

APPENDIX 25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: SEABIRDS (2023)



Table 1. IUCN threat status for all seabird species reported as caught in fisheries within the IOTC area of competence.

| Common name | Scientific name | IUCN threat status ¹ |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Albatross | | |
| Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross | <i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i> | Endangered |
| Black-browed albatross | <i>Thalassarche melanophris</i> | Least Concern |
| Indian yellow-nosed albatross | <i>Thalassarche carteri</i> | Endangered |
| Shy albatross | <i>Thalassarche cauta</i> | Near Threatened |
| Sooty albatross | <i>Phoebetria fusca</i> | Endangered |
| Light-mantled albatross | <i>Phoebetria palpebrata</i> | Near Threatened |
| Amsterdam albatross | <i>Diomedea amsterdamensis</i> | Endangered |
| Tristan albatross | <i>Diomedea dabbenena</i> | Critically Endangered |
| Wandering albatross | <i>Diomedea exulans</i> | Vulnerable |
| White-capped albatross | <i>Thalassarche steadi</i> | Near Threatened |
| Grey-headed albatross | <i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i> | Endangered |
| Petrels | | |
| Cape/Pintado petrel | <i>Daption capense</i> | Least Concern |
| Great-winged petrel | <i>Pterodroma macroptera</i> | Least Concern |
| Grey petrel | <i>Procellaria cinerea</i> | Near Threatened |
| Southern giant petrel | <i>Macronectes giganteus</i> | Least Concern |
| Northern giant-petrel | <i>Macronectes halli</i> | Least Concern |
| White-chinned petrel | <i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i> | Vulnerable |
| Others | | |
| Cape gannet | <i>Morus capensis</i> | Endangered |
| Flesh-footed shearwater | <i>Puffinus carneipes</i> | Near Threatened |

INDIAN OCEAN STOCK – MANAGEMENT ADVICE

Stock status. Following a data call in 2016, the IOTC Secretariat received seabird bycatch data from 6 CPCs, out of the 15 with reported or expected longline effort South of 25°S (IOTC-2016-SC19-INF02). Due to the lack of data submissions from other CPCs, and the limited information provided on the use of seabird bycatch mitigations, it has not yet been possible to undertake an assessment for seabirds. The current International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) threat status for each of the seabird species

¹ The process of the threat assessment from IUCN is independent from the IOTC and is presented for information purpose only

reported as caught in IOTC fisheries to date is provided in **Table 1**. A number of international global environmental accords (e.g., Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)), as well as numerous fisheries agreements obligate States to provide protection for these species. While the status of seabirds is affected by a range of factors such as degradation of nesting habitats and targeted harvesting of eggs, for albatrosses and large petrels, fisheries bycatch is generally considered to be the primary threat. The level of mortality of seabirds due to fishing gear in the Indian Ocean is poorly known, although where there has been rigorous assessment of impacts in areas south of 25 degrees (e.g., in South Africa), very high seabird incidental catches rates have been recorded in the absence of a suite of proven incidental catches mitigation measures.

Outlook. The level of compliance with Resolution 23/07 (*On Reducing the Incidental Bycatch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries*) and the frequency of use of each of the 4 measures (because vessels can choose two out of three possible options) are still poorly known. Observer reports and logbook data should be analysed to support assessments of the effectiveness of mitigation measures used and relative impacts on seabird mortality rates. Information regarding seabird interactions reported in National Reports should be stratified by season, broad area, and in the form of catch per unit effort. Following the data call in 2016 it was possible to carry out a preliminary and qualitative analysis. The information provided suggests higher sea bird catch rates at higher latitudes, even within the area south of 25°S, and higher catch rates in the coastal areas in the eastern and western parts of the southern Indian Ocean. In terms of mitigation measures, the preliminary information available suggests that those currently in use (Resolution 12/06) may be proving effective in some cases, but there are also some conflicting aspects that need to be explored further. Unless IOTC CPCs become compliant with the data collection, Regional Observer Scheme and reporting requirements for seabirds, the WPEB will continue to be unable to fully address this issue.

The following should also be noted:

- The available evidence indicates considerable risk from longline fishing to the status of seabirds in the Indian Ocean, where the best practice seabird incidental catches mitigation measures outlined in Resolution 23/07 are not implemented.
- CPCs that have not fully implemented the provisions of the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme outlined in paragraph 3 of Resolution 22/04 shall report seabird incidental catches through logbooks, including details of species, if possible.
- Appropriate mechanisms should be developed by the Compliance Committee to assess levels of compliance by CPCs with the Regional Observer Scheme requirements and the mandatory measures described in Res 23/07.