

## Past Chair Awards Committee Report

### Awards Committee

#### 2023 Annual Report, Pacific Seabird Group

**From:** Rachel Sprague, Past-Chair and Awards Committee Chair, PSG

**Awards Committee Members:** Dick Veit (Chair), Rachel Sprague (Past Chair), Juliet Lamb (Chair-Elect) and Karen Lau Alarcon (Student Rep)

**For:** ExCo Meeting, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The Awards Committee solicited, reviewed, and awarded the standard annual awards in 2023, including: (1) Special Achievement Award; (2) Lifetime Achievement Award; (3) Student Travel Awards; (4) Student Presentation Awards; (4) Student Research Grants. There was not a World Seabird Twitter Conference in 2023 so we were not asked to judge or present an award for that event.

Award documents are now organized on the PSG Google Drive, including templates, submission forms, and scoring sheets. We received many submissions for all awards. In particular, the sheer volume of applications received for Travel Awards made this year's judging processes continue to be labor intensive for the Awards Committee and Awards Chair. I also want to remind our membership to nominate the accomplished professionals in our society for special achievement and lifetime achievement awards, even if you think they may have been nominated before!

The following are summaries of each of the award categories.

- 1) **PSG Special Achievement Award:** The 2024 SAA was awarded to Linda Elliott, the founder and center director of the Hawaii Wildlife Center. The award recognizes Ms. Elliott's innovation and dedication to seabird conservation, rehabilitation, and education through the Hawaii Wildlife Center. Linda Elliott founded the first dedicated wildlife rehabilitation hospital in Hawaii, which broke ground in 2008 and welcomed its first patient in 2012. In the first 10 years of the Hawaii Wildlife Center, she built a community of supporters, raised money for a facility, and created a valuable resource for the entire State of Hawaii and other islands in the tropical Pacific. The hospital reached its 1,000th patient milestone in 2020, and its 2,000th patient milestone in 2021. Of the 70+ native taxa they care for, 90% are federally threatened, endangered, or of high conservation concern. Linda will accept her award in person at a ceremony at the plenary session on Thursday, 22 February.
- 2) **PSG Lifetime Achievement Award:** The 2024 LAA was awarded this year to Dr. Steven Kress, founder of the Audubon Seabird Institute (retired), National Audubon Society. The award recognizes Dr. Kress' **significant and distinguished contributions to seabird conservation and restoration, mentoring, and the Pacific Seabird Group.** For more than 50 years, Dr. Kress's research has focused on developing techniques for restoring and managing colonial nesting seabirds. The innovative restoration methods he pioneered, including the use of social attraction and the translocation of seabird chicks, have earned global recognition. The combined use of chick translocation, seabird decoys, mirrors, and sound recordings was first used to restore colonies of Atlantic puffins and several species of terns on Maine coast islands.

Dr. Kress will accept the award in person at a ceremony prior to his plenary talk on Friday, 23 February.

- 3) **Travel Awards:** We continue to receive increasing volume of applications for travel support to our annual meeting. For the 2024 meeting, we received 55 applications requesting ~\$69,450 (an almost \$20k increase over 2023). We were ultimately able to award over \$20,000 in travel support to 24 students, early career scientists, and international scientists, including 14 students from North America, and students and scientists from Japan, New Zealand, Germany, Peru, and South Africa. These awards were made possible by the success of the 2024 Seattle LoCo in securing a Packard Foundation grant with \$8k in travel support, and two individual donations from PSG members totaling another \$8k.
- 4) **Student Presentation Awards** will be given out at the annual meeting this week. We currently have 46 student presentations, including 15 posters and 31 oral presentations. This is slightly down from the 59 student presentations in San Diego in 2023, but still up from the 37 at the virtual meeting in 2022. We plan to confer at least one award each for best doctoral and best masters/undergraduate oral presentation, and best poster (with honorable mention).
- 5) **Student Research Grants:** The student research grant Request for Proposals was announced in early 2024, rather than over the summer as in past years. After discussion with several of the former chairs and previous awards committee members, we tried a solicitation in January prior to the spring/summer field seasons. We received 6 applications from only MS and PhD students (compared with 9 applications in 2022, 6 applications in 2021, 13 in 2010, and 11 in 2019). The awards committee and several former chairs decided to make awards for \$2,000 each. Awardees will be decided before the annual meeting.

#### British Ornithologists' Union Godman-Salvin Prize

Finally, we were pleased to facilitate the British Ornithologists' Union presentation of the 2024 Godman-Salvin Prize to Dr. P. Dee Boersma at the PSG Annual Meeting in Seattle. This prize is awarded by the BOU Council to an individual as a signal honour for distinguished ornithological work, and they coordinated to present the award at Dr. Boersma's "home" conference of PSG.