

NEWS

Message from the Regional Director



Don Stewart

Welcome to the first edition of this e-bulletin from the BirdLife International Pacific Partnership through its Secretariat in Suva, Fiji. It I hope you find it informative and interesting.

The e-bulletin fills a communications gap for BirdLife Partners in the Pacific, and for the wider public, by conveying up-to-date news and articles on what actions are being taken, or are required, to conserve birds and biodiversity in the region. It contains stories about the people working to save the region's threatened species, habitats and sites plus other items such as funding and volunteer opportunities - all vital components of BirdLife's mission to improve the quality of life for birds, for other wildlife and for people by focusing on birds and the sites and habitats on which they depend.

The e-bulletin will be distributed quarterly and I hope this first issue will encourage you to read the second and subsequent versions. Contributions are welcome.

BirdLife in the Pacific

The BirdLife International Pacific Partnership includes seven Partner organisations working in Australia (Birds Australia), Cook Islands (Te Ipukarea Society), French Polynesia (Société d'Ornithologie de Polynésie), New Caledonia (Société Calédonienne d'Ornithologie), New Zealand (Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Inc), Palau (Palau Conservation Society) and Samoa (O le Si'osi'omaga Society Inc). BirdLife International is also delivering a conservation Programme in Fiji pending the development of an eligible national NGO to become the BirdLife Partner in the country. The Partnership is supported by a regional Secretariat based in Fiji that provides technical, logistical, programmatic and fundraising support to the Pacific Partners. For more information and the latest news on BirdLife's work in the Pacific, see www.birdlife.org/regional/pacific



LATEST NEWS

World governments fail to deliver on 2010 biodiversity target:

www.birdlife.org/news/news/2010/04/2010-CBD-biodiversity-target-fails.html

THIS E-BULLETIN

This e-bulletin is produced by the BirdLife International Pacific Partnership Secretariat to inform our collaborators and supporters about BirdLife activities in the Pacific. In case you have any questions about this e-bulletin or about the work of the BirdLife Pacific Partnership, please contact us at birds@birdlifepacific.org.fj

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BIRDLIFE INITIATIVES IN THE PACIFIC



IUCN Red List categories

Species

BirdLife International brings PEP to the Pacific



Above: Tuamotu Kingfisher
(Photo SOP Manu)
Below: Fiji Petrel (Photo Jörg Kretzschmar, NatureFiji-MareqetiViti)



Globally, one in eight bird species is threatened with extinction, including 192 which are Critically Endangered (CR). The Pacific hosts 44 (23%) of the most threatened bird species in the world - more than any other region. The Pacific also has the dubious distinction of recording the greatest number of bird extinctions of any other region of the world: 70 of the 133 bird extinctions recorded globally since 1500 - an incredible 53% - are known to have occurred here. The BirdLife International Pacific Partnership is working together to prevent any more species going extinct, through the 'Preventing Extinctions Programme' (PEP). PEP is a global programme incorporating all of BirdLife's work on threatened species. It builds on two new communities: *Species Guardians* - the people and organisations best placed to carry out the necessary conservation work; and *Species Champions* - individuals, institutions and companies who are financially supporting the conservation action of the Species Guardians.

In the Pacific, Species Guardians have been appointed for five Critically Endangered species: in French Polynesia, SOP-Manu (BirdLife in French Polynesia) has become the Species Guardian for Polynesian Ground-dove, Fatu Hiva Monarch, Tahiti Monarch and Tuamotu Kingfisher; while in Fiji, NatureFiji-MareqetiViti is the Species Guardian for the Fiji Petrel. Conservation action is being implemented for these five CR species, funded by the British Birdwatching Fair, the BirdLife International Community Conservation Fund, the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, among others. However, more species still need Guardians, and especially Champions! For details, visit www.birdlife.org/extinction or contact mark@birdlifepacific.org.fj.

La population de Monarque de Tahiti rajeunit mais les Martins-chasseurs vénéré l'empêchent de s'établir

Depuis 1998, la Société d'Ornithologie de Polynésie « Manu » (SOP Manu) mène un programme de conservation du Monarque de Tahiti *Pomarea nigra*, classé en danger critique d'extinction. En 2009, 33 individus de Monarques de Tahiti ont été dénombrés, dont 22 fixés sur des territoires. La santé de la population de monarques s'améliore, en particulier dans une des 3 vallées occupées avec jusqu'à 16 individus observés (contre 11 en 2008). On constate également un rajeunissement rapide de la population sur les 15 derniers mois : le nombre de jeunes individus est passé de 2 en janvier 2009 à 10 en mars 2010.

