

MINUTES OF THE PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

25 June 2021 Conference Call

2:00pm-3:30pm (Pacific Standard Time – UTC-8)

Amended and approved, 3 August 2021

Present: Roberta Swift (Chair), Rob Suryan (Past Chair), Sadie Wright (Secretary), Kirsten Bixler (Treasurer), Peter Hodum (Vice Chair for Conservation), Rachel Sprague (Chair-Elect), Kerry Woo (Canada Regional Representative), Kristin Brunk (Student Representative), Laura Koehn (Washington/Oregon Regional Representative), José Ramirez-Garofalo (Non-Pacific U.S. States Regional Representative), Marc Romano (Alaska/Russia Regional Representative), Nina O’Hanlon (Europe/Africa Regional Representative) [12].

Absent: Cristián Suazo (S. California, Latin America, Hawaii Regional Representative), Katie Stoner (Northern California Regional Representative), Chung-hang Hung (Asia/Oceania Regional Representative) [3].

Others present: Anna Vallery (Communications Committee Co-Coordinator), Stephanie Laredo (Membership Committee Co-Coordinator), Doug Forsell (Member) [3].

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, & REVIEW 13 APRIL ACTION ITEMS

Request for additional Agenda Items. No additions.

Motion to approve the Agenda: moved by Rachel, seconded by Rob.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 12, motion passed unanimously

Review of participants/roll call.

Past Action Items with Responses.

1. All: provide Wieteke and Anna with suggestions for Editor/Associate Editor for “*Pacific Seabirds*”. They have some ideas/suggestions—getting closer. We can remove this from the Action Item list.
2. Peter and Kristin will continue to advance long term mentorship and workshop initiatives. Peter and Kristin both spoke to this—they have a long term plan. We can remove this from the Action Item list.
3. We need an agenda item for the next meeting to vote on increasing PSG annual contribution to OC to \$5K. Sadie will add that to the agenda, Roberta will lead discussion of the item, and Doug F. will attend if possible. Done.
4. Roberta will contact Bob Pitman and provide him with some details about what the *Pacific Seabirds* Editor or Associate Editor position entails. Wieteke will provide Roberta with a summary packet of information to provide to Bob Pitman with this request in the near future.
5. Nacho and Justine will meet with the UCSD AV folks to determine capability and cost estimate for the virtual component of the conference. Roberta will meet with Nacho and others next week for an Annual Meeting Committee discussion and will learn the status of this action.

1. APPROVE 19 MAY 2021 MINUTES

Comment: I think we need a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting if everyone had a chance to review them.

Question: Did anyone want to add or change anything to last meeting's minutes?

Motion to approve the 19 May 2021 minutes; moved by Kerry, Kirsten seconds.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 12, motion passed unanimously

2. VOTE ON INCREASING PSG CONTRIBUTION TO ORNITHOLOGICAL COUNCIL

Overview of the report by Roberta: PSG ExCo will vote on whether to raise the annual contribution from \$2460 to \$5k. Doug Forsell indicates that he gave a presentation on this item at the May 19 meeting. Roberta summarizes: PSG contribution is low relative to other organizations of the same size or bigger. Wilson Ornithological is giving \$22k annually. The vote today will increase our contribution for one year. There are other organizations who are threatening to back out of contributing, and our increase will show support for the OC. Does anyone want to discuss or comment? If not, we need a motion.

Rob motions to increase the PSG contribution to OC for one year to \$5k. We can reevaluate in a year based on input from Doug and other OC reps. Marc seconds.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 12, motion passed unanimously

Comment: Thank you, this is great.

Comment/Question: I haven't been able to find any additional volunteers to be the PSG rep to OC. Does Doug have any suggestions?

Comment: Two current reps would like to be replaced. Doug has been a rep for 22 years, and would like a new rep to replace him.

Question: Is there are write up for what it takes to be a OC rep?

Comment: No, we don't have something written up. Perhaps Doug and Pat could write up a description. We used to have a couple of in person meetings annually; that's down to one in person meeting annually with ~50% attendance.

