

**YEAR-END PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE
JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (JNCC) PROJECT:
ACAP COORDINATION AND ADVICE ON NATURE CONSERVATION
ISSUES IN THE UK SAOTS AND WIDER REGION**

FINANCIAL YEAR 2020-21

REPORTING PERIOD

1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021

PROJECT TITLE

Delivering actions under the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and on other conservation priorities of local importance or in response to other international obligations.

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED DURING REPORTING PERIOD

This year-end project report outlines activities carried out as part of the contribution made by the Falkland Islands Government ([FIG](#)) in the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 to the above named project which is coordinated by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee ([JNCC](#)). The project background and scope are provided in Appendix 1.



ACAP RELATED HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Steering Group and Stakeholder Group Engagement**
 - Facilitated one Steering Group and one Stakeholder Group meeting (October 2020). Meeting primarily used to share updates on activities between all Members, and in particular information on the proposed online format for the ACAP Advisory Committee (AC) and Working Group (WG) Meetings which would be conducted due to in-person meetings not being possible because of Covid-19 (C19) restrictions.
 - Circulated information and updates via email to the Steering and Stakeholder Groups.
- **Intersessional Decisions**
 - Together with the UK ACAP Point of Contact (Elizabeth Biott – Defra), coordinated the UK and South Atlantic Overseas Territories (SAOT) response to a number of intersessional decisions which were required ahead of the C19 delayed 12th Advisory Committee (AC12) meeting (postponed from September 2020 to September 2021) and the 7th Meeting of the Parties (MoP7) meeting (postponed from May 2021 to May 2022). Decisions were required on: AC Work Programme, Secretariat Work Programme, Arrangements with International Organisations, Draft Agreement Budget, Draft Scale of Contributions.
- **Data Entry, Reporting and AC/WG Meeting Preparation**

- Continued with process of creating UK data entry sheets to streamline collation of SAOT data required for national reporting procedures, ensure good data management, and that data format matches that required for uploading to ACAP Data Portal.
- Continued collation, cleaning, and curation of data, ensuring as much of the data as possible was entered in the ACAP Data Portal ahead of the deadlines for the AC and WG Meetings.
- Coordinated, prepared and submitted the UK National Report for AC12 and the UK National Report for MoP7. Note, the latter is required for AC12 as well as MoP7.
 - Final versions of the reports shared with the Project Steering Group; also available upon request from JNCC Project Manager or can be downloaded from the ACAP website ([AC12 Documents](#)).
- Coordinated submission of UK working papers and information documents for AC12, 6th Population and Conservation Status Working Group (PaCSWG6) and 10th Seabird Bycatch (SBWG10) meetings.
- **Review of ACAP Implementation Plans**
 - It is recognised that the ACAP Implementation Plans for each of the UK SAOTs are due for revision and updating. Working Groups for each SAOT, comprising relevant Steering and Stakeholder Group Members, were established. The Falkland Islands Working Group members are:
 - Denise Blake (FIG)
 - Veronica Iriarte (FIG)
 - Tom McIntosh (FIG)
 - Sarah Crofts (Falklands Conservation)
 - Andy Stanworth (Falklands Conservation)
 - James Bates (Falkland Islands Fishing Companies Association)
 - Stephanie Middleton (Falkland Islands Tourist Board)
 - Sally Poncet (Antarctic Wildlife Trust)
 - Paulo Catry (ISPA)
 - Alastair Baylis (South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute)
 - Amanda Kuepfer (South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute)
 - The first Falkland Islands WG meeting was held in May 2020. The review will be an ongoing task in the 2021-22 work plan.
- **Review and/or Input to ACAP Working Group Intersessional Activities**
 - *ACAP Small Grants*
 - Coordinated process for submission of UK proposals.
 - As a member of the ACAP WGs, the Project Manager reviewed and assessed all applications, with comments being considered by the ACAP Review Panel.
 - Three UK proposals were submitted, with two being awarded:
 - *'Effects of delayed mouse eradication on conservation status and population viability of Tristan Albatross on Gough Island'*. Led by the



Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (Dr Steffan Oppel). Awarded.

