

**Pacific Seabird Group Executive Council (EXCo)**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**Tuesday, 7 September, 2010, 09:00 – 17:00**  
**Esquimalt Room**  
**Victoria Conference Centre**  
**Victoria, BC, Canada**  
**Chair: Tom Good**

**Call to Order**

- **Opening Comments, Quorum, Proxies**

Attendees:

- Tom Good
- Don Lyons
- Hannah Nevins
- Patrick O'Hara
- Mark Hipfner
- Patrick Jodice
- Linda Wilson
- Ron LeValley
- Craig Harrison
- Pat Baird
- Doug Forsell
- Robert Day
- Ken Morgan
- Vivian Mendenhall
- Holly Freifeud
- Linda Elliott
- Alan Burger
- Verena Gill

Proxy: Bob Day for Adrian Gall

Proxy: Doug Forsell for Julie Ellis

- **Approval of minutes from 2010 EXCo Meeting in Long Beach, CA**

Comments:

- There is no Publications Committee anymore. There is now a Communications Committee, now chaired by Verena Gill. References to Publications
- Item 20: last sentence (quote from Bill Ritchie) is a humorous misquote?
- Clarification on Action Item: Verena Gill will talk to Joel Schmutz about the status of the Loon and Grebe Technical Committee. Vivian moves to amend the minutes to better describe what happened – Verena had already talked to Joel about this committee's status and found that they do not intend to continue as a committee. ExCo dissolved this committee.

- Section 18 (WSC). Some contradiction on what the fund raising status was at the time of the meeting. At one point, it is mentioned that at least \$120k is needed, another time funding is described as coming along satisfactorily.
- Action Item: Bob Day will send an email to the list serve everytime a project gets funded about where the conservation fund money is going. “Bob Day” should be replaced by “Verena Gill”.
- Action Item: “Doug Bertram switch elected to appointed for chair in Xantus’ Murrelet report.” This is unclear...
- We should review what was known about the funding status of the Long Beach meeting
- Ongoing business #21: WSC Risk/Profit Sharing with other seabird groups? “Profits go to Products” – what does this mean? Dave Irons: much of this was decided 2-3 years ago. Dave sent a clarification email 2-3 months ago. PSG is taking care of all the administrative overhead for the WSC. And in return for that contribution, PSG is getting 10% of the registration proceeds in return for this contribution. Payment to Ron LeValley for his services will come from that 10%. Any proceeds from the meeting above and beyond this amount will go towards meeting products or a future WSC, at the direction of an international steering committee (to be formed).
- Craig moves that we move to approve the minutes as amended. Ron L. seconded. This motion was unanimously approved.

### **Officer’s Reports**

- Report from Chair (Tom Good)\*
- Report from Chair-elect (Pat Jodice)

Pat apologized for not preparing a written report, apparently he had another task or two in his job jar. The meeting has ~250 oral presentations (~50/50 split between invited and contributed oral presentations) and ~360-370 posters. There are 750-800 registrants from ~40 countries. A lot of learning resulted on the part of the organizing committees during the evolution of the meeting. Everyone who submitted an abstract got an opportunity to present at least one thing, in an effort to be as inclusive as possible. Very few talks have been canceled (3-4), but a few more poster people will not make it. A challenge for the meeting will be the competition between 5 concurrent sessions. That is an issue that will need to be discussed for any future WSC. Pablo Yorio and Norm Ratcliff actively participated in the review of abstracts along with Pat Jodice – the mammoth task of organizing the scientific program was not performed along by PSG’s Chair-elect.

- Report from International Steering Committee (David Irons)\*

Dave thanked the PSG ExCo for accepting the financial risk for the WSC and for the continuing support of this effort. Dave drew our attention to the meeting at 1pm today where the formation of an International Steering Committee will be discussed. The objectives of such a group are open to debate, but might include organizing a future WSC meeting, organizing database products, fostering communication across the diverse seabird science and conservation groups,

etc. The support of PSG, as perhaps the leading seabird organization in the world, for this effort will be critical to its success. This might mean designating a PSG representative for such an effort, might mean the contribution of expertise by individual PSG members, etc. Ron L. pointed out that PSG is already assisting WSC efforts by his efforts to manage and track WSC financial matters (which will continue into the future). Some discussion followed on the structure and organization of how the ISC would work. Craig expressed concern that the WSC has had a disruptive impact on the organizational stability of PSG, causing inconsistent gaps in between meetings, perhaps playing a large role in the financial loss of the Long Beach PSG meeting, etc. There is some tension between investment in PSG and investment in WSC meetings. An expectation of some is that a future WSC if held on another continent would be likely a smaller meeting, with fewer participants from North America – probably just senior scientists. This type of model for a WSC would be less disruptive to PSG. There are certainly lessons to be learned from this 2010 experience and most likely, a much longer planning horizon for any future WSC (4-5 years, rather than the 2-3 years for this WSC), so opportunities exist to reduce disruption to PSG.

