



THE IUCN WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS  
OCEANIA  
Newsletter No. 6 2011



Mitchell Falls in the fabulous Kimberley Region of WA- now listed on Australia's National Heritage list photo; Commonwealth of Australia

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#### 1. WCPA OCEANIA UPDATE

##### From the Vice Chair

The last month was dominated by the IUCN Regional Forum with additional trips to, South Australia, Western Australia and the ACT where I was able to catch up with a wide range of WCPA members.

**IUCN Regional Forum** Queensland was the venue for the IUCN Regional Forum which gathered over 100 members of the IUCN 'family' in the region – member representatives, Commission members and members of the Oceania regional Staff as well as distinguished guests from IUCN HQ in Geneva , including Trevor Sandwith the relatively new head of the Global Protected areas Program. Of over 100 delegates 53 were WCPA members in addition to other roles.

Trevor addressed the forum on **Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Protected Areas: how IUCN can make a difference in the Decade of Biodiversity**. I will circulate the presentation separately.

The upcoming IUCN program will be closely aligned to the CBD Aichi Targets and given that they give centrality to protected areas in all their forms, protected areas will continue to be an important part of IUCN's work. There is still a good deal of discussion how we can better link expertise across our vast region to help build capacity by sharing knowledge and skills. A summary of the forum will soon be posted on the

<http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/oceania/>

##### IUCN World Parks Forum meeting

On the Saturday after the Forum a meeting took place between visiting senior IUCN secretariat figures, the heads of Parks Australia and Parks Victoria and the Vice Chair to progress the Australian hosting of the 2014 IUCN World Congress on Protected Areas. Despite earlier complexities progress has been made and all are optimistic that an announcement may be forthcoming. Members will be the first to know!

##### South Australia

The VC was a guest of the government to address a forum of stakeholders on tourism and protected areas where debate continues to lie with getting the benefits – building constituencies of support, engaging new elements of society and new generations in the love of parks, having parks relevant to society, ensuring many communities will support adequately funded well managed parks versus the concern over keeping parks special places where nature thrives, without inappropriate development. The SA government has engaged in a high level of consultation and participants appeared to be comfortable with the directions being taken. The visit also enabled

the VC to discuss new directions in protected area policy with the policy division of the South Australian Protected Areas Unit.

### **Western Australia**

Park visitation was also the theme of the conference in Western Australia. The VC attended the Parks Forum AGM to catch up with parks agency heads from across the Tasman and attended the main day of the "Rediscover Parks: health, heritage and nature, the importance of reconnecting with our parks". Again the theme of relevance was dominant with park managers concerned that we must continue to engage with broad sections of society to win the political support necessary for healthy parks without losing the core value of nature conservation. The international keynote was Tom Kiernan, the CEO of the US National Parks Conservation Association. NPCA is an advocacy organization like our NPAs but appears to have a different sense of its relationship to government in that it sees a primary role as advocacy for proper funding for parks (which is core to WCPA's work). Tom had met with representatives of Australia's NPAs the previous weekend in Sydney. <http://www.npca.org/>

### **Canberra**

The Vice Chair addressed the Natural Tourism Panel is the annual meeting of TTF's Nature-based tourism members on the importance of protected areas to tourism and the various ways in which tourism can contribute to genuine conservation outcomes while enhancing industry objectives.

Thanks to Louise O'Flynn editor and Angie Stringer, Kathy Walls and Ana Tiraá for their contributions to this edition of the newsletter.

### **Member Opportunities**

#### **Oliver Chassot**

Members are reminded that WCPA plans a seminar on December 16th in Sydney on connectivity conservation around the visit of Oliver Chassot one of the leaders of connectivity conservation in Central America. Details as they come to hand but keep the date.

### **WCC events**

Members are reminded that if they want to deliver a session at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Jeju in September next year they must rapidly submit a proposal. The deadline is the 15th October Visit [www.iucn.org/congress](http://www.iucn.org/congress) for the latest updates and Congress information, [access the Call for Contributions](#) and submit your event.

