



THE IUCN WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS

OCEANIA

Newsletter June 2021



Most Australians want to retain glorious areas of intact healthy nature which support our rich biodiversity and multiple ecological, cultural and social values. To Indigenous Australians this is country and to others its wilderness, like the magnificent Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Photo: P. Figgis

WCPA OCEANIA UPDATE **From the Vice Chair**

Dear colleagues,

Our thoughts are with so many who are dealing with the multiple impacts of the pandemic. Australia is yet again facing an outbreak and many other nations are seriously challenged in combatting the virus. Our thoughts are with our regional friends and colleagues in PNG, Timor Leste and Fiji as they contend with serious outbreaks.

Despite Covid's shadow on all our lives conservation efforts are continuing with vigour.

WCPA Members can be particularly proud of the wonderful news that Australia has joined an international coalition of countries, the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People, which is committed to forging a global deal under the Convention on Biological Diversity to conserve 30 per cent of the world's land and sea, in order to halt the loss of biodiversity. The parties to the Convention will meet in Kunming China, in October this year to form the 2030 goals.

The 30/30 concept had its genesis in WCPA with Steering Committee members Canadians, Harvey Locke and Stephen Woodley taking a major role in advocacy.

Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley highlighted the importance of countries working together to protect the resilience of natural systems that support climate stability, food supply and water. "We look forward to working with like-minded countries in finding the best ways to implement the detail of the 30 x 30 targets."

Let us hope that the commitment of the government goes well beyond figures to a major investment in the crucial caveats of true representation, effective management, proper funding, equitable governance etc. which will be developed.

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australia-joins-international-alliance-protect-planet%E2%80%99s-biodiversity>

The **IUCN World Conservation Congress** will go ahead on September 3rd in Marseilles but will be a 'hybrid event'. This is an organisational challenge of immense complexity and it is difficult to get detailed information even at this stage. However, all WCPA members can register for the online Congress. Those already registered to attend in person, but who now cannot attend can change to online and get a refund or make a donation of the difference to IUCN. All details here: <https://www.iucncongress2020.org/>

The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration commenced on 5 June (World Environment Day). All the nations of Oceania have great need to restore their ecosystems for all their immense value to biodiversity, our economies, health, culture and wellbeing. Let's hope our region is a major beneficiary of this international effort!

Vital Sites Series. As WCPA Members please particularly note this excellent online series. A great deal of WCPA's expertise is being packaged into these seminars for your use and wider distribution. They are recorded and if you can't manage the late night timing of some, then they are available on line. Details in article.

Inaugural IUCN Oceania Environmental Law Conference

IUCN Oceania Regional Office (ORO), in partnership with the US Embassy in Fiji, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL), with support from the Pacific Network for Environmental Law, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Environmental Defenders Office (EDO), is hosting the Inaugural IUCN Oceania Environmental Law Conference in conjunction with the 2nd World Environmental Law Congress from 14-16 July 2021. The theme of the Conference is Advancing Environmental Law in the Pacific: Towards 2030 and Beyond. This will be a hybrid event. **Register here**

https://whova.com/web/welc_202107

News of Members

Darren Kindleysides

Congratulations to Darren CEO of the Australian Marine Conservation Society, and all the AMCS team who on June 8, World Oceans Day, had an outstanding fund raiser when a donor offered match all donations. This achieved a \$50,000 for the society, a great boost for their vital efforts to champion marine protected areas and thriving healthy oceans.

George Wilson AM



Warm congratulations to Prof George Wilson on being awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM). George has had a long career has worked for >50 years in a range of wildlife, environmental, agricultural and disease management occupations. His experience covers surveys, ecological research, Indigenous land management, advice to governments and industry on resource management, animal welfare, quarantine and disease management production.

He has worked for both State and Federal Governments and British Government agencies in scientific research, public policy, and strategic analysis. He has published more than 180 papers, reviews, wildlife management plans, chapters and written three books.

He has held many honorary positions including as Commissioner Emeritus with the IUCN Species Survival Commission in recognition of his chairmanship of the Australian Marsupial Specialist Group.

Membership opportunities

Flinders Ranges World Heritage

The South Australian Department for Environment and Water is pursuing World Heritage for the Flinders Ranges for its geological and paleontological significance under criterion (viii) of the World Heritage Convention. They are seeking a Lead Editor to facilitate the production of the full nomination dossier, to coordinate and facilitate author contributions, and contribute written text in support of the inscription of the Flinders Ranges as a World Heritage property.

