

NEWSLETTER 69

SEPTEMBER 1994

SEABIRD GROUP CONFERENCE MARCH 1995

The theme of the forthcoming Seabird Group conference is "Threats to Seabirds". Threats come in many forms, and we hope to have speakers who will describe studies of threats, or describe ways in which seabirds may be protected. One aim of the conference is not just to describe threats, but to evaluate their importance; thus we hope to have speakers who will argue that some activities traditionally seen as threats are not threats at all.

The programme is beginning to come together. As a sample of those likely to speak, the following has so far been arranged. John Weins will be speaking on the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in Alaska, while two other speakers will describe lessons from the *Braer* oil spill. Seabirds at their colonies may be threatened by introduced mammals: Clive Craik will be talking about his experiences with North American mink in western Scotland, while Bernie Zonfrillo and Peter Robinson will describe their programmes of rat eradication from islands. Kees Camphuysen will show the effects of discarded fish and offal on seabirds in the North Sea, Tycho Anker-Nillson will look at the relationship of puffins and herring stocks off Norway.

We hope to hear some perspectives on threats from other parts of the planet, with speakers from Australia, South Africa, the Portuguese Atlantic and hopefully

Antarctica, the Mediterranean and the Baltic. Threats to individual groups of seabirds, such as cormorants and terns will be reviewed. In addition to this, one or two papers will be given describing recent research findings on seabird biology.

The programme is not yet full or fixed. We are still keen to receive more offers of papers, both verbal and presented as posters. There will be specific times set aside to review posters. Please send these as soon as possible to myself (17, Rubislaw Terrace, Aberdeen, AB1 1XE, Scotland. Fax: +44 (0) 1224 621488).

The conference will also feature the usual range of informal events: a bookshop, the bar, a ceilidh, good company etc.

Included with this Newsletter is a conference registration form. Our last conference was virtually fully subscribed. You are encouraged to register as soon as possible. I look forward to seeing you in Glasgow.

Mark Tasker

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Published by: The Seabird Group
 c/o The Lodge
 Sandy
 Bedfordshire
 SG19 2DL
 England

Charity number: 260907

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NATIONAL BEACHED BIRD SURVEY, FEBRUARY 1994

Over 800 volunteers walked beaches for the annual survey of UK beaches at the end of February 1994. This encouraging turn out was partly in response to the "wreck" of seabirds which received a great deal of publicity throughout February. This year's overall totals may not be directly comparable with previous years as many corpses were probably removed from beaches before the survey began. However, bearing this in mind, results can

still be a useful indicator of regional conditions throughout the UK.

As in previous years, the survey was coordinated by regional staff of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and in Shetland, by Martin Heubeck of the Shetland Oil Terminal Environment Advisory Group. This year over 2900 km of beach were walked throughout the UK, and excluding "wings only", nearly 11,000 dead birds were found. Although, this figure is three times greater than last year (2823 birds), it can be largely explained by high auk numbers in areas most affected by the "wreck", (Shetland, Orkney, the Northeast and Southeast), and probably also reflects the increase in length of beach walked in these areas.

Overall density of dead birds was 3.8 per km, three times higher than last year, but again this can largely be accounted for by high numbers of auks in north east regions of the UK. There is a similar explanation for the increase in overall densities of auks, cormorant and shag.

Overall, just over 5% of seabirds, wildfowl, divers and grebes were recorded as slightly or heavily oiled this year, almost half the percentage of last year and only a third of that in 1992. However, there was considerable regional variation with the south south-west recorded as having the highest percentage of oiled birds. Figures were also higher than normal in the north-west, although these "oilings" largely involved reports of birds covered in the "glue" substance affecting these areas earlier in the year.

As in the last three years, the percentage of beach oiling was much higher along the south coast, with 47% of beaches walked reported as at least slightly oiled. The overall oiling average was 13.5% in 1993.