A suggestion from Craig on the possible organizational structure for an ISC might mimic the United Nations with an “security council” and a “general membership”.

- Report from Vice-Chair for Conservation (Craig Harrison)\*

See Craig’s written report for details on letters PSG has written.

We may need some new blood to represent PSG to the American Bird Conservancy (currently Craig H. and Malcolm Coulter). It would best be someone who lives in the Washington DC area. Perhaps Melanie Steinkamp or Nanette Seto would be possible delegates, although both are quite busy with other obligations.

- Report from Treasurer (Ron LeValley)  
Approval of Treasurer’s report and budget

Ron apologized for not preparing a formal report. Right now, funding streams are a bit mixed between the PSG accounts and WSC accounts (Ron has leveraged PSG infrastructure for his work on the WSC).

Ron recently discovered that we have not filed our taxes for the last 2 years. The accountant who has this responsibility attempted to file online but the filing was not accepted and not discovered. This discovery was driven by a donation to PSG for the WSC. The Foundation making the donation had some very specific tax questions, which led to the discovery. Ron has worked hard to clear up this issue and we are no longer at risk of losing our tax exempt status. The accountant is covering one year of tax expenses and there are negotiations ongoing with the IRS to reduce the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of bills due. Ron has cleared up a lot of unusual and unexpected misinformation the IRS had on PSG.

Membership is probably slightly up, perhaps due to the large attendance at this meeting. Sending an announcement of publication of Pacific Seabirds along with a reminder to keep membership current has helped get people to pay their dues! There are 3 new recent life members!

The Endowment Account has gone down a bit as of June 30<sup>th</sup>.

The Publications Fund has not been used for some time. Perhaps PSG should consider, perhaps at the Hawaii meeting, if there might be a better use for these funds (Marine Ornithology). Life membership funds go into the Endowment Fund, currently. Should this continue? A little discussion on this occurred, with some strong opposition to altering the current situation. Bob Day suggested an idea that has occurred to him: should PSG consider a 2<sup>nd</sup> endowment for a different purpose? Bob proposed travel funds for scientists from foreign countries as a worthy purpose for a 2<sup>nd</sup> endowment. Ken M. suggested that a contributions to the Conservation Fund would also be a worthy purpose as well.

The new insurance policy we joined (a cooperative package for California non-profits) is really working well. Coverage for the WSC was included in the regular premium – no additional rider was required. It is also cheaper than our previous policy.

Ron presented the PSG posters he designed and printed for use here at the WSC. Vivian has gotten the flyers printed (here in Victoria) but hasn't physically picked them up here at the conference yet. Some discussion on how it would be nice to display these posters and distribute these flyers at meetings other than PSG meetings. Other proposed meeting were SCB (Marine Section), Hawaii meetings, etc.

Discussion on the Long Beach meeting and the financial loss accrued at that meeting:

- An important lesson learned is to avoid using the Westin hotel chain ever again. PSG committed to filling a block of rooms at the Westin, however the Westin is an expensive hotel (\$149 + tax) so a lot of people stayed elsewhere. We attempted to renegotiate our commitment to Westin but they were not flexible and we ended up paying them \$25000 for rooms that were not used. (Another \$5000 loss came from other factors.)
- Westin did allow PSG to spend some of the \$25000 commitment on food, etc. at the meeting.
- We also did not adequately monitor reservations to recognize this looming problem until after the deadline which the Westin might have been more willing to renegotiate.
- There is definite interest in a more economical meeting site for the 2013 meeting, preferably somewhere in the "core range" of the PSG membership. The intention was that the Long Beach meeting would be cheap (sandwiched between Japan and the WSC) but that didn't work out with the choice of the Westin.
- One option we might consider for future meetings is to use a conference secretariat similar to the firm employed here at the WSC. The savings such a firm might be able to negotiate might be sufficient to pay for their services.
- Some discussion occurred on how this situation arose and how to prevent it in the future. Some concrete suggestions for more systemic improvements:

