



Notes

International Black-capped Petrel Conservation Group Meeting

22nd International BirdsCaribbean Conference, 25 July 2019, Guadeloupe



Introduction

We were overwhelmed by the response of 28 people from 10 countries/territories to participate in the working group meeting for coordinating efforts for the Black-capped Petrel in Guadeloupe in July 2019 (see participant list, below). Despite the meeting being held quite late in the evening (20:00 – 22:00), much was gained through an active discussion of shared goals and future plans. Participants made some new contacts and friends, identified capacity and opportunities, and shared the current state of work among areas and next steps for petrel conservation in their countries. This built on several presentations by various participants during the 2019 BirdsCaribbean International Conference (see list of ten petrel-related talks below).

A special focus of the discussion was given to areas of interest within the Lesser Antilles: Guadeloupe, Martinique and Dominica. It was also noteworthy that a Cuban delegation was interested in pursuing work to locate petrels in their country. We reviewed the current state of available local or anecdotal knowledge or historical information of the species' occurrence on the site, current capacity for supporting radar and acoustic surveys, and identified institutions, initiatives and opportunities for funding. Lessons were shared by Yolanda Leon with Grupo Jaragua, who offered words of encouragement, noting the decades of effort needed to locate nests on Hispaniola.

Location-Specific Notes

Guadeloupe – A talk on fossil record of Guadeloupe by Monica Gala indicated at least 1 of 5 sites with petrel bones (Talk #5). (contact: monica.gala@u-bordeaux.fr). Antoine Chabrolle gave a talk on recent searches for petrel and is seeking collaboration for additional work (See talk #13) (antoine.chabrolle@gmail.com).

There have also been observations of BCPE at sea off Petit Terre, see: Levesque and Yésou (2005)¹ and more recently by Levesque and Yesou (2018)². These observations raise the question of whether another at-sea capture in that area should be attempted to satellite tag more birds. Antoine thinks the French government might fund such a project. There is already a seabird project being funded by the French utilizing low-flying planes that take high definition pictures and French Navy ships as platforms for seabird surveys along transects.

Antoine would like to develop and submit a proposal to engage BIOTOPE (<https://www.biotope.fr/en/>) to do radar monitoring in Guadeloupe and Martinique which has not yet been performed. BIOTOPE is a for-profit environmental consulting firm in France that has a non-profit arm that undertakes conservation research and does grant-making. Lucie Lambert, the head of BIOTOPE Caraïbes is looking forward to supporting BCPE projects. Between this opportunity and the support of the French government, it seems like Guadeloupe and Martinique are well-positioned to continue surveying for the species without U.S.-based aid.

Martinique – There is interest in radar surveys in coordination with work happening on Guadeloupe. There also is capacity for song meter deployments and analysis by Parc Naturel Regional de la Martinique staff, but Christelle Beranger, Thomas Alexandrine and others working in Martinique would likely need more information (e.g., anecdotal or from radar surveys) to know where to deploy them.

Martinique also has a fossil, but to confirm if it is BCPE they would need a museum specimen to compare it to. They have had a hard time securing such a specimen, and one solution is to make a 3-D model from a skeleton and use that for the comparison. It was also noted that the NC Museum have all the specimens there, which could provide an opportunity. Yvan has followed up on providing contacts.

Dominica – Stephen Durand (Dominica Forestry and National Parks Department) explained how Dominica is still recovering from Hurricane Maria and the ordeal with ACTP and their parrots. As a result, capacity is limited to conduct surveys for the BCPE, but they did begin sound-meter research this year. Stephen also expressed a need to be more systematic about their ground-searching protocol, to maximize resources and time. Renewed training could be beneficial, as could additional radar work – hopefully by EPIC in 2020, funds permitting. There is also some anecdotal knowledge on the island from sons and daughters of hunters who were familiar with the bird.

BirdsCaribbean led a post-conference field trip to Dominica, and Stephen Durand escorted Hannah Nevins, Holly Robertson (ABC) to view possible habitat for Black-capped Petrel and see sites of song meter deployment (See photos). It was clear that the forest is still recovering from Hurricane Maria.

