

## RECOVERY OUTLINE

# Gibson's Albatross

1	Family	Diomedidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Diomedea gibsoni</i> Robertson & Warham, 1992
3	Common name	Gibson's Albatross
4	Conservation status	Population visiting Australian territory Vulnerable: A2d

### 5 Reasons for listing

The size of the population visiting Australian waters will probably decrease by more than 20% over the next three generations (75 years: Vulnerable: A2) as a result of fishing bycatch (d). Globally, the species breeds at fewer than five locations (Vulnerable: D2.).

Australian Fishing Zone	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	5,000,000 km <sup>2</sup>	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	5,000 km <sup>2</sup>	low
trend	stable	high
No. of breeding birds	12,000	medium
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of sub-populations	1	high
Generation time	25 years	medium

### 6 Intraspecific taxa

Separation of *D. antipodensis* from *D. gibsoni* (Robertson and Nunn, 1998) is controversial, but adopted here pending publication of genetic analysis.

### 7 Past range and abundance

Breeding on Auckland Is., New Zealand; principal feeding area of females in Tasman Sea, and of the males further south or in the mid-Pacific Ocean (EABG, 1999). In Australian territory, recorded foraging between Coffs Harbour and Wilsons Promontory. Non-breeding birds usually found at between 30° and 50°S, where they take advantage of weather systems to fully exploit food resources (Nicholls *et al.*, 1997).

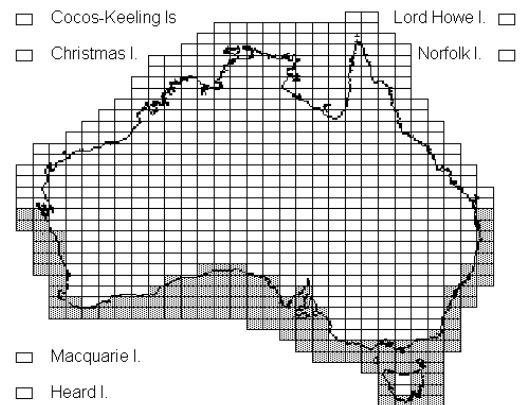
### 8 Present range and abundance

From 1991 to 1997 it was estimated that 5831 pairs bred annually on Adams I. and 50-100 pairs on Auckland I. This is lower than the 1970s and probably much lower than last century (Walker and Elliott, 1999).

### 9 Ecology

Gibson's Albatross breeds biennially (when successful) in colonies among grass tussocks on isolated subantarctic islands and feeds pelagically on squid, fish and crustaceans (Marchant and Higgins, 1990, Gales, 1998), using the wind to travel great distances both

during and between breeding seasons (Reinke *et al.*, 1998).



### 10 Threats

Drowning in longline fishing gear appears to be the primary threat in Australian waters. Birds may also suffer from collision with cables and warps used on fishing trawlers (Gales, 1998, 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.
- 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, 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.

#### 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)<sup>1</sup></i>
	1.0	<i>Extension Officer<sup>1</sup></i>
	3.0	<i>Technical Officers (fisheries observers)<sup>1</sup></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 mitigation<sup>1</sup></i>	\$10,500	\$10,500	\$21,000
<i>Monitor bycatch rates in the AFZ and success of mitigation measures<sup>1</sup></i>	\$3,600	\$8,600	\$12,200
<i>Analysis of annual bycatch data<sup>1</sup></i>	\$8,300	\$0	\$8,300
<i>Educate fishers in the AFZ in mitigation techniques<sup>1</sup></i>	\$6,300	\$5,400	\$11,700
<i>Inform national fora about the TAP<sup>1</sup></i>	\$2,300	\$0	\$2,300
<i>Inform international fora about the TAP and pursue international threat abatement<sup>1</sup></i>	\$3,900	\$0	\$3,900
<i>Maintain currency of TAP and report annually<sup>1</sup></i>	\$2,100	\$0	\$2,100
<i>Research on genetics<sup>5</sup></i>	\$500	\$500	\$1,000
<i>Managing recovery process<sup>5</sup></i>	\$4,600	\$1,800	\$6,400
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>\$42,100</b>	<b>\$26,800</b>	<b>\$68,900</b>

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

<sup>2</sup> Costs shared among 20 albatrosses and 2 giant-petrels

#### 18 Bibliography

- Birdlife International. 2000. *Threatened Birds of the World*. Birdlife International, Cambridge.
- EABG 1998. *Threat Abatement Plan for the incidental catch (or by-catch) of seabirds during oceanic longline fishing operations*. Environment Australia Biodiversity Group, Canberra.
- EABG 1999. *Draft Recovery Plan for Albatrosses and Giant Petrels*. Environment Australia Biodiversity Group, Canberra.
- 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.
- Marchant, S. and Higgins, P. J. (eds) 1990. *The Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.
- Nicholls, D. G., Murray, D., Butcher, E. and Moors, P. 1997. Weather systems determine the non-breeding distribution of Wandering Albatrosses over southern oceans. *Emu* 97:240-244.
- Reinke, K., Butcher, E. C., Russell, C. J., Nicholls, D. G. and Murray, M. D. 1998. Understanding the flight movements of a non-breeding Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans gibsoni*, using a geographic information system. *Aust. J. Zool.* 46:171-181.
- Robertson, C. J. R. and Nunn, G. B. 1998. Towards a new taxonomy for albatrosses. Pp. 13-19 in *The Albatross: Biology and Conservation*. G. Robertson and R. Gales (eds). Surrey Beatty and Sons, Chipping Norton.

Walker, K. and Elliott, G. 1999. Population changes and biology of the Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans gibsoni* at the Auckland Islands. *Emu* 99:239-247.

#### Comments received from

Barry Baker, Nigel Brothers, Rosemary Gales, Tim Reid.