Comment: Good idea to write up a description to cast our new a bit wider to garner interest.

Comment: I have a few descriptions from Pat. I can put a paragraph together and send it to Doug for review.

Comment: All right, thanks.

Question: Any more discussion on that topic?

3. VOTE ON THE PROPOSAL TO ADD \$384 TO STUDENT RESEARCH GRANTS

Rob summarizes the report: The awards committee reviewed the applications (1 for BSc, 4 for MSc, and 2 for PhD) and we were torn between 2 for MSc. Given the amount of money that had already been approved, left us \$384 shy of being able award the second MSc grant. The request from the committee is to include the second award to a MSc student.

Question: Do we need to talk about where that money is coming from?

Comment: I think it's coming from the General Fund/

Comment: Yes, that's correct.

Question: Any comments or questions about this?

Kerry motions to vote on the proposal to add \$384 from the General Funds to the Research Grant fund.
Peter seconded.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 12, motion passed unanimously

Comment: This is great to give the second award because the top two MSc proposals were neck and neck, both very good.

4. COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

Overview of the Report: The main two things are 1) the discussion around publication of Pacific Seabirds. 47-1 will be coming out soon. In 2021 we will only be releasing one issue, 48-1. There is an opportunity for discussion: we don't know about how many people read Pacific Seabirds. It would be good to hear what everyone thinks about whether we keep it up, but we need to find another person to support Theo and Natasha.

Comment: One of the important aspects is for Pacific Seabirds to be a record of the organization. I would want to make sure we don't lose that. Could all of it be in the Pacific Seabirds format or online. Is the most time consuming part getting it online or formatting?

Comment: It's both of those things. Prodding people to submit, and also formatting. It took Theo a long time to edit and format for consistency. I'm not sure if it would be—it would be great if everyone would submit their reports in the same format.

Comment: I was an Associate Editor of Pacific Seabirds in the past, and offering to do that in the past. I found that when the Regional Reps were really engaged, it was a lot easier. When Rob Kaler took the lead on compiling regional reports, it went pretty fast. We were able to pull some of those issues together on really short time frames, it went well. But with just one person (Theo) that would be a big lift. We had four or five people helping out in the past. I'm happy as a regional rep to be leaned on. Regional reps should be submitting reports formatted and ready to go. It would be great if the other regional reps could help with other sections. I would like to see this publication continue. We've received lots of great feedback in the past, and should think long and hard before deciding to stop this publication. We should cast our net a little wider in gathering opinions on that decision.

Comment: That's good to hear that this has been sustainable in the past. Perhaps we could have a call with you (Marc), Wieteke, and Theo to discuss how to make this better—more efficient.

Comment: I won't say it's easy. It's a lot of work.

Comment: I was Chair when we switched to the electronic version of Pacific Seabirds. It was determined that there were more efficiencies and cost effective with a virtual option. It could evolve to something more like people post their own reports instead of one person compiling everything. Better technology could help with new ways of getting the information out to PSG.

Comment: As a new regional rep, I noticed that the last rep is really pushing for responses from people around the holidays, so there were not a lot of responses. I'm on board to do as much work as I need to do, but can we change the timing so it doesn't coincide with the holidays.

Comment: I think a lot of time, people start earlier, but people don't respond, so it gets pushed into the holidays.

Comment: That's a good point. It was an abnormal year. We typically try to wrap up before the holidays. We don't expect everyone to wrap things up in the two weeks before the holidays.

Comment: Thank you all. This is super helpful. I'll update Wieteke and Theo, and see if Natasha is interested in continuing to help. We'd be interested in getting Marc's help, or someone else as Associate Editor.

Comment: I'd challenge you, Anna, to think of innovative ways to present the content. I don't think we're wedded to the format, but need to keep getting the information to PSG.

Comment: Wieteke and I have talked about how to get the content to everyone in a new way. Maybe in 2022 we can discuss a new format. Will continue to update ExCo as we think through this.

