



POSITION PAPER

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Twenty Fifth Meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR XXV)

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CCAMLR XXV - THE WAY FORWARD

WWF welcomes recent progress made by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) XXIV regarding marine protected areas (MPAs) and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. WWF also welcomes the outcomes of the recent Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) meeting in Edinburgh and the decision to work closely with CCAMLR on the development of programs of work to establish protection and effective management for Antarctic marine living resources.

WWF strongly supports the commitments made at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to apply the ecosystem approach by 2010; to maintain and restore stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield ...not later than 2015; and to the establishment of marine protected areas...including representative networks by 2012, and time/area closures for the protection of nursery grounds.

WWF strongly supports the call by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conference of Parties (COP) 10 to take urgent action to address the under-representation of marine and coastal biodiversity in the global protected area system, particularly in areas beyond national jurisdiction. An effectively managed, representative system of marine and coastal protected areas will give a strong backbone to efforts to halt the loss of marine and coastal biological diversity nationally, regionally and globally.

WWF calls on Members of the Commission and Parties to the Convention to implement commitments to good oceans and fisheries management, such as those expressed through the UN's Intergovernmental Consultative Process on the Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS), the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (FSA), and the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI) commitments, and to work to build appropriate institutional arrangements and strengthened political commitment are necessary. In particular, there is an urgent need to expand the network of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), to allow comprehensive management of all relevant issues in all regions, particularly address emerging issues such as controlling high seas bottom trawling and other destructive fishing practices; establishing high seas MPAs and time-area closures; avoiding and mitigating bycatch and incidental catch problems; and managing 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.

Mindful of the exacerbated impacts of climate change at high latitudes and associated early and severe warming induced trends already in evidence, *WWF calls on Members of the Commission and Parties to the Convention* to take even greater steps towards prompt reduction in greenhouse gas emissions so the global average temperature keeps below 2°C above pre-industrial temperatures in order to minimize impacts on Arctic and Antarctic ecosystems.

WWF calls upon CCAMLR XXV to take concerted action in the following four areas:

1) Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

WWF commends CCAMLR-XXIV on the progress made towards building a system of Marine Protected Areas and calls on members to support the outcomes of an Experts Workshop on Bioregionalisation of the Southern Ocean held by WWF / ACE CRC, 4 – 8 September, 2006. This workshop has established a ‘proof of concept’ for bioregionalisation of the Southern Ocean, making an important initial contribution to a range of scientific, management and conservation goals, including the development of a representative system of MPAs. The methods developed during the workshop for undertaking a broad-scale bioregionalisation, and issues identified for further work on this topic, will be of significant value in work towards the 2007 CCAMLR workshop on bioregionalisation.

Summary: WWF recognizes the work CCAMLR has already done to outline a process to establish a comprehensive and ecologically representative system of MPAs. However, CCAMLR and signatory countries still needs to improve the current measures including:

- Support broad-scale bioregionalization efforts for the Southern Oceans;
- Commit resources to finer-scale analysis of sub-regional biodiversity;
- Develop governance models for establishment of High Seas MPAs

Background:

WWF recognizes that at CCAMLR-XXIV (2005), a series of key tasks were outlined towards the development of a comprehensive and ecologically representative system of MPAs. A broad-scale bioregionalisation of the Southern Ocean was identified as an important first step in this process.

WWF notes that the CBD and WSSD underscored the urgent need to establish systems of High Seas MPAs, and calls on CCAMLR to play a leadership role in establishing High Seas MPAs, including through close coordination with the ATCM.

WWF acknowledges the importance of identifying and implementing a National Representative Systems of MPAs within EEZs, particularly where those exclusive economic zones (EEZs) overlap with the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic regions.(eg Heard Island and the McDonald Islands Marine Reserve in the Australian EEZ and,Prince Edward Islands in the South African EEZ). WWF welcomes the recent announcement by the French government on the designation of MPAs in the Terres Australes et Antarctiques Francaises (TAAF) including waters around Kerguelen Island and the Crozet Islands in the French EEZ).

WWF calls on Members of the Commission and Parties to the Convention to ensure comprehensive, adequate and representative MPA networks are embedded within broader systems of ecosystem management that includes the application of a range of conservation measures, including the use of every available tool i.e. spatial, temporal and depth closures, triggers and move on rules, gear modification and bycatch mitigation technology deployment. Through its protocols, the Antarctic Treaty System has established Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPAs) and Antarctic Specially Managed Areas (ASMAs) but what is needed now is an expansion of these designations to marine areas.

2) Illegal Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) Fishing

WWF commends CCAMLR on its work to date on reducing IUU fishing, however improvements to the existing regime are needed to eliminate the threat of IUU fishing.

Summary: WWF recognizes that the work that CCAMLR has already done to greatly reduce the actions of IUU fishers. However, the rate of IUU fishing still poses an unacceptably serious threat to the survival of albatross and petrel populations and to the commercial viability of some toothfish fisheries.

