

Report #14: Code of Conduct Committee Annual Report

Code of Conduct Committee Annual Report to the Pacific Seabird Group Executive Council PSG 2022 Annual Meeting

From: Rob Suryan (Past Chair, PSG)

Michelle Kissling, Julia Parrish, Scott Pearson (Interim Code of Conduct Committee)

Date: 02/07/2022

As PSG Chair in 2020, Rob Suryan formed the Interim Code of Conduct Committee (hereafter “Committee”) with three members recommended by the PSG EXCO at the February 2020 annual meeting. All three agreed to participate and included Michelle Kissling (University of Montana), Julia Parrish (University of Washington), and Scott Pearson (Washington Department of Wildlife). The initial goal of the Committee was to establish the Terms of Reference by which the Committee operates, along with identifying members of a full committee, their length of service, and rotation cycle. Unfortunately, with the challenges of the COVID pandemic, no progress was subsequently made with the Terms of Reference in 2020. There were two complaints submitted, one resolved without EXCO intervention (submitted by a bystander with the complainant specifying no further action needed to be taken) and others related to posts on the PSG listserv that EXCO resolved with direct communication with the people involved.

In 2021, Rob was able to work with the Committee to draft a Terms of Reference and use two cases as tests to define how the Committee and EXCO work to resolve complaints and refine the content and boundaries of the Terms of Reference and Committee jurisdiction. The Committee and PSG Chairs (Rob Suryan, Past Chair, Roberta Swift, Chair, Rachel Sprague, Program Chair) held discussions and reviewed edits of the Terms of Reference throughout the fall and winter of 2021/22 to establish a Terms of Reference that could effectively guide future Committee efforts in supporting the PSG Code of Conduct. This effort included reviewing similar documents from other organizations, such as the Ecological Society of America. The PSG Chairs consulted with the PSG EXCO to ensure there was broad support for the Terms of Reference.

As of the PSG 2022 annual meeting, we are very close to having the Terms of Reference finalized for use by future committees. A completed Terms of Reference will allow the Committee to make final decisions on the two cases submitted in 2021. Complainants from both cases are apprised of the progress and aware of the importance of these initial efforts in establishing the long-term function of the Committee and equitable application of the PSG Code of Conduct. An additional goal for 2022 is establishing a full committee of up to eight people.