

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING OF THE PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP
19 February 2014 Annual Meeting Juneau, Alaska
Approved: 2 July 2014

Chair Doug Forsell **calls meeting to order** at 0911

Roll Call:

Officers: Doug Forsell DF Chair, Jo Smith JS Chair-Elect, Kim Rivera KR Past Chair, Stan Senner SS Vice-Chair Conservation, Lindsay Young LY Treasurer (call – in speaker phone)

Regional Representatives: Annette Henry AH Southern California, Adrian Gall AG Alaska, Hannah Nevins HN Northern California, Ken Morgan KM Canada (call-in speaker phone), Sarah Thomsen ST Student Rep, Iain Stenhouse IS U.S.A. (call – in speaker phone), Sarah Thomsen ST Student Rep (arrived 1035)

A quorum was present (8 or more voting board members)

Non-voting ExCo members present: Vivian Mendenhall VM Acting Secretary, Verena Gill VG (15:35)

Guests: Kuniko Otsuki (0956), Dave Irons, John Croxall, Scott Hatch (no times given for when they came on)

Absent ExCo members, Pat Baird PB Secretary (en route travelling), Yutaka Watanuki YW Asia/Oceania, Steffen Oppel SO Europe/Africa, Peter Hodum PH Oregon/Washington

Absent non-voting ExCo member: Michelle Hester, Membership Coordinator

[Notes: Vivian Mendenhall (in-person), with Pat Baird (recording)]

1. Review and adopt Agenda (DF)- Agenda approved as written.

2. Approve Minutes from 18 November 2013 conference call (DF). Discussion on length of most recent minutes and their length (12 pp). Controversial issues should have in-depth coverage. Records of meetings are kept separately and it is important to have detail in records, not minutes.

Motion: Stan Senner Second: HN. "Postpone approval of the November minutes, to rewrite them with motions with context, and to include a pivotal sense of the Board." Passed unanimously. (10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained).

3. Voting by email. (DF) Discussion on whether or not PSG is allowed to have internet voting at a Board meeting.

Action item: DF will consult an attorney and California law about email voting and will inform the board at the next meeting.

Reports of officers and Committee Chairs were sent earlier by email (and are not summarized here). Below is further discussion by Officers and Chairs.

4. Chair (DF): New things initiated: Secretary used TurboBridge for conference calls; Treasurer automated online membership registration and hired a bookkeeper and accountant, and automated online abstract submission for meetings (RegOnline); Board used Survey Monkey program for polls sent to membership. Chair recommends buying the full Survey Monkey for members' opinion polls or elections. Chair finalized "Protocol to certify tree-climbers for studies on Marbled Murrelet."

Action item: DF will look into purchasing the full program for about \$300.

5. Vice-chair for Conservation (SS): If PSG responded to all issues that concern us, it could occupy a full-time job. We are limited in our ability to follow up on our communications regarding official comments of PSG on various issues. This inability to follow up limits how effective PSG can be. Other issues we have to pass up entirely. Issues this past year (which are online on the website): 1) Letter to Pacific Fisheries Management Council re Fisheries Ecosystem Plan and PSG emphasized that they consider forage fish; 2) Statement to Army Corps Engineers' assessment of managing birds at mouth of Columbia River in relation to endangered salmonids- PSG wrote that they need a new plan; 3) PSG wrote to California State Parks re their Plan for Management of Big Basin State Park, noting the marbled murrelet habitat there and suggested edits to the Plan. PSG was later asked for letter of support for California State parks to procure funding and work with CDF&G and the USFWS to develop a region wide management plan for marbled murrelets in central California; 4) PSG encouraged USFWS to finalize Brown Pelican integrated monitoring plan, 5) Letter to President Obama re: asking Departments of Interior & Agriculture to play more effective role in management of murrelet habitats on California and Oregon railway lands (requested by Marbled

Murrelet Committee); 6) PSG supported USFWS's second generation anti-coagulants for rat eradication on South Farallon NWR, noting the negative side effects on gulls and Bald Eagles. Looking forward on things we may need to comment on: 1) Wind farm proposal off Coos Bay Oregon-first on west coast; 2) Cormorant management plan for Columbia river estuary (largest cormorant colony in USA); 3) Petition by National Resources Defense Council to list the Tufted Puffin in California, Washington, Oregon. Other conservation issues discussed. Need to address conservation issues in member countries (e.g. pipeline and wind farms proposed in Canada).

