Biology, Status, and Conservation of Japanese Seabirds: Introduction of a Symposium by the Japanese Seabird Group and Pacific Seabird Group

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The Japan archipelago lays between 23–46°N and is composed of four major islands (Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu) and thousands of smaller islands, many of which serve as breeding habitat for seabirds. High primary production in upwellings along the front systems around the archipelago support large populations of pelagic marine invertebrates and fish which serve as prey for a large community of breeding and non-breeding seabirds. In inshore waters, prey patches are easily available to breeding seabirds during the spring and summer, and in winter non-breeding species from other areas also occur there. The offshore region is characterized by poor primary production but still provides suitable feeding habitat for local breeding species (e.g., storm-petrels) and non-breeding species from other areas. Overall, the productive and diverse marine ecosystem of Japan reflects a transition zone between northern and southern waters, and has resulted in 37 species of breeding seabirds, with several endemic species (Hasegawa 1984).

To provide information of the current status of breeding seabirds in Japan and to promote scientific research and conservation of seabirds, a symposium titled “Biology, Status, and Conservation of Japanese Seabirds” was held in February 2001 at the 28th annual meeting of the Pacific Seabird Group in Lihue, Hawaii, a meeting point between eastern Asia and North America. This symposium was sponsored by the Japanese Seabird Group and Pacific Seabird Group. Nine papers were presented: 1) Observation of short-tailed albatross, *Diomedea albatrus*, by satellite portable phone (F. Sato, K. Momose, M. Tsurumi, S. Sasaki, and K. Saitou); 2) Breeding biology of the Japanese murrelet, *Synthliboramphus wumizusume* (K. Ono, J. Fries, M. Sato, H. Kohno, Y. Nakamura, and T. Hara); 3) Biology, status and conservation of seabirds in Hokkaido (Y. Osa and Y. Watanuki); 4) Historical and present distribution of colonies of streaked shearwater, *Calonectris leucomelas* (N. Oka); 5) Breeding status and conservation of the Japanese murrelet in the Izu Islands, Japan (H. Carter, K. Ono, J. Fries, H. Hasegawa, M. Ueta, H. Higuchi, J. Moyer, L. Ochikubo-Chan, L. de Forest, M. Hasegawa, and G. van Vliet); 6) The status and conservation of the long-billed murrelet, *Brachyramphus perdix*, in Japan (K. Nelson, Y. Fukuda, and N. Oka); 7) Monitoring seabird populations in

Received and Accepted 10 January 2002. Paper presented in a symposium held by the Japanese Seabird Group and Pacific Seabird Group (Lihue, Hawaii; February 2001).

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Japan: the government's role (J. Fries); 8) Breeding population of streaked shearwaters on the Susu Islet, Korea (K. Lee and J. Yoo); and 9) Revival of the short-tailed albatross population on Torishima, Japan (H. Hasegawa). Among them four papers have been prepared for publication in this volume.

Major results of the symposium are: 1) numbers of breeding endemic short-tailed albatross, the rarest albatross in the world, are increasing at Torishima with continuing efforts over three decades; 2) populations of three species of alcids in Hokkaido are decreasing by up to 10% annually; 3) the Izu Islands' population of the endemic Japanese murrelet, the rarest alcid in the world, appears to be declining; 4) the status of the rare long-billed murrelet in Japan is still uncertain; 5) the status of endemic streaked shearwaters in Japan and Korea was reviewed; and 6) potential roles of the Japanese Seabird Group and Japanese government for the study and management of seabirds in Japan was discussed. We refer the reader to the papers that follow for more detailed information.

We would like to thank the Pacific Seabird Group for hosting the symposium at their annual meeting, and the Japan Environmental Agency for financial support for the Japanese Seabird Group.

Reference

- Hasegawa, H. 1984. Status and conservation of seabirds in Japan, with special attention to the short-tailed albatross. Pages 487-500. In: J. P. Croxall, P. G. H. Evans and R. W. Schreiber (editors). Status and conservation of the world's seabirds. ICBP Technical Publication No. 2.

日本の海鳥の生物学，現状および保全：

日本海鳥グループと太平洋海鳥グループによるシンポジウムについて

日本には数多くの海鳥繁殖地があるが，情報に乏しい。その現状をレビューし，科学研究と保全を図るため，太平洋海鳥グループ会議において，表題のシンポジウムがもたれた。

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