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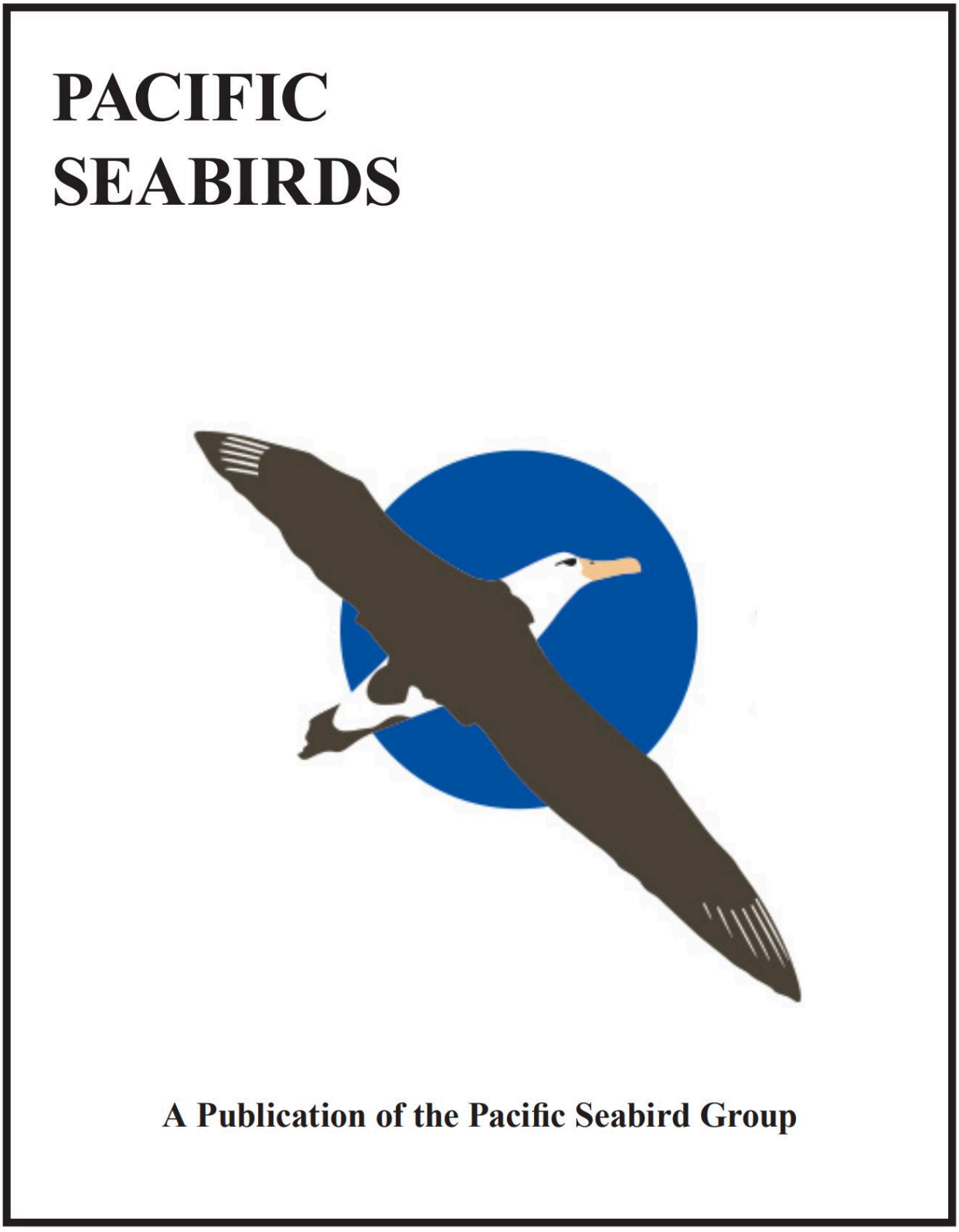

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Upcoming events and conferences

Compiled by the Pacific Seabirds Committee

Title: 7th International and Albatross Petrel Conference
Location: Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico
Date: May 20-26, 2024

Title: NZ Bird Conference 2024
Location: Nelson, New Zealand
Date: June 1-3, 2024

Title: BirdsCaribbean's 24th International Conference
Location: Santo Domingo, Dominica Republic
Date: July 18-22, 2024

Title: 2024 Joint Meeting Wilson Ornithological Society, Association of Field Ornithologists, and Society of Canadian Ornithologists – Société des Ornithologistes du Canada
Location: Peoria, Illinois, US
Date: July 29-August 1, 2024

Title: [16th International Seabird Group Conference]
Location: Coimbra, Portugal
Date: September 2-6, 2024

Title: [2024 Oceania Seabirds: Talking, Listening & Hands-on]
Location: Noumea, New Caledonia
Date: September 23-26, 2024

Title: PICES 2024 Annual Meeting
Location: Honolulu, HI, USA
Date: October 26-November 1, 2024

Title: 4th World Seabird Conference
Location: Hobart, Tasmania
Date: September 7-10, 2026

Committee updates

Navigating Federal Hiring as an Early Career Scientist

USAJobs Webinar Recap
Written by Laney White and Emily Runnells

In early January, the PSG HELPS Committee hosted a webinar on applying to wildlife biology positions through USAJobs, the federal hiring website that can be notoriously difficult to navigate. Submitting a successful application often requires "insider knowledge," so the PSG HELPS team felt this panel discussion was a concrete way to make federal positions in the biological sciences more accessible. Over 400 early career scientists and students registered- clearly, many people find federal hiring confusing!

Our panel of experts included Roberta Swift (Seabird Coordinator, USFWS Office Migratory Birds, Pacific Region), Heather Renner (USFWS, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife), Sarah Schoen (USGS Biologist, Alaska Science Center), and Chelsea McKinney (USFWS, Regional Intern and Fellow Coordinator, Pacific Islands). Thank you to these scientists for generously sharing their time and expertise!

