

**Draft Agenda**  
**Pacific Seabird Group Executive Council (EXCo) Annual Meeting**  
**Tuesday, 7 February, 2012, 09:00 – 17:00, Turtle Bay, HI**

**Call to Order**

- **Opening Comments, Quorum, Proxies**
- **Approval of the Agenda**
- **Approval of minutes from 2010 EXCo Meeting in Victoria, BC and Approval of minutes from EXCo Conference Call Meeting, 27 October 2011**

**Officer's Reports**

- Report from Chair (Patrick Jodice)
- Report from Chair-elect (Kim Rivera)
- Report from Vice-Chair for Conservation (Craig Harrison)\*
- Report from Treasurer, including Endowment Fund (Ron LeValley)\*
- Report from Secretary (Heather Major)\*
- Report from Past Chair (Tom Good)

**Reports pertinent to Hawaii Venue**

- 2012 Local Committee (Lindsay Young)
- Makaha Report (Catherine Smith)

**Ongoing Business**

- Review of PSG-WSU financial issues (Craig Harrison & Ron LeValley)\*
- Proposal by WSU for transfer of funds (David Irons)\*
- Marine Ornithology (Tony Gaston)\*
- Reorganization of ornithological societies (Patrick Jodice)

**New Business**

- By-laws changes
- Future meeting locations (Tom Good; 2014 ongoing efforts, 2015 scoping and ideas)
- Board training workshop at 2013 meeting (Pat Baird)
- Need for professional audit of PSG (Craig Harrison, Ron LeValley)
- Other?

**Continuation of Committee Reports**

- Pacific Seabirds (Vivian Mendenhall)
- 2013 Local Committee (Holly Freifeld)
- Election Committee (Pat Baird)\*
- Membership (R. LeValley)\*
- Corresponding Membership Committee (Melanie Steinkamp)\*
- Conservation Fund Committee (Verena Gill)\*
- Communications Committee (Verena Gill)\*
- Seabird Monitoring Committee (Scott Hatch)
- Xantus's Murrelet Committee (Harry Carter and Shaye Wolf)\*
- Kittlitz's Murrelet Committee (Michelle Kissling)
- Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee (Bill Ritchie)

**Approval of PSG Budget**

**Announcements & Adjournment**

\* written report received

EXCO Packet Table (ver. 02 Feb 2012)

Committee/Report Title	Written Report Rcvd	Author/Presenter	Action Items
Chair	Yes	P. Jodice	1. Continue monthly calls between past, current, and incoming chairs 2. Consider board training and retreat
Chair-elect	Yes	K. Rivera	1. Recommend HB revisions
Conservation	Yes	C. Harrison / C. Harrison	1. Discuss/adopt policy statement (P1, Sect II) 2. Asst. Chair needed
Treasurer	Yes	R. LeValley / R. LeValley	1. Approve Budget 2. See Craig email
Endowment Fund	Yes	R. LeValley et al. / R. LeValley	1. Short-list of potential members in case of replacement 2. Clause D – publications committee no longer exists
Membership	Yes	R. LeValley / R. LeValley	No action items suggested in report
Secretary	Yes	H. Major	No action items suggested in report
Past-chair	Yes	T. Good	No action items suggested in report
2012 LOCO	Yes	L. Young	
Marine Ornithology	Yes	T. Gaston / P. Jodice	1. Form search committee for new Editor, select by PSG '13 2. Schedule publications overview mtg for PSG '13 3. Re-engage with SORA
Pacific Seabirds	Yes	V. Mendenhall	1. Editorial policy 2. Enforcement of regional report deadline
2013 LOCO	Yes	H. Friefeld	1. Review bids from Hilton, Marriot
Elections	Yes	P. Baird / P. Baird	1. Most Pomona Coll emails bounced – investigate 2. Asst. chair needed
Corresponding Membership	Yes	M. Steinkamp et al. / J. Piatt	1. Appoint Melanie as Chair in place of Malcom
Conservation Fund	Yes	V. Gill / P. Jodice	No action items suggested in report
Communications	Yes	V. Gill / P. Jodice	No action items suggested in report
Seabird Monitoring	Yes	S. Hatch	No action items suggested in report
Ornithological Council	Yes	P. Baird	No action items suggested in report
XAMU	Yes	Carter & Wolfe / P. Jodice	No action items suggested in report
KIMU	Yes	M. Kiesling	1. Seek new Chair or inactivate
MAMU	Yes	W. Ritchie	1. Seek new Chair

Note: Assistant Chairs are being encouraged for every committee, hence their appearance in the action item list

## **PSG Chair Report for 2012 EXCO Meeting, Turtle Bay, Oahu, HI**

The term for this Chair has run from September 2010 – February 2012. The term began with PSGs 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting which was held in Victoria, BC, along with the 1<sup>st</sup> World Seabird Conference. The Conference was considered by most to be quite successful with over 800 attendees from 40+ countries. PSG members had a critical role in developing the meeting and in presenting scientific products at the meeting. I think it is safe to say that the global seabird community observed first-hand why the PSG is such a strong proponent for the pursuit of outstanding science and timely conservation as it pertains to seabirds and their habitats.

Due to the extended nature of the Chairs term and the need to enhance the passing of information between past, current, and incoming Chairs, a monthly conference call was established. Past Chair Tom Good, Chair-elect Kim Rivera, and myself arranged conference calls most months as a means to stay current on issues and to provide the current and incoming Chairs with the perspective of the Past Chair. I found these calls to be very valuable and strongly recommend that they be continued in future terms. It may be worth adding the Secretary to the calls to keep minutes and have those duly recorded.

The various committees of PSG continue to conduct important business throughout the year and their stability needs to be maintained. We discussed during the year, but have not yet completely achieved, the appointment of assistant Chairs to each committee. Because of the nature of our work we often find that a Chair is ‘in the field’ for an extended period of time. In instances such as that, and to prepare for either the planned or unplanned need to hand-over duties to a new Chair, an assistant (other titles could be used such as associate, vice, etc.) Chair would be a valuable asset. Pursuing such appointments during the 2012-13 term appears to be a worthwhile endeavor.

One of the most consistent activities for the PSG during the year is the preparation of policy statements. Craig Harrison has taken on this task for years and continues to excel at it, to the point where we may not always realize or recognize the quality and quantity of effort Craig invests in these statements, i.e. we have just come to expect timely and well-developed statements. During the 2010 – 2012 term Craig and I discussed the need for developing a written description of the process used to

develop these policy statements so that PSG members would more fully understand the importance of this work and the timeline needed to accomplish this work. Craig developed such a statement and it is included in his report (Vice-Chair for Conservation). It will be reviewed at the EXCO meeting and proposed for acceptance and inclusion in the Handbook.

The location of and income from annual meetings continues to be a primary focus each year. PSG approved the formation of a conference oversight committee to examine all contracts prior to signature. Enhanced oversight such as that provided by this committee should improve our chances of avoiding financial losses due to poorly structured conference contracts and also allow for improved consistency in information transfer between years/local committees. During the planning stages of the 2012 Annual meeting our original location, Makaha, went out of business. We lost our deposit and, as of the preparation of this report, have yet to have that deposit refunded. Efforts are being made to seek restoration of that deposit and the Chair-elect and EXCO need to continue to invest time and effort in doing so.

The PSG continues to be a key supporter of Marine Ornithology. Editor-in-Chief Tony Gaston, along with his team of Associate Editors, continues to do an admirable job producing the journal and handling manuscripts. The journal continues to focus on the improvement of the manuscripts it receives so as to produce quality science that is readily available to the seabird community. Unfortunately, Tony Gaston will be stepping-down as Editor-in-Chief and so a search committee will be formed to conduct a search for a new Editor. This is an important task and one that deserves thoughtful deliberation during the 2012-2013 term.

Much energy has been invested during 2012 in issues surrounding the financial relationship between the PSG and the World Seabird Union. I will not detail the issues here but instead choose to focus on ideas that may lessen the chances of such issues from arising in the future. PSG would benefit from increased attention to details during their EXCO meetings and in the time period immediately following meetings. Attention needs to be paid to the quality and accuracy of the minutes. What often appears to be an automatic task by EXCO members (approval of minutes) needs to be undertaken with great care and in a timely fashion. Minutes should be produced and reviewed soon after meetings even if 'approval' is delayed

by several months. While anticipating the unexpected is never easy, EXCO members need to pay more attention to the range of potential outcomes when crafting motions and proposals, not just to the range of likely or anticipated outcomes. Similarly, all EXCO members have a responsibility to review treasurer's reports and ask questions regarding expenditures, proposed allocation of funds, and the organizations financial stability. In short, officers and EXCO members need to see their commitment to PSG as a regular part of their career, not just as something they work on immediately before board meetings. This culture of commitment and investment needs to be fostered by current EXCO officers and board members so that incoming officers and board members know what is expected of them.

Throughout the 2010-2012 term various issues arose that made it apparent that our organization would benefit from some self-reflection and training. Such efforts are not short-term fixes to problems but rather long-term solutions to better board management, improved organizational structure, and overall program stability. In an effort to achieve these goals we will be discussing the need for a Board Retreat and Training Session during the 2012-2013 term. While we would only be able to support a limited number of attendees at such a training session, the goal would be to have those individuals act as mentors for incoming EXCO members. In so doing each rotation of EXCO members would hopefully have an improved understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to serve the PSG as Chair for the past 17 months and I look forward to serving the organization as Past-Chair in the year to come. I have complete faith that our Chair-Elect, Kim Rivera, will lead our organization in a positive and professional manner.

Respectfully submitted 2 February 2012

Patrick G.R. Jodice

Chair, Pacific Seabird Group, September 2010 – February 2012

## **PSG Chair-Elect Report**

Preparations for this year's Scientific Program began in early 2011 with outreach in February seeking interest in the development of special paper sessions or symposia. Proposals were due in May and resulted in several excellent and comprehensive sessions (see below). The Scientific Program picked up momentum with the Call for Abstracts in September. Over 200 (211 to be exact) abstracts were received, reviewed, and accepted---144 as oral presentations and 54 as posters. Relatively few subsequent withdrawals were received (6%, 13 abstracts). The main reason noted by authors for withdrawals was lack of travel funds to attend the meeting. The Special Paper Sessions provided the skeleton from which the Scientific Program grew as well as an obvious meeting theme of "Tropical Seabirds". The program is organized into 4 Special Paper Sessions, 13 general paper sessions, and each of the 3 days being introduced with an invited plenary speaker. One-fourth of our 198 presentations being submitted by students.

The Special Paper Sessions are: *Tropical Seabird Biology and Conservation*—David Hyrenbach and Scott Shaffer, *Where Seabirds and Tuna Meet: Biology and Management of Subsurface Predator Facilitated Foraging*—Sara Maxwell, Lance Morgan, & Peter Kappes; *Seabirds, Marine Spatial Planning and Impacts of Renewable Energy Development in the California Current Ecosystem*—Jeannette Zamon, and *Biology & Conservation of Hawai'i's Endemic Seabirds*—Helen James, Nick Holmes, Fern Duvall & Jay Penniman.

The 3 plenary speakers are---Dr. Matthieu LeCorre, *Migration strategies of seabirds of the tropical Indian Ocean*; Dr. John Cooper (recipient of PSG's Lifetime Achievement Award), *Conservation and restoration of islands in the Southern Ocean*; and Dr. Jeffrey Polovina, *Recent changes at the top and bottom of the Central North Pacific subtropical ecosystem*.

**Action:** I'll offer recommended edits to sections (e.g. appendices) of the PSG Handbook based on my experience preparing the annual meeting scientific program.

Submitted by: Kim Rivera, Chair-Elect (Chair, Scientific Program)

# CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT TO PSG EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

February 2012

Craig S. Harrison, Vice-Chair for Conservation

## **I. Background**

PSG's by-laws describe the mission of the Conservation Committee in the job description of the Vice-Chair for Conservation:

The Vice-Chair for Conservation is responsible for initiation and coordination of conservation related activities of the Group . . . Specific duties include: Identifying and keeping informed on issues pertaining to the conservation of seabirds; preparing information on high priority conservation issues and distributing that information to the membership and others interested in seabird conservation; acting for PSG as directed by the chair on priority conservation issues at public forums and through written comments; chairing the Conservation Committee; reporting the activities of the Conservation Committee to the Executive Council at the annual meeting and in at least one of the issues of the Group's publications.

The Conservation Committee is open to all PSG members and meets during PSG's annual meeting. Working members are those who: (1) bring conservation issues to my attention and who draft appropriate correspondence; (2) attend Conservation Committee meetings; (3) review and draft comments on public policy documents that pertain to seabirds; or (4) I ask for opinions on particular issues because of their expertise.

## **II. Proposed Process For Approving PSG Conservation Policy Correspondence**

PSG has never adopted a formal policy on its process for approving conservation policy correspondence. I propose the following to be PSG's official process, which is in keeping with how PSG has approached this issue for well over a decade.

PSG's bylaws state that the Vice-Chair for Conservation is responsible for the initiation and coordination of PSG's conservation-related activities. PSG must speak with a single voice and conservation-related correspondence should normally be signed by the Vice Chair for Conservation. All draft conservation policy correspondence should be reviewed by the Chair, Chair-Elect, and Past Chair for concurrence, any of whom may seek advice from others. Internal PSG review is conducted on a case-by-case basis, the purpose of which is to determine whether there are strongly divergent views. Often PSG is under a strict deadline to provide information or policy advice to resource managers or regulatory agencies. Correspondence should be drafted well before deadlines to allow adequate time for internal PSG review, and insufficient time is not a reason to truncate internal review.