### **News of Members**

Prof. Brendan Mackey is leaving the Fenner School of ANU to be Professor and Director, of the Climate Change Response Program at Griffith University. Dr. Josh Bishop, previously IUCN Chief Economist is heading for Australia to become National Manager - Markets, Sustainability and Business Partnerships at WWF-Australia. Geoff Keeys has been appointed the NZ coordinator of a cross NGO campaign - the Antarctic Ocean Alliance - working to secure marine reserves in the southern ocean. Rob Nichols who has recently left WWF is also working with the Antarctic Ocean Alliance.

## **2. INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **STRUGGLE AGAINST INVASIVE SPECIES: AN IMPORTANT GLOBAL GOAL**

In August the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity expressed support for a recent call from conservation organizations for continued action against invasive species. On 22 July, the magazine Science published a letter from senior leaders of the world most authoritative conservation organizations entitled "Invasives: A Major Conservation Threat". The purpose of the letter was to respond to recent positions that have argued against the struggle against invasive species.

In the letter, the leaders of IUCN, Birdlife, WWF, Conservation International, Wildlife Conservation Society, Fauna and Flora International, and Island Conservation indicated that recent discussions on alternative strategies to the management of invasive species should not undermine ongoing efforts to prevent and mitigate the impacts of invasive species.

The authors of the letter stress that as invasive species are indeed a major cause of biodiversity loss continued aggressive intervention is needed to capitalize on recent successes. Therefore, conservation leaders call the global community to work together to control the most harmful invasive species, and to meet target 9 of Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, which calls for action to control invasives. For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int.

### **PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ALTAI -SAYAN INTERNATIONAL CORRIDOR**

The vision of a great international connectivity conservation corridor in Central Asia came a vital step closer with the announcement on September, 15, 2011 by the Ministers of the Russian Federation and Republic of Kazakhstan that they have officially signed the intergovernmental



agreement regarding the establishment of the Transboundary Reserve "Altai" on the basis of Katunskiy Biosphere reserve in Russia and Katon-Karagaiskiy National Park in Kazakhstan. The signed agreement is based on the 6-years consultations and negotiations with different stakeholders, and finally it designates two protected areas as international transboundary protected area.

The photo by WCPA VC for Mountains and Connectivity Dr. Graeme Worboys shows the watershed and international boundary between Russia's Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve and the Katon-Karagaiskiy National Park (Kazakhstan), taken from the Russian side of the border. The

two reserves help conserve the Snow Leopard and the largest of the native sheep, the Argali. Both of these species are endangered, and the 2011 transboundary agreement will help more effective conservation of these species which are found in the border zone. The transboundary agreement is also a starting point for a mega connectivity corridor vision along the Altai-Sayan Mountains potentially involving China and Mongolia as well as Russia and Kazakhstan. At the same time, the official agreement opens the door for preparing the nomination of the bilateral TBPA into the UNESCO World Network of the Biosphere Reserves

### **CONSERVATION WITHOUT BORDERS – NATURE HELPS EUROPE OVERCOME POLITICAL DIVIDES**

Conservation action involving several countries brings large scale benefits to nature and helps resolve social and political conflicts, a new IUCN publication shows. The book, *Crossing Borders for Nature: European examples of transboundary conservation*, draws on cross-border conservation in Europe, highlighting its challenges and benefits. It was published as part of a project led by IUCN and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) which aims to improve transboundary conservation in the mountainous border zone between Albania, Macedonia and the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. "Due to isolation in the past and recent political instability in the area, the border between those countries was strictly guarded for decades," says Tomasz Pezold, IUCN's Project Officer and one of the publication's editors. "As a result, it now represents one of the last intact natural sites in Europe with some of the largest populations of species like bear, wolf and lynx. Cross-border conservation in this region creates the opportunity to preserve this unique natural heritage in its integrity and brings together countries that were isolated for years."

"Nature doesn't stop at borders or man-made boundaries and nor should our efforts to conserve it," says Maja Vasiljević, co-editor of the publication. "Transboundary conservation is increasingly important in protecting and maintaining large ecosystems and enhancing the socioeconomic development in the areas." For further information, visit:

[http://www.iucn.org/media/news\\_releases/?7903/Conservation-without-borders--nature-helps-Europe-overcome-political-divides](http://www.iucn.org/media/news_releases/?7903/Conservation-without-borders--nature-helps-Europe-overcome-political-divides)

## DEPLETION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS: BAD NEWS FOR MARINE ENVIRONMENT



Broadgilled Hagfish *Eptatretus cirrhatus*.  
Photo: Paddy Ryan

A recent study conducted for The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species has determined that 20% of hagfish species are at an elevated risk of extinction. Scientists warn that this figure could be much higher. The results of this research, carried out in association with Conservation International, indicate that the primary causes of hagfish declines are the direct and indirect effects of fisheries.

