

## SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

### Lindsay Young



Lindsay Young is the executive director of Pacific Rim Conservation, a non-profit organization she co-founded with Eric VanderWerf to address research and management needs of native species across the Pacific. She earned a B.S. from the Univ. of British Columbia and an MS and Ph.D. in zoology from the Univ. of Hawaii. Lindsay has specialized in creating “mainland islands” through predator proof fencing followed by habitat restoration and seabird attraction and translocation. She was the project coordinator for the Kaena Point Ecosystem Restoration Project which installed the first predator proof fence in the U.S. at Kaena Point on Oahu in 2011 and eradicated all predators soon after. In 2014 she oversaw the construction of a predator proof fence at Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge followed by intensive habitat restoration in anticipation of translocating Hawaiian Petrels and Newell’s Shearwaters. The first Hawaiian Petrel translocation at the site was successfully completed in

the fall of 2015 and will be followed by translocating Newell’s Shearwaters in 2016. Her research has been focused on the demography of Laysan Albatrosses, and, in particular, the evolutionary significance of same sex pairing in that species. Lindsay has authored several dozen scientific papers, served as the treasurer for the Pacific Seabird Group, the local chair of PSG twice, the chair of the North Pacific Albatross Working Group, the North Pacific correspondent for ACAP (Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels).

The Pacific Seabird Group awards Lindsay Young with a Special Achievement Award in recognition of her perseverance to protect and conserve Hawaiian seabirds and her sustained commitment to the Pacific Seabird Group,

### Gus van Vliet

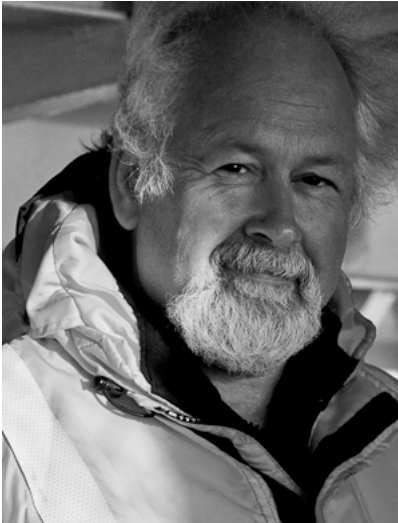
Gus van Vliet began his studies of seabirds as an undergraduate at the University of Michigan and over the subsequent decades has conducted marine bird research in northern Norway, Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, Chukchi Sea, northern Canada, and the northwest Pacific Ocean. Much of his work has been in close collaboration with others, particularly Alan Springer and John Piatt, and has generally been ecological in nature. Biological oceanography and trophic webs have been a driving interest, with emphasis on top-down controls within marine food webs, including marine mammals and salmon. In the early 1990s his two commentaries on Kittlitz’s Murrelets, published in the PSG Bulletin, were the first to sound an alarm over population trends, climate change, and the status of this enigmatic seabird. He continues to be an astute observer of patterns in marine ecosystems and how seabirds and marine mammals are directly and indirectly involved. He has just retired after a 25-year career at the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, having worked within all pollution media (i.e., air quality, water quality, contaminated sites, and oil spill response/prevention).



In recognition of his pioneering contributions to the conservation of Kittlitz’s and Marbled Murrelets in Alaska and his decades of commitment to understand and protect these mysterious seabirds, PSG honors Gus Van Vliet with a Special Achievement Award.

# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

## John F. Piatt



John Piatt got hooked on seabirds in 1973 after spending a few nights on Gull Island, Newfoundland--site of the largest Leach's Storm-petrel and Atlantic Puffin colony in the Northwest Atlantic. While he subsequently pursued an undergraduate degree in biochemistry, three summers in the 1970's were spent working as a naturalist at Cape St. Mary's gannetry, thereby cementing his love affair with seabirds. John switched his field of study to marine biology during the 1980s, and for his graduate program at Memorial University of Newfoundland he assessed the impacts of gill-net bycatch and oil pollution on seabirds, and then studied the behavioral ecology of Common Murre and

Atlantic Puffin predation on capelin—the most abundant forage fish in the frigid waters of eastern Newfoundland.