PSG can take positions that are controversial or are not unanimous, but it is vital that PSG's decision makers understand all sides of controversial issues so they can accommodate any conflicting viewpoints within PSG as much as possible. Where there are strong differences of opinion it may be preferable for PSG to refrain from taking a

position. In such situations individual PSG members can provide information and policy recommendations to agencies and decision makers.

### **III. Summary of Activities Since September 2010**

#### **1. PSG Supports Marine Preserves in Oregon**

PSG wrote the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in October 2010 to support Oregon's use of Marine Reserves and Marine Protected Areas as tools to help protect, sustain, and restore nearshore ecosystems. PSG noted that Oregon's approach compliments efforts by Washington and California to manage the California Current in an ecosystem-based manner and that successful conservation efforts should include all relevant scientific disciplines to design a system of Marine Reserves and Marine Protected Areas. Seabirds within the California Current System are an integral component of that ecosystem and should be included in any marine biodiversity conservation strategy. We noted that there are over 66 seabird colonies within the three ecological areas that are currently under consideration.

PSG urged Oregon to consider supporting research on forage species ecology and biology and to consider banning or restricting forage fisheries within Marine Protected Areas. PSG suggested establishing no-disturbance areas around sensitive seabird colonies during nesting season and protecting in particular Marbled Murrelets, Tufted Puffins, Common Murres and Black Oystercatchers. Finally, PSG asked Oregon to protect shoreline areas to conserve Black Oystercatchers and Harlequin Ducks and to manage activities on public lands adjacent to seabird colonies to deter scavengers and minimize disturbance.

#### **2. PSG Supports Seabird Habitat Conservation Plan on Kauai**

PSG wrote to the USFWS in Honolulu concerning the proposed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that was prepared by Kauai Island Utility Cooperative in November 2010. The HCP describes actions that the utility will implement, at a cost of \$11 million, to minimize, mitigate and monitor the incidental take of species listed under the Endangered Species Act. PSG noted that it had sent numerous letters to USFWS and to the Kauai utility during the past decade on these conservation issues and that it is frustrated and disturbed that the HCP process had already taken over six years. The draft HCP is in support of a proposed incidental take permit for the utility which is an interim step that will last three to five years during which time extensive studies will be undertaken to improve both our knowledge and the conservation of the endangered Hawaiian petrel, the threatened Newell's shearwater, and the band-rumped [Harcourt's] storm-petrel, a candidate species. After the interim permit expires, it will be superseded by a more robust HCP. PSG's comments focused on Newell's shearwaters because that species seems to have the gravest conservation issues on Kauai at this time.

PSG generally supported the conservation measures in the draft HCP because they are progress over the status quo. We stated that the necessary resources (utility, federal and state) should be devoted to understand fully all aspects of the biology and the conservation problems of these seabirds on Kauai. PSG agreed that it is apparent to all

concerned that scientific information relevant to developing an effective conservation program is lacking. During the autumn fledging season, Newell's shearwaters and Hawaiian petrels heading to sea are attracted to bright lights such as street lamps and hotels and resorts. Trapped in the glare, confused birds circle repeatedly until they fall to the ground from exhaustion or strike buildings or wires. We noted that the Save Our Shearwater program has operated since the 1980s and has retrieved and released 30,000 downed shearwaters. We observed that there has been a necessary focus on the light attraction issue, but that it is not clear that this is the only problem that is contributing to apparent declines in the Newell's shearwater population. PSG stated its strong belief that "success" requires an accurate diagnosis of all pertinent conservation issues. We recommended that the focus on burying or moving transmission lines inland and dimming lights be prioritized and addressed, but that other challenges to understanding the population and threats to these seabirds need to be fully explored before threats can be successfully mitigated.

PSG supported improved population estimates of Newell's shearwaters. The species was thought to be near extinction until a pig hunter on Kauai discovered a colony in 1967. In the late 1980s the estimates were 4,000 to 6,000 pairs with the center of its range on Kauai because Indian mongooses have not become established there. The colonies are very difficult to find and census, which makes accurate population estimates difficult. At sea analyses in 1995 estimated 84,000 individuals. We observed that from "near extinction" in 1967 to 84,000 birds only 28 years later suggests either that there are very large fluctuations in the population of this species or that our estimation procedures need to be greatly improved. Some radar studies indicate a decline as much as 75% between 1993 and 2008 but there have been no radar studies on half of Kauai. We noted that while the late 1980s population estimate may have been low (the mid-point estimate would be 5,000 pairs, or about 20,000 individuals assuming the non-breeding and breeding populations are about equal), the possibility must be considered that Spear's 84,000 estimate in 1995 was much too high and that differences in estimation techniques might account for some of the apparent population decline. PSG also noted while the HCP found a decline in the number of fledglings retrieved by the Save Our Shearwater program, relating this decline to the population may be misplaced because there have been significant efforts to diminish the attraction of fledgling Newell's shearwaters to lights and human structures including replacing all streetlights on the island with shielded lights. If the shielding efforts were successful fewer fledglings would be attracted to lights. Clarifying this issue is important, so that conservationists and agencies don't spend a lot of time and money unnecessarily fighting a battle that has already been won.

PSG endorsed studies to determine the extent of egg, chick and adult losses from predators such as feral cats, dogs, rats, pigs and owls. Rat and pig populations may have exploded with the demise of the sugar cane industry and the absence of efforts by cane workers to control them. In addition, biologists have observed extensive predation of Newell's shearwaters by owls. We agreed with the HCP that rat control is unlikely to be efficacious if biologists are not allowed to employ aerial broadcasting of the most effective rodenticides. PSG stated that where feasible, efforts should be made to minimize or eliminate threats from predators. Finally, where feasible, a cross-fostering

program should be undertaken at suitable predator-free locations throughout Kauai. We noted that in the late 1970s, Vernon Byrd successfully transplanted Newell's shearwaters to nest at Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge where terrestrial predators such as rats, cats, dogs and pigs are easily controlled.

### 3. PSG Expresses Concern About Status of Kittlitz's Murrelet

PSG wrote to USFWS in Anchorage to express its concern about the status of Kittlitz's Murrelet in February 2011. PSG supports the evaluation for listing of this species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. We urged USFWS to base its decision on the very best scientific information that is available. We noted that most biologists who are familiar with this species recognize the difficulties in estimating population trends for this highly mobile species and stated that assessing reproductive success and survival must be considered in their decisions.

PSG noted that relative to many other seabirds, little is known about the life history, marine and terrestrial habitat requirements, and ecology of Kittlitz's Murrelets. Populations are geographically clustered and are small in size; the current world population is estimated to be between 30,900 and 56,800 individuals. During the breeding season, this non-colonial species often feeds in coastal waters associated with tidewater glaciers, outflows of glacial streams, and recently-deglaciated areas, but also occurs in smaller numbers in marine waters adjacent to the Aleutian Islands and in northern Alaska. In glacial fjords of south-central Alaska, Kittlitz's Murrelets are more likely to occur near tidewater glaciers where near surface prey was abundant. Throughout the year, they feed primarily on schooling forage fishes and large zooplankton. The timing and route of migration and the winter range of the Kittlitz's Murrelet are poorly known, although recent satellite telemetry data confirms that this species leaves the glaciated fjords of south-central and southeastern Alaska in the late summer and fall and flies directly to the southern Bering Sea where the sea ice edge extends in the winter months. Kittlitz's Murrelets do not breed until 2–4 years of age, lay only one egg/clutch, and may not breed every year. We also suspect that, in some years, there is widespread absence of breeding effort in this species, and there is scattered evidence suggesting poor recruitment even in years in which birds breed. For these reasons, PSG stated that recovery of declining populations can be expected to be slow, even with effective actions taken to stem the decline.

PSG wrote that in the short term, Kittlitz's Murrelet populations will be most responsive to management actions that reduce direct mortality and improve survival. One principal threat that can be effectively mitigated is the incidental take of murrelets that occurs in some commercial salmon gillnet fisheries managed by the State of Alaska. As part of the National Marine Fisheries Service's Alaska Marine Mammal Observer Program, seabird bycatch is sampled in all areas where gillnet monitoring has occurred in Alaska. In those studies, Kittlitz's Murrelet mortalities have been recorded in both driftnets and set-nets. We observed that an accurate statewide mortality estimate from salmon gillnet fisheries does not exist because not all gillnet fisheries have been sampled. Kittlitz's Murrelets also would benefit in the short term from oil-spill prevention and response planning,

reducing human activities that artificially increase populations of predators (e.g., bald eagles), avoiding the disturbance of nesting birds, protecting nesting and foraging habitats, and minimizing vessel-caused disturbance in favored foraging areas (e.g., near glaciers frequented by sight-seeing tour vessels). Finally, we noted that in February 2010 PSG sponsored a symposium to summarize the status and trends of Kittlitz's Murrelet in Alaska and Russia and that peer-reviewed proceedings from this symposium would be available soon.

#### 4. PSG Supports Palmyra Rat Eradication Project

PSG wrote to USFWS in Honolulu to strongly support the Service's proposed plan to eradicate ship rats at Palmyra to aid in the conservation of seabirds and their habitat in April 2011. PSG noted that rats are notorious for their depredations on bird eggs, chicks and adults of the smaller species. The successful eradication of rats on Midway in the 1990s is but one example of how such a project allowed seabirds such as Bonin petrels and storm-petrels to increase. PSG suggested that by removing ship rats small and vulnerable seabird species such as sooty terns, brown noddies and black noddies would almost immediately benefit. In addition, many of the eight seabird species that were apparently extirpated from Palmyra by rats such as tropical (formerly Audubon's) shearwater, Christmas shearwater, wedge-tailed shearwater, Phoenix petrel, white-throated storm-petrel, Bulwer's petrel, blue noddy and gray-backed tern could potentially reappear, some very quickly. PSG also noted that since 1985 USFWS' Regional Marine Bird Policy has stated that its goal is to "remove all introduced predators from marine bird colonies on all National Wildlife Refuges and encourage their removal from all other colonies."

PSG stated that the goals of this project must be complete eradication because we should avoid situations that require perpetual control, funding and vigilance. We noted that half-measures are inefficient and waste scarce conservation resources. For this reason PSG supported the use of brodifacoum, which is capable of killing a rat after a single feeding. We noted that the techniques of aerial broadcasting of bait has greatly improved since a failed attempt to eradicate rats on Palmyra in 2001-2002, including recent successes at Rat Island (Alaska) and Anacapa Island (California). We noted that a review of the Lehua Island rat eradication project found that the use of diphacinone, a weaker rodenticide, and unreasonable restrictions on its use near the shoreline led to failure there. PSG stated that the chances of success will be improved by using large amounts of bait with high toxicity because hermit crabs, not rats, will consume much of the bait. During summer when bird populations are generally low a small number of non-breeding bristle-thighed curlews may be present at Palmyra. For this reason, PSG supported aerial broadcast of brodifacoum with proactive mitigation of risk by capturing and placing bristle-thighed curlews in cages during the poisoning episodes.

This project was carried out in two phases of widespread bait application in June 2011. Nine curlews were placed in cages and did well during their captivity. Apparently the project to eradicate rats has been a success and there have been no reports of secondary poisoning.

## 5. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Seabird Conservation Program

I was contacted in August 2011 by representatives of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to provide my thoughts on the development of NFWF's five-year, \$40 million dollar seabird project in the Pacific. While I was initially contacted because of my position in PSG and associated experience, it seemed to me that my advice would best be provided in my personal capacity. I initially had wide-ranging discussions about various conservation issues and followed up in writing on many suggestions. As part of this process I asked many other PSG members for their opinions and thoughts. I also provided extensive written comments in December on NFWF's draft work plan. I think this project has great potential for the benefit and conservation of seabirds and Scott Hall will summarize the project during the Conservation Committee meeting.

## IV. Updates on Ongoing and Past Conservation Issues

### 1. Radar Ridge Wind Farm Canceled

In November 2011 plans for the first major wind farm in Western Washington were canceled because of federal restrictions to protect the marbled murrelet, a seabird listed as threatened under the U.S Endangered Species Act. Richland-based Energy Northwest and four southwest Washington utilities spent four years and more than \$4 million trying to put 32 wind turbines on Radar Ridge near Naselle. Energy Northwest says "the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service imposed "untenable" restrictions on the wind farm because studies showed one bird could have been harmed every two years." The four participating utilities issued a unanimous decision to terminate the Radar Ridge Wind Project.

"Terminating the proposed Radar Ridge project is a recognition of the huge problems associated with trying to build a major energy facility in critical habitat for a threatened species," said Cantrell. "The fundamental problem with this project was its location. While Energy Northwest tried to find ways to lessen the project's impacts on murrelets, in the end, none of the well-intentioned mitigation measures proposed could overcome the issues of siting the project in the wrong place. The direct environmental harm caused by this proposed project, including impacts to Marbled Murrelets, far outweigh the benefits that it would provide in other areas such as reduced carbon output," Cantrell noted. There are significantly better locations to site renewable energy projects than Radar Ridge."

Radar Ridge is centrally located within an area known as the Nemah Block. A 2008 state-commissioned Science Report identified the Nemah Block as the single best place to restore Marbled Murrelet habitat on state managed lands. As part of a 1997 Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that allows timber harvest on public lands in areas potentially impacting threatened wildlife species, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) committed to "make a significant contribution to maintaining and protecting marbled murrelet populations in western Washington over the life of the HCP." The Science Report highlighted the pressing need for substantial habitat restoration across much of the DNR-managed land base in order to achieve the HCP's conservation objectives.

PSG expressed its concerns to the Washington Department of Natural Resources about this proposal in June 2009 and June 2010, focusing on the impacts of this development on marbled murrelets. PSG expressed concerned that the location of this particular facility (and not wind turbine projects in general) will likely result in direct mortality of murrelets nesting adjacent to the facility. PSG also noted the significant risk of long-term adverse effects to marbled murrelet conservation and recovery on a landscape identified as critical for species recovery.