Hagfish represent an ancient and unique evolutionary lineage; as bottom feeders they play an important role by cleaning the ocean floor and recycling nutrients into the food web which maintains the health of the ecosystems they inhabit. Particular areas of concern highlighted in the study include southern Australia, where the only hagfish species present is threatened, and the coast of southern Brazil. No current conservation measures or legislation exist to protect hagfish populations.

"Hagfish are a great example of one of those 'not-so-cute' species that play a vital role in ecosystem health," says Cristiane Elfes, Programme Officer for the CI-IUCN Biodiversity Assessment Unit. "This study highlights the impact we have on hagfish and the importance of protecting them to maintain the stability of ocean ecosystems." For more information, visit:

[http://www.iucn.org/media/news\\_releases/?7942/Depletion-of-the-body-snatchers-bad-news-for-marine-environment](http://www.iucn.org/media/news_releases/?7942/Depletion-of-the-body-snatchers-bad-news-for-marine-environment)

## MORE THAN GREEN SPACES

'Healthy Parks Healthy People' is a growing slogan worldwide where the evidence mounts for the importance of parks from a health perspective, argues Geoffrey Godbey, President of Next Consulting and Professor Emeritus in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management at Pennsylvania State University. Although the importance of physical activity for human health is well-understood, Professor Godbey says the vital role that parks play in providing an outlet for this physical activity has only recently been acknowledged. In his comprehensive evaluation of the scientific evidence on the value of parks, Professor Godbey has argued the case for the importance of parks in the provision of physical activity that delivers health benefits. "Public park and recreation services are becoming part of the healthcare system of the United States and are now recognised as such," he says.

Given that the need for physical activity in daily life has declined dramatically, due to factors such as motorised transport and sedentary occupations, the role of parks will become increasingly important to maintain our health and fitness. What is being tried in the United States is partnerships between park departments and a variety of health organisations. "These partnerships enter into agreements to sponsor recreation programs, facilities, events and trails which have health benefits.... Most of these are centred on increasing physical activity but, in the future, there will be more emphasis on stress reduction through viewing nature" says Professor Godbey. For further information, visit: <http://www.hphpcentral.com/article/more-than-green-spaces>

## OUR DECLINING MAMMALS - PROTECTED AREAS DO MATTER

An epic candid camera experiment which spanned three continents and seven countries has captured the unthreatened, enquiring expressions of some of the world's rarest animals in a collection of 52,000 photographs. The global camera trap mammal study by international scientists documented 105 species from across Africa, America and Asia, helping to confirm the impact of habitat destruction on the diversity and survival of some animal populations.

"The results of the study are important in that they confirm what we suspected: habitat destruction is slowly but surely killing our planet's mammal diversity," said Dr Jorge Ahumada, an ecologist with the Tropical Ecology Assessment and Monitoring Network at Conservation International who led the study. "The two key findings are. First, protected areas matter: the bigger the forest they live in, the higher the number and diversity of species, body sizes and diet types. Second, some mammals seem more vulnerable to habitat loss than others..." The ongoing project is groundbreaking

because it will allow scientists to consistently monitor change in the habitat, health and survival of rare mammals on a global scale to better understand the roles they serve within particular ecosystems. For further information or to view the photographs visit: <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/the-secret-life-of-mammals-captured-on-film-2339045.html>

### **HIROSHIMA WORLD HERITAGE WORKSHOP**

In July 2011, WCPA members Ross Macleod and Angie Stringer travelled to Japan to attend a workshop on the recently released UNESCO publication '*Preparing World Heritage Nominations.*' This was the 9<sup>th</sup> in a series on the Conservation and Management of World Heritage Sites workshops being hosted by the Hiroshima office of the United Nations Training and Research Institutes (UNITAR).