Comment: I would like to add one more thing. Pacific Seabirds started as a newsletter because we had no other communication. It became more formal when people thought as a society that we should have a publication. It became more formatted as we saw a need to add scientific names, and we ended up as a publication. I think a lot of people stopped—it became complicated dealing with a list of 15 sea ducks. It got more formal than how it started out. If it wasn't so much a scientific publication, more people may submit reports.

Comment: I will take this back to the committee and get to work. The other big thing we have going on is getting the non-profit Gmail account set up. We wanted to make sure that everyone is aware that the change is coming before the next ExCo meeting. The two big things we want to address first: 1) if everyone wants to transfer their blue host emails over to the new gmail accounts, we can move them over as unread. Or we can start with a clean slate in Gmail. We need instruction on the preference from everyone. 2) With Google work space, we have access to a new Google Drive for PSG. All reports and other things can be stored there. We have a new protocol that could live there. We have access to Google meetings. One stop shop. That's a lot.

Question: What's the easiest thing for you and the committee as far as transferring to new Gmail.

Comment: It would be easiest to have everyone do the same thing. All or nothing as far as transferring Blue Host emails.

Question: Do we need to make that decision today? Clean slate would work best for me. Does anyone want their Blue Host emails transferred over? Speak now or forever hold your peace. I see a lot of shaking heads. I'd be happy if we never had to see Blue Host again.

Comment: The other suggestion is, we are hoping to write up a protocol. It may be better with Google PSG accounts and use them in a more official capacity instead of forwarded to personal accounts, which what most people did in the past.

Comment: I use a separate email client to access Blue Host, so it doesn't matter to me. I don't think I need to go back. Clean slate is fine with me.

Comment: Cool. This is also an opportunity to clean up our addresses. We can add or delete emails. We are an email away if you have questions about this.

Comment: Thanks so much Anna. This is going to make things so much easier.

Comment: No worries. That's it for me.

Question: Any more questions.

Comment: I also want to thank Anna. This is time consuming and I really appreciate it.

5. PROPOSAL FOR A STRONGER RELATIONSHIP WITH UK SEABIRD GROUP

Overview of the Report: Within the last month I was contacted by the chair of the UK Seabird Group (Liz Humphries) about forming a stronger relationship with PSG. I'm really just asking about a way to proceed with that. If anyone wants to be involved or has thoughts on how to proceed with that. Liz is already in touch with Peter about DEI issues. She thought we could start by meeting with a few ExCo members to hash out ideas. I'm wondering who else would want to be involved or has thoughts on how we can collaborate better with UK Seabird Group.

Comment: I (Peter) met with Liz a few times and participated in a meeting with a bunch of folks about DEI issues in the seabird world back in the Fall 2020. It seems logical that we support each other more and integrate better (PSG and UK Seabird Group). I would be happy to continue to communicate with them. Lovely people. Please count me in if I can be helpful.

Comment: Thanks Peter. Nina did you have your hand up?

Comment: Same. I would be happy to be more involved. I work with Liz.

Comment: I'm hearing that I (Roberta), Peter, and Nina could have a call with Liz. Are there others who are interested as well?

Comment: Yes, this is Kirsten, and I would be interested in being involved in a discussion as well.

Comment: Awesome. If anyone else wants to join the group, drop Roberta a line.

Comment: I'll just add that the UK Group has awesome swag. I think we should aspire to their level of t-shirts and swag.

Comment: I agree Peter. Last year Olivia got jilted on t-shirts for the conference (the company was inconsistent), so not many people got t-shirts for the last conference. I think a lot of people would want t-shirts with that puffin on it.

Comment: I just googled their website and they've even got Pride Gannets, and cormorants and puffins with pride flags. I literally want to buy all of these.

Comment: We put in an order.

Comment: They had a competition for the members to design the t-shirts and it was really cool.

Comment: We've talked about ways to get members more involved during the year, so that could be an idea.

Comment: And something as simple as, we've got this gorgeous logo and it's not used in anything but correspondence. We should have t-shirts and hoodies with nothing else but the logo. It's wonderful. Nina is right—it's such an inspired idea to generate artists to design art for t-shirts and other swag.