Many thanks to all volunteers who took part in this year's survey, and to regional coordinators who helped greatly with several different requests for bird corpses and initial results. The survey results will contribute to the international pollution monitoring scheme, based in Denmark.

The 1995 survey is planned for the weekend of 25th/26th February - anyone interested in taking part should contact their local RSPB regional office.

Emma Brindley, RSPB

Table 1. Average densities and proportion oiled for seabirds found in the national Beached Bird Survey, comparing February 1994 with February 1993

	February 1994			February 1993		
	Number	Density (no/km)	% Oiled*	Number	Density (no/km)	% Oiled
Auks	8764	2.98	4.4	1379	0.50	13.77
Gulls	620	0.21	7.2	821	0.30	3.3
Cormorant & shag	1337	0.45	2.6	170	0.06	6.5
Fulmar	123	0.04	10.6	103	0.04	9.7
Gannet	36	0.01	25	52	0.02	26.9
Total distance surveyed (kms)	2939.4				2771.8	

Table 2 Numbers, density and proportion oiled of all seabirds found dead in the national Beached Bird Survey, February 1994

Region	Distance covered (km)	Number	Density (no/km)	% Oiled	Number oiled*
Shetland	48.3	850	17.6	4.0	35
Orkney	47.8	590	12.3	0.02	1
Northeast	622.4	6643	10.7	1.0	66
Southeast	424.6	673	1.58	11.4	77
South	333.2	176	0.53	54	95
Southwest	181.7	39	0.21	77	30
Wales	322.4	93	0.29	15	14
Northwest	688.8	616	0.89	27	168
N. Ireland	270.0	44	0.16	6.8	3

Wings not included. Oiled includes lightly and heavily.

Seabirds include: auks, gulls, petrels, cormorants, shags, shearwaters, gannets, terns and skuas.

* % oiled includes birds affected by the "industrial glue" affecting parts of the north-west earlier in the year.

RSPB regional results

Region	Distance covered (km)	Number	Density (no/km)	% Oiled	Number oiled
East Scotland	163.3	1589	9.7	2.0	32
Lothian & Borders	168.2	1499	8.9	1.3	20
North England	204.4	1010	4.9	2.0	21
East England	256.5	463	1.8	10.7	50
Southeast England	213.1	59	0.27	54.2	32
Southwest England	338.5	177	0.53	60.0	105
Wales	322.4	93	0.29	15	14
Northwest England	55.2	5	0.1	40	2
Cumbria	133	155	1.16	27.0	42
Southwest	468.6	310	0.66	40.6	126
Scotland					
North Scotland	156.5	2100	13.4	0.28	6
Western Isles	64	112	1.75	0.0	0
Northern Ireland	270.0	44	0.16	6.8	3

Counties/Regions included:

East Scotland: Fife, Grampian and Tayside

North England: Humberside, Northumberland, North Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear and Cleveland, Durham.

East England: Lincolnshire, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk.

South east England: Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Isle of Wight, Hampshire

South west England: Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, Avon, Somerset

Northwest England: Merseyside, Cheshire, Lancashire

Southwest Scotland: Dumfries and Galloway, Strathclyde,

North Scotland: Highland East and West

THE GREAT SALTEE ISLAND LARUS GULL CENSUS 1994

The Great Saltee Island lies 5.6 km off south Co. Wexford, Ireland. The island is about 1.6 km by 0.4 km covering an area of 89 ha. The flora and fauna of the Saltees are well described (Perry and Warburton 1976, Roche and Merne 1977) and some detailed baseline studies have been carried out for the National Parks and Wildlife service on the breeding populations of seabirds (Lloyd 1982), the findings of which have proved invaluable for this study. The Great Saltee and its smaller neighbour the Little Saltee hold the only substantial seabird breeding colony in the south-east of Ireland.

