

Symposium

PACIFIC SEABIRDS 2007

FORWARD TO SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS

Lukang, Taiwan, 4-7 October 2007

The Pacific Seabird Group opened an exciting new chapter in its conference history with the Special International Scientific Meeting, held in Lukang, Taiwan, October 4 -7, 2007. In combination with the planned conference in Japan in 2009, and the World Seabird Conference in Vancouver in 2010, we feel that we are taking strides toward becoming a truly pan-Pacific organization.

The meeting was held in the Leader Landmark Hotel, Lukang, Taiwan. The conference was a memorable event for all who attended and was facilitated by superb local organization from Mr. Simon Liao and Dr. Wei-Lung Wang, and by the enthusiastic participation of many Taiwanese students. The meeting ran in parallel with the Conference of Taiwan Eco-Environmental Conservation, sponsored by the Taiwanese Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Youth Commission, and the Taiwan Sustainable Energy Society. The Taiwanese National Science Council supervised the meeting, with organization provided by National Chung-Hua University of Education and the Taiwan International Birding Association. In addition, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Vancouver, Canada, provided invaluable assistance in making this meeting a reality. The PSG gives a big "thank you" to all these agencies for their help.

The opening ceremony was attended by several Taiwanese Legislators and high-ranking government officials, and was widely reported in the Taiwanese media which continued to cover the event each day. During the ceremony we were treated to an environmentally themed fashion show by some of the students, who showcased such issues as climate change, pollution, and marine debris. The conference featured invited speakers on three main themes, including "Seabirds as Marine Animals," "Human impacts on seabird populations," and "Seabird status and distribution in the Pacific and adjacent seas." A selection of papers from these talks is published in this issue of *Marine Ornithology*.

During the meeting, Super Typhoon Krosa roared across Taiwan, triggering landslides, disrupting power, flooding homes, wiping out mountain roads, and sadly taking 9 lives. Undeterred by the storm, many of the attendees went out on a morning shorebird field trip to a nearby wetland. Mark Rauzon, Rob Butler, Ron Ydenberg and Julia Parrish saw the first White Tern *Gygis alba* recorded for Taiwan as it streaked by in the typhoon.

A PSG team met with Taiwanese biologists, who requested a cooperative conservation effort for recently rediscovered and imperiled Chinese Crested Tern *Thalasseusa bernsteini* (see cover illustration). The efforts of Mark Rauzon and Verena Gill saw to it that PSG will continue to work on behalf of this species. Following the meeting, a five-day field trip to the mountains revealed the rich biodiversity contained in Taiwan's huge parks and protected areas (about 20% of the country). About 100 life birds were recorded, not to mention a highly poisonous snake that Beth Flint and Verena Gill found inside one of the hotels.

A few people spent the weekend after the field trip in Taipei to continue work on bird conservation. They enjoyed outstanding hospitality with government and birding group officials. Verena Gill, Mark Rauzon, and Rob Butler represented PSG at a ribbon-cutting ceremony and lunch to launch a show of bird photographs and a book by K.K. Kuo, Chair of Olympus Cameras in Taiwan. For more information on Taiwan and its birds, go to www.birdingintaiwan.org.

Verena Gill, Rob Butler, Mark Rauzon, Ron Ydenberg, Tony Gaston

