PACIFIC SEABIRDS



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Compiled by the Pacific Seabirds Committee

Updates from the Ornithological Council

The Pacific Seabird Group is part of the Ornithological Council (OC), a consortium of scientific societies of ornithologists. We're here to support our societies, and their individuals members, with resources, community action, and individual assistance.

The OC recently developed a template for institutions and IACUCs to adapt as needed, setting forth an institutional policy for wildlife and field research. If an institution does not already have a policy setting forth procedures and methodologies, this template provides a place to start. Institutions are encouraged to make any necessary changes or modifications for the policy to fit within their existing animal care and research policies. Learn more and download the template here.

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. 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!

Updates from the Pacific Seabird Group

PSG statement on the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI)

With the rapid development and use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), various members of the Pacific Seabird Group Executive Committee have begun drafting a policy pertaining to the use of GenAI in all PSG submissions (e.g., member applications and annual meeting abstracts) and administrative tasks (e.g., drafting communications and meeting minutes). This policy is under development and will go through a review process by the PSG Executive Committee prior to being posted to the PSG website and emailed to the listserv.

PSG Launches New Social Media Initiatives!



We are excited to announce that PSG has launched two new social media initiatives, **'Creature Feature'** and **'Scientist Spotlight'.** We hope that these monthly initiatives will help increase member engagement while also celebrating our members and the work of the Pacific Seabird Group.

Creature Feature: Every month, we will be highlighting a seabird species on our social media. This could be a species that you are researching, is of conservation concern, or is just a cool species to spotlight! You can submit suggestions for this feature here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSepTDbhIHrRVMh2uiiWSusSX-G2_QIwKhr9FnMVkmRTvMZ7VQ/viewform?usp=header

Scientist Spotlight: This initiative will highlight a PSG member and their research. You can nominate yourself or someone you know (with their permission). Members from any career stage (e.g., student or senior researcher) are eligible to be highlighted in this feature! You can submit suggestions for this feature here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfU3vA6_vD2vBuMJE8Isg2m9TZMBVHvHhoqWkbniMgyJOZ6IA/viewform?usp=publish-editor

Call for Volunteers!

The PSG Communications Team is seeking to recruit new volunteers to help with both the annual meeting and general communications. If you're interested, please reach out to communications@pacificseabirdgroup.org.

Upcoming Conferences and Events



Pacific Seabird Group 54th Annual meeting in Vancouver, BC. February 15-19, 2027



9th International Biologging Science Symposium in Sevilla, Spain. October 18-22, 2027



International Seabird Group Conference in Gdańsk. September 6-10, 2027

Review and Recommendation to Read:

The Seabird Trials: How a Scientist Took Big Oil to Court and Won

by Briony Penn

The Seabird Trials is a fascinating book filled with drama and endangered seabirds. It explores the life of one of our special seabird biologists, Harry Carter, and the fight for compensation due to the destruction of wild animals and nature. "*The Seabird Trials* reveal the fragility and wonder of seabird life, the great cost of oil dependence, and — at a time when scientists are increasingly questioned and silenced — the enduring importance of evidence and truth."

It was recently published and printed by Harbour Publishing, so I am not aware of its distributors. However, I am sure PSG members will all want to read this inspiring story.

The Cycle

A short story

by Aurora Kuczek

Underneath the waves of tussocks and the roaring skies above, lies a bird, not much larger than your hand nor mine. It dreams in the beds of wet sod in a small burrow, carving out its curious home with the folds of its feet and the depths of its feathers. Sometimes, there are two birds in that burrow. Soon, there will be yet another. They nestle up next to each other and whisper the tunes of the night, watching each other with calm eyes in this dark chamber as they perform the tireless duties of parents. After many weeks of caring for a fragile lump of an egg, a youngling is born. It is damp, *fresh*. The need for energy is ravishing, and the parents must now trade off duties to bring the youngling food; a mixture of pinkish slime with a glimmer that twinkles in the youngling's eyes. It is a gift of a long journey, through the entanglements of an unforgiving sea. After some time, the parents leave the youngling in its burrow alone, returning to feed and for slumber. It is just the way of things. A form of independence for the youngling. But the cries of the lonesome youngling awaken the beast who nests in the burrow across the way. With dark eyes, the beast crawls on all fours as it departs its horror-stricken den to trade with the luxury of the youngling's. Mouth watering and tail wagging, the beast enters the chamber. Fur stands up as the beast scrapes its back against the burrow walls, clicking its teeth as it inches near the youngling. The bird moves back against the chamber until its flesh meets dirt. It tries to fly, jumping up and down, its tears echoing through its home. The youngling doesn't have the necessary equipment to escape. It hasn't learned that yet. There is still room to grow. Suddenly, mother arrives. Her calls startle the beast as she shoves her beak deep within the beast's neck. It staggers backwards, arching its neck around and crawling out of the burrow to greet her. It is nighttime then. But mother has eyes that could pierce

