

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p>Joint Twelfth Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group and Eighth Meeting of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group</p> <p><i>Lima, Peru, 8 August 2024</i></p> <p>Overview of progress: ACAP RFMO Engagement Strategy</p> <p><i>Sebastián Jiménez, Christine Bogle, Igor Debski, Megan Tierney, Wiesława Misiak, Mark Tasker, Dimas Gianuca</i></p>
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SUMMARY

The Seabird Bycatch Working Group reviews and updates actions listed in ACAP's RFMO Engagement Strategy at each of its meetings. Based on discussions during SBWG11, the Working Group agreed a list of prioritised areas of engagement and activities for the 2023 - 2025 intersessional period. This was endorsed by AC13. AC13 also endorsed the establishment of an intersessional correspondence group (ICG) to undertake a review of the RFMO Engagement Strategy. A revised ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisations, prepared by the ICG, is presented in **AC14 Doc 20**.

The present document, in Annex 1, describes the prioritised areas of engagement for the triennium 2023-2025, and the progress achieved since SBWG11. Based on this progress, a separate document (**Joint SBWG12/PaCSWG8 Doc 03**) presents the priority actions for the next triennium, 2026 - 2028.

RECOMMENDATION

The Joint SBWG12/PaCSWG8 is asked to consider this review of progress in the ACAP RFMO Engagement Strategy presented in ANNEX 1.

Resumen de los avances: Estrategia de interacción con las OROP del ACAP

RESUMEN

El Grupo de Trabajo sobre Captura Secundaria de Aves Marinas revisa y actualiza las medidas enumeradas en la Estrategia de interacción con las OROP del ACAP en cada

una de sus reuniones. Sobre la base de los debates celebrados durante la GdTCS11, el Grupo de Trabajo acordó una lista de áreas de interacción y actividades prioritarias para el período intersesional 2023-2025. Esta fue aprobada por la CA13. La CA13 también aprobó el establecimiento de un grupo de trabajo por correspondencia intersesional para realizar una revisión de la Estrategia de interacción con las OROP. En el documento **CA14 Doc 20** se presenta una Estrategia de interacción con las OROP del ACAP, preparada por el grupo de trabajo por correspondencia intersesional.

En el anexo 1 del presente documento, se describen las esferas prioritarias de interacción para el trienio 2023 - 2025 así como los progresos realizados desde la GdTCS11. A partir de estos avances, en un documento separado (**Joint SBWG12/PaCSWG8 Doc 03**) se presentan las medidas prioritarias para el trienio 2026 - 2028.

RECOMENDACIÓN

Se pide a la Reunión Conjunta GdTCS12/GdTPEC8 que considere esta revisión de los avances en la Estrategia de interacción con las OROP del ACAP que se presenta en el ANEXO 1.

Aperçu des progrès : Stratégie de l'ACAP en matière d'interaction avec les ORGP

RÉSUMÉ

Le Groupe de travail sur les captures accessoires examine et met à jour les mesures prévues par la stratégie de l'ACAP en matière d'interaction avec les ORGP à chacune de ses réunions. Sur la base des discussions menées au cours de la GTCA11, le Groupe de travail a convenu d'une liste de domaines d'engagement et d'activités prioritaires pour la période intersessions 2023 - 2025. Cette proposition a été approuvée par la CC13. La CC13 a également approuvé l'établissement d'un groupe de contact intersessions (GCI), chargé d'entreprendre un examen de la stratégie d'interaction avec les ORGP. Une stratégie révisée de l'ACAP en matière d'interaction avec les organisations régionales de conservation et de la gestion des pêches, préparée par le groupe de contact intersessions, est présentée dans le **CC14 Doc 20**.

L'Annexe 1 du présent document décrit les domaines d'engagement prioritaires pour la période triennale 2023-2025 et les progrès accomplis depuis la GTCA11. Compte tenu de ces progrès, un document distinct (**Joint SBWG12/PaCSWG8 Doc 03**) présente les actions prioritaires pour la prochaine période triennale 2026 - 2028.

RECOMMANDATION

Le groupe de travail conjoint GTCA12/GTSPC8 est invité à analyser l'examen des progrès réalisés dans le cadre de la stratégie de l'ACAP en matière d'interaction avec les ORGP, présenté à l'ANNEXE 1.

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

Engagement with Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) has been -and continues to be- a paramount component of ACAP's strategy to mitigate and reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds. 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. Accordingly, the Working Group recommended to AC13 that a small intersessional group be established. AC13 endorsed the establishment of an intersessional correspondence group (ICG) to undertake a review of the RFMO Engagement Strategy.

A revised ACAP Engagement Strategy with Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Organisations was drafted by the ICG, and is presented in **AC14 Doc 20**, to be considered by AC14. Priority actions for the next triennium, 2026-2028, are presented in **Joint SBWG12/PaCSWG8 Doc 03**. This document reports on the agreed actions of the current Engagement Strategy endorsed by AC13 and reviews how ACAP delivered against these actions over the period since SBWG11.

2. OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS IN THE ACAP RFMO ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

In order to continue to highlight current ACAP Best Practice Advice and to achieve progress against its objectives related to the current RFMO Engagement Strategy endorsed at AC13, ACAP engaged during 2023-2024 with seven RFMOs, as well as CCAMLR. These included all five tuna RFMOs, , and three non-tuna RFMOs, which are listed below:

- 1) Regional fisheries organisations with competence over tuna fisheries (Tuna RFMOs)
 - a. Indian Ocean Tuna Commission ([IOTC](#))
 - b. International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas ([ICCAT](#))
 - c. Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission ([WCPFC](#))
 - d. Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission ([IATTC](#))
 - e. Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna ([CCSBT](#))
- 2) Regional fisheries organisations with competence over non-tuna fisheries (Non-tuna RFMOs)
 - a. Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement ([SIOFA](#))
 - b. South East Atlantic Fisheries Commission ([SEAFO](#))
 - c. South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization ([SPRFMO](#))
- 3) Regional conservation organisations with competence for living marine resources
 - a. Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources ([CCAMLR](#))

ACAP's engagement included participation in 21 meetings of 8 organisations, of which 12 were attended in person and 9 online. Such participation is a key part of the implementation of

ACAP's RFMO Engagement Strategy. It is critical for maintaining ACAP's profile across organisations and for supporting initiatives in line with ACAP priorities.

Overall, the period from May 2023 to June 2024 has seen positive developments in ACAP's engagement with RFMOs and CCAMLR. In some cases, organisations which had not updated their seabird-related measures for many years, embarked upon reviews of their measures against ACAP Best Practice. SPRFMO is an example of this. In the case of SIOFA, a review process that had begun the previous year continued, while others, such as ICCAT, are discussing the issue at the Subcommittee of Ecosystems and Bycatch of level but have not yet endorsed the proposal at the Commission level. In a welcome development, the IOTC, which had not updated its seabird measure since 2012, adopted a new Resolution on seabird bycatch mitigation, to enter into force on 1 July 2024.

The RFMO which most frequently reviews and updates its seabird measures, WCPFC, is working intersessionally to have a review proposal ready for presentation to its Scientific Committee later this year. In almost all these initiatives, ACAP has been active in providing input, including advice on how each organisation's current measures differ from current ACAP advice.

Meanwhile, the CCSBT plans (at its ERSWG meeting in June 2024) to advance implementation of its Muti-Year Seabird Strategy, a concept which has also attracted interest in other RFMOs. The CCSBT, through its project in the FAO Common Oceans Phase 2 programme, is also taking practical steps (eg. workshops) to promote compliance with the CCSBT's mitigation measures. At CCAMLR meetings in the past two years, the revival of the Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fisheries (WG-IMAF) means that a far greater amount of attention is now given to ACAP-related issues.

In all these processes, ACAP is increasingly acknowledged as the chief repository of knowledge on best practice seabird bycatch mitigation. ACAP has also been active in promoting our guidelines on observer data collection and on Electronic Monitoring Systems, the latter a new and rapidly expanding area of interest for RFMOs. In ACAP's interaction with RFMOs there has been strong cooperation with some ACAP Parties, several of which are leading the review processes.

ANNEX 1 presents the agreed actions of the current Engagement Strategy endorsed by AC13 and reviews progress since SBWG11.

ANNEX 1. AGREED ACTIONS AND REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN THE CURRENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

This document presents the agreed actions of the current Engagement strategy endorsed by AC13 and reviews how ACAP delivered against these actions during the period since SBWG11.

Regional fisheries organisations with competence over tuna fisheries (Tuna RFMOs)

Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)

CCSBT Actions agreed for 2023-2025

1. Continue to take part in the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG).
2. Contribute to further development and implementation of the multi-year seabird strategy.
3. Contribute to the further development of definitions and thresholds for and management implications of high-risk areas for seabirds.
4. Continue to contribute our best practice advice, guidelines, and status reports to ERSWG meetings, including newly approved and updated mitigation measures.
5. Continue to provide inputs to and support for the BirdLife-CCSBT proposal to enhance implementation of seabird bycatch mitigation measures.
6. Contribute material for the future work programme as requested by ERSWG.
7. Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.
8. Work with Australia, New Zealand and other Parties to promote the Antipodean Albatross Action Plan
9. Further engagement with CCSBT Compliance Committee towards contributing efforts to improve compliance in the use of seabird bycatch mitigation measures.

CCSBT Review of Progress

During October 2023, ACAP attended the annual meeting of CCSBT's Extended Commission (EC30) and the 18th meeting of the CCSBT Compliance Committee (CC18), which preceded EC30. In February 2024, ACAP also attended virtually a CCSBT Technical ERSWG meeting. This was the Second Technical Group workshop entitled "Collaboration on Southern Hemisphere Seabird Risk Assessment". In March 2024 ACAP attend the EM Inception Workshop (in Canberra, Australia), part of the CCSBT Seabird Project.

The main issues of interest to ACAP in CC18 included the low level of observer coverage and of ERSWG Data Exchange (EDE) reporting, which means it is impossible to determine the impact of the Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) fishery on seabird populations. Some members did not achieve the required 10% observer coverage and representativeness. High Level Guiding Principles on EM and EMS were recommended to EC30 for adoption. In addition, the coordinator of the CCSBT Seabird Project to enhance the implementation of seabird measures (FAO Common Oceans Tuna programme, Phase 2), reported on progress. The key elements of the project include capacity-building workshops on mitigation measures and compliance

mechanisms, including the latest developments in electronic monitoring. Another element is a planned updated assessment of Southern Hemispheres seabird bycatch.

During EC30, the Commission adopted all the recommendations from the Compliance Committee, and the CCSBT Secretariat presented an update of the CCSBT's Ecologically Related Species (ERS) alignment resolution, which aligns the CCSBT's ERS measures with those of ICCAT, IOTC and WCPFC. This took note of the recent IOTC update to its CMM for seabird bycatch through IOTC Resolution 23/07 on reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries, which will supersede Resolution 12/06 on 1 July 2024. In addition, ACAP briefly summarised the latest (at AC13) update of our best practice advice and the clarifications therein and undertook to present the updated advice in more detail at ERSWG15.

Contributing to development and implementation of the multi-year seabird strategy (MYSS) is a key objective for ACAP in the engagement strategy with CCSBT. The CCSBT Technical ERSWG meeting had as objectives to conduct the Southern Hemisphere Seabird Risk Assessment by CCSBT fisheries on 27 ACAP species, to agree on the proposed list of priority species based on risk assessment outcomes, and to develop a draft on management target based on risk assessment outcomes. ACAP attended the meeting. The Seabird Risk Assessment being used is the Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment (SEFRA) analysis. The outputs are key elements for the MYSS, and therefore, for the next 15th Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG15) which will be held on June 2024. This report was prepared prior to ERSWG15, and will be revised following a report back from ACAP attendance at the meeting.

In March 2024 ACAP attend the EM Inception Workshop (in Canberra, Australia), part of the CCSBT Seabird Project, which is funded by the Common Oceans Tuna Project. This element of the project is focussed on supporting the development of electronic systems to collect compliance-ready data. The workshop was an excellent opportunity to engage with Member Fishing Entities around the design and implementation of EM programmes and disseminate advice through the ACAP EM Guidelines to this key target audience. ACAP presented on the resources we have available, briefly summarised the conservation status of ACAP-listed species with a focus on high priority populations and ran through the ACAP EM Guidelines. A large part of the workshop consisted of Member updates on where they were at in EM implementation. Cost and human safety were identified as key drivers behind the develop of current full EM in replacement of human observers. Key learnings were shared and discussed. A key lesson was the transformative impact of having an EM system integrated with electronic reporting can bring through significant and sustained improvements in the accuracy of logbook reporting, and the associated high levels of compliance with seabird bycatch mitigation measure use. This led to a general appreciation amongst participants that an important objective of a national EM program is to facilitate behavioural changes among fishers.

