



BirdLife International

**Global Seabird
Programme**

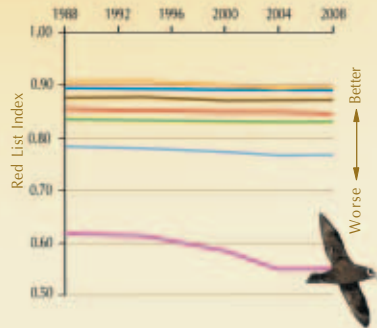
S E A C H A N G E F O R S E A B I R D S

BirdLife Global Seabird Programme

Many seabird populations are rapidly declining and are threatened with extinction. They face a wide range of threats, both on land and at sea, including being killed as bycatch in longline and trawl fisheries, predation and habitat loss. Global solutions are needed to protect seabirds that spend much of their lives travelling vast distances across international waters.

In 1997, BirdLife International established the Global Seabird Programme to support BirdLife Partners to:

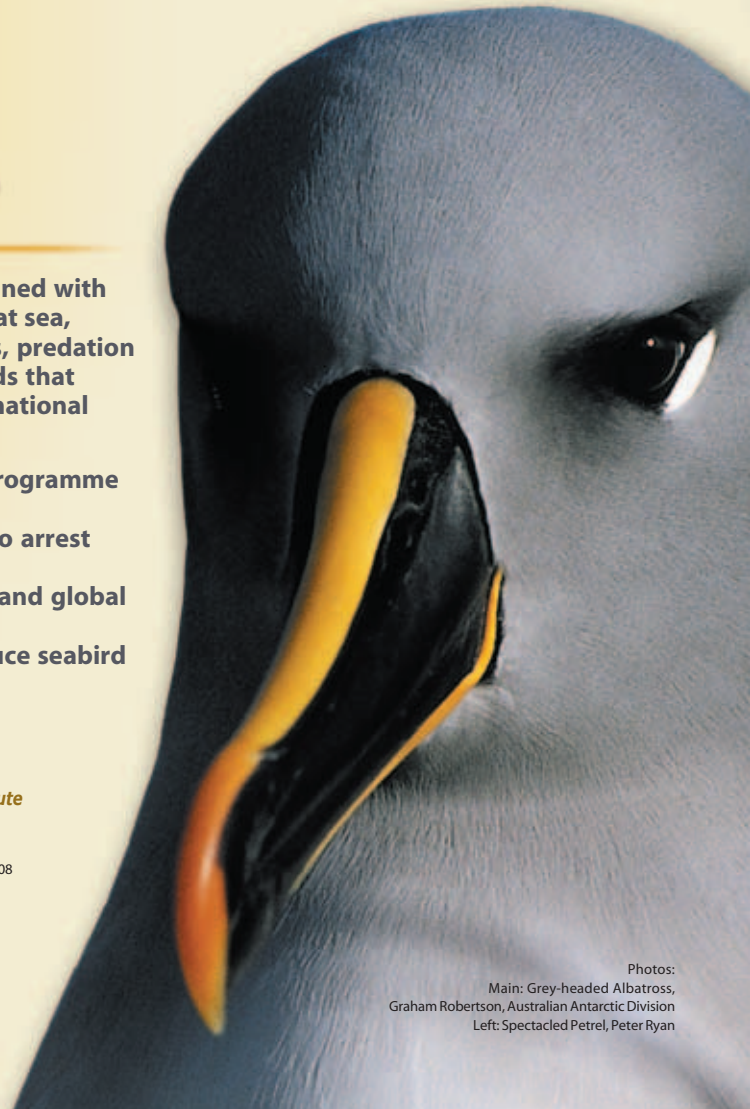
- Promote the collaborative international action that is vital to arrest seabird declines
- Advocate the conservation of seabirds at national, regional and global levels
- Work directly with fishermen and other stakeholders to reduce seabird bycatch and other threats to seabird populations.