What were some of their main takeaways and top tips?

- Be honest, but don't be modest in your application!
- Because the first person who reviews your application doesn't work in your field, clearly describe your qualifications in your CV using the verbiage from the job posting and questionnaire.
- Use the Resume Builder on the USAJobs site to ensure your CV has all the components necessary. Optionally, to make it look nicer, download it, clean it up, and reupload it to your profile.
- Cast a wide net. It can be hard to break into the federal system, so go after any job you're qualified for and can see yourself doing, even if it's not your ultimate career goal.
- Write a strong cover letter. Some hiring managers won't look at it, but for those who do, it can make all the difference.
- If you can track down the hiring supervisor, reach out to them directly to express your interest.

- To determine what gaps need to be filled in your resume and what skills you need to build to be competitive, look at jobs you're interested in but aren't qualified for yet.
- If you make it to the interview stage, don't be modest! Move towards talking about yourself as "I" instead of "we."
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If you weren't able to attend the webinar, but are interested in watching the recording or accessing other resources, visit the PSG Students & Early Career page. The webinar materials are available under "Jobs and Internships" on the Students page. Or, click here to go direct to our USAJobs resources! You'll also find many other resources to help you fledge to the next stage of your career, from a list of seabird research labs to advice from stars in our field.

Thank you again to everyone who attended the webinar, to Amelia DuVall for co-hosting, and to the panelists for making this event a success!

PSG Helping Elevate Long-term Participation in Science (PSG HELPS) supports early career scientists and students through sponsored membership and aims to foster a more inclusive and collaborative community. The program has been made possible by your generous donations. ***Thank you to the PSG community for your support!***

Member updates

Written by Mayumi Arimitsu and Sarah Ann Thompson

John Piatt retired from the USGS in December 2023. His career spanned more than four decades, with significant scientific contributions to seabird and forage fish ecology in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. He has been a member of PSG since 1982, he was Executive Council chair in 1994, and won the lifetime achievement award in 2016. “I remember the first meeting in Seattle in 1982”, he says, “I took the ferry over from Victoria, BC, and met a character on the bow looking for seabirds, who it turned out was also going to PSG—Harry Carter.” John and Harry were fast friends and worked together on many projects in the years that followed. John is enjoying more quality time with his many farm animal friends and wife Nancy at his Auk Ranch in Port Townsend, WA. John is continuing as Scientist Emeritus and can be reached at jpiatt@usgs.gov.

Left: John Piatt, the dedicated puffin protector. Center top (L-R): Alcid Heads Gus Van Vliet, Alan Springer, and John. Center bottom (L-R): Bill Montevecchi, Bill Sydeman, and John at PSG 2022. Right top: John and puffin crew at Bogoslof Island, Alaska (L-R) Josh Adams, Gary Drew, Sarah Schoen, Forrest Piatt, John Piatt, Yumi Arimitsu, Erica Madison, Martin Renner, Nora Rojek. Right bottom (L-R): Nancy and John.

2023 Regional Reports

New, interactive map and searchable format!

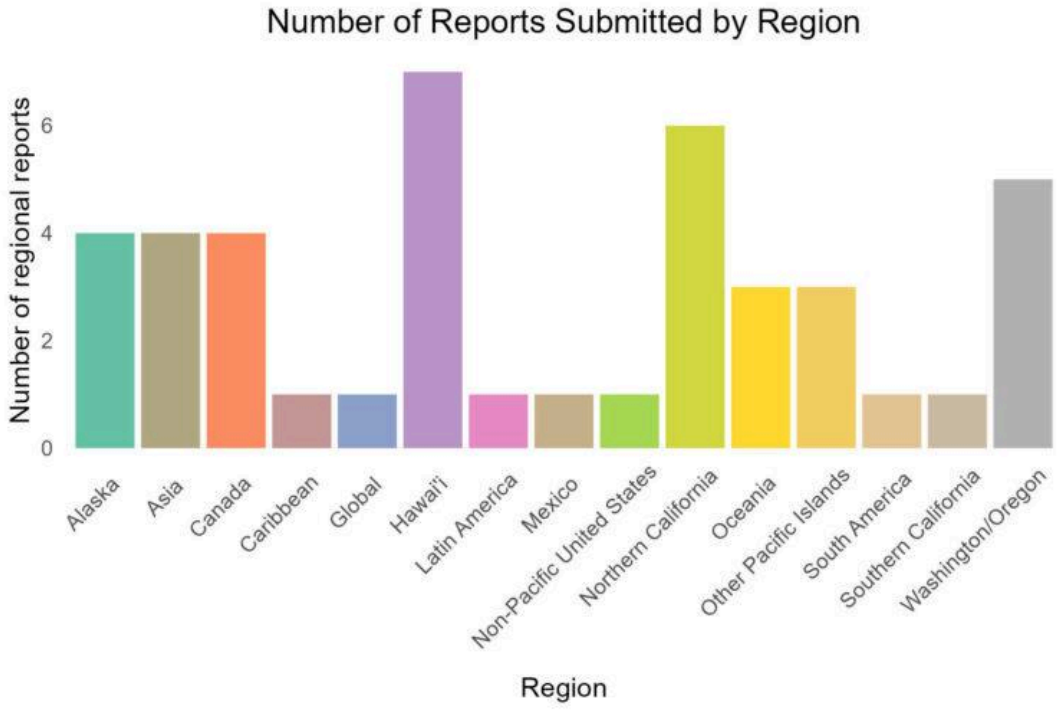
Compiled by Pacific Seabirds Committee

From 2023 to 2024, the *Pacific Seabirds* Committee developed a new, online-based approach to the Regional Reports. These Regional Reports are a cornerstone of PSG, helping us to learn from one another, network, and connect. Regional Reports are now collected via an online submission form each spring (by March 15th). Then, reports are compiled and organized into an online database, which will allow folks to search Regional Reports by region and species.

