



AN UPDATE ON THE STATUS AND TRENDS OF ACAP- LISTED ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS IN THE CCSBT AREA

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INTRODUCTION

Estimates of bycatch in global longline fisheries indicate that 160,000 – 320,000 seabirds, mostly albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters, are killed each year (Anderson *et al.* 2011). These estimates may be understated by as much as 50% or more due to lack of observer data, under-estimates in observer data, or under-reporting (Brothers *et al.* 2010, Anderson *et al.* 2011). Such levels of incidental mortality are known to have resulted in, or are contributing to, population declines for a number of these species (e.g. Weimerskirch *et al.* 1997, Wanless *et al.* 2009; Poncet *et al.* 2017, Weimerskirch *et al.* 2018).

Of the 22 species of albatrosses found globally, 18 overlap in distribution with the Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) fishery, as do seven of the nine petrel species also listed under the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). This paper provides a summary of the status and trends of albatross and petrel species listed under Annex 1 of ACAP that breed or forage in areas where Southern Bluefin tuna are fished (**Table 1**).

CONSERVATION STATUS

Of the 18 species of albatrosses with distributions that overlap with the SBT fishery, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) currently lists:

- one as *Critically Endangered* (CR)
- seven as *Endangered* (EN)
- five as *Vulnerable* (VU)
- four as *Near Threatened* (NT)
- one as *Least Concern* (LC)

Of the seven ACAP petrel species with distributions that overlap with the SBT fishery, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) currently lists:

- one as EN
- three as VU
- one as NT
- two as LC

The IUCN status of four ACAP species has changed since ERSWG12 in 2017. The Amsterdam Albatross *Diomedea amsterdamensis* has been downlisted from CR to EN, the Antipodean Albatross *Diomedea antipodensis* has been uplisted from VU to EN, the Westland Petrel *Procellaria westlandica* has been uplisted from VU to EN, and the Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris* has been downlisted from NT to LC.

STATUS OF KNOWLEDGE RELATING TO POPULATION SIZE AND TRENDS

Comprehensive knowledge of population size, trend and demographic parameters is fundamental to many aspects of albatross and petrel conservation, and is vital to monitoring the effectiveness of management actions. ACAP collates breeding site, trend and other data for all albatrosses and petrels listed under the Agreement, in addition to information held by BirdLife International, the IUCN Red List authority for all birds. Although the size of most populations has been determined at some point in time, the trend and current demographic statistics for many populations are less well known, due to the high level of resources required to access remote sites at appropriate intervals. Determination of global trends can also be difficult because populations of the same species at different sites may show different trajectories.

At its fourth meeting in September 2017, ACAP's Population and Conservation Status Working Group (PaCSWG) examined the current (1996-2016) global trends of species listed under the Agreement. The approach combines census information submitted to the ACAP database (data.acap.aq) and results of any available population models. The time span of two decades was considered appropriate to reflect the trend of these long lived species, some of which breed only every two years, and which may show high annual variation in breeding numbers. The confidence of the assigned trend reflects both the accuracy and extent of the population data.

Of the 18 species of albatrosses with distributions that overlap with the SBT fishery, the PaCSWG assessed:

- Eight as *declining* over the last 20 years
- Five as *stable*
- Three as *unknown*
- Two as *increasing*

Of the seven ACAP petrel species with distributions that overlap with the SBT fishery, the PaCSWG assessed:

- Three as *declining* over the last 20 years
- One as *stable*
- Three as *increasing*

Of the 25 albatross and petrel species listed under Annex 1 of ACAP that overlap with the SBT fishery, 44% are currently declining, 24% are currently stable, 20% are currently increasing, and the current trend is unknown for 12% of species.

The trends are reviewed on a triennial basis or sooner if significant new information becomes available for any of the species. Unless any new information is brought forward to the fifth meeting of PaCSWG between 9 and 10 May 2019, the next full review assessing the 2000-2019 trends will be discussed at the sixth meeting of the PaCSWG in September 2020.

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 are intended to be updated on an ongoing basis as new information becomes available. Although this process has stalled in recent years, updates are expected to progress rapidly in the coming weeks. Species information used in the IUCN Red List can also be found in the BirdLife International Factsheets (<http://datazone.birdlife.org/species/search>).