Lured to Alaska in 1987 by the opportunity to study auklets at St. Lawrence Island, and still employed today by the Department of the Interior (USGS Alaska Science Center) in Anchorage, John has spent the past 29 years studying seabirds, forage fish and marine ecosystems throughout Alaska and the North Pacific. This included documenting the impact of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill on seabirds, and examining how natural variability in forage fish communities affects the biology, behavior and physiology of seabirds at their colonies.

In more recent years, John conducted studies of oceanography, forage fish and birds in glacial-fjord ecosystems in the Gulf of Alaska and in passes of the Aleutian archipelago. John is an author on more than 250 published articles and agency reports, enjoying collaborations with a large number of colleagues around the globe. Among his professional activities, he has served as editor for *The Auk* and *Marine Ecology Progress Series*, as a graduate student advisor and affiliate professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland, the University of Washington and Oregon State University, as Chair of the Pacific Seabird Group, and as a science advisor to the North Pacific Research Board. John continues to be fascinated by the Auk family of seabirds, a passion shared by his wife, Nancy Naslund. John and Nancy (and until recent fledging, their six children) reside in Port Townsend, Washington, on the *Flying Auk Ranch*, alongside a menagerie of dogs, cats, birds, guinea pigs, rabbits, ducks, chickens and horses.

In recognition of his significant achievements and impacts in the fields of seabird ecology, fisheries science, and marine conservation, the Pacific Seabird Group honors John Piatt for over 25 years of scientific leadership, international collaboration, and the creation of the North Pacific Pelagic Seabird Database with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

## Larry B. Spear, (1945 – 2006)



Larry Spear received his BS, with Honors, from the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Biology, University of California, Davis, in 1978; and his MS in Marine Science, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, in 1986. The latter required him living in his car for three years, traveling up and down the West Coast from Seattle to San Diego, stopping at all the fish-processing plants, dumps, and river mouths, and keeping track of two cohorts of Western Gulls that he had banded as chicks on the Farallones. His thesis, “Dispersal in the Western Gull,” was published in *The Auk*. He went on to write 11 papers about Western gull life-history strategies, from hatching to senescence, published in *The Auk* (3X), *Journal of Animal Ecology* (2X), *Studies in Avian Biology*, *The Condor* and elsewhere. His piece in *Natural History Magazine*, about how a Halloween mask can fool gulls into mis-identifying humans, was recognized by the magazine as the article of the decade.

He then set out to understand the at-sea ecology of seabirds. He pioneered the correction of ‘flux,’ whereby the speed and direction of a bird relative to the speed and direction of the research platform, transforms what we perceive as bird ‘density.’ He developed the only existing technique to accurately determine the population size of burrow-nesting species (published in *Journal of Applied Ecology*) from at sea data.

Perhaps his greatest contribution is a series of papers, 33 thus far, was his investigation of the at-sea biology of seabirds, including those of the Southern Ocean and the Eastern tropical Pacific. Within that body of work he showed convincingly that, indeed, many seabirds do feed at night; rediscovered the thought-to-be extinct *Fregetta grallaria titan* subspecies of White-bellied Storm-Petrel; showed that eating plastic does negatively affect seabird well-being; discovered mimicry in Kermadec Petrels that was of a form not yet described in vertebrates; revealed how morphological differences between polar and tropical seabirds related to their respective windfields; described the Pacific-basin-wide migration of Sooty Shearwaters, now confirmed by satellite telemetry; and estimated the true population of the Hawaiian Petrel, much higher than thought at the time - but now confirmed by the discovery of new nesting populations. Since his death two monographs of his have been published, one on the diet of an entire mid-ocean seabird fauna, and the other on the at-sea biology of storm-petrels of the eastern Pacific.

Larry’s legacy also lives on in museum collections; he was a master taxidermist whose study skins with their associated data continue to make significant contributions to our knowledge of seabirds.

In recognition of a passionate scientist whose unstinting focus on solving unanswered questions about seabirds led to many profound discoveries, the Pacific Seabird Group honors Larry Spear posthumously with a Lifetime Achievement Award.