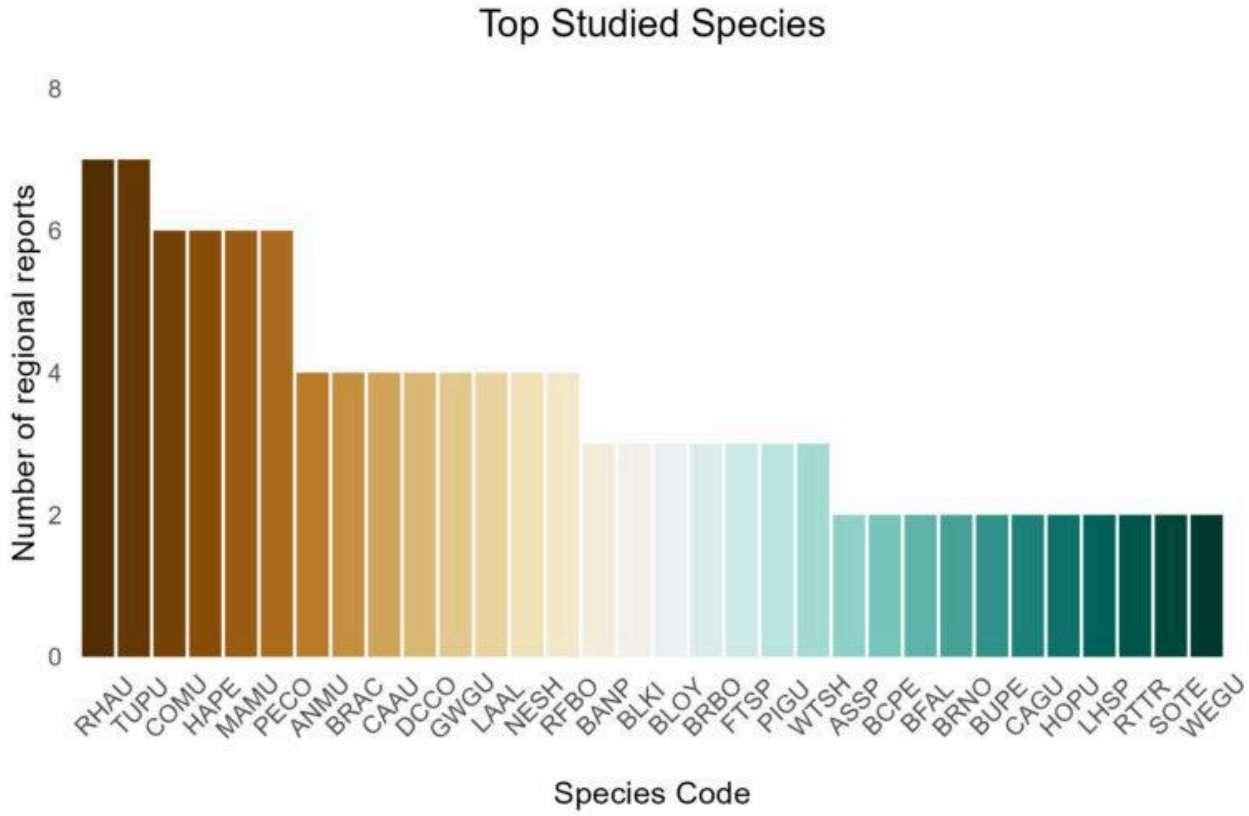
And, you can also explore Regional Reports through our new, interactive map (compiled by Johanna Bosch)!

2023 Regional Reports – by the numbers

We received over 35 regional reports this year, spanning across the Pacific Ocean—and beyond! Most reports came from the regions of Northern California, Washington/Oregon, and the Hawaiian archipelago, followed by Alaska, Asia, and Canada.



PSG members and supporters study a wide array of seabird species! In the 2023 regional reports, many focused on species such as the rhinoceros auklet, tufted puffin, common murre, Hawaiian petrel, marbled murrelet, and the pelagic cormorant.



Notes from the 51st Annual Meeting of the Pacific Seabird Group (PSG 2024)

Written by Juliet Lamb

A hawk swoops through a ballroom, grazing the tops of our heads. Whales surface against the craggy coastline of Puget Sound. Welcome to the 51st Annual Meeting of the Pacific Seabird Group, where for a few days anything was possible.

I could sum up the meeting in statistics—110 oral presentations, 35 posters, 289 attendees from at least 15 countries. However, the real story of this meeting wasn't in the numbers, but the connections we made with one another. I witnessed these first-hand during post-presentation chats with colleagues to forge new collaborations, lively career discussions at the student-mentor session, and meetings and symposia that harnessed our collective wisdom to curtail the catastrophic effects of avian influenza, combat climate change through seabird-sensitive offshore wind energy development, or understand and protect threatened seabird taxa throughout the region and beyond.

The meeting started off on a high note at Flatstick Pub, where the local committee treated us to food, drinks, and mini golf, and nobody wanted to go back to their hotels at the end of the night. Later, in a memorable evening storytelling session, PSGers shared epic tales of owl stalking, robot colleagues, trying and failing to find a good bathroom spot in the field, and the extreme measures they're willing to take to protect seabirds from feral cats (I'd say more, but we've been sworn to secrecy). Rounding out the meeting were visits to some of Seattle's best seabird-related attractions: a behind-the-scenes look at the Burke Museum's bird collection, a trip to the Seattle Aquarium, and a bird- and whale-watching boat tour.