Recommendations

1. Continue to engage in any CCSBT Seabird Project activities where ACAP can provide a meaningful contribution to achieving the results of the project.
2. Further recommendations for future ACAP engagement are pending ERSWG15 outcomes.

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

IATTC Actions agreed for 2023-2025

1. Continue to participate in the IATTC Bycatch Working Group (BYCWG), which provides an opportunity to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP species, and to present to them ACAP's revised best practice advice and conservation priorities.
2. Consider attendance at future meetings for the development of the EM programme and contribute information on ACAP's EM guidelines.
3. Contribute information on new and updated ACAP guidelines including guidelines on observer programmes.
4. Contribute information on updated ACAP advice on improving crew safety when hauling branch lines during pelagic longline operations.
5. Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.
6. Work with Chile and other Parties to promote the Antipodean Albatross Action Plan.
7. Further work to strengthen seabird bycatch mitigation requirements in Res C-11-02 during 2022 meetings should consider the engagement with CPCs, not only those that are ACAP Parties (Chile, Ecuador, France, Peru, Spain), but also the United States and the European Union as strong key players. Actions should be coordinated with BirdLife International.
8. Contribute information on new and updated ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the inclusion of the underwater bait setting devices and assessment of the Underwater Bait Setter (Skadia Technologies) and Hookpod-mini as seabird bycatch mitigation measures.

IATTC Review of Progress

Other priorities meant that ACAP was not able to attend IATTC meetings during the period under review. However, ACAP produced a joint document with BirdLife International on the development of a multi-year seabird strategy and action plan to help guide and evaluate efforts to reduce seabird bycatch in IATTC fisheries, equivalent to the seabird work plans proposed to ICCAT and IOTC. This proposal was presented by BirdLife International at the 1st Meeting of the Ecosystems and Bycatch Working Group (EBWG) in May 2023. Among other actions, this seabird work plan included the review and update of Resolution C-11-02 on seabird bycatch mitigation requirements. The proposal was well received and the EBWG recommended its implementation within the next two years (by 2025) to the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). This was also acknowledged in the report of the Commission Meeting. However, despite of the recommendations of the EBWG and SAC for the creation of an IATTC seabird multi-year strategy, as proposed by ACAP and BirdLife International, this was not included in the IATTC work plan.

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

ICCAT Actions agreed for 2023-2025

1. Continue to participate in the ICCAT Sub-committee on Ecosystems and Bycatch (SC-ECO), which provides an opportunity to exchange information on threats affecting ACAP

species, and to present to them ACAP's revised best practice advice and conservation priorities.

2. Keep in touch with ICCAT during the intersessional period to urge the inclusion of seabird bycatch in the agenda for the next meeting.
3. Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.
4. Contribute information on updated ACAP advice on improving crew safety when hauling branch lines during pelagic longline operations.
5. Contribute information on new and updated ACAP guidelines including guidelines on observer programmes and on electronic monitoring.
6. Continue to work with CPCs (especially those that are ACAP Parties) and ICCAT towards a revision of Rec 11-09 that is informed by the current ACAP best practice advice.
7. Contribute information on new and updated ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the inclusion of the underwater bait setting devices and assessment of the Underwater Bait Setter (Skadia Technologies) and Hookpod-mini as seabird bycatch mitigation measures.

ICCAT Review of Progress

ACAP has regularly participated in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) meetings, including the annual meeting of the Sub-committee on Ecosystems and Bycatch (SC-ECO), and others such as the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) and the Commission. In May 2023, ACAP attended SC-ECO. In September and November 2023, ACAP attended virtually the SCRS and the Commission, respectively. In May 2024, ACAP attended SC-ECO. ACAP also participated in the second meeting of the EcoCard sub-group in April 2023. This sub-group of the SC-ECO was formed to work intersessionally on an indicator-based Ecosystem Report Card (EcoCard) as a tool for monitoring the effects of fishing, environmental variation and climate change on ICCAT species and associated ecosystems.

As regards seabird bycatch, Recommendation 11-09 (Rec. 11-09) "Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT on reducing incidental by-catch of seabirds in ICCAT longline fisheries" is the current ICCAT CMM that outlines the technical bycatch mitigation measures that ICCAT pelagic longline vessels are required to implement in defined areas south of 25°S of the south Atlantic to reduce bycatch of albatrosses and petrels. An evaluation of the effectiveness of this conservation and management measure in reducing bycatch of seabirds was scheduled for 2015; however, it has not been carried out. Although ICCAT has historically addressed seabird bycatch issues, there has been no substantive progress in recent years, except by the 2023 SC-ECO meeting. During the 2023 SC-ECO meeting, ACAP presented a joint proposal with BLI to conduct a review of Rec 11-09. As a result of the discussion, the Subcommittee supported conducting a review of Rec. 11-09 and including it as part of its workplan for 2024. In September 2023, the SCRS endorsed the SC-ECO proposal to conduct a review in 2024 of the current ICCAT seabird bycatch mitigation measures. Based on an intervention by the United Kingdom, the review process in 2024 would also include a review of Recommendation 07-07 (Rec. 07-07) "Recommendation by ICCAT on reducing incidental by-catch of seabirds in longline fisheries". This recommendation stipulates mitigation measures for longline vessels fishing between 20° and 25°S. Discussion of seabird issues was not the focus of the Commission Meeting, but the work program of the SCRS was approved. In May