Data from the IUCN Red List indicate that seabirds are more threatened (lower absolute value) and declining faster (steeper slope) than other major groups of birds

Source: State of the World's Birds, BirdLife International 2008

- Raptors
- Waterbirds
- Pigeons
- Gamebirds
- Parrots
- Seabirds
- Albatrosses & Petrels



Photos:

Main: Grey-headed Albatross,
Graham Robertson, Australian Antarctic Division
Left: Spectacled Petrel, Peter Ryan

Seabird bycatch



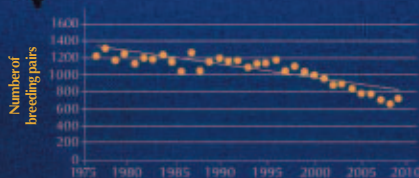
Photos:
Main: Drowned Wandering Albatross
on a longline, Guy Marcovaldi
Left: Trawl warp strike, Sarah Crofts,
Falklands Conservation
Centre: John and Marie-Christine
Ridgway present the Save the Albatross
Campaign petition to the UN Food and
Agriculture Organization, Rome, DeBellis
Right: Albatross and Petrel bycatch,
Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service

Seabird bycatch occurs in longline and trawl fisheries around the world. Seabirds, especially albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters, are attracted to fishing vessels to feed on discarded fish, offal and bait. All too often, the short-term benefit of an easy meal is outweighed by the long-term cost to seabird populations, as foraging seabirds are caught on longline hooks or by trawl cables and drowned. Combined, these fisheries are estimated to kill over 300,000 seabirds every year, including 100,000 albatrosses. With 18 of the 22 species of albatross now classified by IUCN as being under threat of extinction, this scale of loss is unsustainable for many species.

In 2000, the Global Seabird Programme launched the Save the Albatross Campaign with the goal of raising international awareness and funds to enable BirdLife Partner organisations, and collaborators around the world to deliver solutions for reducing seabird bycatch.

Decline in annual breeding population of Wandering Albatross on Bird Island, South Georgia.

Source: British Antarctic Survey



Tackling the problem

A “top-down and bottom-up” approach



From the top, we are working at regional, national and international levels to influence the development and adoption of agreements and measures to reduce seabird bycatch. These include work with:

- **FAO’s National Plans of Action to reduce seabird mortality**
- **Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)**
- **The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP).**

From the grass roots, through the Albatross Task Force (ATF), we work with local fishing communities to raise awareness of seabird bycatch and demonstrate to fishermen the use of simple, inexpensive, yet highly successful, mitigation measures to reduce it. Proven mitigation measures include:

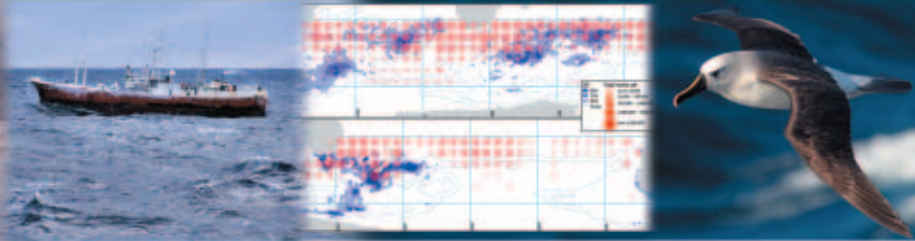
- **Streamer lines scare birds away from hooks and trawl cables**
- **Line weighting to make hooks sink more quickly, and**
- **Fishing at night when seabirds, particularly albatross, are less active.**



Photos:
Main: Blue-dyed bait helps to reduce seabird bycatch, Fabiano Peppes, ATF Brazil
Left: Adding line weights, Ben Sullivan
Centre: Night setting, Ricardo Hoinkis, ATF Brazil
Right: Longline streamer line, Meidad Goren, ATF South Africa

Photos:
Main: Frozen tuna awaiting sale
in Tsukiji market, Japan, Shree
Ram Subedi
Left: Longline fishing vessel,
Andy Black
Centre: Overlap between pelagic
longline fishing effort (red dots) and
the distribution of 13 species of
breeding albatrosses, BirdLife
International 2004
Right: Atlantic Yellow-nosed
Albatross, Peter Ryan

Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)



Since 2004, the Global Seabird Programme has been working with Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) to reduce seabird bycatch. RFMOs are the organisations through which countries collaborate to manage fish stocks on the high seas, and fish stocks that straddle the coastal waters of more than one country. These include highly prized fish such as tuna, swordfish and toothfish.

Under the UN Law of the Sea and linked agreements, RFMOs have a duty to minimise the bycatch of non-target species in their fisheries, including albatrosses, sharks and sea turtles. BirdLife is working with the world's five tuna commissions, whose fisheries overlap with over 80% of global albatross distribution, to implement effective measures for bycatch reduction.

