

Aleutian Tern Technical Committee Meeting – Pacific Seabird Group Annual Meeting 2022

February 22, 2022

Attendees: Mike Goldstein, Susan Oehlers, Yat-tung (Tung) Yu, Don Lyons, Heather Renner, Jenell Larsen Temple, Jenny McKee, Jill Tengeres, Kristine Sowl, Patty Szczys, Robb Kaler, Robin Corcoran, Megan Boldenow, Tania Lewis, Dan Roby, Jenny McKee, Dave Duffy, Simba Chan, Brandt Meixell, Paul Radley

Agenda

1. Introductions

- FYI: Jenny McKee is doing an Audubon story about Aleutian terns

2. Review agenda and revise as needed

- No revisions proposed

3. Brief Background/history of technical committee

- Susan gave a brief introduction on history of ALTE Technical Committee
- Materials are available on the PSG Technical Committee website, including Technical Committee founding documents, past meeting notes, annual reports, Conservation Synthesis, some publications

4. Review 2021 meeting notes and follow-up on action items

- Susan went over a few action items from 2021 to discuss what we have accomplished versus what still needs work.
- Colony database work is ongoing
- Any ideas for tern swag that we can pursue? Let Susan know. (And thanks, Susan, for the t-shirts for new members last year!)
- Genetics work
 - Patty sent out protocol for collecting genetics samples; if you have an opportunity to collect at a new site and don't have a protocol, contact Patty!
 - Jill sent Patty unused eggshells from Kodiak. Patty used these to even out Kodiak versus Yakutat samples. There are issues with one of the markers that Patty is exploring a bit; once this is worked out, Kodiak and Yakutat will have rough parity.
 - Patty would love to have genetic samples collected from further afield colonies in Alaska, and colonies in Asia
 - Option to collect new samples from Yakutat, to compare to initial samples
 - Continued interest and desire to get samples out of Russia (this is the highest priority for this work). Heather is willing to spend some time thinking about how to pursue this.

- Robb pursued help through government to government program; this has not been fruitful.
- We have more than \$10k available (from the original seed money) for this work. Idea is this money will remain available to use in Russia as needed. If folks need to travel to facilitate getting the samples, more funding would be needed.
- We'll need to work on new partnering options, now that Evgeny Syroechkovsky has passed on.
- Simba is trying to contact Russian colleagues to see who will be taking over Evgeny's position in Russia (government position, projects). He will stay in touch with Robb about this.
- Conservation Synthesis needs updating
 - Was written in 2015. Should review what we have done, where we are now, what are the priorities now and the next steps.
 - Mike and Susan would like volunteers to help get documents updated. Maybe a working group?
 - Don is interested in supporting this effort

5. Committee member updates

a. Summary of Annual Report

- Contributions from Alaska Maritime, Kodiak, Black Sand Spit and other Yakutat colonies, Bristol Bay. Also some contributions from Jill

b. Round Robin: (2021 field season accomplishments, COVID impacts and mitigation, papers or presentations completed and/or in development, etc.)

- Kodiak (Robin): Work scaled back a bit after the completion of Jill's work in 2020. Annual report is available for work done in 2021. Will be doing a bit less ALTE work from here forward, mostly just monitoring colonies.
- Alaska Maritime (Heather): In 2021 went out to Chirikof Island (Alaska Maritime's largest colony) and surveyed. Count ~150.
- Yakutat (Susan): no dedicated technician in 2021, so work was scaled back. Basic colony monitoring, put some song meters out, and did some surveying. Classed the year as Moderately successful for Yakutat area colonies.
- Robb will present on the pilot study at Bristol Bay on Friday at 11:15 PST
- Jill Tengeres: Defense is planned for March 18th. Link will be distributed to this group.
- Jill also got seven eggshell samples from museums for compound-specific isotope analysis. Will hope to share information from this work shortly after thesis completion.

c. Year of the Terns (EAAFP)

- Tung Yu (Dir. Hong Kong Bird Watching Society) gave some information on the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership and EAAFP Seabird Working Group's Year of the Terns
 - EAAFP includes 39 partners (intergovernmental organizations, government, NGOs, one private partner)

