



POSITION PAPER

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Twenty Sixth Meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR XXVI)

Hobart, October 22 - November 2 2006

CCAMLR XXVI – AN IPY LEGACY

WWF welcomes progress and the increasing momentum made by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) XXV in building a system of comprehensive protection of the marine environment, addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and providing greater protection of seabirds. WWF particularly welcomes progress made at the recent CCAMLR Workshop on Bioregionalisation of the Southern Ocean (Brussels, 13 – 17 August 2007).

WWF also welcomes endorsement by the 10th meeting of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) (New Delhi, 30 April – 4 May, 2007) of marine protected areas as one of its highest prioritized CEP tools and climate change as one of the highest environmental pressures facing the Antarctic Treaty area.

WWF's CALL TO ACTION FOR IPY:

A unique opportunity exists for CCAMLR Members and Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to mark International Polar Year (IPY) by taking significant steps forward to safeguard the unique biodiversity and enormous productivity of the Southern Ocean.

WWF asks that CCAMLR Members:

Adopt a Resolution at CCAMLR XXVI outlining the necessary activities and timescale to identify and designate an ecologically representative network of high seas marine protected areas covering at least 10% of the Southern Ocean by 2012.

Not only would this commitment protect unique habitats and wildlife, it could also contribute to ecosystem-based fisheries management and increase the resilience of the Southern Ocean to the impacts of climate change.

WWF also asks that CCAMLR Members take action in relation to establishing a system of comprehensive marine protection, ecosystem based management of fisheries, including krill management, seabird protection and international leadership.

WWF specifically calls upon CCAMLR XXVI to take concerted action in the following areas:

1) A system of comprehensive marine protection

WWF calls on CCAMLR Members to commit to undertaking all necessary activities to identify and designate an ecologically representative network of marine protected areas covering at least 10% (almost 3.5 million km²) of the Southern Ocean by 2012.

WWF also calls on CCAMLR members at CCAMLR XXVI to honour its precautionary and ecosystem approaches to its management responsibilities and apply the outcomes of the CCAMLR Bioregionalisation Workshop to realize the conservation outcomes identified by CCAMLR-XXV, namely protection of:

- representative areas;
- scientific areas to assist with distinguishing between the effects of harvesting and other activities from natural ecosystem changes as well as providing opportunities for understanding of the Antarctic marine ecosystem without interference; and
- areas potentially vulnerable to impacts by human activities, to mitigate those impacts and/or ensure the sustainability of the rational use of marine living resources.¹

In particular, WWF calls on CCAMLR XXVI to

- move urgently towards the protection of spatially defined ecological processes and features of exceptional importance to the region e.g. sea mounts and canyons,
- prioritise work to determine areas requiring interim protection,
- collaborate in the development of finescale regional plans that can further inform the process,
- commit to a systematic conservation planning framework as a means for moving forward in a structured and co-ordinated manner, and
- commit to the development of governance models for establishment of MPAs beyond national jurisdiction.

¹ See Report of CCAMLR-XXIV-2005, para 4.14 and Report of SC-CAMLR-XXIV-2005, para 3.54.

Background:

WWF commends CCAMLR on the progress made towards building a system of comprehensive protection of the Antarctic marine environment and most recently, its work on bioregionalisation of the Southern Ocean particularly at the recent CCAMLR Bioregionalisation Workshop (Brussels, 13 – 17 August 2007).

WWF notes the Commission's acknowledgement that protection of Antarctic marine areas has considerable potential for furthering CCAMLR's objectives in applications ranging from protection of ecosystem processes, habitats and biodiversity to protection of particular species (including population and life history stages) (CCAMLR-XXIV, para 4.14).

WWF recognizes that the Scientific Committee, at SC-CAMLR-XXIV, agreed to work toward developing a system of protected areas according to certain parameters (SC-CAMLR-XXIV para 3.57) and the Commission endorsed the Scientific Committee's work plan (CCAMLR-XXIV, para 4.17). Bioregionalisation of the Southern Ocean was identified as an important first step in this process. The CCAMLR Bioregionalisation Workshop utilized outcomes of the Experts Workshop on Bioregionalisation of the Southern Ocean hosted by WWF / ACE CRC (Hobart, 4-8 September, 2006) that established a 'proof of concept' for bioregionalisation of the Southern Ocean.

WWF is of the view that the outcomes of the CCAMLR Bioregionalisation Workshop are sufficient to move forward with achieving conservation outcomes identified by CCAMLR for the protection of the Antarctic marine environment.

