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**The conservation status and priorities for albatrosses and large petrels distributed in  
the WCPFC area**

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**WCPFC-SC14-2018/ EB-WP-14**

**Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels<sup>1</sup>**

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## Abstract

A review of the conservation status and priorities for albatrosses and large petrels has recently been published in *Biological Conservation* (Phillips *et al.* 2016)<sup>2</sup>. Here we present the summary and the link where the paper can be accessed. Those species referred to in the paper that are distributed within the WCPFC area are listed in **Appendix 1**, together with information on their current population sizes, trends and conservation status. Further information can also be found in the Species Assessments developed by ACAP (<http://www.acap.aq/en/acap-species>), which provide comprehensive information on the distribution, biology and threats facing all ACAP species. These assessments are currently being updated.

**Phillips RA, Gales R, Baker GB, Double MC, Favero M, Quintana F, Tasker ML, Weimerskirch H, Uhart M, Wolfaardt A (2016) The conservation status and priorities for albatrosses and large petrels. *Biological Conservation* 201: 169-183**

## SUMMARY

Seabirds are amongst the most globally-threatened of all groups of birds, and conservation issues specific to albatrosses (Diomedidae) and large petrels (*Procellaria* spp. and giant petrels *Macronectes* spp.) led to drafting of the multilateral Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). Here we review the taxonomy, breeding and foraging distributions, population status and trends, threats and priorities for the 29 species covered by ACAP. Nineteen of these species (66%) are listed as threatened by IUCN, and 11 (38%) are declining. Most have extensive at-sea distributions, and the greatest threat is incidental mortality (bycatch) in industrial pelagic or demersal longline, trawl or artisanal fisheries, often in both national and international waters. Mitigation measures are available that reduce bycatch in most types of fisheries, but some management bodies are yet to make these mandatory, levels of implementation and monitoring of compliance are often inadequate, and there are insufficient observer programmes collecting robust data on bycatch rates. Intentional take, pollution (including plastic ingestion), and threats at colonies affect fewer species than bycatch; however, the impacts of disease (mainly avian cholera) and of predation by introduced species, including feral cats (*Felis catus*), rats (*Rattus* spp.) and house mice (*Mus musculus*), are severe for some breeding populations. Although major progress has been made in recent years in reducing bycatch rates and in controlling or eradicating pests at breeding sites, unless conservation efforts are intensified, the future prospects of many species of albatrosses and large petrels will remain bleak.

Full paper available at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320716302427>

## DISCUSSION

Following a recent (2017) review by BirdLife International, the listing authority for birds for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List process, there have been three changes in the formal threat (Red List) status of ACAP species breeding or foraging within the WCPFC area (see Appendix 1). These species are the **Black-browed Albatross** *Thalassarche melanophris* (downlisted from Near Threatened to Least Concern in 2017), **Antipodean Albatross** *Diomedea*

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<sup>2</sup> The paper published in *Biological Conservation* was based on an analysis of data from 29 ACAP-listed species, and excluded the two most recent species added to Annex 1 of ACAP: the Balearic Shearwater and the Pink-footed Shearwater.

*antipodensis* (uplisted from Vulnerable to Endangered in 2017), and **Westland Petrel** *Procellaria westlandica* (uplisted from Vulnerable to Endangered in 2017).

Of the 22 ACAP species distributed in the WCPFC area, eight (c. 36%) are currently showing overall population declines over the last 20 years (see Appendix 1). Six species (c. 27%) appear to have been stable over that timeframe, and five species have increased in number. For three species (c. 14%), the trend is unknown. The confidence of the assigned trend reflects both the accuracy and extent of the population data. In most cases, the primary threat to ACAP species remains incidental bycatch associated with fishing operations. There is an urgent need to better understand the nature and extent of bycatch in all fisheries overlapping with albatrosses and large petrels, and importantly to adopt and implement effective bycatch mitigation measures to reduce this threat.

**APPENDIX 1.** Summary of population size, and conservation status and trends of ACAP species distributed in the WCPFC area.

Species	Common name	Annual breeding pairs (latest census year) <sup>1</sup>	Current Trend 1996-2016 <sup>2</sup> (trend confidence)	IUCN Status 2017 <sup>3</sup>
<i>Diomedea antipodensis</i>	Antipodean Albatross	6,709 (1995-2017)	(High)	<b>EN</b>
<i>Diomedea sanfordi</i>	Northern Royal Albatross	5,135 (2017)	?	<b>EN</b>
<i>Procellaria westlandica</i>	Westland Petrel	2,827 (2011)	(Low)	<b>EN</b>
<i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i>	Grey-headed Albatross	83,999 (1982-2017)	(Medium)	<b>EN</b>
<i>Diomedea epomophora</i>	Southern Royal Albatross	7,924 (1989-2017)	(Medium)	<b>VU</b>
<i>Diomedea exulans</i>	Wandering Albatross	8,149 (1981-2017)	(High)	<b>VU</b>
<i>Phoebastria albatrus</i>	Short-tailed Albatross	893 (2002-2017)	(High)	<b>VU</b>
<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	White-chinned Petrel	1,257,568 (1984-2015)	(Very Low)	<b>VU</b>
<i>Procellaria parkinsoni</i>	Black Petrel	1,500 (2016)	(Medium)	<b>VU</b>
<i>Thalassarche eremita</i>	Chatham Albatross	5,296 (2011)	(High)	<b>VU</b>
<i>Thalassarche impavida</i>	Campbell Albatross	21,648 (2012)	(Low)	<b>VU</b>
<i>Thalassarche salvini</i>	Salvin's Albatross	41,214 (1986-2014)	(Low)	<b>VU</b>
<i>Phoebastria immutabilis</i>	Laysan Albatross	666,658 (1982-2017)	(High)	<b>NT</b>
<i>Phoebastria nigripes</i>	Black-footed Albatross	69,969 (1976-2017)	(Medium)	<b>NT</b>
<i>Phoebetria palpebrata</i>	Light-mantled Albatross	10,637 (1954-2017)	?	<b>NT</b>
<i>Procellaria cinerea</i>	Grey Petrel	75,565 (1979-2017)	(Very Low)	<b>NT</b>
<i>Thalassarche cauta</i>	Shy Albatross	14,683 (2015-2017)	(Low)	<b>NT</b>
<i>Thalassarche bulleri</i>	Buller's Albatross	32,701 (1984-2017)	(Low)	<b>NT</b>
<i>Thalassarche steadi</i>	White-capped Albatross	95,917 (2009-2015)	?	<b>NT</b>
<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	Southern Giant Petrel	47,716 (1958-2017)	(Medium)	<b>LC</b>
<i>Macronectes halli</i>	Northern Giant Petrel	10,691 (1973-2017)	(Medium)	<b>LC</b>
<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>	Black-browed Albatross	688,230 (1982-2017)	(High)	<b>LC</b>

<sup>1</sup> ACAP database <[data.acap.aq](http://data.acap.aq)>. 3 September 2017.

<sup>2</sup> **ACAP Trend:** increasing, declining, stable, ? unknown. **The overall trend for the species may not reflect particular regional or site trends.**

<sup>3</sup> **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](http://www.iucnredlist.org)>.