2024, during the SC ECO meeting, a process was initiated to review Rec. 11-09 and Rec. 07-07. ACAP presented a joint document with BLI in which a review of Rec. 11-09 and Rec. 07-07 against ACAP Best Practice Advice for Reducing the Impact of Pelagic Longline Fisheries on Seabirds was presented. ACAP also presented a document with the ACAP review of mitigation measures and best practice advice for pelagic longline fisheries. ACAP also contributed to a document led by the United Kingdom, which evaluated different combinations and specifications of the currently accepted CMMs, comparing those stipulated by ICCAT with the recommendations in the ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the alternative use of Hook Shielding Devices (HSDs). The document applied the EASI-Fish method to five populations of four species of albatrosses and petrels at risk in the South Atlantic. The SC ECO discussed that some of the mitigation measures in Rec. 07-07 and Rec. 11-09 are not in line with ACAP's best practices or decisions recently taken within the IOTC or the WCPFC and could be updated. A document presented by Brazil reported on the impact on seabird bycatch by small-scale fisheries across southeastern Brazil. It was suggested that small-scale fisheries should be considered in the revision process of Rec. 11-09. As a result of the meeting, the SC ECO recommended that the review of mitigation measures to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds in longline vessels operating in ICCAT continue during 2025. The SC ECO recognized that since the adoption of Rec. 11-09, no revision has been conducted by the Subcommittee on the population status of seabirds in the South Atlantic, nor on their interactions with ICCAT fisheries, or on the effectiveness of the adopted bycatch mitigation measures. Therefore, the SC ECO recommended that the SCRS should continue reviewing and discussing mitigation measures available for different ICCAT fisheries interacting with seabirds, including, but not limited to, the possibility of recommending to the Commission that additional mitigation measures could be adopted by ICCAT.

The second meeting of the EcoCard sub-group was held online to (1) discuss how the ongoing case studies (Mediterranean, Tropical Atlantic and the Sargasso Sea) can contribute to the EcoCard development, and (2) identify and discuss potential synergies and collaborations with outside international projects and initiatives to support the EcoCard development. Seabirds were not mentioned in the three case studies. There was a presentation about the CCSBT Seabird Bycatch Project (from Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project II) that will focus on improving seabird bycatch mitigation measure use and reporting. It was mentioned that this would help to restart discussion of the seabird EcoCard indicators. ACAP should continue to collaborate with SC ECO in the development of seabird indicators for the ICCAT EcoCard. It is recommended that ACAP reestablish communication with the participants of the CPCs that are working on the development of the indicators to be presented to the SC ECO.

Recommendations

The review of Rec. 11-09 and 07-07 will take place in the SC-ECO meeting in 2025. ACAP should engage with ICCAT CPCs (especially those that are ACAP Parties) and BLI and contribute towards a revision of Rec 11-09 and 07-07 that is informed by the current ACAP best practice advice. ACAP should support the recommendations of the SC ECO at the SCRS meeting and present at the next SC ECO meeting the ACAP Best Practice Advice for Reducing the Impact of Pelagic Longline Fisheries on Seabirds updates that arise from AC14 in August 2024..

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

IOTC Actions agreed for 2023-2025

1. Continue to participate in IOTC meetings, including WPEB and the Scientific Committee, to ensure that seabird bycatch issues do not disappear from the IOTC agenda.
2. Continue to engage in IOTC initiatives that are relevant to seabirds, to support efforts that will lead to favourable outcomes for ACAP species.
3. Support IOTC work to advance seabird bycatch monitoring and mitigation, and associated capacity building, in relevant IOTC processes, such as the initiatives underway (including intersessionally) to identify eco-regions and to develop an IOTC Ecosystem Report Card.
4. Contribute information on updated ACAP advice on improving crew safety when hauling branch lines during pelagic longline operations.
5. Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.
6. Follow and ideally participate in the (intersessional) initiative to develop the minimum standards for EMS for IOTC. This engagement should aim to ensure that seabird bycatch requirements are usefully incorporated into the IOTC standards, and that the ACAP process to develop best practice guidelines for the use of EM for seabird bycatch monitoring is linked with the IOTC process.
7. Contribute information on new and updated ACAP guidelines including guidelines on observer programmes and on electronic monitoring.
8. Consider how best to support the development and submission of a proposal to the IOTC Commission to update Resolution 12/06 to bring it in line with the current ACAP advice. Engage with ACAP Parties to determine whether one or more would put forward such a proposal.
9. Contribute information on new and updated ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the inclusion of the underwater bait setting devices and assessment of the Underwater Bait Setter (Skadia Technologies) and Hookpod-mini as seabird bycatch mitigation measures.

IOTC Review of Progress

ACAP has regularly participated in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) meetings of the Scientific Committee (SC) and the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB). During May 2023, ACAP attended virtually the 27th Session of the IOTC. In September and December 2023, ACAP attended WPEB19 and SC26 (virtually), respectively. In addition, during 2024 ACAP is participating actively in the Intersessional Working Group on Reviewing the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) Minimum Data Fields. In June 2024, ACAP attended (online) the 4th Working Group on Electronic Monitoring Standards (WGEMS04).

After the recent review (2022) of the mitigation measures for IOTC longline fisheries conducted at WPEB18, the 25th Scientific Committee meeting (SC25) recommended that the Commission consider including hook-shielding devices as an additional option for seabird bycatch mitigation measures in Resolution 12/06. In May 2023, the 27th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission finally adopted Resolution 23/07 (On reducing incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries), which shall enter into force on 1 July 2024, when Resolution 12/06 will be superseded. This new Resolution stipulates that in the area south of 25°S of the Indian Ocean, Contracting parties and cooperating non contracting parties (referred to

hereafter as “CPCs”) shall ensure that all longline vessels use at least two of three mitigation measures (night setting, bird scaring lines and branch line weighting) or, alternatively, use hook-shielding devices as a stand-alone measure. In September 2023, ACAP presented at WPEB19 an update on the ACAP best practice bycatch mitigation advice for pelagic longline fisheries according to the most recent review that took place in May 2023, at SBWG11, with updates endorsed by AC13. WPEB19 recognized in its report that there are differences between the mitigation measures recommended by ACAP and those stipulated in the recent IOTC seabird resolution 23/07. ACAP recommends the use of night setting, bird scaring lines and branch line weighting simultaneously instead of the use of two of the three measures. The WPEB further noted in its report that Resolution 23-07 does not include the option for the use of underwater bait setting devices as a stand-alone measure and specifies branch line weighting options different from those currently recommended by ACAP.

Resolution 23/07 also contained elements that call on the Scientific Committee to undertake specific tasks. Specifically, there is a request to the SC that specifies: “(para 8) The Scientific Committee will continue to review and make recommendations to the Commission on advancements and best practice in seabird bycatch mitigation as they become available. This will include, by 2024 at the latest, developing advice to the Commission on best practice branch line weighting.”

