



**Black-capped Petrel (Diablotín) Presentations and Working Group Meeting
at the SCSCB regional meeting, Grenada
28 July, 2013**

Reported by Jennifer Wheeler, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Holly Freifeld, American Bird Conservancy

The 2013 SCSCB regional meeting hosted two talks and a poster presentation focused on the Diablotin:

Tracking the Devil: Radar Surveys for Black-capped Petrels. *Adam Brown.*

Monitoring Breeding Black-capped Petrels at Morne Vincent, Haiti and Loma del Toro, Dominican Republic.
Esteban Garrido, Ernst Rupp, Adam Brown and James E. Goetz

Black-capped Petrels and Communication Towers. *Adam Brown, Ernst Rupp, and Holly Freifeld*

Additionally, a meeting of the International Black-capped Petrel Conservation Group was held on the evening of Sunday, July 28, 7:30 – 9 pm local time. An internet connection was obtained in order for people to connect via Skype.

Attendees at the Working Group meeting included: Jennifer Wheeler, Holly Freifeld, Ernst Rupp – Grupo Jaragua (on Skype), Esteban Garrido – Grupo Jaragua (on Skype), Justin Proctor – Cornell University, Jason Townsend – University of California, Davis, Greg Butcher – U.S. Forest Service, Chris Rimmer – Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Kirsty Swinnerton – Island Conservation, Scott Johnston – USFWS, Anderson Jean – Société Audubon Haiti, Eduardo Iñigo – Cornell University, David Wege – BirdLife International, Adam Brown – Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC), Brian Watts – Center for Conservation Biology, Will Mackin – SCSCB

Discussions at the working group meeting focused primarily on answering questions on recent findings in Hispaniola. Adam Brown presented on behalf of Grupo Jaragua earlier in the day, describing the results of nest monitoring during the 2012-2013 season. Ernst and Esteban fielded questions (via Skype) concerning threats and plans for the next season, which involve continued monitoring of known nests and extending searches into the Cordillera Central. The group then moved to discussion of the threat posed by collisions with communication towers and possible steps to counter the threat. The overarching issue of socioeconomic pressures was also discussed, and the critical need to engage with communities in Haiti.

Ernst noted that Grupo Jaragua is trying to bring in as many local cooperators as possible. He emphasized the need for the coarse direction offered by radar to find nests, then the need for burrow probes to see into nests deep in crevices, and sometimes climbing equipment for steep cliffs. Unskilled searches aren't likely to be effective, but the value of citizen reports (e.g., downed birds, reports of calling) is acknowledged.

Individual tracking of birds was discussed. Holly reported on the one ABC expedition to attempt to catch birds at sea in August 2012. Much was learned, but birds did not come close enough for an attempt at trapping. ABC is putting that idea on hold for now and suggests it would be more efficient to go directly to likely islands and use the new technologies (radar, ARUs) to aid in searching. However, ABC has the three satellite transmitters in hand from the at-sea capture project and plans to have these deployed on nesting petrels on Hispaniola next season.

Adam noted the many logistical issues of moving radar equipment around. He believes that the existing unit should not leave Hispaniola because it's very costly and complicated to bring it back. EPIC needs a second "traveling" radar to survey other islands. Adam is very confident of the utility of radar to find petrels, and has sites already scoped out on Dominica and Cuba. Single instances of sightings point to places to start. A priority to search is Cuba, but it is very hard to get the radar unit into the country. Dominica or Jamaica would be next priorities. Adam noted that much more searching remains to be done on Hispaniola, though (e.g., Massif de la Hotte, the rest of Cordillera Central), and a program of annual monitoring should be established.

Other issues discussed briefly were:

- Kirsty noted that Island Conservation would consider installing ARUs on islands where pre-eradication monitoring is starting.
- BCPE is in review for listing under US Endangered Species Act. It is important for this group to provide comments on a proposed listing rule, if/when one is published.
- The long-awaited monograph is available! 2013. Diablotín *Pterodroma hasitata*: a biography of the endangered Black-capped Petrel. Marine Ornithology Vol 41 (special issue ISSN 1018-3337): S3-S43. T. Simons, D. S. Lee and J. C. Haney. See <http://www.marineornithology.org>
- Noting that local community engagement and donor support for conservation based on socioeconomic solutions is critical, EPIC is working on a documentary film to tell the story of parallel lives... petrels living in a cave, humans living in Boukan Chat. A trailer for the documentary "Save the Devil" is under development; the trailer will be used to help raise the big funds needed for the full film (\$50K pledged of \$100K needed so far). The goal is to develop a tool that all in the working group can use.

Next Steps:

All members of the working group are asked to revisit the actions in Table 2 in the *Conservation Action Plan for the Black-capped Petrel* (Goetz *et al.* 2012). Reviewers should mark it up with updates and suggestions for additional needs or steps, or suggest which actions are no longer warranted. Holly (hfreifeld@abcbirds.org) has offered to compile suggestions. When this is completed, the working group should meet (likely via Internet) to do some focused prioritizing for fund-raising.

Requested Deadline: September 6

More detailed notes and copies of presentations can be found online at <http://www.fws.gov/birds/waterbirds/petrel/>