- Build in redundancy in the oversight of large financial commitments i.e., by the local chair and the treasurer.
  - A conference organizing committee that provides institutional knowledge to each meeting's local committee.
  - Better communication and coordination of local committee efforts (monthly conference calls, inclusion of the past local chair on the local committee, or other approaches that work).
  - Hotel contracts written so that on certain dates prior to the meeting if rooms in the PSG block are not taken, they are freed up and PSG is no longer bound.
  - Provide more ExCo support and oversight for the local committee. Perhaps ExCo could suggest some additions to the committee.
  - Craig moved that we form a Conference Coordinating Committee, Pat J. seconded. There was unanimous support. Lora Leschner, Katie O'Reilly, the PSG treasurer, and the past chair were all suggested as potential members of this committee. **Action Item:** the Chair (Tom) will appoint people to this committee.
- Report from Endowment Fund Trustees (Ron LeValley)
  - Report from Secretary (Mark Hipfner)\*

Mark believes we are up to date on Secretary tasks.

Vivian requested a summary of the ExCo meeting minutes from the Long Beach meeting be delivered to her for publication in Pacific Seabirds. **Action Item for Mark.**

- Report from Pacific Seabirds Editor (Vivian Mendenhall)\*

Working on the issue for Spring 2010 currently. Regional Representatives will need to collect activity reports from PSG members in their region beginning shortly after this WSC meeting.

With electronic publication of Pacific Seabirds significant savings were accrued: Our total expenditure for Volume 35 (all hard copies) was \$6,681; the total for Volume 35 (half electronic) was \$5,299.

- Report from Past Chair (Greg Balogh)

There was no report from Greg.

### **Reports from Committees**

- Election Committee (Pat Baird)\*

See submitted Report. Pat updated EXCO on its newest Members, and discussed the need to improve outreach and promotion for the next set of elections. The duties of the Regional Representatives were also discussed; there is a feeling that more specific instructions regarding the requirements of these positions is needed; there have been some difficulties in recruiting a Hawaiian Islands Representative.

**Action Item:** Holly is to take the spare PSG posters to Hawaii to use in a recruitment drive for

- Corresponding Membership Committee (Craig Harrison, Malcolm Coulter)\*

See submitted Report, and note that Malcolm Coulter was not able to attend the Meeting. It was Moved by C. Harrison that John Cooper be made the first Honorary Member; Seconded by B. Day, and passed unanimously.

**Action Item:** Chair T. Good to send a letter to J Cooper re: Nomination.

- Xantus's Murrelet Committee (Shaye Wolf)

No Report submitted. S. Wolf did not attend this EXCO meeting.

- Kittlitz's Murrelet Committee (Michelle Kissling)\*

See submitted Report. In addition, Michelle updated EXCO on the status of a series of 11 paper that will soon be published in Marine Ornithology. She also left EXCO with a copy of a 24 page report on the Information Needs Workshop held in Alaska in 2009.

- Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee (Bill Ritchie)

Bill presented his report following Lindsay's report on the upcoming Hawaii meeting. He will be preparing a written report to Tom after the meeting.

PSG sent a letter to the USFWS recommending against the Radar Ridge wind power project in SW Washington (USFWS is reviewing the ESA consultation for the project). The project would occur on Washington state Department of Natural Resource (DNR) lands.

There is MAMU technical committee meeting later today.

- Chinese Crested Tern committee (Verena Gill)\*

See submitted Report. Verena noted that PSG continues in a networking role on conservation issues related to Chinese Crested Terns (CCT), She also reported on D. Roby's visit to Taiwan in 2010 to attend a 2-day CCT conservation workshop. Roby presented a paper on social attraction as a means to restore depleted seabird colonies. She also made EXCO aware of the political sensitivities between China and Taiwan, and its implications for conservation issues. Funding issues were also raised as a red flag that is possibly limiting conservation efforts for CCT.

- Conservation Fund Committee (Verena Gill)\*

See submitted Report. Verena updated us on the total number of applications received for funding through CFC (5) and the number funded (3). She also informed EXCO that an initiative with BirdLife International to support the CFC fell through due to the recession, while the CFC did receive a \$2000 donation from Commonweal in August 2010.

- Communications Committee (Verena Gill)\*

See submitted Report. Verena updated EXCO on the state of the PSG listserv (607 members, currently) and the PSG Twitter account (115 followers, currently). The Twitter account seems to be reaching an entirely new audience for PSG.

- Seabird Monitoring Committee (Scott Hatch)

See submitted Report. Scott updated EXCO on the exciting advances in the development of the Pacific Seabird Monitoring Database (PSMD), which is now implemented and accessible on the WWW. And being populated. A big focus of the WSC will be to begin the process of developing a global seabird database (WSMD).

