

New agreement gives hope for Pacific wildlife

The BirdLife International Pacific Partnership and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) have signed a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will strengthen the two organisations' efforts to work on joint conservation objectives across the region. 'This is an important document for our future collaboration', said David Sheppard - Director of SPREP. 'By focusing on specific area of cooperation, the MoU will make more effective use of the respective capacities and strengths of both our organisations. SPREP is a regional organisation established by the governments and administrations of the Pacific region to look after its environment. Its mandate is to promote cooperation in the Pacific islands region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve the environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations'. The MoU acknowledges that the Pacific region has more threatened bird species per unit of land area or per person than any other region in the world, and the most extinctions. 'Birds have long been recognised as effective indicators of biodiversity condition and concerns', said Don Stewart ' Director for the BirdLife Pacific Partnership. 'It is the stated aim of SPREP and BirdLife that no more bird species must be allowed to become extinct in the Pacific region, and that the conservation status of threatened birds must be improved'. The revised MoU seeks to enhance co-operation between BirdLife and SPREP to achieve the following joint objectives:

- Collaborate on delivering conservation action to improve the status of the globally threatened species and the status of Important Bird Areas within the Pacific region.
- Collaborate in the implementation of the 'Invasive Species Management Guidelines for the Pacific'.
- Extend to each other standing invitations to be represented by observers at appropriate meetings, including the annual SPREP Meeting and the biannual BirdLife Pacific Partnership Meetings and to co-sponsor relevant meetings.
- Keep respective memberships informed of co-operative activities undertaken pursuant to the MOU.

The MoU was signed on Monday 13th June in Suva, Fiji.