

To: Pacific Seabird Group Executive Council

From: Wieteke Holthuijzen and Anna Vallery, Communications Committee Co-  
Coordinators

Date: January 30th, 2023

# Communications Committee Annual Report - 2022

## Executive Summary of Communications Committee Accomplishments

The Communications Committee is composed of PSG members that volunteer to facilitate communications and publications by PSG or PSG-supported (i.e., *Marine Ornithology*). The Communications Committee maintains the PSG website, PacificSeabirds listserv, *Marine Ornithology*, *Pacific Seabirds*, Symposia, Technical Publications, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In addition, the Communications Committee maintains the news posts and work opportunities on the PSG website and social media accounts. Collectively, this team donates an enormous amount of time and in-kind support to PSG; for example, our social media team (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) volunteers upwards of 360 hours per year by posting news, work opportunities, and PSG announcements. In addition, substantial website updates and the development of the new PSG Wild Apricot website (for membership management and Annual Meeting registration) required at least 400 hours of volunteer work. In all, we estimate that maintaining the PSG website, Wild Apricot/Annual Meeting website, and social media require up to 800 hours of volunteer time annually.

### 2022 Highlights

- Anne Francis Web Design helped PSG to replace our website's uDesign theme (design wrapper for the site) with Kadence, and WPBakery Page Builder—a 3rd-party plugin—with Gutenberg, the editor native to Wordpress. This was estimated to cost \$2,550 and the updated website will launch in early February 2023. This major update is required to keep the site function and it will additionally increase the loading speed of the website as well.
- Based on the Work Opportunity Naming Scheme developed by PSG's EID Committee, we completely revamped the PSG Job Board and job submission

process; employers and other organizations can submit jobs in a [standardized form](#) to PSG to ensure transparency and clarity about the financial compensation being offered for expected skills and labor.

- Working closely with the Membership Committee, Local Committee, PSG EXCO, and Justine Miller, we helped to compile information/build new web pages related to PSG's Annual Meeting on Wild Apricot and assisted with registration processes and helped to troubleshoot payment problems.
- Wieteke and Anna (and the rest of the Communications Committee) continue to develop a comprehensive Communications Committee Handbook to outline all of the committee's responsibilities and timelines for completing tasks

### **2022-2023 Committee Changes**

- We welcome Cassidy Ruge to PSG's Facebook team and Ariel-Micaiah Heswall to PSG's Instagram team!
- Additional volunteers are sought to help with PSG website updates and to facilitate communications efforts during the Annual Meeting (Wild Apricot)

### **Recommendations**

- Create a complete an up-to-date Communications Committee Handbook
- Continue to grow/coordinate PSG's use of Slack as a more comprehensive communications tool for PSG EXCO and within/among committees
- Use PSG 2023 to recruit additional help for the Communications Committee
- Develop a more engaging, online-based version of *Pacific Seabirds* and facilitate greater communication/updates among PSG members outside of the US/Canada
- Conduct live-tweeting and other social media communications during Annual Meeting (get photos, video, short quotes); post photos and congratulate award recipients (for student presentations and travel awards) vis social media channels following PSG 2023
- Complete a website-wide update following PSG 2023 (e.g., update EXCO, Committee pages, etc.)
- Continue to develop/facilitate more activities throughout the year virtually/through social media, such as webinars, training, workshops, etc.
- Implement methods to create a more inclusive website that reaches much more of the PSG membership (beyond the US/Canada) and investigate ways to make the website more accessible and user-friendly

## **A. PSG Website (Wieteke Holthuijzen, Anna Vallery)**

- Total visitors (14,071) and total page views (47,430) both decreased over the previous year; visitors to the PSG website dropped by 43.9% while page views

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only declined by 6.6%. This decrease may be due to the use of the new PSG Wild Apricot website exclusively for Annual Meeting information (no Google Analytics available for Wild Apricot website)\*

- Average session duration is 1min:06sec, 3 pages viewed
- 64.8% of viewers are from the U.S., 7.5% Canada, 5.2% United Kingdom, 2.2% Australia, 2.1% Japan, 1.8% China, 1.1% France, 1.1% New Zealand
- The most highly visited page is the PSG Home Page (12.8%); Job Postings (11.1%); Annual Meeting (7.6%); PSG Committees (3.6%); Job Boards (3.2%); 2023 Annual Meeting (3.0%); Executive Council (2.3%); Student Research Grant (1.8%); Student Research Labs (1.6%), and About Us (1.5%)
- 42.8% of visitors find PSG directly (i.e., through a direct link, typed in URL, or saved as a bookmark), 42.1% via an “organic search” (i.e., through a search engine); 11.7% via social media; and 3.4% via referral
- 49 work opportunities and postdocs posted to the PSG Job Board throughout 2022, down from 64 throughout 2021 (a decrease of 23.4%)