The workshop series is designed to build capacity in member countries, and participants came from varied backgrounds relating to both cultural and natural heritage. Participants included 26 delegates from 16 countries. The workshop was supported by six resource professionals including Vice Chair at Large of WCPA Executive Committee, Cristi Norazowa and IUCN World Heritage Capacity Building Officer Leticia Leitao. The workshops main focus was on the *Preparing World Heritage Nominations* manual and the importance of a strong comparative analysis when preparing WH nominations. UNITAR's Hiroshima office, with strong support from the Hiroshima Prefecture, conducts a wide range of training opportunities for the Asia Pacific region.



UNITAR workshop participants in front of the World Heritage 'A bomb dome' site

The WH series seeks to utilize UNESCO's Convention on natural and cultural heritage more effectively by focusing on national policy making and planning, the office intends on continuing with WH series for the foreseeable future. For more information, visit: [www.unitar.org](http://www.unitar.org)

Ross MacLeod is Director and Angie Stringer is Principal Project Officer of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Partnerships and World Heritage branch, they are currently working on the extension of the Fraser Island World Heritage Area and World Heritage listing for suitable areas of Cape York Peninsula.

### **MESSAGE FROM THE 4TH WORLD CONFERENCE ON ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

The link below is to the SER2011 Mexico CALL to ACTION from the 1,000 delegates at the Society for Ecological Restoration's 4th World Conference on Ecological Restoration. The World Congress delegates congratulate the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity for their practical and forward looking Strategic Plan 2011-2020, including Targets 14 and 15 in which the Parties have agreed that by 2020, ecosystems of particular importance to water security, human health, and sustainable livelihoods are restored, and their resilience and contribution to carbon stocks enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including the restoration of at least 15% of degraded ecosystems. Click here for the full SER2011 Mexico CALL to ACTION: <http://www.ser2011.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/SER2011-Mexico-CALL-TO-ACTION-Final.pdf>

## **3. AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL NEWS**

### **MINISTER ANNOUNCES MAJOR RESPONSE TO HAWKE REVIEW**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> August while many of us were engaged with the IUCN Forum Hawke Review of National Environment Law the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities announced reforms designed 'on the one hand to strengthen environmental protections and on the other also make it easier for the business sector to meet its obligations environmentally'.

The Minister flagged major four corners of Australia for major conservation initiatives for the south west marine region, the Kimberley, the Cape and the Coral Sea and Tasmania's forests - The Minister stated that "there is an opportunity for iconic protection like we haven't seen since those Hawke, Keating years".

Gratifyingly for all of us in WCPA he stressed valuing connectivity. "Connections between landscapes are really important. You only get your environmental resilience by having your connections. That's what the corridors are about and the work that we're doing in the corridors. Once corridors are established, they once again don't become a lock up of land." He also stressed the importance.

Importantly but controversially from a state's point of view, the Minister announced his intention to add national parks as a matter of 'national environmental significance areas' where they are under some form of new threat, whether that new threat be grazing, mining, logging or large scale land clearing.

The speech covered many other items of interest so it is certainly worth all members familiarizing themselves with the speech. <http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/burke/2011/tr20110824.html>

### **THE WEST KIMBERLEY ADDED TO THE NATIONAL HERITAGE LIST**

On 31 August the West Kimberley was added to the National Heritage List. The West Kimberley is a vast area of dramatic and relatively undisturbed landscapes that has great biological richness and provides important geological and fossil evidence of Australia's evolutionary history. With sheer escarpments and pristine rivers that cut through sandstone plateau and ancient coral reefs to create spectacular waterfalls and deep gorges, the region's remoteness has created a haven that supports plant and animal species found nowhere else on the Australian continent. Against the backdrop of this extraordinary landscape is woven a remarkable account of Aboriginal occupation over the course of more than 40,000 years and the story of European exploration and settlement, from William Dampier's landing at Karrakatta Bay to the development of rich and vibrant pastoral and pearling industries that continue today. For further information, visit: <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/west-kimberley/index.html>

### **WWF PRAISE FOR AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL SAFETY NET**

An independent audit by WWF-Australia has praised efforts to build the National Reserve System as 'arguably the Australian Government's biggest conservation success story'. Environment Minister Tony Burke has launched the *WWF-Australia Building Nature's Safety Net 2011* report in Canberra. "Almost 20 years since former Prime Minister Bob Hawke first championed the idea of a National Reserve System, this independent report describes its critical role in protecting biodiversity and saving threatened species from extinction," Mr Burke said. Today the National Reserve System is a vibrant network of some 9,415 reserves, covering a range of ecosystems across the nation. The WWF report describes the National Reserve System as 'excellent value for money' - costing an average of only \$47 a hectare to buy wildlife habitat and protect it forever through the National Reserve System, or just \$5 a hectare to support the declaration and management of Indigenous Protected Areas. For further information, visit: <http://www.wwf.org.au/>