## 2. Protection of Seabirds at Kaena Point, Hawaii

PSG wrote to the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources at least three times from 2008 to 2011 to support the erection of a predator-exclusion fence at Kaena Point, the northernmost tip of Oahu. Lindsay Young has been instrumental in moving this project forward. The fence is designed to eliminate seabird predation from dogs, cats, mongoose and rats at the Kaena Point Natural Area Reserve, especially at wedge-tailed shearwater and Laysan albatross colonies. The removal of predators and the restoration of native vegetation might encourage red-footed boobies or great frigatebirds to nest. The project is now completed and EXCo members can visit the site.

## **V. Anticipated Activities During 2012**

It is almost impossible to predict the specific issues that the Conservation Committee will address during the coming year. We ask all PSG members to bring important issues to the Conservation Committee in a timely manner. We request members to volunteer to review documents and to assist the Committee in drafting PSG letters.

**PSG 2011 Treasurer's Report**  
**Ron LeValley**

*at Business Mtg*  
*12<sup>30</sup> p*

*2-10-12*

**Financial Accounts**

PSG maintains a number of bank accounts. The operating funds are kept in a two regular checking accounts.

Regular Checking	September 30, 2010	\$78,227.61
	September 30, 2011	\$102,079.24
	January 22, 2012	\$192,992.54

Our Investment funds (Life Memberships and other specially designated monies) are kept in a mutual fund managed by Neuberger and Berman.

Investment Funds	September 30, 2010	\$126,275.74
	September 30, 2011	\$119,879.53
	January 22, 2012	\$132,010.16

A PayPal account is used to accept membership payments, contributions and other monies by credit card.

PayPal	September 30, 2010	\$498.32
	September 30, 2011	\$15,100.28
	January 22, 2012	\$1,641.62

Vivian Mendenhall maintains an account to facilitate the printing and mailing of Pacific Seabirds

Pacific Seabirds balance as of	September 30, 2010	\$1,145.10
	September 30, 2011	\$5,640.00

<b>Total Assets as of September 30, 2010</b>	<b>\$206,146.77</b>
<b>Total Assets as of September 30, 2011</b>	<b>\$242,699.05</b>
<b>(Total Assets as of January 22, 2012 –does not include Oahu expenses!!)</b>	<b>\$329,989.84</b>

**PSG Accounts as of January 22, 2012 (modified)**

**Cash on Hand**

**Accounts**

Chase Checking	\$192,742.89
North Valley Bank Checking	\$249.65
PayPal	\$1,641.62
Neuberger Berman Investments	\$135,355.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$329,989.84</b>

**Allotted Funds**

Craig Harrison Conservation Fund	\$7,464.18
Endowment Fund	\$135,355.68
Marine Ornithology	\$3,877.48
PSG 2012 Hawaii	\$85,045.83
Student Travel Fund	\$825.95
Seabirds.net, WSC Publications, Databases	\$37,000.00
World Seabird Conference Seed Money	\$12,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$281,569.12</b>

*20,000 - separate (explain)*  
*17,000 - separate (explain)*

**Unallocated Funds** **\$48,420.72**

*few motion - pending elaborations*  
*Ken M 2nd*

# Revised Budget

## Accounting and Budget

	Proposed 2010-2011	Actual 2010-2011	Proposed 2011-2012	Notes
<b>INCOME</b>				
Conservation Fund		\$1,152.18		1
Endowment Fund				2
Life Membership		\$1,620.00		
Membership	\$10,000.00	\$8,883.18	\$10,000.00	
Institutional Subscriptions		\$525.00	\$500.00	
Books Publications	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Tax Refund		\$6,618.68		3
General Fund		\$19,751.00		4
Marine Ornithology		\$2,470.00	\$1,500.00	5
Student Travel		\$50.00	\$500.00	6
Long Beach Meeting		\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	7
Ohau Meeting		\$18,323.36		8
Misc				
World Seabird Conference	\$11,000.00	\$94,095.15	\$59,092.37	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21,000.00</b>	<b>\$162,488.55</b>	<b>\$80,592.37</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Bank Charge	(\$1,500.00)	(\$780.45)	(\$1,500.00)	9
Conservation Fund		(\$6,110.00)		
Dues And Subscriptions	(\$1,400.00)	(\$1,998.53)		10
Insurance	(\$1,400.00)	(\$1,400.00)	(\$1,500.00)	
2012 Oahu Meeting		(\$22,472.16)		11
Misc	(\$500.00)		(\$500.00)	
Marine Ornithology		(\$8,191.99)	(\$4,000.00)	12
Office Supplies	(\$75.00)		(\$75.00)	
Postage	(\$200.00)	(\$106.00)	(\$100.00)	
Professional Fees	(\$1,000.00)	(\$575.00)	(\$750.00)	
Publications		(\$6,500.00)	(\$6,500.00)	13
Student Travel			(\$850.00)	14
State Taxes	(\$20.00)	(\$133.27)	(\$150.00)	
Federal Taxes		(\$6,618.68)		15
Chair's Discretionary Funds	(\$1,000.00)	\$0.00	(\$1,000.00)	
Lifetime Achievement Awards		\$0.00	(\$4,000.00)	
Telephone		\$0.00		
WSU products		\$0.00	<del>(\$21,700.00)</del>	
World Seabird Conference 2010		(\$83,792.98)	37,000	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$7,095.00)</b>	<b>(\$138,679.06)</b>	<b>(\$42,625.00)</b>	
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$13,905.00</b>	<b>\$23,809.49</b>	<b>\$37,967.37</b>	

Notes:

1. See Conservation Fund Report

public.  
seabird.net  
db

2. Miscellaneous donations in conjunction with dues payments
3. Refund received after appealing penalty from not filing taxes on time.
4. Income From World Seabird Conference to PSG
5. Income through PayPal account for Subscriptions and Page Charges
6. Income from Silent Auction and donations.
7. Income received from the Long Beach meeting **NOTE \$9K more is coming.**
8. Based on early budget and includes Midway trip. **This will likely change!**
9. Mostly PayPal fees.
10. IUCN, Ornithological Council
11. Based on present income and includes Midway trip. **This will likely change!**
12. Payment after PayPal charges from Subscriptions and Page Charges
13. Pacific Seabirds
14. Amount on hand for Oahu meeting
15. Tax Penalty paid for not filing, refunded (see above)
16. Publications, Seabird.net, Databases

15. Tax Penalty paid for not filing, refunded (see above)

16. See World Seabird Conference Summary

**Membership**

As of December 20, 2011 PSG has:

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
Life Members	<b>81</b>	<b>80</b>
Regular and Family	<b>371</b>	<b>383</b>
Student	<b>109</b>	<b>84</b>
Corresponding	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
Honorary	<b>1</b>	<b>1 (John Cooper)</b>
Total	<b>597</b>	<b>555</b>

Membership has remained steady. We continue to gather many new members at our annual meetings. We continue to lose members each year after the meeting that they attend! Membership renewals will go out in January 2012 along with the notification of the Pacific Seabirds recent issue.

**Report to the Pacific Seabird Group EXCO from Secretary, Heather Major  
For 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Turtle Bay, Hawaii, February 7-11, 2012**

Meeting Minutes

Minutes from EXCO's October 27<sup>th</sup> conference call were distributed to EXCO for comment in early November. An updated version of these minutes were distributed along with the minutes from EXCO's September 2011 meeting in Victoria in late January for approval during EXCO's February meeting in Hawaii. Summary minutes for Pacific Seabirds will be sent to the Editor of *Pacific Seabirds* following their approval. Approved minutes will also be sent in their entirety to Annette Henry for the webpage.

Handbook

Work on updating the handbook is continuing lead by Past-Chair. The latest version has been distributed to EXCO for comments.

Secretary duties need to be updated to include:

*“Maintain a file of archived original unedited minutes”*

## PSG Past-Chair Report for 2012 EXCO Meeting, Turtle Bay, Oahu, HI

**PSG Awards Committee Members:** Tom Good (Chair), Pat Jodice, Kim Rivera

**Lifetime Achievement Award:** John Cooper

**Special Achievement Award:** None

**PSG 2012 Travel Awards:** 17 students and 4 non US/Canada scientists

Last Name	First Name	Initial awards	Status (Jan 2012)	Final awards	Country
BORKER	Abe	\$245.00	Confirmed	\$320.00	USA! USA!
DAVIS	Mikaela	\$245.00	Cannot attend		Canada
DAVIS	Shanti	\$180.00	Confirmed	\$255.00	Canada
GOODENOUGH	Katherine	\$245.00	Confirmed	\$320.00	USA! USA!
GRACE	Jacquelyn	\$245.00	Confirmed	\$320.00	USA! USA!
INGENLOFF	Kate	\$180.00	Cannot attend		USA! USA!
KAPPES	Peter	\$225.00	Confirmed	\$300.00	USA! USA!
LAWONN	James	\$195.00	Confirmed	\$270.00	USA! USA!
MAFTEI	Mark	\$180.00	Confirmed	\$255.00	Canada
MILLOW	Christopher	\$210.00	Confirmed	\$285.00	USA! USA!
ORBEN	Rachel	\$230.00	Confirmed	\$305.00	USA! USA!
SCHMIDT	Annie	\$245.00	Confirmed	\$320.00	USA! USA!
YOUNG	Rebecca	\$245.00	Confirmed	\$320.00	USA! USA!
ANDO	Haruko	\$275.00	Confirmed	\$350.00	Japan
McDUIE	Fiona	\$275.00	Cannot attend		Australia
MITKUS	Mindaugas	\$300.00	Confirmed	\$375.00	Sweden
PINET	Patrick	\$280.00	Cannot attend		France
		<b>4,000.00</b>		<b>3,995.00</b>	
Last Name	First Name	Initial awards	Status (Jan 2012)	Final awards	Country
LAVERS	Jennifer	\$400.00	Cannot attend		Australia
SATO	Mayumi	\$400.00	Confirmed	500	Japan
TAKASHIMA	Midori	\$400.00	Confirmed	500	Japan
URA	Tatsuya	\$400.00	Confirmed	500	Japan
YAMAMOTO	Yutaka	\$400.00	Confirmed	500	Japan
		<b>2,000.00</b>		<b>2,000.00</b>	

I think I have mentioned before that non-US/Canada students became a category in the recent past but it is not in the PSG Handbook. I consulted Lindsay about the overall budget and my awards committee members about it before soliciting for this category, but it seemed prudent to do it for a meeting in Hawaii when Asian student members might want to attend. Also, travel to

Hawaii is more expensive than other meetings, so we wanted to offer amounts that weren't insulting to a potential student (that goes for US/Canada or non-US/Canada students). As it was, some no-shows made all the offers a bit more generous than first anticipated).

**PSG Student Presentation Awards:** 31 talks and 16 posters are being considered for "Best Student Paper" and Best Student Poster" Awards.

A number of PSG members (n=15) have graciously volunteered their services as judges.

We will meet briefly before talks begin on the evening of Tuesday, 7 February 2012 to discuss the student judging process and again after the coffee break on Friday, 10 February 2012 to tally scores and make decisions on winners and runners-up.

**PSG 2013:** PSG 2013 will be in Portland, Oregon. Holly will report out later in meeting.

**PSG 2014:** We have a proposal from Juneau from Adrian Gall, and an informal proposal for the Monterey area from Hannah Nevins and Josh Adams.

**PSG 2015:** Discussions of late have emphasized that we would be best served having meetings in the near future play to our core membership areas (to "recover" from meetings in Japan, Hawaii, and Victoria). Semi-Ah-Moo in Blaine, WA has expressed a desire to have us back. The greater Seattle, WA area is another possibility. Other thoughts include San Diego/La Jolla, CA and the San Francisco Bay area.

## **PSG Handbook Revision Update**

Not really a Past-Chair duty (according to the PSG Handbook).

Frustrated from relying on an inaccurate version as Chair-Elect and Chair, I assigned myself this task as Chair. Mark Hipfner (as Secretary) and Doug Bertram (as Chair) had worked on a version that was passed on to Greg Balogh and then to me. I have combed through the Handbook for inaccuracies, duplication, etc. and have circulated a draft to EXCO and committee coordinators. Some sections need more revision than others. For example, Doug Bertram circulated a description of the former Chairs' meetings, duties, etc. to that group, but it was not incorporated in Mark's February 2010 version. I have tried to fold that into the current draft (January 2012), but somebody from that group needs to look that section over.

I'm not sure revisions are usually approved by EXCO, as the Chair and the Secretary are normally updating the Handbook annually with bylaws changes, etc., but we might think about doing it in this case.