¹ Levesque and Pierre Yésou (2005) Occurrence and abundance of tubenoses Procellariiformes at Guadeloupe, Lesser Antilles, 2001–2004 by Anthony Levesque and Pierre Yésou in *North American Birds*, Vol. 59, No. 4, 2005.

² Levesque and Yesou (2018) Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*) occurrence near Guadeloupe, Lesser Antilles, 2001–2008. *Journal of Caribbean Ornithology*, Vol. 31: 20-22.

Hispaniola – Anderson Jean, Environmental Protection In the Caribbean (EPIC), Jim Goetz and Grupo Jaragua continue to monitor petrels in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. (see talks #80, #104) Contact: andersonjeanht@gmail.com for new information on threats emerging in La Visite. Francoise Benjamin has been working to summarize information on communication tower placement in Haiti. francoisebenjaminht@gmail.com.

Likely the highest priority in Haiti is at La Visite: protecting what is considered to be the global source population for petrels that might eventually get translocated. Border sites (Boucan Chat/Loma del Toro) are receiving conservation attention. Another site is Pic Macaya, but with radar indicating fewer birds (40 to 50 pairs), and very difficult conditions (terrible roads, need to haul in water and other supplies), it is less of a priority.

Cuba – Nicasio Viña described the current situation in areas of potential petrel breeding habitat around Pico Turquino and Pico Suecia: there are no roads, no trails, the area is a national park and protected from human activity, likely few cats, no known mongoose. They have anecdotal knowledge that petrels occur in this area, but access is difficult and they would like technical assistance and training in how to utilize song meters, radar, and conduct ground searches. There is interest in use of both song meters and possible radar surveys to detect petrels. Previous observations of rafts of 40-50 birds in nearshore waters of La Brujas inlet opens the door to another at-sea capture if the logistics of doing such an operation could be cleared politically in Cuba.

There may be an opportunity to work through regional efforts with biologists in DR through Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC – a tri-lateral convention between Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic) (Talk #105). Nicasio.vina@un.org

Other potential sites – Yvan Satgé (Clemson University) identified several locations on known breeding islands, and some on islands not known to host breeding petrels, using predictive habitat modeling. These include St. Lucia, Jamaica (Blue Mountains), St. Vincent (La Soufriere) as other potential sites for petrel nesting areas (see talk #105 below). Workers in these areas can contact Yvan (ysatge@clemson.edu).

Other Considerations

There was strong agreement in the Working Group that technical expertise is strongly needed. Therefore, it is a high funding priority to facilitate inter-island technical exchanges to share expertise between groups like Grupo Jaragua, who now has a good deal of experience with ground searching, with other less-experienced groups.

Adam Brown, EPIC seeks to repeat radar surveys as a monitoring tool and is willing to conduct radar surveys in new locations given local partnerships to conduct this work. (Contact: Adam Brown abrown@epicislands.org)

Matthew McKown, Conservation Metrics, Santa Cruz (not present) has been analyzing the song meter data for DR and is willing to collaborate with others on analysis (Contact: matthew.mckown@conservationmetrics.com)

Caribbean Biological Corridor (Corredor Biológico en el Caribe) promotes work across range of countries through CBC framework to advance conservation and sustainability goals. Countries include Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Cuba. This framework would seem ideal to support the work to identify and protect nesting sites of Black-capped Petrel. It is unclear what kind of funding would be available for such work (Contact: Nicasio Viña, nicasio.vina@un.org , see: <http://cbcbio.org/>). See talk #109.

There are initiatives from both French Overseas Territories—which include Martinique (BIODIV'OM Life) and Guadeloupe—and UK Overseas Territories (Anguilla, Montserrat, Cayman Islands, and Turks and Caicos Islands), and to address threats on islands for threatened species.

