

**REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS STANDING COMMITTEE FOR
THE CO-ORDINATION OF SEABIRD RESEARCH**

REPORT TO THE IOC PERMANENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE XXTH CONGRESSUS INTERNATIONALIS ORNITHOLOGICUS: 1986-1990.

The Standing Committee for the Co-ordination of Seabird Research (SCCSR) of the International Ornithological Committee (IOC) is an international group of marine bird biologists appointed by the President of the IOC. The SCCSR was established in 1966 with the principal aim of providing a mechanism for enhanced information exchange and integration of research on seabirds worldwide. That liaison function has traditionally been achieved through organized discussions and subject reviews at each congress, culminating with the presentation of a special interest symposium addressing a specific research topic or concern as part of the formal IOC scientific programme.

One major outcome of the open meeting at the 19th Congress in Ottawa in June 1986 and discussions that followed, was the clear desire by all participants (committee members and others) to see more emphasis placed on action-orientated activities to be pursued between congresses. With that as a goal, the development of working groups was initiated to undertake specific review exercises (based on consensus of research needs) including the formulation of special interest symposia and workshops. Final decisions resulted in the establishment of four working groups - "Seabirds-at-sea", "Bibliographies", "Nomenclature", and "Technological innovations" - and a task force to solicit recommendations on possible symposium titles for the SCCSR's official contribution to the 20th Congress. The following is a brief summary of major activities of the working groups and task force, and the overall accomplishments of the

standing committee during the review period, 1986-90.

IOC-SCCSR SPECIAL SYMPOSIUM

After considerable input and discussions by committee members and nonmembers between 1986-88, a consensus was reached to undertake a review of the usefulness of seabirds as bio-indicators of changing environments. The topic was considered to be of global interest with more than 70% of respondents to the call for possible symposium titles suggesting the subject area. A decision was taken to adopt a symposium proposal submitted by Dr R.W. Furness entitled "Seabirds as monitors of changing marine environments" with Dr Furness and Dr D.N. Nettleship as conveners. The emphasis is on seabird and fishery interactions with the intent of assessing the potential use of marine birds (direct and indirect) as indicators of fish stock status in a variety of marine ecosystems.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS WORKSHOP

Efforts by members of the Technological innovations and the Seabirds-at-sea working groups resulted in the formulation of a workshop to review recent technological advancements in examining activity budgets of seabirds. Dr G.W. Gabrielsen, of the Norwegian Polar Research Institute/Norwegian Institute of Nature Research, accepted the committee's invitation to serve as chairman of the workshop. Between 1988-90, Dr Gabrielsen and his co-chairman, Dr K.L. Kooyman, assembled an impressive group of scientists from eight countries that will meet at the 20th Congress to identify and display new measuring devices, and discuss parameters of measurement, the need for standardization of methodologies, and the interpretation of physiological function.

OTHER SPECIAL INTEREST CONGRESS-RELATED INITIATIVES

There have been a number of actions taken by the SCCSR to enhance information exchange and the standardization and integration of approaches taken in various seabird research areas. Calls for further review on aspects of survey/census techniques and the structure and function of single-species and multi-species monitoring systems are high, and advancements in co-operative approaches to problem solving have been made. For example, there is now good liaison between investigators monitoring birds on land and at sea in the eastern and western Atlantic and eastern Pacific, including northern regions of Norway (Svalbard), Denmark (Greenland), Canada and U.S.A. (Alaska). Two special interest groups have formed since 1986 and will meet at the 20th Congress to discuss further and review co-operative monitoring programmes ("Cooperative seabird studies in the North Atlantic") and the need for computerized seabird colony databases ("Computerized colony registries - their design and use in seabird research, management and conservation"). The agenda for the SCCSR open meeting is robust, comprising numerous topics for discussion put forth by the seabird research community at large. Those discussions should culminate in the development of resolutions and action plans that will facilitate a more effective seabird research effort worldwide.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Two major bibliographic undertakings were discussed in 1986: (1) petrel bibliography - review of progress on a comprehensive collection of citations on the biology of the Procellariiformes (compiler: Dr J. Warham), and (2) initiation of the compilation of materials on the pelagic distribution and ecology of seabirds (principal compiler: Dr R.G.B. Brown). The petrel bibliography now contains about 6 000 citations, with an expected total of about 8 000 entries. Dr Warham will be making a formal report at the SCCSR open meeting in December 1990, and may also give a

demonstration of how this computerized bibliography is searched. The pelagic distribution and ecology bibliography has been advanced on an incomplete rough-working stage, comprising about 2 000 entries concentrated on work in the northern hemisphere. Its present status is "inactive", but work is expected to resume early in 1991.

NOMENCLATURE

Discussions on current issues related to seabird nomenclature and systematics by members of the SCCSR Nomenclature Working Group usually take place either at specialist round-table discussions or in association with the IOC's Standing Committee on Ornithological Nomenclature. No progress report has been received from the SCCSR working group chairman, Dr P. Devillers, although an oral report is expected to be presented at the 20th Congress SCCSR open meeting followed by a written submission.