*\*As a note, Google Analytics recently switched to Google Analytics 4; thus, data is different from previous reports and not directly comparable*

In 2022-2023, we worked closely with Anne Francis Web Design to complete major updates to the PSG website. In addition, we have moved nearly all of the Annual Meeting information off of the PSG website and instead to the [PSG Wild Apricot website](#) so as to streamline Annual Meeting registration information (and avoid duplicate information) with the new membership service. We revamped the PSG Jobs page by developing a new job submission form and expanded our list of national/international job boards.

### Proposal for PSG Website Updates and Changes in 2023

- General update (review all pages and links, update from 2023 Annual Meeting onwards)
  - Ensure that all links are working and open in a new tab
  - Update all Annual Meeting links to go to new Wild Apricot PSG website
- Update PSG History page (and associated Wikipedia page) with text prepared from PSG 2023
- Update Students & Early Careers page and related pages
  - Potentially add a map of current members, could possibly be under “About PSG”
  - Add more profiles of PSG ECS members
  - Add more profiles of PSG Corresponding Members
  - Create profiles of Life Members (look similar to the Former Chairs page, and will replace the more-lengthy interviews)

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- Update/find better placement for Student Presentation Awards page
- Update Volunteer page
- Update Awards page
  - Lifetime/Achievement awards - change formatting of photos
  - Update Presentation Awardees and Travel Awardees
- Update List of Committees on Committees and Delegates page
  - Update descriptions for all Committees and Working Groups, as well as links for most recent reports
  - Find PSG Delegate to the American Bird Conservancy (EXCO), develop link for ABC Delegate under the Committees and Delegates page
- Update all new officers and elected positions on PSG EXCO page
- Post any [Conservation Letters](#) from 2020 onwards
- Continue to post content regularly from PSG (News, Work Opportunities, etc.)
- Update [Grants](#) pages
  - Update List of Conservation Grant Recipients
  - Build a list of Student Grant Recipients
- Update [Photo Gallery](#) page
- Post-PSG 2023:
  - [Update Past Annual Meetings page](#)
  - Add PSG 2023 Annual Meeting logo
  - Update [EXCO](#), [Committees, and Delegates](#) contact info
  - Update [Lifetime Achievement Awards](#) (change formatting of photos) and [Student Presentation Awardees](#) and Travel Awardees (add this link to sub-menu)
- Embed simplified/revised version of PSG handbook in the [Organizational Records](#) page

The Website Coordinator spends +200 hours annually adding new posts, updating and adding content to pages, communicating with webmaster, EXCO, external organizations wishing to share jobs.

## B. Listserv (Verena Gill, Coordinator)

As of 16 January 2023, the PSG listserv has 1063 subscribers but we have subscribe and unsubscribe requests almost every day so this number is very dynamic. The current total is an increase from 1011 subscribers a year ago and the largest number of subscribers to date. The PSG listserv has a 3,000+ subscriber capacity. Remember, a subscriber does not have to be a PSG member.

The Listserv Coordinator spends over 100 hours annually approving new subscriptions, and delayed posts, tending to subscriber needs on their account, updating and archiving content, and removing spam, responding to general inquiries, and dealing with complaints.

## C. *Marine Ornithology* Journal (Louise Blight, Managing Editor)

Louise Blight is stepping down as Managing Editor for *Marine Ornithology*; Past Chair Roberta Swift will submit a separate Annual Report for *Marine Ornithology*.

## D. *Pacific Seabirds* Bulletin (Theo Squires, Editor; Natasha Gillies, Associate Editor)

Following the survey sent out at the last annual meeting we received 44 member responses regarding the overhaul of our Pacific Seabirds publication. Most respondents indicated a desire to see Pacific Seabirds continue in a bulletin format but were widely varied on design preferences and frequency. Overall most respondents agreed that regional reports were the most important aspect for them, while many acknowledged the publication serves as a necessary archive of our organization's events. Future priorities will include streamlining delivery of content to the editors. Planning is currently underway to create a submission portal for reports and content. The Editor has a strong plan for implementing successful changes to the publication. Compiled issues will continue to be made available in a PDF format on an annual basis, and back issues are planned pending new guidelines. Anyone with interest in contributing content, artwork, reviews, or expertise is encouraged to contact [communications@pacificseabirdgroup.org](mailto:communications@pacificseabirdgroup.org) or [editor@pacificseabirdgroup.org](mailto:editor@pacificseabirdgroup.org)

The most recent issue of *Pacific Seabirds* is [47\(1\)](#), published in 2020. Efforts are ongoing to revamp *Pacific Seabirds* and transfer it to a more engaging online format. The Communications Committee is planning to get materials together and publish a 2021/2022 Pacific Seabirds ASAP to try and get the publication back on schedule. The Communications Committee will also be working to find a team to push this effort forward into the future.