They are inviting expressions of interest in fulfilling this important role. This opportunity is currently advertised on the SA Tenders and Contracts website as [Expression of Interest DEW049568](#) and will close on **Monday 12 July 2021**. A detailed overview of the process we are undertaking and the evaluation criteria is available via the link. For further information please see website or contact Irving, Jason (DEW) Jason.Irving@sa.gov.au

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

INVESTING LESS THAN 1% OF WORLD GDP INTO NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS CAN TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY CRISIS

A new study by the World Economic Forum and others finds tripling of current investments into nature-based solutions needed by 2030 to tackle the climate crisis or face a \$4 trillion financing gap. Today, just one tenth of 1% of global GDP is invested in nature-based solutions

Scaling up of private capital for nature-based solutions is one of the central challenges

It urges governments, financial institutions and businesses to overcome this investment gap by placing nature at the heart of economic decision-making in the future. It stresses the need to rapidly accelerate capital flows to nature-based solutions by making nature central to public and private sector decision-making related to societal challenges, including tackling the climate and biodiversity crises.

Unlocking the potential of nature-based solutions to close the finance gap by 2050.

<https://tinyurl.com/3dvuxtvz>

ARE YOU ALL WATCHING VITAL SITES - WCPA'S RICH SYMPOSIUM SERIES?



This year, nations of the world are expected to set ambitious new targets for protecting biodiversity. In much of the world, achieving spatial targets will require conservation of areas under private ownership. Throughout 2021 IUCN is hosting the Vital Sites webinar series which is rich in expert insights and discussions across all of the many areas of expertise in our global network. All seminars are recorded. In June the series explored the potential for privately protected areas (PPAs).

Photo: Naree Station Northern NSW is an example of a private protected area owned

and managed by Bush Heritage which protects an outstanding wetland located in a vitally important part of the Murray Darling Basin System. NSW P. Figgis

These three Vital Sites webinars are presented by IUCN in partnership with the WCPA Group on Privately Protected Areas and Bundesamt für Naturschutz (BfN) as part of a learning program. It be complemented by online curricula available free of charge on BfN's training website.

All details of these events and previous events and registration at:

<https://iucngreenlist.org/news-events/vital-sites-the-journey-to-marseille/>.

G7 OUTSTANDING STATEMENT

The recent G7 Meeting in May included a meeting of environment ministers from UK, USA, Canada, Japan, France and Italy. Their statement is an outstanding additional testimony to the major global shift to recognise the central importance of nature in addressing the world's major challenges.

"We acknowledge with grave concern that the unprecedented and interdependent crises of climate change and biodiversity loss pose an existential threat to nature, people, prosperity and security. We recognise that some of the key drivers of global biodiversity loss and climate change are the same as those that increase the risk of zoonoses, which can lead to pandemics. We highlight that urgent and concrete action is needed to move towards global sustainability, further mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as halt and reverse biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. We recognise that climate change and the health of the natural environment are intrinsically linked and will ensure that the actions we take maximise the opportunities to solve these crises in parallel."

<https://tinyurl.com/tk3wa3a4>

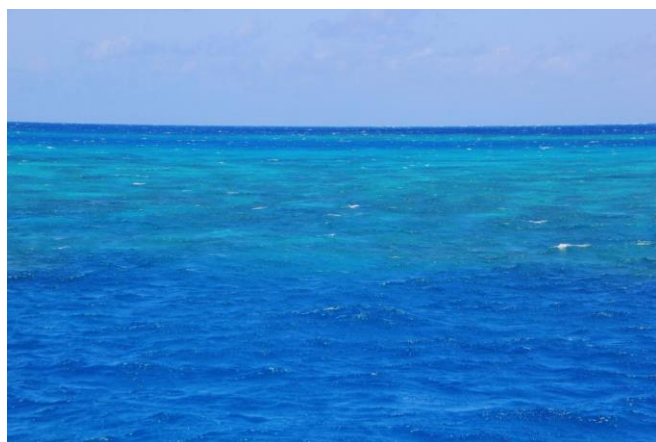
CONSERVATION IS VITAL TO ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

WCPA and partners have just published a major report on the role of area-based conservation in fulfilling many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has largely been produced in the time of Covid-19 and focuses on many issues relevant to rebuilding a greener economy.

