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**UPDATE ON THE CONSERVATION STATUS, DISTRIBUTION AND
PRIORITIES FOR ALBATROSSES AND LARGE PETRELS**

**Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)
and
BirdLife International**

1. STATUS AND TRENDS OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS

Seabirds are amongst the most globally-threatened of all groups of birds, and conservation issues specific to albatrosses and large petrels led to drafting of the multi-lateral Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). A review of the conservation status and priorities for albatrosses and large petrels was recently published in *Biological Conservation* (Phillips *et al.* 2016).

There are currently 31 species listed in Annex 1 of the Agreement. Of these, 21 (68%) are classified at risk of extinction, a stark contrast to the overall rate of 12% for the 10,694 bird species worldwide (Croxall *et al.* 2012, Gill & Donsker 2017). Of the 22 species of albatrosses listed by ACAP, three are listed as Critically Endangered (CR), six are Endangered (EN), six are Vulnerable (VU), six are Near Threatened (NT), and one is of Least Concern (LC). Of the nine petrel species, one is listed as CR, one as EN, four as VU, one as NT and two species as LC.

The population trends of ACAP species over the last twenty years (since the mid-1990s) were re-examined in 2017 by the ACAP Population and Conservation Status Working Group (PaCSWG). Thirteen ACAP species (42%) are currently showing overall population declines. For three species (c. 10%), the trend over the last 20 years is unknown. Eight species (c. 27%) appear to have been stable over that timeframe, with a further seven species increasing. Information on population size, and the conservation status and trends of ACAP species distributed in the IATTC area is summarised in Appendix 1. The confidence of the current trend for each species in Appendix 1 reflects both the accuracy and extent of the available population data.

1.1 High Priority Populations

There are a number of populations that have been identified by ACAP as being of particularly high conservation priority. This includes populations demonstrated to be declining at more than 3% per year, holding more than 10% of the global population, and at risk from fisheries bycatch. The aim of identifying these highest priority ACAP populations is that focus is given to the most threatened populations in terms of enhancing collaborative efforts and outcomes. In addition, ACAP has also identified populations facing the greatest risk from different global fisheries. This prioritisation has identified three particular priority populations foraging in the IATTC area:

Waved Albatross breeding at Espanola Island (Ecuador). This population breeds and forages almost exclusively in the IATTC area and was one of the first priority populations identified by ACAP. An Action Plan has been developed, which highlights the need for improved monitoring and reporting of data from IATTC fisheries.

Antipodean Albatross breeding at Antipodes Island (New Zealand). This population was recognised as a high priority in 2017 following a rapid population decline since 2005, with particularly high female mortality (Walker & Elliott 2017). This decline has been coincident with an expansion of the foraging range north and east across the Pacific as far as Chile and into the IATTC area.

Laysan Albatross breeding in the Central North Pacific. This population, along with Waved albatross, was identified as being a particular priority amongst those species and populations affected by bycatch in IATTC pelagic longline fisheries.

2. AT-SEA THREATS

Albatrosses and petrels face many threats at sea. These threats include ingestion of marine debris including fishing hooks discarded in fish offal, entanglement in lost fishing gear and other marine debris, contamination from pollutants and over-fishing of prey species. However, direct interactions with fishing operations and associated mortality (bycatch) has been identified by ACAP and others (e.g. Anderson et al 2011) as the major threat causing widespread declines in albatross and petrel populations. All ACAP species are at risk from this threat. Much of the ACAP Seabird Bycatch Working Group's (SBWG) work has focussed on reviewing best practice mitigation advice for industrial fishing gear types, principally pelagic and demersal longline, and trawl gear, as well as collection of fisheries bycatch data, and engagement with RFMOs, particularly the tuna RFMOs. Work on developing advice for mitigating seabird bycatch in artisanal and other small-scale fisheries is also underway.

3. DISTRIBUTION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS IN THE EAST PACIFIC

The area of application of current IATTC Resolution C-11-02 was defined according with information on at-sea distribution of seabirds available until 2011. However, every year data on new species, and detailed information about differences between genders and age classes allow a better understanding of the dynamics and patterns of seabird distribution. An important

proportion of data on seabird distribution is held in the Tracking Ocean Wanderers, Global seabird tracking-database. Over 11 million data points representing seabird habitat throughout the world's oceans are compiled in this database, providing an invaluable marine conservation tool for seabirds and their habitats (<http://www.seabirdtracking.org/>).

