



Agreement on the Conservation  
of Albatrosses and Petrels

## **Eighth Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group**

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### **Genetic variation of the use of bill length measurements for identifying species in the wandering albatross species complex; introduction of a new identification method to the Japanese observer program**

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### **SUMMARY**

To understand the potential impacts of bycatch on populations, it is important to identify animals to species level. This includes individuals within the wandering albatross species group, *Diomedea exulans*, *D. dabbenena*, *D. antipodensis gibsoni* and *D. antipodensis antipodensis*, which overlap in their at-sea distributions. In our study, species was determined initially for bycaught birds in this group from bill length measured in the lab. These identifications were then compared with those from molecular methods (DNA analysis). Results were in complete agreement, and it was suggested that the bill length method has the potential for application in the Japanese and, by inference, other observer programs. Indeed, we report this method has now been introduced as standard in the Japan Observer Program.