

NEWS

Message from the Regional Director



This 3rd in a series of quarterly e-bulletins from BirdLife International's Pacific Partnership Secretariat in Suva, Fiji, leads off by bringing readers the latest news on conservation measures being taken by Partners and collaborators to save from extinction the Critically-Endangered Fiji Petrel and the Polynesian Megapode; monitoring work to collect data on the status of bird populations at Important Bird Areas in Fiji and New Caledonia; a forest conservation awareness campaign conducted by Fiji's first and only nature conservation NGO; and a report on the collaboration between BirdLife and SPREP. These activities fall under the four

BirdLife themes of 'species', 'sites', 'habitats' and 'people' with their respective objectives – please see www.birdlife.org/worldwide/vision/index.html for more details about what guides the BirdLife Partnership.

In the 2nd e-bulletin, we reported that advice had been received from Brussels that our bid for a new regional project, funded by the European Union, and involving all five of our Pacific Islands Partners, plus NatureFiji-MareqetiViti, had been provisionally accepted. Further advice from Brussels has since confirmed that our proposal has now been fully accepted for funding. You will find in this edition an outline of what has been proposed and how it is expected to be implemented. This will be the largest, and the most significant, regional project our Partnership has ever managed and I would like to pass on my thanks to everyone who helped in putting together this complex proposal. Your efforts have paid off.

The 2nd e-bulletin also reported on developments between SPREP and BirdLife. Following the meetings in Apia in July, the Secretariat was represented at the 21st SPREP Meeting in Madang, Papua New Guinea, in September and a summary of proceedings of interest to the Partnership is included in this edition.

In September, decisions were made on which projects would be funded in the 2010 round of the BirdLife International Community Conservation Fund which is administered by Forest & Bird (BirdLife in New Zealand). Fifteen applications were submitted this year from groups in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands of which seven were selected for funding, to a total value of NZD 105,000. Three proposals were accepted for funding in the Pacific Islands: these will enable continuation of urgent conservation measures to save the Critically-Endangered Fatu Hiva Monarchs in French Polynesia and will assist community groups to work on endangered species in the Republics of the Marshall Islands and of Nauru. Both proposals were strongly supported by their governments which had approached the Secretariat for assistance and mark an increasing involvement for BirdLife in Micronesia.

I hope this edition is informative in making news of BirdLife more widely available to those of you concerned with preserving birds and biodiversity. Comments and articles are welcomed.

Don Stewart



LATEST NEWS

Largest seabird event ever: over 800 seabird specialists met in Canada in September 2010, see also www.birdlife.org/news/news/2010/09/largest-seabird-event-ever-aims-high.html

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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

BIRD CONSERVATION INITIATIVES IN THE PACIFIC

Species

Polynesian Megapodes in dire straits

The Tonga Community Development Trust (TCDT), in association with the World Pheasant Association and the Tonga Ministry for the Environment and Climate Change, recently completed the first survey since 1993 of the Endangered Polynesian Megapode, locally known as *Malau*, on the island of Niuafou'ou in Tonga. Early indications are of a substantial decline. Only ten nesting burrows at seven sites across the island remain active – there were 27 nests at 13 sites in the early 1990s. Possible causes of the decline include predation of chicks and egg-laying females by feral cats and/or impact of feral pigs on both feeding areas and potential nesting sites. Alternatively, geothermal activity may have changed, resulting in reduced egg survival. The tradition of egg-harvesting by the local communities has declined in recent years, suggesting that this is unlikely to be causing current rates of declines. Next steps are urgently being discussed with local communities, as any conservation action will be dependent on their involvement. This project was funded through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund and the Programme of Work for Protected Areas. For more details, please contact Sione Faka'osi of TCDT at s.fakaosi@tcdt.to



Above: Male Polynesian Megapode, Hikutemotu, Niuafou'ou, Kingdom of Tonga, September 2010 (photo Claudia Torres)

