

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

February 24, 2017

Attendees: Robin Corcoran, Don Lyons, Mike Goldstein (phone), Leah Kenney, Susan Oehlers, Kelly Nesvacil, Sanjay Pyare, Robb Kaler, Heather Renner, Martin Renner, David Duffy, Pat Baird (Phone)

Follow up/continuation from February 22 meeting

Colony data storage

Group agreed that existing data should be stored in colony register, with Marc as compiler. Marc can transfer data to Robb for eventual inclusion in the broader seabird colony registry (which has some current accessibility issues).

We will hold off on doing outreach/requesting new surveys from folks near historical colonies until we have better methods (after methods workshop)

Sanjay may have students that can help with data compilation/entry

Russia connection

Discussion of involving Russian biologists in methods workshop, possible funding opportunities for travel. One option discussed, grants from PSG, may not be feasible. PSG does offer travel awards to non-US, non-Canadian scientists to attend PSG annual meetings, but there is not precedent for PSG funding travel awards for travel to other meetings.

Who would be most appropriate to invite? Don and Heather will follow up to identify potential contacts

Robb will investigate funding options

Letter to USFWS

Susan attended KIMU meeting and reported agreement that there should be separate ALTE and KIMU letters

New USFWS regional director (Greg Siekaniec) is supportive of seabird conservation (former Alaska Maritime Refuge Manager)

Letter should not be too specific (i.e. listing category, etc.), but rather express conservation concern and request to elevate rank and funding level, reference ADF&G status and the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership plan to use terns as flagship species for seabird conservation throughout that Flyway.

Don and Martin will draft letter, using original letter as template

NFWF AK fund

Is this a potential funding source? Sanjay and Mike applied for this a couple of years ago and were rejected

Has to match priorities

Bering Sea/Kodiak sites might fit

Heather will look into

#### Kenai Refuge ALTE colony

Dawn Magness, new ecologist at Kenai NWR, is interested in initiating work on a small ALTE colony near the refuge headquarters

There was some work done in the 80s (Lynn Krasnow)-Heather will see if she can dig up any files to share with Dawn

Options presented by Dawn include: drone testing, photos from a camera pole, sound recording to track colony arrival/departure, and observations from a blind (bill load photos)

Martin reported work on waterbirds showed minimal disturbance unless flying too low, infrared sensors can be used, MAMU work has been done by drones with camera

The technical committee can help develop a protocol to test disturbance by drones: starting at high elevation, and collecting imagery. Maybe test on ARTE if ARTE only colony available

There are some references available, on common and crested terns. Kelly will send out white paper developed by Jon Barton

Martin and Heather will help Dawn with protocol development, and Heather is available to help in the field

Pat-will send out notes from drone poster at Waterbirds meeting

Bill load information would also be useful

Heather suggested nest camera work at Naknek colony-lots of gull predation

#### 2017 field season

A general outline of planned field work:

- Kodiak (FWS, with assistance from OSU)
  - Colony surveys
  - Trail cam nest monitoring
  - Initial assessment of ALTE preferred vegetation structure
  - Photograph prey delivered to chicks
- Dillingham/Platinum (ADFG, OSU)
  - Satellite tagging
  - Colony surveys/monitoring as feasible
- Yakutat (USFS, ADFG, UAS, OSU)
  - Satellite tagging

- Trail cam nest monitoring
- Colony surveys/monitoring

Leah reported that USFWS ecological services has ~\$15k available for field work support, after supporting technician for Kodiak. Potential to support a volunteer for the Yakutat site (travel, food). Sanjay may also be able to support a technician/volunteer. Susan will work with Leah and Sanjay on bringing on a volunteer (potentially Janelle Lopez). Don will work with Leah on purchasing ~15 decoys to facilitate trapping birds for tagging.

Nest camera work: test different methods (Manuela Huso, a statistician from OSU has some experience and might be a resource). Caleb Spiegel (former OSU MS student) took oystercatcher video footage (PWS). Will require some in season review for adjusting methods as needed

Kelly reported that ADF&G is pretty good on staffing (will cut back on colony monitoring component if necessary)

Tentative field schedule: Don et al. to Dillingham site ~May 7-15, then 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> week of May in Yakutat. Think about adding Naknek next year (?). Dave is not available May 10-12. Don has another 1 week commitment in June.

Potential to add mist nets for trapping methods (suggested by Scott Hall)-Kelly was able to add to IACUC

Partners working with ADF&G as part of the Federal Aid project statement are authorized to collect egg shells as part of Kelly's ADF&G's general collecting permit. We will contact Dave Duffy for preferred storage methods and shipping address.