

Pacific Seabird Group



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

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Lic. José Luis Luege Tamargo
Secretario de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
Blvd. Adolfo Ruiz Cortínez 4209,
Colonia Jardines en la Montaña, Tlalpan
México, D.F. C.P 14210

Re: Baja California Pacific Islands Biosphere Reserve

Dear Secretario Luege Tamargo:

On behalf of the Pacific Seabird Group (PSG), I am writing in support of the proposal to create a Biosphere Reserve that incorporates the Pacific islands of Baja California. PSG is an international non-profit organization that was founded in 1972 to promote knowledge, study and conservation of Pacific Ocean seabirds. PSG takes a broad international perspective in recognition that the oceans are tied together by the wandering of seabirds and the flow of ocean currents. Our membership is drawn from the entire Pacific basin, including Mexico, Canada, Russia, Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. Among PSG's members are biologists who have research interests in Pacific seabirds, government officials who manage seabird refuges and populations and individuals who are interested in marine conservation.

PSG projects have included workshops to train Mexican biologists who work in Baja California in state-of-the-art conservation techniques. In addition, members of PSG, both Mexican and American researchers, have been instrumental in researching and monitoring seabird populations and their habitat on the islands in the proposed Biosphere Reserve. Their studies have demonstrated that more than 2.3 million individuals of 20 types of seabirds breed on the Pacific Islands. Six of these seabirds are endemic, occurring nowhere else on earth. The San Benito Islands alone support more than 2 million birds representing 13 types of seabirds, making it one of the most significant seabird colonies in the eastern Pacific.

Seabirds are an incredibly important feature of the marine ecosystem and they also play an important role in structuring the terrestrial habitat of the islands which they inhabit. Healthy ecosystems on these islands in turn help support healthy fisheries populations in the near shore waters. By protecting the Pacific Islands of Baja California as a Biosphere Reserve you will preserve valuable functioning ecosystems that support economically important abalone and lobster fisheries. These fisheries will benefit in the short and long term from the protection conferred by Biosphere designation.

Looking to the future, the threats to Baja California's Pacific Island ecosystems will likely increase with additional tourism, illegal fishing pressures, and unregulated island use. The creation of a Pacific Islands Biosphere Reserve will help establish a framework to manage these threats while maintaining the current valuable fisheries – thereby protecting these important islands in perpetuity.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

/s/ Craig S. Harrison

Craig S. Harrison
Vice Chair for Conservation

cc. Dr. Ernesto Enkerlin, Presidente de la
Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas