

# *Seabirds*

## *landing on ships*



Version 2008a

A white seabird with dark wings is shown in flight against a background of a rocky coastline and the ocean. The bird is positioned on the left side of the frame, flying towards the right. The background is a blurred view of a rocky shore with waves crashing against the rocks.

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A white seabird with dark wings is shown in flight against a background of a grey, misty ocean. The bird is positioned on the left side of the frame, with its wings spread wide. The background is a soft-focus view of the sea with white foam from waves.

## 1. Introduction

Each year, birds land on ships operating in the Southern Ocean. Such strandings occur during the night. Conditions of poor visibility (fog, snow or rain) increase the risk of birds becoming disorientated by ship lights.

Bird species commonly attracted to ship's lights:

- Antarctic Prion (*Pachyptila desolata*)
- Blue Petrel (*Halobaena caerulea*)
- Diving-petrels (*Pelecanoides*)
- Storm-petrels (*Hydrobatidae*)

A petrel bird is shown in flight, its wings spread wide, against a background of a cloudy sky and the ocean. The bird is white with dark wings and a dark cap. The ocean below is dark with white foam from waves.

## 1. Introduction

- The legs of petrels are not designed to walk, so the seabirds are unable to take off.
- Birds hide behind ship's gear and in corners.
- Birds can become hypothermic and die if their feathers become waterlogged.
- Check every morning to see if birds have landed on the ship.
- Occasionally, hundreds of birds may land on a vessel in a single night.



## *2. Bird Strandings Coordinator*

- It is recommended to let one person coordinate the handling and taking care of birds (for example: naturalist, expedition leader on cruises, or crewmember).
- This person is also requested to fill in the Incident Report.

A white seabird, possibly a booby, is shown in flight against a background of a rocky coastline and the ocean. The bird's wings are spread wide, and it is flying towards the left. The background is a blurred view of a rocky shore with waves crashing against the rocks.

### 3. *What to do if you find birds?*

Do not handle the birds yourself. Inform the Bird Coordinator to take care of birds. If he/she is not available, follow these guidelines:

- Handle the birds as little as possible, so as:
  - not to stress the bird
  - to avoid infections from humans to birds and vice versa
- Keep the birds in a dry, warm, dark room until ready for release.
- Use one box/container for each bird. If not enough boxes are available, put the same bird species in one box. Do not mix bird species.

A white seabird, possibly a booby, is shown in flight against a background of a rocky, snow-dusted landscape. The bird's wings are spread wide, and it is flying towards the left. The background consists of dark, jagged rock formations partially covered in white snow or ice.

## 4. *How to handle birds ?*

- Use gloves.
- Keep the bird's beak away from your face.
- Keep your hand over the back of the bird to keep its wings folded.
- Never use force.

## 5. *When to release the birds?*



Ideally, releasing the birds should also be done by the coordinator:

- Release the birds when the ship's deck lights are off.
- If this is not possible, release the birds at first light next day.

Ensure that there are no Skuas or Gulls (predators) around.



A photograph of a seabird, possibly a booby, in flight over the ocean. The bird is shown in profile, flying towards the left, with its wings fully extended. The background is a blurred view of the sea with white-capped waves. The overall tone is somewhat desaturated, with a focus on the bird's form and movement.

## *6. How to prevent birds from landing on ships?*

Help to avoid attracting seabirds, particularly:

- when the ship is near islands (where the birds breed) and
- on nights when visibility is poor.

### **Guidelines**

- Keep deck lights and ice lights at the minimum necessary for safety.
- Keep deck lights to a minimum when at anchor or close inshore overnight.
- Use blackout blinds on all portholes and windows, where possible.

