

**World Seabird Union Transition Team Conference Call  
1700 (GMT) Thursday (In UK), Jan. 13, 2011**

**Conference Call Participation and Representation**

- David Irons (DI) – Chair, Circumpolar Seabird Group; Chair WSUTT; US Fish & Wildlife Service
- John Croxall (JC) – Chair, BirdLife International, Global Seabird Programme; Vice-Chair, WSUTT
- Pat Jodice (PJ) – Chair, Pacific Seabird Group
- Jessica Hardesty Norris (JHN) – Seabird Program Director, American Bird Conservancy
- Ben Lascelles (BL) – BirdLife International, Global Seabird Programme
- Ross Wanless (RW) – African Seabird Group
- Melanie Steinkamp (MS) – Co-Chair, NW Atlantic Marine Bird Cooperative; US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Norman Ratcliffe (NR) - Chair, The Seabird Group
- George Wallace (GW) – Vice President for Oceans & Islands, American Bird Conservancy
- Jennifer Wheeler (JW) – Waterbird Conservation of the Americas; Treasurer, Soc. for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds; US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Xavier Monbaillu (XM) – Secretary, Medmaravis
- Marischal De Armond (MD) - De Armond Management Ltd (Secretariat)

**Apologies**

Kees Camphuysen - Dutch Seabird Group, Europeans Seabirds at Sea Group  
Matthieu Le Corre - Indian Ocean Seabird Group  
Peter Dann - Australasian Seabird Group  
Pablo Yorio - Argentine Seabird Group

**Abbreviations**

- WSC1 – 1<sup>st</sup> World Seabird Conference
- WSU – World Seabird Union
- WSUTT – World Seabird Union Transition Team

**Preamble**

Based on the responses to the questionnaire sent out, the following decisions and recommendations were noted:

- Agree that the name should be World Seabird Union.
- Agree that when fully established at least one Student representative be invited to participate.
- Agree that, for the time being, there will be no subscription for membership. However, reflecting the diversity of views already expressed, agree to explore options for a flexible system, involving different levels of membership (including free), together with the rights and responsibilities associated with these.
- Take initial steps towards the formal establishment of a World Seabird Union, with a Constitution/Charter based on the principles and procedures set out in the draft Charter that accompanied the original circular.
- Establish a mechanism for the Transition Team to commence work

**Agenda**

**Welcome and Opening Comments**

DI commenced the meeting at 1702 GMT, welcomed the group, thanked them for their interest and involvement and asked everyone to provide a self-introduction.

DI described his role as Chair, and that of JC's Vice-Chair role in transitioning from an organizing committee of the WSC1 to a more formal body, the World Seabird Union.

DI then provided some background on how and why we are here today and described some of the findings/observations/feedback to date, largely flowing from the WSC. Several of these points are reflected in the preamble in the agenda.

JC noted that much of the work, structure and background that forms the basis for the WSU and this transition team was developed, reviewed and ratified by representatives of prospective WSU organizations at WSC1 and/or afterwards, and that the agreed initiatives address 3 main topics:

- Communications initiative
- Database frameworks
- Mechanism for facilitating future WSC

The intention of the work of the WSUTT is to be as transparent as possible to the broader community/constituency, including the posting of agenda, minutes and documents to the seabirds.net website.

## **1. Establishment of World Seabird Union**

### **1.1 Constitutional aspects**

- DI invited comment on the proposed charter as circulated (Doc. TT 1/1).

NR noted need to include research as well as conservation in the mission statement

**ACTION:** JC asked that representatives forward other suggestions for charter changes to JC and DI, who would provide an updated version for the next conference call

### **1.2 Legal aspects**

- JC noted that a legal structure for a non-profit organization would be needed to support initiatives to secure funding, granting etc and invited ideas for the most convenient way of doing this. He also suggested that a US based legal entity would be beneficial (if not essential) for pursuing funding and granting opportunities in the US. It was noted that being registered initially in the US would not preclude the organization from registering to handle operational activities in other national jurisdictions.
- GW volunteered to investigate options to consider
- XM suggested that being registered in more than one country, as is Medmaravis, is helpful
- JW asked whether it would be feasible to have a relationship with another independent organization to serve as the WSU's financial agent. GW to consider in his review of legal structure options.

**ACTION:** GW to provide a report on potential legal operational structures for consideration during the next conference call

### **1.3 Financial aspects**

DI reported that WSC1 raised funds primarily through conference registrations and fundraising initiative and although accounting is not quite complete, a surplus is likely to be realized on the Conference. It was the intention of the WSC1 Organizing Committee that surplus funds would be provided to a WSU if one was successful in being developed as an outcome of WSC1.

### **1.4 Representational aspects**

- DI referred to the proposed charter document (TT 1/1) and noted the general recommendation from participating organizations is that WSU be established without a membership fee.
- JC foreshadowed a likely need to review the structure and representation as the WSU becomes formally established, particularly to consider potential categories of membership to best represent the variety of related seabird research and conservation organizations that would participate; any membership fee structures should also be considered at that time.
- NR reminded the group that the amount of money that might be raised from membership would be small in relation to the management of this process and that money raising efforts should be directed to pursuing major grants.