through the beast's skull. The two battle arm and wing, the youngling watching from the burrow entrance. With a swift movement, the beast jolts upright until it snatches mother right in the stomach while she is midair, and pulls her down to the ground. The corners of the beast's lips upturned as it glances back towards the youngling. The nasty thing carries mother to its den, its tail wagging with delight as it disappears. Over the next week, the youngling lives in fear. Father has not returned for some time now, and the ocean rumbles deeply beneath their cliff. The youngling shivers in the chamber as the winds howl outside. It is getting colder, and water from the storms is starting to seep into the chamber. Pretty soon, it will be flooded if father doesn't return to renovate. At night, the youngling can hear chatter from its neighbors. There is the talk of the ocean. The food. There is not enough to go around. And the beast is still lurking somewhere in the shadows. This makes the youngling even more fearful than before, but it thrives off of hope. A hope that the youngling won't be forgotten. Days pass. Sleep comes and goes. But father still hasn't returned. The youngling grows weaker in the now flooded burrow as the tussocks become intertwined with the sod outside. One morning, after many days of rain, the youngling sees the sunshine seep in from the outside, and it crawls towards the entrance. It wants to experience the sun, the warmth. It swims through the muddied water, climbs upwards until its face is illuminated with the golden god in the sky. Its pale gray feathers sparkle, and it closes its eyes briefly to take it all in. Shaking out its wings, the youngling's stomach grumbles. *Any day now, father will return*, it thinks. The youngling reopens his eyes. The beast sits on its hind legs in front of the youngling, drool pooling in its mouth. The youngling sighs and closes his eyes once more. *Any day now.*

Photography - *Brandt's Cormorant*

by Sophie Neiblum



Conference Updates

The 4th World Seabird Conference

by Anna Vallery, PSG Delegate to the World Seabird Union

This past September 4th, the World Seabird Conference (WSC) was held in Hobart, Tasmania, bringing together an incredible 664 seabird scientists, managers, and students from 49 countries and territories under the theme Wings of Adaptation: Seabirds in a Changing Climate. This was the first in-person WSC in more than a decade, following meetings in 2010 and 2015 and a virtual gathering in 2021. Of those registered, 526 attended in person and 138 online, and eleven of the countries represented had never sent anyone to a WSC before.

The program ran 14 symposia, five concurrent oral tracks, three plenary presentations, a plenary panel on Indigenous knowledge and culture, and roughly 148 posters. The conference theme was reflected across the symposia and contributed sessions with marine heatwaves, warming oceans, changing phenology, shifting prey landscapes, and climate-linked demographic responses appearing repeatedly across taxa and regions. HPAI was a major cross-cutting topic, alongside pathogen surveillance, mercury, PFAS, and plastics. And new technologies and methods like drones, passive acoustic monitoring, camera traps, machine learning, and satellite imagery featured throughout many talks and posters. These topics were reflected in workshops as well – all four of which were filled to capacity. Two offered hands-on training opportunities - one in acoustic monitoring and another on attaching seabird tracking devices. The other two were discussion-based, covering new technologies for seabird colony monitoring and reducing seabird bycatch in fisheries. WSC4 was also the first World Seabird Conference to run an expanded hybrid program. All oral presentations and all but one workshop were recorded and made available for all attendees, virtual or in-person, to watch for up to 6 months after the meeting. Sessions were also live-streamed and immediately available to all hybrid participants, who were also given the ability to ask questions virtually. The final day of the conference was fully hybrid, with pre-recorded talks from virtual presenters played in two concurrent sessions at the venue. Several presenters joined via Zoom to take questions from the live and virtual audience. This hybrid day was made possible thanks to the Pacific Seabird Group (PSG). PSG not only co-sponsored the hybrid day and chaired the hybrid committee, but provided $20,000 USD to the WSC for increasing accessibility. This funding supported 42 complimentary virtual registrations for applicants along with seven regional “hub” events. These hub events allowed for groups to get creative and host watch parties, social time, or other events to connect with fellow seabird enthusiasts who couldn’t make the trip to WSC.

Hub events were held around the world, with events across Argentina, two Hawaiian Islands, and in Seattle. The Pelagicos Lab, for example, brought 26 people together on Oʻahu at the Hawaiʻi Pacific University Oceanic Institute, where marine science faculty and students – including a Seabird Ecology and Conservation class that earned extra credit for attending – watched and discussed recorded talks. They focused on the threats closest to home, including artificial light at night, plastic pollution, invasive predators, and habitat degradation. On Maui, the Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project hosted eight early- to mid-career attendees, who tuned into the plenary panel on Indigenous knowledge and culture together

along with several other presentations. And in Argentina, five research groups – CIMAS, CESIMAR, CIPD, the Instituto Antártico Argentino, and INIBIOMA – brought together researchers, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students from across the country for watch parties and to support their colleagues presenting both virtually in and in-person. The WSC brings the global seabird community together in a single place and, after more than a decade apart, WSC4 was a reminder of how much that matters. PSG's support of the hybrid day extended that reach well beyond Hobart, to colleagues who couldn't make the trip but still presented, asked questions, and gathered with their own communities to watch.

Thank you to our volunteer editors Aurora Kuczek, Mariella Mestres, and Hunter Lyells who helped make this fall PSG edition possible!