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Local Organising Committee

Patrick O'Hara, Chair

Ever since he can remember Patrick O'Hara has been drawn to the ocean. As soon as he finished high school in Ontario he moved to BC to pursue an honours undergraduate degree at UBC in marine zoology and oceanography. After several years working as an oceanographic technician, his focus shifted to marine birds and migratory systems for his PhD at SFU. For his PhD he spent 4 years in mangrove systems in Panama studying the wintering ecology of the Western Sandpiper. After his PhD Patrick moved into seabird research with a joint post-doctoral position with the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada and the Biology department at the University of Victoria. During this period he helped develop the Birds Oiled at Sea (BOAS) program (Environment Canada and the Department of Biology at the University of Victoria), which provides research support for policy, management and enforcement efforts dealing with pollution associated with human maritime activities and impacts this pollution may have on marine ecosystems. Currently, the BOAS in the pacific region of Canada is composed of two basic components. The first component is the modeling of risk of exposure to oil spills to seabirds, which incorporates spatial and temporal risk of oil spills based on empirical surveillance data (airborne and satellite borne sensors) and modeling, oceanographic data, seabird survey data, and spatio-temporal modeling of oceanographic processes and seabird distributions. The second part focuses on direct measures of impact of oil spills on seabirds, such as the encounter rate of oil contaminated seabird carcasses found in beached bird surveys, and how to interpret this information.

Pat Baird

Pat Baird is an ecologist, having worked on colonies and at-sea, from Argentina to the Arctic Ocean, mainly on seabirds, with a handful of sea-associated shorebirds thrown in. She conducted Post-Doc research with George Hunt and Dee Boersma, and is now collaborating with Ron Ydenberg at Simon Fraser University, having left the U.S. in 2006. Her focus is on foraging ecology, with seabirds as indicator species. She is the long-time Elections Chair for the Pacific Seabird Group, and multi-tasks frequently, raising daughters Hanna and Aravis.

Doug Bertram

Doug's research interests include life history ecology and evolution, and conservation biology. From 1996-2001, he directed the seabird program for the Centre for Wildlife Ecology at Simon Fraser University and focused on the populations on Triangle Island, the largest seabird colony in Western Canada. Coupling recent and historical seabird data from Triangle Island to build a time series spanning three decades facilitated the examination of the consequences of ocean climate variation for reproduction and survival of several colonial marine bird populations. Current research involves population ecology of the Marbled Murrelet and focuses on estimating population trends and determining their causes. Doug is a Marine Conservation Biologist with Environment Canada and he lives in Victoria with his wife Sandi, and their three children. Doug is also an Adjunct Professor with the Centre for Wildlife Ecology at Simon Fraser University (<http://www.sfu.ca/biology/wildberg/bertram/>).

Louise Blight

Louise's general research interests are in the breeding biology and conservation of marine birds, with a focus on island ecosystems and the Antarctic. She is currently a PhD candidate at the

University of British Columbia, where she is using a historical ecology approach to study seabird population changes over the last 120 years. One component of this study involves looking at diet changes by using stable isotope analysis of museum specimens collected from the 1880s to the present. Apart from sitting on the World Seabird Conference's Local Organising Committee, she participates in several national and international collaborative conservation efforts, including the [Vertebrates-at-risk group](#) of the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team, and [Friends of the Ross Sea Ecosystem](#), a group of Antarctic scientists working to protect the world's last intact marine ecosystem.

Shelagh Bucknell

Shelagh Bucknell is an Administrative Services Assistant with the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada, in Delta, BC. Over the last 13 years she has been involved in the planning and organization of many conferences on behalf of Environment Canada, including: the 3rd National Habitat Workshop, the 1998 Annual Meeting of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, the 9th North American Arctic Goose Conference and Workshop, the North American Sea Duck Conference and Workshop 2002, the 30th Annual Meeting of the Pacific Seabird Group and the 11th International Grouse Symposium

Shelagh also assisted with the development and management of the Canadian Wildlife Service waterbird technical committee meeting in 2004, the development of the scientific program for the Waterbird Society conference in Taiwan in 2005, and the management of abstracts and program for the 35th Annual Meeting of the Pacific Seabird Group in 2008.

Peter Davidson

Peter Davidson holds a B.Sc. and M.Sc. in ecology, both from the University of East Anglia (UK)'s Centre for Ecology and Evolution. He has 20 years experience in bird and mammal conservation, spanning Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Australasia and North America. He has conducted at sea surveys for marine mammals and birds in British Columbia, north-west Europe and south-east Asia, in various capacities, including baseline status and distribution surveys, aboard seismic research vessels and as a fisheries observer. He is currently the British Columbia Program Manager for Bird Studies Canada, is involved with organisations connecting children to nature, and recently authored a photographic guide to birds in Indochina.