Dans une des vallées, les altercations entre monarques et Martins-chasseurs vénérés *Todiramphus veneratus* sont régulières. Le plus souvent, les couples de monarques fixés sur leurs territoires font face à cet oiseau connu pour être agressif. Toutefois, il est à noter qu'un couple de monarques a été chassé de son territoire en février 2010. Il est vraisemblable que la présence de martins-chasseurs dans des secteurs favorables aux monarques empêche les jeunes de s'y établir. SOP Manu a commencé le déplacement des martins-chasseurs afin d'offrir de nouveaux espaces colonisables par les monarques.

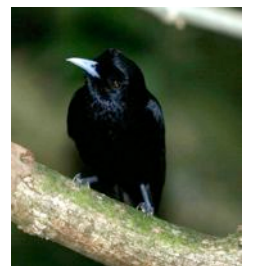
English translation, summary: Since 1998, SOP Manu is implementing a successful conservation programme for the Critically Endangered Tahiti Monarch. In 2009, a total of 33 individuals were counted, with the number of juvenile birds increasing from 2 in January 2009 to 10 in March 2010. However, some Monarchs are known to have been chased away by Tahiti Kingfishers. For more details, contact Thomas Ghestemme at tghestemme@manu.pf



Tahiti Monarch
(Photo SOP Manu)

Catastrophic decline of the Fatu Hiva Monarch forces increased conservation measures

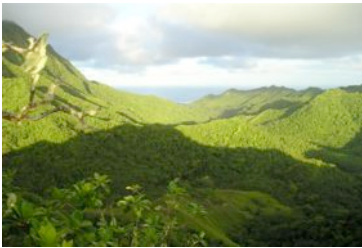
The endemic Fatu Hiva Monarch (Critically Endangered) *Pomarea whitneyi* in the Marquesas archipelago has been disappearing since the arrival of the Ship Rat 20 years ago. In 2009, SOP Manu did a five-month survey of the island of Fatu Hiva to compare data with those from the 2007 census and found a catastrophic situation. 32 territories were known in 2007, but only 13 territories were found in 2009: a decrease of 60 %. SOP Manu found only 41 birds and estimates the total current population stands at 67. In 2009, feral cats have been identified as a threat, specially for adult birds. Effective annual rat control has been ongoing on accessible territories since 2008. In the protected valley of Omoa, SOP Manu recorded an increase of number of territories (8 in 2009 against 5 in 2007) and observed successful nests. This positive result suggests that creating another, larger controlled area in an accessible part of the island could allow birds to be translocated to it from valleys where protection is impossible. The swift decline of the already small population makes it imperative that conservation efforts are increased in and after 2010. Funding is urgently needed to halt the decline before losing one more individual. For more information or if you can help, please contact Thomas Ghestemme at tghestemme@manu.pf (with contributions by Maden Le Barh and Ed Saul).



Fatu Hiva Monarch
(Photo T Ghestemme, SOP Manu)

Sites

The IBA Cook Book - BirdLife and Te Ipukarea Society to produce IBA directory for the Cook Islands



Takitumu Conservation Area (Photo Lynda Valerie, TCA)



The Cook Islands comprise 15 islands with a total area of 237km² and a human population of 18,000. It includes the Southern Cook Islands Endemic Bird Area (EBA). The country has a high level of endemism, but in common with other Polynesian Islands, relatively low species diversity. Birds are well represented, 26% of the avifauna is endemic, of which six species are globally threatened. The islands also support three non-endemic threatened species including the recently reintroduced Rimatara Lorikeet (Endangered). However, significant gaps still exist in the overall knowledge of sites and threatened species in the Cook Islands which is hampering decision-makers to set science-based conservation priorities. Important Bird Areas (IBAs) have not been researched, making the Cook Islands one of the last Pacific Islands not to have an IBA process completed or underway.

