



Our Concern is Seabirds

The interest and concern of the PSG encompasses millions of birds from over 275 species-- all related by their dependence on the ocean environment, but widely divergent in their natural histories and the problems they face. Pacific seabirds include representatives of 23 families, including penguins, loons, grebes, albatross, shearwaters, storm-petrels, boobies, pelicans, cormorants, frigatebirds, geese, ducks, puffins, murre, murrelets, auklets, guillemots, phalaropes, sandpipers, plovers, terns, jaegers, and tropicbirds.

Some Pacific seabirds are astonishingly numerous and wander widely over the seas. For example, millions of shearwaters that nest on islands off Australia and New Zealand annually migrate to feeding areas in the Bering Sea. These millions of shearwaters complement the arctic population of nesting seabirds that in Alaska alone may number over 40 million. Other species are uncommon or occur only in restricted areas. Several Pacific seabird species are endangered, including the Short-tailed Albatross and Dark-rumped Petrel. With increasing human development and pollution of the marine environment, the list of threatened and endangered species is growing. PSG members have worked hard to help the recovery of species like the Brown Pelican.

Although our knowledge is growing, our understanding of the ecology of Pacific seabirds is inadequate. We have yet to learn the most basic breeding biology of several species and the feeding ecology of many species is poorly known. Decades of research are still needed to understand the population dynamics of seabirds, as most are long-lived and reproduce slowly. Yet changes are swiftly coming to the seabirds' world. Oil pollution, plastic in the ocean, and fishery depletions are but a few threats that need addressing.

Seabirds for the Future - Protection and conservation of the great variety of fascinating seabirds of the Pacific Ocean are a challenge that will require the contributions, research, concern and dedication of many people from many countries if the diversity and numbers of seabirds are to be preserved.