Methods

The island was censused between 23-27 May 1994. Birds nesting on the cliffs were counted with a telescope (30 x 80) and all apparently occupied nests were marked on a map. Areas above the cliff were censused using a team of seven observers who systematically covered the island using the techniques described by Aspinall (1993). Generally the observers moved in parallel about 3m apart through a marked transect. Due to thick stands of briars in some parts of the island it was not always possible to stick strictly to this method.

The error in counts was checked by sending one team ahead on a marked transect placing pasta in all nests found followed by a second team about 50m behind checking for any unmarked nests. This was checked further by having the

combined teams walk the transect again. An error of 7% was calculated.

To account for nests that had been laid in but had failed or were predated prior to our counts a 9% allowance was calculated (Creme unpubl.). This is comparable to the 10% allowance made by Lloyd (1982).

In mixed areas of lesser black-backed and herring gulls, proportions were estimated

from sample counts of adult birds. The total number of nests for each species were calculated from these estimates of relative abundance.

Results

The results of the census are shown in Table 1 along with the census figures from Lloyd (1982) and the Seabird Colony Register.

Table 1. Breeding pairs of *Larus* gulls on Great Saltee.

Year	1978	1979	1980	1986	1994
Great black-back	250 - 320	240	410	85	110
Herring gull	3000	2750	2613	825	277
Lesser black-back	75 - 80	110	152	82	620

Discussion

From the figures presented it is quite clear that a dramatic decrease has occurred in the breeding populations of herring and great black-backed gulls on the Great Saltee. Concurrent with this there has been an increase in the numbers of breeding pairs of lesser black-backed gulls. A short visit to the Little Saltee suggests that the population of herring and great black-backed gull have not simply deserted the larger island to take up residence on its neighbour. However, it is of interest to report that the lesser black-backed gull population appears to be one order of magnitude greater than the most recent estimate (Perry and Warburton 1976). It is important to stress that this estimate is based on the briefest of visits which could not apply the methods used on Great Saltee. And although the results of the Little Saltee visit should be treated with caution the data is sufficiently dramatic to warrant a detailed survey, comparable to that undertaken on Great Saltee, in 1995.

and especially to Francis Gallagher. Thanks to the Seabird Group for financial support.

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Gillian A. Creme and Thomas C. Kelly.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the team: Simon Berrows, Tom Gittings, John Murphy, Clare Pollock

ELASTIC AND OTHER ARTIFACTS IN PUFFINS

In 1969-1970 during Operation Seafarer the numbers of puffins nesting in Britain and Ireland were found to be much reduced compared to previous years. Coincidentally, lengths of elastic were recovered from the stomachs of puffins shot off Norway or found dead in eastern Britain, and the ingestion of such pollutants was considered a possible causative factor in the decline of the puffin.

Since 1972 we have examined the stomach contents of all dead puffins we have come across and the results have recently been published in Marine Pollution Bulletin 28 (1994): 54-55 entitled "Ingested elastic and other artifacts in Puffins over a 24-year period". Puffins examined were of two types. The first included dead birds found washed ashore or blown inland along the British North Sea coast (191 birds) and Atlantic coast (14 birds). The second included apparently healthy adults found freshly dead after attack by predators, collision with obstacles or having been killed (under licence) for pesticide residue analyses at the North Sea colony on the Isle of May, Firth of Forth (124 birds), the Atlantic coast colonies of St Kilda (17 birds), and the Shiant Islands (12 birds) in the Western Isles.

Artifacts were found in 42 (13.3%) of the stomachs from 315 North Sea Birds but in none of the stomachs from 43 Atlantic coast birds. The Atlantic coast birds are not considered further here. Thirty stomachs contained elastic, seven included cylindrical tablet-shaped "plastic" granules and five stomachs contained nylon and other synthetic thread.