Respectfully submitted;

Tom Good

2012 PSG Past-Chair

**PSG 2012 HAWAII EXCO REPORT**

**Location:** Turtle Bay Resort, Haleiwa, Hawaii

**Dates:** February 7-10, 2012

**# Registered Attendees:** 283

**# Abstracts submitted:** 205

**Budget:**

<b>Turtle Bay Resort, Honolulu, Hawaii</b>			
<b>Fixed Costs:</b>	<b>unit cost</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>total</b>
Plenary talks (\$1000 airfare/hotel, \$300 food)	\$1,300.00	2	\$2,600.00
Lifetime Achievement Award (travel only)	\$3,000.00	1	\$3,000.00
Student Travel Awards			\$4,000.00
Foreign travel awards (Based on past PSG's)			\$2,000.00
Poster Display rental		20	\$3,000.00
Program Printing			\$1,613.00
2.15% credit card processing fee			\$3,600.00
Conference bag		300	\$485.00
Pens			\$100.50
T-shirts			\$1,051.00
Volunteer gift cards	\$25.00	27	\$675.00
Misc office supplies and name tags			\$300.00
<b>Resort Specific Costs</b>			
Meeting room rental			\$5,000.00
AV rentals			\$3,400.00
AM/PM break food/drink 3 days			\$19,320.00
Light dinner for poster reception (cost/pp)	\$50.00	280	\$20,775.00
Banquet- rental, food,		170	\$20,500.00
Student mixer cheese display			\$300.00
Hawaii GE tax	4.71%		\$395.81
<b>Subtotal Resort Specific Costs</b>			<b>\$69,690.81</b>
<b>Grand Total Expenses</b>			<b>\$92,115.31</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Sponsorships			\$2,500.00
Registration			\$72,205.00
Silent Auction Proceeds			\$1,000.00
T shirt sales			\$1,700.00
Banquet			\$11,600.00
Field trip net income			\$17,000.00

<b>Income total:</b>			<b>\$106,005.00</b>
<b>Total Profit:</b>			<b>\$13,889.69</b>

**Status on Makaha refund**

Upon closing at the end of October, Makaha resort indicated that the deposit should be received within 30 days and that it would be issued from their parent company, Northwynd Resorts. Once 30 days had elapsed, a demand letter written by a legal council was sent to both Makaha (who had since closed its doors and disconnected their phones) and Northwynd. A better business bureau complaint was filed in early December. Phone calls and e-mails to Northwynd were not returned until January. The representative reached with Northwynd in January indicated that they were “in discussions” with lenders and everyone will be repaid (“vendors and the like”) if those are successful. PSG’s legal council told him PSG was not a vendor and they had basically stolen their deposit money if it had not been set aside. The demand letter was re-sent in January and nothing has moved since.

**Anticipated financial outcome**

If the Makaha refund is realized, then the anticipated net profit from PSG 2012 is expected to be ~\$14,000. If the deposit is not returned then the net loss is \$7,000. It is expected that PSG will eventually receive the deposit back from Makaha but that it will take some time.

**Suggestions for future PSG meetings**

Do not initiate discussions with any hotels that are currently, or expect to be under renovation at any point before or immediately after the meeting. While it was impossible to anticipate the situation with Makaha, the word renovation should raise red flags.

A second suggestion would be to have deposit money in an escrow account or some other kind of third party account so that in the event that the hotel cannot or does not honor their end of the contract, we are not stuck in this situation again.

Improvements for future meetings that have already been made include compiling all previous meeting statistics (rooms reserved, rooms used, # attendees, reg rates etc) onto a summary tab and including all previous years budgets in the same excel file. This way future local chairs have a single spreadsheet that can provide most of the past history of PSG meetings and assist them with negotiating room blocks and working out their budget.

The second major improvement that was made this year was the use of regonline as a registration system. This allowed for relatively seamless registration once set up, and the funds were transferred daily into PSG’s bank account which reduced the risk associated with having our registration fees sitting in a third party account. In addition, creating a membership password, and issuing it only to current members meant that our treasurer was (finally!) able to get all participants current on their membership dues. For 2013, the membership renewal option will be included on the registration site so that these two things can both be done at the same time. The registration site was also able to generate name badges automatically and print sophisticated reports very easily. The cost of the site was split between participants (as an extra ‘processing fee’) and PSG so that it was less expensive than previous options PSG has used. We have set this up so that it can be used for future meetings with relatively ease.

**MARINE ORNITHOLOGY**  
**Report to Pacific Seabird Group EXCO, January 2012**

**Tony Gaston, Managing Editor/Editor-in-Chief**

**Organization**

In 2011 Scott Hatch, who had been our North American Editor since 2005, decided to call it quits. Scott was a really exceptional editor and I would like to pay fulsome tribute to the time and energy that he devoted to the journal. I found myself invariably in agreement with his editorial decisions and I myself became a little lazy about editing because papers coming via Scott were always in an excellent state with respect to formatting and style and virtually typo-free. During his tenure, Scott probably handled about half the papers flowing through Marine Ornithology because we had, and continue to have, a preponderance of papers from North America. His was a big job and he did it splendidly. If I have done one thing right in managing Marine Ornithology, it was inviting Scott to be an editor.

Scott's departure coincided with my own decision to alter the structure of the journal away from the "Regional Editor" model, in which I was mainly a Managing Editor, towards a more typical structure with an Editor-in-Chief and a list of Associate Editors. Instead of papers being submitted to Regional Editors, under the new structure they all come to me and I assign them to Associates. The AEs then return them to me for a final decision. This system, already in action, should improve the consistency of decision-making and also short-circuit the system by turning back papers clearly inadequately prepared or off-topic.

The restructuring was mentioned in last year's report to PSG Exco and was discussed at a lunch-time meeting of the editors during the World Seabird Conference in September, where it met with general agreement. Tony Diamond, Rob Barrett and Peter Dann remain from the previous structure, becoming Associate Editors, while Alan Burger has shifted from being Review Editor to becoming an Associate Editor. In addition, I recruited Sebastien Descamps (Norsk Polar Institute, Norway), Peter Evans (Seawatch Foundation, UK), Nina Karnovsky (Pomona College, CA), Kathy Kuletz (F&WS, Alaska) and Yan Ropert-Coudert (CNRS, Strasburg, France) as additional AEs. Pat Baird (Simon Fraser U, Vancouver, BC) has taken over as Book Review Editor. These changes will be evident with the next volume year (vol 40, 2012) and will be accompanied by a change in cover format and perhaps some website tweaking.

Another change I have not reported, but which may be significant is that our technical editor from 2004, Ann Fotheringham-Brown, resigned in 2010. Her successor, Carolyn Brown, another Ottawa-based editor, worked previously with Canada's National Research Council Journals and also acts as a publishing consultant. She has been a good source of advice on matters other than editing, so getting her participation (suggested by Ann) may have been a lucky break.

Recently, Akiko Shoji, my former graduate student, has been helping me with rounding up page charges, as well as with mailing.

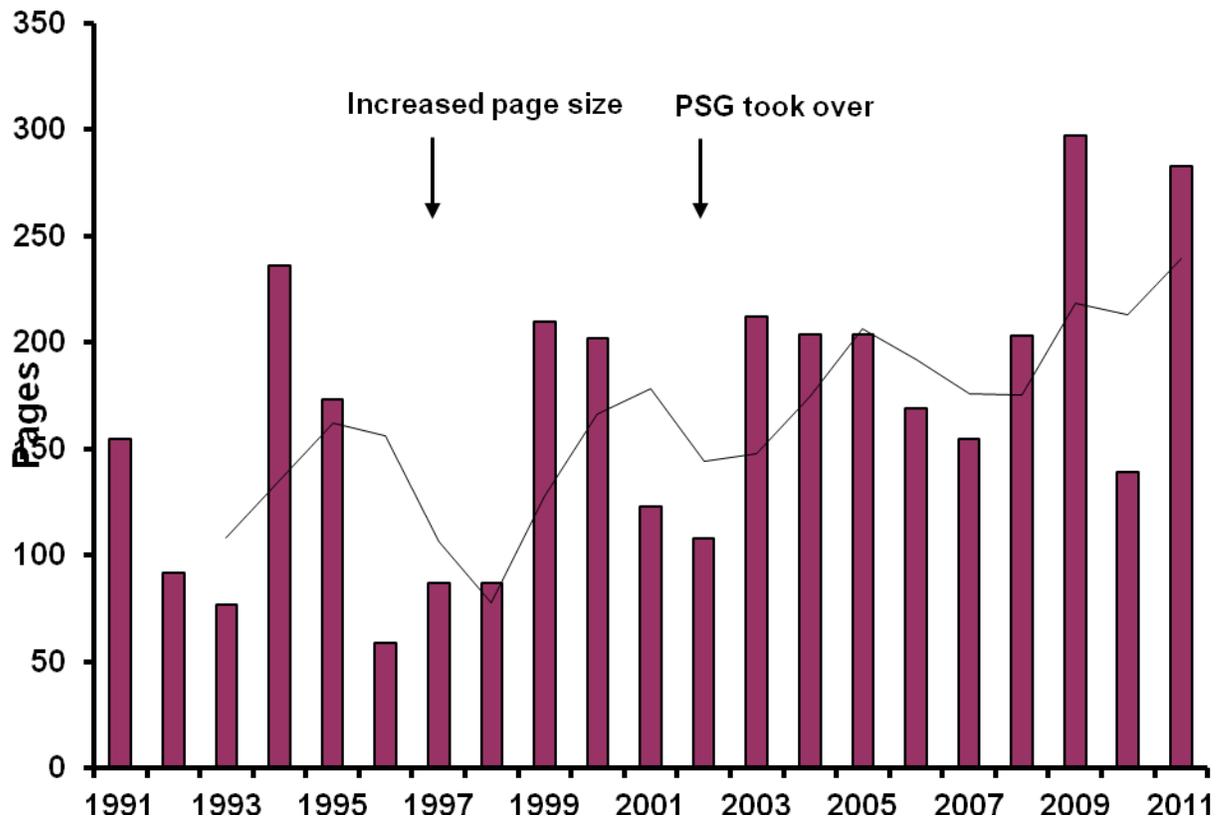
### **Summary of recent issues**

After a very bumper volume year in 2009, with 3 issues and 297 pages published, the 2010 year was much smaller, only 139 pages. This taught me a lesson that it is better to spread things out a bit, rather than trying to cram everything on hand into every issue. However, 2011 saw us back up to our maximum size with 283 pages in two issues. Material in the pipe suggests that we will be able to produce another good issue in April 2012. The size of the journal has increased from an average of 136 pages in the decade before we took over, to an average of 230 pages in the last four years. However, the increase is greater than that, because the current format allows for more words per page than the earlier one. In 2011 we published >2000 000 words.

The size of the journal is not really a great way to evaluate our success (although it probably is a good indicator of the amount of work involved). To date, we have refused relatively few papers, preferring instead to put time and effort into tutoring weaker authors to produce something useful. If we can afford this approach, I would like to continue it, because that is part of our mission – to increase the availability of information on seabirds. I think we should continue to publish anything on seabirds that constitutes sound, non-trivial, science.

The table below summarises the papers published and the authorship of volumes 31-39 to illustrate the current state of the journal.

Issue	Total pages	Forum	Papers	Short notes	Reviews	Authors
31(1)	94	0	11	1	2	36
31(2)	118	0	15	0	0	44
2003 combined	212	0	26	1	2	
32(1)	120	0	11	6	1	61
32(2)	84	0	5	6	2	33
2004 combined	204	0	16	12	3	
33(1)	73	1	7	5	1	44
33(2)	131	1	13	3	5	61
2005 combined	204	2	20	8	6	
34(1)	86	1	8	5	3	42
34(2)	83	0	12	1	1	33
2006 combined	169	1	20	6	4	
35(1)	88	0	9	3	4	42
35(2)	67	0	8	0	3	22
2007 combined	155	0	17	3	7	
36(1)	82	1	8	3	4	34
36(2)	120	0	12	5	3	57
2008 combined	202	1	20	8	7	
37(1)	95	1	11	0	2	41
37(2)	86	1	11	0	0	25
37(3)	113	2	13	8	1	63
2009 combined	297	4	35	8	3	
38(1)	67	1	7	3	4	39
38(2)	72	1	8	2	3	42
2010 combined	139	2	15	5	7	
39(1)	145	1	13	3	4	75
39(2)	138	0	15	4	4	60
2011 combined	283	1	28	7	8	



Changes in numbers of pages published in Marine Ornithology since 1991

### Impact

Because we are not listed by ISI, Marine Ornithology still does not have a citation index from them. However, other indices suggest that we are doing better than you might anticipate. Scimago ([www.scimagojr.com](http://www.scimagojr.com)) produces a rather different index of impact (SJR Index) that gives MO a score of 0.046. This compares with 0.079 for Condor, 0.044 for Bird Cons International and 0.041 for Waterbirds. We rank in the second quartile of both their “Oceanography” and “Animal Science and Zoology” lists, so there are many, many journals below us. We still do not have our papers posted on SORA – I have left this to Patrick Jodice who has made little headway to date.

### Subscriptions

Currently, Marine Ornithology is being sent to 27 individual and 42 institutional subscribers. In addition, 29 *gratis* copies are mailed to collaborators, deposit libraries, editors and one life member (we no longer offer a life membership). This means a total mailing of 98 copies. I print 130 copies of each issue to ensure I have a stock of back issues, but I might reduce that to 120, as there is not much demand for back-issues. I can and do increase the print-run where

symposia are involved and symposium organisers pay for additional copies. Marine Ornithology currently goes to 53 permanent institutions (either subscribers or deposit libraries) in the following countries: US (24), UK (9), Australia (3), South Africa (4), France (1), Italy (2), Netherlands (2), New Zealand (3), Norway (1), Poland (2), and Germany (2). The numbers have been pretty stable since 2007 when the raising of rates for South African subscribers caused the shedding of quite a few.

### **Budget**

Starting with the 2009 volume year and getting more insistent as we proceed, I have been requesting page charges. We currently charge \$30/page and an additional \$70 if there is colour on the page. In the past two years approximately 50% of non-symposium authors paid – most of those with agency affiliations and a few academics. In addition, all costs were found by the conveners to cover the last three symposia published: Salish Sea and Indian Ocean Seabirds in 2009, Kittlitz's Murrelet in 2011. Consequently, although I budget with a view to asking PSG for up to \$6000/annum, we actually have not requested any money from PSG since 2008, when we received \$3000. On average we have received approximately \$2000/year from PSG since the PSG took over responsibility for MO. Given that I work on the idea that supporting societies will contribute \$1/member/year and that PSG membership sits around 500, the additional cost to PSG has been only about \$1500/year.

The strength of the Canadian dollar continues to be a source of concern, as all our income is in US\$\$, while most of the expenses are in CN\$\$\$. The Canadian dollar has been close to or above parity with the US\$ all of the past year. If this continues, I may raise the subscription rates again in 2013 and probably the page charges as well.

