

## Report #2g: Vice Chair for Conservation and Conservation Committee Annual Report

### Conservation Committee Annual Report

#### Vice-Chair for Conservation Report for 2022

Prepared by Peter Hodum

During 2022, we wrote and submitted two letters to relevant decision-makers on issues associated with seabird conservation. Below are summaries of the two letters submitted in 2022:

1. 14 March 2022: PSG submitted a letter to the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, strongly opposing the proposed expansion of the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority Roberts Bank Terminal 2.
2. 12 April 2022: PSG submitted a letter to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department recommending substantial revisions, including specific recommendations, to draft rules on take-off and landing of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) in state parks and on coastal areas managed by Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

In addition to preparing and submitting letters, the Conservation Committee participated in the following seabird conservation-related activity:

Peter Hodum, Vice-Chair for Conservation, worked with Dr. Doug Bertram, Environment and Climate Change Canada, to continue the ongoing collaborations with the Environmental Law Centers (ELCs) at the University of Victoria, BC, and the University of California, Irvine to conduct a review of legal, regulatory and policy applications of incidental take of seabirds in Pacific salmon gillnet fisheries.

This process began in late 2021 and continued through 2022, with law students at both ELCs working under the supervision of law school faculty members at both universities. The goal of this legal assessment is to determine how the concept of incidental take is applied in Pacific gillnet fisheries in both Canada and the US and if mitigation occurs for marine bird mortalities in gillnets.

During the past two Conservation meetings at the virtual 2021 and 2022 PSG Annual Meetings, we discussed strategies to improve the effectiveness and impact of the Conservation Committee (CC). With a new Vice-Chair for Conservation about to assume the role, I include below several important ideas/suggestions that I want to make sure remain visible:

- 1. The fundamental importance of communication about seabird conservation issues to PSG membership and/or a group of members particularly interested in being informed such issues.**  
Following a discussion of this topic, a PSG Slack channel for conservation was created, but I never developed it as a real resource. It would be instructive to revisit this topic to assess whether Slack is the best platform for communication to the membership. Apparently, the Waterbird Society has a Slack channel that was developed for their 2020 meeting and has been kept active. Slack and similar platforms have the advantage of being more flexible and dynamic than conventional listservs.
- 2. Development of strategies and capacity to become more proactive in engaging more directly with decision makers and stakeholders.**  
I have not made any progress in moving this suggestion forward.
- 3. Creation of more opportunities for early career scientists to participate actively in the work of the Conservation Committee.**

Although graduate students and ECSs have limited discretionary time, contributing to the Conservation Committee could provide valuable professional experience for those interested. While I had conversations with PSG Student Representatives, we never finalized a plan to formalize and communicate these opportunities.

**4. Improving communication of conservation issues to the Conservation Committee.**

Given the relative lack of feedback from PSG members about conservation issues to which the Conservation Committee might direct its attention, it has been suggested that regional representatives could communicate with their regional membership more regularly throughout the year, possibly through quarterly emails, including reminders to share relevant conservation issues. This has not happened yet.

**5. Increasing visibility of work that PSG members are doing in conservation, climate change science and sustainability.**

I did not make any progress on this, but it seems like we could create a sub-committee tasked with developing a communications strategy to highlight the impactful work of our membership.

**6. Formation of groups of experts on priority conservation topics to help with tracking needs, opportunities and letter writing.**

Having focal groups that track emerging conservation issues and opportunities for input/comments might be a way to increase the committee's ability to provide input as well as efficiently prepare informed and impactful comments/letters.