Puffins swallowed elastic of a range of types (from elastic bands 7 mm across to thin threads, apparently from rotted garments), various colours (red, black, white) and a range of lengths (1-20 cm). Most puffin stomachs contained only a few short elastic fragments, but two from dead

birds held cylindrical balls (10x40 mm) of tangled black elastic and another four puffin stomachs contained elastic bands. There was a similar wide variety among the types of nylon encountered, and one stomach from a bird found dead contained a 30x10 mm ball of black thread. In the three birds discussed above with large elastic or thread balls in their stomachs, approximately half of the space in the stomach was filled with the artifacts and it is probable that these would have interfered with digestion. The "plastic" granules were present in numbers varying from 1 to 20 per stomach and were 1-3 mm in diameter.

There was no significant difference between the frequency of occurrence of artifacts in apparently healthy adults from the isle of may and those found dead elsewhere in the North Sea indicating that the ingestion of elastic or other pollutants was unlikely to be the cause of death.

Pooling all the adult samples into three equal time periods (1969-1976, 1977-1984 and 1985-1992) suggests a gradual decline in the frequency of occurrence of artifacts (11%, 9%, 6%), but differences between the groups of years were not statistically significant.

Among the birds found dead, the occurrence of artifacts varied significantly with age with the frequency being higher in first-year birds (38%) compared with immature puffins (19%) and adults (10%). Puffins eat a wide variety of small fish and marine invertebrates and presumably they mistake elastic, nylon and other artifacts for their normal prey.

The higher frequency of occurrence of artifacts among younger birds could therefore be due to this age group being less adept at distinguishing such items from genuine prey. In contrast to some other seabirds such as gulls, cormorants and albatrosses that regularly produce pellets containing undigested food remains, puffins and other auks normally appear to digest their food completely. Artifacts might therefore be expected to accumulate in the stomach throughout the

lifetime of an individual. However, results from the study did not provide any clear evidence of such an accumulation over time. Hence, it appears that while the chances of swallowing artifacts are higher in young birds, these can be ingested at any time. Once in the stomach, artifacts may eventually break down sufficiently to be passed out through the gut, or possibly regurgitated.

The numbers of pairs of puffins breeding on the Isle of May increased on average by 19% per annum between 1973 and 1981 (when the frequency of artifacts was relatively high) and remained stable between 1985 and 1992 (when the frequency was lower). Similar population changes appear to have occurred throughout the North Sea during this time. It is therefore unlikely that ingested artifacts have had a serious impact on puffin numbers.

Many of the puffins examined were supplied by Seabird Group members. We will be glad to send a copy of the note to any member who writes for one to ITE, Hill of Brathens, Banchory, Kincardineshire AB31 4BY.

Mike Harris and Sarah Wanless

COMMON GUILLEMOTS WITH BILL DEFORMITIES

On 27 April 1991, a guillemot with a deformed bill was present in a group of 466 birds on Cashtal Mooar, Peel Hill, Isle of Man - the second largest colony of the species in the island. The bird's bill was curved and much longer than usual for the species - perhaps as long proportionately as that of a hoopoe. The right side of the bill was the usual dark colour, but there was an elongated silvery patch on the left side of the bill. This gave the initial impression that the bird was holding a sand eel in its bill. The bird was fully grown and appeared to be paired, doing jerky head movements (bowing) with a bird close by. The bird was not noticed on

the next visit, 6 May 1991, or subsequently.

A bird present on 11 July 1993 in a group of 34 adults on the breeding ledge at Gobny Callin, almost 2 km south of Cashtal Mooar, also had a deformed bill. The bill was longer than usual, but was not curved. The end of the bill was not pointed in the usual fashion, having the appearance more as if the tip had broken off. The bill was mostly dark but there was a white line which extended from half way along the base of the bill on the left side, curving up to the top of the bill to perhaps two-thirds of the way to the end. The bird was not seen to interact particularly with any other bird, but was a member of the tight group of birds on the ledge. This bird was not seen on visits during the 1994 breeding season.