Looking for the Fiji petrel

The Fiji Petrel is one of the many enigmatic gadfly petrel species, endemic to the Pacific. Susan Waugh, who until recently worked with the BirdLife Pacific Partnership Secretariat, visited the island of Gau, Fiji where the Fiji Petrel is known to breed. The island has 16 villages occupying cropping and coastal areas around the fringes of a mountainous forested site. A group of islanders, including a representative from each village, has been working with NatureFiji-MareqetiViti (NFMV) to search for the petrels. Susan took part in a survey, covering the rugged interior of the island, with four members from the NFMV team. They searched likely areas for petrel burrows, and burrow-scoped burrows across the highland areas. Many of the burrows had crabs inhabiting them, although finding a fungus in one of them caused a bit of light relief! In many areas, there was extensive sign of pig damage (see photo). However, despite the lack of positive sightings of the petrels, the trip showed that the NFMV team are on top of their approaches to searching for petrels, using all the available techniques of spotlighting, burrow-scoping and ground searches. Further work in 2011 will bring specially trained dogs to the site to continue to refine the search for petrel burrows. For more information, contact Dick Watling from NFMV at watling@naturefiji.org



Above: Signs of pig rooting on Gau (photo Sue Waugh)

Sites

IBA monitoring in Natewa and Kadavu

The BirdLife Fiji Programme has been undertaking monitoring at two Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in September and October 2010: the Natewa Tunuloa peninsula in Vanua Levu, and Mount Nabukelevu on the southern island of Kadavu. The main objective of this monitoring process was to collect data on the status of bird populations and their habitats and to assess the vegetation composition in both IBAs. The data collected will assist the BirdLife Fiji Programme to evaluate the conservation status of the IBAs and review and strengthen existing management measures put in place with the help of local communities. The data from the monitoring will be uploaded onto the World Bird Database (WBDB), a database which records all information on IBAs and KBAs in the world, as well as onto other data repositories. Feedback to the local communities is a priority and SSG members who participated in the monitoring will ensure that data and findings from the monitoring is given back to the local communities. In addition, the Fiji Programme staff will ensure that results are being disseminated to the respective government stakeholders. The IBA directory for Fiji (2006) lists 14 IBAs, and 6 additional IBAs were identified as part of the BirdLife Pacific IBA compendium, produced in June 2010 (see previous e-bulletin). In the long term, the Fiji Programme aims to monitor all IBAs as part of BirdLife's global IBA programme. For more information, contact Milly Ravuso at milly@birdlifepacific.org.fj



Above: BirdLife staff, the Nabukelevu Site Support Group and local volunteers during the IBA monitoring exercise in October 2010, on the summit of Mt Nabukelevu in Kadavu – at 805 meter/2,641 feet (photo BirdLife Fiji Programme)

New million Euro project for the Pacific Partnership

The European Union recently approved an application by the BirdLife Pacific Partnership and Secretariat entitled "Island Ecosystems, Local Livelihoods - Combating Invasive Alien Species in the Pacific for the benefit of biodiversity and people". This project, which will be implemented in all six Pacific island nations where BirdLife is present, aims to reduce the spread and the negative environmental and socio-economic impacts of Invasive Alien Species (IAS). It will focus on three thematic areas: IAS control (with a pilot project in New Caledonia), IAS eradication (targeting IBAs in Palau and French Polynesia), and biosecurity (aimed at preventing the introduction/re-introduction of IAS at IBAs in Fiji and in the Cook Islands). A cross-cutting advocacy and training programme will involve these five countries as well as Samoa. Assessing the effectiveness of the action will be supported by monitoring across all sites and the appointment of a Masters student to research a specific area of interest to the programme. Project results will be compiled to complement existing best practice models and will be disseminated through various regional and global networks. The project will be facilitated by the BirdLife Pacific Partnership Secretariat in Suva and supported by a technical committee comprising the Pacific Invasives Initiative, Landcare Research, SPREP and the six BirdLife Partners. The four-year programme is expected to commence in early 2011. For more information, contact Steve Cranwell at steve@birdlifepacific.org.fj



People

The 21st annual SPREP meeting, 6-10 September 2010 in Madang (Papua New Guinea)

