

Report #2f: Past Chair Awards Committee Report

Past Chair Awards Committee Report 2023

Awards Committee

Annual Report to the Pacific Seabird Group Executive Council

PSG 2023 Annual Meeting

Submitted by: Roberta Swift, PSG Past Chair, and Awards Committee Chair

Awards Committee Members: Rachel Sprague (Chair), Roberta Swift: (Past Chair), Dick Veit (Chair-Elect), Karen Lau Aucoin (Student Representative)

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The Awards Committee solicited, reviewed, and awarded all the standard annual awards in 2022, including: (1) World Seabird Twitter Conference; (2) Student Research Grants; (3) Lifetime Achievement Award; (4) Special Achievement Award; (5) Student Travel Awards; (6) Student Presentation Awards. In addition, we instituted a new award: (7) the Chair's Choice Award. Award documents are now organized on the PSG Google Drive, including templates, submission forms, and scoring sheets. We received an overwhelming number of submissions for all awards, and selected three each LAA and SAA's in honor of the 50th Annual Meeting. The sheer volume of applications received and increased number awarded made this year's judging processes especially labor intensive for the Awards Committee and Awards Chair. The following are summaries of each of the award categories.

(1) World Seabird Twitter Conference. There were twenty-two presentations that focused on seabirds from the Pacific Region and were referred by the World Twitter Seabird Conference to the PSG Awards Committee. This is a three-fold increase compared to only 7 judged in 2021. Because that number of presentations was a big lift for the Committee to review and score, we asked the World Seabird Twitter organizers to high grade them for us in 2024 by providing a select few for us to consider. The \$200 prize for the best Pacific Seabird Presentation went to Catalina Porras for her presentation "Plastic ingestion in Neotropical Cormorants decreases in COVID-19 anthropause in Lima, Peru."

(2) Student Research Grants. We received nine applications for Student Research Grants, which is comparable to the six applications received in 2021: one B.S. student, one M.S. students, and seven Ph.D. students. The standard award is \$1,000 for each of the three degree categories but we awarded the specific amount requested by each applicant for their research cost needs. The three applicants receiving grants are below; those with an asterisk are presenting at PSG 2023:

- *Olivia Fross (BS) \$999.93 "Population Dynamics and Trends of an Endangered Seabird: Breeding Tufted Puffins (*Fratercula cirrhata*) in Washington State"
- *Kamya Patel (MS): \$700; "Plastic ingestion: A sensory ecology approach"
- *Katie Stoner (PhD): \$1000; "Assessing pre-breeding diet of Tufted Puffins throughout their North American range using eggshell membrane stable isotopes"

(3) Lifetime Achievement Awards. Three LAA's were awarded this year, to Dr. Bill Sydeman, Dr. Kathy Kuletz, and Dr. Kees Vermeer in recognition of their distinguished and lasting contributions to the study and conservation of seabirds, mentorship, and the Pacific Seabird Group. Dr. Sydeman and Dr. Kuletz will attend the meeting and give oral presentations. Dr. Vermeer is not able to attend but his award acceptance will be recorded by colleagues and shared at the meeting.

(4) Special Achievement Award. The SAA was awarded to a three-person team for their significant contributions to Chinese Crested Tern research and conservation: Simba Chan, Dr. Shuihui Chen, and Professor Hsiao-Wei Yuan. Simba Chan and Professor Yuan will accept their awards in person at the awards banquet. Dr. Chen is not able to attend but his award acceptance will be recorded by colleagues and shared at the meeting.

(5) Student Travel Awards: A two-year hiatus in travel awards due to COVID-19 caused a gap in institutional knowledge related to travel awards. This increased startup time as the Awards Committee navigated a process that was new to all of them. We received a record number of applications for travel awards this year (over \$50,000) but were only able to award a fraction of that amount (\$12,960 in travel awards). This made the process highly competitive and highlights the need for additional student travel support. The need was likely very high because this is the first in-person meeting in three years. Travel awardees included 11 students from North America, and three students from Taiwan, New Zealand and Chile, and an international ECS from Korea.

(6) Best Student Presentations Awards will be given out at the annual meeting this week. We currently have presentations from at least 59 students, which is a major uptick from 37 last year. These include oral presentations from approximately 3 undergraduates, 15 Master's students and 16 PhD's as well as poster presentations from 7 undergraduate, 8 MS students, and 10 Ph.D. candidates (numbers are still in flux at the time of writing). We will provide six students (1 each BS, MS and PhD poster and oral presentation) with an award certificate and a \$25 Amazon gift card.

(7) Chair's Choice Award is a new award this year, created to appreciate individuals at PSG who have made significant contributions in their service to PSG by going above and beyond in their PSG capacities. The two individuals chosen spanned the spectrum of PSG experience - one is a long term member with a major position within PSG, and the second an Early Career Professional, student and volunteer Committee lead for the last few years. The awardees will be announced and awards presented at the Awards Banquet.