- *'Winter fine-scale movements of black-browed albatrosses and encounters with fishing vessels'*. Led by the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI) (Dr Alastair Baylis). Awarded.
- *'Acoustic monitoring of white-chinned petrels: a baseline of presence and phenology'*. SAERI-led (Dr Alastair Baylis). No awarded in this round.

○ *Fisheries Certification Review*

- As a result of discussions held at SBWG9 and AC11, ACAP funded a piece of work to look at how ACAP can improve its engagement with fisheries certification schemes.
- There are two focal areas: i) Certification Standards, and ii) Engagement with individual Certification Schemes – the largest of these being Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).
- The Project Manager is part of the working group to help steer the direction of the work which has been timed to coincide and feed into the current MSC Standards Review process.

● **Development of ACAP-related Research Proposals**

- The following four proposals which address priority areas in the SAOTs for albatross and petrel conservation management or research were prepared in collaboration with Steering Group and/or Stakeholder Group members:
 - *'What goes thump at night: managing bird-strike in South Georgia'*. JNCC-led with GSGSSI, IAATO, Argos Froyanes Ltd. Awarded Darwin Plus Funding. Three-year project to commence in July 2021 ([DPLUS143](#)).
 - *'Improving Falklands marine management effectiveness for marine higher predators'*. SAERI-led with JNCC. Awarded Darwin Plus Funding. Three-year project to commence in July 2021 ([DPLUS139](#)).
 - *'Assessing cryptic mortality of ACAP species in commercial fisheries'*. JNCC-led with BAT, FIG, GSGSSI, TDCG. Awarded Defra funding (from 2020-21 underspend) but unfortunately due to staff resourcing no longer being available at the time funding confirmed, the 6-month project did not go ahead. If opportunity arises, proposal will be re-submitted in 2021-22.
 - *'Expansion of albatross and petrel monitoring on South Georgia – feasibility study'*. JNCC-led with GSGSSI. Awarded Defra funding (from 2020-21 underspend) but unfortunately due to staff resourcing no longer being available at the time funding confirmed, the 6-month project did not go ahead. If opportunity arises, proposal will be re-submitted in 2021-22.

- **Field Work**

- Conducted field work with Falklands Conservation in the austral summer of 2020-21 – annual albatross and petrel monitoring for FIG. Data is also submitted to ACAP.
- Re-deployed two remote cameras on New Island and West Point Island (Falkland Islands) to determine if any black-browed albatross return to these

Field Survey – Falkland Islands



Remote camera set-up, West Point Island

colonies in winter, as has been observed on Bird Island (Falkland Islands) over the past couple of seasons. May open up opportunities for winter studies.

- The research cruise planned with FIG Fisheries Department to undertake trials on methods to reduced net entanglements had to be postponed due to C19 issues – it is hoped that these will be undertaken during 2021-22.

- **Provision of Advice or Input to other ACAP-related projects or issues**

- Requests from Defra or FCDO for advice, comments or assistance have been met as and when required – e.g. requests for information on albatross and petrel population trends for reporting and press releases.
- Additional intersessional work as and when requested by the ACAP Secretariat – e.g. reviewing proposed MoUs being developed between ACAP and various RFMOs, financial matters etc.
- Reviewed the seabird baseline data collection section of the set of Standards and Guidelines for Deep-sea Mining being developed by the International Seabed Authority. Comments included in the UK response to the Guidelines submitted to the Commission.
- Provided relevant input via the Technical Advisory and Stakeholder Groups of the JNCC-led, Defra supported, project which is developing a UK Seabird Bycatch Plan of Action as part of the ongoing UK Marine Strategy programme of work.
- Acted as an advisor for a range of working groups with relevance to ACAP (and wider) issues in the SAOTs including: Falklands and South Georgia Wildlife Disease Response Group, Falklands Seabird Bycatch Group, Falkland Islands Offshore Hydrocarbons Environmental Forum. Input/advice provided through attendance at meetings or revision of documents.