The BirdLife Pacific Secretariat's Senior Technical Advisor, Mark O'Brien, attended the above meeting as an observer for BirdLife International. Present were officials and representatives of most of the governments of the Pacific Island Countries and Territories as well as from the USA, France, Australia and New Zealand. On the final day a higher meeting, including many environment ministers from these countries, was organised. A number of areas of the SPREP work programme were discussed during the meeting. It was encouraging to hear the priority given by SPREP and its members to biodiversity conservation work. Three main areas for discussion that were of particular interest to BirdLife were 'Mainstreaming invasive species and biodiversity', 'Climate Change - UNFCCC process: from Copenhagen to Mexico and PIFACC mid-term review' and 'Global Environmental Funding'. Each of these provided useful information for any future funding applications within the region in these subject areas. Mark also had useful discussions with representatives of a number of countries, including Papua, New Guinea, Vanuatu, Marshall Islands and Nauru regarding developing BirdLife work programmes in these areas. If anyone would like to know more about the discussions surrounding the above topics, or indeed about any topics related to SPREP activities in the region, please contact Mark at mark@birdlifepacific.org.fj



Local dancer waits for his cue at SPREP greeting ceremony (photo Mark O'Brien)

MORE NEWS FROM THE BIRDLIFE COMMUNITY

www.birdlife.org/community/category/bird-news/bird-blog-pacific/



New Zealand's bright green parrot, the Kakariki, has won this year's **Forest & Bird** (BirdLife in New Zealand) POLL for Bird of the Year: www.birdlife.org/community/2010/10/kakariki-scoops-forest-bird's-bird-of-the-year-title/



Birds Australia's (BirdLife in Australia) Threatened Bird Network has announced that it is time once again to start looking for Australia's rarest and most cryptic wetland species; the Australian Painted Snipe (APS): www.birdlife.org/community/2010/10/australian-painted-snipe-surveys/



Watch the video about the **BirdLife Partnership** of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources: www.birdlife.org/community/2010/10/the-birdlife-partnership-video/



Take part in the interactive **conservation conversations** at www.birdlife.org/community/category/bird-blog/conservation-conversation/ or follow BirdLife on Twitter, facebook, watch the BirdLife YouTube channel or get your RSS feeds delivered on your computer or phone. There is no excuse not to be informed!

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

New staff members



Jacqueline Evans

New TIS coordinator: Jacqueline Evans

As announced by Don Stewart in the previous e-bulletin, Te Ipukarea Society Inc (TIS, BirdLife in the Cook Islands) has appointed Jacqui Evans as its Program Manager effective 31 May 2010. Jacqui has been involved with TIS since its inception in 1996, as a volunteer in both technical and practical roles, and as President. Jacqui has a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Arts degree in Geography. She previously worked for the Worldwide Fund for Nature, the National Environment Service, the Ministry of Marine Resources and Cook Islands News. By far her most challenging role has been creating and implementing the Public Health (Sewerage) Regulations for the Ministry of Health. "I'm passionate about protecting our fragile island environment. I intend to raise the profile of TIS and implement worthwhile projects that produce results" commented Jacqui. One of the projects Jacqui will be managing is the production of the IBA/KBA book for the Cook Islands, supported by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (see e-bulletin nr 1, April-June 2010). Please also note the new TIS email address: Te.Ipukarea.Society.Inc@gmail.com and their website on <http://ipukarea.blogspot.com>

New BirdLife Global Council member: Philippe Raust, SOP Manu

Philippe Raust

Dr Philippe Raust, President of the Société d'Ornithologie de Polynésie 'Manu' (SOP Manu, BirdLife in French Polynesia), has recently been elected to represent the Pacific region within BirdLife's Global Council (see column to the right). Philippe replaces Tiare Holm from the Palau Conservation Society (PCS, BirdLife in Palau) who resigned from Global Council in 2009. The other Pacific Global Council member is Mike Britton from Forest&Bird (BirdLife in New Zealand, see previous e-bulletin). When Philippe arrived in Tahiti 35 years ago, he discovered the unique avifauna of the islands of French Polynesia. He was amongst the founder members of SOP Manu in 1990, and has worked for its development ever since, holding different positions on the Board. He implemented BirdLife's EC-funded regional IBA identification project in French Polynesia (2003-2008) which documented 33 IBAs, and has been present at most BirdLife Pacific Partnership Meetings to date. He also played an instrumental role in SOP Manu's recent upgrade to full BirdLife Partner status. Please congratulate Philippe with his appointment to Global Council at phil.raust@mail.pf

