

RECOVERY OUTLINE

Sooty Albatross

1	Family	Diomedidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Phoebastria fusca</i> (Hilsenberg, 1822)
3	Common name	Sooty Albatross
4	Conservation status	
	Population visiting Australian waters	Vulnerable: A1a+2d

5 Reasons for listing

A decrease in population size of 50% has been recorded at one site but not at others, so the global decline assumed to be 20-50% in the last three generations (Vulnerable: A1) based on direct observation (a). A decrease of similar magnitude is likely over the next three generations (45 years; A2) as a result of fishing bycatch (d).

Australian Fishing Zone	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	5,000,000 km ²	medium
trend	stable	medium
Area of occupancy	5,000 km ²	low
trend	stable	medium
No. of breeding birds	42,000	medium
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of sub-populations	1	medium
Generation time	15 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

None described.

7 Past range and abundance

Breeding on islands in the southern Indian and Atlantic Oceans, foraging south of 30°S, between southern New South Wales and Argentina (Marchant and Higgins, 1990, EABG, 1999).

8 Present range and abundance

Current global population estimated at 100,000 individuals, with 15,700 pairs breeding annually (Croxall and Gales, 1998). The small population on Possession I. (Crozet Is) has decreased in size by 58% over the last 20 years (Weimerskirch and Jouventin, 1998).

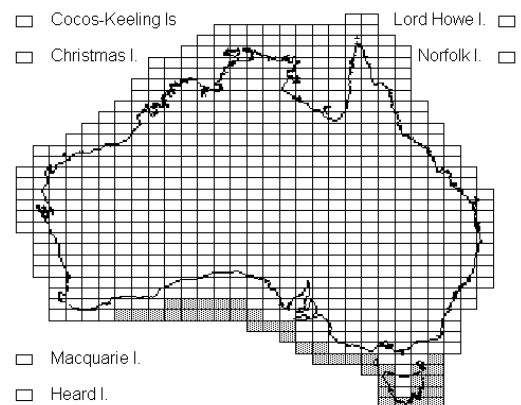
9 Ecology

Sooty Albatrosses nest biennially if successful and either singly or in colonies amidst grass tussocks and other vegetation. They take cephalopods, fish, crustaceans, siphonophores and penguin carrion from the high seas (Marchant and Higgins, 1990) and associate with whales and fishing boats (Marchant and Higgins, 1990, Gales, 1998).

10 Threats

Sooty Albatross are most threatened by drowning in longline fishing gear. Until recently up to 150/year

were being caught by Japanese Tuna Fleet each year in the Australian Fishing Zone (Gales, 1998, Gales *et al.*, 1998, Weimerskirch and Jouventin, 1998). Sooty Albatross may also suffer as a result of collision with cables and warps used on fishing trawlers (EABG, 1999).



11 Information required

11.1 Develop genetic profiles to determine provenance of birds caught as bycatch.

12 Recovery objectives

12.1 Reduce at-sea threats to acceptable levels.

12.2 Obtain global agreement on conservation measures required.

12.3 Promote public awareness of the conservation needs of albatrosses.

13 Actions completed or under way

13.1 A Threat Abatement Plan (TAP) to minimise fishing bycatch has been prepared (EABG, 1998).

13.2 Effective mitigation techniques have been developed and are being improved.

13.3 Bycatch rates in the AFZ and the success of mitigation measures are monitored and the results quickly analysed.

13.4 Measures known to be effective in mitigating seabird bycatch within the AFZ are promoted by legislation, a code of practice and education programs.

- 13.5 A Recovery Plan has been written and a Recovery Team is in place. Australian Fisheries Management Authority, Convention for Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, Ecologically Related Species Working Group of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations and its Committee on Fisheries, Incidental Mortality Arising from Longline Fishing – ad hoc Working Group of the Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment of Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, Tasmanian Fisheries Service, professional fishing industry groups.
- 14 Management actions required
None.
- 15 Organisations responsible for conservation
Environment Australia
- 16 Other organisations involved
Antarctic Science Advisory Committee, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry - Australia,

17 Staff and financial resources required for recovery to be carried out

<i>Staff resources required 2001-2005</i>	1.0	<i>Project Officer (international liaison)¹</i>
	1.0	<i>Extension Officer¹</i>
	3.0	<i>Technical Officers (fisheries observers)¹</i>

Financial resources required 2001-2005

<i>Action</i>	<i>Conservation agencies</i>	<i>Other funding sources</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Develop improved fishing bycatch mitigation¹</i>	\$10,500	\$10,500	\$21,000
<i>Monitor bycatch rates in the AFZ and success of mitigation measures¹</i>	\$3,600	\$8,600	\$12,200
<i>Analysis of annual bycatch data¹</i>	\$8,300	\$0	\$8,300
<i>Educate fishers in the AFZ in mitigation techniques¹</i>	\$6,300	\$5,400	\$11,700
<i>Inform national fora about the TAP¹</i>	\$2,300	\$0	\$2,300
<i>Inform international fora about the TAP and pursue international threat abatement¹</i>	\$3,900	\$0	\$3,900
<i>Maintain currency of TAP and report annually¹</i>	\$2,100	\$0	\$2,100
<i>Research on genetics²</i>	\$500	\$500	\$1,000
<i>Managing recovery process²</i>	\$4,600	\$1,800	\$6,400
<i>Total</i>	\$42,100	\$26,800	\$68,900

¹ Costs for TAP actions divided amongst all 20 albatrosses, 2 giant-petrels, White-chinned Petrel and Grey Petrel

² Costs shared among 20 albatrosses and 2 giant-petrels

18 Bibliography

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- EABG 1998. *Threat Abatement Plan for the incidental catch (or by-catch) of seabirds during oceanic longline fishing operations*. Environment Australia Biodiversity Group, Canberra.
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- Gales, R. 1998. Albatross populations: status and threats. Pp. 20-45 in *The Albatross: Biology and Conservation*. G. Robertson and R. Gales (eds). Surrey Beatty and Sons, Chipping Norton.
- Gales, R., Brothers, N. and Reid, T. 1998. Seabird mortality in the Japanese tuna longline fishery around Australia, 1988-1995. *Biol. Conserv.* 86:37-56.
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- Weimerskirch, H. and Jouventin, J. 1998. Changes in population size and demographic parameters of six albatross species in the French sub-Antarctic islands. Pp. 84-91 in *The Albatross: Biology and Conservation*. G. Robertson and R. Gales (eds). Surrey Beatty and Sons, Chipping Norton, NSW.
- Comments received from
Barry Baker, Nigel Brothers, Rosemary Gales, Tim Reid.