

SEABIRD CONSERVATION STRATEGY : THE ICBP SEABIRD AND ISLAND
MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS & SYMPOSIA, CAMBRIDGE, AUGUST 1982

The International Council for Bird Preservation (hereafter ICBP) is a federation of national organizations concerned about the conservation, management and wise use of wild birds and their habitats. Founded in 1922, ICBP is the world's oldest international conservation organization. Based on agreements made with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), ICBP provides the bird component for the IUCN/WWF programmes. In the past ICBP has been preoccupied with the saving of single species. There is now a shift in ICBP planning towards the broader conservation of bird communities in threatened or sensitive habitats. Two of ICBP's current principal themes are of interest to members of the African Seabird Group, namely, seabirds and island management.

Seabirds have been chosen as a principal theme by ICBP because it is thought that they provide an excellent indicator for the status of the marine environment. Island management, which involves many seabirds, has been chosen because island birds account for over 30% of all the endangered bird taxa in the ICBP Red Data Book. To help develop and promote management guidelines for these two themes, ICBP convened two specialist workshops at Cambridge University, England, in August 1982. These workshops, in which participation was by invitation only, were held in conjunction with the 18th (quadrennial) World Conference of ICBP. In addition to the workshops, one-day symposia on each theme were held so that delegates to the Conference could gain knowledge of these specialist themes.

SEABIRD WORKSHOP

Some 60 seabird specialists from around the world were invited to this workshop which had the following aims :

- 1) To review available information on the distribution and status of seabirds throughout the world.
- 2) To identify the nature and extent of threats facing species or populations of seabirds.
- 3) To identify gaps in our knowledge regarding objectives (1) and (2).
- 4) To identify and agree upon priorities for :
 - a) surveys (to collect missing information),
 - b) conservation orientated research, and
 - c) conservation projectsby the most workable methods available.
- 5) To publish a review of, and to recommend policy for conservation orientated work on seabirds as a basis for an ICBP action plan.

Some 35 review papers were prepared for the workshop which was attended by some 60 ornithologists. The first one and a half

days were devoted to regional reviews. There followed reviews of six main issues related to seabird conservation, namely : fishing, incidental takes in nets, disturbance and habitat destruction, human exploitation, pollution and poisoning, and predation. Finally, the workshop split into working groups to prepare recommendations concerning these six issues and also to prepare statements concerning the conservation status of particular seabird taxa. Workshop sessions lasted from 09h00 to 17h30 daily. Two evenings were spent discussing the ICBP seabird working group, and in electing members.

The regional coverage was impressively comprehensive with 29 papers/reports covering the whole world except Central America, sections of Antarctica and, the major gap, Asia where no reviews were prepared for the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia or the U.S.S.R. Each speaker was given 10 minutes to present succinctly his regional findings and five minutes were allowed for discussion. In commenting on these regional reports, I will stress those regions of prime interest to members of the African Seabird Group, beginning with the Southern Ocean.

The Southern Ocean was considered in six regional reports. Tony Williams reviewed the known status and conservation needs of the islands in the "African" section of the Southern Ocean : Tristan da Cunha, Gough, Prince Edward, Crozet, Kerguelen, St Paul and Amsterdam, Macdonald and Heard Islands. Pierre Jouventin and associates presented a survey of the seabird status and conservation needs for the French territories : St Paul and Amsterdam, Kerguelen, Crozet and Terre Adelle; and Gavin Johnstone the results of a recent expedition to the Macdonald and Heard Islands. Other reports concerned the Scotia Arc area, the Ross Dependency, and islands on the New Zealand Platform.

Within the African sector of the Southern Ocean, the prime conservation need is elimination of alien mammals notably cats which are currently a menace to seabirds at Amsterdam Island, Marion Island, Ile aux Cochon, and at Kerguelen, and cattle which are damaging the habitat of Amsterdam Island. The only species which can be considered vulnerable, on a world scale, within this region is the Kerguelen Tern *Sterna virgata* which is endemic to the region and has an estimated world population of 8 000 pairs. It is known from only three island groups, the Prince Edward and Crozet Islands, where the combined population is less than 200 pairs, and Kerguelen where the remainder occur. The seabird fowling industry in the Tristan da Cunha group was identified as needing proper scientific assessment to permit continued sustained use of the resource. Other potential problems were the possible development of Kerguelen as a military base including possible testing of nuclear weapons. It was noted that this region has the greatest diversity of seabird species in the world, 44 species, and that despite a total land area of less than 10 000 km² the numbers of seabirds on these 10 island groups exceed the total number of seabirds on the African continent and shelf by many millions of pairs. Hence the critical importance to seabirds of these few tiny islands and the need for urging governments concerned to ensure their preservation as seabird sanctuaries.

