries management and conservation organisations will:

- Develop and maintain relationships with regional fisheries management and conservation organisations whose activities are directly or indirectly relevant to the conservation, including the protection and management, of albatrosses and petrels.
- Consult and cooperate with the Secretariats of other regional fisheries management and conservation organisations on matters of common interest.
- Enter into cooperation arrangements with regional fisheries management and conservation organisations, as may be appropriate.

Focus of engagement

This engagement strategy focuses on three categories of international organisations:

<p>1. Regional fisheries management organisations with competence over tuna fisheries</p>	<p>Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)</p>
<p>2. Regional fisheries management organisations with competence over non-tuna fisheries.</p>	<p>South East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (SEAFO) Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO)</p>
<p>3. Regional conservation organisations with competence for living marine resources.</p>	<p>Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)</p>

Basis for engaging with regional fisheries management and conservation organisations

ACAP Parties are committed to achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels.

Seabirds are being incidentally caught in various high seas fisheries and there are long-standing concerns about the impacts of this incidental catch.

Not all Range States are currently Parties to ACAP, and so cooperation among [and with] States which have significant high seas fisheries is essential to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds, given the global nature of the issue.

The conservation status of albatrosses and petrels would significantly benefit from international cooperation between ACAP and regional fisheries management and conservation organisations.

ACAP is the global leader in developing and assessing best practice technologies and techniques to prevent, reduce or eliminate the mortality of seabirds resulting incidentally from fishing activities.

ACAP has developed a range of best current practices to prevent, reduce or eliminate the mortality of albatrosses and petrels resulting incidentally from fishing activities, and undertakes ongoing review of these practices in light of changes in current knowledge.

ACAP is the global repository of current information about actual and potential changes in the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels arising from threats at-sea and on land.

Developing individualised approaches

Individualised approaches will be developed for each regional fisheries management and conservation organisation. These will be based on targeted outcomes sought over each ACAP triennium. Consideration will be given to enabling factors and constraining factors affecting the potential achievement of the targeted outcomes, as well as ways to leverage the enabling factors and diminish the constraining factors.

Table 1 sets out the targeted outcomes for the IOTC for the triennium 2026–2028. This will be a model for developing such targeted outcomes for engagement with the other international organisations listed.

Reviewing progress

The engagement strategy will be reviewed at periods of no more than every three years.

Table 1. Template for the targeted outcomes for a given regional fisheries and conservation organisation for the triennium 2026 – 2028. An example for IOTC.

Institutional forums <i>Prioritise engagement in</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB) ▪ Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM) ▪ Working Group on Electronic Monitoring Standards (WGEMS) ▪ <i>Other potential engagement</i> ▪ Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) ▪ Scientific Committee (SC) ▪ Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS) ▪ Compliance Committee (CoC) 	Conservation Measures Resolution 23/07 on reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries	Standards IOTC https://iotc.org/science/regional-observer-scheme-science ACAP ACAP Guidelines on Fisheries Electronic Monitoring ACAP Data Collection Guidelines for Observer Programmes to improve knowledge of fishery impacts on ACAP-listed species	Relationship between organisations Letter of intent between IOTC and ACAP Secretariat , MoU expires Feb 2026
	Targeted outcomes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Night setting redefined to exclude setting beginning before nautical dusk or extending after nautical dawn. 2. Line weighting redefined to reflect ACAP best practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater than a total of 40 g attached within 0.5 m of the hook or; – Greater than a total of 60 g attached within 1 m of the hook or; – Greater than a total of 80 g attached within 2.0 m of the hook. 3. Reviews of CMM occur at intervals no greater than 5 years. 	Targeted outcomes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EM systems designed to ensure management performance assessment of seabird interactions. 2. EM standards incorporate ACAP best practice guidelines. 3. Advocate for investment by IOTC in incorporating Artificial Intelligence into EM systems, particularly to assist in review of video footage and species identification. 4. IOTC Regional Observer Scheme includes minimum data field that enable assessment of fishery impacts on ACAP-listed species. 	Targeted outcomes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and adopt IOTC seabird strategy and action plan that prioritises actions to prevent, reduce or eliminate the mortality of albatrosses and petrels resulting incidentally from fishing activities. 2. Maintain currency of MoU with IOTC. 3. Support development of IOTC Ecosystem Report Card. 4. Provide routine advice about new and updated ACAP best practices and guidelines. 5. Provide routine advice about actual and potential changes to the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels.

Enabling Factors	Constraining Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACAP Party participation: Australia, France (OT), South Africa, United Kingdom. • Resolution 23/07 commits Scientific Committee, by 2024 at the latest, to develop advice to the Commission on best practice line weighting. • ACAP’s advice provides evidence-based substantiation for the best practices for branch line weighting. • ACAP’s advice provides evidence-based substantiation of the performance requirements associated with Underwater Bait Setting technologies. • ACAP/BLI working jointly on draft IOTC seabird strategy and action plan. • CCSBT’s <i>Multi-year Seabird Strategy</i> may be a foundation for an IOTC seabird strategy and action plan (see Report of ERSWG-14 Report att. 4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACAP Parties represent a minority within the IOTC membership; France (OT) is required to caucus with European Delegation under the Common Fisheries Policy. • DWFNs are reluctant to change branch line weighting requirements; concerns about hazard posed by flyback incidents to crew safety. • DWFNs reluctance in accepting published findings from other regions. • Skadia Technologies continues to experience difficulties in bringing its UBS to market; recent funding support from Australian Government is intended to address this constraint. • CCSBT’s seabird bycatch target not yet agreed between targets based on nominal reported seabird bycatch rates, and targets based on Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment (SEFRA) outputs.
Leveraging Enabling Factors	Diminishing Constraining Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACAP Party representatives encouraged to caucus and give support to ACAP official attending IOTC meetings. • ACAP Review of mitigation measures and Best Practice Advice for Reducing the Impact of Pelagic Longline Fisheries on Seabirds provides substantiation for the best practice branch line weighting recommendations, and about Underwater Bait setting Technologies. • ACAP/BLI to work intersessionally in developing a draft IOTC seabird strategy and action plan, including engaging with ACAP Parties within IOTC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACAP Official to reach out to ACAP Parties ahead (3M) of key IOTC meetings to engage with national delegations. • ACAP Official to develop evidence-based presentation focused why ACAP’s best practice branch line weighting recommendations should be adopted. • ACAP Advice on Improving Safety when Hauling Branch lines during Pelagic Longline Fishing Operations addresses the potential hazard posed by flybacks to crew.