Another recent innovation has been the use of Paypal for subscriptions and page charges. These payments go through the PSG Treasurer, as I do not want to set up a Paypal account myself. The main effect of this innovation is that we have added a few individual subscribers. It remains to be seen whether these continue, or whether people mainly wanted to get copies of issues in which they had written papers. There is a slight falling off in the number of Institutional subscribers, but this loss of income has been counterbalanced by an increase in revenue from page charges.

I cannot provide a decent statement of the finances right now because the costs of layout and printing for the past two issues still have not been invoiced. Suffice to say that I have enough on hand to pay those bills and produce the first issue for 2012, so I do not envisage any problems. The books (spreadsheets) are available for inspection any time.

### **The website**

I continue to be most grateful to Ben Saenz, our *pro-bono* webmaster, for his very efficient handling of the web site.

### **The Future**

I approached PSG and other supporting Societies to ask if they wanted a review. In my last report, I invited PSG to develop such a review in 2011. To date, no one has showed any interest in doing so, so there has been no outside review. The journal is still far short of where I would like to see it. I would like to see posting on acceptance, more support from advertising and page charges, acceptance by ISI and proper citation indexing. If we can get ISI recognition we have a chance to attract more good quality papers and raise the standard of the science we publish. However, we do want to continue to be an outlet for all legitimate contributions on seabirds, irrespective of their contribution to science at large. In the longer term this may mean expanding the size of the journal.

If the journal is to be expanded much beyond its current size, I think we shall need to take a more professional approach. To date, the only people being paid are the technical editor (Carolyn Brown), the layout team (Reber Creative) and the printers. I suspect that some financial inducement might be necessary to attract a suitable Editor-in-Chief if he/she is to do more than I have. Also, we may need to start paying our webmaster, although Ben has never hinted at being over-worked. However, if we went to post-on-acceptance he probably would need to put aside more time. If we want to spend more we shall have to generate more revenue. Other options on the table include dropping the printed issue, adopting an online review process (presumably through one of the existing providers) and affiliation with WSC (if such an organisation actually appears).

Although I get some satisfaction in editing and producing *Marine Ornithology*, I recognise that the journal would probably benefit from a more dynamic Editor-in-Chief. I find myself rather less active and engaged than I used to be. Even if I still had all my youthful energy intact, after eleven years, I am certain that a change at the top would be beneficial for the Journal. It is in the nature of things that change is best achieved by bringing in new blood.

**Consequently, I would like to make a strong recommendation to the PSG Exco that you identify and recruit a new Editor-in-Chief as of 2013.** There might be an advantage to keeping the position in North America, but we don't have to be inflexible on that. As I indicated before, I would be happy to continue doing the finances for the journal, which would remove one less-agreeable aspect from the Editor's job, making it more attractive to candidates. I would also be happy to have an overlap year to accustom the new editor to the tasks involved.

Expanding and upgrading the journal, along with generating the necessary additional revenue, are not trivial tasks. They really need to be undertaken within the context of a general review of PSG's publications. I think that there are two

options – (1) for PSG, via the publications committee, to take a more active role in managing the journal; (2) for PSG to formally “spin off” Marine Ornithology, with the journal constituted as an independent foundation or incorporated as a business. Right now the publisher is still registered as the “African Seabird Group” and the country of publication is South Africa. We probably should do something about that. To date, the PSG Exco has pretty much had a free ride as far as thinking about or organising Marine Ornithology. **However, whatever future direction Marine Ornithology takes, I think it is up to PSG to provide the engine.** I would like the Exco to convene a publications workshop at the 2013 meeting where these matters can be discussed. It would be essential to have the new Editor-in-Chief selected and present at that time, so this gives a good deadline to aim for. We have a good foundation now – so let’s really make this thing go.

And please, **can we have some reaction to this report**

All the best

Tony Gaston

Managing Editor/Editor-in-Chief

**Thanks**

In addition to myself, the editorial team for 2010-11 was: Scott Hatch of USA (North America and Asia), Tony Diamond of Canada (N America east coast and Caribbean), Rob Barrett of Norway (Europe), and Peter Dann of Australia (Southern Hemisphere). Alan Burger was Review Editor. I would like to thank them all for their excellent efforts. I would also like to offer sincere thanks (again) to Ben Saentz, our webmaster, to Carolyn Brown, our technical editor, and to Reber Creative, our layout team. Perhaps some thanks could be recorded at the PSG AGM for these individuals.

# REPORT OF THE *PACIFIC SEABIRDS* EDITOR TO THE PSG EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Vivian Mendenhall, 7 February 2012

## A. Issues of *Pacific Seabirds* published since September 2010:

Volume 37, number 1, Spring 2010 (published June 2011). 288 hard copies were mailed—200 domestic, 88 foreign. Costs were \$1371.61 for printing and mail handling, \$444.72 for postage. The printing company initially overlooked the Institutions sheet of the mailing list (the only time in 21 issues they've done this); they paid for expedited mailing of those copies.

Volume 37, number 2, Fall 2010 (published December 2011). 288 hard copies were mailed—200 domestic, 88 foreign. Costs were \$1,921.10 for printing and mail handling; postage cost \$126.13 for domestic mailing, \$372.17 for non-U.S. copies.

Volume 38, combined issue with numbers 1 and 2, Spring and Fall 2011 (published February 2012). The issue will be printed and mailed the week of our meeting. Costs are not known yet. This double issue should catch *Pacific Seabirds* up with the real-life year and season; I will try to keep it that way.

## B. Proposed editorial policy:

I propose to include the following in the journal: "*Pacific Seabirds* reflects the policies of PSG's Executive Council. On issues for which such a policy has not been expressed, the journal aims for an unbiased presentation of all points of view."

*Rationale:* There have been a few concerns over the years about articles or "Forum" opinion columns that presented only one side of a story. That's because I've printed all submissions (aside from peer-reviewed articles) as received, subject only to minor editing for style, readability, and accuracy. Some people felt there was a lack of fairness: people or agencies who were criticized should be given the chance to add their viewpoint, or they could at least be warned about something they might feel was hostile.

In the past month, two such concerns have arisen: (1) an opinion piece on whether a new international seabird group should exist; (2) a paragraph about PSG meetings that would specify which ones have lost money (which in most cases would "finger" an individual LOCO chair). After discussing the options with professional journalists, I decided to postpone both pieces until the relevant people have been invited to reply.

*Back and forth:* Several PSG members have objected to *that* decision. There is no cut-and-dried answer. I would run some opinion pieces alone, e.g. those that discuss a policy rather than criticizing named entities or people.

Some examples of "fairness" decisions: (1) Wikipedia suggests that "fairness" means "taking sides on an issue would be permitted as long [the reporting] was accurate and the other side was given a fair chance to respond." (Wiki also describes plenty of arguments on the issue.) (2) A letter criticizing a journal or magazine article is often published, followed by an invited rebuttal from the original authors. (3) An exposé of ghastly working conditions in Apple's overseas factories included the sentence, "Apple was provided with extensive summaries of this article, but the company declined to comment."

*Sources* for the above examples: (1) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity\\_%28journalism%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_%28journalism%29); (2) *Condor* 113(4):709-712, 2011; *Scientific American* 305(6):8, December 2011. (3) *New York Times*, 25 January 2012 ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)).

C. **Pat Baird** has agreed to be Associate Editor and has already proven very helpful!

D. **Two minor problems:**

(1) Several Regional Representatives didn't pay attention to my deadline for 2011 Reports, which is why only half of the reports appeared in the recent issue. I realize I also have taken deadlines lightly in recent years, so there's an excuse. But I plan to be more dogmatic in the future. I'll try to notify contributors early and often. The NEXT deadline (for the Spring issue) is MARCH 20, 2012.

(2) About 10 long-time members seem to have changed their street address but never notified PSG. They are not getting the journal, obviously. Two cases may be due to our mistake or the post office's, but the others are real. (Note: the U.S. post office will only forward mail for a year; I have no idea what other countries' post offices do.) We don't have time to pursue all oblivious members for their updates.

I wish the PO wouldn't paste the "Undeliverable" sticker over the original address, so I have no idea who the addressee was (sometimes I can deduce it by peering through the back of the envelope) . . .

<b>PSG 2013 - summary comparison of draft bids (1 Feb 2012)</b>		<b>Hilton</b>	<b>Marriott Waterfront</b>
<b>Minimum anticipated revenue (guest rooms + food &amp; beverage)</b>		89,643	70,652
<b>Occupancy tax and service charge</b>		14,055	11,707
<b>TOTAL MINIMUM COMMITMENT, PSG (est.)</b>		<b>103,698</b>	<b>82,359</b>
<b>GUEST ROOMS</b>	Dates (room nights)	18-24 Feb	11-17 Feb
	Room rates, reg. (1-4 people)	113-133	113
	Room rates, student (1-4 people)	99	113
	Anticipated total revenue	59,643	80% of blocks
	Occupancy tax	12.5%	12.5%
	Comp rooms	1/50	1/50
<b>FOOD &amp; BEVERAGE</b>	Commitment to waive rental fee	30,000	25000
	Service charge	22%	24%
<b>ADDITIONAL CONCESSIONS</b>	Free internet access in guest rooms	yes	
	Parking passes	5	
<b>OTHER</b>	Rental fee for event space (waived)	34,000	40,550
<b>PROS/CONS</b>	<b>HILTON</b>	<b>MARRIOTT</b>	
<b>PSG \$\$ commitment*</b>	Higher	Lower	
<b>Event space*</b>	Good fit	Huge	
	Really nice	Just renovated - am seeing it Thursday	
<b>Travel from/to airport</b>	Straight shot from airport on light rail	4-5 blks from rail (with train change), 1 blk from bus	
<b>Walkability</b>	Very high	Very high	

**\*Notes:**

Marriott on the whole is cheaper than Hilton (in response, however, Hilton has come down on room rates and min. F&B commitment; they told me the total spent on F&B at the 2005 joint mtg was >\$80K). Marriott has been undergoing renovation; they're not quite done and only with some pressing was I able to get a walk-through before Hawaii (tomorrow afternoon), so I'll have more info to share at ExCo on Tuesday. Based on Marriott's layout specs, the event space is HUGE compared with Hilton - we might feel like peas rattling around in there

Marriott's layout specs, the event space is HUGE compared with Hilton - we might feel like peas rattling around in there.

A/V question: Do we typically rent projectors from the venue or request loaners from agencies/universities? Will have a bid and rates from Hilton before end of week.

Alternate lodgings: cheaper hotels are scattered all over downtown; rates for a semi-decent place run around \$85/night for a double.

## ELECTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT 2012 ELECTIONS

To: Patrick Jodice, Chair, PSG 2011-2012

Cc: The ExCo of PSG

28 January 2012

Surprisingly, 66 members out of 739 voted (8%)—surprising that anyone voted, because there was not one opposition candidate. So thanks to all of you stalwart members for exercising your right to vote. In comparison, the last election that had more than one candidate running for an office only had 95 out of 527 (18%) voting, and in the run-off region of 27 members, only six members voted (22%). Kind of mimics USA voter turnout. There were some write-ins, notably George Tirebiter, and I have kept these in a “PSG Futures” file for upcoming elections. Always feel free, as is your member’s right, to nominate someone you think would be a good leader.

So thank-you to all 66 of you who did vote. We found some bounced email addresses, so those of you who have changed email addresses in the past 18 months (since the last election cycle), please let the secretary Heather Major, and the treasurer, Ron Le Valley, know. They are responsible for keeping up the current list of members’ addresses. Most of the emails from Pomona College bounced, so if someone could follow through on that, it would be good.

And all of you please read the upcoming issue of Pacific Seabirds. It will be hot off the presses on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February we hope. In this issue are two articles about PSG you need to read. The first is “How the Executive Council Works,” which outlines all of the jobs on the ExCo. The second article is “How PSG Runs,” which summarizes the day-to-day operations of PSG, who is responsible for what in PSG, and how PSG funds itself. If you did not know before, you will after you read it. Anyhow, please read these articles and consider volunteering for PSG, either as a volunteer on one of the committees, or on the ExCo. Any member can sit on in during the ExCo meetings, and I would urge members to do this to acquaint themselves with PSG’s operations and its leadership. Remember, this is an all-volunteer organization, and it would be good for you to take an active part in it. It is a rewarding experience.

Here are the members who were elected for the rotations for 2012. Their terms run for two years. Terms for all newly elected Executive Council will begin on the adjournment of that annual meeting.

Chair-Elect: Doug Forsell

Treasurer: Ron LeValley

### **Regional Reps:**

Alaska: Adrian Gall

Northern California: Hannah Nevins

Europe/Africa: Steffen Opper

Asia: Yutaki Watanuki

Student Representative: Sarah Thomsen

Respectfully submitted

Patricia Baird, Ph.D., Elections Chair

## Corresponding Membership Committee

26 January, 2012

**(Melanie Steinkamp, John Piatt, Jessica Hardesty and Malcolm Coulter)**

The Corresponding Membership Committee provides PSG membership to researchers/conservationists in developing countries. Committee members are: Melanie Steinkamp, John Piatt, Jessica Hardesty and Malcolm Coulter. To retain “Corresponding Membership”, recipients are asked to provide a brief report on research or conservation in their area at least every three years for *Pacific Seabirds*; we suggest more frequent submissions. But we also have included other communications such as the Indian Ocean Seabird Group Newsletter that was put on the PSG List-Serv and have recently included BirdLife Pacific to increase our communication with that group.

We originally had eight memberships to provide and, as this costs PSG minimally, we were allotted another eight at the Monterrey meeting, for a total of 16.