## E. Facebook (Derek Harvey and Cassidy Ruge, Co-Coordiators)

Summary Statistics, March 1, 2022-Jan 16, 2023:

- Average post reach/month: 11,946 (down from 13,273 from March 2021-Jan 2022).
- Average page likes and reactions\*/month: 108 (down from 390 average page likes/month) .
- Total link clicks: 4,251
- Total page likes\*\*: 3,723 (Up from 3,565 page likes last year)
- The post with the largest reach (4,616) was on Aug. 22, 2022. It was a job posting for a new wildlife biologist position at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.
- The post with the most likes and shares this year (91 likes, 7 shares) was on Oct. 24, 2022, in which we announced the release of the latest issue of "Marine Ornithology."

*\*Facebook combined "likes" and "reactions" so the comparison to last year's statistics isn't direct.*

*\*\*Facebook combined "likes" and "follows" so we no longer have a separate statistic for number of followers*

### Opportunities and Challenges

Derek Harvey returned for a second year as co-coordinator of the Facebook page, while Cassidy Ruge was recruited at the 2022 Annual Meeting to fill the second coordinator spot, and officially started his role of coordinator in March 2022. Derek and Cassidy continued to post PSG updates, seabird-related news, jobs openings, and other related information a little under once a day on average (0.82 posts/day from March 1, 2022-Jan 16, 2023). Multiple posts to promote World Albatross Day and the upcoming PSG 2023 Annual Meeting were created (original content) and shared (e.g., from pages such as the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, the Seabird Group, World Seabird Union, and multiple seabird-related projects across the Pacific). An effort was made to share posts related to organizations and movements such as Birdability and Black Birders Week. The #FieldWorkFriday posts were continued on most Fridays and an effort was made to showcase fieldwork across the Pacific. Additional regular effort was made to include seabird stories from outside North America, including Japan, China, Tahiti, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and Peru. Made multiple posts highlighting work and digital seminars with Chinese Crested Terns was denoted by

#YearoftheTern following the convention by East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership.

### Recommendations for 2023

- Continue to maintain an average of 1 post per day encompassing seabird news, job opportunities, PSG news, and recent publications
- Participate (via multiple posts leading up and on the day of) in promoting important seabird conservation events (e.g. World Albatross Day, World Seabird Day, World Oceans Day, National Wildlife Refuge Week)
- Increase promotion for virtual and in-person educational/involvement opportunities for ECS, current students, and citizen scientists (e.g. virtual seabird symposia, free “talks”, seabird die-off monitoring training)
- Continue to highlight ECS within PSG

Managing the PSG Facebook account has taken approximately 100 hours (between Cassidy and Derek) from March 2022- January 2023 to create and share content.

## F. Twitter (Brad Wilkinson and Jenna Schlener, Co-Coordiators)

- The @PacificSeabirds Twitter account was revived in 2016.
- Since revival, follower count has shown steady increases with significant annual growth of ~450 new followers per year.
  - 101 followers in 2016
  - 701 followers in 2017
  - 1,051 followers in 2018
  - 1,356 followers in 2019
  - 1,753 followers in 2020
  - 2,395 followers in 2021
  - 2,868 followers in 2022
- As of January 2023, @PacificSeabirds now has **3,232 followers**.
- On average, from Jan - Dec 2022, 13 tweets were sent each month, which generated 15,604 impressions and 2,073 profile visits per month. While the number of monthly tweets and impressions were both decreased compared to 2021, profile visits increased slightly. As in the past, the Annual Meeting (Feb) generated considerable activity (32,800 impressions and 6,391 profile visits).
- The most popular tweet (earning 9,246 unique impressions) was a tweet advertising a field technician position with the British Antarctic Survey.

- This underscores the overall development of PSG Twitter as a clearing-house for employment opportunities.
- The hashtag #PSG2022 was used for the 2022 Annual Meeting and attached to tweets to advertise events and talks. It was also very successfully used by conference participants.
- As part of PSG 2023 registration, we have asked registrants to provide their Twitter handle and use the hashtag #PSG2023.
- Bradley Wilkinson and Jenna Schlener were the primary co-leads on curating content for the PSG Twitter account, with a bimonthly schedule of responsibility.