The report is produced jointly by the Institute for European Environmental Policy, IUCN, The Nature Conservancy, UNDP, World Bank, WWF and Wildlife Conservation Society. We will be using it to promote protected and conserved areas as key elements in any post-Covid sustainable development strategy. It has many case studies and practical guidance.

<https://ieep.eu/publications/biodiversity/biodiversity-land-use/building-on-nature-area-based-conservation-as-a-key-tool-for-delivering-sdgs>

PROTECTION OF THE HIGH SEAS EDGING CLOSER



International scientists have a letter published in *Science* on June 4, 2021, that sets out key priorities for negotiations on an international treaty to safeguard biodiverse waters beyond any nation's jurisdiction.

The scientists say that the agreement should include a framework both to establish a network of marine protected areas in the high seas, including fully protected marine reserves, and to conduct environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental

assessments in these ocean areas. The agreement also must lay out the institutional mechanisms required for effective implementation. The authors encourage scientists from around the world to support the call for a robust United Nations treaty by adding their names to the letter, which would help reflect the global nature of what is at stake in protecting the high seas. Read the letter [here](https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2021/06/bbnj-letter-formatted-for-pew-website-final.pdf).

Photo: The Pacific our Ocean home P. Figgis

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2021/06/bbnj-letter-formatted-for-pew-website-final.pdf>

ONE HEALTH' APPROACH URGED BY CONVENTION ON BIODIVERSITY

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice or SBSTTA is a vital science based preparatory forum of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biodiversity. A very interesting report was produced from the Twenty-fourth meeting online, 3 May – 13 June 2021 on the vital area of the relationship between healthy ecosystems and biodiversity and health. The document can be found by hitting the Official tab at this site and going to item13. <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-24>

One Health defines itself as “a collaborative, multisectoral, and transdisciplinary approach — working at the local, regional, national, and global levels — with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment.” <https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/basics>

Just one quote helps to summarise the report

“12. A draft global action plan for biodiversity and health, annexed to this note, has been developed in line with decision 14/4, to support Parties in mainstreaming biodiversity and health linkages into national policies, strategies, programmes and accounts, building on the guidance on integrating biodiversity considerations into One Health approaches. It is envisaged that the draft global action plan will also contribute to the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, its goals and targets in order to achieve the vision of living in harmony with nature by 2050. The draft global action plan for biodiversity and health for 2021-2030 provides a strategic vision with specific objectives, action areas and activities for leveraging biodiversity and health interlinkages. It is intended that the implementation of the draft global action plan would help to catalyse the operationalization of the “biodiversity-inclusive One Health transition”, one of eight areas of transition identified in the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook.”

AUSTRALIAN NEWS

KOSCIUSZKO PLAN OF MANAGEMENT UNDER THREAT



In his last great publication *Kosciuszko: A Great National Park*, our recently departed friend, Graeme Worboys AM, with co-author Dierdre Slattery, catalogued the long story of the struggle to establish the park in an age of utilitarian attitudes to land. They then catalogued the even greater struggle to ward off the hungry eyes and alternative futures which have threatened this beautiful and unique alpine environment. The first Snowy Scheme of the 1950s had many negative impacts such as poorly sited roads, erosion, spoil dumping and weed introduction.

Despite its iconic status, Kosci has continued to suffer major damage, particularly from feral animals, horses, pigs and deer and wide scale intense fires. However, instead of a major effort to restore its majesty, we have the multiple issues of Snowy 2 – a large scale 'battery' costing many billions whose economic and ecological sense has been comprehensively questioned by many experts. <https://npansw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Snowy-2.0-claims-dont-stack-up.pdf>

The current issues of considerable concern are the proposed amendments of the Plan of Management to allow kilometres of high voltage towers through the national park and at the same time amend the POM to allow a much more commercial pro development approach to 'activate' the park. These are issues too complex for a newsletter but please consult the website of the National Parks Association NSW to get more detail.

<https://npansw.org.au/campaigns-2/protect-our-parks/kosciuszko-national-park/snowy-2-0/>

MOST AUSTRALIANS SUPPORT WILDERNESS

A Roy Morgan poll has found 90 per cent of Australians support the protection of Australia's wilderness areas. Support is high across the political spectrum, with 86 per cent of Coalition voters, 92 per cent of Labor voters and 94 per cent of Greens voters agreeing wilderness should be protected.

The poll, which was commissioned by wilderness researchers Martin Hawes and Grant Dixon, defined wilderness areas as large natural areas of land that have not been significantly modified by the impact or activities of modern society.