# 7. Incident Report

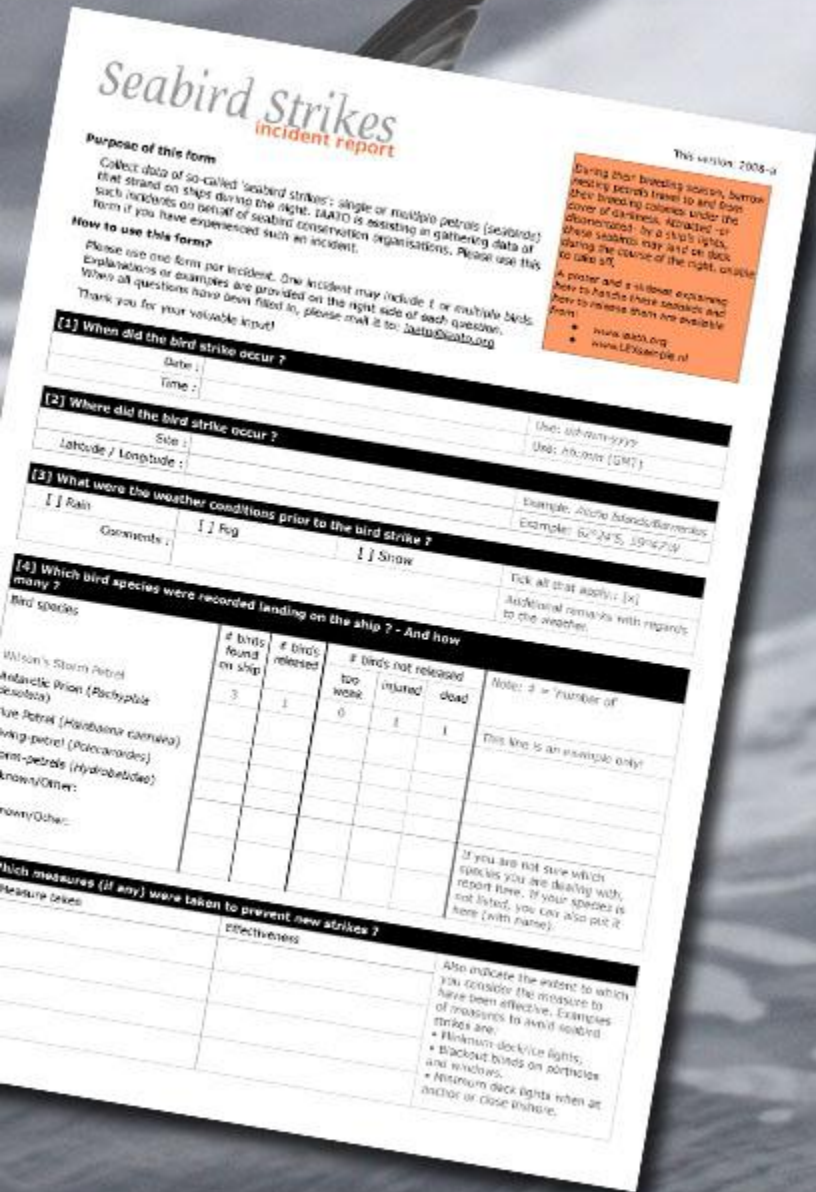
## Goal

- Gather data on bird strandings, to better understand the impact and frequency of these incidents.
- Monitor effectiveness of measures taken.

IAATO assists in gathering data of incidents on behalf of seabird conservation organisations.

## Usage

- Should be filled in by Bird Coordinator some time after birds have been released.
- Use one report per incident (for 1 or multiple birds)
- Easy questionnaire.
- Send by email to [iaato@iaato.org](mailto:iaato@iaato.org)



**Seabird Strikes Incident report**  
This version: 2008-a

**Purpose of this form**  
Collect data of so-called 'seabird strikes': single or multiple petrels (seabirds) that strand on ships during the night. IAATO is assisting in gathering data of such incidents on behalf of seabird conservation organisations. Please use this form if you have experienced such an incident.

**How to use this form?**  
Please use one form per incident. One incident may include 1 or multiple birds. Explanations or examples are provided on the right side of each question. Where all questions have been filled in, please email it to: [iaato@iaato.org](mailto:iaato@iaato.org). Thank you for your valuable input!

**(1) When did the bird strike occur?**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**(2) Where did the bird strike occur?**  
Site: \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude / Longitude: \_\_\_\_\_  
Use:  Unknown  
Use:  Other (GMT)

**(3) What were the weather conditions prior to the bird strike?**  
 Rain  Fog  Show  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
Example: Arctic Islands/Arctic  
Example: 60°N 15, 10N 17W  
Tick all that apply: (X)  
Additional remarks with regards to the weather: \_\_\_\_\_

**(4) Which bird species were recorded landing on the ship? - And how many?**

Bird species	# birds found on ship	# birds released	# birds not released			Notes: 0 = number of
			too weak	injured	dead	
Wilson's Storm Petrel						
Antarctic Prion (Puffin-like)	3	1	0	1		
Shearwater (Puffin-like)						
Shearwater (Puffin-like)						
Shearwater (Puffin-like)						
Shearwater (Puffin-like)						
Other:						

**Which measures (if any) were taken to prevent new strikes?**  
Measure taken: \_\_\_\_\_  
Effectiveness: \_\_\_\_\_

Also indicate the extent to which you consider the measures to have been effective. Examples of measures to avoid seabird strikes are:  
• Minimum deck/ice lights  
• Blackout blinds on portholes and windows  
• Minimum deck lights when at anchor or close to shore.

**Drinking water breeding seabirds, however, should travel to and stay over of darkness. Attracted to these seabirds may and on back to take off.**  
A poster and a 40-liter explanation how to handle these seabirds and how to release them are available from:  
• [www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)  
• [www.IAATO.org](http://www.IAATO.org)

A white seabird, possibly a booby, is shown in flight against a background of a snowy, mountainous landscape. The bird is positioned on the left side of the frame, with its wings spread wide. The background is a soft-focus view of snow-covered terrain with some dark patches, likely rocks or shadows.

## 8. Overview of available material

### 1. Poster

- Audience: passengers and crew.
- Usage: print, laminate and put it where everybody can read it.
- PDF format (A4). Available in: English, French, Spanish, German and Dutch.

### 2. Slide Presentation

- Audience: passengers and crew.
- Estimated time: 10 minutes. Can be merged/combined with another lecture.
- PDF format. Available in English.

### 3. Incident Report

- To be filled in by Bird Coordinator.
- MS Word format. Available in English

All material can be downloaded from:

- [www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)
- [www.LEXsample.nl](http://www.LEXsample.nl)



### **Feedback**

Your feedback on the poster, presentation and incident report is appreciated! Send your email to:

- [lex@lexsample.nl](mailto:lex@lexsample.nl)

Feedback regarding specific strandings can be sent in using the Incident Report.

### **Version**

This version: 2008a

### **Credits**

Text by A. Black (BirdLife/RSPB) & LEXsample Photography  
Photographs by LEXsample Photography