Rian Dickson

Rian Dickson is a M.Sc. candidate in the Centre for Wildlife Ecology at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby. Her current work focuses on wing moult ecology of Surf Scoters (*Melanitta perspicillata*) and White-winged Scoters (*M. fusca*) on the Pacific coast of North America and is a collaborative effort between Environment Canada and the US Geological Survey. Rian began doing field work on the coast of British Columbia while completing her undergraduate degree at the University of Victoria. Since then she has followed birds from Mexico to Alaska and the Canadian Arctic. Broad areas of interest include the non-breeding biology of birds and exploring links between marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Tony Gaston

Tony Gaston (Ocean of Wings organiser) is a poet, philosopher and ecologist based in Ottawa. He earns his keep as a Research Scientist with Environment Canada. In his spare time he watches sunsets in places where there are no streetlights.

Peter Hodum

Peter Hodum (Co-coordinator for Exhibitors) is a conservation biologist with Oikonos - Ecosystem Knowledge and the University of Puget Sound. Starting from his days as an aspiring beach bum growing up on the Jersey Shore, Peter has been enamored with the marine environment. He received his Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of California- Davis for research on the foraging ecology and energetics of Antarctic fulmarine petrels. His current research focuses on the

ecology and conservation of seabirds and islands, with a long-term program in the Juan Fernandez Islands, Chile. He has also worked in New Zealand, the Galápagos, the Bay of Fundy, Mexico and Washington State. When he is not studying seabirds, Peter is frequently out sea kayaking with them.

Heather Major

Heather is currently completing her PhD in the Centre for Wildlife Ecology at Simon Fraser University with Mark Hipfner and Ron Ydenberg. Her broad research interests include island conservation and seabird ecology. After completing an MSc on the impacts of introduced rats on a large seabird community in Alaska, Heather shifted her focus to seabird recovery post-introduced predator eradication. Her current research focuses on prospecting decisions and habitat selection by nocturnal Ancient Murrelets in Haida Gwaii, British Columbia and the Western Aleutian Islands, Alaska, in an effort to understand why some populations are slow to recover following predator eradications.

Michelle Paleczny

Michelle Paleczny is an MSc student and member of the Sea Around Us Project, who studies the effect of global marine fisheries on seabirds.

Jennifer Provencher

Jennifer is currently completing her MSc at the University of Victoria under Anthony Gaston, Patrick O'Hara and Jon Dower in the department of Biology. For 10 years Jennifer has been working as a coastal ecologist along the Pacific Coast of North America from Baja, California to Southeast Alaska, but her interests have moved to the Arctic in the last few years.

Jennifer's current research with the University of Victoria focuses on how seabird diet can be used to sample the marine environment and used as indicators of change. In partnership with Environment Canada under an International Polar Year project involving Memorial University, Carleton University, the University of Manitoba and UVIC they have collected adult thick-billed murrelets (*Lomvia uria*) from low, mid and high Arctic sites and northern fulmars (*Fulmarus glacialis*) from mid and high Arctic locations to examine their stomach contents to study what the birds are eating. Jennifer is comparing this current data information to similar studies done in the 1970s and 80s in the same areas to assess how the diet of these seabirds has changed over the last several decades with reference to changing climatic conditions

Along with prey items Jennifer also finds plastic debris that has been ingested by the birds. As a side project she is interested in how seabirds can be used to monitor and track how plastic debris is spreading into Arctic waters, an area where seabirds have only recently been observed to ingest plastics.

Jenny Schlieps

Jenny Schlieps is a wildlife rehabilitator with over 15 years of experience. She has extensive experience with a broad range of bird and mammal species, including seabirds, waterfowl, raptors, large carnivores and marine mammals. She currently specializes in the care of seabirds and waterfowl impacted by oil spills. She has been a member of the Focus Wildlife response team since 2008 and is Focus Wildlife's Program Manager. She has participated in oiled wildlife response since 2003 in Washington State, British Columbia and Alberta, Canada. Her responsibilities include search and collection, wildlife processing and assessment and direct care. Jenny has also presented numerous oiled wildlife volunteer and response trainings for Washington State. She is a founding and current board member of the Washington Wildlife Rehabilitation Association (WWRA), is a frequent speaker at the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NWRA) symposia and has reviewed and edited journal articles for the NWRA Proceedings and [Principles of Wildlife Rehabilitation](#). She assisted with editing the NWRA Wildlife Medicine Manual, which was used as the primary text for the NWRA Wildlife Medicine Course, the first course to provide formal training in wildlife medicine for veterinary students.

Joanna Smith

Jo Smith (Co-coordinator for Exhibitors) is a marine ecologist with The Nature Conservancy in Seattle, WA. Her research focuses on the conservation of marine species, habitats and processes in the California Current Ecosystem. Her passion for all things salty has led to seabird studies on Haida Gwaii, Juan Fernández Islands, Palmyra Atoll, and the Galápagos Islands. Her M.Sc. is in entomology from the University of Victoria and her Ph.D. in seabird ecology from the University of Washington. Jo plays the 5-string banjo in her spare time.