WWF also notes that the objective of the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources is the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources (article II). The function of CCAMLR is to give effect, *inter alia*, to that objective (article IX). This includes:

- identifying conservation needs and analysing the effectiveness of conservation measures; and
- formulating, adopting and revising conservation measures on the basis of best scientific evidence available including –
 - designation of regions and sub-regions based on the distribution of populations of Antarctic marine living resources,

- the designation of the opening and closing of areas, regions or sub-regions for purposes of scientific study or conservation, including special areas for protection and scientific study, and
- the taking of such other conservation measures as the Commission considers necessary for the fulfilment of the objective of this Convention.

Further the Commission follows a ‘precautionary’ approach that aims to minimise long-term adverse effects rather than delaying decisions until all necessary data are available, and an ‘ecosystem’ approach that takes into account all the relationships between organisms and physical processes constituting the Antarctic marine ecosystem.

WWF endorses CCAMLR’s identification of the need to establish a harmonized regime for the protection of the Antarctic marine environment across the Antarctic Treaty System. (CCAMLR-XXIV, para 4.12).

WWF also acknowledges the importance of identifying and implementing national representative systems of MPAs within exclusive economic zones (EEZs) that overlap with the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic regions, e.g. Auckland Islands Marine Reserve (New Zealand EEZ), Heard and McDonald Islands Marine Reserve (Australian EEZ), the Kerguelen Island and Crozet Islands MPAs (French EEZ), and progress towards a Prince Edward Islands MPA in the South African EEZ.

2) Ecosystem-based Management of Fisheries

WWF calls on CCAMLR XXVI to design fisheries research programmes to inform the development of recovery plans for over-exploited species and depleted stocks as well as focusing on current target species.

WWF calls on CCAMLR XXVI to consider further the inclusion of all information on IUU products reaching the market.

WWF calls on CCAMLR XXVI to support the publication of “Name and shame” vessel lists with countries of origin to aid in the process of eliminating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including illegal incursions into EEZs.

Background:

WWF believes the principle of sustainable fishing must be strongly underpinned by the application of ecosystem-based management (EBM). WWF has seen remarkable progress within CCAMLR towards applying EBM. For example, predator/prey research has assisted in assessing the needs of higher order species on prey, e.g. whales, seals, birds and their dependence on Antarctic krill, *Euphausia superba*.

EBM principles require that the burden of proof, demonstrating that there are no major or unacceptable ecosystem impacts of activities or developments, must rest with the user. In addition, delivery of EBM can only be successful if accompanied by the development of fisheries management closures. For delivering EBM effectively the protection of spawning and nursery grounds and critical fish habitats is paramount.

Fisheries can only be sustainable over the long term if the natural structure and function of ecosystems are maintained and it is recognized that ecosystems are dynamic and constantly changing. WWF believes that EBM can only be applied effectively if management is informed by scientific data. During the mid-eighties, commercially targeted *Notothenia rossii* was over exploited and stocks depleted. If stocks are recovering, they are only doing so exceedingly slowly. It is important the EBM for fisheries management be applied not only to current target fish, but also for the purposes of recovery of depleted stocks.

Compliance: Generally the estimated IUU catch has decreased for the past three years in the CCAMLR region, however it has increased in three of the fishing divisions – with this accounting for 90% of the IUU catch. In 2006, CCAMLR agreed that increased surveillance was needed in these areas.

The CCAMLR Toothfish Catch Documentation Scheme developed in a relatively short timeframe and applied with some success has seen the markets shrink for the off-loading of toothfish caught in IUU operations in the CCAMLR area. Further consideration is necessary to allow the incorporation of all information, including ways of verifying and including anecdotal information, on IUU products reaching the market in order to further improve estimates of IUU fishing effort.

The development of electronic reporting and a vessel monitoring system is also making it more difficult for vessels from some of the Member

States straying illegally into EEZs. WWF considers that there is still more work to be done on stamping out these illegal incursions, particularly since if the practice is allowed to continue it will undermine CCAMLR's effectiveness and its intent. Name and shame vessel lists specifying country of origin would aid this process.

3) Krill Management

WWF calls on CCAMLR Members at CCAMLR XXVI to proceed with speed and urgency to put in place finescale management plans for the krill fishery which implement ecosystem based management and apply a highly precautionary approach to managing the fishery that allows for existing uncertainties, including the possible impacts associated with climate change.