Changes over the past year:

John Cooper is moving on! We held him as a Corresponding Member in appreciation for his great contribution to establishing *Marine Ornithology*. He is duly moving on to become our first *Honorary Member of the Corresponding Committee of PSG*. *We offer him our great congratulations!*

We have replaced Amit Sukal (BirdLife Pacific) with Don Stewart because Amit has moved on and Don, in charge, will keep communication flowing.

We presently have seven Corresponding Members from China, Colombia (2), Fiji, Ecuador, The Indian Ocean and Peru.

We are a small, slow-acting committee. Malcolm has stepped down as chair of this committee, and Melanie is now taking the lead. We look forward to her leadership.

We encourage suggestions to include others: contact: Melanie Steinkamp:  
[Melanie\\_Steinkamp@fws.gov](mailto:Melanie_Steinkamp@fws.gov)

## Report to EXCO by Verena Gill

### Craig S. Harrison Conservation Fund

This report covers September 2010 to January 2012.

We received six inquiries for funding; of those three were funded, one is waiting for the applicants to submit a full proposal, one was denied as it was for work outside of the Pacific, and one never responded to our request for a full proposal.

The three funded proposals were:

1. Dr. Carlos B. Zavalaga, Peru. At-sea movements of Peruvian-Diving Petrels in Peru: Interaction with fisheries? \$2000. Fully funded
2. Mere Tabudravu, Fiji. Community-based Monitoring and Conservation of the Collared Petrel. \$2000. Fully funded.
3. Diego Miranda, Chile. Northern Chile Beached Seabird Surveys. \$1910. Fully funded.

### Fund-raising efforts

There will be a 5K foot race at the 2012 Hawaii meeting to raise money for this fund. Each person will be charged \$15 and the entire amount will go to the Fund.

There was a donation button for the Fund on the 2012 Hawaii meeting registration page that has generated money. Ron LeValley will have the exact amount when the meeting is over and registration finished.

Our account with Amazon.com has generated some money for the Fund when people buy products through the PSG portal. Ron LeValley has the exact amount.

### Listserv

683 members as of 27 January 2012.

Exceeds number of official members as some people have a couple of e-mail accounts and some people have been signed up for 'free' from developing countries.

## REPORT OF THE SEABIRD MONITORING COMMITTEE

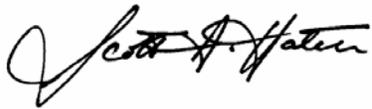
### 39th Annual Meeting, Pacific Seabird Group Oahu, Hawaii 7-10 February 2011

The Pacific Seabird Monitoring Database (PSMD) is fully implemented on the World Wide Web (contributor, user, and administrative interfaces) and can be accessed at: <http://seabirds.usgs.gov>. The database currently contains 20,934 observations of seabird population parameters (numbers, breeding success, phenology, survival, and others) in 2,954 time series. Most of those data (18,281 observations in 2950 time series) were converted to record status 'Public' during 2011. The online database currently has 27 registered data contributors and 66 registered users.

The previous meeting of the Seabird Monitoring Committee was held in conjunction with the World Seabird Conference in Victoria, BC, 7-11 September 2010. Committee members helped organize and present a number of workshops at the conference intended to promote the creation of world seabird databases: World Seabird Monitoring Database (WSMD), World Seabird Colony Register (WSCR), World Pelagic Surveys Database (WPSD), World Seabird Tracking Database (WSTD), and World Seabird Trophic Studies Database (WSTSD). The goal for the seabird monitoring component is an expansion of the general approach exemplified in the PSMD to include the efforts of seabird researchers globally. This global project is being pursued under the auspices of the World Seabird Union (WSU), a consortium of regional seabird organizations, including the Pacific Seabird Group and approximately 20 others worldwide. The WSU will sponsor Seabirds.net, a website designed to accommodate the shared aspirations of all seabird professionals, including especially the creation and maintenance of world seabird databases. A version of the PSMD (becomes WSMD) will soon be installed on Seabirds.net as a pilot project for trial and evaluation.

An important initial step in creating a global database will be a comprehensive inventory of all past and ongoing effort to monitor population parameters of the world's seabirds. Regional Coordinators, with areas of geographic responsibility as shown on the attached map, have been recruited to lead this initiative.

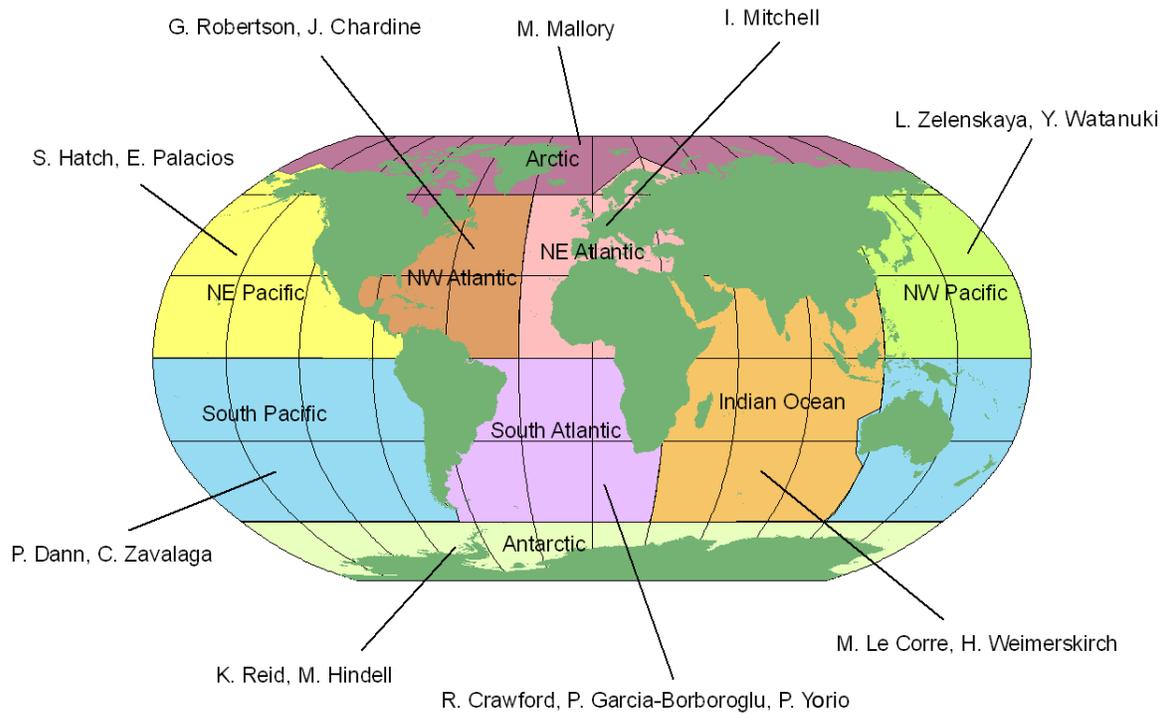
Respectfully submitted,



Scott A. Hatch, Coordinator  
PSG Seabird Monitoring Committee

World Seabird Monitoring Database

Regional Coordinating Committee



## Ornithological Council Report --- Pat Baird, OC Board representing PSG along with Doug Forsell

To keep up with what is happening among other researchers (seabirds and otherwise), go to the Ornithology Exchange <http://ornithologyexchange.org/> where the OC provides information about current hot topics in ornithology. Look for regular topics on policies that affect ornithology (permits, animal welfare, research funding, government policies), and bird conservation and management issues, as well as search for jobs. The OC also publishes news items in the Ornithological Newsletter and on its BIRDNET website <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/orncounc/index.html>. The Ornith-L and OCNET listserves because Ornithology Exchange replaced them. To find their publication, "Use of Wild Birds in Research," go to their webpage. The OC routinely contacts individuals to alert them to developments in matters of interest.

For those of you who do not know what it does, the Ornithological Council (OC) is a nonprofit foundation headquartered in Maryland, near Washington DC, and is composed of 12 member societies, including PSG. PSG has two members on the Board of Directors, Pat Baird and Doug Forsell. Doug has been on the board for over ten years, and Pat just joined it a year ago. Its executive director is Ellen Paul. The OC focuses on issues that affect birds and their survival, and on the needs of ornithologists. It also is an information center for research funding, and other policies that affect ornithologists and ornithological societies. The council goes to bat for researchers and tries to resolve conflicts, e.g. helping with permit issues. "The Use of Wild Birds in Research" is a publication of the Council and is updated regularly. It also provides information exchange.

The Council interacts with

- Public policy-makers
- Wildlife resource managers
- Scientists and educators
- The general public

The Council:

- Links the scientific community with public and private decision-makers
- Provides timely information about birds to help ensure scientifically-based decisions, policies, and management actions
- Informs ornithologists of proposals and actions that affect birds or the study of birds
- Enhances the ability of ornithologists to pursue professional activities
- Speaks for scientific ornithology on public issues
  - It ensures that the best ornithological science is incorporated into legislative, regulatory, and management decisions that affect birds.
  - It promotes the influence of ornithology in public affairs

Following are the main points in this report.

1. Serious problem with the Bird Banding Lab
2. Conference on the Animal Welfare Act in the context of wildlife biology
3. OC discussions with USDA APHIS Veterinary Services Program which had proposed the undertaking of a risk assessment regarding the import and use of materials from birds
4. Response to request by the Office of Science and Technology Policy regarding funding, standards, and policies of databases

5. Small grants program for ornithology
6. Structure of OC and PSG's dues.

#### I. "Potential serious problem with the BBL" 20 Jan 2012

A bander at one of the larger, more prominent bird observatories sent the OC a memo stating that the BBL denied this person's request to have other species added to his/her banding permit. Therefore, s/he is not going to be able to do any fall migration banding, or a winter project that would help in tracking declining populations of passerines.

Their reasoning was funding issues. They said their two biggest expenses are the 1-800 answering service and the cost of bands, both of which are vulnerable to budget cuts next year. The head of the BBL feels that he is going to have to make some hard decisions about funding. They have committed themselves to continuing to support banding that is currently approved and to do that they have to discourage any new projects that might have high volume banding. They are not willing to support any new multi-species projects. The OC Executive Director, Ellen Paul stated on the website: "If this is the response they are giving to everyone requesting permits for new research, it is going to put a major crimp in ornithological research in the future."

#### II. Conference on the Animal Welfare Act in the context of wildlife biology, October 2011

In October, the Ornithological Council (OC) and the American Society of Mammalogists (ASM) organized a conference on Animal Welfare Act compliance in the context of wildlife biology. The issues discussed can be easily applied to seabird researchers too.

Profit from this meeting for unrestricted funding (a few thousand dollars) will be shared evenly by OC and ASM and will be used to fund the planned post-conference activities, which include:

1. Development of a wildlife biology-appropriate protocol, including a short-form for "field studies"
2. Development of wildlife Standard Protocols to be posted on appropriate websites that are accessible to researchers, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) members, and animal welfare agencies and organizations such as USDA, Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW), the nonprofit Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC), and the Publication Responsibility in Medicine and Research foundation (PRIM&R)
3. Survey colleges, universities, and research institutions to determine how they address wildlife research (for instance: how they interpret the "field studies" criteria, how they handle field research protocols, what resources they have/have need for, when and how they consult with experts)
4. Establish an outreach program to help new IACUC members and students to obtain resources, including a FAQ
5. Work with the online training programs, such as CITI, to incorporate a wildlife biology module

### **III. USDA APHIS Veterinary Services program is undertaking a risk assessment regarding the import and use of materials from birds from countries where Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and/or Exotic Newcastle Disease occur**

One or both pathogens occur in almost every country in the world, so any new requirements could have a significant impact on ornithological research. The OC is working to provide the agency with sufficient information to determine that the existing requirements are sufficient to prevent the inadvertent introduction of non-native pathogens to the United States. In addition, APHIS has already expanded its import restrictions to include all Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza strains, not just H5N1, and the OC is attempting to persuade the agency to develop procedures for lifting restrictions once it has been determined that a particular strain is not, in fact, highly pathogenic or that the outbreak has been eliminated, much in the way that the agency currently lifts quarantine restrictions in the United States.

The OC has asked the U.S. Office of CITES Management Authority to propose an agenda item for the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Thailand, 2013) pertaining to problems with the new permit validation requirement. The OC request documents numerous instances in which the validation requirement has resulted in the rejection of otherwise valid shipments and that evidence a lack of ability or willingness on the part of many countries to properly validate permits.

The OC also helped dozens of ornithologists to obtain USFWS, USDA, APHIS, and other permits and to navigate the complex import and export processes last quarter.

The American Veterinary Medical Association has yet to release its updated euthanasia guidelines. These influential guidelines are widely accepted by Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees, and are the standard to which the Public Health Service Policy (which governs all federal grant funding for research involving live vertebrates) adheres. They are extremely important to any of us who study seabirds. The AVMA released a statement explaining that they intend to list thoracic compression as “disapproved” despite the complete lack of supporting evidence. They plan to include an explanatory comment which then may give Institutional Animal Care and Use committees “the leeway to approve use of this method under certain circumstances. The director of the OC, Ellen Paul, met with AVMA Executive Vice President Ron DeHaven to discuss the situation. The OC and the American Society of Mammalogists asked the AVMA to clarify the type or types of testing results it would consider acceptable in re-examining the issues. The AVMA has yet to respond.

Executive Director Ellen Paul and Bob Sikes, chair of the ASM Animal Care and Use Committee, submitted a paper to *Bioscience* that makes the case that the Animal Welfare Act was never intended to apply to wildlife research. They are awaiting an acceptance response.

OC continues to track closely the development of a new Animal Welfare Act regulation by APHIS. The agency announced that it is refraining from publication of the proposed regulation while it determines if enforcement is feasible and in alignment with existing federal resources. OC keeps in close contact with APHIS, and will do all it can to assure that the regulation does not impede research for reasons that are not science-based and that do not actually serve to improve the welfare of birds studied in research.

