THE IUCN WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS
OCEANIA
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Award winning experiences in Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park, Tasmania - Anna Donald

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FROM THE VICE CHAIR

Dear Colleagues,

WCPA members in Australia ended 2011 with a Connectivity Conservation Forum at Sydney Botanical Gardens. WCPA partnered with Great Eastern Ranges and appreciated the support of the Office of Environment NSW. Over 100 attended the event which underscored the centrality of the landscape scale concept and the strong development of initiatives all over the world and nationally.

In January the VC took annual leave on the way to the WCPA Steering Committee meeting in Senegal which included 6 days in Senegal before the meeting to look at their parks. Unfortunately the political situation deteriorated and the meeting was cancelled as we were in the air between Casablanca and Dakar. After advice we kept to our plan and visited Langue de Barbarie and Djoudj National Parks. They were a sobering look at the immense problems of achieving conservation in extreme poverty and poor governance. The Meeting is being rescheduled for May at IUCN headquarters.

The on-going saga of the Australian bid to hold the IUCN World Parks Congress in 2014 is slowly edging to a conclusion – we hope positive and I hope to be able to let members know in the next few weeks. Finally thank you to Louise O’Flynn who put much of this newsletter together in my absence and Naomi Doake and Kathy Walls for their contributions to the first edition of the Newsletter in 2012.

MEMBER OPPORTUNITIES

ACIUCN in partnership with South Australian Department of Environment and Natural Resources is holding a symposium on ‘Innovation for 21st Century Conservation’. It is the second in the Science informing policy series. The event is invitation only due to the style of event and also venue restrictions. Many presenters are WCPA members. However if other members feel they could contribute to such a forum we may have additional spaces so please indicate by emailing Penelope.figgis@ozemail.com.au

The World Heritage for Cape York Peninsula Discussion paper is out for comment. It would be highly appropriate if WCPA put in a submission on the topic. Are there members with some capacity who might draft a response? Please let me know emailing me personally – see above. The paper can be found at cypwh@derm.qld.au

REPRESENTATIONS

The WCPA has supported the declaration of a large marine protected area for the Coral Sea.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

In January we had the sad news of the untimely death of John Hibberd who is a long term member of the World Commission and has made many contributions over a lifetime to nature conservation, most recently heading up the Canberra and South East Environment Centre. Well known NSW conservationist, Peter Prineas has been honoured with an OAM. WCPA was also pleased to see an
Australian honour for Jeffery Lee, senior custodian of Koongara who made the key decision to have his traditional lands incorporated into Kakadu National Park and World Heritage Area. Congratulations to Jon Tanzer who has become Marine Director of WWF International.

2. INTERNATIONAL NEWS

WCPA CHAIR NIK LOPOUKHINE HONOURED

Nik Lopoukhine, Chair of IUCN WCPA, was honoured with the J.B. Harkin Award recently for his life-long commitment to Canadian conservation. The award, named after the “Father of National Parks” J.B. Harkin, honours individuals who have made significant contributions to the conservation of Canada’s parks and wilderness. The award presenters noted Nik’s continuous efforts in stimulating scientific discussion within Parks Canada and for promoting Canadian conservation and park values globally.

PROTECTED, NATURALLY

More than 180,000 protected areas now cover over 12% of the world’s land area and 7.2% of coastal waters. They play an important role in reducing carbon emissions and helping people adapt to the impacts of climate change. These are the findings of a newly-published paper in the journal Solutions. Protected areas conserve natural ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, mangroves and grasslands contributing to the two main responses to climate change: mitigation through carbon capture and storage, and adaptation such as protection against extreme weather and provision of clean water.

“Ecosystem-based approaches will be critical elements in national and local climate strategies, complementing reductions in energy use and investments in hard infrastructure and new technologies... Additional financial support will be needed for the global protected area network to meet new challenges presented by climate change. National and international policy efforts must be better coordinated” explains Trevor Sandwith, Director of IUCN’s Global Protected Areas Programme. For further information, visit: http://www.iucn.org/news_homepage/all_news_by_theme/protected_areas_news/?8667/Protected-naturally

PARKS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Albania is a country of rich natural wealth but where many people struggle to make ends meet. One plan under way is to get the country’s national parks and other protected areas to support the needs of people as well as nature. Despite its small size, Albania has a rich biological diversity and over a third of the country is covered in forests—home to wolves, bears, lynx, wild boar and many more species. Albania is making great progress in conservation, doubling its network of protected areas from 5.8% of the country’s total land area in 2005 to 12.57% in 2009. In a two-year project, experts from IUCN, the Italian Development Cooperation and Albania’s Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration (MoEFWA), are identifying priority needs in safeguarding ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation. The project is targeting sustainable economic activities for local populations living near or within Shebenik-Jablanica National Park and Velipojë Protected Landscape, both selected for the vast ecosystem services they provide to people.

