

Seabird Working Group

19 January 2015, 15.10 – 16.00

Chair: Mr Paul O'Neill (Australia)

Co-ordinator: Mr Yat-tung Yu (Hong Kong Birdwatching Society)

1. Introduction

Paul O'Neill welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief background report of the SWG. Each participant introduced themselves and their affiliation.

2. Adoption of the Draft Agenda

The draft Agenda was adopted with no changes.

3. Actions taken since MOP7

Paul O'Neill (Australia) gave a brief introduction into the working of the SWG since MOP7. Partners were referred to the SWG report in the Agenda documents (Agenda Item 3.3.1.3).

4. Discussion of 2015-16 Seabird Working Group Work Plan

i) Review of the seabird prioritisation process

Members agreed that the SWG should review and update the seabird prioritisation list before every MOP. As new information becomes available, Partners are asked to provide this to the Chair and Co-ordinator for action.

ii) EAAFP input into the 'Seabird Breeding Colony Registry'

Robb Kaler (USFWS, Alaska) gave an overview of the 'Seabird Breeding Colony Registry'. Members agreed that the SWG should contribute to the registry, particularly with information about the highest priority species in the flyway (e.g. Christmas Island Frigatebird). Robb Kaler (USFWS, Alaska) agreed to send the spreadsheet to the Chair and co-ordinator for input. Once the Chair has submitted the information in the correct format, the Chair will send it around to other members.

iii) Co-ordinating effort to detect Aleutian Terns along the EAAF

Robb Kaler (USFWS, Alaska) updated the group on recent developments on the Aleutian Tern population in Alaska. Robb explained that there had been a suspected decline of this species in Alaska. Robb also updated the group on some recent migration research on this species which identified quite distinctive wintering areas. Robb requested support from the SWG for better communication and information exchange on Aleutian Terns in the flyway. A short information brief/article for the EAAFP website was suggested as a good start to raising awareness of this species.

- iv) Preparation and adoption of Action Plans for agreed high priority seabird species.

Members discussed which seabird species might benefit from coordinated conservation through a species action plan. It was decided that as a species group – terns – would benefit from a single plan. Members committed to supporting the development of the tern conservation plan over the coming years. It was suggested that the Alaskan Seabird Information Series could be a useful template to use.

- v) Nominate additional Flyway Network Sites for seabird before MOP9

Paul O'Neill (Australia) advised the SWG that Australia was working on two additional FNS, specifically for seabirds. Nominations have been drafted and will be submitted for internal review and approval in 2015. Paul also encouraged other Partners to submit nominations of FNS that are important to seabirds.

- vi) Summary of the Seabird Working Group's work plan 2015 – 16

- Update the Seabird Working Group's Prioritisation Process before MOP9
- Coordinate entry of seabird breeding data into the 'Seabird Breeding Colony Registry'
- Coordinate information update on the breeding population of Aleutian Tern in Russia.
- Prepare a tern conservation plan.
- Encourage the nomination of FNS that are important for seabirds.
- Support a meeting with seabird experts, conservationists and policy makers.

5) First Report of Avian Cholera

Robb Kaler (USFWS, Alaska) updated the SWG on a widespread case of avian cholera affecting seabirds in Alaska.

6) Other Business

- Election of new Chair
 - o Robb Kaler (USFWS, Alaska) will be the new Chair of the SWG

- Mark Carey (Australia) and Yat-tung Yu (Hong Kong Birdwatching Society) will be coordinators of the SWG.

7) Meeting Close