

The global distribution of albatrosses and petrels

The RSPB is contributing to a pioneering initiative, led by BirdLife International, in which scientists from around the world have created a global database of remote tracking data of albatrosses and petrels.

Nineteen of the world's 21 species of albatross are now under global threat of extinction. The major threat to many of these species is from being killed as bycatch in fisheries, especially longline fisheries.

The database has been used to map the distribution of these vulnerable seabirds as they forage and migrate over the vast expanses of the world's oceans, and will be a key tool for their conservation. The data are invaluable for understanding many important aspects of the seabirds' ecology and demography, and for identifying areas of overlap with the distribution of the world's fishing fleets, the critical areas where albatrosses and petrels are at risk of being caught.

Results from analysis of the global database have been published in *Tracking Ocean Wanderers*. This

Tristan albatrosses breed exclusively on Gough Island, a UK Overseas Territory that is part of the Tristan de Cunha Islands. Tristan albatrosses forage in the South Atlantic, especially near the coast of Brazil, where they are vulnerable to mortality on longlines.



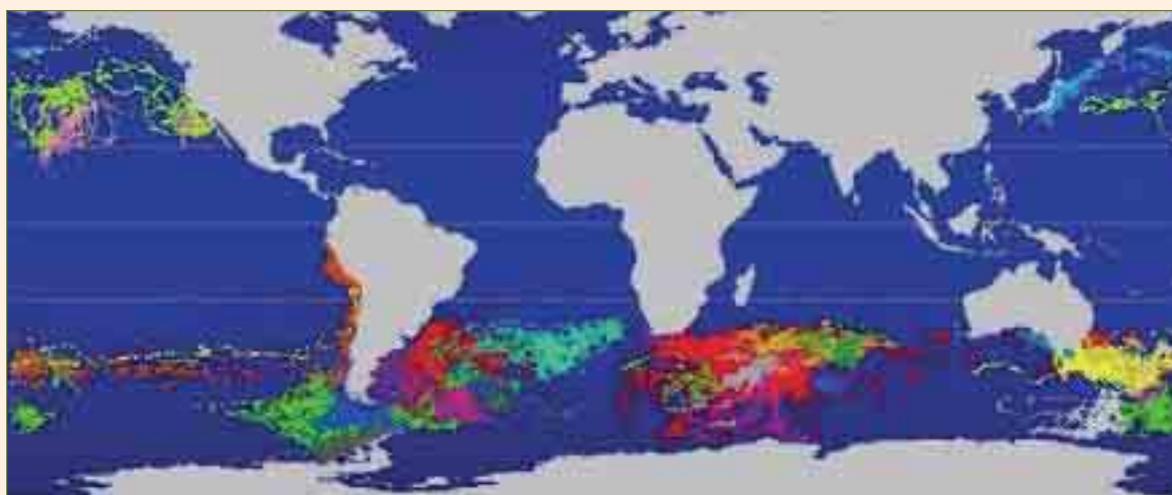
Rinie Van Muiers/ Foto Natura/ FLPA

Above: Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross – currently being tracked as part of an RSPB/Percy Fitzpatrick Institute project.



Peter Ryan

Satellite/platform terminal transmitter (PTT) tracking locations submitted to the Global Procellariiform Tracking Database. Each colour refers to one of 21 different species; the light green locations in the mid South Atlantic are from Tristan albatrosses, tracked as part of an RSPB/University of Cape Town project.



highlights the concentration of albatrosses in the southern hemisphere between 30–50 degrees South, and the importance of highly productive oceanic regions such as the Humboldt Current, the Patagonian Shelf, the Antarctic Polar Frontal Zone and other areas of eddies and upwellings. In addition, the results demonstrate the differences in foraging areas used by young and mature birds, and during different stages of the breeding cycle. Brooding albatrosses often rely on foraging grounds close to their breeding colonies, but as their chicks grow, parents of many species frequently travel thousands of kilometres to find food for their young.

The database will continue to expand as new data are added. The BirdLife Global Seabird Programme, which is hosted by the RSPB, is using these data to assess overlap between albatrosses and commercial fisheries, helping to urge fishery managers to take measures to reduce seabird bycatch.

Contact:
cleo.small@rspb.org.uk

BirdLife International (2004) *Tracking Ocean Wanderers: the global distribution of albatrosses and petrels. Results from the Global Procellariiform Tracking Workshop, 1–5 September 2003, Gordon's Bay,*

South Africa. BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK.

Cuthbert RJ, Hilton GM, Ryan PG and Tuck G (2005) At-sea distribution of breeding Tristan Albatrosses *Diomedea dabbenena* and potential interactions with pelagic longline fishing in the South Atlantic Ocean. *Biological Conservation* 121: 345–355.

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See also: 2001: 26

The global distribution of albatrosses and petrels. Results from the global procellariiform tracking workshop, 1–5 September 2003, Gordon’s Bay, South Africa. BirdLife International, Cambridge. Bugoni L, Mancini PL, Monteiro DS, Nascimento L, Neves T (2008) Seabird bycatch in the Brazilian pelagic longline fishery and a review of capture rates in the Southwestern Atlantic Ocean. *Endang Species Res* 5:137–147. Article Google Scholar. Second international conference on the biology and conservation of albatrosses and other petrels. 8–12 May, Waikiki, Hawaii. Otley HM, Reid TA, Pompert J (2007) Trends in seabird and Patagonian toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* longliner interactions in Falkland Islands waters, 2002/03 and 2003/04. *Mar Ornithol* 35:47–55. Here, we combine 10,108 tracks from 5775 individual birds at 87 sites with data on breeding population sizes to estimate the relative year-round importance of national jurisdictions and high seas areas for 39 species of albatrosses and large petrels. Populations from every country made extensive use of the high seas, indicating the stake each country has in the management of biodiversity in international waters. We quantified the links among national populations of these threatened seabirds and the regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) which regulate fishing in the high seas. Like most websites we use cookies. If you’re happy with that, just carry on as normal (close this bar) - otherwise click here to find out more. Results from the Global Procellariiform Tracking Workshop, 1–5 September, 2003, Gordon’s Bay, South Africa. Download document. Get news by email. Connect With Us. Facebook id. Twitter id. LinkedIn id.