

First World Seabird Conference, 7-11 October 2010, Victoria, BC, Canada

World Seabird Colony Register and World Seabird Monitoring Database

Post-Conference Implementation Plan for Colony-Oriented Seabird Databases

Synopsis

Workshops were held on the status of existing databases and prospects for creating or enhancing global access to colony-centric seabird data of two types:

- Breeding seabird distribution and abundance (colony registers)
- Fluctuations in seabird population parameters (monitoring databases)

Summaries of discussion points, conclusions, and recommendations were prepared by workshop convenors, presented in a plenary session during the conference, and subsequently posted for review on Seabirds.net (Attachments 1 and 2).

Products envisioned in both workshops are functionally related because some geographical sites are represented in both, and the potential exists for duplication of time series data given historical approaches to managing seabird colony inventories. Therefore, it is proposed to create one oversight committee (World Seabird Colonies Working Group) to manage the development of colony-oriented seabird databases per recommendations of the legacy workshops. The group would work to ensure: (a) coordination during data discovery and enrollment, and (b) sound mechanics and effective linkages between databases from design through implementation stages. To those ends, the group would self-organize to encompass two subcommittees—a Regional Coordinating Committee and a Technical Committee.

A Regional Coordinating Committee for seabird monitoring was established prior to the World Seabird Conference. It is proposed to recruit additional members to that entity as needed to constitute a functioning working group for world seabird colony data (see attached).

Timeline

It is proposed that the operational year for this working group commence annually on 1 January, and that the group report activities and accomplishments to its parent organization (world seabird governing body) on a quarterly basis (31 March, 30 June, 30 September, 31 December).

Action Items

- Recruit members for the World Seabird Colonies Working Group, including motivated individuals well-positioned to serve in one or both of its divisions

- Define the missions, goals, and strategies of the working groups and its coordinating and technical divisions
- Begin implementation of strategies recommended by World Seabird Conference participants, including (year 1):
 - Summarize and report current information on locations, quantities, and availability of world seabird colony data
 - Plan and initiate a comprehensive inventory of world seabird colony data, noting types and quantities of data, current formats (relational schemas or other), distribution and availability (served on the Internet, published, public or private custody, etc.)
 - Deploy an adapted version of the Pacific Seabird Monitoring Database (becomes World Seabird Monitoring Database – default rendition) as a pilot project on Seabirds.net
 - Create links to all pertinent resources (colony registers and monitoring databases) on Seabirds.net

Communications

Members of the working group will need to communicate on a regular basis. Because face-to-face meetings are impractical at the required frequency, the group will rely primarily on other means of conducting business, including:

- Email,
- Online forums (e.g., Google groups or comparable functionality at Seabirds.net),
- Online meetings (videoconferencing), or
- Conference calls by telephone

Point of Contacts

Scott Hatch
 USGS Alaska Science Center
 4210 University Drive
 Anchorage, AK 99508
 +1 907 786-7163
shatch@usgs.gov

David Irons
 US Fish and Wildlife Service
 1011 East Tudor Road
 Anchorage, Alaska 99503
 +1 907 786-3376
david_irons@fws.gov

Attachment 1

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Workshop Recommendations: World Seabird Colony Register (WSCR)

(1) Lessons learned from existing databases

- Many have received sustained, long-term effort to develop
- All have encountered problems in deciding on conventions for site names, taxonomy, threats, etc.
- In establishing new databases, it is useful to build on the experience of others
- Requirements do not always fit within existing databases
- Existing databases fulfill their local needs and demands very well
- Managers of existing databases do not currently have time or capacity to re-enter data into a new database, therefore an interoperable system, linking existing databases together was the preferred approach

(2) Potential contributors to a World Seabird Colony Register

The following repositories of existing seabird colony registry data were identified. It was resolved they should be link-referenced on seabirds.net for general review.

- North Pacific Seabird Colony Database
<http://alaska.fws.gov/mbsp/mbm/northpacificseabirds/colonies/default.htm>
- Arctic Seabird Monitoring Project
<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/nabm/index.jsp?lang=EN&proj=10>
- Seabird Colony Database for the Barents Sea region
<http://npweb.npolar.no/prosjekter/seabirdcolonydatabase>
- Beringian Seabird Colony Catalog
http://gcmd.nasa.gov/records/GCMD_seamap270.html
- UK and Republic of Ireland Seabird Monitoring Programme Database
<http://www.jncc.gov.uk/smp>
- Pacific Seabird Monitoring Database
<http://seabirds.usgs.gov/>

- BirdLife Marine Important Bird Areas Database
<http://www.birdlife.org/community/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/marineIBAs.pdf>
- Circumpolar Seabird Colony Database
<http://caff.is//caff-expert-groups/caff-seabird-expert-group-cbird/nuuk> (broken link)
- ACAP Colony Database
- NOAA/USFWS Seabird Colony Database
- SCAR – Antarctic Colony Database
- National Databases – Greenland, Iceland, New Zealand
- Others?

Attachment 2

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Workshop Recommendations: World Seabird Monitoring Database (WSMD)

(1) Is a World Seabird Monitoring Database Desirable?

The workshop concluded affirmatively, for purposes of:

- Linking and sharing data in existing databases (interoperability)
- Providing a repository for unaffiliated seabird monitoring data

(2) Goals

The WSMD will:

- Collate and disseminate information on temporal and geographic variation in numbers, productivity, survival, and others
- Prevent the loss of seabird monitoring data by:
 - Linking and complementing existing databases
 - Collating previously unaffiliated seabird monitoring data
- Be widely used by seabird professionals throughout the world
- Be designed and implemented so that broad participation is encouraged and intellectual property rights are protected

(3) WSMD Management

World seabird governing body should charter relevant working groups as follows:

- Regional Coordinating Committee
 - Regional coordinators
 - National database managers
- Technical Committee
 - Database specialists
 - National database managers
 - Seabird data contributors

(4) Costs and funding

Identified costs:

- Salaries of 2-3 database specialists
- Cost recovery of time spent by database managers (setup only)
- Travel costs for committees
- Data entry to central database

Suggested funding sources:

- Regional seabird organizations via increases in member subscriptions
- Data user fees

(5) Next steps

- Use PSMD model (deploy on seabirds.net)
- Discuss detail of next steps with database managers
- Identify all national or international databases on seabird monitoring
- Seek agreement to share these data
- Establish core fields
- Discussion with data users: level of detail captured by WSMD
- Explore funding options

World Seabird Colonies Working Group

Regional Coordinating Committee (To Be Expanded)