### **NEW QUEENSLAND CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY REPORT**

A new report about climate change and Queensland biodiversity draws on a wide range of methods to assess the vulnerability of species and habitats in each of Queensland's 14 bioregions. Published by the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management, the report draws upon biogeography, species distributions, genetic studies, temperature experiments and expert opinion. It operates from the principle that past responses to natural climate change provide the best guide to likely responses in the future. The report also includes a general chapter about the vulnerability of plants and animals to various climatic impacts including higher temperatures and more intense cyclones. The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildlife-ecosystems/biodiversity/climate-change-report.html>

## FROG LOG NOW AVAILABLE

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service describes "Frog Log" the new iPhone app as the ultimate, hand-held guide to the frogs of Tasmania, with frog calls, high quality scalable images, and information on habitat, distribution and breeding. The app can even be used to help Tassie's Parks and Wildlife Service by 'logging' occurrences of frogs in the wild! The app's 'sightings' function allows GPS-enabled devices to send in the coordinates of frog sightings. This will help scientists build a record of the distribution of frogs in Tasmania, an important task as the numbers of frogs is declining. Frog Log follows Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service's popular guide to Tasmanian birds, "A Bird in the Hand". For further information, visit:

<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=24139>

## GREEN.TV

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service has joined green.tv - a broadband TV channel for environmental films. Green.tv is the first website to bring together films from a whole range of environmental organisations and independent filmmakers and make them available to anyone anywhere. Green.tv is a broad environmental hub bringing together ideas and viewpoints from the world's leading environmental organisations, including UNEP, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, IUCN, and many more. See the Parks and Wildlife Channel at <http://sp.green.tv/parks-tasmania>

## HELP DEVELOP A WORLD-CLASS WALKING EXPERIENCE IN KAKADU

Kakadu National Park is developing a new walking track strategy and Parks Australia is after your help. Kakadu is a premier tourist destination in Australia's Top End, its natural beauty and outstanding cultural values attracting visitors from around Australia and the world. The park provides a range of opportunities for visitors to undertake day and overnight bushwalks. Parks Australia are now working with traditional owners and the tourism industry to open up new walking experiences which protect the park's World Heritage-listed natural and cultural values. They are particularly keen to develop an iconic walking trail - a well interpreted and truly memorable experience - similar to such renowned treks as Tasmania's Cradle Mountain and Central Australia's Larapinta Trail. To help Parks Australia make Kakadu a world-class walking destination why not take 5-10 minutes to fill in the questionnaire at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NCKRRN3>

## 4. NEW ZEALAND NEWS

### A MARINE PROTECTION STRATEGY FOR KAIKOURA



The stunning Kaikoura coastline

The launch of Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura draft marine strategy was held on 1 September 2011. Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura, the Kaikoura Coastal Marine Guardians, have come together to develop a management strategy for the Kaikoura coast. The Guardian's vision is a future where the moana (sea) of Kaikōura is richer and healthier. The marine environment will be used sustainably, providing for the needs of present and future generations. In this vision, people will interact with the sea in ways that care for its mauri (life force).

People's activity will be managed to respect the natural connections between living and physical elements and sustain the sea's dynamic ecological balance. Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura literally means the cloak of Te Tai o Marokura. Culturally it means to lay the cloak or mantle of Ngāti Kuī over Te Tai o Marokura, caring for the seas around Kaikōura. Submissions on the strategy are invited until 2 December 2011. To find out more about the strategy and to make a submission, go to: [www.teamkorowai.org.nz](http://www.teamkorowai.org.nz)

