



Forest & Bird hosts BirdLife Pacific meeting

Forest & Bird (BirdLife in New Zealand) hosted representatives of bird protection and conservation groups from around the Pacific region last month at a successful meeting of the BirdLife Pacific Partnership at our Ruapehu Lodge. About 30 people attended the meeting, which underlined New Zealand's role as part of the broader global environment and conservation scene. An organisation like Forest & Bird - the biggest BirdLife partner in the South Pacific - has to take responsibility for supporting its regional partners but also has to play a role in broader conservation issues, particularly climate change, protection of flyways for migratory birds and our oceans. The attendees included BirdLife's International Assistant Director of Network and Capacity Development Dr Hazell Thompson, BirdLife Australia head Dr Graeme Hamilton, and delegates from French Polynesia, Fiji, the Cook Islands and Samoa. The head of Island Conservation Director for the Western Pacific Ray Nias and Bruce Jefferies of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme also took part. Forest & Bird representatives included former president Peter Maddison and Eila Lawton, as well as Jillian Vaughan of the Miranda Society. The Executive was very ably represented by Jon Wenham who did a fantastic job as one of the key hosts and was extremely helpful in managing the meeting's logistics. The meeting was held over six days, starting with a welcome to the park by Te Ngaehe Wanikau and his wife Hinemoa, representing Ngati Tuwharetoa paramount chief Sir Tumu Te Heuheu, who was unable to attend because of a tangi (funeral) on the same day. The welcome was very emotional and set the tone for the whole week because of the ancient links between Tuwharetoa and the Polynesians of the Pacific islands. The first day was an internal meeting on aspects of the partnership, followed by the open session, which started with work on the BirdLife Global Strategy for 2013-2020. This strategy is largely built on the four pillars of species, habitats and sites, sustainability and empowering people. The meeting also discussed BirdLife Pacific planning for the next five years based on the draft strategic plan and the major activity areas. These include important bird areas (IBAs), marine protection, island restoration, preventing extinctions, the Forests of Hope programme to save tropical forests and the impact of climate change. During the week, Forest & Bird staff gave presentations on areas of their work of interest to the delegates, including Otago/Southland Field Officer Sue Maturin's project to help control a pest vine taking over an important forest in Vanuatu and our work to identify marine and coastal Important Bird Areas (IBAs) around New Zealand. Delegates also got the opportunity on a successful field trip organised by the Department of Conservation to find out about community projects and kiwi and whio (Blue Duck) protection. These were of significant interest to the delegates from island countries because of their own focus on pest eradication and control. **Mike Britton - General Manager, Forest & Bird** [Subscribe to The BirdLife Pacific Quarterly E-Newsletter](#)