### **IV. Open Government and the funding, standards, and policies of databases**

The OC wrote a letter to the Deputy Chief of Staff Office of Science and Technology Policy (OTSP) in January 2012 about Open Government: Government-sponsored databases to archive data. The OTSP requested input on the OC’s interest in enhancing public access to digital data generated in federally-

funded research. It is the opinion of the OC that if resources are available, the government should commit those resources to help “stabilize” those data, convert them to a digital format, and submit them to appropriate data repositories.

The OTSP wants to encourage public access to and preservation of digital data from federally funded scientific research, while protecting the intellectual property interests of publishers, scientists, Federal agencies, and other stakeholders.

The OC strongly encouraged the OSTP to work with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to provide funding and direction to the agencies to stabilize existing physical data records, to digitize those records, and make them available on publicly accessible databases. These processes should not be limited to agency-held data but should be opened to private researchers as well. The federal government must be willing to commit the resources to enable excellence or the undertaking is not worthwhile.

The OTSP however is concerned that the inherent differences between scientific disciplines and different types of digital data must be taken into account when developing policies on the management of data. The OC moreover has identified a number of different databases in the United States, many of which have fields which are duplicates. The OC thinks that it is unreasonable for a researcher to have to enter his or her data into more than one database, particularly as it is possible that the two datasets may not use the same metadata standard.

The scientific community should also be consulted with regard to the release of certain types of data. For instance, the OC has long been concerned about the public access release of location information associated with bird banding, which could facilitate activity that is prohibited under the ESA. Other species, protected only under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, are very vulnerable to disturbance during the breeding period. If the public could use the location data associated with bird banding to determine breeding locations, the disturbance resulting from human presence could lead to failed breeding attempts. The same concerns would pertain to location data of other animals...protected under the ESA, and to other animals that are vulnerable to disturbance, should location data be made available. The OC suggested that a researcher have the right to omit or to “coarsen” the location data.

The OSTP queried the OC how funding mechanisms could be improved to better address the real costs of preserving and making digital data accessible. The OC replied that typically in ornithology, the grants do not permit researchers to hire staff to undertake the work associated with effective metadata labeling and deposit of data. The OC went on to say that there is no point in warehousing data if it is not done in such a way as to make the data easily retrievable.

Without additional funding, data repositories are not likely to be of adequate quality and any resources devoted to them will have been wasted. Therefore the OC encourages the OSTP to make available funding for the population of databases. The OC states that this is not a hypothetical concern. The USGS devoted more than a decade of effort to develop the National Biological Information Infrastructure. It is now being dismantled; it never began to approach the original goal of providing access to distributed data, but for the support afforded to efforts such as VertNet. VertNet provides open access to approximately 84.3 million vertebrate records, with participation among 72 institutions’ networks through MaNIS, HerpNet, ORNIS and FishNet. These are taxon-based, distributed database networks of natural history collection data.

ORNIS, <http://www.ornisnet.org/>, is the data entry and management site for ornithologists. ORNIS addresses the urgent call for increased access to these data in an open and collaborative manner, and involves development of a suite of online software tools for data analysis and error-checking. This project, funded by the National Science Foundation, expands on existing infrastructure developed for mammals, amphibians and reptiles, and fish databases.

ORNIS searches include both specimen (museum) and observational (ecology) databases, and include contributors from other countries, as well as in the United States.

The letter further discussed standards and policies for the federal government to implement something like this. The full text can be found at: <http://ornithologyexchange.org/forums/topic/1559-federal-data-sharing-policies-response-to-ostp-request-for-comments/>

## **V. Small grants program for ornithology**

A donor approached the OC to propose the establishment of a small grants program for projects that integrate ornithological research and conservation. The donor was motivated by his prior experience in initiating a similar grant program for research to support bear conservation programs. He observed that there seemed to be no other grant programs directly linking ornithological research with existing bird conservation projects. He had seen the work of the OC over several years, and felt that the Council would be a good foundation through which he could sponsor this grant.

This grant was approved by the Board of Directors as a three-year pilot project. After that time, the OC board will evaluate the program and determine if it should be continued, assuming the donor wishes to continue making contributions, or assuming that other donors or sources of funding can be found.

### **A. Subject matter**

The premise of this grant program is that scientific knowledge is a critical component of successful conservation projects. Therefore, grants will be made for research that support actual conservation projects. Grant proposals will be required to identify the specific conservation project that the research is intended to support and will show that research will help to improve the likelihood of success of that project.

The research could contribute scientific knowledge to enhance a wide range of conservation projects such as community conservation (including citizen science, education, cultural practices, and organizing); habitat preservation, management or restoration, training of natural area managers, or income-generating activities that promote or support conservation activities. Funding can be supplemental to other grants but other funding must be disclosed.

Preference will be given to projects focusing on resident species, but benefits to migratory birds will also be considered.

### **B. Geographical focus**

During the pilot phase, grants will be limited to projects in Central America, south America, and the Caribbean so as to maximize the return on limited funds.

### **C. Funding**

The donor proposes to fund the pilot project at \$7,500 per year. If the OC board decides to continue and expand the program at the end of the pilot project, the OC would seek additional donors.

### **D. Potential coordination with the grant programs of member societies**

Other member societies might be suitable partners for this OC program, and the OC welcomes discussions about creating a joint Request for Proposals. As the PSG representative, I believe that a pairing of a Craig Harrison Conservation Fund grant with this OC grant would be a good way to leverage funds. I urge our members who live in or have projects in the three targeted areas to think about designing a project that would fit into both of these grant programs.

The OC would by no means compete with member societies for donors. The OC would not seek contributions via the OSNA dues renewal process, as do other societies.

## **VI. The April 2012 board meeting of the Ornithological Council will be held on Monday April 2. Location TBD.**

### **VII. Membership on the Ornithological Council**

PSG is an organizational member of the OC, and we have two seats on the Board. At present, PSG contributes \$1000 annually to the OC. As you can see from the above points, the OC does a lot of work for us as individuals and as a society, as well for the 11 other members. The OC works behind the scenes, and is an advocate when it comes to any sort of banding or permit issue. Personally, the OC has helped me in many facets of my research regarding import permits and banding permits for auxiliary markers.

PSG had 739 members as of 1 January 2012. Currently, PSG's membership dues to the OC are \$1000 annually. This is \$1.35 per member. I would like to suggest that PSG increase its annual contribution to the Ornithological Council from \$1000 to \$1500 per year. That would be \$2.00 per member. For all that the OC does, I believe that this is a good use of PSG's funds. However, this subject might better be saved for discussion and vote at the mid-year conference call.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Baird, Ph.D.

PSG Board Member to the Ornithological Council

## **2010-11 REPORT OF THE XANTUS'S MURRELET TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

To: Pacific Seabird Group Executive Council

From: Harry Carter and Shaye Wolf, Xantus's Murrelet Technical Committee Coordinators

Date: 21 January 2012

The mandate of the Xantus's Murrelet Technical Committee (XMTC) is to "monitor the federal listing petition, state status, research, and conservation issues; provide information to interested parties; and coordinate research and conservation in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada." The Xantus's Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*) occurs at sea along western Baja California, California, Oregon, Washington, and south-central British Columbia; it breeds on islands off southern California and northwestern Baja California. Below, we summarize XMTC activities in 2010 and 2011.

### **Meetings**

Our meeting at the February 2010 PSG Annual Meeting in Long Beach had strong attendance and focused on the management and restoration plan. At the September 2010 World Seabird Conference in Victoria and the February 2012 PSG Annual Meeting in Oahu, we chose not to hold meetings due to expected low attendance. In September 2011, we attempted to organize a meeting in southern California but insufficient people were available. We are currently planning to organize a meeting in southern California in summer-fall 2012.

### **Management and Restoration Plan**

The XMTC has been an active cooperator in the preparation of the Xantus's Murrelet Management and Restoration Plan that will guide state and federal efforts to protect and restore Xantus's Murrelets at breeding islands in southern California and northwestern Baja California. This plan will fill an important gap since California is not required to write a recovery plan and the Xantus's Murrelet is still a federal candidate for listing that receives no ESA protections. Plan preparation is being led by Humboldt State University (HSU) who obtained funding from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). Several XMTC members are primary authors and several organizations, universities, and agencies in the US, Mexico and Canada are involved. This collaborative effort has been spearheaded through coordination and prompting of the XMTC. The document will be published as a CDFG report, in both English and Spanish, and will be posted on CDFG and PSG websites.

In spring 2011, an incomplete review draft (Carter et al., in prep.) was prepared and circulated to the whole committee for comments. We are continuing to work on this document to finish missing sections and will circulate a more final version to the whole committee for comments in 2012. We hope to have a final version as early as fall 2012, although Spanish translation may take longer.

### **Listing Status**

At present, a federal listing priority number of 5 has been retained by the Xantus's Murrelet in the Candidate Notice of Review. However, in July 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agreed to: (1) re-examine the status of 251 candidate species (including Xantus's Murrelet); and (2) by 30 September 2016, submit to the Federal Register for publication either a Proposed Rule (for endangered or

threatened status) or a not warranted finding for the Xantus's Murrelet. Status review work will likely start in 2013 or 2014. The XMTC expects to assist this process by: (1) continuing to provide updated information to better assess current threats and restoration of this species in the U.S. and Mexico; (2) completing the Management and Restoration Plan (see above); and (3) encouraging further publication of research on Xantus's Murrelets (see WFVZ below).

The State of California officially listed the Xantus's Murrelet as Threatened in December 2004; however, there is still no recovery plan or implementation schedule. Xantus's Murrelets are listed as Endangered in Mexico; the species is not listed in Canada.

### **WFVZ Publication**

In 2005, PSG and CWS hosted a symposium on Xantus's Murrelets at the Portland meeting. A symposium proceeding was prepared in *Marine Ornithology* (Volume 33, No. 2). However, several papers were not prepared in time for inclusion and additional studies have been conducted since 2005. At the planned XMTC meeting in summer 2012, we will discuss the preparation of another volume of papers on Xantus's Murrelets for publication in the *Proceedings of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology*. Papers in this volume would greatly assist listing, management and conservation decisions in the near future.

### **Genetics and Species**

Queen's University and California Institute for Environmental Studies (CIES) have completed a range-wide genetics study (Birt et al., in press). The two subspecies of the Xantus's Murrelet (*S. h. hypoleucus* and *S. h. scrippsi*) are different species based on genetic analyses and these two species are clearly distinct from Craveri's Murrelet (*S. craveri*). All three *Synthliboramphus* murrelet "species" breed off northwestern Baja California while only *S. h. scrippsi* breeds in southern California. Conservation and management efforts should recognize them as three distinct species until full recognition by the scientific community is received.

### **Nest Monitoring**

In 2010, nest monitoring for measuring hatching success, timing of breeding, and population size changes was conducted at: a) Santa Barbara Island, funded by Montrose Settlements Trustee Council (MSTC) and CINP (Barnes, Auer, Harvey); and b) Anacapa Island, funded by the American Trader Trustee Council (ATTC) (Whitworth et al. 2012). This was the final year of ATTC funding for monitoring at Anacapa Island. A report on 2008-09 nest monitoring at Santa Barbara Island will be available in the near future (Harvey et al., in prep.).

In 2011, nest monitoring was continued by CINP with funding from the MSTC at: a) Santa Barbara Island (Harvey, Barnes, Auer); and b) Anacapa Island (Harvey).

Nest monitoring has not been conducted in Baja California since 2007 due to completion of CIES monitoring funded by Chevron at the Coronado Islands in 2007 (related to the withdrawn LNG terminal plan) and insufficient funds by Mexican groups and researchers at San Benito Islands. A long-term monitoring program is needed in northwestern Baja California.

## **Surveys & Research**

In 2009-10, extensive Xantus's Murrelet surveys were conducted at Santa Barbara Island by a group of researchers (CIES – Whitworth; CINP – Harvey; Pomona College – Karnovsky; Carter Biological Consulting [CBC] – Carter), with funding from the MSTC: (1) nest searches in all accessible coastal areas; (2) nocturnal spotlight surveys for measuring population size changes and estimating population size; (3) nocturnal at-sea captures using the nightlighting technique to examine status of birds in at-sea congregations; and (4) diurnal at-sea transects for measuring at-sea distribution (replicating 1976-77 transects), coupled with at-sea sampling to assess prey and oceanographic conditions (Whitworth et al. 2011; in prep.).

In 2011, nest monitoring and at-sea captures were continued by CINP (Harvey, Barnes, Auer) at Santa Barbara Island, funded by MSTC.

## **Restoration**

*Anacapa Island:* Black Rat eradication was conducted in 2001-02 (Island Conservation and CINP), funded by ATTC (Howald et al. 2005). Annual nest monitoring by HSU and CIES from 2000-10 has shown that numbers of nests found in monitored areas has grown substantially and high hatching success has occurred. However, most upper island areas have not yet been reused for nesting, based on fall 2009 surveys (Whitworth et al. 2012).

*Santa Barbara Island:* Native plant restoration by CINP (Harvey, Barnes, Auer) began in 2007 and has since expanded greatly, funded by MSTC (Harvey and Barnes 2009; unpubl. data).

## **Conservation issues**

### *Introduced Mammals*

At most islands with breeding Xantus's Murrelets, introduced mammals have been eradicated over the past 30 years. Efforts continue to control cats at the south end of Guadalupe Island and at San Clemente Island. Several proposals to fund cat eradication at Guadalupe Island have been prepared but not yet funded. Proposed Black Rat eradication at San Miguel Island with funding from the MSTC is now doubtful due to concerns about impacts to Island Fox. Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas (GECI) is examining eradication options for a non-native *Peromyscus* species that was introduced to West San Benito Island in 2007. No efforts to remove introduced rats or cats are underway at Cedros and Santa Catalina Islands, although murrelets likely breed in areas that are not currently accessed by introduced mammals.