## MARINE AND FISHERIES PROTECTION MEASURES FOR THE SOUTH ISLAND'S WEST COAST

After a lengthy consultation process that began in 2005 with the formation of the West Coast Marine Protection Forum, five new marine reserves are to be established on the South Island's West Coast. The announcement was made by the Ministers of Conservation Kate Wilkinson and Fisheries Minister Phil Heatley on 26 August. The new reserves are Kahurangi (8466ha), Punakaiki (3558ha), Okarito (4641ha), Gorge (847ha) and a small educational site at Ship Creek near Haast (16ha), totalling 17,528ha combined. Kahurangi and Okarito will become the two largest marine reserves on New Zealand's mainland coast. All marine life in the reserves will be protected. Further information about the Forum and West Coast MPAs can be found at: <http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/marine-and-coastal/marine-protected-areas/other-protected-areas/proposed-west-coast-marine-protected-areas/>

An additional 9557ha of sea adjoining the Punakaiki and Gorge marine reserves will be protected from bottom trawling, dredging and Danish seining under fisheries legislation. As well, four mataitai reserves are to be established along the West Coast at Mussel Point, Ship Creek (Tauperikaka Point), Bruce Bay and Hunts Beach, totalling approximately 2.9 square kilometres. Mataitai reserves generally prohibit commercial fishing, but allow for recreational and other non-commercial fishing. The mataitai reserves come into effect on 22 September 2011. Further information can be found at: <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Press/West+Coast+mataitai+reserves+announced.htm>

## NEW PARTNERSHIP DOUBLES EFFORTS TO SAVE ENDANGERED WHIO

The Department of Conservation (DOC) and Genesis Energy have signed a \$2.5 million business partnership that will help secure the future of New Zealand's rare endangered whio (blue duck). The whio is only found in clean, fast-flowing rivers and streams. It is seen as an indicator species and an icon for the environmental health of New Zealand's back country waterways. DOC Director-General Al Morrison said development of the \$2.5 million partnership was a team effort between Genesis Energy and DOC, initiated by DOC's Whio Recovery Team and led by DOC's Commercial Business Unit (CBU). It will see DOC and Genesis Energy work together over the next five years to double the number of secure whio breeding sites across the country.

He says the partnership will help secure the future of whio, and reflects a growing recognition that investing in conservation is good for business. "This is exactly why we set up the CBU - to engage with forward-thinking businesses that can see the real value of protecting New Zealand's environment. It's good for conservation, and it's an area we're determined to build on," Mr Morrison said. The Genesis Energy Whio Recovery Programme partnership will fund a five-year management programme for whio. It will enable the implementation of a national recovery plan that will double the number of fully operational secure whio breeding sites throughout the country, and boost pest control efforts. For further information, visit: <http://doc.govt.nz/about-doc/news/media-releases/new-partnership-doubles-efforts-to-save-endangered-whio/>

## 5. PACIFIC ISLAND & PNG NEWS



### COOK ISLAND MARINE PARK UPDATE

IUCN Member Te Ipukarea Society is firmly behind the proposal by the Cook Islands Government to turn just over 50% of the country's EEZ into a marine park. This would make the area the largest marine park in the world, at around 1 million square km, or approximately 2.5% of the entire Pacific Ocean. The concept includes the establishment of a trust fund, to be capitalized through an intensive fund raising effort. The newest IUCN NGO member in the Pacific Islands, The Ipukarea Society (TIS), a Cook Islands environmental organisation, sees this proposal as a way to generate much needed funds

for conservation work throughout the country. "We hope that this would include a better resourced monitoring, control, and surveillance capability to stamp out illegal fishing by large foreign fishing vessels," says Kelvin Passfield of Te Ipukarea Society.

Photo Kelvin Passfield

<http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/oceania/?8227/Strengthening-support-for-largest-marine-park>

### **JAPAN FINDS RARE EARTHS IN PACIFIC SEABED**

Japanese researchers say they have discovered vast deposits of rare earth minerals, used in many hi-tech appliances, in the seabed. The geologists estimate that there are about a 100bn tons of the rare elements in the mud of the Pacific Ocean floor. At present, China produces 97% of the world's rare earth metals. Analysts say the Pacific discovery could challenge China's dominance, if recovering the minerals from the seabed proves commercially viable. The [British journal Nature Geoscience reported](#) that a team of scientists led by Yasuhiro Kato, an associate professor of earth science at the University of Tokyo, found the minerals in sea mud at 78 locations.