The Albatross Task Force (ATF)



BirdLife's Albatross Task Force (ATF) is the world's first international team of seabird bycatch mitigation instructors. It was established in 2005 as a collaborative initiative between the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (UK BirdLife Partner), BirdLife International and a range of other partners to meet an urgent need for skilled practitioners to work with fishermen on-shore and at-sea.

ATF teams are based in bycatch 'hotspots' in southern Africa and South America, where the distribution of a large number of threatened albatrosses and petrels overlap with large and diverse longline and trawl fleets.

Instructors are now working in six countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Namibia, South Africa and Uruguay.



Photos:
Main: Northern Royal Albatross, New Zealand,
Hadoram Shirihai, Tubenose
Project, © A & C Black
Left: Fisherman and ATF instructors
discuss a forthcoming trip, Tim Wedge
Right: The ATF Brazil team present the crew of
a longliner with streamer lines, ATF Brazil



Photos:

Main: Under the instruction of the ATF, fishermen are able to use mitigation measures more effectively, Oli Yates, ATF coordinator

Left: ATF instructors integrate with local fishing communities, ATF Brazil
Centre: Experimental trials refine mitigation measures, K&B photography (karianandbox.com)

Right: The ATF have been instrumental in monitoring the use of streamer lines in South African trawl fisheries, Meidad Goren, ATF South Africa

ATF successes



The ATF is working in pelagic and demersal longline and trawl fisheries to demonstrate to fishermen and fisheries managers the suite of cost-effective mitigation measures available to reduce seabird bycatch to negligible levels, to collect data on seabird bycatch levels, and to work with fishermen to identify new solutions.

Where established, the ATF has improved the robustness of seabird bycatch estimates, is training fisheries observers and compliance officers, and is conducting experimental trials of mitigation measures. Already, the successes of the ATF are also feeding upwards, influencing the drafting of new fisheries regulations.

In future, the ATF will expand to cover other global bycatch hotspots; candidate countries under consideration include Ecuador and Peru.

Marine Important Bird Areas



The Important Bird Areas (IBA) programme of BirdLife International seeks to identify and protect a network of sites critical for the long-term viability of bird populations. The IBA programme began on land but is now being extended to the marine environment. Four kinds of IBAs cover seabirds away from their breeding colonies. These are:

- Critical at-sea areas for pelagic species
- Migration bottlenecks
- Non-breeding (coastal) congregations, and
- Seaward extensions to breeding colonies to include principal foraging areas.

The work to identify such marine IBAs is making a vital contribution to current global initiatives to protect and sustainably manage the oceans.



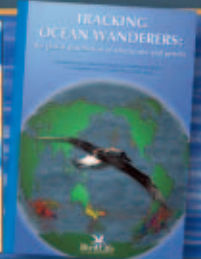
Photos:
Main: Grey-faced Petrel, Hadoram Shirihai, Tubenose Project, © A & C Black
Left: Magnificent Frigatebird, Ben Lascelles, BirdLife International
Centre: Arctic Tern, Ben Lascelles, BirdLife International
Right: Chinstrap Penguin, Ben Lascelles, BirdLife International

Photos:
Main: Great Shearwater,
Hadoram Shirihai, Tubenose
Project, © A & C Black
Left: Cory's Shearwater,
Fabio Olmos
Centre: Cory's Shearwater
distribution, SPEA (BirdLife
Portugal)
Right: *Tracking Ocean
Wanderers*, BirdLife
International 2004



Marine IBAs

BirdLife leads the way



BirdLife Partners in Portugal, Spain, New Zealand, and the Baltic Sea states of Latvia and Estonia are leading the way in identifying and designating marine IBAs for a wide variety of seabird species.

In Spain and Portugal, tracking studies and surveys from ships/ planes have been combined to identify the foraging areas used by breeding seabirds.

In 2004, BirdLife International published '*Tracking Ocean Wanderers.*' This report was the result of a unique collaboration between scientists worldwide, analysing satellite-tracking data to reveal the distribution of albatrosses and petrels across the world's oceans. By mapping the overlap between seabirds and fisheries, the results are being used to target conservation efforts more effectively. Work is now underway to adapt the findings of this study to help with the identification of IBAs on the high seas.