CCAMLR still needs to review, improve and expand measures, including:

- Port to port reporting of VMS data by all licenced fishing vessels
- Full, mandatory implementation of the electronic catch documentation scheme
- Improve the procedure for listing IUU vessels

- Prohibit any unregulated use of transshipping/reefer vessels
- Implement blacklists for beneficial owners and flag states of blacklisted vessels

Background:

WWF calls on all Members of the Commission and Parties to the Convention to fully implement CCAMLR's Conservation Measures to combat IUU fishing. In addition, CCAMLR must continue to review and improve the current suite of measures to eliminate IUU fishing, including the vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirements. WWF calls for the full, mandatory implementation of the electronic Dissostichus Catch Documentation (eDCD) scheme by all Parties to further reduce the risks of fraudulent reporting.

WWF recognizes that the centralized VMS is a powerful tool in the fight against IUU fishing but the level of reporting must be extended to include VMS data from vessels for their entire port-to-port fishing trip, not just when active within the CCAMLR Area. Unless all fishing vessels report these data, verification of fishing vessel activity during entire trips will be hampered, creating a huge loophole for IUU fishers to exploit.

WWF calls on CCAMLR to tighten up the system for listing IUU vessels. In particular, it is important that CCAMLR members should absent themselves from deliberations and decisions relating to any of their vessels

The global challenge to combat IUU fishing requires closer collaboration between CCAMLR and other RFMOs and coastal states in order to ensure sharing of information on lists of authorized and blacklisted vessels. This information sharing should also be extended to include related information on vessel operators and beneficial owners.

WWF calls on Members of the Commission and Parties to the Convention to prohibit transshipment of fish caught in the CCAMLR Area to other vessels, even outside the CCAMLR Area, unless those vessels are flagged to CCAMLR member states and fully comply with all CCAMLR measures – including comprehensive observer coverage of transshipment and landings.

WWF calls on the CCAMLR to require the Joint Assessment Group (JAG) to improve the estimates of IUU fishing by developing better methodologies to estimate levels of trade in and consumption of

toothfish and toothfish products. Market-based estimates are being effectively used in other areas, such as the Barents Sea cod fishery, to provide reliable estimates of IUU fishing effort for the managers of the fishery.

WWF calls on CCAMLR to implement a scheme to identify and blacklist the beneficial owners and Flag of Convenience (FOC) flag states of blacklisted fishing vessels. In this way more meaningful pressure can be put on those ultimately responsible for controlling IUU fishing efforts.

3) Krill Management

CCAMLR, the “krill convention”, should be implementing management measures to effectively manage the resource that plays a crucial role in the Antarctic ecosystem.

Summary: CCAMLR's approach to krill management is critical due to krill's pivotal role in the Antarctic ecosystem. The renewed interest in krill fishing and the development of new and highly efficient methods for harvesting krill means that CCAMLR must now tighten up the management measures for krill.

WWF is calling for Members of the Commission and Parties to the Convention to adopt the following measures for the krill fishery:

- 100% observer coverage on all krill vessels
- Centralised VMS reporting to allow for monitoring of fishing activities
- Fine scale, monthly catch reporting
- Precautionary catch limits for Small Scale Management Units (SSMUs) based on ecosystem-based management principles and sensitivity to the implications of climate change

Background:

WWF recognizes that CCAMLR was originally set up due to the increasing interest in the 1970s of commercial krill fishing. Given the rather simplified ecosystem typical of high latitudes and extreme environments, the Antarctic scientific community was concerned that any over-exploitation of krill would have catastrophic consequences for the abundant wildlife of the region, which are often directly dependent on krill.

WWF calls on CCAMLR to closely monitor the effects of climate change on the winter sea ice cover, which greatly influences the abundance of krill for the following summer, in order to implement an effective ecosystem based management system for the krill fishery. The

relatively 'simplified' ecosystem found in the Antarctic offers CCAMLR a unique opportunity to implement a successful ecosystem approach to managing fishing, especially in relation to the management of the krill fishery.

WWF shares the concern of the Antarctic science community that the potential for reductions in krill abundance from the combined effects of a substantial increase in fishing effort and reduced winter sea ice attributable to climate change could lead to overexploitation.

WWF calls on CCAMLR to implement highly precautionary management strategies for krill. These are urgently required due to the anticipated increase in commercial fishing for krill driven by the expansion of the aquaculture industry globally, particularly the expansion of the Chilean salmon farming industry which plans to double in the next decade and Norwegian interest in chemical extracts from krill.