Discussions of proposals for action have been ongoing throughout the review period involving committee members and a broad cross-section of other seabird scientists from many nations. Questions of work priorities predominated, focusing on the need to bring certain information from seabird organizations, regional groups, and individual researchers together to permit unified action on specific problems and issues. Initiatives proposed by the standing committee since 1986, several of which have already been actioned or are under careful consideration, include:

Seabird conservation

There is a need for a careful collaboration between the IOC and the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) for the development of a global strategy plan for the conservation of seabirds (Status: under discussion).

Long-term population studies

Committee members consider long-term studies of

seabird populations to be essential to a better understanding of population and community dynamics and ecological requirements of seabirds. Equally important is the provision of mechanisms to facilitate publication of these extensive life-historical researches. (Status: under discussion).

Journal publications

There is a strong consensus among committee members of the need for an international journal of marine ornithology. The long-term objective is for the establishment of one first-class global journal rather than an overabundance of secondary regional seabird journals and bulletins. The committee feels that a major effort is required to discuss the roles of the various seabird groups and their co-ordination. The magnitude of the task to achieve that goal is formidable. (Status: under discussion).

Population surveys and monitoring

The committee recommends the development of a global view of population surveys and monitoring with international co-operation. The approach under consideration is for the establishment of a matrix of regions worldwide, each region with a subcommittee responsible for the development of a list of work priorities and specific recommendations for the placement and initiation of regional survey/monitoring systems. The SCCSR role would be one of co-ordination and the preparation of a preliminary proposal. (Status: under discussion).

Seabird colony registries

The development of regional, national, and international computerized databases is considered important to seabird research and management. Access to seabird colony data is a problem that will benefit from being tackled globally, with standardization of methods and procedures derived from groups already operating colony databases. The first international meeting on seabird colony

databases was organized and chaired by the SCCSR chairman as a special paper session at the joint meeting of the Colonial Waterbird Society and the Pacific Seabird Group, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., 12-16 October 1988. Participants, representing six colony databases from five countries [U.K. (2), Canada (1), Norway (1), U.S.A. (2)], made detailed presentations in the programme entitled "Computerized colony registries: their design and use in waterbird research, management and conservation" as a first step in the co-ordination of systems development. A second meeting is being held at the 20th Congress (see above). (Status: continuing).

Commercial fisheries

Review existing knowledge of the impact of competition for food with fisheries (which is at best fragmented and imperfect) in an attempt to identify information gaps and approaches that might be taken to correct them. The overall objective is to develop an agenda for co-operative international research efforts. (Status: under discussion).

Seabirds as bio-indicators

Several investigators and research groups are addressing questions relating to the use of bird populations as indicators of environmental changes. Several committee members are key co-ordinators of research activity within this subject area: measurement of certain parameters in population status and reproductive performance. The SCCSR serves an important communication and liaison function. (Status: continuing).

Population differentiation and quantitative characters

The committee feels that there is a strong need to identify the extent to which natural populations of seabirds mix with one another and to determine the structure of populations in genetic terms. A recommendation is before the committee to set up a working group of interested parties to discuss and

develop ideas of how best to tackle these questions. (Status: under discussion).

Climate change and seabirds

Requires the formulation of a workshop to assess the implications of climate change on populations of seabirds. (Status: in progress).

Bibliographies

Develop an agenda for the preparation of additional reviews on certain species, families, and specific subjects. (Status: in progress).

The central task of the SCCSR continues to be maintaining long-term communication and co-operation between members and their working groups, and seabird researchers at large. The exchange of information function of the committee has been largely successful, as has its role in the identification of subjects for special interest symposia and workshops on seabirds. However, it is felt that the committee's influence and effectiveness can only be enlarged by an increase in the number of active participating members, additions that will provide a broader representation of seabird researchers throughout the world. These and other issues will be reviewed and discussed at our New Zealand meetings as we plan our activities for the next four years.

Members of the Standing Committee for the Co-ordination of Seabird Research for the period 1986-1990 (20th Congress) are as follows:

P.H. Becker	(Germany)
Brian D. Bell	(New Zealand)
W.R.P. Bourne	(United Kingdom)

R.G.B. Brown	(Canada)
P.A. Buckley	(USA)
J. Cooper	(South Africa)
J.C. Coulson	(United Kingdom)
J.P. Croxall	(United Kingdom)
P. Devillers	(Belgium)
A.W. Diamond	(Canada)
D.C. Duffy	(USA)
P.G.H. Evans	(United Kingdom)
R.W. Furness	(United Kingdom)
A.N. Golovkin	(USSR)
G.L. Hunt	(USA)
W. Hsu	(China)
J.R. Jehl	(USA)
C. Jouanin	(France)
N. Kuroda	(Japan)
J.L. Mougín	(France)
D.N. Nettleship	(France)
C.J.R. Robertson	(New Zealand)
R.P. Schlatter	(Chile)
W.R. Siegfried	(South Africa)
K. Vermeer	(Canada)
J. Warham	(New Zealand)
G. Watson	(USA)
V. Zubakin	(USSR)

The members of the IOC-SCCSR for the period 1986-1990 were appointed by President Charles G. Sibley in 1986 with three additions made later by the Committee Chairman to offset the loss of members (deaths and resignations).

Respectfully submitted for the Standing Committee for the Co-ordination of Seabird Research.

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