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SEABIRD GROUP JOINS BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL

The Seabird Group has become an associate organisation of BirdLife International. BirdLife International is the organisation that brings together the planet's bird conservation organisations in order to enhance their activities through co-operation and information flow. BirdLife International hopes to be able to appoint a seabird officer before too long to work specifically on global seabird conservation projects. The Seabird Group will be able to influence BirdLife International's developing role in this field.

STAMFORD RAFFLES AWARD

Congratulations to Bill Bourne on being awarded the Zoological Society of London's Stamford Raffles Award for 1993, in recognition of his contributions to the study of seabirds at sea.

SEAWATCHING IN THE NETHERLANDS IN THE 1980s

A 203 page special issue of *Sula* has been devoted to a summary, by Maarten Platteeuw, Nick van der Ham and Jan den Ouden, of seawatching records from the Dutch coast from 1980 to 1989. It follows on from Camphuysen and Van Dijk's excellent work summarising records from 1974 to 1979. Observations were made regularly from 28 points on the Netherlands coast, and the text (in Dutch) mainly compares the 1980's records with those from the earlier period. There are neat graphs showing size and direction of migratory movements through the year, and tables to show variation between years. Scarce and rare species, along with marine mammals are covered in greater depth in this volume than the earlier one. English graph captions and a summary make the volume accessible to non-Dutch readers. Overall, most species were seen in higher numbers in the 1980's than in the 1970's. This may be due to an overall southward movement of seabirds in the North Sea between the two periods (partly supported by observations of birds at sea), or may be due to greater experience of the seabird watchers. The authors are to be congratulated on an excellent summary, and the Werkgroep CvZ of the Nederlandse Zeevogelgroep on having recording systems that make such analyses possible.

The publication costs Dfl. 27.50 plus Dfl. 10.00 for postage from the Treasurer of the Dutch Seabird Group. Send a Eurocheque (with passnumber on the back!) to Y. Hermes, De Houtmanstraat 46, NL-1792 BC Oudeschild, The Netherlands, asking for "Zeetrekboek 94". Alternatively use international bank

transfer to Postbank The Netherlands account number 6255749 of Treasurer NZG, Oudeschild.

FROM RECENT ISSUES OF COLONIAL WATERBIRD SOCIETY BULLETIN

VOL.17, NO. 2

Most of this issue is composed of 162 abstracts of papers from the 1993 Colonial Waterbird Society Annual Meeting. This was held in Arles, and thus many of the abstracts have a stronger European (particularly Mediterranean) relevance than is usual. Many of the papers document population and colony sizes. Mauro Fasola describes the habitat needs and conservation requirements of gulls and terns in the Po delta. These are basically undisturbed islands, with suitably short vegetation and free from mammalian predators. Twenty-seven abstracts deal with roseate tern numbers, ecology and conservation. Five papers consider the evolution of coloniality in waterbirds. Five papers discuss nocturnality in seabirds. Hopefully, many of these papers will be written up in full and published in scientific journals. Much of the remainder of the issue concerns the activities of CWS's various committees and officers.

VOL. 18, NO. 1

Reports of members activities occupy the first half of this issue, while two long position statements on fish-eating bird research, conservation and management occupy the second half. For those who do not know the code, this means cormorants and other birds seen by some as competitive predators with man on fishery resources. Currently the growing cormorant population in Europe is causing some fuss. Those who know their literature will realise that this issue has been with us for many decades, and no amount of research seems to "solve" the problem. Most research has failed to find a major impact from cormorants in "natural" situations, whereas there are

problems at fish farms and put-and-take fisheries. Most of these problems could probably be overcome with sensible design and site management. The pressures to kill remain however.