Another relevant outcome from 2022 (WPEB18 and SC25) and 2023 (WPEB19 and SC26) IOTC meetings was the inclusion in the program of work of the WPEB the development of a draft IOTC seabird work plan. This was the result of a joint submission from BLI and ACAP to WPEB18 proposing the development and adoption of a seabird strategy and action plan for IOTC longline fisheries. SC25 supported the inclusion of this item in the WPEB program of work for 2024. Proposed actions scheduled more than one year in advance are tentative and are reviewed each year to determine whether they remain a priority. In September 2023, WPEB19 reiterated this item on the WPEB program of work for 2024, and this was then endorsed in December 2023 by SC26. The development of a draft IOTC seabird work plan should start in September 2024.

Another relevant output for ACAP from SC26 relates to the work of the Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS), and specifically to its ad hoc Working Group on Electronic Monitoring Standards (WGEMS). A recent IOTC resolution (Res. 23/08) requires the revision of the Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) data fields. Base on this resolution, and on the recommendations of the WPDCS and the WGEMS, SC26 endorsed the request for setting up an intersessional working group to discuss and review the scientific need for each ROS data field, including the status of each of them (i.e. mandatory / mandatory when feasible / optional), and the possibility of adding EMS-specific elements to the list of ROS mandatory data fields, among other issues. Since February 2024, ACAP has been participating in the subgroup that is revising the ROS data fields for pelagic longline, which is the fishing gear of interest for ACAP in seeking to mitigate seabird bycatch in IOTC fisheries. In June 2024, at the WGEMS04, the longline subgroup presented a document that included the general principles of the ROS fields, proposed modifications, fields to be removed, and pending fields without consensus, including branch line weighting information. It was discussed that the most effective way to review the unresolved fields would be to hold a one-day in-person meeting during the WPDCS20, which will take place in November 2024.

Recommendations

ACAP should continue to participate in the WPEB and SC meetings of the IOTC. ACAP's short-term priorities at these meetings should focus on supporting and providing relevant information to initiate a seabird strategy and action plan at the IOTC. Because ACAP has an important role in providing advice and resources for the CCSBT multiyear seabird strategy, it is expected that if a specific seabird strategy is approved for the IOTC, ACAP could contribute significantly to its development. ACAP should engage with relevant CPCs (mainly ACAP Parties) and BLI prior to and during the SC and WPEB meetings to ensure that an IOTC's strategy to reduce seabird bycatch is developed so that its fisheries do not pose a threat to ACAP-listed species. In addition, ACAP should contribute providing advice in the process of reviewing branch line weighting specifications as was requested by IOTC commission in Resolution 23/07. ACAP should continue collaborating with IOTC in the review of ROS data fields for pelagic longline fisheries and in the related tasks of the ad hoc WGEMS of the WPDCS.

Western and Central Pacific Tuna Commission (WCPFC)

WCPFC Actions agreed for 2023-2025

1. Future participation in WCPFC meetings, including of the Compliance Committee, to maintain our profile and give support to initiatives in line with our priorities.
2. Contribute information on new and updated ACAP guidelines including guidelines on observer programmes and on electronic monitoring.
3. Contribute information on updated ACAP advice on improving crew safety when hauling branchlines during pelagic longline operations.
4. Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.
5. Work with Australia, New Zealand and other Parties to promote the Antipodean Albatross Action Plan.
6. Work with relevant ACAP Parties and attend SC/TCC meetings to encourage adherence to reporting requirements and to seek ways to improve the situation, given the concerns raised through Project 68.
7. Contribute information on new and updated ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the inclusion of the underwater bait setting devices and assessment of the Underwater Bait Setter (Skadia Technologies) and Hookpod-mini as seabird bycatch mitigation measures.

WCPFC Review of Progress

Since 2009, ACAP and WCPFC have a Memorandum of Understanding with the objective of facilitating cooperation to support efforts to minimise bycatch of albatrosses and petrels within the WCPFC Convention Area. Since then, ACAP has regularly participated in meetings of the WCPFC Commission and Scientific Committee (SC), and occasionally the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC).

In 2023, to maintain our profile and support initiatives in line with our priorities, ACAP attended four WCPFC meetings. In August 2023, ACAP attended in person the 19th Regular Session

of the Scientific Committee (SC19). This meeting had among its main agenda items reviewing seabird bycatch research and starting a process to update the WCPFC conservation and management measures on seabirds (CMM 2018-03). ACAP contributed an information paper entitled “Updated ACAP Advice on Reducing the Bycatch of Albatrosses and Petrels in WCPFC Fisheries” (SC19-EB-IP-21), which was presented in the plenary. In addition, ACAP made a number of interventions related to seabird bycatch and its mitigation. It was agreed that New Zealand would lead the review of CMM 2018-03, which will be updated during SC20 (2024), aiming to ensure that effective mitigation methods are required and applied across the WCPFC Convention Area. ACAP joined the intersessional working group that was established to review and discuss the latest scientific evidence on seabird bycatch mitigation in order to inform decisions during the review of CMM 2018-03.

Following up decisions and planned actions from SC19, ACAP participated in the First (February 2024) and Second (May 2024) Online Informal Intersessional Meetings for the review of CMM 2018-03. During these meetings, New Zealand presented reviewed scientific evidence on the effectiveness of each mitigation measure and considered comments and views of WCPFC CPCs and Observers on this matter.

In September 2023, ACAP attended (online) the 19th Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC19), which was held in hybrid format. The ACAP objectives at the meeting were to engage more with compliance processes and understand how best to contribute to compliance discussions, in accordance with the priorities in the RFMO Engagement Strategy. Discussions around the Compliance Monitoring Report (CMR), which took up the main part of the meeting, were held in closed session, in which observers were not allowed to participate. Hence, ACAP’s attendance at the TCC19 was brief.

Regarding seabird bycatch, New Zealand (on behalf of Australia, Fiji, France, and the United States of America) presented a report on Operation Nasse – 2023 (WCPFC-TCC19-2023-RP02), which showed that non-compliance with seabird bycatch mitigation requirements was the most common issue identified. An important meeting outcome was the efforts to improve the use of Regional Observer Programme (ROP) data in the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS), including the formation of three intersessional working groups to provide advice on the refinement of WCPFC monitoring programmes. Areas of focus would include improvements to the ROP and the electronic reporting and monitoring (ER-EM) minimum standard data fields for monitoring sea turtle and seabird bycatch and the implementation of required mitigation measures.