- **Training/Corporate Professional Development (CPD)**

- JNCC continued to provide financial support through its CPD programme for the Project Manager to continue Spanish lessons which will prove invaluable when engaging with Spanish-speaking ACAP colleagues. Note, Spanish is the native language of 6 of the 13 signatory Parties, and Spanish is also one of the three official languages

of the Agreement. This will also benefit work done under the Focal Point role, particularly for building collaborations and partnerships in Latin America.

SAOT FOCAL POINT FOR CONSERVATION RELATED HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Project Manager has also served as the JNCC Focal Point for conservation in the SAOTs during the reporting period. Many conservation projects and initiatives have been supported through this mechanism. The Focal Point was involved with several projects, a number of which had specific relevance to the Falklands. Activities have included the following:



- **Project Proposal Preparation and/or (subsequent) Project Management:**
 - *Bahia Lomas Mapping:* Development of a [pilot project](#) to develop tools/methodology to map and model the distribution of shorebird feeding and resting sites in the Bahia Lomas Wetlands Reserve, Chile. Proposal was successful (Defra funded) and was run as a partnership between JNCC and Universidad Santo Tomas (Chile). The project concluded in October 2020.
 - *Use of Earth Observation (EO) for Land-use Management:* A number of proposals are in development with partners of the Austral Earth Observation Alliance ([AEOA](#)) – i.e. the earth observation centre of excellence that has been established in the South Atlantic region. These focus on the application of EO data and tools for land use management, including stocking rate densities and pasture quality mapping in the Falklands and southern Chile, and fire-risk mapping in the Falkland Islands.
- **Project development and management, and provision of advice or input to other focal areas for the South Atlantic region and UKOTs**
 - *National Reports:* Provided input to UK National Reports and position on particular matters, e.g. for the latest CITES CoP.
 - *AEOA:* Contributed to the continued development of AEOA, through participation in Partners meetings, planning sessions, proposal development and project management.
 - *Marine Spatial Planning for the Turks & Caicos Islands:* JNCC is a project partner on this Darwin Plus project being led by SAERI. The project will build a Territory-to-Territory partnership between the Falklands and the Turks & Caicos Islands (TCI) to develop Marine Spatial Planning Tools for the TCIs to feed into long-term planning and decision making in the marine environment. The SAOT Focal Point is the JNCC representative on the Project Steering Committee and will contribute to some of the technical aspects of the project. The project commenced in April 2019 and is due to be completed by October 2021.

- *TCI Environment Strategy*: Development of a new national Environment Strategy for the Turks & Caicos Islands. JNCC is working with the government of the TCIs, providing technical assistance to develop a new Environment Strategy which will form the overarching mechanism to rationalise environmental plans and activities, ensure effective implementation of environmental priorities, and support sustainable development. It is being developed through a series of



Discussing the structure and function of the Turks & Caicos Islands Environment Strategy with TCIG Departments and Stakeholders

consultations, which began in 2019 and are ongoing. The process could be offered for roll-out to other UKOTs.

- *Turks & Caicos Islands (TCI) Marine & Coastal Resources Management*: This Darwin Plus project is led by JNCC with partners from the Turks & Caicos Islands Government, as well as from SAERI. The project is developing tools and methods to enhance the existing evidence base needed to support effective assessment and management of the TCIs coastal and marine resources, and establish a substantial knowledge exchange programme to build capacity in development and application of tools and methods. The 3-year project commenced in August 2020 ([DPLUS119](#)).

FUNDING AND MOU RENEWAL

- Financial management of the project was undertaken by the JNCC Finance Team.
- The ACAP and SAOTs coordination project provides support to all the SAOTs. The total annual budget for the JNCC ACAP Coordination and SAOT Advisor post is c. £66,500 p.a.
- Annual funding is contributed through the following funding streams:
 - JNCC (through reserved Grant-in-Aid from Defra) – ongoing commitment.
 - FIG – funds committed through to the end of the 2020-21 FIG Financial year, after which commitment will be revised.
 - BAT – ongoing commitment via an MoU (see more detail below)
 - GSGSSI – ongoing commitment via an MoU.
- The ACAP & SAOT Focal Point post in JNCC is a permanent post in JNCC.

ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

A summary of planned activities is presented below. The full draft programme of work for 2021-22 is provided in Appendix 2. This will be further refined in consultation with the Project Steering Group.

- **ACAP-related activities:**
 - UK ACAP data review and update – first priority will be the collation of SAOT seabird bycatch data and completing the seabird bycatch reporting forms on the ACAP data



portal. This will be followed by reviewing and updating (where necessary) all other SAOT ACAP data which is submitted to the ACAP data portal.

- Review and update each of the SAOT ACAP Implementation Plans. The last review of the FIG plan was in 2014.
- Finalise preparation for the delayed AC12 and WG Meetings – now scheduled for September 2021; attend AC12 and WG Meetings.
- Prepare for and attend the delayed MoP7 meeting – now scheduled for May 2021.
- Work with SAOTs and UK Government to agree priority activities and intersessional work arising from AC12, WG and MoP7 meetings; plus those identified in SAOT Implementation Plans.
 - Likely to include the development of new research proposals to fill gaps in evidence bases.
- Arrange bi-annual Project Steering Group and Stakeholder Group meetings – update and review of activities (also for SAOT Focal Point activities).
- Manage Darwin Plus Birdstrike project; participate in vessel trials which will form part of this project.
- Field work, including annual albatross and petrel monitoring, deployment of tracking devices for Darwin Plus marine management project, and empirical observation and trials of at-sea seabird bycatch mitigation measures.
- Exploring options for site visits to SAOT ACAP Territories and sites (also beneficial for SAOT Focal Point activities).
- Continue to increase SAOT stakeholder engagement and outreach.
- **SAOT Focal Point activities:**
 - Management (where relevant) and technical input to on-going projects, including but not restricted to: SAOT and regional natural capital related programmes of work, Development of the SGSSI Terrestrial Protected Area, Development of AEOA (and related projects), TCI Environment Strategy, TCI Marine and Coastal Resources Management Darwin Plus Project.
 - Work with SAOTs and UK Government to identify other priority areas of work where assistance can be given.
 - Likely to include development of new research or strategic proposals. May be some overlap with ACAP areas of work.
 - Provide input and advice to individual and cross-territory working or advisory groups (meeting attendance, intersessional work, reviews etc.).
 - Continue to develop and strengthen strategic and collaborative regional partnerships.



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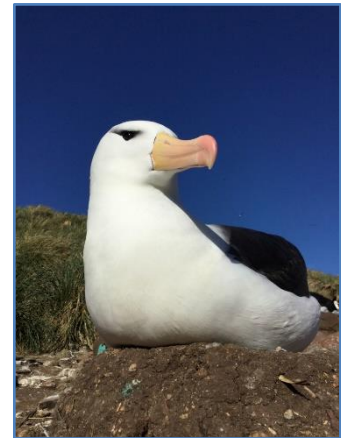
APPENDIX 1. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF PROJECT

PROJECT BACKGROUND



[ACAP](#) is a multilateral environmental agreement which seeks to conserve albatrosses and petrels by co-ordinating international activity to mitigate known threats. The UK and relevant South Atlantic Overseas Territories (SAOTs) (British Antarctic Territory, Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, and Tristan da Cunha) have ratified ACAP. The ACAP co-ordination project was established to ensure coherence of action between the territories, to assist with the planning and implementation of conservation work, to take responsibility for the reporting requirements, and to lead on critical seabird bycatch mitigation work. These actions would contribute to the UK and the SAOTs fulfilling their requirements in respect of ACAP, and indeed to biodiversity conservation objectives more broadly.

The success of the ACAP co-ordination project was such that it was decided to expand the scope of the post to become the JNCC focal point for conservation in all the SAOTs, including St Helena and Ascension. One of the main aims of this focal point is to support/facilitate an ongoing programme of work in the SAOTs that responds more effectively to regional conservation priorities.