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Table 1. 2019 summary of status and trends of ACAP species breeding/foraging in the SBT fishery area.

Species	Common name	Number of sites ¹	Breeding sites responsibility	Breeding Frequency ²	Annual breeding pairs (latest census year) ¹	Current Trend 1997-2016 ³ (trend confidence)	IUCN Status 2019 ⁴	IUCN Status Justification ⁴ and other notes ⁵
Diomedea dabbenena	Tristan Albatross	1	UK	B	1,108 (2015-2016)	↓ (High)	CR	Projected extremely rapid population decline over three generations (70 years). Modelled population declines are a consequence of very low adult survival owing to incidental mortality in longline fisheries, compounded by low fledging success caused by predation of chicks by introduced mice. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22728364/132657527
Diomedea amsterdamensis	Amsterdam Albatross	1	France	B	39 (2016)	↑ (High)	EN	This species has a very small population, confined to a tiny area on one island. Numbers have recently been increasing https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698310/132397831
Diomedea antipodensis	Antipodean Albatross	6	NZ	B	6,709 (1995-2017)	↓ (High)	EN	This species is considered to be undergoing a very rapid decline in population size https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22728318/132656045
Diomedea sanfordi	Northern Royal Albatross	5	NZ	B	5,135 (2017)	?	EN	Restricted to a small breeding range in which severe storms in the 1980s resulted in a decrease in habitat quality and poor breeding success. Based on this low breeding success, the population is estimated and projected to be undergoing a very rapid decline over three generations. Evidence suggests that the number of breeding pairs may have remained relatively stable; thus, the species might qualify for downlisting in the future. However, in the absence of recent substantive data upon which to assess trends or changes in productivity rates, projected declines are maintained as a precautionary measure. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22728323/132656392
Phoebastria fusca	Sooty Albatross	15	France, South Africa, UK	B	12,096 (1974-2017)	↓ (Very Low)	EN	Very rapid decline over three generations (90 years), probably due to interactions with fisheries. Since 1980, three sites (Crozet, Marion and Gough) have witnessed severe declines, although the population at Prince Edward may have increased between 2002-2009. However, high variability in population counts between years necessitates caution and further data are required before a change in status should be considered. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698431/132645596

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(ERSWG Agenda Item 5.1.1)

Species	Common name	Number of sites ¹	Breeding sites responsibility	Breeding Frequency ²	Annual breeding pairs (latest census year) ¹	Current Trend 1997-2016 ³ (trend confidence)	IUCN Status 2019 ⁴	IUCN Status Justification ⁴ and other notes ⁵
Procellaria westlandica	Westland Petrel	1	NZ	A	2,827 (2011)	↔ (Low)	EN	Restricted to one very small area when breeding, and its habitat is declining in quality due to erosion and landslips. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698155/132629809
Thalassarche carteri	Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	6	France, New Zealand, South Africa	A	35,073 (1984-2015)	↓ (High)	EN	Estimated very rapid ongoing decline over three generations (71 years), based on data from the population stronghold on Amsterdam Island. This decline is thought to be the result of adult mortality and poor recruitment owing to interactions with fisheries and disease. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22728372/132657962
Thalassarche chlororhynchos	Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross	6	UK	A	33,650 (1974-2011)	↔ (Low)	EN	Very small breeding range and is estimated to be undergoing a very rapid decline projected over three generations (72 years) owing to incidental mortality in longline fisheries. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698425/132645225
Thalassarche chrysostoma	Grey-headed Albatross	29	Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, South Africa, South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)*	B	83,999 (1982-2017)	↓ (Medium)	EN	Data from South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)*, which holds around half the global population, indicate a very rapid rate of decline of the world population over three generations (90 years), even if colonies lacking trend information are assumed to be stable. The major driver of declines is likely to be incidental mortality in longline fisheries. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698398/132644834
Diomedea epomophora	Southern Royal Albatross	4	NZ	B	7,924 (1989-2017)	↔ (Medium)	VU	Although current population trends are assumed to be stable, it has a very small range, breeding on four islands though largely confined to just one, with a fifth mainland population comprising only hybrid birds. It is therefore highly susceptible to stochastic effects and human impacts. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698314/132641187
Diomedea exulans	Wandering Albatross	39	Australia, France, South Africa, South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)*	B	8,149 (1981-2017)	↓ (High)	VU	Overall past and predicted future declines amount to a rapid population reduction over a period of three generations. At South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)*, this species is undergoing a rapid decline over three generations (70 years). On the Crozet and Kerguelen Islands, the populations rapidly declined between 1970-1986, then stabilised, but have recently declined again. Longline fishing is likely to be the main cause of decline in this species, causing reductions in adult survival and juvenile recruitment, and this threat is on-going. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698305/132640680