ACAP participated as an observer at the 20th annual meeting of the WCPFC Commission (WCPFC 20), held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, in December 2023. WCPFC 20 was held as a hybrid meeting, with some delegates participating online. The agenda included an item on seabird bycatch mitigation and discussion of the agreed review of CMM 2018-03 (on seabirds), although not to the same extent as at WCPFC19 (2022). The 2022 meeting made the decision to review CMM 2018-03, whereas WCPFC 20 was considering progress and the necessary steps for that review in 2024, following recommendations from the Scientific Committee (SC19).

ACAP’s main interest in participating was to contribute to discussion of the CMM 2018-03 review and support recommendations that came from the WCPFC Scientific Committee meeting (SC 19) in August 2023 (which ACAP attended). SC 19 supported a proposal by New Zealand to lead the review of CMM 2018-03 under three areas of focus, with New Zealand organising informal intersessional meetings to discuss the latest scientific advice and to gather

views on the review, with the goal of submitting a revised CMM to SC20, TCC 20 and WCPFC 21.

At WCPFC 20, New Zealand repeated this proposal and announced dates (in February and May 2024) for the intersessional meetings. The following WCPFC Members and participating territories spoke in favour of the proposal: Korea, Australia, Fiji, Chinese Taipei, New Caledonia, Indonesia, the EU, French Polynesia, and the US. There were no opposing comments. I expressed ACAP's support for the review and our willingness to participate in the intersessional process. The New Zealand proposal was adopted.

A more general objective of ACAP's participation was to continue and enhance ACAP's engagement with the WCPFC and meeting attendees. The in-person nature of the meeting provided ample opportunities for informal discussions with a range of delegations and the renewal of contacts, plus establishment of some new ones.

Recommendation

As well as taking part in the intersessional process led by New Zealand, it will be important for ACAP to attend the Scientific Committee and Commission meetings in 2024, where the review of CMM 2018-03 should be finalised and adopted.

Regional fisheries organisations with competence over non-tuna fisheries (Non-tuna RFMOs)

South East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (SEAFO)

SEAFO Actions agreed for 2023-2025

1. Continue participation at relevant SEAFO meetings, Scientific Committee (SC), the Compliance Committee and Meeting of the Commission.
2. Continue to contribute our best practice advice, guidelines, and status reports to SC meetings, including newly approved and updated mitigation measures.

SEAFO Review of Progress

The South East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (SEAFO) came into force in April 2003, with the Convention Area being known to be important for a number of ACAP species. ACAP first engaged with SEAFO in 2015 when it was invited to attend the 11th Scientific Committee meeting (SC11). The objectives for ACAP at that meeting were to formally introduce the work of the Agreement, to learn more about the structure and functioning of SEAFO, and to build a closer working relationship with SEAFO in respect of seabird conservation matters. One of the outcomes of the meeting was a recommendation from the SEAFO SC to investigate the establishment of an MoU between ACAP and SEAFO to facilitate cooperation to minimise incidental bycatch of albatrosses and petrels, which went on to be developed and signed in December 2018. Progression of the MoU from development to signing was aided by the

attendance of ACAP at SEAFO SC14 in 2018 where presentations on the work and objectives of ACAP and of the draft MoU were made. Given the fishing effort within the SEAFO Convention Area is currently low (1-3 longline vessels annually between 2018-2023), ACAP has, since 2018, primarily kept a 'watching brief' on SEAFO activities. But remaining formally engaged is still seen as important as fishing effort could potentially increase in the future, and therefore it is essential to ensure appropriate bycatch mitigation conservation measures continue to be in place, are being used, and being reported on. Furthermore, Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing for Patagonian toothfish has been reported in the SEAFO Convention Area in recent years (2016), and it is highly unlikely these vessels use the seabird bycatch mitigation measures set out in SEAFO Conservation Measure (CM) 25/12. CM 25/12 is the current conservation measure adopted by SEAFO that relates to reducing incidental bycatch of seabirds in the SEAFO Convention Area. It is considered generally consistent with ACAP Best Practice Advice.

Recognising the continued importance of remaining engaged with SEAFO, ACAP attended the SC19 as an observer in November 2023. ACAP's main objective at SC19 was to provide an update on ACAP activities and its advice for reducing the bycatch of albatrosses and petrels in SIOFA demersal longlining and trawl fisheries (Doc/SC/11/2023), emphasising the need to maintain implementation of these measures, even if low seabird bycatch rates have been observed or recorded. An update was also provided on the conservation status of the 16 ACAP species which overlap in their distribution with the SEAFO Convention Area, as well as the two ACAP High Priority Populations which have been shown to spend >5% of their time in the SEAFO area, and both of which are also showing continuous population declines. Even though there have been only two seabird by-catches by a demersal longliner in the past 12 years (since CM 25/12 came into force), and that CM 25/12 is broadly consistent with previous ACAP best practice advices, the SEAFO SC agreed that a review of the updated ACAP best practices in particular with regard to its safety, practicality and feasibility in the context of SEAFO, will assist in the evaluation of the CM. ACAP has agreed to provide supporting information for the CM evaluation at the next SC meeting, providing this is requested by the Commission. Unfortunately, ACAP was not able to attend the 29th Annual Meeting of the Commission in 2023 and so not able to follow-up on whether the Commission wishes to accept ACAP's offer of assistance to review CM25/12 but could make enquiries intersessionally.

Recommendations

Engage with the SIOFA Secretariat intersessionally to establish if ACAP can assist with any intended review of CM 25/12 by providing further relevant updated advice. As ACAP is involved with the review of SPRMOs seabird CMMs, ACAP could help to make sure any relevant findings/outcomes from that review are considered by SEAFO, thereby helping to achieve alignment between the non-tuna RFMOs.

Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

SIOFA Actions agreed for 2023-2025

1. Continue participation at future SIOFA meetings, including Stock and Ecological Risk Assessment Working Group (SERAWG), Scientific Committee (SC), the Compliance Committee and Meeting of the Parties (MoP).

2. Pay attention to further work to harmonise observer programmes, and any development of e-monitoring, so as to identify relevant future opportunities to engage regarding the collection of seabird bycatch data in this RFMO.
3. Work with interested CCPs to develop detailed proposed changes to seabird bycatch mitigation and data standard CMMs to achieve better alignment with ACAP advice for consideration at SC8 and SC9.