Key to the project is demonstrating the broad range of benefits that communities could enjoy from healthy, well-functioning ecosystems, such as better protection from floods. The project will train officials on the management of protected areas and raising awareness that will help local and national governments to better exploit the natural potential of these areas. For further information http://www.iucn.org/news_homepage/all_news_by_theme/protected_areas_news/?9082/Advance-Albania

GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PROTECTED AREAS

Good governance is crucial for protected areas to achieve their conservation goals. This conviction was shared by the participants at the CBD PoWPA capacity building workshop held recently in Cape Town where IUCN TILCEPA’s (the IUCN WCPA-CEESP inter-Commission Theme on Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Equity and Protected Areas) Drs Margaret Jacobsohn and Nigel Crawhall made presentations that emphasized the link between ensuring fair, effective governance and efforts to improve management of protected areas.
The participants discussed examples of best-practices in PA governance, using the case of Namibia as an example, where a Community Conservancy network has been in operation since the time of independence. They also noted that successful governance often occurs in situations of conflict, where one party or agency takes responsibility, initiating dialogue between parties and thereby creating a platform for improving governance.

The workshop was part of the CBD’s efforts to implement its Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) in Central, East and Southern Africa. A Protected Areas Governance Resource Kit in all UN languages will be released by IUCN TILCEPA in cooperation with GiZ and partners in 2012. Further information about TILCEPA:
http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/ceesp/what_we_do/wg/tilcepa.cfm

NATURE’S KEY TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR LIBYA
A new IUCN report has called for improvements in the legal and institutional framework of conservation in Libya. So far, only four Libyan sites have been declared protected areas or are being considered for protection; however the report identifies 24 new marine and coastal areas for protection due to their natural and economic value.

Although not currently a top priority for Libya, Alain Jeudy de Grissac one of the authors of the report believes that “if we manage it properly, Libya’s natural heritage and natural resources can play an important role in securing a better future for the country and for the Mediterranean environment.” It is argued that by protecting threatened species, introducing sustainable fishing practices and developing eco-tourism, places like Al Araar-Bouverat can bring wide-ranging benefits to local people. The report also highlights opportunities for trans-boundary conservation in the region. Further information:
http://www.iucn.org/news_homepage/?8583/Natures-key-to-a-bright-future-for-Libya

NEW NATIONAL PARK FOR SIERRA LEONE
Sierra Leone’s president has officially declared the Gola Rainforest a national park. A statement from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security says that the Gola Rainforest has been identified as a “Biodiversity hotspot” and is of global importance because of its rich variety of plants and animals. The Gola Rainforest National Park lies in the country’s southeast at the border with Liberia. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds says the declaration of the over 71,000-hectare Gola Rainforest as a national park should subdue ongoing threats from logging and mining. Further information:

VOLCANO AND CLOUD FORESTS CONSERVED IN ECUADOR
Conservation organisations and the Ecuadorian government have succeeded in securing over 250,000 acres (106,000 hectares) of cloud forest and grasslands surrounding the Antisana Volcano for protection. Further information: http://www.cbd.int/information/news.shtml

3. AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL NEWS

AUSTRALIA: STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT
The full set of report products are available online at environment.gov.au/soe, and hard copies of the report (~1000 pages) and ‘in-brief’ summary (~50 pages), and CDs of the hard copy and supplementary materials are also available (free) and can be ordered at http://www.environment.gov.au/soe/publications/index.html#soe2011.