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Species	Common name	Number of sites ¹	Breeding sites responsibility	Breeding Frequency ²	Annual breeding pairs (latest census year) ¹	Current Trend 1997-2016 ³ (trend confidence)	IUCN Status 2019 ⁴	IUCN Status Justification ⁴ and other notes ⁵
Procellaria aequinoctialis	White-chinned Petrel	73	Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)*, France, New Zealand, South Africa, South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)*	A	1,257,568 (1984-2015)	↓ (Very Low)	VU	Suspected rapid declines, although almost no reliable estimates of historical populations exist. Very high rates of incidental mortality in longline fisheries have been recorded in recent decades; the probability that these circumstances will continue, the susceptibility of chicks to predation, and the degradation of breeding habitat indicate that a rapid and on-going population decline is likely. An updated assessment of the population on South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)* is needed in order to fully assess the overall trend. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698140/132628887
Procellaria conspicillata	Spectacled Petrel	1	UK	A	14,400 (2010)	↑ (High)	VU	Owing to its very small breeding range, it is highly susceptible to stochastic events and human activities. Any evidence of population declines would likely lead to its uplisting. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22728437/132659002
Procellaria parkinsoni	Black Petrel	2	NZ	A	1,500 (2016)	↓ (Medium)	VU	Breeds on just two very small islands where introduced predators are a potential threat, and could drive the taxon towards extinction in a very short time. The population is assumed to be stable, but if a decline is detected, the species should be uplisted to Endangered. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698150/132629374
Thalassarche eremita	Chatham Albatross	1	NZ	A	5,296 (2017)	↔ (High)	VU	Very small breeding range, being restricted to one breeding site (The Pyramid), rendering it susceptible to stochastic events and human impacts. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698393/132644476
Thalassarche impavida	Campbell Albatross	2	NZ	A	21,648 (2012)	↔ (Low)	VU	Breeding is restricted to a single location, where it is susceptible to potential human impacts and stochastic events. Although numbers decreased steeply between the 1970s and 1980s owing to interactions with fisheries, the population is now thought to be increasing, although there has not been a census since 1996. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22728349/132657209
Thalassarche salvini	Salvin's Albatross	12	NZ	A	41,214 (1986-2014)	↓ (Low)	VU	May have undergone a rapid decline, but different census methods make a comparison of the available data potentially misleading. However, breeding is largely restricted to one tiny island group, where it is susceptible to stochastic events. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698388/132644161

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Procellaria cinerea	Grey Petrel	17	Australia, France, New Zealand, South Africa, UK	A	75,565 (1979-2017)	↓ (Very Low)	NT	Although there are no current trend data, this species is susceptible to introduced mammalian predators, and today it is the most commonly caught bycatch species in longline fisheries in New Zealand waters. Evidence from Gough Island, formerly thought to contain the largest population of this species, suggest that the species is likely to be subjected to considerable predation from introduced mice that are a major predator on other winter-breeding seabirds. The population on the Kerguelen Islands may also be in decline due to fishery bycatch. Based on these data a moderately rapid decline is suspected, but further data are urgently required in order to more accurately assess its population numbers and trends. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698159/132630237
Thalassarche bulleri	Buller's Albatross	10	NZ	A	32,701 (1984-2017)	↔ (Low)	NT	Although the species is restricted to a tiny small area when breeding, the population is stable and the islands on which it breeds are moderately widely spread so it is unlikely to become highly threatened in a short time owing to human activities or stochastic events. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22728328/132656798
Thalassarche cauta	Shy Albatross	3	Australia	A	14,683 (2015-2017)	↓ (Low)	NT	Breeds on just three islands. It may be susceptible to stochastic events and human activities, although one nesting site is moderately widely separated from the other two. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22729604/132660845
Phoebetria palpebrata	Light-mantled Albatross	71	Australia, France, New Zealand, South Africa, South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)*	B	15,637 excluding unreliable Auckland estimate of 5,000 pairs (1954-2017)	?	NT	May be declining owing to bycatch on longline fisheries and perhaps the impacts of introduced predators. Threats and population status both remain poorly known. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698448/132647449