In order to develop more effective management that is moving towards an ecosystem approach, WWF calls for specific and immediate improvements in the management of the Antarctic krill fishery. These first steps are:

1. Extension of the CCAMLR international observer programme so that the krill fishery has 100% observer coverage – as for all other CCAMLR fisheries. Identifiable pressures driving increased interest in commercial exploitation of krill are of such a large scale and immediacy that it is no longer realistic to claim that there is no need for closer regulation of the krill fishery.
2. Centralised VMS reporting; so that the regulators of the fishery know what licensed vessels are doing. This is now normal practice in well-run fisheries around the world – and CCAMLR krill fishery should be no exception.
3. Require detailed, haul-by-haul weekly catch reporting. If there are going to be precautionary catch limits for small scale management units, even the current level of fishing is likely to exceed such limits for some units. CCAMLR thus needs to be able to disperse fishing effort and close units to prevent local overfishing.

In addition, WWF also calls for CCAMLR to begin regulating the krill fishery at a smaller scale, by setting catch limits for small scale management

units (SSMUs) consistent with CCAMLR's commitment to ecosystem-based management. This will allow the stock assessment and subsequent management of the fishery to be undertaken at scales that will allow a better understanding of the factors that are influencing the krill populations, their dependent populations of predators and their environment (such as fishery removals, climate change induced reduction in sea ice and flow-on impacts on predator distribution and abundance).

WWF urges CCAMLR XXV to adopt an approach to setting precautionary catch limits for SSMUs that fully implements the Convention's commitment to ecosystem-based management and allows scientists and the Commission to be able to differentiate between changes in krill abundance attributable to fishing and other key factors such as climate change.

4) Seabird Protection

WWF commends CCAMLR on its achievements to date on reducing the incidental capture of albatross and petrel in Southern Ocean fisheries. CCAMLR's approach of seabird friendly fishing operations is recognised as best practice on a world stage and WWF calls on all CCAMLR members to adopt and implement the CCAMLR regulations within their national waters as well as on all vessels flying their flag and fishing in waters inhabited by albatrosses and petrels.

Summary: WWF recognizes the work that CCAMLR has done to greatly reduce seabird bycatch in CCAMLR waters and calls on all Members of the Commission and Parties to the Convention

- to urgently adopt and implement a National Plan of Action (NPOA) to reduce seabird mortality in longline and trawl fisheries, and
- to ratify and fully engage in the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and to assist populating ACAP databases on status and trends and breeding sites, including invasive species.

Further, WWF calls on those Members of the Commission and Parties to the Convention that have implemented a seabird NPOA for longline fisheries

- to review the effectiveness of their NPOA in reducing seabird mortality in longline fisheries

- to adapt their seabird NPOA to also address seabird bycatch in trawl fisheries
- to assist other parties adopting and implementing a seabird NPOA for longline and trawl fisheries.

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.

Albatrosses and petrels breed on remote offshore islands and forage over the open sea. They travel enormous distances across oceans during foraging flights and migratory journeys.

While individual nations are taking measures to protect albatrosses and petrels, these birds are susceptible to threats operating throughout their range and international action is required. The principal threats to albatrosses and petrels have been land predators, habitat competition and land degradation. More recently, the global expansion of fisheries (longline and trawl) has begun to pose the greatest overall threat to seabirds.

Albatrosses and other seabirds often feed by scavenging for food behind fishing vessels and get caught as bycatch. Between 80,000 – 160, 000 seabirds are killed in this way each year in the Southern Ocean and it is estimated that a high proportion is killed by "pirate" fishing boats.

International Agreements: Two important international agreements relating to the seabird by-catch problem have been drawn up.

The Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)

The 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. The Agreement is established under the auspices of the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) and is legally binding.

Nine countries have now ratified the Agreement (Australia, Ecuador, New Zealand, Spain, South Africa, Peru, France, Argentina and the UK) and the Agreement entered into force on 1 February 2004. Another two countries, Brazil and Chile have signed ACAP, and it is hoped that they will become party to the Agreement soon.

ACAP intends to work closely with regional fishery management organisations (RFMOs) to ensure that seabird mitigation measures are routinely adopted

during fishing operations. ACAP focuses on CCAMLR, a Convention that has implemented strong seabird measures and demonstrated a commitment to the reduction of fisheries seabird bycatch that is exemplary.

The FAO International Plan of Action - Seabirds

The FAO developed an International Plan of Action (IPOA) to tackle seabird by-catch in 1988.

The FAO encourages member countries to assess their own seabird by-catch problem and to develop and implement a National Plan of Action (NPOA), based on the recommendations listed in the IPOA. So far, twelve countries plus the European Union have either completed or started to develop an NPOA. 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 the recommendations listed in the IPOA.

The following States have completed the process of developing, NPOAs: Brazil, Falkland Islands, New Zealand, South Africa, United States, Australia, Japan. Canada and Vietnam are developing NPOAs.

The FAO IPOA and the related NPOAs are vitally important to solving the seabird by-catch problem. However, their development and implementation by member states are purely voluntary as is the review of their effectiveness in reducing seabird bycatch.



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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.