CORAL SEA COMMONWEALTH MARINE RESERVE PROPOSAL
IUCN and IUCN WCPA have supported the concept of a large marine protected area for the Coral Reef which high levels of protection. Although globally IUCN supports The Federal Government has released for public comment a draft plan for the Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve. Public submissions will be accepted up until 24 February 2012. The Coral Sea region covers 989, 842 square kilometres of Australian waters and seabed east of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, out

WORLD FIRST ON HENDERSON ISLAND

A ground-breaking operation to restore Henderson Island, a remote island near Pitcairn in the Pacific is now complete. At 43km², Henderson is the largest tropical or sub-tropical island ever to be subject to a rat eradication operation and the first time such an operation had been conducted from a ship. A monitoring expedition will take place in 2013 to determine whether rats have successfully been eradicated from the World Heritage Listed Henderson Island.

The island has been identified by Birdlife International as an Important Bird Area (IBA) for its endemic land birds and breeding seabirds. Since their introduction, rats have had a devastating impact on the island, killing over 25,000 petrel chicks a year whereby driving the Henderson petrel towards extinction and as well as reducing the seabird population to 40,000 pairs (the population was once in the millions). Rats have also limited the population of other endemic bird species and altered the forest through seed consumption, whilst also preying upon marine turtle hatchings and Henderson’s unique invertebrate populations. Further information: www.rspb.org.uk/hendersonisland

TEMPERATE GRASSLANDS CONSERVATION INITIATIVE (TGCI)

The Grassland Management Conference was held in November 2011 in Wyndham Victoria. The conference brought together 250 grassland specialists from across Australia, including WCPA members. Over two days a range of topics were presented by experts and leaders in the industry such as strategic planning for Victoria’s grasslands; restoration of grassland communities; conserving threatened flora and fauna species; community engagement; monitoring; compliance and a range of grassland management techniques. In addition to conveying important information about the current status of grasslands, strategies and projects, the conference provided an opportunity for people working in the area of grassland management to share their experience. For further information about the conference, visit www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/grasslandconference. If you would like to know more about the Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (TGCI) or are keen to become involved in the TGCI network, please contact Naomi Doake at: tgciiucn@gmail.com or nomes06@gmail.com

INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS SPECIAL ISSUE


INVERTEBRATES ONLINE

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service website now provides a unique insight into the State’s remarkable invertebrate fauna. Tasmania contains a wealth of invertebrate species of ancient origin and is home to an unusually high proportion of endemic species, with nearly half of the invertebrate species found within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area found nowhere else on Earth. Many invertebrate species have greatly restricted ranges, such as the blind velvet worm, while others occupy remarkably narrow niches, such as the pandani moth which feeds solely within the fronds of the endemic pandani, the world’s tallest heath plant. Further information: http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/?base=11201
OVERLAND TRACK TAKES OUT AWARD
The Overland Track in Tasmania’s World Heritage listed Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park has won the award for best adventure holiday destination in the Australian Traveller Magazine’s Readers’ Choice Awards. Tasmanian Minister for Tourism, Scott Bacon, said more than 1000 Australian Traveller readers nominated their all-time favourite travel destinations and experiences throughout Australia in 2011 in a survey conducted by the magazine over three months in 2011. “It is great to see one of Tasmania’s iconic wilderness experiences getting the recognition it deserves at a national level,” he said.

Anna Donald

COOPERATION TO CONSERVE THE CAIRNS COASTLINE
In the first time in Australia’s history an Indigenous Protected Area has been declared over existing World Heritage areas and national parks nearly 10,000 hectares of the Wet Tropics The dedication of Mandingalbay Yidinji Indigenous Protected Area took place in November 2011. Mandingalbay Yidinji country lies just east of Cairns across the Trinity Inlet. Straddling the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Areas, the region includes a great diversity of environments - mangroves, freshwater wetlands, rainforest clad mountains, coastal beaches, reefs and islands. The dedication is testament to the hard work of the traditional owners, who have taken a partnership approach to reach their goal of ‘putting country back together’.


A NEW INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA FOR NSW
Traditional owners gathered at Nambucca Heads in late November 2011 to celebrate the declaration of the 111 hectare Gumma Indigenous Protected Area. Just south of Nambucca Heads on the north coast of New South Wales, next to the Gaagal Wanggaan (South Beach) National Park, Gumma is a culturally significant landscape and a refuge for biodiversity.

Baga Baga traditional owner Conway Marshall said that sustainable management of the landscape and its species was embedded in Gumbaynggirr culture. “We still use this area and maintain our connection to this sacred and culturally significant place. For our people Mimi Wagar (Mother Earth) is central to our beliefs. She is a living entity, sustaining all life and organising the balance between ecosystems. Gaagal (the sea) is our totem,” he said.

