

Aleutian Tern Technical Committee Meeting
Pacific Seabird Group Annual Meeting, Tacoma, WA

February 22, 2017

Attendees: Robin Corcoran, Don Lyons, Mike Goldstein, Leah Kenney, Susan Oehlers, Kelly Nesvacil, Sanjay Pyare, David Duffy, Marc Romano, Shiway Wang, Pat Baird (phone)

Meeting opening, introductions, agenda review

Group Member Updates on 2016 Work

- Annual Report (Susan) to PSG ExCo
- Yakutat field work (Susan)
 - o continued general monitoring, surveys
 - o Dave Duffy was keynote speaker at Yakutat Tern Festival
 - o High egg loss to ravens
 - o One geolocator recovered at Italio (6 in total now)
- ADFG field work (Kelly)
 - o scoping trips to Dillingham and Platinum
 - o checked known ALTE nesting around Icy Bay, little/no tern nesting seen
- Kodiak (Robin)
 - o new colony found on west side of Kodiak
 - o two large road system colonies: one failed, eagles seen; the other colony had at least some success (2 fledglings seen)
 - o some nest defense seen by ALTE
- Alaska Maritime (Marc R)
 - o Few birds in refuge
 - o Little nesting in Homer area; reliable colony (Stone Step Lake) failed
 - o Chirikov Island – fox removal planned
- UAA (Shiway)
 - o Analyzed stable isotopes from opportunistically sampled ALTE from Yakutat
 - o Few interannual differences in trophic level or fresh/marine spectrum, but some interannual differences in niche breadth
 - o Chick diets may be from more freshwater sources than adult diets during pre-breeding molt
 - o Pat Baird: historic diet data was 2 to 1, capelin to sandlance, but with some diversity. Prey identified from regurgitations and diagnostic bones
 - o Robin: 2016 photos of prey from Kodiak indicated a lot of diversity
 - o Presents talk on Friday afternoon of scientific program
- Generally poor nesting season across much of the Gulf of Alaska
- Subsistence seabird and egg harvest (Susan for Liliana Naves)

- ca. 4500 tern eggs harvested per year state-wide, 20% from SE Alaska, majority from Y-K Delta
- Several questions on sampling, reporting, etc. Can we engage with Liliana more closely for our education?
- Sanjay: colleague at UAS potentially well suited to these questions
- Indonesia trip (Sanjay and Mike)
 - Building off geolocator study
 - Tags deployed in 2010, recaptured in 2011-2016
 - Departure in late July, ~2 months in migration, stopover/slow down in Sea of Japan (west of Hokaido and Sahaklin)
 - Funneling zone in Tawwan Strait
 - Fan out to various sites in Philippines, SW Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, eastern Papua New Guinea
 - Additional survey data for ALTE at ca. 40 sites; generally single individuals seen
 - Only 2-3 species connect this part of SE Asia and US/Alaska
 - Individual winter site/region fidelity
 - Trip: Mike, Sanjay, local FS rep, Washington DC rep
 - Had 4 zones in mind:
 - Sumatra – too much time involved to get there
 - Java/Serang/Sunda (sp) Straight
 - Bali/east Java
 - Seram – security concerns
 - Local university partners were very helpful and interested
 - Looked for museum specimens as a guide to identification and potential presence of ALTE
 - Confirmed IDs using 700mm camera photos
 - Several other tern species present and in larger numbers
 - Common Tern
 - Crested Tern
 - Black-naped Tern
 - Fishing platforms for net-based nocturnal fishery served as roosting habitat for many terns, but no ALTE seen. ALTE rarely seen on small flotsam, always singly.
 - ID based on secondary feathers wing bar. Roosting ID not confident without also seeing the bird in flight.
 - 12 ALTE sightings, all single individuals. Over 100km of survey transect.
 - No birds seen off Bali.

Continuing discussion of a possible letter to FWS suggesting a higher priority within the agency (Susan)

- Sympathetic regional manager, former Alaska Maritime refuge manager
- Letter in 2014 was joint with KIMU, perhaps better to write a separate letter now
- Worth pursuing, Susan will follow-up

Colony information database (Susan for Heather)

- Heather is still receiving anecdotal colony observations and data following on the 2015 paper. Also, the data used for the 2015 paper is not in a publically accessible format. Where should this data be captured? How can we make it useful? Is it useful?
- Marc: there is a database structure and interest at Alaska Maritime to be an ALTE colony data clearinghouse. This information could be compiled and delivered to Robb K and others periodically.
- Marc: FYI, the FWS has hired a seabird database manager and has a plan for two additional positions. For more information, attend the Seabird Monitoring Committee and FWS Pacific Seabird Program meetings this afternoon.

IUCN status update and discussion and East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership meeting in January (Susan for Robb K)

- Not a lot of support from Russia to add ALTE to the bilateral agreement, but can be pursued by FWS and State of Alaska if support is there.
- Marc: reports from Russian scientists and bird guides have not always agreed in terms of how many ALTE are at Sakhalin.

Conservation Planning Meeting (Kelly)

- aka methods development workshop
- Idea has occurred in many venues considering ALTE (NFWF, ADFG, etc.)
- Converge on common methods, interpretation of data, research priorities
- Subcommittee brainstormed some ideas about a week ago
- Outline of meeting presented (see attachment)
- Marc: FWS has gone through this process for monitoring COMU colonies & population in California Current
- Leah: Structured Decision Making (SDM) would be a great approach and her office has recently used a very good facilitator/leader
- Marc: the FWS National Training Center can also offer SDM training either in Virginia or remotely (in Alaska)
- Funding: potential interest from NFWF; potentially from ADFG but grant cycle is coming soon; potential support from FWS ES (Leah) for facilitator and their products; FWS Region 7 Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) is another possible source of support.
- Leah: a little more focused objectives prior to a meeting would be helpful. A good facilitator can help refine objectives prior to the meeting; circulating objectives to meeting attendees prior to the meeting for feedback and buy-in.
- Kelly will work with Leah and get back to smaller group for coordination (Susan, Marc, Don, Mike)

Follow-up ALTE meeting Friday morning at 10:00 – 12:00 in Boardroom N.