Seabirds of the Afrotropical region, Africa south of the Sahara plus the entire Red Sea and Madagascar, were considered by John

Cooper, Tony Williams and Peter Britton. This review listed for the first time all the seabirds breeding within this huge area and gave some indication of their total populations. In all, 37 species breed within this area in numbers probably totalling less than one million pairs (less than the population of Macaroni Penguins *Eudyptes chrysolophus* alone in the African sector of the Southern Ocean). Noteworthy are : the general lack of seabirds in the humid tropics; the very important concentration of endemic seabirds in the Benguela Current zone which provides over half the total number of seabirds in the Afrotropical region; and the poor state of our knowledge of seabirds in the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden area. Two species can be singled out as potentially vulnerable on a world scale : the Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* with a population of 39 000 - 83 000 pairs at only 16 breeding localities, and (although still numerous), because of its very marked decrease throughout this century, the Jackass Penguin *Spheniscus demersus*. The future of Latham Island, Tanzania, a major breeding locality for Masked Boobies *Sula dactylatra* and Sooty Terns *Sterna fuscata*, seems black since it is almost certain to be developed as a base for offshore oil exploration. The prime conservation needs in the Afrotropical region are : further survey of little known areas; education so that less exploitation of seabird colonies occurs; and protection of key localities within fully protected national parks or nature reserves.

South America was covered in three reviews by David Duffy, Roberto Schlatter and Pierre Devillers. It is clear that the status of seabirds is far less well known there than it is in Africa and that problems for seabirds are considerably greater. Notably, there has been a huge decline, of three or more million birds, in the Humboldt Current zone as a result of human overfishing of the Anchoveta. Also endangered are some endemic species including several on the Patagonian coast which occur in only very small numbers.

Although a paper summarizing the status of Australian seabirds was circulated, no verbal presentation was made. This was a particularly disappointing show from the continent which, with its recent Handbook of Australian Seabirds, seemed to have been making much progress with seabird research through the last decade. New Zealand more than compensated for the absence of Australians with no less than 12 Kiwis present at the workshop. Seabird research in this country, where a third or more of all birds are seabirds, is in a healthy, aggressive and in some respects world leading state.

The tropical oceans flanking Africa were dealt with in two reviews. Chris Feare covered the Indian Ocean and Tony Williams the tropical South Atlantic Ocean. The problems of the two oceans are surprisingly different. In the Indian Ocean the prime problem is excessive human exploitation of seabird eggs, young and adults; in the Atlantic Ocean the prime problem is predation by alien mammals notably cats which have eliminated many species from the central islands of several island groups. Again it was clear that there is a need for further detailed surveys before we shall know the full status of several species within these regions. The most threatened localities are : Round Island, Mauritius and Rodrigues, both in the Indian Ocean; and, in the South Atlantic, South Trinidad Island, at each of which man and alien mammals have greatly reduced seabird populations, including those of several endemic taxa.

The other tropical ocean areas are of less direct interest to Africans but there were notable succinct and aggressive reviews of the Caribbean and Indonesian situations by two young Dutch researchers.

The reviews of the northern hemisphere regions were of less direct interest to Africans. These regions harbour the world's major industrial areas and are threatened by a different suite of threats mainly resulting from the developed life styles of the inhabitants. The Japanese review was particularly disappointing since it failed to appreciate the structure and purpose of a workshop and since the current fieldworkers did not attend. Notable deliveries were given by two Spanish researchers and it is good to know that there is an increase in interest in seabirds in the Iberian peninsula. Disappointing was the absence of any Scandinavian cover of the situation in the Baltic Sea.

It was clear during the reviews concerned with major threats to seabirds how lucky we in Africa and the Southern Ocean are in being relatively remote from heavy industrialisation and fishing activity. The tally of auks taken in fishing operations in the northern hemisphere is extremely distressing. It was encouraging though to hear that pollution, poisoning and oiling are apparently less damaging to seabirds than we have been led to believe by the media, although their local impact can be extremely severe. Considering direct human exploitation of seabirds for food, which was by far the most widespread threat to seabird populations, the need for greatly increased educational effort was stressed. It was also remarked that there is a great need to encourage local inhabitants to appreciate their seabirds in aesthetic rather than in culinary ways. The composition of the workshop itself, heavily dominated by Anglosaxons, was indicative of the lack of indigenous interest in seabirds and their conservation.

Finally, local members of the African Seabird Group were represented on the following working groups : Penguins - Cooper, Duffy and Williams; Albatrosses - Williams; Divingpetrels - Duffy; Cormorants - Cooper; Terns - Williams and Cooper; Human exploitation of seabirds - Williams; and Fishing - Cooper and Duffy. John Cooper was elected onto the ICBP seabird working group.

SEABIRD SYMPOSIUM

Eight papers were delivered at this one-day symposium. In the morning there were four major topic reviews and in the afternoon species case studies. David Nettleship gave a major review of the role of seabirds in marine ecosystems and their special conservation problems. Pierre Devillers gave an illustrated account of the seabirds of South America. David Nettleship appeared again to review seabird conservation in the Canadian Arctic. Finally for the morning session, Mike Garnett gave an illustrated review of the problems of conserving seabirds at Pacific Christmas Island. The case studies concerned : the Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*, given by Euan Dunn; the Jackass Penguin, by John Cooper with his can of Peruvian Pilchards; the Darkrumped Petrel or Pata Pegada *Pterodroma phaeopygia* by Malcolm Coulter; and finally the Magenta Petrel or Taiko *P. magentae* by

David Crockett. The last was notable as the only contribution to the symposia by an amateur.

As a whole the symposium was much lower key than the workshop. It was perhaps unfortunate that the two events were separated by a period of five days since a number of delegates to the workshop were unable to stay on for the symposium.

THE ISLAND MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP AND SYMPOSIUM

There was considerable overlap in interest between these functions and the seabird workshop and symposium. On the whole this symposium was more stimulating than the seabird one possibly because by now one was getting a little stale on seabirds. Particularly interesting was the series of papers by the New Zealanders on aliens and their eradication. Ian Atkinson gave a very clear review of the spread of rats to islands throughout the world and Colin Veitch and Philip Moors gave accounts of the vast effort and time (in each case more than three years) needed to eradicate cats and rats respectively from even very small islands of only a few hectares. Finally David Wingate presented a superb account of how a single individual can through great perseverance create a conservation success story. This man deserves a medal for the way in which he has painstakingly striven to preserve and increase the last tiny population of the Bermuda Petrel or Cahow *Pterodroma cahow* and for his work in restoring as a nature reserve one of the small islets of Bermuda. In the evening David told us a different story when he illustrated the disaster occurring in Haiti where overpopulation and habitat destruction is likely to eradicate the Blackcapped Petrel or Diablotin *P. hasitata* from what would almost anywhere else in the world be an entirely secure breeding habitat: steep (almost sheer) mountain cloudforest.

By the time we arrived at the one-day Island Management workshop those of us who had earlier attended the seabird workshop were largely exhausted after two full weeks of constant mental effort and few delegates were left. To accommodate the nonseabird people interested in island birds there was considerable duplication of matter discussed in the seabird workshop. Nevertheless the discussions were fruitful.

The setting for this series of meetings, Kings College, Cambridge, was superb, the accommodation comfortable, the food good. The English weather was characteristically perverse, warm and sunny whilst we were incarcerated in the meetings but rainy as soon as the two weeks of meetings were over.

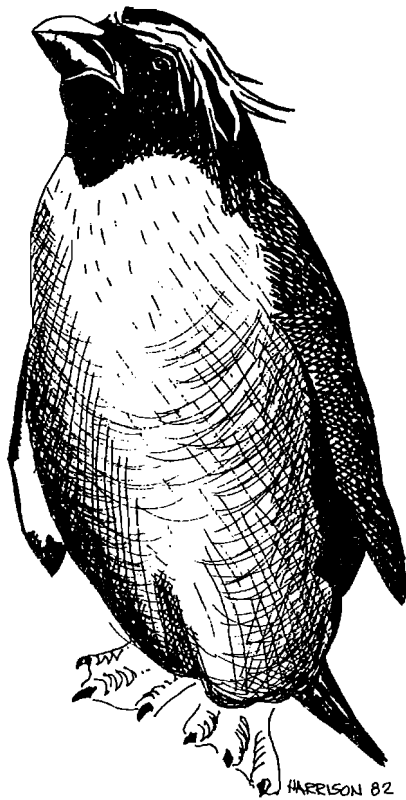
Many thanks are due to Dr Christoph Imboden, Director of ICBP, and his staff for their cheerful and smooth organization of the meetings and especially to Dr Imboden and John Croxall for their determination, against the wishes of the "old guard of desk-jockeys", to get current fieldworkers from as many parts of the world as possible to the workshops. Thanks too to NATO for supplying the essential financial backing.

In all I think all we delegates found this an extremely worthwhile and stimulating series of meetings. Almost certainly there has

never been a single meeting at which such a geographically diverse group of seabirders has been assembled. The meeting of representatives of such diverse areas was alone of immense value particularly to those far from Europe and North America. The published proceedings, giving the review papers in full, is likely to form the definitive account of the state of the world's seabirds for some considerable time to come.

Received 9 February 1983

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Macaroni Penguin.