Alien eradications



Two-thirds of threatened bird species on oceanic islands suffer impacts from invasive species (*State of the World's Birds*, 2004). By far the greatest impact comes from introduced mammalian predators. Around the world, pigs, cats and rats have decimated many once great seabird colonies. In addition, introduced non-native plants can dramatically reduced nesting habitat. Building on the success of techniques for eradicating most of the mammalian invasive species that threaten seabirds, restoration is now proving possible on ever larger islands.

BirdLife Partners are engaged in projects worldwide to restore seabird islands.

Photos:

Main: Masked Boobies return to mainland Ascension Island following cat eradication, Ascension Conservation. Cutout, Michael Amparo
Left: With helicopter support, SPEA have removed rabbits from Bugio Island in the Madeira group, Iván Ramirez SPEA
Centre: BirdLife's Pacific Partnership aim to clear introduced mammals from 18 islands, BirdLife Pacific Partnership
Right: Predation of Tristan Albatross chicks by introduced house mice was recently discovered on Gough Island, Ross Wanless



HOW YOU CAN HELP SEABIRDS

- Contact the BirdLife Global Seabird Programme (see overleaf)
- Join your national BirdLife Partner
- Make a donation to support the Programme, via www.savethealbatross.net

Other BirdLife Partner actions



- **BirdLife Species Champions** This BirdLife initiative identifies and supports organisations or individuals to be 'Species Guardians', to take or stimulate conservation action to protect a Critically Endangered bird species.
- ***Pterodroma/Pseudobulweria* forum** *Pterodroma* petrels face numerous threats, chiefly from habitat loss and introduced predators. BirdLife is assisting experts working with these birds to share information and experience with each other.
- **Consumer Choice** BirdLife Partners aim to harness consumer power by promoting fish caught in ecologically sustainable fisheries, such as those certified by the Marine Stewardship Council.
- **Climate Change** The long-term implications of climate change on seabird populations are difficult to predict but are likely to be significant. The Global Seabird Programme is working to incorporate the influence of climate change on future conservation strategies.

Photos:

Main: New Zealand Storm-petrel, one of 19 Critically Endangered seabirds, Hadoram Shirihai, Tubenose Project © A & C Black

Left: Penguins on an iceberg, Andy Black

Centre: Consumer guide produced by BirdLife International's New Zealand Partner, Forest and Bird
Right: Mottled Petrel, Hadoram Shirihai, Tubenose Project © A & C Black

BirdLife Global Seabird Programme

Photos:
Front cover Salvin's Albatross and silhouette, Brent Stephenson
© Eco-Vista: Photography & Research
Back cover Waved Albatross, Galapagos, Simon Stirrup

BirdLife Partnership contacts:

BirdLife Global Seabird Programme Coordinator: Ben Sullivan, The RSPB, c/o: Australian Antarctic Division, Channel Highway, Kingston, Tasmania, Australia, 7050. Email: ben.sullivan@rspb.org.uk

BirdLife Global Seabird Programme Senior Policy Officer: Cleo Small, The RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, UK. Email: cleo.small@rspb.org.uk

Marine Important Bird Area Officer: Ben Lascelles, BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA, UK. Email: Ben.Lascelles@birdlife.org

Albatross Task Force Coordinator: Oli Yates, Del Almacen, 170, La Herradura, Coquimbo, IV Region, Chile. Email: oli.yates@gmail.com

South American Coordinator: Esteban Frere, Aves Argentinas, 25 de Mayo 749 2° 6, 1002 Buenos Aires, Argentina. Email: avesmarinas.sudamerica@avesargentinas.org.ar

Southern African Coordinator: BirdLife South Africa, PO Box 52026, Waterfront, 8002, South Africa. Email: seabirds@birdlife.org.za

Asia: Cristi Nozawa, BirdLife Asia Division, Toyo-Shinjuku Building, 2nd Floor, Shinjuku 1-12-15, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0022, Japan. Email: cristi@birdlife-asia.org

Europe: Iván Ramírez, SPEA, Avenida da Liberdade, 105 – 2° Esq, 1250-140 Lisboa, Portugal. Email: ivan.ramirez@spea.pt

Oceania: Susan Waugh, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, PO Box 631, Wellington, New Zealand. Email: s.waugh@forestandbird.org.nz

North America: Greg Butcher, Director of Bird Conservation, National Audubon Society, 1150 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 600, Washington DC 20036, USA. Email: gbutcher@audubon.org

www.savethealbatross.net

This brochure is also available in Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish




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