



SOUTHERN SEABIRD SOLUTIONS

Conservation through Cooperation

**Newsletter Four
December 2003**

Our Goal: Southern Seabird Solutions promotes the adoption of fishing practices that avoid mortality of southern hemisphere seabirds.

Inside:

- Our new governance structure
- ACAP breakthrough
- Advisory officer for South Africa
- Fisher exchanges underway
- Seabird video completed

Season's Greetings

Hi everyone,

I hope you're all planning a relaxed time over the Christmas – New Year holiday season. I'll be spending Christmas with my family in Wellington, which I'm looking forward to.

The past year has been a very busy one for Southern Seabird Solutions. We've managed to achieve a lot, and you can read about some of our successes in this newsletter.

Have a happy and safe Christmas, and I look forward to working with you all in 2004.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janice Molloy".

Janice Molloy

Convenor, Southern Seabird Solutions

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Our Annual meeting

It was great to see so many familiar faces at the Southern Seabird Solutions annual meeting in Auckland, NZ, on November 18 and 19. I also got to meet a whole lot of new people as well. As always, I was inspired by the energy and commitment of people working cooperatively on the seabird issue.

About 60 people attended the meeting, representing a range of interests: government agencies, fishing companies and industry organisations, environmental groups, eco-tourism operations, and seabird research. Countries represented included New Zealand, Australia, Peru, Chile, Spain and USA.

Much of the first day was spent reviewing progress on some of our key projects. On the second day, we developed a series of priority areas for

the new management committee to develop.

Which brings me to the highlight of the meeting! We were officially launched as a Charitable Trust by the New Zealand Minister of Fisheries, Pete Hodgson.

I think this is a very good move. It will give us clarity as we manage projects and funding in the coming years.

In launching the Southern Seabird Solutions Trust, Pete Hodgson praised initiatives already underway to reduce the number of seabirds accidentally killed and urged the fishing industry to continue making progress on this issue.

Details of the Trust

The Trust structure recognises that supporters are the backbone of Southern Seabird Solutions. It also ensures that organisations are able to support seabird conservation projects without that interfering with their normal activities.

The Trust's objective is to promote the conservation of albatrosses and petrels within New Zealand and internationally. Specifically, it will:

- Encourage New Zealand fishers to become world leaders in developing and using effective mitigation measures, and acknowledge role model fishers and fleets;
- Implement cooperative projects that build commitment for use of mitigation measures, and

transfer of technology and knowledge between countries;

- Establish multi-stakeholder groups with similar objectives to the Trust in other countries;
- Encourage all fishing nations to join the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), and encourage them to implement effective National Plans of Action;
- Carry out research that contributes to the conservation of albatrosses and petrels; and
- Seek resources to enable the Trust to implement its projects.

SSS Governance

Four groups of people and organisations have been instrumental in turning Southern Seabird Solutions into a Trust. These are:

- The supporters (of course) – all the people and organisations which are helping SSS work towards achieving its aims;
- The people who have agreed to be on the Management Committee, to look after the Trust's ongoing activities;
- The settlers, who have formally established the Trust and contributed seed funding; and
- The people who have agreed to be trustees, to provide overall direction for the group;

The Trustees are: Eric Barratt (Sanford Ltd), Alan Edmonds (Department of Conservation), Robin Hapi (Te Ohu Kai Moana), Bill Mansfield (Ministry of

Foreign Affairs and Trade), and Jo Breese (WWF New Zealand).

The Settlers are: Sanford Ltd, New Zealand Longline Ltd, Sealord Group Ltd, Solander Group, New Zealand Seafood Industry Council, WWF New Zealand, Department of Conservation, Chris Robertson (seabird researcher), Te Ohu Kai Moana, Moana Pacific Fisheries, Leigh Commercial Fishermen's Association Inc.

The Management Committee comprises: Darryn Shaw, Malcolm McNeill, Chris Anderson, Chris Howe, Simon Thomas, Janice Molloy, Dave Kreutz, Brent Marshall, Simon Reid, Alan Riwaka, Dave Kellian, Chris Robertson.