Anchoring the incredibly rich scientific program were our plenary speakers, whose talks offered an optimistic and proactive outlook for the future. Sarah Converse provided practical examples of how decision science can make seabird conservation more effective, efficient, and inclusive. Natalie Ban and Jaime Ojeda presented a vision for seabird science that includes local communities as equal partners. Gemma Clucas took us with her on a National Geographic-worthy adventure to study penguins on wild, unforgiving Zavadovski Island. And Steve Kress, this year's Lifetime Achievement Award winner, showed us how translocation and restoration efforts have transformed (and continue to transform) seabird conservation in a changing world. I was especially moved by the words of Special Achievement Award winner Linda Elliott, who highlighted the essential and often neglected importance of wildlife rehabilitators in seabird conservation. Together, their talks made me feel more confident than I've felt in a long time about our power as individuals to make a real difference for seabirds, despite all the challenges stacked against us.

At the same time, our meeting offered a chance to look inward and seek opportunities to make both PSG and seabird science more inclusive. Thanks to the Local Committee's energy in securing funding, the success of prior silent auctions, and the generosity of donors, we were able to award over $20,000 toward meeting travel expenses for students and international scientists. This year's brand-new gear swap (organized by early-career PSGer Kristina McOmber) gave early-career scientists a chance to take home high-end used field gear donated by members. The EID committee organized and secured funding for a workshop to improve equity in hiring practices. A new photo exhibit, Faces of Seabird Conservation, showcased the diversity of backgrounds and experiences within our community by profiling seabird scientists, conservationists, volunteers, and enthusiasts throughout the world. We still have a long way to go before PSG truly encompasses the breadth and depth of human experience in seabird conservation, but I am buoyed by our collective enthusiasm and energy for doing this important work.

I want to end with an enormous thanks to everyone who made this meeting such a memorable experience. To the local committee and our fearless conference planner, Justine, for welcoming us to Seattle and managing the complex logistics. To the symposium and workshop organizers, session chairs, and AV volunteers who donated their time and energy to keeping everything running smoothly. To the students whose fresh ideas, enthusiasm, and high-caliber research contributed contagious energy and forward-thinking optimism. To the seasoned professionals whose wisdom, patience, and kindness made them approachable despite their intimidating accomplishments. And finally, to everyone who contributed to discussions on the important issues facing our organization. You are the future of PSG, and I am beyond excited to be part of it.

PSG 2024 Industrial Habitat Workshop Summary

Compiled by Mark Rauzon, Kim Abplanalp, David Pereksta, Dena Spatz, and Alex Wegmann

The past fifty years has witnessed fantastic island habitat recovery via a suite of techniques, including predator eradications, species restoration through social attraction and translocations, and increased policy and funding focus on island ecosystems. The price of success is rising as the techniques are upscaled with aerial bait delivery over larger areas in invasive species eradication campaigns, since the low-tech islands have been cleared. Seabird habitat restoration costs on islands are approaching that of human-created habitat for seabirds, so-called industrial habitat creation, which is nascent.

This workshop initially focused on addressing the impact of offshore wind energy development on seabirds and other species, particularly focusing on mitigation strategies. Participants suggest a shift in mindset from viewing the impact negatively to exploring opportunities for positive outcomes. Ideas include creating artificial habitats, such as islands and platforms, to support vulnerable species. Climate change also demands we consider creative ways to restore seabird populations; industrial habitats (likely pared with attraction) being one of those solutions. There are a lot of examples of industrialized habitat, one recent example is the kittiwake tower built in the North Sea as a wind farm mitigation tool. We also know from the seabird restoration database that about a third of known social attraction efforts globally used artificial habitat for seabirds (mostly Laridae), and often with greater success than without, because the industrial habitat inherently minimized impacts from predators, human disturbance, and climate shifts. One successful example presented was the building of raft islands that have wheels and are removable if predators key into them.

We call for collaboration, international projects, and innovative approaches like bird platforms away from wind platforms and mitigating effects in other regions where there are novel opportunities. The conversation also touched on the mismatch in addressing seabird deaths due to fisheries compared to wind farms, proposing a holistic perspective and a management structure. Legal and regulatory challenges are highlighted, with a focus on the lack of seabirds as recognized “bycatch” under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the need to advocate for changes to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The discussion delves into the complexities of mitigation, emphasizing the need for a clear framework, sustainability, and international cooperation. Examples of successful artificial habitats, concerns about industry compliance, and the importance of monitoring and education were highlighted.

Participants explored the potential of industrial habitats to generate valuable data through monitoring, emphasizing the benefits of “wired-smart” colonies. The idea of using industrial platforms to generate income from guano harvesting is introduced, suggesting economic opportunities for both birds and humans, and creating ecosystem benefits by fertilizing the seas. Concerns about legal responsibility, maintenance, and ownership of mitigation measures are raised, pointing to potential obstacles. Overall, the participants advocate for diverse and creative mitigation solutions tailored to different species and emphasize the need for a comprehensive, long-term approach to address the complex challenges associated with offshore wind development. Participants express a desire to ensure mandatory mitigation measures and consider the role of PSG is to influence regulations and promoting seabird-friendly practices in fisheries and wind energy projects; for example, responding to a “Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Future Floating Wind

Energy Development Related to 2023 Leased Areas Offshore California". Future steps include synthesizing expert recommendations for some mitigation ideas, providing guidance on habitat creation for seabirds and guiding PSG's Conservation Chair to write letters to support seabird inclusion as bycatch in the Magnuson Stevens Act, reinstating the MBTA incidental take permit, and endorsing an oceanic joint venture.

2025 Joint Meeting of The Waterbird Society and the Pacific Seabird Group

English

The Waterbird Society and Pacific Seabird Group are excited to be hosting a joint meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica from January 6th through 9th, 2025!