Question: is there anyone who is particularly excited about this idea and would like to lead the effort for better swag for PSG?

Comment: I'm happy to help. If someone could tag team with me? I don't think it's a heavy lift. Maybe we could send an email to the listserv and get more general ideas for things that people would want with PSG swag.

Comment: I could help with the communications for that. As far as partnership, I'm happy to connect with UK Seabird Group to talk about DEI stuff as we coordinate with WbS on that topic as well.

Nina, Peter, Roberta, and Kirsten will meet with Liz and the UK Seabird Group to propose steps towards a stronger relationship between these groups.

Question: Anyone else want to talk about UK Seabird Group and great swag ideas? Ok, next thing.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT/UPDATE

Overview of Report from the Treasurer: I have 3 items to discuss: 1) I want to let you know that the tax info from the last fiscal year has been turned into the accountant. We've had a little back and forth so hopefully we wrap that up soon. 2) We are in the process of opening HELPS bank account, and that will be official shortly. 3) I have contacted the student research grant recipients and have heard back from two of them. Before I send out the awards, I wanted to ask you. Rob asked me to ask, do we still want to issue 90% of the award and hold 10%, which is what we've typically done that in the past. We did not do that last year because I forgot. But I want to check in with you to determine if we want to stick with issuing 90% of the grant now and wait to issue the last 10% until we receive a report from the grant recipient. Or should we pay 100% now and that's it.

Question: what was the reason for holding 10%?

Comment: it's hard to get reports from people, and that was a way to reliably do it.

Question: do grads require reports.

Comment: no. But if we receive reports, we have the option to post it to the website. But I don't know if past reports are posted on our website.

Comment. I was curious. I think usually in government grants are usually unconditional. Thanks.

Comment: That's why I asked. I had not seen reports in past years. But it is a requirement that at the end of the year, the recipient provides a report. The link was broken on our website, I worked with Wieteke to repair that. I have no idea what compliance has been in the past. Does anyone know where past reports are for student research grants?

Lots of shaking heads.

Comment: I wonder if anyone ever asked the students for reports? If they haven't been emailed specifically they may have forgot. Especially during a pandemic year. It feels weird to withhold money and may be hard to keep track of.

Comment: Some boards do that, but is that becoming unnecessary or complicated, especially for the treasurer and awards committee.

Comment: NFWF grants require reports but they are \$400k grants. But for just a \$1k grant, it may be more about good standing. Grants are important, and I don't necessarily want to hold back the money, but perhaps extra reminders about staying in good standing requires a report.

Comment: I feel like we should really pester them before we have a policy to withhold funds.

Comment: I can help pester people. I know it probably just fall through the cracks.

Comment: Thanks Kristin.

Question: Do we need to vote? Or is this a discussion? Just treasurers update.

Comment: I don't think we need to vote. It's not much money, honestly. It sounds like you want me to pay 100% now? I see nodding heads. Okay-that's all I have.

Rob will work with Wieteke to revise the language on the website that currently indicates that grant funding will be withheld if reports are not submitted by grant recipients.

Question: Any additional questions for Kirsten? Okay, next agenda item.

7. NEXT STEPS FOR JOINT PSG/WBS 2024 COSTA RICA CONFERENCE

Summary of Report: It's just a question about next steps for organizing a joint conference in 2024. The main crux is, do we need to have an official vote from the group? Is there a process to formalize the process? How does ExCo want decisions made—logistics, auction, field trips? Can Rachel make those decisions, or do we need a subcommittee? We want to check in with the group. The conversation has kind of dropped off, Rachel. Someone was going to set up a meeting, but I don't think anyone did.

Comment: The WbS group was super excited and wanted to chat right away, but then went on vacation. There are lots of small questions that WbS wants answers for quickly. Lots of details right now even though it's years out. Largely I think they are looking for commitment from PSG for a joint meeting. WbS is blazing ahead so if we want a joint meeting there, we need to make that decision soon. The momentum is for Costa Rica. Do we want to commit? What is the delegation for decision making?