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Species	Common name	Number of sites ¹	Breeding sites responsibility	Breeding Frequency ²	Annual breeding pairs (latest census year) ¹	Current Trend 1997-2016 ³ (trend confidence)	IUCN Status 2019 ⁴	IUCN Status Justification ⁴ and other notes ⁵
Thalassarche steadi	White-capped Albatross	5	NZ	?	95,917 (1995-2015)	?	NT	The population trend of this albatross remains poorly known, due to high inter-annual variability in breeding numbers and estimates prior to 2007 are not comparable with those made since. Analysis of recent data suggest that the trend may in fact be stable, but the species remains categorised as Near Threatened given the continuing uncertainty over its trend and because, given its longevity and slow productivity, and a high rate of mortality recorded in longline and trawl fisheries, it may be declining at a moderately rapid rate. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22729609/132661314
Macronectes giganteus	Southern Giant Petrel	119	Antarctic Treaty, Argentina, Australia, Chile, Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)*, France, South Africa, South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)*, UK	A	47,716 (1958-2017)	↑ (Medium)	LC	Recent analysis of trend data for the global population over the past three generations (64 years) gives a best case estimate of a 17 % increase and a worst case scenario of a 7.2 % decline (Chown et al. unpubl. report 2008); declines consequently do not approach the threshold for classification as Vulnerable. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22697852/132608499
Macronectes halli	Northern Giant Petrel	50	Australia, France, New Zealand, South Africa, South Georgia (Islas Georgias del Sur)*	A	10,691 (1973-2017)	↑ (Medium)	LC	This species had shown a significant increase during the past two decades (probably owing to greater availability of carrion from expanding populations of fur seals, increased waste from commercial fishing operations, and the use of measures to reduce seabird bycatch around some breeding colonies). It no longer approaches the threshold for classification as threatened. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22697859/132609000

Species	Common name	Number of sites ¹	Breeding sites responsibility	Breeding Frequency ²	Annual breeding pairs (latest census year) ¹	Current Trend 1997-2016 ³ (trend confidence)	IUCN Status 2019 ⁴	IUCN Status Justification ⁴ and other notes ⁵
<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>	Black-browed Albatross	65	Australia, Chile, Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)*, France, New Zealand	A	688,230 (1982-2017)	↑ (High)	LC	This species has an extremely large range, and hence does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the range size criterion (extent of occurrence <20,000 km ² combined with a declining or fluctuating range size, habitat extent/quality, or population size and a small number of locations or severe fragmentation). The population size is extremely large, and hence does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the population size criterion (<10,000 mature individuals with a continuing decline estimated to be >10% in ten years or three generations, or with a specified population structure). The population trend appears to be increasing, and hence the species does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the population trend criterion (>30% decline over ten years or three generations). https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22698375/132643647

*A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (Islas Georgias del Sur e Islas Sandwich del Sur) and the surrounding maritime areas.

¹ **Site:** usually an entire, distinct island or islet, or rarely, section of a large island (>3,000km²). ACAP database. <data.acap.aq>. 3 September 2017.

² **Breeding Frequency:** A = Annual, B = Biennial

³ **ACAP Trend:** ↑ increasing, ↓ declining, ↔ stable, ? unknown

⁴ **IUCN Status:** CR = Critically Endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, NT = Near Threatened, LC = Least Concern. IUCN 2019. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2019-1. <<https://www.iucnredlist.org>>

⁵ BirdLife International (2019) IUCN Red List for birds. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 26/04/2019.