FROM PACIFIC SEABIRDS VOL. 21, NO.1

This is the first edition of Pacific Seabirds, the new name of the Pacific Seabird Group Bulletin. This name change marks a change in style. Pacific Seabirds will in future contain more technical notes and papers reporting current research of interest to Pacific Seabird Group members. Pacific Seabirds will not become a fully fledged journal, and will continue in its function of being a newsletter also. Submitted articles will however be refereed. The issue starts with an article pointing out that arctic foxes are naturally resident on the Pribilof islands, and despite killing seabirds there, deserve to be conserved. Tony Gaston weighs in with an article on the perils and pleasures of ringing thick-billed murrelets on cliffs. He provides valuable guidance in the form of seven rules to follow. A loss rate of 5% of chicks off the cliffs is viewed as the upper limit of acceptability. Bill Bourne contributes an interesting article on the origin of some "vagrant" seabird specimens in collections in cabinets around the world. Inadequate and hasty labelling of specimens seems likely to be the root of the problem, rather than deliberate fraud. Part 2 of Harry Carter's article on his visit to Japan continues over four pages. Anyone wanting to visit Japanese seabirds is recommended to read this extended article. Most of the remainder of the issue is occupied with abstracts from the 1994 annual meeting (see review in the last *Seabird Group Newsletter*) and regional reports of members activities.

FROM SOUTH WEST OILED SEABIRD GROUP BULLETIN, NO. 5.

This issue of the Newsletter starts with a review of the 1993/94 beached bird count in SW England. This is followed by a very informative article on oiled birds from John Barker, a vet. This includes veterinary advice on treatment of oiled seabirds. The following article is on the releasing strategy for rehabilitated oiled seabirds, indicating problems of imprinting on humans, and on the birds immune systems. Release should be attempted near flocks of the species concerned, or close to the site where the bird was initially recovered. Released birds should be ringed. Releases should occur in calmer weather conditions. The newsletter finishes with an article on a seminar held by Texaco in south-west Wales in association with the opening of a new oiled bird cleaning centre.

FROM BUTLLETÍ DEL GRUP CATALÀ D'ANELLAMENT, VOL. 9

The only seabird related article in this issue is by D. Sol and J.M. Arcos on the distribution of yellow-legged herring gulls in Catalonia during autumn. A census carried out in 1992 found that the Ebro delta was a very important moulting area for this species. This is away from the main breeding area on the Medes islands. The census perhaps highlights a little known area of knowledge of the location of post-breeding gulls.

FROM LE CORMORAN VOL 9. No. 1

The first part of this issue is the 1991-92 bird report for Normandy. Of most interest to Seabird Group members will be the article by Gérard Debout on the nesting birds of the cliffs of Pays de Caux. This area, on the south side of La Manche has increasing numbers of several seabirds. Totals now include 703 fulmar sites, 466 cormorant pairs, 9352 herring gull pairs, 16 lesser black-backs, 4 great black-backs and 659 kittiwakes. Guillemots, razorbills

and puffins nested on the cliffs in the last century, but no longer do so. It may be that the first two species are poised for a return to the cliffs following sightings during the 1992 breeding season.

FROM WORLD BIRDWATCH, VOL. 16, NO. 10

Europe's most threatened seabird, the Madeira freira *Pterodroma madeira* had its most successful breeding season for many years in 1993. The estimated breeding population of 20-30 pairs produced eight chicks. Success can be directly attributed to improved wardening and control of cats and rats in the main breeding area. Next door on Bugio, Fea's petrel *Pterodroma feae*, has a population of only 150-200 pairs. Hardening of the ground on this island due to the impact of introduced rabbits and goats makes it difficult for the petrels to dig their burrows. BirdLife International funded Brian Bell of New Zealand to visit the island and assess the feasibility of removal of these animals.

BirdLife International has also just published *Important Bird Areas in the Middle East*. This book identifies the crucial sites for bird conservation in the area. Hopefully, publication will stimulate governments in providing or adding to protection at these sites. Seabird islands off Arabia, and the southern Iraq marshes are particularly deserving of protection.

