

Vice Chair for Conservation Annual Report

Pacific Seabird Group

2023 Conservation Committee Annual Report

Prepared by Lindsay Adrean, Vice-Chair for Conservation

The PSG Conservation Committee prepared one comment letter and signed on to one letter in 2023.

- PSG prepared and submitted a letter to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management on October 31, 2023 during a public comment period on proposed Wind Energy Areas (WEAs) in Oregon. With input from PSG members, this letter contained comments on the spatial suitability analysis that was used in the development of the WEAs as well as research figures and references that deserved consideration prior to finalization of the WEAs. Species-specific recommendations were included for the Short-tailed Albatross, Leach's Storm-Petrel, Tufted Puffin, and Marbled Murrelet. General recommendations focused on methods for reducing data gaps of the current suitability analysis and detecting changes in seabird distribution and abundance in WEAs.
- PSG was extended an invitation and chose to sign on to a letter developed by Environment America asking President Biden to establish permanent protections for Cashes Ledge, an underwater mountain range in the Gulf of Maine that is an important feeding area for seabirds. Some fishing regulations are in place in this area, but these regulations are not permanent and there are currently no protections related to other threats such as industrial development or climate change. Numerous groups have been advocating for enhanced protections at Cashes Ledge for at least the last decade

The biggest challenge in the Vice-Chair position has been keeping informed on issues pertaining to conservation of seabirds where PSG's input may be needed. The Federal Register is an easily accessible source of federal actions pertaining to seabirds, however, it is not feasible for one person to monitor all potential federal proposals and determine whether PSG input is needed. A more logical method would be to receive notifications from PSG's membership of topics of concern, as has been the preferred method. However, no members contacted the Vice-Chair in 2023. To address this challenge, a new two-prong method of outreach to members will be used in 2024. The Vice-Chair will include an agenda item in the 2024 Conservation Committee meeting requesting upcoming conservation issues for creation of a "watch list" for the current year. Additionally, the Vice-Chair for Conservation will contact PSG's regional representatives on a quarterly basis to request notification of new conservation issues to add to the watch list. Using this list, the Vice-Chair can monitor known concerns and solicit assistance from PSG members directly or via the list serv when the time is appropriate for a comment letter or other method of engagement.