Suggestions for increasing the "capacity" of the Conservation Committee:

- Ask members to tell Stan about issues.
- Remind regional representatives that it is part of their job to tell Stan about regional issues.
- Ask PSG members with expertise in an issue to draft PSG's comment letters. Some members would have to decline because of conflicts of interest.
- Create a permanent Conservation Committee.

6. Chair-elect (JS): Handbook helpful in putting on meetings. RegOnline worked well for abstracts. She suggests that one person handle RegOnline for all annual meetings so each Chair-elect doesn't have to relearn it. Discussion to hire a part-time assistant from within PSG to put on meetings- maybe this person would also be the same person to help with editorial jobs of *Marine Ornithology* or *Pacific Seabirds*. The AOU has such an assistant. Need to look at financials first to see if PSG can afford this. Summarized makeup of 2014 meeting attendees: 30% Academic, 27% state and provincial, almost 25% early-career and student. **Action item: SS will check with AOU or Ornithological Council about their arrangement and costs.**

7. Past Chair (KR): RegOnline helped with her awards duties. Travel awards discussed (\$5700 available for 2014 meeting). Re: next meeting: no venue yet and Past Chair has not come up with alternative venues or possible Local Committee chairs. There is a possibility from member survey that the next meeting will be San Jose California.

8. Treasurer (LY): PSG's finances are in good condition (~5 months into our fiscal year). Small Grants for Conservation also has adequate funding. PSG paid for seabirds.net (\$7998). Discussion on the PSG checking account and who has signing authority (Treasurer, Past Chair, Chair, two editors). We now have just one checking account for all business (*Pacific Seabirds*, local committee, etc.) and up to 5 people can have signing authority under our new surety bond (2014-2015: Chair, Past Chair, Treasurer, Editor *PS*). Credit card has two people on it (for 2013-2015: Past Chair, Treasurer- all in USA. Not Chair because she is Canadian). RegOnline is working well for annual meetings, and for planning future meetings because we now have a template for the program. It also helped with membership renewals- good data collection for members, signing up for mentorship, and donating to PSG via RegOnline (we doubled our renewal income and increased donations). For example: data collection: academics composed the majority of members. All of this information is now in the archives. **Action Item: LY will put a document on the PSG list server that will walk members through entering their data via RegOnline.** New email addresses for board members on web page. Accountant and bookkeeper working well. We are up to date on tax filings to the California Registry of Charitable Trusts. Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Tax Returns, and Tax Exemption Letter are now on the PSG website.

Motion: LY moves Second: AH. "Provided that an estimate comes in under \$2,000, I would like to retain an attorney on a need-only hourly basis to 1) determine what PSG's legal obligations are to respond to questions that PSG receives regarding our organization, and 2) to have that attorney respond on PSG's behalf if a response is required." Passed unanimously. Our accountant recommended this action. **Action Item: LY is will obtain estimates for this service.** If the amount is over \$2,000, we would need a Board vote. This is to establish a relationship only. LY will support the new Treasurer with any unfinished business.

9. Membership records (MH no written report). Membership 481. Goal for Membership: integrating membership, conferences, and financial management. **Action Item 1: MH will train the new Coordinator and will create a training document. Action Item 2: MH will send names of members with obsolete records to the Regional Representatives who will try to track them down and make corrections.**

Suggestion to ask via list server. It was the sense of the board that Regional Representatives should be notified of obsolete snail-mail and email addresses for their members, and asked to find the corrections.