SIOFA Review of Progress

The Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) came into force in June 2012. ACAP interaction with SIOFA has developed since 2018 when the two organisations signed a MoU to facilitate cooperation to minimise incidental bycatch of albatrosses and petrels. In 2019, MoP6 of SIOFA adopted a CMM following a proposal submitted by the European Union (EU). The EU proposal was based largely on ACAP's best practice advice for reducing the impacts of seabird bycatch in demersal longline and trawl fisheries. However, the trawl components of the proposal were largely not included in the final CMM adopted by SIOFA. No measures were proposed for pelagic longline, despite some effort reported by one CPC. ACAP attended the online SC6 and Working Group meetings in 2021 to present a general update on ACAP activities, species status and ACAP advice on seabird bycatch mitigation and data collection. Following COVID-19 related delays the results from contracted ecological risk assessment for seabirds (and other bycatch species) were considered at SC7 in 2022, which provided evidence of potentially high risk, including risk to Critically Endangered albatrosses, and with highest risk for seabirds from interaction with pelagic longline fishing. ACAP presented to SC7 a review of the SIOFA seabird bycatch mitigation and data standards CMMs against ACAP advice. Based on consideration of this work, the SC recommended that pelagic longliners operating in the SIOFA Area follow IOTC Resolution 12/06 on reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries which was subsequently adopted at MOP9.

On March 2023, ACAP attended (online) the Eighth Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC8). SC8 also recommended holding a 1-2-day workshop with scientists, managers, industry representatives and observers to consider how seabird bycatch mitigation measures may be progressed further. This workshop was postponed and ultimately not held.

Because of the lack of intersessional progress no seabird bycatch relevant papers were considered at SC8. However, ACAP was given the opportunity to speak to the group to recapitulate on previous ACAP advice to SC7. France-OT and some observers voiced strong support for progressing with the planned seabird bycatch workshop so that progress could be made towards addressing the gaps in SIOFA's current seabird bycatch and data standards CMMs, although other CPCs noted that as most of the seabird bycatch risk was from pelagic longline and since that was addressed through adoption of IOTC Resolution 12/06 any further consideration could be delayed until more data showing risk to seabirds from other methods was available. SC8 agreed to include a focused agenda item on seabird data collection and bycatch mitigation measures at SC9. The SC also requested the Secretariat to prepare and present a paper summarising available information about SIOFA seabird bycatch mitigation measures and seabird interactions.

In March 2024, ACAP participated (online) as an observer at the Ninth Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC9), focussing its efforts on the agenda item dedicated to seabird bycatch mitigation measures and seabird data collection. A paper co-authored by the SIOFA Secretariat and ACAP detailing seabird interactions recorded in SIOFA, current seabird

mitigation measures in force in SIOFA, a comparison of these with other RFMOs, as well as identifying outstanding ACAP advice with respect to mitigation measures in use was presented by the SC Chair on behalf of the Secretariat (SC-09-22). ACAP also presented a paper which provided an update on ACAP activities since March 2022 and advice on reducing the bycatch of albatrosses and petrels in SIOFA longlining and trawl fisheries (SC-09-24). The ACAP paper emphasised the importance of the SIOFA Convention Area to ACAP species by highlighting that six ACAP High Priority Populations occur within the area, and that at least two populations spend >35% of their time there. During discussions at SC9 it was highlighted that improvements could be made to the way SIOFA asks CPCs to collect and report seabird bycatch, with the SIOFA Secretariat being tasked to: i) provide a summary of incidental bycatches reported from the vessel logbooks and the observer logbooks; and then ii) identify any potential data gaps, potential improvements that could be made for data collection and reporting by CPCs, and potential amendments to CMM 02(2023) that would clarify what information should be collected from the two types of logbooks. Further, while the SIOFA SC will recommend the SIOFA MoP note SIOFA's demersal and pelagic longline fisheries have implemented a number of ACAP best practices for mitigating seabird bycatch, that they also note updated best practice from ACAP which recommends the implementation of line-weighting, night-setting, and bird-scaring lines in combination, is not currently required by SIOFA CMMs; but that this could further improve SIOFA's mitigation measures. The SIOFA SC will also recommend that the SIOFA MoP note that, although used by some flag States, many ACAP best practices for mitigating seabird bycatch have not been officially implemented in SIOFA trawl fisheries, and that mandating such practices so that they are more widely used would further improve SIOFA's mitigation measures. Both Australia and France supported the recommendations, and France indicated to ACAP a willingness to work collaboratively intersessionally to progress a review of CMM-13 and CMM-02 if this was to be taken forward. ACAP suggested to France/Australia that any review of the SIOFA CMMs may also benefit from considering the findings and outcomes of the review SPRFMO is making of its seabird CMMs so as to help achieve greater alignment between RFMOs.

Recommendations

If SIOFA MoP11 agree to a review of the SIOFA seabird CMMs, ACAP should work intersessionally with any interested CPCs (most likely France-OT and Australia) to progress this review – in particular having CMM-13 mandate mitigation measures for trawl fisheries. As ACAP is involved with the review of SPRMOs seabird CMMs, ACAP could help to make sure any relevant findings/outcomes from that review are considered by SIOFA, thereby helping to achieve alignment between the non-tuna RFMOs.

South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO)

SPRFMO Actions agreed for 2023-2025

TBC

SPRFMO Review of Progress

The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) is a relatively new RFMO, formally established in August 2012. ACAP's engagement with SPRFMO has been sporadic, with input made initially during the development of their Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) and with papers presented to the Scientific Committee on occasion thereafter. In October 2014 the two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) proposing areas of cooperation.

In 2014, the SPRFMO Commission adopted a Seabird CMM, most recently updated in 2017 (CMM 09-2017), setting out mitigation measures for demersal longline and trawl fishing. It includes a reference to ACAP best practice and also to the SPRFMO Scientific Committee considering the advice from ACAP's Advisory Committee. SPRFMO also has a measure on data standards (CMM 02-2022).

In January-February 2023, ACAP attended virtually the 11th Annual Meeting of the Commission (SPRFMO COMM11). In September 2023, ACAP attended to the 11th Scientific Committee meeting (SC11). In January-February 2024, ACAP attended in person the 12th Annual Meeting of the Commission (SPRFMO COMM12).