"The deposits have a heavy concentration of rare earths. Just one square kilometre of deposits will be able to provide one-fifth of the current global annual consumption," said Yasuhiro Kato. The minerals were found at depths of 3,500 to 6,000 metres (11,500-20,000 ft) below the ocean surface. However, there are environmental concerns, in particular potential damage caused by deep sea mining to marine ecosystems.

The Malaysian government is considering whether to allow the construction of an Australian-financed project to mine rare earths, in the face of local opposition focused on the fear of radioactive waste. The listed mining company Nautilus has the first license to mine the floor of the Bismarck and Solomon oceans around Papua New Guinea. It will be recovering what is called seafloor massive sulphide, for its copper and gold content. For further information, visit: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-14009910>



### **PACIFIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM**

The very first Pacific Environment Forum was recently held in Samoa. Drawing upon the expertise and experience of Pacific environment workers, delegates discussed three vital issues of importance to the Pacific region with presentations on: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, environmental governance in the Pacific and, adapting to climate change.

"We in the Pacific are fortunate that we still maintain to a large extent our traditions and practices that govern the way we manage and use our natural resources. We have also developed modern and contemporary systems," said the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Government of Samoa, Hon. Faamoetaulua Lealaiauloto Taito Ulaitino Dr F. Tumaalil. He further noted that "community ownership and leadership is at the core of environmental governance particularly because most of our lands are customary owned. Many of our national policies and strategies are meaningless if our communities are not a part of it."

For further information, visit: <http://www.sprep.org/>

### **SEA BIRD BREEDING COLONIES BENEFIT FROM RODENT REMOVAL MISSION IN PHOENIX ISLANDS**

For millennia, the remote, uninhabited Phoenix Islands in the central Pacific had been an ideal location for ground nesting seabirds, but the arrival of people also meant the arrival of rats, which easily preyed on eggs and chicks. A unique international expedition recently embarked on a campaign to help restore these important seabird breeding sites.

In the last week of July, the vessel RV Aquila returned to Apia, Samoa, after a successful mission to restore the wildlife of two more islands in Kiribati's Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA) through the removal of invasive rats. The PIPA Islands of Birnie and Enderbury were each targeted by two

helicopter drops of rat bait. 19 people from Kiribati, Australia, New Zealand, USA, South Africa, Cook Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia are part of a three country restoration mission across islands in the South Pacific Ocean.

The first two islands were restored in 2008 and with the conclusion of the 2011 mission; four of the eight islands will have been restored through removal of introduced pests. The PIPA team will now begin planning the next step of restoring the remaining four islands.

With an area over 400,000 square km, PIPA is the largest marine protected area in the Pacific Ocean and includes all eight of Kiribati's Phoenix Islands. It was declared a protected area in 2006 and was named a World Heritage Site in 2010.

#### **POWPA MEETING MINUTES**

The following link is to the most recent PoWPA meeting minutes:

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2011/ntf-2011-138-powpa-pacific-en.pdf>

#### **WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS**

A Regional workshop for the Pacific on updating national biodiversity strategies and action plans – incorporating work on valuation and incentive measures took place in the first week of October in Nadi, Fiji. The minutes from the workshop can be found at the following link:

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/nbsap/nbsapcbw-pac-02/official/nbsapcbw-pac-02-01-add1-en.pdf>

## **6. UPCOMING**

#### **OCEANZ 2011, 12 AND 13 NOVEMBER 2011**

This diving conference and exhibition will be held in Tauranga. Guest speakers include Dr Roger Grace, marine conservationist and MPA advocate. Find out more at: [www.oceanzdiveconference.com](http://www.oceanzdiveconference.com)

#### **INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY, 5 – 9 DECEMBER 2011**

The conference is being held in Auckland and the theme is “*Engaging Society in Conservation*”. There is also a Marine Conservation Think Tank, comprising 14 marine-themed focus groups, to be held 2 – 5 December 2011. Find out more at: [www.conbio.org/2011](http://www.conbio.org/2011)

#### **FIFTH NATIONAL WETLAND RESTORATION SYMPOSIUM, 21 - 23 MARCH 2012**

The symposium is being organised by the Southland Wetlands Working Party in conjunction with the National Wetland Trust. The symposium will be held in Invercargill. Deadline for abstracts is 1 September 2011. Find out more at: [www.wetlandtrust.org.nz](http://www.wetlandtrust.org.nz)