The joint meeting will be held at the Costa Rica Marriott Hotel Hacienda Belen, a wonderful venue located just outside San José in the middle of a vibrant 12-acre coffee plantation. Costa Rica itself almost needs no introduction as a nature tourism destination. It is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world. Despite its size (only

about the size of the State of Virginia) it has a tremendous variety of flora and fauna, including over 900 bird species, including rare and endemic species. This country offers ornithologists a diverse and accessible range of habitats, from lush rainforests to coastal regions and highland cloud forests, making it an excellent location to bring the two societies together. It is the hope that holding the joint meeting in this central location within the Americas will also facilitate ornithologists across the hemisphere to attend and form and strengthen collaborations for the benefit of waterbirds and seabirds.

Details about the joint meeting are available on the meeting website here. This website will continue to be updated as more details are finalized and as calls for symposia, abstracts, and other announcements become available.

- **Workshops, Symposia, and Round-tables**: The Scientific Program Chairs of the 2025 Waterbird Society & Pacific Seabird Group Joint Meeting are now accepting proposals for workshops, symposia, and round-tables to be held at the meeting in Costa Rica this January 6-9, 2025! Click here for more information.
- **Award Nominations**: PSG Past Chair Dick Veit invites your nominations for 2025 recipients of PSG's Lifetime Achievement Award and Special Achievement Award. These awards will be presented to recipients at the 2025 Joint Meeting of PSG and the Waterbird Society in Costa Rica from January 6-9, 2025. Please submit your nominations to Dick Veit (pastchair@pacificseabirdgroup.org) by July 15th, 2024; click here for more information.

Be sure to follow PSG or the Waterbird Society on social media or sign-up for the PSG Email List to receive the announcements directly!

Español

La Waterbird Society y el Pacific Seabird Group celebrarán una reunión conjunta en San José, Costa Rica, a principios de 2025. ¡Marque sus calendarios del 6 al 9 de enero! Empiece a hacer planes para una reunión extraordinaria y viaje a un destino increíble. ¡Se publicarán más detalles en un futuro próximo!

Costa Rica como destino de turismo de naturaleza casi no necesita explicación. Es uno de los países con mayor biodiversidad del mundo; A pesar de su tamaño (sólo del tamaño del estado de Virginia) tiene una tremenda variedad de flora y fauna. No hace falta decir que su avifauna es notable. Con más de 900 especies de aves, incluidas variedades raras y endémicas, el país ofrece a los ornitólogos una gama diversa y accesible de hábitats, desde exuberantes bosques tropicales hasta regiones costeras y bosques nubosos de tierras altas.

- **Información y ubicación del lugar**: Costa Rica Marriott Hotel Hacienda Belen, 700 metros al oeste de Bridgestone/Firestone, La Ribera de Belén, Heredia, Costa Rica. Haga clic aquí para más información. Algunos eventos, como Noche en el Museo, se llevarán a cabo en el Museo Nacional de Costa Rica.
- **Talleres, simposios y mesas redondas**: Los presidentes del comité científico de la Waterbird Society y el Pacific Seabird Group están aceptando propuestas para talleres, simposios, y mesas redondas que se presentarán en la reunión en Costa Rica entre el 6 y 9 de enero del 2025! Haga clic aquí para más información.
- **Nominaciones a premios**: El ex presidente del PSG, Dick Veit, invita a sus nominaciones para los ganadores de 2025 del premio Lifetime Achievement Award y el Special Achievement Award del PSG. Estos premios se entregarán a los ganadores en la Reunión Conjunta 2025 del PSG y la Waterbird Society en Costa Rica del 6 al 9 de enero de 2025. Envíe sus nominaciones a Dick Veit (pastchair@pacificseabirdgroup.org) antes del 15 de julio de 2024; haga clic aquí para más información.

A brief account of the 2023 HPAI-H5N1 outbreak in the Galápagos Islands and impacts on local seabirds

Written by Sebastian Cruz

The 2023 HPAI-H5N1 outbreak has drawn global attention due to its effects across the Americas, including a crisis in Peru impacting thousands of seabirds and numerous marine mammals (1). The Galápagos Islands, well-known for its unique avifauna, had not experienced any outbreaks until September 2023. Local ornithologists, bird-enthusiasts, and authorities alike feared an outbreak could severely affect the endemic seabird species with naturally small populations. This report outlines the developments over the past seven months since the initial detection of the virus, incorporating data from official sources, communications from naturalist guides on local forums, and interviews with local ornithologists.

In September 2023, naturalist guides aboard dive-yachts near Wolf Island reported finding dead and distressed seabirds, primarily red-footed boobies, Nazca boobies, and a single frigatebird, exhibiting symptoms of HPAI-H5N1. These initial findings on the 16th led to the discovery of additional casualties on Darwin Island and later reports of similar occurrences on Genovesa Island, situated 270 km south of the initial outbreak site. Prompted by these reports, the Galápagos National Park Service (GNP) and the Galápagos Biosecurity Agency (ABG) undertook immediate action, collecting samples

for analysis at the ABG Laboratory in Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island, confirming H5N1 in three of five carcasses (2). Confirmatory testing in Guayaquil led to the closure of several key tourist sites, including the entirety of Genovesa Island and specific areas on San Cristobal (Punta Pitt) and Española Islands (Punta Suarez and Punta Cevallos), to prevent further spread (3).

Subsequent monitoring revealed an increase in mortalities at Punta Pitt yet reports from Darwin and Wolf Islands indicated a cessation of new deaths, suggesting the outbreak's initial impact may have been contained. Broader sampling was carried out across the archipelago, with a focus on the vulnerable populations of Galápagos penguins (*Spheniscus mendiculus*) and flightless cormorants (*Phalacrocorax harrisi*). By December 2023, the GNP issued an encouraging update: all 46 samples collected across various sites tested negative for HPAI-H5N1 (4). Despite this positive development, certain areas remain off-limits to tourism as a precautionary measure.