Funding for guests

I'd like to thank the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for providing funding from its Latin America Strategy for two South Americans to attend the SSS annual meeting.

Dr Patricio Arana, a marine biologist from Chile, and Admiral Hugo Arevalo Escaro from Imarpe, the Peruvian Marine Research Institute, were able to get a good overview of our aims and activities. And of course, they got to meet lots of people working on seabird conservation and make valuable connections.

They also provided SSS members with an overview of seabird interactions in their respective areas and their planned activities, and this was very useful.

ACAP breakthrough

Great news about ACAP! The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels now has enough signatories to take effect.

South Africa became the fifth country to ratify ACAP last month. Australia, New Zealand, Ecuador and Spain have already ratified.

Barry Baker from the ACAP Interim Secretariat in Australia says that five ratifications were required for ACAP to come into force, which will happen on February 1 2004.

“ACAP is the first agreement dedicated to conserving albatrosses and petrels, and it will go a long way to unifying nations in taking concerted international action to protect seabirds.”

Australia is currently acting as the Interim Secretariat for ACAP and will do so until the first meeting of ACAP parties is held. The location of the permanent secretariat will be decided then.

South Africa funding

South Africa is getting a seabird-fisheries advisory officer.

A partnership between Southern Seabird Solutions, WWF South Africa and Birdlife South Africa has received \$US 7000 from a fund organised by the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO).

This fund is raised from donations following lectures to cruise ship passengers during the Antarctic tourism season each year.

The grant will be used to establish a seabird-fisheries advisory officer in South Africa to work with fishers and fleets on seabird identification and conservation awareness.

WWF South Africa's Programme Manager: Marine, Dr Deon Nel, says his organisation is proud to be involved in this project.

"It is important that we in the global community set aside our differences and work together towards ensuring the survival of these magnificent oceanic seabirds while at the same time ensuring that our fisheries are maintained in a responsible and sustainable manner."

Seabird resources for South America

Southern Seabird Solutions has received \$5000 from the Ornithological Congress Trust to produce a package of seabird conservation resources for Chilean and Peruvian fishing fleets.

These resources will help fishers identify vulnerable seabird species, show how to remove seabirds from fishing hooks, and explain the range of measures available to reduce the likelihood of their accidental capture during fishing.

Chile – New Zealand exchange

I'm delighted to say that we've just successfully completed our first fisher exchange.

Sanford Ltd hosted Chilean swordfish skipper Luis Uribe Varas on

board the San Aotea II, which is a world leader in its work on seabird mitigation.

Luis' trip was the result of a four-way funding partnership between the Southern Seabird Solutions Trust, Sanford Ltd, the Ministry of Fisheries, and the New England Aquarium Conservation Action Fund.

Sanford Ltd skipper John Bennett, who won the inaugural Golden Albatross award at last year's International Fishers Forum in Hawaii, took good care of Luis on board the San Aotea II.

Susan Waugh from the New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries says Luis was able to observe mitigation techniques on the San Aotea II (such as the use of tori lines) and talk to the New Zealand crew about his experiences with seabird mitigation in Chile.

"We wanted to provide an opportunity for an influential Chilean fisherman to see a world leader in action, with the hope that this would spark an exchange of information and ideas," she says.

Meanwhile, Greg Johansson from Sanford Ltd says: "Effective seabird mitigation requires not only physical changes to the vessel and its operation but a change of attitude and culture amongst the fishers.

"Immersing Luis (and others) into this culture and our suite of mitigation techniques will demonstrate that effective mitigation can be incorporated into efficient vessel operations with relative ease."

The French Connection

To continue the good news, we have also received funding for a New Zealand fisher to visit Reunion Island to share information with French longline fishers about mitigation techniques.

Sponsorship has been provided by A.S. Fiskevegn, a Norwegian manufacturer of fishing gear, through its New Zealand/Australia agent, Gourock New Zealand.

The money will cover the cost of sending Malcolm McNeill, a vessel manager for Sealord Group Ltd, and Jakob Hals, from A.S. Fiskevegn, to Reunion Island. Malcolm is a former deep sea longline skipper, a member of Southern Seabird Solutions, and chair of the NZ Ling Longline Working Group. Jakob Hals attended the second International Fishers Forum in Hawaii last year.