Question: was anyone involved in that last joint meeting? It sounds like this may be uncharted territory.

Comment: There has not been any formal decision making or voting associated with other PSG meetings. I think this decision can be run by the ExCo. If you want more involvement from PSG, you can survey the whole group, but in the past it's been left to the Chair and past Chair to make those decisions. The committee approach you're taking, Roberta is good, and run it by (inform) ExCo.

Comment: In 1982 we had a joint meeting with Austral Asian group. We rotated joint meetings with the East or West, but this is entirely different, so I don't know how we'd work that out. You just need to vote on when you have the meeting and form a Local Committee, who brings the proposed budget to ExCo, which is really the only thing ExCo needs to vote on.

Comment: You might want additional input from PSG about an international trip. You will likely lose people from Canada or other members.

Comment: I think for every meeting we do polls to see how big of a meeting to plan for. The venues depend on that.

Question: how far out do we have meeting locations planned for PSG.

Comment: That is definitely something that has fallen through the cracks. I'm trying to catch up for us.

Comment: Okay so 2022 is San Diego and 2023 is Seattle. Rachel, does WbS want to do CR in 2024?

Comment: This is really more like our 2025 meeting. It will either be in December 2024, or Jan/Feb of 2025. Our 50th is 2023 (Seattle), and a big question mark around Alaska for 2024.

Comment: we did have a poll at the meeting that we could refer to. It sounds like we need to get some input on Costa Rica, and maybe we could get input on Alaska as well.

Comment: WbS is dealing with the same issue regarding international travel (will reduce some members being able to travel). They acknowledged that concern but also that it's a kind of high interest destination. It was also brought up that our last meeting in Mexico was well attended. Less concern that people will find a way to get there.

Comment: And now we have the hybrid option, which helps with attendance.

Comment: And it is 4 years out, so everyone recognizes that a lot can change before then. And technology changes. And who knows what the state of US or Canada government will be then. That's why this is hard to plan for the banquet four years out. The point is, they are trying to figure out if it's a joint meeting to understand the total number of people. They are considering doing a pelagic trip in the middle of the conference so that people can interact with attendees in that way in the middle of the trip. Everyone agreed that no more than four sessions, even if that that means that not all talks are selected (being more selective). This will be one where Rachel is the past chair. I will have handed stuff off including the 2024/25 conference. So can I commit to the idea of this joint meeting?

Comment: We are not committing any funds, so we are committing to moving forward. Then the LoCo would propose a budget.

Question: When do they come on? 1.5 years ahead of the conference?

Comment: probably sooner for this one. WbS has already offered a Loco chair.

Question: Do we have a deadline for committing to the meeting?

Comment: Not necessarily, but they would like to know when PSG will commit to a joint CR meeting.

Comment: They been wanting to see our past conference budgets and I think Kirsten sent me something.

Comment: I think they want to see our budget to see if there are things that PSG budgets for conferences that they hadn't thought of. It's not an audit.

Comment: The main thing is the figure out the financials to make sure the profit is split 50/50 and you need one treasurer who handles the funds—not co-mingle them or anything. Those are things the LoCo needs to figure out. I think we had a problem with one of the joint meetings with the WbS because they ended up with all the profits. We don't want to end up with hard feelings.

Question: Kristin, I don't want to put you on the spot, but a joint meeting will be an excellent opportunity for students to network. I know that as a grad student I was able to go to a joint meeting and was able to get out of my PSG sphere. How do you feel about this for students, to go to Costa Rica? I think the bar will be high for students to attend.

Comment: I've been thinking about this, and while I think it could be a challenge for students from North America to be able to attend, but it would make it more accessible to students from Central and South America who don't get to attend conference in North America. It doesn't seem like a bad thing, in fact it seems like a good thing from that perspective. And hopefully we can raise some money for travel grants, and maybe can make it up to the NA students in some way.