My personal concern for the local avifauna leads me to carry out daily surveys at my local beach (Playa de los Alemanes, Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island). This site is frequented by various seabird and shorebird species, including lava gulls (*Leucophaeus fuliginosus*), brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), blue-footed boobies (*Sula nebouxii*), magnificent frigatebirds (*Fregata magnificens*), whimbrels (*Numenius phaeopus*), oystercatchers (*Haematopus palliatus*), ruddy turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*), black-necked stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*), least sandpipers (*Calidris minutilla*), and plovers (*Charadrius spp*.) Up until the 12th of March 2024, there are no signs of mass mortality at this site. Nonetheless, on March 11th, 2024, naturalist guides report on a local WhatsApp group called "Pajareros de Galápagos" several sightings of dead or dying Galápagos shearwaters (*Puffinus subalaris*) in the west of the archipelago. These sightings are from Urbina and Elizabeth Bay on Isabela Island and Punta Espinoza on Fernandina (site of a recent eruption). These cases have not been confirmed to be related to a HPAI-H5N1 outbreak by local authorities.

This outbreak highlights the fragility of the Galapagos ecosystems and underscores the importance of vigilant monitoring, rapid response, and international cooperation in safeguarding these invaluable natural treasures from emerging threats.

References:

1. Leguia M, Garcia-Glaessner A, Muñoz-Saavedra B, Juarez D, Barrera P, Calvo-Mac C, Jara J, Silva W, Ploog K, Amaro L, Colchao-Claux P, Johnson CK, Uhart MM, Nelson MI, Lescano J. Highly pathogenic avian influenza A (H5N1) in marine mammals and seabirds in Peru. *Nat. Commun*. 2023 Sep 7;14(1):5489. doi: 10.1038/s41467-023-41182-0. PMID: 37679333; PMCID: PMC10484921.

2. Preocupación en Galápagos por casos positivos de gripe aviar. *Primicias*.
3. Acciones urgentes tomada en Galápagos para proteger la biodiversidad frente al arribo de la Influenza Aviar. *Galápagos Conservancy*.
4. Evalúan la salud de pingüinos y piqueros en Galápagos, tras caso de gripe aviar. *Primicias*.

World Seabird Union launches a new website experience

Written by Carrie Kovalick

This February, the World Seabird Union (WSU) unveiled an enhanced website designed to be a global hub for all things seabird conservation. This new platform will not only connect people with information, tools, resources, and opportunities—but also unite them in a shared mission of supporting seabird conservation projects in communities worldwide, making it easier than ever to make a global impact.

Launching the new site worldseabirdunion.org was a momentous occasion, coinciding with the Pacific Seabird Group Annual Meeting. It also served as a platform to announce the date for the highly anticipated 2026 World Seabird Conference (WSC) in Hobart, Australia. The WSC is a pinnacle event for seabird conservationists, researchers, professionals, students, and supporters. It offers a unique opportunity to forge new connections and collaborate across various fields of seabird science, research, management, business, and education.

As a legacy project from the first World Seabird Conference in 2010, seabirds.net will also remain an important project of the WSU. The history of the original site goes back to when seabird researchers Scott Hatch and Annette Henry got together and thought it would be a good idea to have a website that represented a data portal that pointed people to information about seabird databases, science, etc. Seabirds.net will remain the home of the life history database, discussion forum, and WSU Global Seabird Colony Register (an interactive map that provides data storage, sharing, and visualization of colony data, and is a crucial resource for seabird conservation initiatives).

By submitting your seabird conservation-related events, activities, stories, press releases, or announcements, you can contribute to the global seabird conservation community. WSU will highlight your news across social media and email and provide a

platform for you to connect with other professionals and supporters, amplifying the impact of your work.

About World Seabird Union: WSU works to build connections among member organizations, promote the exchange of seabird information, and unify people working on global seabird-related topics. Their mission is to place seabird research, management, and conservation into a worldwide perspective. They do this by creating global partnerships that reach out to developing nations to facilitate research, transfer knowledge, and support conservation. The World Seabird Union comprises professional seabird organizations worldwide, including the Pacific Seabird Group. WSU has a 15-year vision to create and enhance sustainable, diverse networks, and partnerships to foster and share seabird research, knowledge, and ideas on a global level. More details can be found in WSU's 5-year strategic business plan online.

Join PSG's new email list!

For nearly 20 years, Verena Gill managed the PacificSeabirds Listserv, an amazing resource used by over 1,000 subscribers to share and learn information about seabirds. We applaud and thank Verena for all of her work and for helping to keep the seabird community connected and thriving!

Now, we've transitioned the listserv to a new platform (Google Groups). If you were already subscribed to the PacificSeabirds Listserv, your email address has been moved to the new Pacific Seabird Group Email List.

If you're new to PSG and you'd like to join our email list, please click here!
The email list is free and open to everyone, but does require adherence to PSG's Code of Conduct. Please note that only subscribers to the PSG Email List may post messages. For questions, please contact the PSG Communications Committee (communications@pacificseabirdgroup.org). In honor of Verena Gill's work in compiling seabird research papers, PSG is also taking up the baton and keeping the tradition alive!

If you have *newly-published seabird research* to share (or you've come across recent seabird research articles), please complete this form. We've also posted this form on PSG's home page so you can easily find it and bookmark it.
Again, many thanks to Verena for starting this important resource! We'll continue to share new seabird articles at the beginning of each month—so please be sure to contribute and share the knowledge!