## **2. World Seabird Conference**

### **2.1 Evaluation of responses from WSC1**

- DI & JC commented briefly on the WSC1 survey (Doc. TT1/2), noting the excellent level of response (more than 500 replies) and the overwhelming satisfaction expressed; MD was especially thanked for his

contribution to this. It was noted that the responses and comments provide a useful guide for future organisers of WSC.

## **2.2 Evaluation of responses to questionnaire about WSC2**

- DI noted that, based on the results of this survey (Doc. TT 1/3, with attachment), it is clear that there is strong desire to hold another WSC in 3-5 years, preferably in September/October.

## **2.3 Establishment of “search committee” for WSC2**

- It was agreed that the way forward towards a WSC2 is to establish a search committee to encourage, invite, review and comment on prospective bids from interested organizations willing to serve as future conference hosts. Interested individuals were invited to serve on this committee.
- PJ, JHN, NR & MD offered to serve. DI recommended Pat O’Hara, as the Chair, WSC1 Local Committee also be invited to participate; this was agreed.

The TT requested MD to circulate, to all who had requested it, the responses to questions 1-9 of the questionnaire plus the text in TT1/3 announcing the process for expressions of interest in hosting WSC2. Responses for WSC2 should be returned to DI by 30 September 2011. The new Committee would review these responses and advise TT on which should be invited to submit formal bids to host WSC2. It was agreed that all WSU member organisations should also receive this initial circular on WSC2

**ACTION:** DI to ask Pat O’Hara to participate on this committee

**ACTION:** MD to circulate questionnaire responses and Expression of Interest documents to host the WSCII

## **2.4 Collation/editing of WSC1 Handbook on how to put on a WSC**

- DI noted the value of collating and passing along the knowledge gained from planning WSC1 to future conference hosts. Some input from WSC1 Planning Committee has been received to date, including a suggested draft format for a conference planning handbook. This combined with an existing conference planning handbook that PSG uses can form the basis for a WSC Conference Planning Handbook.

**ACTION:** DI to review JW’s suggested draft for a handbook and develop a plan for how to move forward on this initiative.

## **3. WSC Legacy developments**

### **3.1 Seabirds.net**

- DI noted that a small team lead by Grant Humphries is ready to move forward with developing this initiative further and along the lines outlined in the attached report (Doc. TT 1/4). He is asking for direction on how to proceed.
- DI also noted that Axiom Consulting built and is currently managing the seabirds.net website and is recommending that this committee now take over and manage the content and development of the site. All agreed with this recommendation.
- JC recommended members of the seabirds.net website team participate in the next WSU conference call in the future as seabirds.net is the most visible initiative of the WSU. All agreed. RW noted he may know somebody interested in serving on this committee

**ACTION:** DI to advise Grant to move forward with his plan to manage the site and to participate in future WSU calls.

### **3.2 Seabird colony databases (Monitoring and Register)**

- In relation to the initial report from the group (Doc. TT 1/5), JC noted that additional information (on where they are at and what is needed) would help WSU facilitate progress.

- DI suggested it is likely easier and cheaper to develop a World Seabird Colony Register than a Monitoring database.
- BL thought that the committee itself felt that the Register would be the primary initiative and the monitoring database would then follow

**ACTION:** JC, DI, BL to discuss further (and with Scott Hatch) in order to prepare summary of current status and priority next steps for this initiative.

### **3.3 Seabird tracking databases**

- BL reviewed the plan as outlined in the supporting document (Doc TT 1/6) and indicated that the timetable for this initiative was on track and that the ability simultaneously to search across all 4 databases should be available soon.

### **3.4 Seabird-at-sea databases**

- No update to share

**ACTION:** RW participating in this initiative and offered to provide an update on this for the next call

### **3.5 Indicators of performance, productivity and population status**

DI described circumpolar seabird area model and its web-based application and noted the desire to move this to a global program. A number of questions were posed on how this could be achieved

### **3.6 Mortality events**

- DI reported that there was very strong interest in this topic at WSC1 and a small group is moving this project forward; he would re-solicit a report for the next conference call.

**ACTION:** DI to ask for a report from the mortality events committee.

### **3.7 Other topics (e.g. habitat restoration, marine spatial planning)**

- No other topics were raised for discussion

## **4. Other matters**

- Agreement that the Meeting Agenda, Minutes and supporting Documents would be posted on Seabirds.net and that everyone on the WSC1 Master database be contacted to advise them of this was re-affirmed.
- MD commented that the seabirds.net site should include a “sign-up” function to collect names and contact information from individuals wishing to be in communication with the WSU, thus providing an opportunity to continue to grow the database and distribute information about the WSU.

**ACTION:** DI to ask Axiom to post agreed to Meeting Agenda, Minutes and supporting documents on seabirds.net.

**ACTION:** DI to ask Axiom to look into incorporating a “sign-up” function linked to a communication tool on seabirds.net.

## **5. Next Conference Call**

- JC recommended conference calls be quarterly and that meeting scheduling needs to consider meeting times that allows greatest possible participation from all global regions. This may require each meeting to start at different times to accommodate the different time zones of participants and to share the pain of awkward local times, or to have a main meeting followed by a sub-meeting satisfactory to region times.

- In the event the 1-800 toll free call in number does not provide a complimentary call costs from various countries, long distance call costs can be managed by having participants dial-in using Skype.

**ACTION:** Everyone to protect Thursday April 7 at 1700 GMT for the next conference call.