With funding obtained from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, BirdLife International and Te Ipukarea Society (TIS, BirdLife in the Cook Islands) will fill this gap and will work together with other regional, national and local stakeholders to identify, discuss and agree a set of IBAs in the Cook Islands. This will provide a widely supported list of priority sites for conservation, which can then be used for local and national advocacy to ensure sites are included in planning and policy decisions. For more information, contact mark@birdlifepacific.org.fj

Mining New Zealand's National Parks



Stockton mine (Photo Pete Lusk)

New Zealand's government is looking into mining 7,000 hectares of the country's top conservation land and national parks. These pristine conservation areas are a key part of the country's 21 billion dollar tourism industry and contain some of its most imperilled species, such as its North Island Brown Kiwi. Forest & Bird, the BirdLife Partner in New Zealand, has launched strong opposition to the government's plans by organising marches and public meetings throughout the country. So far, Forest & Bird has generated thousands of letters of opposition (e-cards and submissions) and 50,000 people marched against the plans in Auckland on the 1st of May. See www.radionz.co.nz/news/stories/2010/04/14/1247fe0b21d4 and www.forestandbird.org.nz/what-we-do/campaigns/too-precious-mine for more information.

Habitats

Island surveys in French Polynesia



Thierry and the local guide, Vatea Hapipi checking burrows for Audubon's Shearwater at Motu Oa, Marquesas Islands (Photo Sue Waugh). Surveys funded by the David & Lucile Packard Foundation and the Aage V Jensen Charity Foundation

In March/April, a SOP Manu team conducted a series of site surveys in French Polynesia for seabird populations and invasive species. The team was led by Julie Champeau, assisted by Thierry Autai, along with Steve Cranwell and Susan Waugh from the BirdLife Pacific Partnership Secretariat and botanist Jean-Francois Butaud. They visited around 15 sites, surveying seabird populations and introduced mammalian threats with the intention of identifying priority islands for restoration. The two sites (Hatu Iti and Motu Oa) surveyed in the Marquesas archipelago were remote rocky islands with fantastic seabird populations, including several thousand pairs of Sooty Terns and Audubon's Shearwater, along with a host of boobies, noddies and tropic-birds. The second set of sites were in the Gambier group, where the team was assisted by Johnny Reasin, a keen natural historian and landowner in the Gambiers. Rats were confirmed present on the majority of islands surveyed, and goats and rabbits on some of them. Removing these alien mammals would protect breeding populations of several seabird species, including globally threatened Phoenix and Polynesian Storm-petrels. An evaluation of the costs and benefits of restoring these islands will lead to the completion of one or more eradications within the next year. Please contact susan@birdlifepacific.org.fj or steve@birdlifepacific.org.fj for more details.



2010 World Forestry Day in Fiji: 1 Million Trees Campaign



The Government of Fiji launched a 'One Million Trees Campaign' to support World Forestry Day (WFD, 21 March 2010), to celebrate 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity and 2011 as the International Year of Forests. The theme of the campaign is 'Plant a million trees – our GIFT to future generations'. The campaign is part of the Government's efforts to comply with the Convention of Biological Diversity target for 2010, to reduce biodiversity loss due to unstoppable ecological degradation associated with the depletion of the world's forests.

The BirdLife International Fiji Programme supports the campaign through the Site Support Groups (SSGs) in Nabukelevu and Natewa Tunuloa IBAs. In Nabukelevu, 20 indigenous vesi trees (*Instia bijuga*) were planted by the SSG and the communities during a management planning workshop held in Daviqele village, Nabukelevu (see article below). The SSG also germinates their own seedlings of vesi wai (*Millettia pinnata*), nokonoko (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) and some coastal plants in the village nursery for replanting. In the Natewa Tunuloa IBA, communities plant coastal plants such as dilo (*Calophyllum inophyllum*) and dogo (*Bruguiera gymnorrhiza*). These activities generate participation in the 1 Million Trees campaign, and will continue to raise awareness about the importance of conserving trees and forests. Contact milly@birdlifepacific.org.fj for more details.

People

A baseline for conservation and livelihoods in Kayangel, Palau



Rat damage in coconut tree (Photo PCS). Project funded by the UK Government Darwin Initiative and the Micronesia Conservation Trust

The Palau Conservation Society (PCS, BirdLife in Palau), together with BirdLife International and other partners, is eradicating invasive alien species on the four islands of Kayangel atoll, Palau. Kayangel is a priority site for conservation because of the IBA on the island of Ngeriungs, home to the Endangered Micronesian Megapode. Invasive species (rats and mice) decrease the populations of ground nesting birds such as the megapode. They also have a negative impact on the people of Kayangel, by spreading disease and destroying crops. PCS developed a comprehensive socio-economic and biodiversity monitoring programme to measure the project's success. This began in March 2010 with the gathering of baseline data. Preliminary results include:

(1) PCS found more megapodes on Ngeriungs Island, the IBA, than on the other three islands in the atoll. (2) Of the people who had crops, half said that rats had damaged their crops, with some reporting a near 50% loss. (3) Most people were aware of invasive species such as rats, but few people knew how they were transported to the island.