### *Bright Lights*

No efforts have been made to address potential impacts from bright lights near breeding colonies (i.e., squid fishing lights, aquaculture facilities, anchored vessels, etc.). The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is considering possible effects of lights on seabirds at offshore oil platforms in southern California. Future seabird restoration plans in Baja California funded by MSTC and Luckenbach Trustee Council have identified the reduction of bright lights as one goal.

### *LNG Proposals*

The XMTC is following the progress of 2 proposals for constructing LNG terminals near XAMU colonies in CINP: 1) Crystal Energy's Clearwater Port located approximately 12.6 miles offshore of the city of Oxnard in the Santa Barbara Channel, 10-15 km off Anacapa Island; and 2) Esperanza Energy's Port Esperanza located approximately 15 miles seaward of the Port of Long Beach. Both projects appear to be on hold.

### *Offshore Wind Farms*

BOEM is developing programmatic regulations for offshore wind development, and the XMTC is monitoring opportunities to provide public comments.

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## 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

TO: PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

FROM: MICHELLE KISSLING, KITTLITZ'S MURRELET TECHNICAL COMMITTEE COORDINATOR

DATE PREPARED: 31 JANUARY 2012

The Kittlitz's Murrelet Technical Committee (KMTC) was formed in 2008 to begin addressing concerns related to the status and conservation of this rare seabird. The Kittlitz's Murrelet (KIMU) is currently listed as a candidate under the Endangered Species Act. The purpose of the KMTC is to: (1) act as a technical authority on the status, distribution, and life history of the KIMU; (2) identify, encourage, and facilitate research; (3) address conservation problems related to the KIMU; and (4) act as a liaison between research and management.

### 2011 KMTC accomplishments, relevant topics, and updates

- (1) The KMTC last met on November 19, 2010 in conjunction with the Alaska Bird Conference, Anchorage. Twenty-nine members participated (five over the phone). Meeting minutes can be downloaded from the PSG website or are available on request.
- (2) The proceedings of the symposium titled "Population status and trends of the Kittlitz's Murrelet" held in Long Beach, California, February 17, 2010 were completed and published in *Marine Ornithology* 39(1):2-122 in August 2011. All 11 papers presented at the symposium were published in the proceedings and are available on the *Marine Ornithology* website.
- (3) We completed and distributed 2010 and 2011 KIMU Project Summaries of completed, current, and proposed projects to study KIMU in Alaska and Russia. The goals of this effort were to improve communication among investigators of KIMU studies and to connect funding agencies and organizations with investigators seeking funding for specific projects. Annual summaries are available on request.
- (4) We drafted and sent a letter from PSG to Geoff Haskett, Alaska Regional Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, on February 4, 2011. The purpose of the letter was to encourage the Service to move forward with the evaluation for listing of the KIMU under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. See the 2011 KMTC Mid-year Report (dated March 15, 2011) for details regarding letter development.
- (5) In September 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published the 2011 Candidate Notice of Review in the Federal Register lowering the Listing Priority Number (LPN) for the species from a 2 to an 8. However, because of the multi-district legislation settlement (see #6 below), the change in the LPN had no influence on the timeline of the listing evaluation for KIMU.
- (6) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reached a multi-district legislation settlement with the Center for Biological Diversity and WildEarth Guardians in September 2011 that requires the Service to review and address the needs of over 250 species, including the KIMU, on the 2010 Candidate Notice of Review. The Service received funding in 2012 to begin the listing

evaluation for KIMU and publish a decision regarding the legal status of the species in the U.S. Federal Register by September 30, 2013. The KIMU cannot remain a Candidate for listing under the U.S. Endangered Species Act; the Service will either reach an unwarranted finding or publish a proposed rule by this date.

#### Future of the KMTC

As of February 11, 2012, I resign as Coordinator of the KMTC for two primary reasons. First, I have coordinated this committee since its inception in 2008 and the committee would benefit from new leadership. Secondly, I am leading the KIMU listing evaluation for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (beginning in February 2012) and therefore, I now view my position as Coordinator of the KMTC for PSG as a direct conflict with my assigned tasks at the Service.

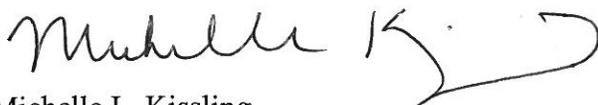
I, and others, have encouraged several individuals to assume the KMTC Coordinator role, but nobody has stepped forward to do so at this time. With the KIMU listing evaluation underway, I suspect that PSG (or some members of PSG) may want to be involved in certain aspects of the process. I suggest using the Conservation Committee as an avenue for PSG to write letters and/or review materials related to the KIMU listing evaluation and, if necessary, proposed rule and designation of critical habitat. I recommend classifying the KMTC as 'inactive' for one year to allow time for someone to assume the leadership role, but if after one year, the committee still lacks a coordinator, I suggest PSG abolish the KMTC. If the need arises again, the KMTC can reform at that time.

I am proud of the accomplishments of the KMTC in the last four years (2008-2011). Key accomplishments include:

- Organizing five formal and one informal KMTC meetings
- Compiling and distributing a prioritized list of information needs for the KIMU
- Writing three letters to agencies and organizations encouraging KIMU conservation
- Facilitating and improving coordination among researchers, managers, and interested individuals
- Convening a symposium with 11 papers that summarized the current state of knowledge regarding status and trends of the KIMU
- Publishing proceedings of the aforementioned symposium in *Marine Ornithology*
- Maintaining a list of current, completed, and proposed KIMU projects annually
- Elevating the awareness of KIMU within state and federal agencies, industry, universities, and non-governmental organizations

I appreciate the opportunity to coordinate this important committee on behalf of the Pacific Seabird Group and thank the Executive Council for support over the years.

Sincerely,



Michelle L. Kissling  
Coordinator, Kittlitz's Murrelet Technical Committee

## 2011 Report of the Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee

To: Pacific Seabird Group Executive Council  
From: William Ritchie, Committee Coordinator  
February 2, 2012

The Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee (MMTC) has been a long standing committee of the Pacific Seabird Group. Its role is to: (1) act as a technical authority about the status, distribution, and life history of the Marbled Murrelet; (2) identify, encourage, and facilitate research; (3) address conservation problems related to the Marbled Murrelet; and (4) act as a liaison between research and management.

### **MMTC Activities and Accomplishments:**

- The full committee met March 10 & 11, 2011 in Santa Cruz, California. This was a standalone meeting since the Pacific Seabird Group did not hold an annual meeting in calendar year 2011. The meeting, hosted by California Fish and Game OSPR, the Command and Luckenbach Trustee Councils, and California State Parks, was convened to assist with development of a regional marbled murrelet conservation plan and to identify outstanding questions and research needs for the Santa Cruz (Recovery Zone 6) population. Twenty-eight members and guests attended the meeting and a field tour of murrelet sites in the Santa Cruz Mountains and coastal foraging habitats. Attendees were able to satisfy their adventurous side as a tsunami struck the coast during our meeting.
- Committee membership totaled 71 in 2011, a slight reduction from 2010. Losses from Alaska, British Columbia, and Oregon were somewhat offset by slight increases from California and Washington (Figure 1). The latter two regions accounting for more than half the committee's current members.
- The proposed Radar Ridge wind energy project, the first major wind farm in Western Washington, was canceled because of federal requirements to protect the Marbled Murrelet and due to declining economics that made the project unfeasible. In 2009 and 2010 the MMTC wrote letters outlining our concerns about the potential impacts to Marbled Murrelets by locating this development at Radar Ridge. The proposed site would have been located within close proximity to the South Nemah Natural Resource Conservation Area and other conservation lands in southwest Washington. These conservation lands were in part designated to protect and enhance Marbled Murrelet nesting habitat, including long-term murrelet conservation for the Washington Department of Natural Resources Habitat Conservation Plan and The Nature Conservancy Ellsworth Preserve. See the Conservation Committee report for more details.
- Tree climbing is occasionally used for small-scale, often single tree, Marbled Murrelet nesting assessments in suitable habitat. In 2002 MMTC wrote a letter providing general guidance on when and how tree climbing should be used to identify suitable murrelet nest trees. The Committee has developed a draft standardized training protocol for use in

certifying climbers. The protocol will be reviewed at our 2012 meetings. A training session will be held in autumn 2012, pending available funding.

- In the Committee's final action for 2011, the MMTC Inland Survey Protocol (ISP) Working Group began working on revisions and updates to the survey protocol and training curricula. A core group met in Corvallis, Oregon in November to identify sections of the protocol that need revision. A working draft was prepared and will be presented for discussion at the MMTC meetings to be held in early 2012. We are planning to have a final revised ISP available for Executive Council review by autumn 2012.

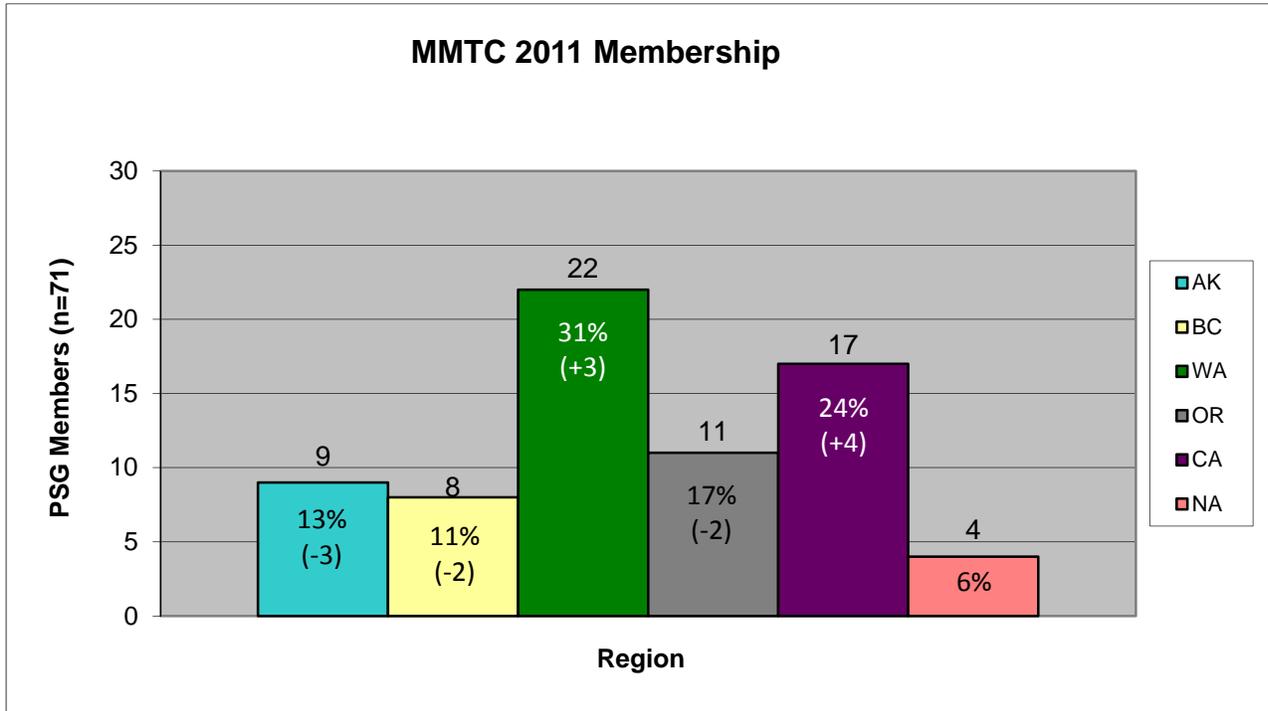
### **Important Updates:**

- Since our 2011 Santa Cruz meeting, inland A/V surveys, corvid research and management, new habitat mapping, and outreach and litter control programs at state parks have continued or expanded. The Sempivirens Fund has developed a regional conservation plan for marbled murrelets in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Although survey detection levels show a downward trend, and the population may be supported largely due to emigration, it appears to be more robust than the 2009 estimate.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released a final revised Critical Habitat designation in October 2011. The new designation removed approximately 190,000 acres in southern Oregon and northern California, an area where extensive surveys over many years has not found murrelets. Many of these lands were determined to be unsuitable habitat since the 1996 Critical Habitat designation.
- Marbled Murrelet at-sea population monitoring continued as part of the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) Effectiveness Monitoring Program. For the 5-zone area combined, the overall population has declined during the years 2000 to 2011. An estimated population of 22,500 birds was up from the previous year, but large confidence intervals persisted. A declining trend is evident in both the 5-zone area and in Zones 1 and 2 (Washington). At-sea monitoring will continue in 2012, but may need to be curtailed if funding is reduced in subsequent years.
- A model developed for the NWFP terrestrial habitat monitoring component has shown that 64% (2.4 million ac) of higher suitability Marbled Murrelet habitat is on federal lands. The model examined changes in available habitat between 1994-1996 and 2006-2007. The trend shows an overall loss of habitat of 7-13%. Federal lands saw a 3% loss where as private lands showed a 30% loss in habitat. Much of the loss was due to timber harvest and fire. Reports summarizing the NWFP monitoring activities from 2000-2011 are available at: ([www.reo.gov/monitoring](http://www.reo.gov/monitoring)).

### **Future MMTC Work Items:**

- Members of the MMTC will be developing a radar survey protocol for pre-construction monitoring at proposed wind energy projects. A three-day meeting was held in late January 2012 to begin this process.

- The MMTC members will also continue working on revisions to the Inland Survey Protocol.



**Figure 1.** PSG Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee membership by region. Member totals appear above bars and proportion of regional representation and change from previous year are shown within bars.