



NEWSLETTER 157

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News

Report from the 16th International Seabird Group Conference, 2nd – 6th September 2024

Jacqui Glencross, ECR representative, The Seabird Group Executive Committee

What a week! The first week of September saw 260 members of the seabird community descend on the beautiful city of Coimbra, Portugal for a packed week. The conference was hosted by the University of Coimbra and the wonderful ECOTOP group and I am sure I speak for everyone when I say they did an excellent job.

Many of us found our feet by attending a walking tour ahead of the conference on Monday 2nd September where we discovered the wonders of Coimbra and met up with old and new friends. The conference then kicked off with six workshops covering topics on networking, necropsy, policy, offshore windfarms, technology, and bioacoustics. The welcome address by [Paulo Catry](#) on the wanderings of [Cory's Shearwater](#) (*Calonectris borealis*) nesting on the Selvagens Islands, highlighted the fact we can study a species for years and some of their behaviour can remain elusive.



Group photo of the attendees and organisers of the 16th International Seabird Group Conference. Photo: Vitor Paiva.

On Tuesday, we began with a fascinating plenary on optimising movement decisions in changing environments by [Samantha Patrick](#). This talk discussed the importance of combining habitat switching and plasticity to understand adaptive changes in movement. We were then treated to talks on a range of topics including movement ecology, climate change and extreme events, census, monitoring, and demography, as well as renewable energy. After a busy day, we headed to the first of two poster sessions of the conference. This year we definitely had both quality and quantity with 150 fantastic posters on show.

On Wednesday, after a last-minute change of plans, we were given an amazing plenary talk by [Paco Bustamante](#). Paco, who impressively managed to pull together a plenary talk in less than 24 hours, told us about the effects of mercury on sub polar and polar seabirds. This led into more talks on pollution, toxicology and diseases, as well as foraging and feeding ecology. In the afternoon we also had two EDI talks by [Claudia Cavadas](#) and [Eleanor](#)

Honan on contributing to the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion in science and toileting and menstruation during seabird fieldwork. Both talks were thought provoking, and I highly recommend watching these talks on our YouTube if you missed them – especially if you are managing people in the field! The second of the poster sessions followed the days talks before we headed to the conference dinner. We arrived at Casa das Caldeiras where conversations and wine continued to flow, and we were treated to a beautiful fado!

The final day of talks began with our final plenary talk by **Katarzyna Wojczulanis-Jakubas** on parental care in seabirds. We learnt about division of labour between the sexes and the importance of coordination between the parents on parental performance. The remainder of the talks discussed work on behaviour and evolution, fisheries, and many more topics.



Conference dinner Fado Band. Photo Sabiya Sheikh

As the conference came to a close, we were left filled with new knowledge, new ideas, and a long list of new friends and future collaborators. In his conference closing speech, our chair, Alex Bond, left us with a challenge; reach out and collaborate with someone new between now and the next conference in 2027. I feel very privileged to be a part of the seabird community and cannot wait to see the next wave of research which will have happened as a result of this conference.

We would like to thank Jaime Ramos and the team for organising and hosting such an incredible conference. Also, a huge congratulations goes to the winners of all the student prizes. For those of you who couldn't make it, or those who want to relive it, you will be able to watch the conference talks on our YouTube channel. For now, we say até mais, but also watch this space – because soon we will announce where our next conference will be held!

Fulmar observations from the Faroe Islands – Two chicks in the same nest

Jens-Kjeld Jensen

The **Northern Fulmar** (*Fulmaris glacialis*), like most Procellariiformes, lays just a single egg, but it is not unusual to find two eggs in the nests of this species. A study of two-egg clutches in Fulmars from the Faroe Islands concluded that the two eggs are most likely laid by two different females¹, but the process by which this occurs is far from clear. I myself have observed a Fulmar nest with two eggs which were brooded alternately by the adult: one egg was brooded one day and then the second egg the next day (on the island of Stora Dímon, Faroe Islands). Despite many observations of two-egg clutches in Fulmars, a nest with two chicks has not to our knowledge been seen until a remarkable finding this summer, 2024.

On 16th July 2024, Levi Joensen was at Hestmúlin on the island of Kunoy, Faroe Islands (Latitude: 62.366 Longitude: -6.70) to check the climbing fixtures on an almost vertical, 72 m high cliff stack. At a height of about 40 m, Levi saw a Fulmar nest with two ~10-day-old chicks lying right next to each other, seen in Image 1. On 6th August Levi was again at the site, this time with friends Marið Heimustovu and Esmundur Løwe Sørensen and saw the two chicks still in the nest as seen in Image 2. Unfortunately, a final check of this



Fulmar nest with two chicks found on the island of Kunoy, Faroe Islands, on the 16th July 2024 (left) and 16th August (right). Photos: Jens-Kjeld Jensen.

¹ Birkhead T, Jensen JK, Thompson J, Hammer S, Thompson P, Montgomerie R. (2020). Two-egg clutches in the Fulmar. *British Birds*, 133: 165-170.

nest has not been possible to see if both chicks reached fledging age, but the observations are nonetheless very interesting.

It is the first time that two chicks have been seen in a Fulmar nest on the Faroe Islands. How the two eggs hatched is a mystery, as there was no indication as to whether two different pairs were incubating the nest, or whether just a single pair managed to rear this double clutch to hatching. Similarly, it is unclear whether these chicks, which appeared to be quite healthy, were being fed by a single pair or two different pairs. I would be very interested to hear whether any similar observations have been recorded elsewhere, and what the outcome of such two-chick nests have been.

Kaj Eli Sørensen is thanked for making me aware of this observation.

Please contact the author if you have any similar observations using these details:

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