“That’s why we have a responsibility to look after this place, to pass down our cultural knowledge about our connection to water and why we must protect the landscape... Declaring our country an Indigenous Protected Area will help us to look after Gumma through litter management, weed and feral animal control. Further information: http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/media-releases/mr25nov11.html

ENHANCING GONDWANA RAINFORESTS OF AUSTRALIA WORLD HERITAGE AREA
The Queensland Government has spent $40 million to acquire 705 hectares of high conservation land to be added to Springbrook National Park. Springbrook, in the Gold Coast Hinterland is a place of outstanding natural beauty and environmental significance with waterfalls, lush rainforest, ancient trees and magnificent views. It is part of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area—Australia’s most ancient forests. With more than 600 plant species and 272 animal species recorded, it is a place of exceptional biodiversity.

The Queensland Government’s vision for Springbrook plateau is a vibrant community underpinned by World Heritage values. For further information, visit: http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/parks/springbrook/restoration/index.html
RICH SPECIES FINDS ON NED’S CORNER STATION

Pobblebonk frogs and puffball mushrooms are just some of the species that are emerging in response to rains in the desert country of northwest Victoria where a team of Bush Blitz scientists are surveying Ned’s Corner Station – a Victorian Trust for Nature private reserve - in search of new species. It's part of the Bush Blitz program – a three-year partnership between the Australian Government, BHP Billiton and Earthwatch Australia that aims to document the plants and animals across Australia’s National Reserve System.


4. NEW ZEALAND NEWS

MOTUTAPU ISLAND PROVIDES REFUGE FOR FRESHWATER NATIVES IN DECLINE

Two native freshwater species with declining populations have been released on pest-free Motutapu Island. Redfin bullies, New Zealand’s most colourful native fish, and koura, or native crayfish, were released into Home Bay Stream on Motutapu on 26 November 2011. The release was led by DOC with support from the Motutapu Restoration Trust, Ngai Tai and the Mahurangi Technical Institute. The release is part of DOC’s programme to move at risk native wildlife onto Motutapu and neighbouring Rangitoto Island after eradicating animal pests including rats, stoats and possums from the islands.

"Nationally koura and red fin bully populations are declining due to habitat loss, loss of water quality and other factors," said DOC ranger Callum Bourke who led the release of the freshwater species. Bourke believes that this is the first translocation of redfin bullies in the wild. It is possible that koura lived on Motutapu in the distant past but disappeared following a catastrophic event such as the Rangitoto eruption 700 years ago. It is hoped that both species will in time establish self-sustaining populations on the island. For further information, visit: http://doc.govt.nz/about-doc/news/media-releases/motutapu-island-provides-refuge-for-freshwater-natives-in-decline/

DOGS PART OF DEFENCE FOR PEST-FREE ISLANDS OF EASTERN BAY OF ISLANDS

Two specially trained Department of Conservation (DOC) rodent dogs are working to help keep the eastern Bay of Islands clear of rats and mice. DOC's Conservation Dogs Programme have been working on the pest-free islands from Urupukapuka to Motuarohia (Roberton Island) throughout the winter.

DOC Ranger Angela Newport (Cody’s handler) says, "Cody and Neela really earn their keep. Cody recently flushed out a female Norway rat that had made it out to Otehei Bay on Urupukapuka Island. The rat was later caught in a trap." Fleur Corbett (Chair, Guardians of the Bay of Islands, the community group behind Project Island Song) explains that “Cody and Neela are a vital part of the islands' defences. They are active across the islands as well as on the mainland. For further information, visit: http://doc.govt.nz/about-doc/news/media-releases/rodent-dogs-vital-part-of-defence-for-pest-free-islands-of-eastern-bay-of-islands/

REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR BIODIVERSITY

IUCN is undertaking global consultation on the consolidation of criteria used to identify sites of importance for biodiversity through a joint SSC/WCPA Task Force. A first consultation workshop was held at the International Congress of Conservation Biology (ICCB) in New New Zealand. The primary threat to biodiversity remains the destruction of important natural
habitats, and so the primary response must remain to safeguard these places. But how do we know where these places are? The aim of the consultation workshop was to get feedback and input from participants on the general framework of the project and criteria to be considered. Further information: http://news.mongabay.com/2011/0821-hance_pas_deforestation.html

5. PACIFIC ISLAND & PNG NEWS

NEW CLIMATE CHANGE APPOINTMENT

Congratulations to WCPA Oceania key figure and regular newsletter contributor Ana Tiraa for her appointment as Director of the recently established Cook Islands Department of Climate Change at the Office of the Prime Minister. Ana is a well-respected conservationist both locally and internationally. With a background in natural resources management and climate change, Ana is a very suitable choice for this newly created position.