Background:

Antarctic krill, *Euphausia superba*, are considered to be the lynch pin of the Antarctic food chain. Maintaining krill populations and making informed decisions on how to sustainably manage the use of the resource is going to be one of the major challenges facing CCAMLR Members in 2007 and beyond. WWF considers that strong and cautious management of the krill fishery is fundamental to not only the health and status of krill stocks and all of the Southern Ocean species dependent on krill, but also to the credibility of CCAMLR. Recognizing that the Southern Ocean is already experiencing impacts associated with global climate change, CCAMLR must meet the challenge of strengthening the regulations that apply in the krill fishery.

At CCAMLR XXV, there was heightened interest in the krill fishery, with one country, Vanuatu, sending an informal and late notice of its intention for five Vanuatu flagged vessels to fish for krill during the 2006/07 fishing season. This would not only double the 2005/06 season's catch but when added to catches of the eight countries who had formally lodged their intention to enter the fishery in the 2006/07 season, it became clear that in the 06/07 season they were going to be very close to reaching the trigger limit of 620,000 tonnes. The trigger, when reached, requires finescale management to be implemented. Having now received all the notifications of vessels that intend to enter the fishery it is certain that the trigger will be reached and exceeded.

Finescale management should include applying a precautionary approach, making use of spatial and temporal closures, employing all available and

relevant measures already in use in the management of other CCAMLR species and modifying catch and effort reporting to allow a haul by haul comparison between traditional trawl methods and the new pumping technology.

CCAMLR is presently viewed as an outstanding framework that each year has developed robust research programs and applied improved management practices for the Southern Ocean. If the heightened interest in the krill fishery and changing technology allowing easier and speedier access to the resource, results in krill stocks being overexploited and the collapse of the Southern Ocean food web, then CCAMLR will be viewed as having failed to deliver on its commitment to conserve the marine living resources of the Southern Ocean.

4) Seabird Protection

WWF calls on CCAMLR XXVI to agree a strong Conservation Measure to reduce bycatch of seabirds in trawl operations.

WWF encourages on CCAMLR Members and Parties to urgently implement the CCAMLR measures within their national waters as well as on all vessels flying their flag and fishing in waters inhabited by albatrosses and petrels, and **WWF encourages CCCAMLR Members and Parties** to urgently fulfill Resolution 22/XXV on international actions to reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds arising from fishing, and in particular the elements focusing on action to reduce and minimize bycatch of albatross and other seabirds in high seas areas adjacent to the CCAMLR Convention Area and within the range of seabirds that breed and forage in the Convention Area.

WWF calls on CCAMLR XXVI to extend Resolution 22/XXV to recognize, encourage and support national and international collaborative initiatives which involve fishers, seabird specialists and officials with the aim of promoting the adoption of fishing practices which avoid seabird mortality and facilitating the transfer of knowledge, technology and skills.

In addition, **WWF calls on CCAMLR Members and Parties** to urgently adopt and implement National Plans of Action (NPOAs) to reduce seabird mortality in both longline and trawl fisheries, and to ratify and fully engage in the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and

Petrels (ACAP). For those Members and Parties that have implemented a seabird NPOA for longline fisheries, WWF urges them to - review the effectiveness of their NPOA in reducing seabird mortality in longline fisheries, - adapt their seabird NPOA to also address seabird bycatch in trawl fisheries, and - assist and support other countries adopting and implementing a seabird NPOA for longline and trawl fisheries.

WWF urges CCAMLR XXVI to consider developing a Resolution recognizing the progress made to reduce the threat to seabirds from bycatch and the need to further protect seabirds through action to minimize the threat to Southern Ocean seabirds from invasive species.

Background:

Of the world's 24 species of albatrosses, 23 are considered endangered or vulnerable according to the 'red-list' criteria of the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The global expansion of fisheries (longline and trawl) now poses the greatest overall threat to albatrosses and other seabirds which often feed by scavenging for food behind fishing vessels.

WWF commends CCAMLR on its achievements in reducing the incidental mortality of albatrosses and petrels in Southern Ocean fisheries. CCAMLR leads on best-practice and has contributed to the implementation of smart-fishing initiatives on a global scale. The trialing of integrated line weighting, the introduction of night setting, nil offal discharge and other mitigation technology has seen a notable decrease in the number of seabirds killed in the CCAMLR region in long line fisheries and for the first time no albatrosses were reported taken in regulated longline fisheries in the 2005/06 season. However, a number of countries noted the threat of seabird bycatch in trawl warps.

CCAMLR best practice measures include the development and implementation of mitigation measures to ensure countries are actively reducing incidental catch of seabirds in their fisheries operations, however concerns remain that best practice measures have not yet been introduced throughout the foraging range of Southern Ocean seabird species. Further action is needed both within EEZs and in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Several innovative initiatives have been developed with the aim of promoting adoption of fishing techniques which reduce and eliminate seabird mortality and facilitating the transfer of knowledge, technology and skills between fishers.