Distribution maps for albatross and petrel species across the IATTC area are provided in **Figure 1**. These maps demonstrate the importance of southern latitudes as well as the North Pacific, primarily due to the presence of three albatross breeding species in the northern area, the Laysan (NT), Black-footed (NT) and Short-tailed (VU) Albatrosses, plus the Waved Albatross (CR) breeding in the Galapagos archipelago. Shearwaters and petrels forage throughout the IATTC area, including the Sooty Shearwater (NT), White-chinned Petrel (VU), Grey Petrel (NT), Black Petrel (VU), Westland Petrel (EN), Cook's Petrel (VU) and Murphy's Petrel (NT), as well as the Pink-footed Shearwater (VU) recently listed in Annex 1 of ACAP.

Distribution maps for the high priority populations of Waved, Laysan and Antipodean Albatrosses are provided in **Figure 2**.

References

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FIGURE 1. At-sea density map for albatrosses (A), and shearwater and petrel species (B) distributed in the East Pacific Ocean. Source: BirdLife International Tracking Ocean Wanderers. Blue line shows the IATTC Convention area. Shearwater and petrel species include Sooty Shearwater, White-chinned petrel, Grey petrel, Black petrel, Westland petrel, Cook's petrel and Murphy's petrel

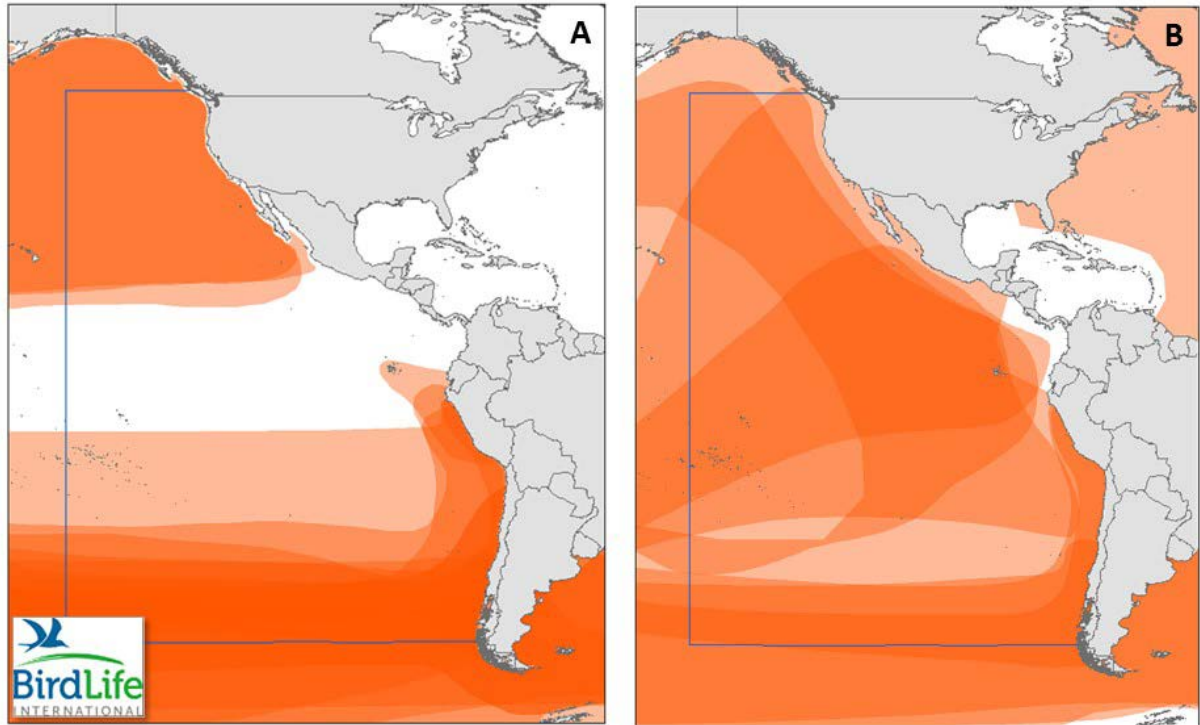
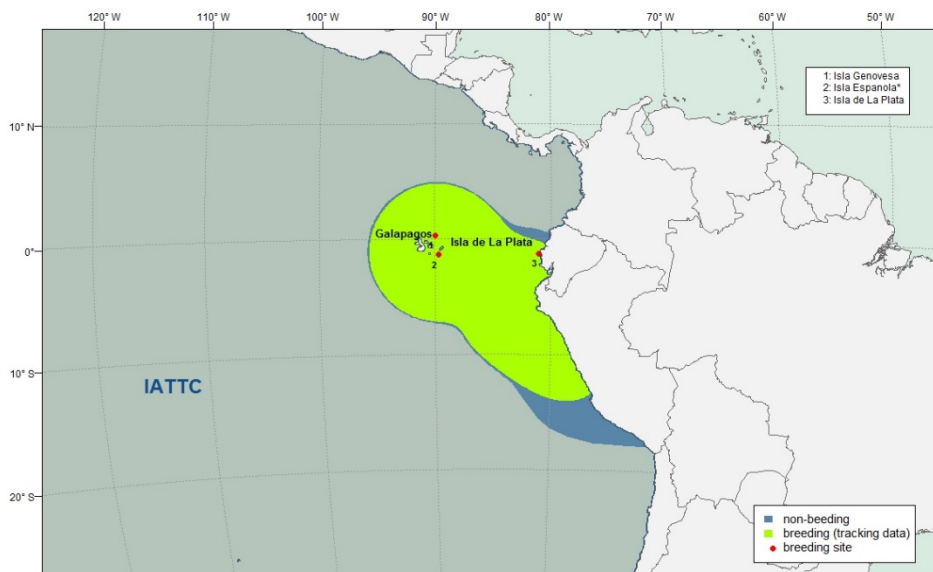