In addition to serving as a baseline, this survey will help PCS prioritise further activities. For more information, contact Steve Cranwell at steve@birdlifepacific.org.fj or Anu Gupta at agupta@palaucconservation.org or read the story on www.birdlife.org/news/news/2010/04/A-baseline-for-conservation-and-livelihoods-in-Palau.html.

Sustainable livelihoods at a community-declared protected area in Fiji



BirdLife's Tuverea Tuamoto and SSG Chairman Jovesa Drau after the signing of the MoU (Photo Kelera Macedru, NatureFiji-MareqetiViti). Project funded by CEPF and GEF-SGP

On 14 April, ten *mataqalis* (Fijian landowning clans) from the district of Nabukelevu, in the southern island of Kadavu, Fiji, signed a MoU with the BirdLife Fiji Programme to protect the forests of Mount Nabukelevu for the next 20 years. Mount Nabukelevu IBA is home to globally significant populations of four Kadavu endemic bird species, including the Kadavu Shining Parrot, and is the only known nesting site of the Polynesian Storm-petrel in Fiji. However, the forests in this IBA are under severe threat by unsustainable agricultural practices.

A community-declared protected area of just over 1,000 ha was agreed during a workshop in April which also saw the formulation of a management plan. This plan will guide the protection and sustainable management of this community protected area, including the implementation of livelihood projects and the enactment of customary laws.

In collaboration with the communities, a local conservation group has been established with representatives from the four villages surrounding the mountain. This Site Support Group has already established a model farm and a nursery for replanting native trees. The objective of these projects is to provide an alternative source of subsistence agriculture for the communities and a rehabilitation programme for the forests, in the hope of increasing the conservation status of the bird species on Nabukelevu. For more information, please contact milly@birdlifepacific.org.fj.

Read also about the kids of Kadavu, the conservationists of the future:

www.birdlife.org/news/news/2010/04/Fijis-comic-book-heroes-of-conservation.html

Glossary

EBAs:

Endemic Bird Areas

= geographical areas home to at least two endemic bird species whose ranges are restricted to a relatively small area. Because restricted range species are particularly vulnerable to the threat of extinction, EBAs are high on the list of habitats to protect.

IBAs:

Important Bird Areas

= areas that are recognised as being globally important habitat for the conservation of bird populations. Currently there are about 10,000 IBAs worldwide.

KBAs:

Key Biodiversity Areas

= priority areas for conservation using not only bird criteria but also other taxa. All IBAs are by definition KBAs and most KBAs qualify as IBAs.

LCGs:

Local Conservation Groups

= organised, independent groups of volunteers who work with their local communities, the national BirdLife Partner and other organisations to promote conservation and sustainable development at IBAs. The network of Site Support Groups (SSGs) covers the whole world and is still growing.

SSGs:

Site Support Groups

= another name for Local Conservation Groups (mainly used in Africa and the Pacific).

NEWS FROM THE BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP SECRETARIAT

New staff members



Sue Waugh

Marine IBA Coordinator

Susan (Sue) Waugh joined the BirdLife Pacific Partnership Secretariat in January 2010 as the new Marine IBA coordinator. Sue will be working with Partners across the region to identify Marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs), which are critical sites for seabirds, including nesting, feeding and migration sites. She will be helping Partners to compile inventories of key sites, by pulling together existing data, identifying gaps and conducting surveys to gather further information on key sites. Sue has worked on seabirds for over 20 years, with a particular focus on conserving albatross and petrel species and seeking solutions to fisheries by-catch issues. Before coming to Fiji, Sue was based in New Zealand for 10 years, working for the Ministry of Fisheries and for the BirdLife Partner, Forest & Bird. Sue is also the Pacific Co-coordinator for the BirdLife Global Seabird Programme. Please contact Sue at susan@birdlifepacific.org.fj

Senior Technical Advisor

In April, the new Senior Technical Advisor for the Pacific, Mark O'Brien, arrived at the Secretariat in Fiji. Mark has been working for the RSPB (the BirdLife Partner in the UK) for the last 25 years, initially as a research biologist, more recently as the advisory manager for Scotland. In that time he co-ordinated conservation management on the ground, both with internal staff and with other organisations, and monitored the extent to which this management has been successful. Mark: "I have recently been considering a new challenge, and the advisory post with the BirdLife Pacific Partnership Secretariat certainly provides that. My work programme will involve pulling together the, already well-advanced, IBA studies undertaken around the region and co-ordinating the Preventing Extinctions Programme in the region. I look forward to working with many of you on both these subject areas in the not too distant future." Mark's email address is mark@birdlifepacific.org.fj