The ACAP co-ordination project was formally established by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee ([JNCC](#)) in 2008 with funding contributions from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the British Antarctic Territory (BAT)/Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Falkland Islands Government (FIG), the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI), the Overseas Territories Environmental Programme (OTEP), and JNCC. Funding for this project has been granted in consecutive phases since 2008; note, however, that funding is no longer received from OTEP. The project is managed by a Project Steering Group, which comprises representatives of all the SAOT Governments and the relevant UK government departments and agencies (Defra, FCDO and JNCC). The project manager is based in Stanley, Falkland Islands.

SCOPE OF WORK

The main objective of this project is to provide ongoing support to the UK SAOTs and UK government departments in respect of ACAP, and more broadly through the SAOT Focal Point mechanism.

More specifically, the ACAP-related work programme is designed to ensure an effective and co-ordinated approach to meeting the commitments of ACAP, and to ensure that the UK continues to be amongst the leading Parties in implementing the Agreement. Broadly, and consistent with the ACAP Agreement and Action Plan, work is focussed on the following areas:



- Management of threats at breeding sites
- Monitoring the status and trends of populations
- Analysis of foraging ranges of ACAP species, and spatial and temporal overlap with fisheries
- Reducing seabird bycatch, both within the jurisdictional waters of the SAOTs, but also internationally, by working with partners towards improving the effectiveness of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)
- Further development and implementation of seabird bycatch mitigation
- Improving education and awareness of seabird conservation issues
- Robust data management
- Sourcing funding for the implementation of albatross and petrel conservation projects.

ACAP action plans have been developed and formally adopted for each SAOT. These plans identify the obligations of Parties in respect of ACAP, based on information taken from the text of the Agreement and its Action Plan. Actions necessary to effectively meet the obligations of ACAP are identified and prioritised, and regularly reviewed. These plans serve as a tool to guide ACAP-related work in the OTs and internationally.



The SAOT Focal Point-related work programme is focussed on responding to and supporting local (SAOT) and wider regional conservation priorities including project development and management, building capacity within the SAOTs, and facilitating information exchange between the UKOTs, the UK and wider South Atlantic region.