Working Group Information

Compilers of notes: Hannah Nevins, Jennifer Wheeler, and Yvan Satgé

The International Black-capped Petrel Conservation Group consists of any individual or group working to understand and conserve this species, and is co-led by Jennifer Wheeler (BirdsCaribbean) and Hannah Nevins (American Bird Conservancy). Their goals for the coming year are producing an updated BCPE Conservation Plan and facilitating the acquisition of funds for finding and protection of sites. Potential sources include untapped private donors, foundations, etc., as well as dwindling USFWS support. Support no longer includes National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (their Caribbean program is concluding) nor seabird restoration funds from the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

These notes will be posted at: <https://www.birdscaribbean.org/our-work/black-capped-petrel-working-group/>) along with other unpublished reports, notes and presentations relating to the petrel.

Participants

Name	Organisation/Institution	Country	Email
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Nicasio Viña Dávila	Corredor Biologico En El Caribe/ Caribbean Biological Corridor	Cuba	nicasio.vina@un.org
Stephen Durand	Forestry, Wildlife & Parks Division	Dominica	nazarai@gmail.com
Thomas Alexandrine	Parc of Martinique	Martinique - France	t.alexandrine@pnr-martinique.com
Yolanda Leon	Grupo Jaragua	Dominica Republic	yolanda.leon@grupojaragua.org.do
Yvan Satge	Clemson University, North Carolina	United States/France	ysatge@clemson.edu

Talks Presented at 2019 BirdsCaribbean Meeting on or relating to conservation of Black-capped Petrel

(Numbers indicate abstract numbering in the Conference Program; see <https://sites.google.com/site/birdscaribbeanconference2019/program>)

5. FOSSIL BIRDS FROM GUADELOUPE ISLANDS (FRENCH WEST INDIES): A REVIEW OF THE RECORD AND NEW DATA. Monica Gala, Véronique Laroulandie, and Arnaud Lenoble, PACEA - UMR CNRS 5199, University of Bordeaux, France. E-mail: monica.gala@u-bordeaux.fr

13. BLACK-CAPPED PETREL (*Pterodroma hasitata*) INVESTIGATION IN GUADELOUPE. Antoine Chabrolle, Animateur RESOM/GISOM, Muséum National D'Histoire Naturelle/Station Marine de Concarneau, in collaboration with the Association des Mateurs Amicaux des Z'Oiseaux et de la Nature aux Antilles (AMAZONA) & Association pour l'Etude et la protection des Vertébrés et végétaux des petites Antilles (AEVA). E-mail : chabrolle.antoine@voila.fr

17. SIERRA DE BAHORUCO NATIONAL PARK, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: THE BATTLE GOES ON. Yolanda M. León^{*}, Héctor Andújar[^], Andrea Thomen[^], Pablo Feliz[^], Ernst Rupp[^], John Lloyd[†], and Chris Rimmer[‡]. ^{*}Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo (INTEC), [^]Grupo Jaragua, [†]Vermont Center for Ecostudies. E-mail: Yolanda.leon@intec.edu.do

79. AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY CONSERVATION ACTION IN THE CARIBBEAN. Daniel J. Lebbin, American Bird Conservancy, The Plains, USA. E-mail: dlebbin@abcbirds.org

80. CONSERVING BLACK-CAPPED PETRELS (*Pterodroma hasitata*) THROUGH POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN HAITI. Adam C. Brown^{*}, Anderson Jean[^], Jennifer Wheeler[‡], and Ernst Rupp[‡] ^{*}Environmental Protection in the Caribbean, US, [^]JACSEH, Haiti, [†]BirdsCaribbean, US, and [‡]Grupo Jaragua, Dominican Republic. E-mail: abrown@epicislands.org

104. BLACK-CAPPED PETREL (*Pterodroma hasitata*) NEST MONITORING IN PARC NATIONAL LA VISITE, HAITI: 2018 BREEDING SEASON. Anderson Jean, Tinio Louis, René Jeune, Lionel Raymond., and Adam Brown. Jeunes en Action pour la Sauvegarde de l'Ecologie en Haiti (JACSEH) and Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC). E-mail: andersonjeanht@gmail.com