The Ornithological Council: who we are and how we can help you

Written by Laura Bies

You may know that PSG is a member of the Ornithological Council—but, do you know what the OC actually does and how it can help you in your career?
Formed in 1992, the Ornithological Council is a consortium of scientific societies of ornithologists. PSG is a founding member of the OC. Our current member societies are:

- Association of Field Ornithologists
- Birds Caribbean
- CIPAMEX: Sociedad para el Estudio y Conservación de las Aves en México
- Neotropical Ornithological Society
- North American Crane Working Group
- Pacific Seabird Group
- Raptor Research Foundation
- Waterbird Society
- Wilson Ornithological Society

The OC is governed by a board of directors made up of representatives from each of our member societies. The OC member societies contribute annually to the OC, which supports a part-time salary for the OC executive director. We also have Supporting Members, organizations that contribute a smaller amount each year to support our mission.

Our Mission

The OC works to (1) ensure that the best ornithological science is incorporated into legislative, regulatory, and management decisions that affect birds; (2) enhance the ability of ornithologists to pursue professional activities; and (3) promote the influence of ornithology in public affairs.
We do this by monitoring the legislative, regulatory, and management decisions that affect bird management and conservation, and offering science-based feedback to agencies and regulators, as appropriate. We work to ensure that the regulations, policies, and practices involving bird banding are effective and efficient, and that programs such as the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory have the resources they need.
We provide extensive free resources to the ornithological community online, and answer individual questions as well. We also manage the Ornithology Exchange, an online community for ornithologists and others, with timely information regarding ornithology and conservation, as well as a free job board.

How can we help YOU?

We offer individual assistance to all members of OC societies on issues regarding animal welfare (usually involving securing IACUC approval for research) or securing the permits needed for ornithological research. Whether you're in the planning stages of a research project and aren't sure where to begin or you've been successfully securing permits for years but are suddenly facing unexpected delays and denials of permits, we can help! In fact, it's also helpful to the OC when you reach out if there are unexpected bumps in the permitting processes—that allows us to identify areas we can work on with the various federal agencies to improve their policies and regulations.

If you need information about permits for banding, import/export, scientific collection, or other activities, check out our website BIRDNET.ORG for extensive information on permitting in the U.S. and Canada. For example, we recently released an updated guide to the import permit process, which offers detailed information and advice on securing the permits needed to import specimens or bird parts into the U.S. *A Guide to the Permits and Procedures for Importing Bird Products into the United State for Scientific Research and Display* is available for download on our website.

Also on BIRDNET.ORG is the *Guidelines for the Use of Wild Birds in Research,* a foundational publication, now in its fourth edition, which provides an in-depth guide to the animal welfare considerations involved when performing research involving wild birds, including ethical considerations and the legal framework that must be followed by researchers.

If ornithologists have questions that are not answered by these publications, OC staff is always available to help with individual inquiries by phone or email. Each year we help dozens of ornithologists secure IACUC approval for their research or the permits they need to conduct their research or import specimens.

The Voice of the Ornithological Community

The OC is also always working behind the scenes, meeting regularly with federal agency staff and others to continually improve the policies and regulations that govern your work. We regularly file official comments with federal agencies, reach out to the Administration and Congress as needed on key issues, and otherwise serve as your voice in the policy and regulatory process.

You can learn more about the actions that the OC is taking to support ornithologists on the Ornithology Exchange, in the "News from the Ornithological Council" forum. There you'll also find timely articles about policy issues that affect ornithologists.

Please feel free to reach out to OC Executive Director Laura Bies at laurabiesoc@gmail.com if we can be of assistance!

Michael Philip Harris (1939-2023)

Written by Mark Tasker

On December 17th, 2023, the world lost one of its great seabird ornithologists when Mike Harris died aged 84. Mike was a founder member of The Pacific Seabird Group and received its Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007. His name is forever linked to Atlantic Puffins *Fratercula arctica*, but his work extended to many other seabirds and into understanding their place in the marine environment.

Mike was born on April 28th, 1939, in Swansea, where he also went to school and university to gain both his BSc and PhD. A DSc followed in the late 1980s, with a later honorary professorship from Glasgow University. His Doctorate was obtained from a study of the biology of gulls on the Welsh island of Skomer.

Mike's external PhD examiner was David Lack, who was then Director of the Edward Grey Institute at Oxford University, who offered him a post-Doctorate position working on gulls, Manx Shearwaters *Puffinus puffinus* and Eurasian Oystercatchers *Haemotopus ostralegus* on Skokholm Island, partly to follow up on the 1930s work of the pioneering seabird ornithologist, Ronald Lockley. A further post-doctoral study took Mike to the Galápagos Islands in the 1960s, primarily to study three species of storm-petrels, but also the biology of Waved Albatross *Phoebastria irrorata*, Flightless Cormorants *Nannopterum harrisi*, and tropicbirds. He even found time to collect *Spirorbis* polychaetes as he travelled around the islands—which led to the identification

of six new species. Mike wrote the first *Field Guide to the Birds of Galápagos*, still one of the best guides available. He also met the tourism pioneer Lars-Eric Lindblad and was funded by him to develop a strategy for sustainable tourism for the archipelago. The legacy of that strategy still persists as anyone who has had the privilege to visit those islands will have experienced, with cruise vessels only being allowed specific time slots to visit each island in order to avoid too many visitors in any one place at any one time. Mike was also a naturalist guide on some of the pioneering cruises to Antarctica.

On returning from the Galápagos in 1972, he was appointed to a Nature Conservancy (a UK government body) job investigating the decline of UK Atlantic Puffins. This brought Mike to Scotland where he joined the then research station just outside Banchory, near Aberdeen. Puffin research took him to the remote western Scottish island archipelago of St Kilda where study plots were established on Dun—with access via a breeches buoy cable system from the main island of Hirta. We can be certain that this method would not have survived any safety inspection, but it worked well. At more or less the same time, Mike started work on the Atlantic Puffins of the Isle of May, a much more accessible island off the east coast of Scotland.

The work on the puffins rather contradicted the concept of a declining population—he found no evidence of decline on St Kilda, and much evidence of an increase on the Isle of May. In 1974, Mike surveyed the seabirds of Shetland to the north of Scotland and laid the foundations for seabird monitoring that has continued there ever since.