Comment: Things are cheaper in Costa Rica. Hotels are cheaper. And air fare to CR from east coast is not bad. And maybe can people can share hotel rooms.

Comment: I think it is a compelling enough reason—to benefit students in central and south America to attend, to have the meeting in CR.

Comment: I'd be willing to be a representatives on the committee—I've got friends in CR>

Comment: Thanks Doug—we'll loop you in!

Comment: Things get messy with silent auction and banquet. How you divide up funds for student travel for the following year. All these are important considerations.

Comment: Write down that Doug has volunteered to help with LOCO for costa rica joint meeting.

Comment: It looks like we don't have a meeting location for 2024.

Comment: That's in my bucket (Rob). We have some ideas and I'll start contacting people.

Comment: We had a poll with a word map with locations for future meetings. Would that be helpful?

Comment: Yes.

Roberta will send Rob the word map resulting from the poll question at the last meeting about future conference locations. Rob will continue to work on a proposed location for the 2024 meeting location.

Question: It sounds like there is no strong opposition to going down the road with WbS to plan a joint meeting in CR in 2024/25? Good to work out some of the agreement earlier, especially about finances. That gives us some time. Roberta, Doug, Rob, and Rachel will continue to work with WbS to hash out some details for that meeting—eventually a budget.

Comment: Sounds good. Thanks Rachel. Any more thoughts or comments from anyone on that topic. Next agenda item.

8. PSG MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Report Summary: Jen and I developed a 2 year strategic plan to increase membership, focused primarily on increasing membership in under-represented groups and regions. We also came up with a plan to increase our member appreciation and working with communications and website teams, as well as Kristin (student rep) to highlight early career scientist and student through social media and website. We've worked with HELPS coordinator to ensure that language is clear on website about who benefits from applying for that program. Early career scientists are folks who are less than 5 years into their

career. We came up with: if every Corresponding committee member could come up with 5 new members by the end of the year that would be great. That is our goal for this year. We'll see how our numbers look, and next year we may have new proposals for targeting specific groups where we haven't seen increasing member numbers. We are also updating members profiles in CVent. How many new students are we getting? This isn't specified in the profile in CVent. We want to add this question. Maybe this will require an email to ask everyone to update their profile. Right now we have HI/CA/South America grouped together. We'd like to split that up. It doesn't mean the regional rep needs to be split up, we just want more detail. One thing that has come up—there is talk of a seabird session at SAKNAWS conference that Cheryl Horton is working on. They put in a proposal. If that does go through, we'd like to offer discounted memberships during that week. I wanted to bring it up to see if we need to develop a formal proposal for a vote, so we can provide discounted memberships during conference weeks?

Comment: I think yes, it is important to have a formal proposal because memberships are our primary income.

Comment: that sounds good. We'll work on that.

Question: Maybe I (Kirsten) can touch base with you as you work through that?

Comment: Yes, we'll touch base with you Kirsten.

Comment: Thank you Stephanie, that's a great report. Membership is high! That may be as high as it ever has been.

Comment: Yes. Active membership is 572!

Comment: That's great—thank you Stephanie. We had a call with CVent this week and talked about an issue where a lot of members opted out. I got an email from Cvent about how to do that. I'll share that with you. The main issue is that when people submit abstracts, their opting out had prevented Roberta from communicating with them through CVENT. She is worried about that happening again. It means she needs to send those individuals separately. If you are a member, you need to receive communications.

Question: Any additional questions for Stephanie.

Question: I'm curious about the Cvent opt out option. If you opt out of the membership portal Cvent, does it end all Cvent communications?

Comment: I think so. There are two ways to opt out and they are called two different things, but they both block any communications from Cvent.

Comment: Even if you could clarify the wording of the opt out to let people know what they will be missing out.

Comment: I did let people know that I did not recommend opting out because of the lack of communications. We are past time, let's head to action items.

Sadie reads through action items (highlighted in red in these notes).

Question: Any additional action items? Motion to adjourn the meeting?

Peter motions to adjourn the meeting. Rachel seconded.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 12, motion passed unanimously