Two important international agreements relating to the seabird by-catch problem have been established. In 1988, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) developed an International Plan of Action (IPOA) to tackle seabird by-catch. In implementing IPOA-Seabirds, States assess the seabird by-catch problem within their fisheries and/or within their coastal waters. If a bycatch problem exists, each State then develops and implements a National Plan of Action (NPOA), based on, but not limited by, the recommendations listed in the IPOA.

The legally binding Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) requires signatory states to take specific measures to improve the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels. Eleven countries have now ratified the Agreement (Australia, Ecuador, New Zealand, Spain, South Africa, Peru, France, Argentina, the United Kingdom, Chile and most recently, Norway) and the Agreement entered into force on 1 February 2004. It is anticipated that a number of other countries will come forth to sign and ratify the agreement to demonstrate their commitment to seabird-safe fishing practices.

Addressing the invasives threat ; Some of CCAMLR's greatest achievements in reducing the threat to seabirds through strong conservation measures are being undermined by one of the major threats facing the wildlife of the Southern Ocean islands – the introduction of invasive animals. Rats and mice threaten albatross and other seabirds on a range of Sub-Antarctic islands – in the South Atlantic mice alone kill one million petrels, shearwaters and albatross each year.

This problem can be addressed, since the 1970s, introduced rats and mice have been eradicated from more than 100 islands worldwide. On Campbell Island (NZ) the world's largest rat eradication programme resulted in the island being confirmed rat-free in 2003. Since then vegetation and invertebrates have been recovering and seabirds have been returning. Recently, the Australian and Tasmanian Governments announced a funding commitment of \$24.6M to implement a rabbit and rodent eradication plan for Macquarie Island, where rabbit grazing and burrowing has caused extensive erosion and increased landslips, resulting in King penguins being buried and killed, and albatross nests falling off eroding hillsides. Furthermore, the Australian Government has recognised rats on offshore islands as a key threat, and is developing a national threat abatement plan.

At a global scale, such national initiatives combined would provide the basis for a Southern Ocean Islands initiative that would identify islands, their values and priorities for invasive species eradication. Member countries of ACAP have already agreed to provide species data on key islands, and this would build on and inform the need to develop a strategic prioritization system. While, the creation of national registers of islands with invasive species, the islands key conservation values and Action Plans would help to address the impact of invasive species on Southern Ocean seabirds at a national, regional and for albatrosses and petrels a global scale.

CCAMLR's efforts to reduce bycatch of seabirds will be undermined if other threats to the same species are not addressed

5) International Leadership

WWF calls on Members of the Commission and Parties to the Convention to demonstrate international leadership through national level implementation of complimentary global commitments to good oceans and fisheries management, such the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (FSA), and FAO's Compliance Agreement, and to work to build appropriate institutional arrangements and strengthened political commitment.

WWF calls on Members of the Commission and Parties to the Convention to take greater steps towards prompt reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and to strengthen the Antarctic and Southern Ocean's resilience and ability to adapt to the impact of climate change by minimizing environmental pressures on the system.

Background:

International leadership is necessary not only through the work and successes of CCAMLR but also through national level implementation of complimentary global commitments to good oceans and fisheries management, such as:

- the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS),
- the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (FSA),
- FAO's Compliance Agreement, and
- The Convention on Biological Diversity.

Work is necessary to build appropriate institutional arrangements and strengthened political commitment to deliver such agreements.

In addition, there is an urgent need to expand the network of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), to allow comprehensive management of relevant issues in all regions, and in particular to address the elimination of IUU, control of high seas bottom trawling and other destructive fishing practices; establishment of high seas MPAs and time-area closures; avoidance and mitigation of bycatch and incidental catch problems; and management of discrete high seas stocks. Considerably more political will and scientific effort is needed to confront overfishing and set all depleted fish stocks and threatened species on paths to recovery within regional ecosystem-based management frameworks.

Finally, mindful of the exacerbated impacts of climate change at high latitudes and associated early and severe warming induced trends already in evidence, greater steps towards prompt reduction in greenhouse gas emissions so that the global average temperature keeps below 2°C above pre-industrial temperatures in order to minimize impacts on Antarctic ecosystems is necessary. In addition, to strengthen the Antarctic and Southern Ocean's resilience and ability to adapt to the impact of climate change environmental pressures on the system must be minimised.



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WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.