



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

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14 July 2010

Senator Barbara Boxer
Chairwoman
Committee on Environment and Public
Works
United States Senate
410 Dirksen
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator James Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public
Works
United States Senate
456 Dirksen
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Boxer and Ranking Member Inhofe:

The Wildlife Society (TWS) is writing to express our strong support for the **Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act of 2010**. TWS urges the prompt passage of this bill for the conservation of these two groups of highly imperiled seabirds.

The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937 and is a non-profit scientific and educational association of over 9,100 professional wildlife biologists and managers, dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our mission is to represent and serve wildlife professionals—the scientists, technicians, and practitioners actively working to study, manage, and conserve native and desired non-native wildlife and their habitats worldwide.

Albatrosses and petrels face enormous threats worldwide, including fisheries bycatch, invasive species on breeding islands, plastics dumped at sea, toxic pollutants, and climate change. The extent of these threats is such that over two-thirds of the existing 22 species of albatrosses are considered threatened with extinction.

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) is an international agreement established to mitigate threats to the conservation of albatrosses and petrels by facilitating international cooperation. The ACAP now includes 13 countries that have worked to construct cost-effective conservation measures around the globe. For example, inexpensive changes to fishing gear that are required in Alaska and have decreased albatross mortality to nearly zero have been implemented in Argentinean fishing fleets.

The Obama Administration, like the Bush Administration, supports Congressional action to enact the ACAP, requiring legislation and treaty ratification by the Senate. The bipartisan Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act of 2010 would support conservation by directing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, and other relevant federal agencies to:

- better conserve albatrosses and petrels by adopting and implementing best conservation practices and utilize the best available scientific information, technologies, techniques, and other cost-effective innovations as they are developed and are shown to be effective;
- work cooperatively with other nations to ensure that albatrosses and petrels are conserved throughout their ranges; and
- ensure that Federal agencies apply a precautionary and adaptive management approach to conservation by not postponing conservation measures due to a lack of full scientific certainty, as to the threat, its effects, or the effects of such measures being contemplated where threats of serious or irreversible adverse impacts or damage are posed to albatrosses or petrels.

By joining the ACAP, the United States can help to protect its threatened bird species and enlist the cooperation of other signatory countries. ACAP-listed bird species include five of the eight albatross species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, three of which (the Laysan, Black-footed, and Short-tailed albatrosses) the U.S. has significant interest in protecting. The U.S. may also work cooperatively to reduce the incidental impacts of fishing, consistent with the 2001 United States National Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries.

The Wildlife Society would like to thank you for the opportunity to express our support for the conservation of imperiled seabirds and ask for your assistance in passing the Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act of 2010. As populations of these birds become increasingly threatened and continue to decline, the United States and countries around the world must seek ways to mitigate their impacts and avoid extinctions. The ACAP strives to meet this goal directly by encouraging international cooperation for the conservation of these threatened birds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hutchins", written in a cursive style.

Michael Hutchins, Ph.D.
Executive Director/CEO