### **Recommendations for 2023**

- The Twitter Manager should engage with the World Seabird Union (worldseabird@gmail.com) regarding opportunities to promote PSG over social media.
- The Communications team should consider additional opportunities for engagement. The #30EarthMonthHeros was a successful campaign in 2020, and there may be other similar opportunities. In addition, explore the possibility of a member takeover as an additional outreach opportunity.
- World Albatross Day and Juneteenth fall on the same day. We should respectfully consider reserving the American hours of June 19th for Juneteenth, and consider posting World Albatross Day content the day before and/or after June 19th.
- Twitter managers should strive to use quote tweets instead of regular retweets where possible. Quote tweets not only increase the number of monthly tweets from the PSG account, but also add to the number of impressions and profile visits as well. Providing simple commentary is an effective way to increase the visibility of PSG while still highlighting the original tweet.
- It was apparent to PSG managers that overall user activity (e.g., impressions, follower count, and profile visits) decreased or decelerated following new corporate management at Twitter. It remains unclear if this decreasing engagement will become normalized and/or permanent as prior users migrate to other platforms or if engagement will rebound. Managers should closely follow analytics through the coming year to ascertain what lasting impact, if any, result from this change.
  - PSG Communications should also be aware of overall culture on the platform under new leadership and be prepared to discuss the viability of using the platform in the future should it be deemed unacceptable.

**ACTION:** Twitter managers to discuss these topics at the next Communications Committee meeting.



- Following PSG 2023, the Twitter manager should discuss with the Communications team and consider the archiving of conference tweets (#PSG2023) to share on the PSG website. This can be done using the Advanced Search option, and may be a great way to share with a broader group the happenings at the conference.

**ACTION:** Twitter manager to discuss this possibility with the ExCo and Communications Committee.

- In the lead up to PSG 2023 the local committee should be contacted regarding social media engagement and the meeting hashtag #PSG2023 should be promoted.

**ACTION:** Twitter manager to set a calendar reminder for fall of 2023 to coordinate a conversation about opportunities with the Communications Committee & Local Committee.

- At PSG 2023, we could take the opportunity to identify and engage with PSG members that are on Twitter. Members could self-identify during conference registration, there could be a signup sheet at check-in, and people could be encouraged to share their twitter handle on their Title slide or poster. Signs to encourage people to follow us on all social media platforms could also increase followers.

**ACTION:** The Twitter account manager must remind the ExCo of this suggestion prior to the next meeting registration opening.

**ACTION:** Twitter managers to contact EID committee to brainstorm ideas of how PSG can be involved in #BlackBirdersWeek (End of May/early June)

The team estimates 140 hours were spent to keep PSG active on Twitter, 2022-2023.

## G. Instagram (Ariel-Micaiah Heswall and Olivia Townsend, Co-Coordiators)

- The Instagram account was created in May 2016
- The number of followers has continued to increase over time and has steadily increased by about 200 followers each year since 2019:
  - 60 in Feb. 2017
  - 505 in Jan. 2018
  - 1,004 in Jan. 2019
  - 1,217 in Jan. 2020
  - 1,465 as of Feb. 2021

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- 1,635 as of Jan. 2022
- **1,824 as of Jan. 2023**
- The website link in the PSG's Instagram bio ([linktr.ee/pacificseabirdgroup](https://linktr.ee/pacificseabirdgroup)) was added in January 2021 as a landing page for all PSG references. Since it was added, it has been opened 1001 times (views) and used 824 times (clicks).
- In the first 2 weeks of 2023, the PSG Instagram profile has had 1528 impressions and 16 profile visits
- Current top cities of our followers:
  - Honolulu, HI
  - Santiago, Chile
  - Auckland, NZ
  - Lima, Peru
  - Seattle, WA
- Current age distribution of our followers supports that Instagram is overall a younger audience:
  - 1% between 13-17
  - 9% between the ages of 18-24
  - 42% between the ages of 25-34
  - 25% between the ages of 35-44
  - 11% between the ages of 45-54
  - 12% above the age of 55
- Total of 87 posts in 2022 (7-8 posts per month)
- Top 5 posts of 2022:
  - Meet the faces of PSG: An Identification Guide by Peter Harrison (261 likes)
  - Year of the Terns 2022 post (215 likes)
  - Celebrating Alaska's Seabirds (162 likes)
  - PSG member highlight on the Cook Islands (144 likes)
  - Job opening for a seabird research intern at Sealife Center (135 likes)
- Top 5 stories of 2022:
  - Postdoc announcement at the Swedish University (347 views; total of 5 website taps)
  - Job posting in Alaska (346 views, total of 92 website taps)
  - Second announcement of PSG registration (337 views)
  - First announcement of PSG annual meeting registration (330 views; total of 23 website taps)
  - 2022 PSG Silent AUKtion (327 views)
- Volunteer hours
  - Average about 4-5 per month per person (about 120 hours/year)

