

XXXI ATCM - Policy Update

July 2008



The XXXI Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) was held from June 2nd to 13th in Kiev, Ukraine. The AKCP had four representatives at the meeting who were part of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) delegation.

The ATCM discussed a wide range of issues, some of which are of relevance to krill and krill predators, such as: a) Marine Protected Areas; b) the Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP) management plans; c) a joint SC-CAMLR and CEP workshop in 2009; and d) Southern Giant Petrels and their status as a Specially Protected Species.

CEP discussions on the potential effects of the Antarctic krill fishery on predators

At the CEP, Argentina expressed concerns about the likely increase in the Antarctic krill fishery, and the potential combined impact of fishing and climate change, in view of the observed decrease in krill availability in some areas around the Antarctic Peninsula. Argentina reminded the CEP about its responsibility in regard to krill predator species, covered under the Environment Protocol. CCAMLR's Executive Secretary noted that the impact of krill fishing on krill dependent species is a central part of the risk-based ecosystem approach to management of marine resources taken by CCAMLR. As reflected in its report, the CEP noted the potential implication of declining krill stocks on those species covered by Annex II.

Marine Protected Areas

During the Legal and Operations session, Rodolfo Werner, Science Advisor of the AKCP, introduced ASOC's "IP 119, Designation of Marine Protected Areas within the Antarctic Treaty Area". This paper calls on the ATCM to breathe new life into the MPA debate within the Antarctic Treaty Area. The paper was well received by various delegations which thanked ASOC for the reminder of the responsibility the ATCM holds in regards to designating MPAs within the Antarctic Treaty Area.



As some delegations acknowledged at the meeting, ATCPs need to deploy greater efforts to develop marine protected areas in the ATS Area. It was also noted that the bio-regionalization process that has been initiated by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) is a very important first step in this direction, as the only scientifically-based tool to objectively determine protected areas and that it is supposed to be fully under CCAMLR's control.

Later at the Legal and Operations sessions, the UK presented draft text for an ATCM Resolution that recommended Parties to follow up on their agreed commitments to promote MPAs and enhance cooperation with CCAMLR (as mandated by Annex V of the Environment Protocol). The draft text read as follows: "continue and intensify work towards protection of the Antarctic marine

Marine Protected Areas (continued)



environment, which may include the establishment of protected and managed areas in accordance with Annex V of the Protocol on Environmental Protection, based on scientific information”.

Although there was wide support to this proposal, consensus could not be reached due to opposition by two delegations, on procedural grounds. During the discussion, various delegations reminded the meeting that this topic is under permanent consideration by the CEP and CCAMLR, that it falls under the responsibilities of the ATS, and that protecting the Southern Ocean is an inherent aspect of the CEP’s responsibilities.

At the CEP, in regards to MPAs, the United Kingdom introduced IP 2 “Workshop on Bioregionalisation of the Southern Ocean” (Brussels, Belgium, August 2007), articulating that the aim of the workshop was to provide a scientific basis for the identification of representative areas for protection in the Southern Ocean. It was noted that the results of the workshop had been endorsed by CCAMLR, which agreed that these results were sufficient to allow progress on developing practical approaches to the selection of marine areas for protection.



The UK also introduced IP 3 “*Proposed approach for the identification of important marine areas for conservation*”, presenting an approach for the identification of important marine areas for conservation based on the *Systematic Conservation Planning Methodology*. A pilot study will be undertaken to identify key decisions and data sets as required. Some delegations strongly supported the development of a representative network of marine protected areas in Antarctica, and mentioned that the results of the workshop could be used by the CEP and CCAMLR to inform marine spatial management.

As we saw in the Legal and Operations session, one delegation was opposed to the discussion on marine protected areas by the CEP, arguing that this matter should be mainly discussed in the CCAMLR context. However, as noted by other delegations at the CEP, Article 3 of Annex V of the Protocol clearly states that development of marine ASPAs and ASMAs is within the CEP’s purview.

The AKCP is very disappointed by the outcome of these discussions. However, it is also encouraged by the wide support expressed to this proposal by many delegations, and hopes that real progress can be made on this issue at subsequent ATCMs and CCAMLR meetings.



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Joint SC-CCAMLR and CEP workshop

To further strengthen cooperation between the CCAMLR Scientific Committee and the CEP, CCAMLR made a proposal to the CEP to hold a joint SC-CCAMLR and CEP workshop in 2009. In this context, the CEP noted ATCM *Resolution 1 (2006) on CCAMLR in the Antarctic Treaty System*, which encourages increased cooperation between the ATCM and CCAMLR at a practical level in respect to the conservation and protection of the Antarctic environment. The overarching theme for the workshop, as proposed by the CEP, would be ‘Opportunities for collaboration and practical co-operation between the CEP and SC-CCAMLR’.

The main issues to be discussed in the workshop are: climate change research; ecosystem and environmental monitoring; protected areas and spatial management measures; species requiring special protection; marine pollution; biodiversity and non-native species. The goal of the workshop would not be to address these issues in great detail, but rather to focus on the creation of the necessary mechanisms for practical cooperation in relation to the proposed issues.

The AKCP welcomes the endorsement by the CEP of this proposed workshop, as close integration between CCAMLR and other bodies of the ATS is key for an integrated approach to the preservation of the Antarctic environment. The AKCP looks forward to the outcomes of this workshop, and hopes that it will contribute to a harmonized protection regime for Antarctica.



Krill Predators: Southern Giant Petrels and their status as a Specially Protected Species

Based on the results of a workshop held on May 2008 in Cambridge on the issue, the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) introduced a paper, WP 10 rev 1 “*Status of the Regional, Antarctic Population of the Southern Giant Petrel – Progress*”. Participants to the May workshop included several Contracting Parties and representatives of SCAR, BirdLife International and ACAP. In preparation for this workshop SCAR compiled an extensive database on abundance and trends of the species at all known breeding sites, and scrutinized the data according to the IUCN Red List criteria for regional assessments.



According to the SCAR paper, the workshop reviewed extensive data for several monitoring sites on the Southern Giant Petrel. According to the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, the Southern giant petrel population south of 60°S is of Least Concern.

It was concluded that the present data and analysis do not support the designation of this species as a Specially Protected Species (SPS) under Annex II. Nevertheless, It was recommended that additional censuses of breeding sites and of fledging success be undertaken in a consistent scientific manner to enable better estimates in regards to current trends in Southern giant petrel population (north and south of 60°S). Furthermore, quantitative work should be undertaken, using both current and new data, so that quantitative demographic models can be applied to the species. Because these models rely on carefully collected, time series information, the collection of such data was encouraged. Censuses conducted in sites more than 10 years ago should be revisited at an appropriate time so that an assessment of the current status of the species at these sites can be made.



On this issue, New Zealand presented WP 30 Rev 3 “Draft Action Plan for Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*. New Zealand stressed the importance of producing the Action Plan in order to test the CEP guidelines and the process for collaboration between the CEP and Scientific Committee of CCAMLR in regard to protected marine species. However, since the Southern giant petrel will no longer be listed as SPS, the CEP concluded that it was not appropriate to adopt the draft Action Plan, although it was agreed this document will be made available at the website of the Antarctic Treaty as an example for future comments and consideration.

The AKCP encourages ATCPs to follow CEP’s recommendations on actions to monitor and gather systematic information on the conservation status of Southern Giant Petrel populations in the ATS Area that could guide future decisions to protect this species as appropriate.

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