

- February 20, 2024: The MMTC held its annual meeting in conjunction with the Pacific Seabird Group Annual meeting in Seattle, WA. Seventy-four members were in attendance either physically or by Zoom connection. Presentations were delivered on research and monitoring.
- October 29, 2024: Meeting to discuss the potential for research and development of social attraction techniques. Two regions were proposed for further consideration (Northwest Oregon/Southwest Washington and the Santa Cruz Mountains). Additional meetings have been scheduled for 2025.
- November 18, 2024: Members from Conservation Zone 6 (California) met to review 2024 research and monitoring efforts and plan for 2025 efforts.
- December 11, 2024: The Marine Subcommittee held a meeting to develop priorities for 2025. This subcommittee is seeking new members and suggestions for priorities.

#### **Technical Publications:**

Two technical publications were finalized in 2024 and are available on the PSG website under the Technical Publications list.

- PSG Technical Publication #6: A Revised Protocol for Surveying Marbled Murrelets in Forests
- PSG Technical Publication #7: Terrestrial Habitat Management Recommendations for Marbled Murrelets

#### **Research, Monitoring and Conservation:**

- Research, monitoring, and conservation activities for 2024 will be reported during the annual meeting of the MMTC scheduled for January 6, 2025. Local updates and meeting notes can be obtained from the co-chairs after this date.

### [Report #2i. EASCC Committee Annual Report](#)

#### **PSG 2025 East Asian Seabird Conservation Committee report**

Compiled by Simba Chan

#### **Overall:**

##### Shinan Migratory Bird Symposium (21 November 2024, Shinan County, Republic of Korea)

Since 2007, the Shinan County of South Jeolla Province of the Republic of Korea, hosted annual symposia on migratory birds. In 2024, the theme of the symposium is "Solutions for Conservation and Management of East Asian Seabird Habitats".

##### **Speakers:**

- Noritaka ICHIDA: A Challenge for Bird Conservation in Asia working with many friends
- Miran KIM: Marine plastic ingestion by seabirds in Korea
- Simba CHAN: Highly pathogenic avian influenza - a new threat to seabirds globally
- Bo-yeon HWANG: The status of microbial disease infection in Black-tailed Gull *Larus crassirostris*

- Yukata WATANUKI: Global and local mapping of sensitivity of seabirds to offshore wind farms in Japan
- Yoon-Kyung LEE: A nine-year study of breeding performance and habitat use in Korean Chinese Crested Tern, Critically Endangered Species
- Yat-tung YU: East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership Seabird Working Group: Past, Present and Future

On 22 November 2024, seabird experts from Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong had a meeting with Korean ornithologists to discuss a closer cooperation on seabird study and conservation in eastern Asia.

### Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

No report of massive seabird die-off in Russian Far East in 2024.

No report of massive seabird die-off in Korea, Japan and Taiwan in 2024.

On 19 September 2024, the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH, formerly OIE) released a report (event ID 5717) noting a total death of 980 “Wildlife (species unspecified) (WILD)” from Xiangshan County, Zhejiang Province of China in June 2024. From geographical coordinates provided by the Chinese Government (29.3846 , 122.216) there is no doubt the outbreak occurred on Tiedun Dao of the Jiushan Islands, where a Chinese Crested Tern colony (the biggest existing) was restored with support from PSG members since 2013. From 24-hour monitoring in 2014 and 2015 there is also no doubt the majority (if not all) ‘dead wildlife’ were Greater Crested Terns and Chinese Crested Terns.

Warning has been sent to all seabird colonies in Asia from the Avian Disease Working Group of the East Asian Australian Flyway Partnership.

## **Country reports**

### **Japan**

#### From Yutaka WATANUKI

1) The Japan Seabird Group updated the Japan Seabird Colony Database, which is managed by the Biodiversity Center of the Ministry of the Environment, in March 2024.

<https://www.sizenken.biodoc.go.jp/seabirds/>

2) The Ministry of the Environment continues its conservation and propagation project for Common Murres on Teuri Island. This year, 14 birds have fledged. Since banding for individual identification is necessary to obtain information on population dynamics, a method of capturing them from a boat at night was considered.

3) The Ornithological Society of Japan published the eighth revised edition of Check-list of Japanese Birds. It officially mentioned the two cryptic species of the Short-tailed Albatross (breed on Senkaku Islands and Torishima Island but the scientific name of the Senkaku Short-tailed Albatross remains undetermined)

4) The Japanese government is trying to expand the promotion area to accelerate the construction plan of offshore wind power generation. To that end, the Ministry of the Environment plans to

take the lead in creating a seabird sensitivity map for the ocean area, including Japan's EEZ, using GPS tracking and aerial census, with floating wind power generation in mind.