COASTAL WATERBIRDS OF GABON

A recently published report details the results of a two month census of the coastal wetlands of Gabon. A total of 14,000 - 17,500 gulls, terns and African skimmers were counted. Twelve species were involved, with terns being the commonest. Between 10% and 15% of the African population of royal tern winters on this coast. Young terns of several European populations use the area, on the basis of ringing evidence. Nearly

1,000 African skimmers were counted. Cost was not detailed on the information received, but further details may be available from the publishers: WIWO, c/o Dribergseweg 16c, 3708 JB Zeist, The Netherlands.

IDENTIFICATION GUIDE TO WHALES AND DOLPHINS OF THE BRITISH ISLES

The Sea Watch Foundation has produced an identification chart for the whales and dolphins of the north-east Atlantic. It features photographs of most species likely to be seen, taken both at sea and on the beach. Charts are encapsulated in plastic, and are thus ideal for those going to sea. They cost £4.00 each, plus postage and packing at £1 for UK, £1.50 for the rest of Europe and £2.00 for the rest of the world. Write to Sea Watch Foundation, 7 Andrews Lane, Southwater, West Sussex, RH13 7DY.

STORM PETRELS *Hydrobates pelagicus* WITH PLASTIC RINGS

Due to the high corrosion suffered at sea by the aluminium rings of the Spanish ringing scheme and to make it possible to identify future recaptures of the birds, Storm Petrels *Hydrobates pelagicus* captured in summer 1993 on NW Iberia were ringed with a white or black (plain colours) plastic ring on right tarsus and the aluminium one on left tibia.

During spring and summer 1994, the birds are being ringed with a white plastic ring, engraved with black numbers, on left tarsus and an aluminium one on right tibia.

Any information on these birds will be welcome, as also information on the condition of the rings.

Rafael Costas
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SPAIN

PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP MEETING, 1995

The 22nd annual meeting of PSG will be held in San Diego, California on 10-13 January 1995. The meeting will include general papers and a symposium on Island Restoration and Seabird Enhancement. Papers are requested on population assessment, predator control, vegetation management, legal perspectives, resource protection/oil spill prevention planning, oiled bird cleanup/cost effectiveness, habitat rehabilitation, recolonisation/attraction studies, genetic studies and captive breeding. The meeting will be held at the Catamaran Resort Hotel on Mission Bay north of San Diego. The beach is only one block away! For information about the program contact Mark Rauzon, tel: +1 510 531 3887, and for local arrangements/registration contact William Everett tel: +1 619 589 0480. On the basis of experience of previous PSG meetings, this should be an excellent conference.

COLONIAL WATERBIRD SOCIETY MEETING, 1994

This will be held from 3-6 November at the Shell Beach Resort Hotel, Wrightsville Beach in southeastern North Carolina. For information on the programme contact James Kushlan, Department of Biology, University of Mississippi, MS 38677, USA. Tel: + 601 232 7203; Fax: + 601 232 5144. Bookings for the hotel accommodation should be made directly with the hotel (preferably by 12 October): Shell Island Resort Hotel, 2700 N. Lumina Avenue, Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480 USA. Tel: +910 256 5050; Fax: +910 256 8337. Registration for the meeting is through Office of Special Programs, UNC Wilmington, Wilmington, NC28403-3297, USA and base fees are \$65 before 15 October, \$70 after this date. Call +910 395 3195 for further information.

SYMPOSIUM ON THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE ATLANTIC ISLANDS

The second symposium on this subject will be held in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Canary Islands on 12-16 February 1996. This follows the first symposium held on Tenerife in 1993. Posters and papers on biological aspects of the Atlantic Islands are wanted, both in English and Spanish. For pre-registration and further details, please write to: Secretaria II Symposium Fauna y Flora, Departament de Biología, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 35017 Las Palmas, España, Fax: +34 28 451430.

CONFERENCE ON ALBATROSSES

The first international conference on the biology and conservation of albatrosses will be held in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia in August 1995. For further details contact: G Robertson, Antarctic Division, Channel Highway, Kingston, Tasmania, Australia 7050.