- 10. World Seabird Union (WSU):** (David Irons DI, John Croxall JC; report sent earlier by email): PSG's role in WSU: and PSG is "by far the largest" of the WSU's 20 component organizations. Next World Seabird Conference (WSC) is the Conference Centre in Cape Town South Africa. DI hopes that "PSG and its members will play a big role in the next WSC." They have used \$17,000 (money they raised) + PSG's \$9,000 and \$8,000 for databases. PSG will help the WSU with "seed money" of \$23,000 for a deposit on the venue. PSG's money is close to being transferred. The contract will have stipulations: 1) held at a public conference centre, 2) if the conference is cancelled, the deposit will return to PSG. The contract will be between PSG and the Conference Centre in Cape Town. SS: what might be costs of the meeting for people from USA? DI: costs of registration/hotel/food similar to that at PSG meetings in the US. Current air fares are about \$2,000. JS: what is the break-even point for numbers? DI/JC: Target numbers are 400 people (facilities max = 600-650 people), and break-even is about 300 people. BirdLife International (BLI) and the South Africa Seabird Group are putting conference together (JC works at BLI so he is keeping in close touch with them). Outline of program will be launched in March/April 2014. At present, PSG has no other financial obligations to the WSC. PSG's representatives to WSU are Pat Jodice (he is also a board member of WSU) and Michelle Kappes (alternate). Representatives are to provide regular updates on WSU to their respective organizations. JC: they will get a bi-monthly report. JS: we need a deadline for the deposit and regular reports. **Action item 1: Jo Smith will request regular updates from PSG's representatives to WSU. Action Item 2: DF will go over the contract in detail to ensure that it is agreeable to both parties and that it protects PSG.**
- 11. Local Committee** (Sadie Wright; no written report): The current meeting has 171 registrants, with a few more expected as walk-ins. The meeting is \$8,000 in the black. The LOCO recently downsized break-even numbers of registrants to 150 registrants from their original 200. Because they used a conference center, they did not have to be concerned with filling hotel rooms.
- 12. Future Meetings survey** (DF): (results reported earlier by email): Of 159 respondents (from list server), 32% said they were planning on attending, and 24% said they might attend. Thirty % said that if they attended the WSC2, they would not attend the 2016 meeting, and 70% said they would. Should PSG meet with the WSC2 in South Africa in Oct 2016: 30% yes, 34% no opinion, 4% no opinion. Timing for future meetings: January/February. Preference for joint meetings with other groups: 54% yes 45% no. Four people were willing to host a meeting: AH -San Diego, Anna Weinstein (AW) somewhere in northern California (will also help with 2015 meeting), Mexico, and the Galapagos (Ecuador). Places where members would like to meet (in order): California, Hawaii, Mexico, Portland Oregon, Seattle Washington. Most comments regarding meeting venues were about the money to get there. **Action Item: DF will post the results of this survey on PSG's list server. Action Item: Board will send several surveys a year to members to query the membership about various issues the Board thinks is important.**
- 13. 2015 Annual Meeting** (DF): HN: how will results of survey affect planning for San Jose? DF checked out 3 downtown hotels near San Jose State University and the Convention Center, which are adequate (Hilton, Marriott, Hyatt). Good public transportation. Still no written proposal from Scott Shafer as of today –he is concerned about conflict with WSC2 and wanted Board feedback. **[Note:** Scott emailed a general proposal later in the day; mentioned below]. DF concerned that if members go to WSC2 that they won't go to PSG 2016, or that attendance will be low. We cannot skip the 2016 meeting.
- 14. Future meetings discussion:** Board needs to determine whether members even want a joint meeting with WSC2, or with the Waterbird Society (WS invited us to meet with them in La Paz for our 2015 meeting) in 2016. (The Past Chair's duty is to bring information on the location of the next Annual Meeting, the proposed site of the meeting to be held in two or three years, and a choice of two or three sites for the meeting to be held in three years. This was not done). DF thinking of a joint meeting with WSC2 or the Waterbird Society for 2016 (held in Fall 2015). SS clarifies that the annual meeting does not need to be in the calendar year. JS reiterated that historical meetings were in January or in the fall. VM and JS note that PSG

has had 4 joint meetings that were usually in the Fall, and that the next calendar year, PSG had no annual meeting. Feb 2015 will most likely be at San Jose. Discussion of when to hold meetings- Bylaws state that we need a meeting once a year. JS: Poll shows that there is much less than majority support for a joint meeting with WSC2: 60% members are either opposed or uncertain about meeting with WSC2. JS: For PSG to hold a joint meeting with WSU obligates us to be partners in the joint planning of the meeting-more than just a donor, which is our status right now. Discussion on flexibility of meeting dates for annual meeting, and preference by members to meet closer to the core (HN). LY: need to poll more members and look at demographics in next survey- respondents to this poll were not all members (query was on list server). JC suggests that if PSG wants to meet in South Africa, it needs to be before WSC2, (other seabird groups will have their own meetings in addition to attending WSC2). "They don't have the scale problem of potentially destabilizing the regularity of meetings that PSG has." DF: State of California requires non-profit Boards to have face-to-face meeting once a year. **Action Item: DF will form a committee to come up with a simple poll for members that has ~ 3 options for future meetings.**

(Off the conference call: Iain Stenhouse, 1245)