SPREP LAUNCHES CLEAN PACIFIC 2012

On World Wetlands Day 2nd February SPREP officially launched The Clean Pacific 2012 campaign. The campaign has 4 objectives to help achieve a clean Pacific region. The following quotes from a speech by Director General, David Sheppard.

"The first objective is to increase the capacity of Pacific islanders to better manage waste and control pollution. Together we are building capacity to manage waste and also implementing the 3Rs approach to waste: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. In other words we should Reduce the level of waste we produce, we should Reuse items rather than throwing them away, and we should Recycle items that can be recycled. The 3Rs can make a big difference and can help us achieve a Clean Pacific. These are also three simple words that we can all apply in our day to day life.

The second objective of the Clean Pacific 2012 is to support grassroots actions for a cleaner Pacific region. The old adage that you should think globally, but act locally is fundamental for achieving a Clean Pacific. Local communities and villages must be directly involved in better managing waste and controlling pollution. Clean up programmes such as today’s clean up at lake Lanonofo’o and last years’ partnership between SPREP, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and Rotary Samoa on a clean up programme in Manono, can also play an important role. However, action on waste management and pollution must start from and build on action at the village and grassroots level.

The third objective of Clean Pacific 2012 targets the policy makers across the region to encourage the adoption of better waste management and pollution control policies. Waste and pollution cut across all sectors - public health, tourism, agriculture, and biodiversity such as is found in wetland areas, and we need to work together to find common solutions and maximize our limited resources.

The fourth and final objective of Clean Pacific 2012 is to encourage our Pacific island governments to ratify regional and international pollution-related agreements, such as those designed to prevent and manage marine pollution from ships. Without these international agreements, our Pacific region would not have the power or resources to regulate pollution from larger developed countries.

**SCIENCE AND ECONOMICS: NEXT STEPS FOR MANGROVE PLANS**

As part of IUCN Oceania’s MESCAL project, a workshop was held in December 2011 to discuss and develop research methodologies to gather baseline information on the flora and fauna associated with mangrove ecosystems of Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Samoa. “Science, economics and governance are important elements for sustainable management of any natural system and these are areas the MESCAL team focused on specifically during the workshop,” said Milika Sobey, Water and Wetlands Programme Coordinator at IUCN Oceania Regional Office.

Over thirty participants from the five participating countries and partner organisations attended the workshop, which was held in December 2011 in Honiara, Solomon Islands. For this component of the project, IUCN is working with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the University of the South Pacific, an IUCN Member.

The four day workshop ended with country delegates drafting their respective implementation plans which would be pursued in the next year. The regional project, Managing Ecosystems and Climate change Adaptation and Livelihoods (MESCAL), is being implemented in the five countries and encourages inter-agency coordination for the management of mangroves and related ecosystems. For further information, visit: [http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/oceania/?8926/Science-and-economics-next-steps-for-mangrove-plans](http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/oceania/?8926/Science-and-economics-next-steps-for-mangrove-plans)

**PACIFIC CHARTS COURSE FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE**

Pacific Island Countries committed to reviewing and updating their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) at a regional meeting held in Nadi in the second half of 2011. The 10th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity last year approved a series of far-reaching decisions that seek to refine the implementation of the convention and define clear targets to move forward on.

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the twenty Aichi targets outline the approach to meet these targets. The meeting was well attended by representatives from regional non-government organisations including SPREP, IUCN, RARE, BirdLife International and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and participants from Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. For further information, visit: [http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/oceania/oro_newsarchive/?8906/Pacific-charts-course-for-conservation-of-nature](http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/oceania/oro_newsarchive/?8906/Pacific-charts-course-for-conservation-of-nature)

**6. UPCOMING**