ACAP's main objective at COMM 11 was to encourage SPRFMO to undertake a review of their CMM-09-2017 against ACAP's current best practice advice and to review the implementation of provisions of CMM 02-2022 relevant to data collection, reporting and verification. ACAP had been specifically asked by the SPRFMO Executive Secretary to provide this meeting with updates of its best practice advice and guidelines as endorsed by AC12, so as to enable SPRFMO Members to consider whether a review of the relevant SPRFMO measures should be undertaken. New Zealand spoke in support of ACAP's suggestion for a review and will work (together with the US, other interested Members and ACAP) on developing a review for presenting to the SPRFMO Scientific Committee. The review formed part of the Scientific Committee's workplan for 2023.

At SC11, ACAP presented a comprehensive paper which provided a review of the SPRFMO seabird bycatch mitigation measures (CMM09-2017) and the seabird-related data collection requirements (CMM 02-2022) and made many recommendations. SC11 added to its Workplan a proposal for an intersessional workshop (coordinated by New Zealand and Peru, with ACAP assistance) to be held before the next Scientific Committee meeting, to progress the review and prepare new draft texts of CMMs for consideration by the Scientific Committee in 2024 and by the Commission in 2025.

ACAP's main objective at COMM12 was to encourage and support the adoption by the SPRFMO Commission of the Scientific Committee's recommendation, so as to ensure that the review of the CMMs would go ahead. The COMM12 outcome on this issue was encouraging. COMM12 agreed to the proposal in the SC Workplan. New Zealand outlined the timetable developed by New Zealand and Peru (with input from ACAP) for the preparation of the updated CMMs for presentation to the SC13 in September 2024.

Regional conservation organisations with competence for living marine resources

Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

CCAMLR. Actions agreed for 2023-2025

1. Participate in the CCAMLR Scientific Committee and Commission meetings.
2. Continue to participate in the e-group, to discuss the trials examining bird-interactions with the trawl monitoring cable and the effects of any mitigation devices.
3. Work with CCAMLR Secretariat periodically to monitor the occurrence and magnitude of seabird bycatch events reported in previous seasons largely dominated by White-chinned petrels although with isolated records of albatrosses caught.
4. Contribute information on new and updated ACAP guidelines including guidelines on observer programmes and on electronic monitoring.
5. Contribute information on updated ACAP advice on improving crew safety when hauling branchlines during pelagic longline operations.
6. Continue to prepare briefings and liaise in advance of the meetings with ACAP Parties and observers who participate in CCAMLR meetings, to exchange views.
7. Hold, as relevant, discussions with/briefings of ACAP Parties, significant Range States and fishing entities, in advance of and during the meetings, to promote ACAP objectives.
8. Contribute information on new and updated ACAP Best Practice Advice, including the inclusion of the underwater bait setting devices and assessment of the Underwater Bait Setter (Skadia Technologies) and Hookpod-mini as seabird bycatch mitigation measures.

CCAMLR. Review of Progress

In 2023, ACAP participated in the CCAMLR Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing (WG-IMAF), the Scientific Committee (SC-CAMLR 42) and the Commission (CCAMLR-42). The main issue of interest to ACAP during recent CCAMLR meetings has related to trawl fisheries, both the use of net monitoring cables in the continuous krill trawl fishery and the absence of seabird bycatch mitigation requirements for trawl fisheries generally. For several years a derogation from Conservation Measure (CM) 25-03 has been in place (renewed annually) to allow trials of continuous trawl fishing using net monitoring cables, with a requirement to trial mitigation measures. In previous recent fishing seasons Norway was the only CCAMLR Member carrying out such trials, but this year China, too, reported on a trial. This reporting was presented to WG-IMAF, which met for the second time since its re-establishment in 2022.

ACAP participated in seven documents presented to WG-IMAF. This included papers on WG-IMAF intersessional work related to warp strike observations, seabird bycatch mitigation and an update on ACAP activities and advice.

There remains considerable uncertainty of the magnitude and nature of warp strikes in CCAMLR trawl fisheries due to limitations in the quantity and quality of warp strike

observations. There was lengthy discussion around the level of warp strike observation coverage that should be required.

There was discussion on the need for cooperation amongst Members and with other organisations, particularly adjoining RFMOs. The Working Group reflected on ACAP's engagement beyond the Convention Area and requested ACAP to provide a summary of its engagement strategy to WG-IMAF for consideration.

Among outcomes of the WG-IMAF meeting were:

- a recommendation to the Scientific Committee for observer coverage to reach a minimum of 5% of fishing time on a per-vessel basis ideally from the 2024/25 season onwards.
- encouragement of further development of mitigation devices and a request that ACAP provide intersessional advice to assist in further improving seabird mitigation devices that had been developed.
- a recommendation to the SC that CCAMLR maintain the existing derogation of the prohibition on use of the net monitoring cable in Conservation Measure 25-03, with new clarification that video footage review may be used to achieve required observation rates.
- a recommendation that the SC encourage the development and use of warp and net cable mitigation measures on trawl vessels during the 2023/24 fishing season (e.g. paired streamer lines on conventional trawl vessels, and warp scarers or 'socks' on continuous trawl vessels), and the introduction of mandatory mitigation measures on trawl vessels once suitable mitigation specifications have been developed.
- A recommendation that the SC encourage CCAMLR Members to apply the light pollution guidelines developed by Australia and New Zealand.
- a recommendation that CCAMLR Members at relevant regional fisheries meetings emphasize CCAMLR's performance history, given that CCAMLR's seabird incidental mortality mitigation efforts in demersal longline fisheries are an exemplar of best practice and what can be achieved.

Relevant outcomes of Scientific Committee (SC-CAMLR 42) and the Commission (CCAMLR-42) discussions were:

- The Scientific Committee endorsed most of the recommendations from WG-IMAF (and all the seabird-related ones), including on the development and use of warp and net monitoring cable mitigation measures on trawl vessels for the 2023/2024 fishing season, and the introduction of mandatory mitigation measures on trawl vessels once suitable mitigation specifications have been developed.
- Very positive comments were made by several delegations about ACAP's contribution of information to WG-IMAF.
- Considerable discussion on warp strike observations and agreement on the amount of observations recommended by WG-IMAF.
- Discussion on High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) and the need for coordination amongst relevant organisations and CCAMLR Members on how to provide guidance, share information and monitor outbreaks.
- The SC and the Commission agreed on the continuation for a further year of the derogation of CM 25-03, with ongoing trials of mitigation measures in continuous trawl using net monitoring cables.