

# Pacific Seabird Group



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DEDICATED TO THE STUDY AND CONSERVATION OF PACIFIC SEABIRDS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

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28 January 2008

Dear Sir:

On behalf of the Pacific Seabird Group (PSG), it is my pleasure to inform you that the so-called "Mythological Bird," the Chinese Crested Tern was rediscovered in the year 2000 off Fuzhou on the east coast of Mainland China. PSG is an international, non-profit organization that was founded in 1972 to promote the knowledge, study, and conservation of Pacific seabirds. It has a membership drawn from the entire Pacific basin, including China, Canada, Mexico, Russia, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. Among PSG's members are biologists and scientists who have research interests in Pacific seabirds, government officials who manage seabird refuges and populations, and individuals who are interested in marine conservation. PSG has served as an unbiased forum for government, university, and private sector biologists to discuss and resolve issues related to Pacific seabirds.

We are aware that the Chinese Crested Tern has been listed in China as a Nationally Protected Species (Class 11) since 1989, so it was especially fortuitous that 11 years later, a small colony was discovered in the Matsu Archipelago. The number of these terns observed in 2006 was *only* 13, and 2 of those were chicks. Other individuals may exist along the China coast, but experts estimate less than 50 exist in the world.

The need for conservation action is urgent. Therefore, we have decided to organize an international team of experts to come together and help outline a plan of action for this

rare species. We hope with your help and that of others, the species can be a “Phoenix that rises from the ashes” and heralds a new era in international marine conservation.

We therefore invite you or your representative to attend our international meeting in February 2008 in Blaine, Washington State, USA. Here we will discuss ways and means to help the species survive. Together, with biologists from across the globe, a truly international effort can show the world how cooperation can save dying species from extinction.

We know that your country has made great efforts to preserve endangered species such as the Great Panda and Crested Ibis, and we are hopeful that you will be willing to once again help save a species and protect the bird that carries the name of your nation. We commend China for setting aside marine protected areas such as Jiushan Islands in Zhejiang, Huanghe Sanjiaozhou Nature Reserve, and the Min Jiang river estuary, Fujian province, where the terns may feed.

At this time, one of the most serious threats to the birds is egging by local fishermen from the mainland. Some fishermen go ashore on the islets to pick up the tern eggs for food. Not only does this remove eggs but it impacts the tern productivity since when they are disturbed many other birds can snatch the eggs for their own food. We would like to request your help in asking the fishermen not to take eggs and disturb the birds on the islets during breeding seasons. This would be a first, but great, step in trying to save this fragile species of tern.

Your kind reply will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Verena Gill  
Chair, Pacific Seabird Group

Source- Rare Birds Yearbook 2008 (Birdlife International ) 2007. Erik Hirschfeld (ed.)