5) Prof. Watanuki retired in March. He will continue to serve as the chairman of the Japanese Seabird Group. Seabird research on Teuri Island will continue under the direction of J.B. Thiebot (Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Fisheries Sciences, Hokkaido University).

6) The Japan Bio-logging Study Group has launched a database called "BiP" that mainly covers data obtained within the Japanese EEZ using bio-logging techniques. It contains tracking data for a large number of seabirds.

#### From Yasuko SUZUKI: Japan gillnet projects updates from 2024

Yasuko Suzuki (BirdLife International), Motohiro Ito (Toyo University) and his students, and Nobuhiko Sato (in an advisory role, Fisheries Research and Education Agency) continued an experimental study on gillnet bycatch mitigation technique in collaboration with Tokyo Sea Life Park in Japan. At a Common Murre and Tufted Puffin aviary with a dive pool at the aquarium, the experiment was conducted to compare their behavior to different colors of gillnet mimic. The mimic was created in such way that bird safety was ensured. Preliminary results revealed subtle increase in avoidance behavior against some colors. However, it was only observed when the experiment was carried out with chumming of feed. Such avoidance behavior was not evident regardless of color when live bait fish was used, which suggests stronger stimuli is necessary to reduce gillnet bycatch at sea.

We also continued a systematic data collection project in Japan with local gillnet fishers in NW Hokkaido, including Teuri Island, a breeding site of four alcids and two cormorant species (four of them are listed in Japan's Red Data Book). The project aimed to evaluate environmental and operational factors for seabird bycatch in gillnet fisheries. Although the number of bycaught birds reported was small during the project period, water depth where gillnets were set appeared an important factor. We are currently in discussion with local stakeholders to shift towards more sustainable model for long-term systematic data collection.

#### From Daisuke OCHI

This year, we mainly conducted field tests of artificial bait on fishing boats as a technique for mitigating bycatch of seabirds. We also continued our satellite tracking survey of black-footed albatrosses on Torishima, and our colleague, Haruka Hayashi, compiled the results showing that their breeding status is affected by differences in their oceanic utilization areas.

About bird flu, we asked that ACAP compile guidelines for vessel-based countermeasures against avian flu on fishing vessels, as we were concerned that the spread of the disease to humans would prevent us from collecting data on bycatch from fishing vessels.

## **Taiwan**

From Chung -hang HUNG (data provided by the wild bird societies of Taipei and Penghu)

In the breeding season of 2024, 8 Chinese Crested Terns and about 1800 Greater Crested Terns were recorded at Sheshan Island, Mats. 2-3 nests of Chinese Crested Tern recorded but it is believed only one chick fledged in 2024.

14000 Greater Crested Terns were recorded in Penghu and there were four islands with breeding colonies. No Chinese Crested Tern recorded in Penghu in 2024.

No massive seabird deaths recorded in Taiwan in 2024.

## Report #2j. SCMU/GUMU Technical Committee Annual Report

### **2024 REPORT OF THE PSG SCRIPPS'S MURRELET AND GUADALUPE MURRELET (AND CRAVERI MURRELET) TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

Yuliana Bedolla and David Mazurkiewicz, Committee Coordinators

#### **Introduction**

In 2012, the American Ornithologists' Union split Xantus's Murrelet into Scripps's Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus scrippsi*) and Guadalupe Murrelet (*S. hypoleucus*), based on genetic separation. In September 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declined to list these species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, although they remain protected as state-threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act and they are listed as endangered in Mexico. The mandate of the Scripps's Murrelet and Guadalupe Murrelet Technical Committee (SMGMTC; formerly the Xantus's Murrelet Technical Committee) of the Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) is to "monitor the federal listing petition, state status, research, and conservation issues; provide information to interested parties; and coordinate research and conservation in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada." During the non-breeding season, the Scripps's Murrelet occurs at sea off the Pacific coasts of western Baja California, California, Oregon, Washington, and southern British Columbia; it breeds on at least 12 islands off southern California and northwestern Baja California. The Guadalupe Murrelet occurs at sea in the same areas as Scripps's Murrelet during the non-breeding season; but it breeds mainly at Guadalupe Island, with smaller numbers at the San Benito Islands and perhaps a few other islands as far north as Santa Barbara Island. The Craveri's Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus craveri*) breeds on many islands in the Gulf of California and at least 4 islands off the coast of Baja California from Asunción to San Martín. Post breeding it ranges into waters off Southern California and occasionally further north. Its conservation status is threatened/vulnerable (IUCN 2019) and is impacted by many of the same stressors and concerns as Scripps's and Guadalupe murrelets, hence its inclusion in development of a conservation plan for these species.

Below, we summarize SMGMCMTC activities in 2024: