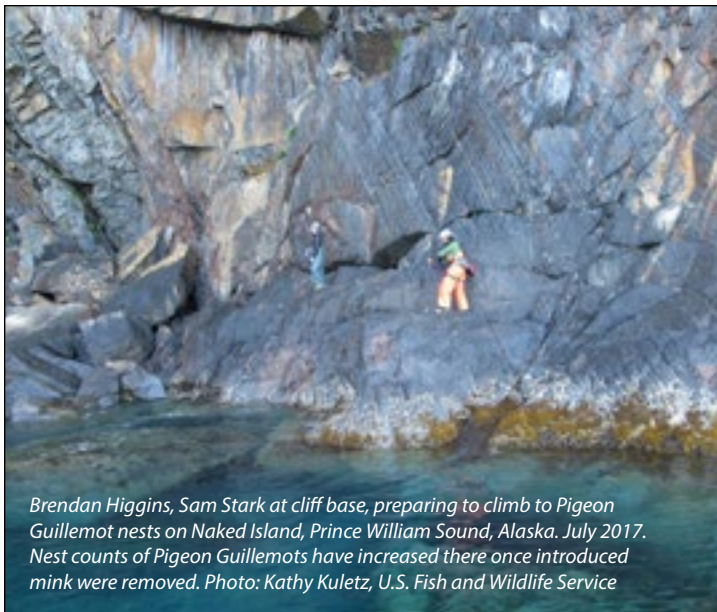


Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group (CBird) Implementation Update U.S.A., 2019

The [Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group \(CBird\)](#) promotes, facilitates, and coordinates conservation, management and research activities among circumpolar countries and improves communication between seabird scientists and managers inside and outside the Arctic.



Brendan Higgins, Sam Stark at cliff base, preparing to climb to Pigeon Guillemot nests on Naked Island, Prince William Sound, Alaska. July 2017. Nest counts of Pigeon Guillemots have increased there once introduced mink were removed. Photo: Kathy Kuletz, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Current CBird Priorities

● Country participating ● Country not participating

- The State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR)
- Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI) (Implementing the Circumpolar Flyway Workplan)
- Implementation of the species-specific conservation strategies and action plans
- Contributing seabird monitoring data to State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR) and Seabird Information Network (SIN)
- Circumpolar Review of Arctic Tern Population Trends
- Assessment of seabird bycatch in Lump sucker fisheries
- Murre harvest study and scientific recommendations to international and national harvest schemes
- Black-legged Kittiwake conservation strategy
- Publication: Circumpolar dynamics of a marine top-predator track ocean warming rates (Descamps et al. 2017, Global Change Biology)

Links with National Priorities

The [Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan](#) (Irons et al. 2015; CAFF Monitoring Report No. 17) included the USA seabird monitoring sites and actions, which are primarily implemented by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). In turn, the USFWS, through collaboration with other CBird members, refined their monitoring scheme to facilitate comparisons across circumpolar regions, with a focus on three key Focal Ecosystem Components - thick-billed murres, common murres, and black-legged kittiwakes.

The USA seabird monitoring program contributed to, and has been informed by [CBird's Murre Conservation Strategy and Action Plan](#) and by recommendations in the [State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report](#). The USA CBird members and other Alaska seabird biologists were actively involved in compiling and writing these and other CAFF documents.

Short-tailed and Sooty Shearwaters amass at Akutan Pass in the Aleutian Archipelago, Alaska, where large numbers of seabirds and shipping routes overlap. Photo: Tamara Zeller, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



CBird Summary of 2017-18 Country Achievements

Evaluating risk and removing threats to seabirds in Alaska

USA biologists have made headway in evaluating risk and removing threats to seabirds in Alaska. Examples include: (1) the successful removal of non-native mink from an island group in Prince William Sound, resulting in increasing counts of Pigeon Guillemots at nesting colonies in 2016 - 2018 (USFWS, Unpublished data); (2) completion of a risk assessment from 'rat spills' in the Aleutian Archipelago and Bering Sea (Renner, et al. 2018, [Biological Invasions](#) 20: 2679-2690); (3) initiation of a [web-based tool to evaluate risk to seabirds from shipping in the Aleutian Archipelago](#), based on the related publication (Renner, M. and Kuletz, K. 2015. [Marine Pollution Bulletin](#) 101: 127-136).

Photo: Tamara Zeller, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Guiding the CBird contribution to SAMBR

The USA CBird representatives contributed to the [State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report \(SAMBR\)](#). The CBird contribution to SAMBR required consolidation of past and on-going CBird reports, country-specific data and trends, and summarizing issues affecting status and conservation of seabirds throughout the circumpolar region.

Expanding our knowledge of offshore distribution and abundance of seabirds

Since 2006, the USFWS has conducted seabird surveys in conjunction with a variety of vessel-based research projects via partnerships with national and international programs. The results have greatly expanded the [North Pacific Pelagic Seabird Database](#) and our understanding of how seabirds are influenced by physical and biological conditions. The increasing occupation of the [Distributed Biological Observatory](#) has made it possible to integrate seabird data across projects, thus increasing geographic and temporal coverage for the Pacific Arctic. (see Kuletz et al. 2019, *Deep-Sea Research II* 162:191-210).

Assisting CBird contribution to WGICA

The USA CBird representative participated in the 2017 workshop (in Seattle, November 2017) of the ICES/PICES/PAME Working Group on Integrated Ecosystem Assessment for the Central Arctic Ocean (WGICA). New data was compiled and literature reviewed to contribute towards a seabird section for the IEA.

Monitoring of seabird colonies and population trends

The USFWS (primarily through the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge) continued long-term monitoring of 18 species of seabirds at 20 colonies in Alaska. The USFWS produces an annual summary of long-term trends for seabirds in Alaska; the latest is available at: Dragoo, D., Renner, H., Kaler, R. 2018. [Breeding status and population trends of seabirds in Alaska](#).



Marty Reedy conducting seabird surveys in the Chukchi Sea
Photo: Kathy Kuletz, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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