Activity	Outputs	Outcomes
1 ACAP Coordination (all SAOTs)		
1.1 UK ACAP Data Review and Update	Standardised Data Input Templates; Data collated and curated	All SAOT data entry up-to-date and QA/QC'd
1.2 Review & Update SAOT ACAP Implementation Plans	Revised Plans	Meet national and international obligations
1.3 SAOT ACAP Data Collation and Submission to ACAP Secretariat (AC12, SBWG10, PaCSWG6)	Data collated and curated	Maintain/raise UK & SAOT profile within ACAP; meet international obligations
1.4 Attendance at AC12	Meetings, meeting minutes, briefing documents, information papers	Meet national and international obligations; well prepared UK-delegation; robust and evidence based input from UK into ACAP; raise UK & SAOT profile within ACAP
1.5 Preparation and attendance at 10th Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG10) Meeting	Meetings, meeting minutes, briefing documents, information papers	Meet national and international obligations; well prepared UK-delegation; robust and evidence based input from UK into ACAP; raise UK & SAOT profile within ACAP
1.6 Preparation and attendance at 6th Population & Conservation Status Working Group (PaCSWG6) Meeting	Meetings, meeting minutes, briefing documents, information papers	Meet national and international obligations; well prepared UK-delegation; robust and evidence based input from UK into ACAP; raise UK & SAOT profile within ACAP
1.7 Preparation for 7th Meeting of the Parties (MoP7)	Meetings, meeting minutes, briefing documents, information papers	Meet national and international obligations; well prepared UK-delegation; robust and evidence based input from UK into ACAP; raise UK & SAOT profile within ACAP
1.8 Attendance at MoP7	Meetings, meeting minutes, briefing documents, information papers	Meet national and international obligations; well prepared UK-delegation; robust and evidence based input from UK into ACAP; raise UK & SAOT profile within ACAP
1.9 Action activities and intersessional work from AC12, WG and MoP7 meetings; plus those identified in SAOT Implementation Plans	TBC	Enhanced or maintained seabird conservation
1.10 Prepare UK ACAP progress reports - ACAP and Project Steering Group	Reports	Meet national and international obligations; informed partners
1.11 Responding to requests from ACAP Secretariat	Various - emails, advisory notes/guidelines, summaries, implementing ACAP-directed actions within the SAOTs	Meet national and international obligations; robust and evidence based input from UK into ACAP; raise UK & SAOT profile within ACAP; enhanced seabird conservation within the SAOTs
1.12 Project proposals and fund raising	One project proposal focused on ACAP-related priorities	Dedicated resources for ACAP-related research/priorities; enhanced seabird conservation
1.13 Seabird Surveys & Field Work (Falklands Conservation led)	Population status and trends data	Enhanced knowledge on population status and trends of ACAP species; ACAP officer enhances personal knowledge-base of field surveys and issues
1.14 Empirical observation of 'at-sea' mitigation measures and trials (FIFD-led)	Trip report; Recommendations	ACAP officer enhances personal knowledge-base of fishing practices and practical implementation of seabird conservation mitigation measures; enhanced seabird conservation
1.15 Management and vessel trials for South Georgia Birdstrike project (JNCC-led)	Progress reports, guidelines, information papers	Enhanced seabird conservation; meet national obligations; raise SAOT profile within ACAP and seabird forums
1.16 Input to and field work for winter tracking of Black-browed albatross project (SAERI-led)	Progress reports, manuscripts, information papers	Enhanced seabird conservation; meet national obligations; raise SAOT profile within ACAP and seabird forums
1.17 UK Seabird Bycatch Projects - SAOT ACAP input	Meeting minutes; Report and/or Guidelines	Reduced seabird bycatch in the UK; raise ACAP and SAOTs profile in other international seabird work
2 Regional Focal Point		
2.1 Input to activities of Austral Earth Observation Alliance (AEOA)	Regional CoE for EO established - partners, TORs, strategy; Meeting minutes and reports	Academic partnerships between LATAM countries and SAOT institutions/organisations/government departments; Shared vision for advancing Earth Observation applications; raising profile of the SAOT research capabilities
2.2 Development of collaborative projects and partnerships for and between SAOTs and LATAM.	Two (funded) project proposals focused on natural capital approaches to landscape and economic planning (or other focal areas of interest) in the South Atlantic	Strategic and academic partnerships between LATAM countries and SAOT institutions/organisations/government departments; additional resources for priority regional environmental work; raising profile of the SAOT research and management capabilities
2.3 Assist with national reporting (e.g. CBD, CMS)	Reports	Meet national and international obligations
2.4 Technical input and management of ongoing, relevant projects - e.g. TCI Environment Strategy, TCI Marine and Coastal Resources Management, TCI Fisheries	Various - meeting minutes, reports, workshops, outreach products etc.	Various - dependent on scope of work; but overall, should lead to strategic and academic partnerships
3 Joint Activities		
3.1 Steering Group Engagement and Meetings	Meeting Minutes	Partnerships; informed partners; provision of essential feedback and review on progress and priorities
3.2 Stakeholder Group Engagement and Meetings	Meeting Minutes	Partnerships; informed partners; essential feedback and review on progress and priorities
3.3 Input and advice to advisory groups* - meeting attendance, intersessional work, reviews etc.	Various - emails, reviews, advice, implementing actions within the opts and the wider region	Various - dependent on scope of group; but overall, should lead to enhanced nature conservation practices
3.4 Outreach and education	Various - local and international media pieces (print, TV, social); guidelines; fact-sheets; presentations	Raising awareness within different groups (e.g. industry, science, government, civil society) of ACAP and related issues, as well wider nature conservation activities
3.5 Planning for site visits to SAOT ACAP sites	Trip itinerary	Improved partnerships; ACAP officer enhances personal knowledge-base of site-specific issues
3.6 Budget Tracking and Management	Budget reports	Project objectives met within budget
3.7 Project Management	Project reports	Project objectives met on time and within budget
3.8 Corporate Personal Development (CPD) Training	Various	Regional focal point officer enhances job-relevant skills
3.9 Leave	N/A	N/A