- Includes finding content, editing/uploading photos, writing captions, responding to DMs, and engaging with followers
- Recommendations for 2023:
  - Try to find more PSG members to feature their seabird research
  - Continue photo promotions, such as our successful series in the past highlighting students and early-career scientists that won awards from PSG. We can continue this following PSG 2023.
  - Try to increase the number of posts and stories per week.
  - Be more diligent about posting on Saturdays for #SeabirdSaturday, and use it to highlight seabird species, research articles, job openings, etc.
  - Continue utilizing Instagram stories to reach followers, as this feature is continuing to grow in popularity on the platform.
  - Consider also using IGTV to engage with our followers (e.g., we can do live Q&As with seabird researchers on IGTV)

## H. Annual Meeting Website - Wild Apricot (Wieteke Holthuijzen, Anna Vallery, Justine Miller, Nacho Vilchis, Membership Committee, Rachel Sprague, and many others)

### Overview

The [Wild Apricot website](#) went live in October/November 2022 as a replacement for Cvent and now will host membership management as well as all information related to the Annual Meeting (i.e., Annual Meeting information will not be duplicated on the PSG website). The PSG Wild Apricot website has 15 active pages including:

- Home
- Annual Meeting\*
  - Abstract Submission
  - Agenda
  - Field Trips
  - Online Store
  - Past Annual Meetings
  - Registration
  - Scientific Program
  - Silent AUKtion
  - Sponsorship
  - Travel and Accommodations

- Join Us
- Donate
- Contact

*\*Other pages we could add for future Annual Meetings include Sponsor/Exhibitor Booths and Plenary Speaker Bios*

### **Total Team Volunteer Hours (including emails and Wild Apricot page maintenance)**

In transitioning to a new service (from Cvent), many hours were put into Wild Apricot to bring over membership information, create the PSG 2023 50th Annual Meeting registration, and build pages. We encountered some problems with registration and membership payment (especially for international members) but were able to troubleshoot most of these issues with Wild Apricot and AffiniPay. Although we (as a team) easily put in +120 hours into Wild Apricot, we expect that it will be much easier to use Wild Apricot going forward. For example, following the Annual Meeting, we can keep all of the PSG 2023 pages in Wild Apricot but set them to “admin-only” and update/publish them once we have information for PSG 2024. In addition, we should be able to easily duplicate the PSG 2023 event registration for PSG 2024, which will save a considerable amount of time. On average—once Wild Apricot was set-up—we spent 2-3 hours/week to maintain the website and troubleshoot errors.

### **Recommendations for PSG 2024**

- Wieteke is willing to volunteer with Wild Apricot maintenance updates with respect to the Annual Meeting in 2024 in tandem with the Communications Committee, LoCo, and Annual Meeting facilitators/organizers/meeting planner(s)
- Although Wild Apricot has good documentation and help available online, we recommend developing a sort of manual/guide with information and timelines for future Annual Meetings. This would be a useful document to develop with both LoCo and the meeting planner to document institutional knowledge.
- PSG 2023 is the first in-person meeting since 2020; there was quite a steep learning curve in coordinating registration via Wild Apricot as well as communicating with the entire Annual Meeting team. We recommend monthly to twice-monthly meetings among everyone on the Annual Meeting team to share information and organize more efficiently, meet deadlines, and effectively delegate tasks.
- We recommend starting efforts to plan the Annual Meeting and update the PSG website and Wild Apricot alike earlier in the fall, ideally by August (if not earlier). Initial planning efforts should include (at the minimum) PSG Chair, PSG Program Chair, LoCo, Communications Committee, and the Meeting Planner.

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- Add Wild Apricot to Google Analytics to track visits to the Wild Apricot (under [pacificseabirdgroup@gmail.com](mailto:pacificseabirdgroup@gmail.com))
- Determine if it is possible to have Wild Apricot website URL be the first/main hit on Google that is generated when searching “PSG Annual Meeting” (SEO)
- For PSG 2024, all relevant pages need to be up and running prior to September 1st (logo, meeting location, registration costs, hotel booking information)