Mike's work on the Isle of May Atlantic Puffins focussed initially on understanding demography and diet, which entailed much ringing of adults, collection of food loads dropped under nets, and watching food deliveries to burrows. This work culminated in his 1984 book, *The Puffin*, that summarized all knowledge on the species (and related species) to that point. In subsequent years, Mike set out to answer many of the questions raised in that book—for instance, where do Atlantic Puffins spend the winter (geolocators indicate most Isle of May birds remain in the north-western North Sea, but some venture to the eastern Atlantic). In the early 1980s, he started to take an interest in the biology of other seabirds breeding on the Isle of May, such as Black legged Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* and European Shags *Gulosus aristotelis*, but most especially Common Guillemots (Common Murres) *Uria aalge*. The early 1980s also marked another important transition in his life, the start of work with Sarah Wanless, who not only became his most important co-researcher but he subsequently also married. The dynamic partnership with Sarah led to a substantial increase in research publication and wider influence on seabird studies. In the mid-1980s, he was key in designing and setting up the UK and Ireland Seabird Monitoring Programme, the results of which have proved important in understanding trends in seabird populations and in the effects of over-fishing of sandeels (sand-lance) *Ammodytes* within the feeding range of Scottish seabird colonies. A new and much expanded and rewritten edition of *The Puffi*n book, co-authored with Sarah, was published in 2011.

Mike's links with the Pacific continued after his work in the Galápagos. He had visited Hawai'i while on the Galápagos, and memorably managed to get altitude sickness! His first (known) PSG meeting was in Asilomar in 1982, a tour of colleagues and their work in Alaska followed in 1985. Memories of that visit included a stay on St George Island in the Pribilofs where Sarah and Mike were present when the first ever download of a time-depth recorder from a sea lion occurred—a harbinger of future remote instrumentation on seabirds that both Sarah and Mike engaged in. Mike also marveled at how Vernon Byrd and his team coped with the logistical challenges of monitoring local seabird populations. The weather was atrocious, and Mike never did see the main breeding areas on the High Bluffs because of the dense fog!

In 1995, Mike and I travelled to Alaska as part of the review of the consequences on the Exxon Valdez oil spill. In 2004, Sarah was one of the plenary speakers at the PSG

meeting in La Paz, Baja California and Mike was immensely proud to receive the most supportive spouse award from George Divoky at that meeting!

In another link to the Pacific, one of the most exciting moments of Mike's time on the Isle of May was when Yutaka Watanuki, visiting from Japan, downloaded the first data from miniature digital cameras attached to European Shags showing birds foraging for sandeels (sand lance).

On a UK and global basis, there are very many seabird researchers who owe their careers and quality of research to Mike's influence. This was recognised formally, along with the PSG Award, with the award of the British Ornithologists' Union's Godman-Salvin medal in 2006 and the Seabird Group's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016. Mike has written or co-authored more than 300 publications; research that has been cited more than 15,000 times—more publications are in the pipeline and his thinking will last many years into the future.

Mike's style was of great informality, but with deep practicality and discipline. This made him a very good mentor, easy to approach, and always generous with his time. He loved fieldwork, and his attention to detail, especially when observing seabirds led to many great insights. His observation that the degree of parental care was a key indicator of the health of Common Guillemot (Common Murre) colonies has led to considerable insights into the effects of climate change on seabirds. The data to show this was collected over four decades of very careful observation of Guillemot behavior.

Mike understood the importance of working with and being part of a community, especially on a small island. Mike made a difference to the seabirds and to the islands he loved and to the many people whose lives were changed for the better by knowing him. Our sympathies to all those who knew him, but particularly to Sarah.

Dear Baby Heron

Written by Lakea Lin

You can't see or hear me through this one-way glass, but can you feel how much I believe in you? This place is rigid and colorless, so unlike the fluid and vibrant world where you belong. Does it feel like a dream? The life you once knew? How could I tell you that this confine and all its strangeness is temporary, if only you'd stay strong for long enough to know? Perhaps it is best that I remain behind this glass. That way, this place and everything that happened here will be a distant dream in the life you are meant to live. Until then, I'll care for you from afar, where I won't sway you from becoming your true self.

This photo was taken years ago at the Wetlands & Wildlife Care Center, where I was trained. Every year is a struggle, financially as well as for the volunteers, to keep up with

increasing mass mortality events such as red tides and starvation caused by warming oceans, as well as oil spills and countless other human-caused threats to wildlife.
The Annual Baby Shower on May 11th is their biggest fundraiser. In the past it was the only day they would be open to the public. Donations can also be made on their website (click here). WWCC also has an Amazon Wishlist; I have used Amazon Smile to donate to them as well.

From the WWCC website:

- In 1990, 400,000 gallons of Alaskan crude oil were spilled off the coast of Huntington Beach, sickening over 1,200 birds. Less than half of the affected birds survived treatment at a makeshift facility.
- As a result, the Alliance for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education and the Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy began taking steps to provide a permanent facility capable of responding to the wildlife injured in daily encounters with humans and future toxic spills.
- On March 31, 1998, with the assistance of the California Department of Fish and Game Office of Spill Prevention and Response, Southern California Edison and others, the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center(WWCC) opened its doors in Huntington Beach.
- WWCC is capable of rehabilitating over 400 animals at a time. The facility is equipped with animal washing stations, a hospital, indoor and outdoor caging, areas to prepare food and a facilities container. The treatment and rehabilitation areas are closed to the general public.
- Our center has evolved over the years into a sophisticated network of rehabilitation professionals and volunteers, unique to the southland in accessibility, expertise and results. We are proud of the dedicated veterinarians, trained wildlife technicians and certified volunteers who make our success possible.