FIGURE 2. At-sea distribution maps for high priority populations.

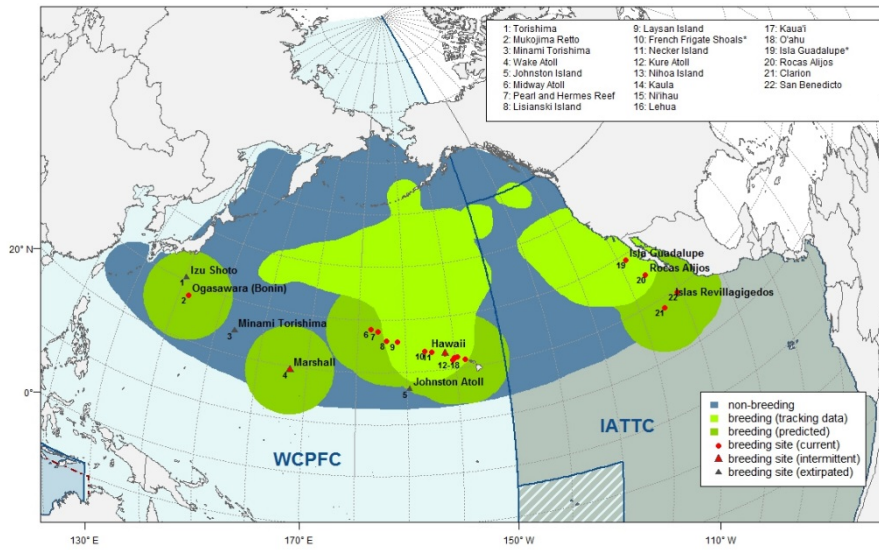
A. Waved albatross (all populations) ¹

Phoebastria irrorata



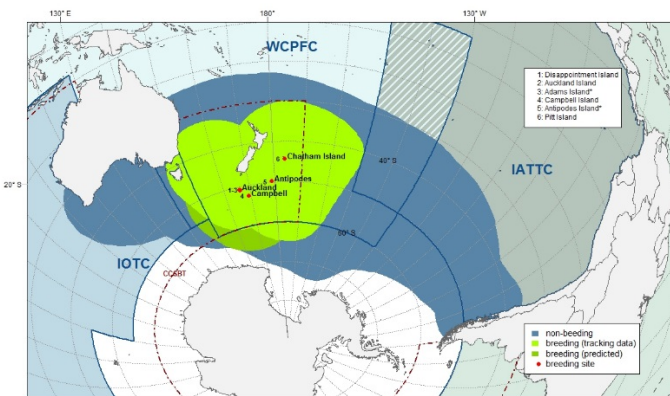
B. Laysan albatross (all populations) ¹

Phoebastria immutabilis

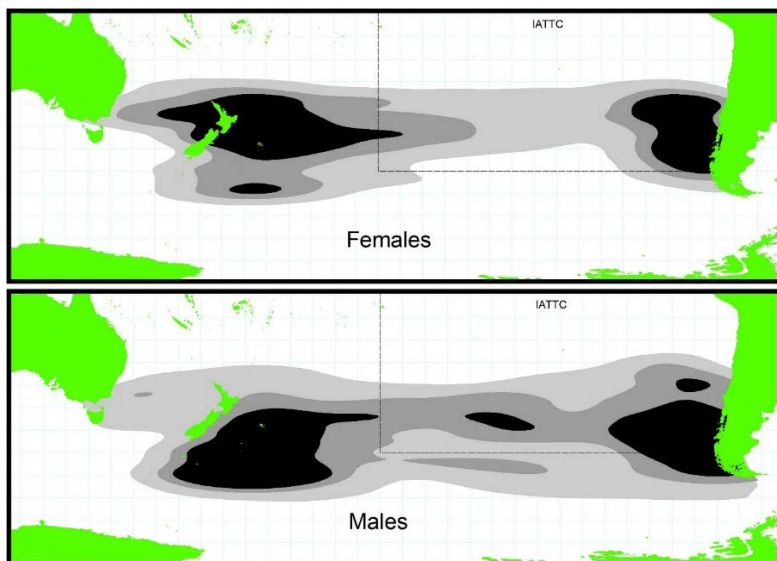


C. Antipodean albatross (all populations) ¹

Diomedea antipodensis



Antipodean albatross (Antipodes Island population, non-breeding 50, 75 and 95% kernels) ²



¹ ACAP/Birdlife ² Walker & Elliott (unpublished data)

APPENDIX 1. Summary of population size, trend and conservation status of ACAP species distributed in the IATTC area. Species recently uplisted or downlisted by the IUCN are highlighted.

Species	Common name	Annual breeding pairs (latest census year) ¹	Current Trend 1993-2013 ² (trend confidence)	IUCN Status 2016 ³
<i>Phoebastria irrorata</i>	Waved Albatross	9,615 (2001)	↓ (Medium)	CR
<i>Diomedea sanfordi</i>	Northern Royal Albatross	5,135 (2017)	?	EN
<i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i>	Grey-headed Albatross	83,999 (1982-2017)	↓ (Medium)	EN
<i>Diomedea antipodensis</i>	Antipodean Albatross	6,709 (1995-2017)	↓ (High)	EN ⁴
<i>Procellaria westlandica</i>	Westland Petrel	2,827 (2011)	↔ (Low)	EN ⁴
<i>Diomedea epomophora</i>	Southern Royal Albatross	7,924 (1989-2017)	↔ (Medium)	VU
<i>Diomedea exulans</i>	Wandering Albatross	8,149 (1981-2017)	↓ (High)	VU
<i>Phoebastria albatrus</i>	Short-tailed Albatross	893 (2002-2017)	↑ (High)	VU
<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	White-chinned Petrel	1,257,568 (1984-2015)	↓ (Very Low)	VU