THE COLONIAL WATERBIRD GROUP

The Colonial Waterbird Group (CWG) is a scientific, nonprofit organization dedicated to the study, conservation and preservation of colonial waterbirds. CWG publishes *Colonial Waterbirds*, a professional ornithological journal devoted to the publication of results of research on colonial species of waterbirds.

During the early 1970s, a need was recognized by biologists, ecologists, and conservationists for a society whose primary aim would be the exchange of information on the biology, behaviour and conservation of colonial waterbirds. In response, the Colonial Waterbird Group was formed in 1976 to establish better communication and co-ordination between a growing number of people studying colonial waterbirds, and to contribute to the protection and management of stressed populations or habitats of such species.

Goals of the Colonial Waterbird Group :

1. To publish the journal *Colonial Waterbirds*.
2. To encourage and co-ordinate standardized surveys of colonial waterbirds.
3. To publish a newsletter to foster communication among members.
4. To assist efforts by conservationists related to protection and management of colonial waterbirds and wetland ecosystems.
5. To act as a clearing house of information for ongoing research and research opportunities.
6. To issue statements of policy, position papers, or statements of information related to matters of public policy, where colonial waterbirds may be involved.

The Colonial Waterbird Group was officially formed in October 1976 during the North American Wading Bird Conference at Charleston, S.C., U.S.A., a meeting jointly sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The first three Annual CWG Conferences were held at DeKalb, Illinois, (1977), New York (1978) and Lafayette, Louisiana (1979). Papers presented at these conferences were published in an Annual Proceedings (Vols 1-3, 1978-1980). At the Ottawa Meeting held in 1980, the CWG elected to publish a fully refereed journal *Colonial Waterbirds*, the first volume of which (designated as Vol. 4) appeared in 1981. After volume 5 the journal was opened to submitted papers.

CWG is composed of professional biologists, students, conservationists, and anyone interested in the biology, ecology, behaviour, and management of colonial waterbirds. The CWG Newsletter, providing regional reports of research activities, committee progress reports, and notes of interest, is compiled by an appointed editor. The Society's professional journal, *Colonial Waterbirds*, is a fully refereed and edited journal administered by an editor and editorial advisory board appointed by the CWG Council.

Colonial Waterbirds publishes original reports dealing with the

biology, methodology of study, and management of colonial waterbirds. Theoretical papers and reviews of current knowledge are also invited. Preliminary reports of ongoing research, if timely and informative, will also be considered. Manuscripts submitted for consideration for publication must not have been published or currently be under consideration for publication elsewhere. Publication in the journal is open to any individual from throughout the world, and must be written in English, although authors whose primary language is not English are encouraged to provide an abstract in that language, in addition to the English abstract. The double-spaced manuscript should not exceed 25 pages in length, including figures and tables.

Submit contributions to the Editor, Herbert W. Kale II, Florida Audubon Society, 1101 Audubon Way, Maitland, Florida 32751, U.S.A.

Membership Categories

Regular \$20-00 (Includes *Colonial Waterbirds* and CWG Newsletter)
Student \$15-00 (Includes *Colonial Waterbirds* and CWG Newsletter)
Library \$25-00 (Does not include Newsletter)

Back Issues

Vols 1 - 3 \$12-00 each
All other volumes \$20-00 each

For membership and/or back issues contact the CWG Treasurer, 563, Fairview, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1M 0X4.

The Colonial Waterbird Group held its sixth annual meeting in Chevy Chase, Maryland, U.S.A., 4 - 7 November 1982. Fourteen papers were presented at the symposium session on the *Feeding ecology of waterbirds* and 25 papers were presented in general sessions. Stephen Kress organized a round table discussion on *Tern status and conservation in the Northeast and Great Lakes*.

The seventh annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for early November 1983, to be held in Puerto Rico. For further information about the Colonial Waterbird Group contact Francine G. Buckley, Secretary, 372 South Street, Carlisle, Mass. 01741, U.S.A.

REQUEST FOR MANUSCRIPTS FOR *SEABIRD*

The (British) Seabird Group proposes to produce a journal called *Seabird* which will contain original papers on seabird research. Although the emphasis will be on the North Atlantic and North Sea regions, papers from other regions of the world will be welcomed, particularly if they are likely to be of general interest to seabird workers. The journal will be published annually and will replace *Seabird Report*. The editors are Dr P.G.H. Evans (c/o Edward Grey Institute, Zoology Department, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PS, U.K.) and Dr T.R. Birkhead (Zoology Department, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN, U.K.) and potential contributors should send two copies of their typed manuscripts to one or other of these by 1 January 1983 for possible inclusion in the 1983 issue. Papers should be written following recommendations laid down for contributors in *Ibis*.