New Pacific Partnership Secretariat staff: Jez Bird

Jez Bird

Jez Bird has replaced Susan Waugh as the Marine IBA Coordinator at the Pacific Partnership Secretariat per October 2010. Jez has worked for the BirdLife International office in Cambridge, UK, as BirdLife's Global Species Programme Officer from 2006-2009. During those three years he has been heavily involved in BirdLife's species level priority setting through management of three iterations of the IUCN Red List update. On behalf of the Species Programme, Jez initiated an update of all seabird information published on the 2010 IUCN Red List which also form the basis for an analysis of threats to seabirds for the first World Seabird Conference in Vancouver, which took place in September 2010. He has a developing understanding of marine IBA criteria and provided technical support to programmes across the Partnership including the Global Seabird Programme and the Preventing Extinctions Programme. Please contact Jez at jez@birdlifepacific.org.fj

**BirdLife Global Council:**

The BirdLife Global Council is the highest decision-making body of the BirdLife International Partnership (currently comprising 114 organisations, which makes it the world's largest alliance of conservation NGOs). Global Council members are democratically elected every four years during the BirdLife Global Partnership Meetings. They constitute the 'board' of the global BirdLife Partnership.

The current Council Members are:

Chairman: Peter Johan Schei (Norway)

Treasurer: Recruiting

Council members:

Dr Andrés Bosso (Argentina)
Mr Mike Britton (New Zealand)
Dr Chip Chirara (Zimbabwe)
Mr Josep del Hoyo (Spain)
Mr Yehya Khalid (Jordan)
Mr Paul Matiku (Kenya)
Mr Werner Müller (Switzerland)
Mr Ben Olewine IV (USA)
Mrs Peg Olsen (USA)
Dr Asad R Rahmani (India)
Dr Philippe Raust (French Polynesia)
Mr Alejandro Sánchez (Spain)
Dr Mohammed Shobrak (Saudi Arabia)
Prof Blas Tabaranza (Philippines)
Mr Fred Wouters (Netherlands)
Sir Graham Wynne (UK)
Dr Alberto Yanosky (Paraguay)

Latest network data:

The Global BirdLife Partnership consists of 67 Partners, 8 Partner Designates, and 39 Affiliates



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Who: **The Whitley Fund for Nature**
When: 31 October 2010
What: Grants and recognition through a high-profile award system, including Whitley Awards, Gold Awards and Continuation Funding (only for Award winners)
How much: GBP 30,000 for a Whitley Award, GBP 60,000 for a Gold Award
Eligible countries: Pacific island states are eligible
More information: www.whitleyaward.org/index.php



Who: **Conservation Leadership Programme**



When: 15 November 2010
What: Small grants and training programme
How much: From USD 12,500 for Future Conservationists, via USD 25,000 for Follow-up Awards, to USD 50,000 for Leadership Awards
Eligible countries: All Pacific island states are eligible (again!)
More information: www.conservationleadershipprogramme.org

Who: **International Foundation for Science**



When: 31 December 2010
What: Supports young conservationists with research grants for biodiversity conservation
How much: USD 12,000
Eligible countries: Developing countries only
More information: www.ifs.se

EVENTS

There is only one event in October 2010: the CBD COP 10 in Nagoya, Japan. Here are BirdLife's five key asks:

1. Strong and ambitious 2020 targets which link conservation to human wellbeing
2. At least a ten-fold overall funding increase so every country has the resources to implement the CBD
3. An agreement on access and benefit sharing to end biopiracy
4. Expansion of protected area networks to cover all areas of special importance for biodiversity
5. The Biodiversity and Climate Change Conventions working closely in step



See www.birdlife.org/community/tag/cop10/ for the latest details

NEW RESOURCES



Publications

Various BirdLife International publications, including **World Bird Watch**, **Bird Conservation International**, **books** and **brochures**, can be found on www.birdlife.org/publications/index.html

Volunteer Programme

The BirdLife International Pacific Partnership **Volunteer Programme and Marketplace** aims to link enthusiastic and able volunteers to the BirdLife Partners and their work in the Pacific region. See www.birdlife.org/regional/pacific/pacific_in_action/volunteer_projects for more details.

BirdLife in the Pacific

The BirdLife International Pacific Partnership includes seven Partner organisations working in Australia, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau and Samoa. 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. For more information and the latest news, see www.birdlife.org/regional/pacific



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.