<i>Procellaria parkinsoni</i>	Black Petrel	1,500 (2016)	↓ (Medium)	VU
<i>Ardenna creatopus</i>	Pink-footed Shearwater	33,520 (2009-2016)	↔ (Low)	VU
<i>Thalassarche eremita</i>	Chatham Albatross	5,296 (2017)	↔ (High)	VU
<i>Thalassarche impavida</i>	Campbell Albatross	21,648 (2012)	↔ (Low)	VU
<i>Thalassarche salvini</i>	Salvin's Albatross	41,214 (1986-2014)	↓ (Low)	VU
<i>Phoebastria nigripes</i>	Black-footed Albatross	69,969 (1976-2017)	↑ (Medium)	NT
<i>Procellaria cinerea</i>	Grey Petrel	75,565 (1981-2017)	↓ (Very Low)	NT
<i>Thalassarche bulleri</i>	Buller's Albatross	32,701 (1971-2017)	↔ (Low)	NT
<i>Phoebetria palpebrata</i>	Light-mantled Albatross	10,637 (1954-2017)	?	NT
<i>Thalassarche steadi</i>	White-capped Albatross	95,917 (1995-2015)	?	NT
<i>Phoebastria immutabilis</i>	Laysan Albatross	666,658 (1976-2017)	↔ (High)	NT
<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>	Black-browed Albatross	688,230 (1982-2017)	↑ (High)	LC ⁵
<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	Southern Giant Petrel	47,716 (1958-2017)	↑ (Medium)	LC
<i>Macronectes halli</i>	Northern Giant Petrel	10,691 (1973-2017)	↑ (Medium)	LC

¹ ACAP database <data.acap.aq> 3 September 2017.

² **ACAP Trend:** ↑ increasing, ↓ declining, ↔ stable, ? Unknown. The overall trend for the species may not reflect particular regional or site trends.

³ **IUCN Status:** CR = Critically Endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, NT = Near Threatened, LC = Least Concern. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2017-3. <www.iucnredlist.org>.

⁴ Uplisted since last assessment; ⁵ Downlisted since last assessment