105. USING PREDICTIVE HABITAT MODELLING TO LOCATE UNKNOWN NESTING AREAS OF THE ENDANGERED BLACK-CAPPED PETREL (*Pterodroma hasitata*) IN THE GREATER CARIBBEAN. Yvan G. Satgé^{*}, Ernst Rupp[^], Adam Brown[†], and Patrick G.R. Jodice[‡] ^{*}South Carolina Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit - Clemson University, Clemson, USA, [^]Grupo Jaragua, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, [†]Environmental Protection In the Caribbean, Sint Maarten, Dutch West Indies, [‡]USGS South Carolina Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Clemson, USA. E-mail: ysatge@clemson.edu

106. A STORY WITH ALTERNATE ENDINGS: CONSERVATION PLANNING FOR THE DIABLOTÍN (BLACK-CAPPED PETREL) USING POPULATION VIABILITY ANALYSIS. Hannah Nevins^{*}, Jennifer Wheeler[^], Kelly Newton[‡], Don Croll[‡], Tim Tinker[‡], Brad Keitt^{*}, and Adam Brown[‡] ^{*}American Bird Conservancy, [^]BirdsCaribbean, [†]Coastal Conservation Lab, University of California at Santa Cruz, [‡]Environmental Protection in the Caribbean. Email: hnevins@abcbirds.org

107. SEVEN YEARS OF RESEARCH, MONITORING, AND PROTECTING BLACK-CAPPED PETREL (*Pterodroma hasitata*) IN HISPANIOLA. Ernst Rupp, Esteban Garrido, Hector Andújar, Jairo Matos, Jose Castillo, Jerson Feliz, Rene Jeune, and Tinio Louis, Grupo Jaragua, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. E-mail: ernst.rupp@grupojaragua.org.do.

109. SELECTION OF CONSERVATION TARGETS IN THE BIOLOGICAL CORRIDOR IN THE CARIBBEAN (CBC). Nicasio Viña Dávila^{*}, José L. Gerhartz Muro^{*} and Freddy Rodríguez Santana[^] ^{*}Secretariat of the CBC, [^]Oriental Center of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (BIOECO). E-mail: nicasio.vina@un.org

Images from the Working Group Meeting



Photo captions (from top left to right):

- 1) Christian Roy (Canadian Wildlife Service), Hannah Nevins (American Bird Conservancy) and Benoit Laliberté (Canadian Wildlife Service).
- 2) Yolanda Leon (Grupo Jaragua), Francoise Benjamin (Jeunes en Action pour la Sauvegarde de l'Ecologie en Haiti), Kirsty Swinnerton (UK), and Hector Andujar (Grupo Jaragua).
- 3) Andrea Thommen (Grupo Jaragua), Francoise Benjamin (JACSEH), Hector Andujar (Grupo Jaragua), and Adam Brown (EPIC).
- 4) Nicasio Viña (Caribbean Biological Corridor), Yvan Satgé (Clemson University), and Carmen Plasencia (BIOECO).
- 5) Thomas Alexandrine (Parc of Martinique), Christelle Beranger (Parc of Martinique), and Lucie Lambert (Biotope).
- 6) Antoine Chabrolle (Muséum National D'Histoire Naturelle), Anderson Jean (JACSEH), Beatriz Conde (Association Carouge) and David Belfan (Association Carouge).

MORE PHOTOS:



After workshop fun - Jennifer Wheeler (BirdsCaribbean) and Dan Lebbin (American Bird Conservancy) demonstrate how to make fluffy petrel chick with yarn (left). Finished product!

FIELD TRIP PHOTOS:



Photos: Post-conference Field trip to Dominica to view possible habitat for Black-capped Petrel. (Top, left to right)

- 1) Jacqueline Andre (Dominica Forestry Division) and Stephen Durand (Dominica Forestry Division) and Jorge Brocca (SOH) get ready for ferry to Dominica in post-conference field trip.
- 2) Holly Robertson (American Bird Conservancy & BirdsCaribbean) and Jennifer Wheeler (BirdsCaribbean) get ready to depart Guadeloupe for Dominica.
- 3), 4) View of petrel habitat on Dominica with Holly Robertson (American Bird Conservancy).