Mark O'Brien

The BirdLife International Pacific Partnership Secretariat



From left to right: Don Stewart, James Millett, Dick Watling (NatureFiji-MareqetiViti), Maaike Manten, Nirmala Chand, Tuverea Tuamoto, Helen Bain (Forest & Bird), Miliana Ravuso, Elenoa Seniloli, Sarojni Raj, Mere Valu, Helen Dalton (NatureFiji-MareqetiViti), Steve Cranwell (2009)

The BirdLife International Pacific Partnership Secretariat staff

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Who:** **Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN)**
- When:** Deadline 23 May
- What:** Research grants on Ecosystems, Biodiversity and Land Use: Forestry and REDD-plus; and on Resource Utilisation for Sustainable Development
- How much:** Maximum USD 45,000 per year (3 years)
- Eligible countries:** APN member/approved countries (see website)
- More information:** www.apn-gcr.org
- Who:** **APFED Showcase**
- When:** Usually end of May - check website
- What:** Support for projects that promote innovative policies, measures, and actions for sustainable development
- How much:** Maximum USD 30,000
- Eligible countries:** Asia - Pacific
- More information:** www.apfedshowcase.net/

UPCOMING EVENTS

- What?**
Round Table for Nature Conservation annual meeting / SPREP Birds Working Group meeting
- When?**
5-9 July 2010
- Where?**
Apia, Samoa
- See:**
www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/oceania/oro_roundtable and www.sprep.org/roundtable/default2.asp?category=What%20is%20the%20Roundtable
- Contact:**
mark@birdlifepacific.org.fj

NEW RESOURCES

Books

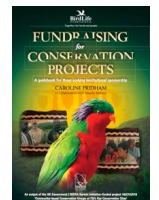
Two key outputs of the UK Government's Darwin Initiative-funded BirdLife project "Community-based Conservation Groups at Fiji's Key Conservation Sites" are now available:

The **Management Planning Guideline for Protected Areas in Fiji** is a small, simple yet highly versatile tool aimed to assist local conservationists and skilled professionals achieve effective management of protected areas in the hope of conserving Fiji's biodiversity for present and future generations. The manual intends to facilitate the development of protected areas by providing detailed guidance on how to structure a management plan; how to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders; and how to monitor the implementation of the plan. The manual will also help develop the capacity of Fijian conservation professionals and local conservation groups to undertake management of community protected areas at priority sites in Fiji. Copies of the manual can be sourced at the BirdLife International Pacific Partnership Secretariat office in Suva, Fiji. Please contact Miliana Ravuso at milly@birdlifepacific.org.fj



Funded by the UK Government (Defra) Darwin Initiative

The **Fundraising for Conservation projects** guide is an easy to use, step-by-step handbook providing useful tools for project development, proposal writing, donor relations and fundraising strategies. The guide also contains tips and real-life examples based on years of fundraising experience. The tools are universally applicable but the authors focused specifically on the Pacific. Please ask maaike@birdlifepacific.org.fj for your copy.



The BirdLife Pacific Partnership Volunteer Programme

In April 2010, the BirdLife International Pacific Partnership launched a **Volunteer Programme and Marketplace** that aims to link enthusiastic and able volunteers to the BirdLife Partners and their work in the Pacific region. A dedicated page on the BirdLife Pacific website (designed by volunteers!) advertises specific volunteering opportunities to the public and provides a central place for Partners and volunteers to share information. If you are looking for an internship, sabbatical or professional placement, or if you are a BirdLife Partner in need of additional human resources: go to www.birdlife.org/regional/pacific/pacific_in_action/volunteer_projects or send an email to: BirdLifePacificVolunteer@gmail.com and find out more how the BirdLife Pacific Volunteer Programme works.

CONTRIBUTION OF ARTICLES

We welcome contributions to this e-bulletin from the BirdLife Pacific Partners about activities and events in the fields of species, site and habitat conservation. We are also very interested in your work with people. Please send your contributions to birds@birdlifepacific.org.fj.

Please feel free to send this e-bulletin to your own members, collaborators and supporters