- Japanese Seabird Conservation Committee (Motohiro Ito)

No Report submitted, and Motohiro did not attend the EXCO meeting. EXCO discussed the possibility of disbanding this Committee, because Japan now has a Regional Representative.

**Action Item:** Verena Gill to discuss possible disbandment with M. Ito.

- ABC/OC (Craig Harrison/Malcolm Coulter)

No Report submitted. Doug informed EXCO that he is now the longest serving Member of the Ornithological Council. The OC's Annual Report for 2010 has been mailed out (by Ellen Paul). PSG contributed \$1 k per year to the OC. There was a general discussion among EXCO members about permitting issues (which some considered a problem) around Animal Care protocols, and the role of OC in these processes.

- Publications Committee (Pat Jodice)
- World Seabird Conference Local Committee (Patrick O'Hara)\*

(Report given following Dave Irons' ISC report.)

Patrick thanked PSG for their investment in the meeting. Also, for PSG sanctioning the hiring of the Event Coordinator, which was vital to ensure the success of the meeting.

As of today there are 750 registrants from 43 countries. Over 800 badges have been printed. At least 17 people who are scheduled to present have not registered. A little less than half of the registrants are from North America. The attendance by country is led by the US, then Canada, the UK, and New Zealand. Around 1320 people registered for updates from over 70 countries.

The registration income will probably not quite cover expenses for the meeting, but the funds raised by the international fundraising committee will quite easily cover any slight shortfall. Certain donations cover particular aspects of the meeting, leaving some amount of registration income as a surplus (from which PSG will receive the return on its investment).

- PSG 2012 Meeting Local Committee (Lindsay Young)\*

Report given after the Secretary's report.

The proposed site is a YMCA camp (Camp Erdman), a little bit different than normal accommodations. For about \$500, the expenses of registration, food, and lodging would be covered for each. There are 8 houses that sleep 8 people and 16 houses that sleep 16. There are vacation rentals nearby and the nearest hotel is about 30 minutes away. The facility is 35-40 minutes from the airport, requiring either rental cars or some sort of shuttle service to be set up. Some discussion ensued on how many people would prefer to stay off-site.

Some suggestions on fine-tuning the budgets were made.

Lindsay will prepare a revised budget based on the feedback here. She will also cost out the hotel alternative on Oahu, and conduct a survey of the general membership to see what the general preferences are. The Camp Erdman alternative will include a registration fee that would ensure that the meeting would run in the black (current budget presented did not include a separate registration fee). The anticipation that Lindsay will present the options at the winter (Dec/Jan) proposed ExCo conference call and ExCo would come to a decision sanctioning a venue choice at that time.

### **Ongoing Business**

- Bylaws revision/new regional representative structure (Tom G.)

Tom reported on this to EXCO earlier in the day.

- Updating the PSG Website (Verena G. et al.)

Verena updated EXCO on the state of the PSG website. The list of Committees needs to be updated, and in general, there remains an unacceptable amount of missing and incomplete information on the website.

- Budgets (Treasurer's proposed budget) (Ron L.?)

Ron reported on this to EXCO earlier in the day.

- Marine Ornithology Report (Tony G.)

No Report submitted. In addition to Pat's earlier discussion, Tony Gaston appeared here to update EXCO on the state of the journal Marine Ornithology. He informed EXCO that the journal operates on a shoestring budget and that the current financial model will need to be updated moving forward if the journal is to remain active.

- PSG Handbook (Revisions, updates) (Greg B.)

Progress on Handbook revisions was discussed. Secretary Hipfner informed the EXCO that he had revised the Handbook in 2009-2010, and passed the new version on to Past Chairs Bertram and Balogh. Nothing further seems to have been done.

Also discussed were options for the site of the Annual Meeting in 2012 (Hawaii) and 2013 (possibly Portland). EXCO agreed to discuss this further on the end of year call.

- Contracts (report on any active contracts)?
- **Action Items** from Long Beach EXCo Meeting
  - Update handbook to reflect that 120k in investment account includes an amount based on inflation (Vivian M.)
  - United Way eligibility issues (Greg B? Ron L.?)
  - Switch 'elected' to 'appointed' for chair in Xantus' Murrelet report (Doug B.?)

### **New Business**

- PSG Annual Meetings: Budgets and Contracts (Tom G./Craig H.)

There was general discussion (again) that after the Long Beach Hotel problems (see reports earlier in the day), these sorts of mistakes must be prevented in future.

- Other?

There was general agreement among EXCO members that with along time between Meetings (September 2010 until the 2012 Meeting) that there will have to be 2 conference calls: one in late 2010 and one in summer 2011.

### **Announcements**

None.

### **Adjourn**