



February 9, 2022

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Chairman
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1332 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cliff Bentz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1329 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member Bentz,

On behalf of the World Seabird Union, a United States based, global non-profit partnership based in the US, whose mission is to place seabird research, management, and conservation into a worldwide perspective, we write to express our strong support for the advancement of the Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act (ACAP; H.R. 4057). This legislation will leverage American leadership in order to expand international cooperation in combatting threats to these imperiled birds.

Thirty-one species of albatrosses and petrels are currently included in the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). Of these, 12 species have been documented in North American waters (Chesser *et al.* 2021), several of which are listed under the United States Endangered Species Act. All 31 species interact with United States fisheries and fisheries products sold in the United States. As well, a of America (USA). Il 31 would benefit from the participation of USA in ACAP through the Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act (H.R. 4057) as the most effective way to export best practices for globally shared resources such as high seas fisheries.

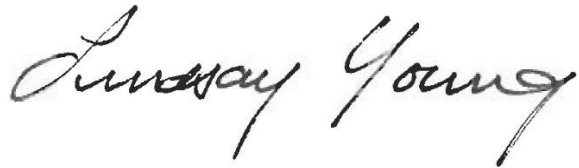
This Act will enable the United States to implement the ACAP. Entered into force in 2004, ACAP and aims to improve coordination in conserving some of the most threatened bird species on the globe. Seventy one percent of all albatrosses, and over half of the petrel species, are threatened with extinction.

Joining the Agreement has received bipartisan support from Republican and Democratic administrations, including from President George W. Bush, who submitted the Agreement to the Senate for advice and consent in 2008. Thirteen nations are now party to ACAP. While the USA has sent observers to the meetings, it cannot influence the proceedings through the power to vote, chair the working groups, or propose amendments.

Along with ACAP signatory nations, the United States has been a leader in the introduction of best fisheries practices to reduce incidental seabird mortality (bycatch). Night setting, bird scaring lines, and increased longline weighting are some of the effective mitigation measures available to reduce seabird bycatch that have been promoted by and are widely used in the USA. When utilized, these actions greatly diminish incidental mortality of endangered seabirds. The United States has undertaken much good work to reduce bycatch of albatrosses and petrels within its home waters and fisheries. However, the impacts of these efforts are lessened because the United States is not a member of ACAP. By joining, the United States would be able to further the conservation of these wide-ranging species that connect the nations of the world.

The United States faces a serious challenge to reverse the decline of many of our bird species who are sensitive indicators of how we are protecting our environment as a whole, so this decline signals a broader crisis that Congress should act on and help reverse. The World Seabird Union strongly believes that advancing this bill and fully investing in bird conservation programs will be essential to achieving the conservation goals that are critical to supporting our environment and our economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsay Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Lindsay Young

Chair
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