- 15. Seabird Monitoring Committee** (SH; report sent earlier by email): Scott is retiring as coordinator of this committee. The Chair (DF) appointed Robb Kaler and Heather Renner as new co-coordinators. The Pacific Seabird Monitoring Database PSMD (and the *seabirds.net* website) have been hosted on the server of Scott's employer, the U.S. Geological Survey. Now that Scott has retired from USGS, the hosting is unavailable and must be moved to another server. PSG's website is hosted on Bluehost, and our List server will soon be moved there. However, Bluehost does not support the program (Microsoft Information Service Apache Webserver and MS SQL Server) on which the PSMD runs. (recording stopped at 3h45m19s and never restarted). **Action Item: SH will work with AH to find a solution to get *seabirds.net* back online. Motion (HN) seconded (AG). "To approve support for the PMDB up to \$1,200 per year."**

Discussion: The PSBMD is a "work in progress"; many data series not yet entered, e.g. Alaska (especially Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge), Beringia, western Canada. A database needs full-time management to ensure updates, especially if you can't pay people to input their data (as in the past). Too big a job for 2 volunteers? Before PSG commits to supporting a database in perpetuity, EXCO would like to see a 2- to 5-year plan for its management, such as adding monitoring sites, and repeats of monitoring at existing sites. Motion is amended. **Motion as amended (HN) and seconded (AG): "Approve support for the Pacific Seabird Monitoring Database up to \$2,400 for two years; benchmarks to include (1) put the database back online, (2) identify data sets that need updating, and enter updates where feasible, and (3) develop a five-year plan. Passed (9 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained).**

- 16. Student Representative** (ST; no written report): She has polled students on whether technical workshops should be offered at PSG meetings; a large percent said yes. A student representative has a big workload; it would be good to have 2 of them-they need to overlap. They could have staggered terms (i.e., one elected each year for a one-year term), or one could be "representative-elect" (not yet a member of EXCO). This would be a Bylaws change. Encourage interested students to attend all ExCo meetings. Duties of student rep summarized-see PSG Handbook.
- 17. 2015 Annual Meeting** (continued): Scott Schaffer sent a proposal this afternoon for a meeting in San Jose. **Motion: Moved (KR) seconded (AH) that San Jose will be the location for the 2015 meeting, on a date in January or February to be determined; Scott Schaffer will be Local Committee Co-chair. Discussion: DF will be Local Committee Co-chair if someone else doesn't volunteer. EXCO needs to receive a draft budget for the meeting soon.). Passed (10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained). Action item: DF will call the candidate hotels for estimates and report back to the ExCo.**
- 18. Conflict of Interest Statement** (DF; included in pre-meeting emails). **Discussion:** General desire to modify the CoI statement before EXCO members sign it. It doesn't define "conflict of interest"; it doesn't seem to cover all potential conflicts of interest, nor how to declare one. Paragraph 2 seems to require too much (a signer might have to work for PSG all the time). **Tabled** until a definition is added. **Action item: SS and AH will work on adding a definition of Conflict of Interest to the statement.**

19. Task Force recommendations: **Tabled** (for lack of time).

20. PSG poster, to put up at other societies' meetings: KM proposed the poster but is not able to chair the project. **Moved (JS); Seconded (AH).** *"Approve up to US \$800 for delivery, within one year, of a stand-alone poster to be used at meetings."* **Passed (11 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained).** **Action item KM will Identify lead for poster project.**

21. PSG Code of Conduct (JS; draft sent earlier by email): Five Former Chairs have requested that PSG develop a CoC for our members, after one of them stated that he/she had a bad interaction with another member. **Discussion:** A CoC should include guidance and recourse, in case a member is unable to handle a difficult interaction with another. It should also cover conflicts of interest. It can be added to over time, if need arises. Examples of organizations with CoC's include the AAAS, Society for Conservation Biology, and College of Applied Biology of BC. Would Life Members be concerned, since they finalized their memberships before a CoC existed? Who would approve the CoC? EXCO is entitled to, but it would be better to submit both draft and final to PSG members. **Moved (JS); seconded (HN):** *"That a committee be appointed to draft a Code of Conduct and decide how it should be approved."* **Passed (10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained).** VM volunteered to be on the committee (but not to chair it).

Joined the conference call: VG (not voting), 1535

22. Editor of *Pacific Seabirds* (VM report sent earlier by email): A committee will decide on the journal's future. HN, VM, and AH are on the committee, so far. **Discussion:** VM: A periodical journal/bulletin is a valuable record of PSG's history. Some sections of PS could be posted online throughout the year, in the interests of timeliness, but they should continue to be combined in a discrete periodical publication. Questions:

1. Should PS appear only online? Until now, half the members have opted to receive hard copies. If it's only online, it should have the same appearance as now. Some contents could be replaced by blog-type postings (although some government employees aren't allowed to access blogs from work).
2. Should PS continue to accept articles for peer review? (Such articles are specifically short, conservation-oriented, and focused on Pacific seabirds.) PS seems to provide a unique outlet for such work. But authors could submit short articles to *Marine Ornithology* instead. **Action item: A poll should be taken of the membership on what they'd like to see regarding Pacific Seabirds. (no person assigned to this task).**

23. Website or Pacific Seabirds educational content (AH): PSG needs to provide some introductory pages on seabirds for the public—what they are, their role in ecosystems. These seem ideal for the PSG website.

