

Pacific Seabird Group



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

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February 6, 2008

David Dicks, Executive Director
Puget Sound Partnership
P.O. Box 40900, Olympia,
Washington 98504-0900

Re: Interest in Puget Sound Partnership

Dear Mr. Dicks:

The Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) is an international, non-profit organization that was founded in 1972 to promote the knowledge, study, and conservation of Pacific seabirds. It has an international membership drawn from the entire Pacific basin, including China, Canada, Mexico, Russia, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA as well as a substantial membership in Europe. Among PSG's members are scientists interested in seabird biology and conservation, government officials managing wildlife refuges and populations, and individuals interested in marine conservation. PSG has served as a forum for government, university, and private sector biologists to discuss and resolve issues relating to seabird-fisheries interactions, island restoration, contaminants, listings under the Endangered Species Act and logging. Puget Sound has always been of interest to PSG since it is one of the largest estuaries in our region of concern and supports major concentrations of breeding, migrating and wintering marine birds.

The purpose of this letter is to: 1) express our interest in the Partnership's activities, 2) invite Partnership representatives to attend PSG's 35th Annual Meeting occurring locally in late February and 3) provide some preliminary observations on Puget Sound marine bird research needs based on information presented in the 2007 Puget Sound Update and the 2007 State of the Sound produced by the Puget Sound Action Team.

We applaud the efforts of the Puget Sound Partnership in working to restore and preserve the Puget Sound marine ecosystem and appreciate your soliciting input for development of your Action Plan. It so happens that our annual meeting at Semiahmoo Resort in Blaine, Washington, on February 27-30 will include a symposium entitled "The Salish Sea Ecosystem: Status and Impacts of Changes on Marine Birds." We plan to use this

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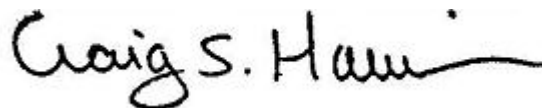
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meeting to obtain input from symposium participants and attendees so that we can make detailed recommendations to the Partnership on Puget Sound bird research and conservation. Realizing that time at the meeting will be limited, we may form an informal Puget Sound working group to facilitate interactions after the meeting. Representatives of a number of organizations in the Partnership will be participating in, and attending, the symposium and we ask you to encourage others to attend.

It is important for the Partnership to be aware that marine birds play a dual role in any assessments of the Sound. In addition to being an important natural resource that needs to be monitored and conserved, as apex predators they also are excellent indicators of temporal and spatial variation in marine ecosystem function and changes in lower trophic levels. Systematic hypothesis-driven monitoring of key life history phenomena, including monitoring of breeding success and diets, as well as population size, conducted annually will provide important information to the Partnership on the "health" of the Sound. The Partnership's ambitious goal of "restoring the Sound by 2020" will face two major problems when addressing marine bird populations. The first is the lack of sufficient historic time-series data that could provide a target for restoration efforts. More important is the temporal variation seen in many wildlife populations that precludes establishment of or a restoration to a "normal baseline." Ideally, monitoring and research will allow identification of factors causing the variation so that anthropogenic effects that require attention can be separated from natural variation.

We welcome any questions you may have and look forward to providing you with more detailed input for your Action Agenda after our annual meeting later this month.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig S. Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Craig S. Harrison
Vice Chair for Conservation