

## The 4<sup>th</sup> World Seabird Twitter Conference: Connecting with Peers and the Public

Report by Laura Bliss, WSTC4 Chair (@LauraBlissEco)



Another year and another successful Twitter conference! In fact, conferences using this social media platform have been organized by the World Seabird Union every year since WSTC1 in 2015 and are run entirely by early career volunteers. This year, our fully-digital conference featured 100 presenters from 22 countries presenting in three different languages. Each presenter had 15 minutes to present four scheduled tweets (280 characters each) and answer any questions. Often questions and discussions continued outside of the presenter's session. The minimalistic tweet limit forced presenters to be succinct and use photographs, infographics, or animations to explain their research. This multimedia focus makes the presentations from this conference much more accessible to the general public and challenges researchers to think outside traditional communication methods.

We've found that Twitter Conferences are ideal for engaging with the global seabird community, maintaining networks, keeping up with new scientific developments and field methods, and identifying new opportunities for collaboration — all from a mobile phone or laptop. An additional benefit is that the science communicated reaches far beyond the research community. In 2018, 1.2 million Twitter users saw World Seabird Twitter Conference (#WSTC4) tweets! During the three days of the conference, the hashtag was tweeted 2,667 times by 601 contributors, on average about 52 times per hour. The geographic extent of #WSTC4 was global (Fig. 1), which provided great exposure for participants, as well as our sponsors, the Pacific Seabird Group, Avian Biology Research Journal, the Australasian Seabird Group, the Seabird Group, and the American Ornithological Society.

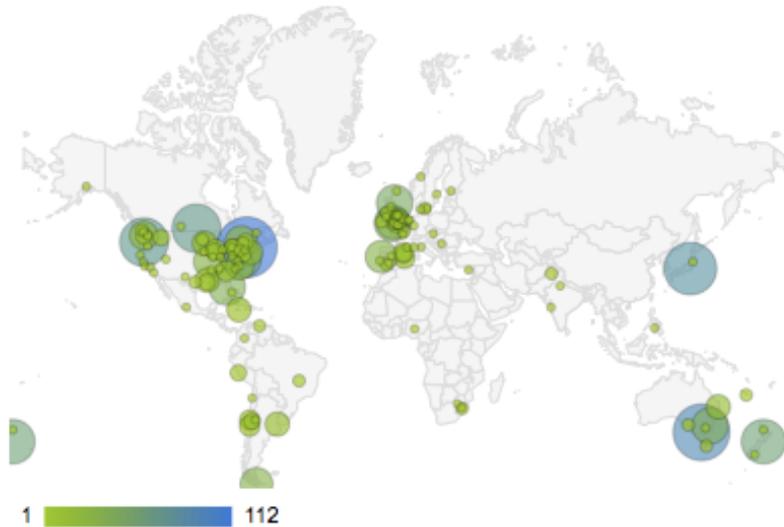


Fig. 1. The geographic extent of the #WSTC4 hashtag during the WSTC4 conference 17-19 April 2018.

If you feel like you've missed out — don't worry! The 5th World Seabird Twitter Conference (#WSTC5), chaired by Agnes Olin (@agnesbirgitta) is being held in April 2019. And, WSTC4 presentations are available for viewing by using the hashtag search on Twitter (Fig. 2). If you'd like to learn more, participate, or volunteer, visit <http://www.seabirds.net/wstc4.html> for more details. Or, get in touch with us!

**4<sup>th</sup> WORLD SEABIRD TWITTER CONFERENCE**  
 17-19th April 2018

**ATTENTION!**  
*Followers and presenters!*

**In addition to #WSTC4, this year each session has their own # to make it easier to follow presentations & read-up on the conference later on! List of all sessions & # below!**

Behaviour #Behav	Foraging ecology 1 #ForgEco1
Breeding biology #BreBio	Foraging ecology 2 #ForgEco3
Climate change #ClimCha	Genetics #Gentcs
Conservation Biology 1 #ConsBio1	Management, policy & planning 1 #ManPolPlan1
Conservation Biology 2 #ConsBio2	Management, policy & planning 2 #ManPolPlan2
Conservation Biology 3 #ConsBio3	Population biology #PopBio
Contaminants & marine debris #ContMarDeb	Tools & techniques #ToolsTech
Fisheries #Fishers	Tracking & distribution #TrackDist

Fig 2. Session hashtags from WSTC4.

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