Action item: VM volunteered to draft some introductory texts on seabirds.

24. List server (VG report sent earlier by email): The List server needs to be moved from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's server to a private one. Cost estimates were compared in VG's report; she explained that a perpetual license would cost more at first but be cheaper in the long run. Recommended to buy the software and not lease it. **Moved (KM); Seconded (AH).** *"We will migrate the PSG list server off of the USFWS server and we will purchase a perpetual license with a one-time expenditure and will pay all associated annual maintenance and service fees that will include upgrades and which will not exceed \$3,000."* **Passed (10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained).**

Off the conference call: Verena Gill 1620

OTHER BUSINESS

25. Bylaws amendments (VM; submitted earlier by email): **Discussion:** Some have not seen the current Bylaws (as amended in 2013) although they are on the website. VM: there are 2 amendments that would bring our Bylaws into conformity with California law (Ex-Officio and Proxy members). Discussion regarding whether a Chair can be appointed by Chair but needs to be removed by a majority of the ExCo. A lawyer should review the proposed amendments re Ex-Officio and Proxy members before we vote on them. ExCo is operating as close as possible to current California requirements already (not following our Bylaws exactly), and will continue to do so. Suggested that Life Member fees go into the General Fund. Needs to be discussed by the Committee. **Bylaws tabled** until a lawyer has been consulted. Appointed Committee Chairs/Coordinators are not on the Board. Only members elected to Board positions are on the Board. **Action item 1: JS/DF will chair a new Bylaws Committee and will get questions ahead of time for what changes are needed and will get advice from a lawyer by June or a deadline of 6 months. We will have a**

conference call just dealing with Bylaws. Action item 2: DF will ask an attorney to review the proposed amendments re Ex-Officio members. JS/DF/VM/SS/PB on committee now. Off the conference call: Ken Morgan, 1655

26. Communications Coordinator: This position is absent now. Tony Gaston wants a discussion about MO and Communications Coordinator. Discussion on what needs to be done re *PS, MO*, the website, the list server. HN volunteers to be the coordinator. *Moved (JS); Seconded (KM). "To appoint HN as Communications Coordinator. Passed (8 yes, 0 no, 1 abstained).* Discussion of who revises Handbook.

Action Item: All ExCo members review *PS and MO* and provide feedback on how to go forward.

Off the conference call: LY, 1714. (No one attending by conference call from now on.)

27. Chinese Crested Tern Committee: The coordinator and members of the committee consider it to have been disbanded, but an EXCO vote is needed to formalize this. *Moved (SS): "To disband the Chinese Crested Tern Committee." Seconded (AH). Passed (8 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained).* LY leaves call; recording ends.

28. Elections Committee (report sent earlier by email): The vote for Student Representative ended in a tie between Abraham Borker and Andrew Titmus. **Discussion** of the two candidates' qualifications by members who know them; both are highly qualified and motivated. Andrew is volunteering at the current meeting (Abraham is in the field). Whichever person is not selected will be asked to contribute to PSG in other ways. *Moved (SS); Seconded (HN). "To select Andrew Titmus as the next Student Representative." Passed (7 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained).* [NOTE: Only 7 people participated in this vote. One voting member had left the room temporarily. No one on EXCO noticed at the time that we had no quorum. I emailed the Chair of the meeting and the current Chair about this on 27 February. —VMM, 27 February 2014].

29. Task Force recommendations for better EXCO contacts with members (AG): A recent poll of EXCO resulted in top scores for eight suggestions: numbers 1, 3, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 21 of report. **Discussion:** Some recommendations have already been implemented, such as paying two part-time or as-needed professionals (bookkeeper, attorney). A few other suggestions:

- EXCO meeting agendas should list top-priority items first
- The Website should be kept current
- A good way to get input from PSG members could be to hold discussions at Membership Meetings, or post blank poster paper for comments
- Email the Task Force recommendations poll to the whole membership

ADJOURNMENT *Moved (AH); Seconded (JS). "To adjourn the meeting." (1822). Passed (8 yes, 0 no, 1 abstained).*