- The flyway has been traditionally focused on wetlands but will be promoting terns and their conservation needs in 2022. This is a new direction for them.
- Year of the Terns 2022: <http://tiny.cc/YoTerns>
 - Goals are: Enhance awareness-raising, encourage exchange of ideas and promote discussion of collaboration on seabird research and conservation, promote and strengthen working relationships within the Seabird Working Group
 - Aleutian Tern is one of the target species

Campaign timeline

Month	Activities
February	- Formation of Year of the Terns Organizing Team - Launch of Year of the Terns
March - April	- Collection of materials and prepare of factsheet about terns in EAA Flyway
May	- Launch of Tern Photo Competition
June	- Promote the World Seabird Day events
July	World Seabird Day (3 July) webinars - 1 July: Launch of EAAF seabird breeding colony registry - 2/3 July: Webinar "Study and conservation of terns in EAA Flyway"
Sept - Oct	- Tern Photo Competition closing and announcement
November	- 2023 calendar with winning photos of Tern Photo Competition

You are invited to join and support!

Tell us if you want to organize events and be part of the *Year of the Terns* campaign!

We are recruiting organizing team members for (please let me know by 27 Feb):

1. Producing Factsheet about terns in EAA Flyway

2. Year of the Terns Photo Competition

3. World Seabird Day talk series

And sponsors and supporters!

- The Aleutian Tern Technical Committee could contribute information for the Fact Sheets at a minimum.
 - Susan Oehlers has offered to help with this effort and can keep Alaska partners in the loop.
- Don: Can we form a sister relationship between Alaska and Jakarta Bay?
 - This is an area a lot of birding takes place, so there could be an audience and a wide reach.
 - Simba Chan: This could be an ideal Seabird Flyway Network Site.

- Don: If we do tag birds in Nome this summer, they could be tracked in real time, and some of that information could be used as an opportunity to generate interest in terns.
- Don asked that Tung let him know how else he can support Year of the Tern. Tung said he would love his help on a few things, and will follow up.

6. 2022 field season plans and priorities

- Alaska statewide census planning/methods testing continues
 - We hope to launch the statewide census work in 2023, focusing on one geographic region at a time. Tagging information shows fine scale movement within a breeding season, but not larger scale movements; so partitioning by region is feasible.
 - Pilot work will continue in 2022 to fine tune methods and study plan
 - We will be looking for some help with 2022 surveys (aerial + ground count)
 - Need technicians/biologists plus some logistics help
 - Could collect eggshells for genetic analysis during this work
 - We need to work on permits for this for 2022
 - We will also be looking to hire a part time coordinator in the future.
 - Someone who is good with logistics, grants, permits, and maybe also has experience to do some field work.
- Yakutat area: Susan will be working at Black Sand Spit and some other area colonies, but efforts are downsized compared to previous years
- Kristine Sowl: Can Izembek do some ground truthing of tern colonies in their area?
 - Kristine suggested she could help get Izembek to undertake this through FWS Inventory and Monitoring work
 - Kristine has found ATV off-roading is taking place in what could be good Aleutian tern habitat. This might help prioritize this work.
 - Megan/Heather/Robb to loop Kristine in on conversations with Izembek
 - Robb: Kara Hilwig also noted some disturbance at Bethel (?) from someone doing off-roading on a snowmachine. Might be time to work on raising awareness.
 - Also could work on awareness about disturbance from egging.
- Tania Lewis has some interest in getting out to a colony in the Glacier Bay Area.
 - Three-day kayak trip out to a small colony at Adams Inlet (?). Might be able to fit this one in this year; just needs to make it work with her field schedule.
 - Larger colony at Alsek could use some logistics support to access; so accessing this colony would require planning further out from the season.
- Tagging-Nome: Satellite tagging of ALTE in 2022 (10 tags to go out in Nome). Plan to collect genetic samples.

7. Funding

a. Current funding status

- Four open NFWF awards
 - Susan has one with funding that needs to be reallocated
 - Robin has two that will be used for tagging this year
 - Robb has two open awards

- One is being wrapped up this season
- One is being used for statewide work

b. Other potential future funding needs/opportunities?

- No new funding opportunities offered
- No needs identified
- Susan asked that we all keep terns on our radar as we see potential funding opportunities
- Any follow up planned with Scott Hall?
 - Mike and Susan talked with Scott a week ago about future granting opportunities and funding. Also met with Jana Doi who manages the NFWF Alaska program. Can bring forward some notes from today's meeting as well.