NZ NPOA

The New Zealand Government has developed a draft National Plan of Action on Seabirds, which it has been consulting on.

The NPOA proposes a mix of voluntary and mandatory measures (such as the continuation of existing mandatory measures like the use of tori lines on tuna longliners and a prohibition on trawl net monitor cables).

The draft plan encourages the fishing industry to voluntarily reduce seabird deaths but allows for the Government to introduce mandatory measures if a voluntary approach fails.

It proposes that codes of practice for managing seabird bycatch in key fisheries are developed by the industry, in cooperation with government agencies, environmental groups, iwi and other interested parties, by mid 2004. These codes will specify fishing practices, limits on seabird deaths, public awareness and compliance measures, and penalties for non-compliance.

The plan also discusses legal options in relation to vessels that fail to take reasonable precautions to limit seabird deaths.

Progress in South America

Chile hosted a South American workshop on albatross and petrel conservation in the first week of December. This was sponsored by Birdlife International and FAO, with the goal of making further progress towards development of National Plans of Action for South American countries.

The last workshop was held in Montevideo, in Uruguay, two years ago and the next workshop will be held in Argentina in 2005.

Workshop organiser Dr Carlos A. Moreno from the Universidad Austral de Chile says the meeting was attended by fishing industry representatives, NGOs, government fishery managers, scientists from Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Peru, and seabird conservation experts from the Falklands, New Zealand, USA, Norway, and Spain.

The group updated the South American Strategy for the Conservation

of Albatrosses and Petrels, and discussed the draft NPOAs of New Zealand, the USA, Falklands and Brazil.

Carlos says the group was very positive about working together and by the end of the workshop had managed to develop a list of priority tasks by country and region.

Experiments in Australia

Australia's eastern tuna and billfish fishery is experimenting with a range of mitigation measures.

Trials with two underwater bait-setting devices (the 'chute' and Dave Kellian's capsule) as well as twin tori lines in combination with weighted branchlines are underway, as part of the Australian fishery's search for solutions to the problem of incidental capture.

The eastern fishery extends from the tip of Cape York to the bottom of Tasmania. About 120 tuna longliners set 10 million hooks each year and catch more than 6000 tonnes of tuna and byproduct annually.

Seabirds encountered in the eastern fishery include the wandering albatross, black-browed albatross, shy albatross, grey-headed albatross, white-chinned petrel, great winged petrel, flesh-footed shearwater, and short tailed shearwater.

Tuna longline skipper Dave Kreutz says that chute trials have taken place with 100 percent observer coverage on 10 vessels, which between them set nearly half a million hooks. Another trial involving twin tori lines with weighted branchlines has involved 40 fishing boats, while the 'capsule'

(which sets baits 10 metres underwater) is currently undergoing testing on one vessel.

He says that fishers have become more aware of the issue.

"The perception used to be that there wasn't a problem in the fishery – but it only takes a few boats to have a bad day, and suddenly the industry has a problem. Awareness in some parts of the industry is now fairly high. There's a general resolve within the industry to come up with a solution that will really make a difference."

Seo/Birdlife competition

And the winner is...

Alas, no winner to announce yet but Carles Carboneras assures me that an announcement is not far off. He and the other organisers have had their work cut out sifting through the entries, assessing their mitigation potential. I hear that there have been many entries of a high calibre.

87 fishers and fishing companies from 11 countries entered the SEO/Birdlife International competition, which carries a prize of \$NZ 36,000 for the design judged to have the most potential.

VIDEO

We've completed our seabird video, 'Fishing the Seabird Smart Way' after months of hard work. It's 20 minutes long and it features interviews with a range of role model fishers within the New Zealand fishing industry about mitigation measures in use on their vessels.

The video is currently being distributed to fishing boats throughout New Zealand, and is being translated into Spanish for distribution to fishing fleets in Chile and Peru.

The video was made as a result of funding primarily from the Department of Conservation and the Seafood Industry Training Organisation.

If you'd like to find out more about Southern Seabird Solutions or be involved in any of our projects, please feel free to contact me.

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