Mr Hawes said the poll results sent a clear message to federal and state governments that Australians want to see wilderness protected. 'Australia is one of only five countries that contain over 70 per cent of the Earth's remaining wilderness outside Antarctica. Wilderness areas are vital to the ecological health of the planet. They play a major role in storing carbon, stabilising climate and protecting biodiversity. Yet wilderness in places like Tasmania's Takayna/Tarkine region remains unprotected and under threat.'

The poll found a majority of Australians oppose tourism developments in wilderness areas.

Dixon explained that wilderness had experiential as well as Indigenous and ecological values. 'Wilderness offers opportunities for potentially life-changing journeys in remote and challenging settings', he said. 'Many people enjoy wilderness vicariously and appreciate that it exists, even if they never go there.'

Detailed report on poll findings: <http://bit.ly/WildernessSupportPoll2021>

NEW PROTECTED MARINE AREAS FOR AUSTRALIA'S REMOTE NORTH WEST



Australia is adding an area of the Indian Ocean bigger than France to its network of marine parks in an attempt to keep out international fishing boats and promote scientific discovery in two biodiversity hotspots.

The Federal government announced \$5.4m would be spent to create two marine parks around Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands covering 740,000 sq. km – a huge expanse of ocean.

Photo: www.cocoskeelingislands.com.au

Conservationists said the promised marine parks would be a significant step for ocean protection. However marine experts are keen to see the level of protection the region will receive, and the extent to which commercial activities will be limited.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/may/13/huge-marine-parks-off-christmas-and-cocos-islands-targets-foreign-fishing>

RECENT STEPS ON FUNDING OF INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS

In 2020 The Country Needs People organisation celebrated the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt announced that he would be extending Indigenous ranger contracts to 2028 which matched the extended funding for Indigenous Protected Areas announced by Environment Minister Sussan Ley. This was very significant as Indigenous rangers had never been given the security of funding for a sustained period.

Later in 2020, The Ngururrpa and Ngadju Indigenous Protected Areas were announced. The two new IPAs cover over 7 million hectares of fragile desert ecosystems and the richly biodiverse Great Western Woodlands to the IPA network. Both these areas took over five years to develop, showing how crucial long-term funding is if you want to see real gains for people and nature.

In this year's budget for rangers and IPAs the federal government committed \$11.6 million over the next two years to incorporate Sea Country into Indigenous Protected Areas across nine new locations. This is an important step, recognising that caring for country doesn't end at the shoreline. "Sea Country and land are part of a whole and need to be cared for in the right way by the right people."

The budget also provided \$4 million over the next four years for Indigenous rangers to manage pests, protect biodiversity and care for cultural values and \$0.5 million for stakeholder engagement to modernise and strengthen Indigenous heritage protections.

The Country Needs People has welcomed this support for land and sea management, but says the government can, and should, show more ambition for Indigenous Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas.

https://www.countryneedspeople.org.au/?utm_campaign=21_fed_budget_update_9&utm_medium=email&utm_source=thecountryneedsitspeople

BLUE CARBON FUNDING BOOSTS BUDGET FOR MARINE CONSERVATION

Earlier this year the federal government announced a \$100 million investment to manage our ocean habitats and coastal environments and contribute to the global task of reducing emissions

The package will target 'blue carbon' ecosystems that involve seagrass and mangroves playing a key role in drawing carbon out of the atmosphere. The package will also support Australian Marine Parks, expand the Indigenous Protected Areas into Sea Country and protect marine life.

"The package will be delivered across four key areas of Australia's oceans management, implementing on ground actions to support Australian Marine Parks, expand the Indigenous Protected Areas into Sea Country, restore blue carbon ecosystems and protect iconic marine species."

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australia-announces-100-million-initiative-protect-our-oceans>

TASMANIAN GROUP WINS RESTORATION AWARD



Before and after photos of the award winning restoration

Tasmanian nature conservation organisation, the North East Bioregional Network (NEBN) has won a prestigious international award for the Restore Skyline Tier project which involves restoring Radiata Pine plantations back to biodiverse native forests at a landscape scale

The Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia (SERA) International Award for Restoration Excellence was presented at the SERA Conference in Darwin recently.

The award acknowledges a significant, enduring or internationally recognised contribution to the science and/or practice of ecological restoration.

North East Bioregional Network President Todd Dudley acknowledged major project partners New Forests and Timberlands Pacific and a range of programs (i.e. Green Army) and grants from federal governments as well as support from organisations such as Environment Tasmania, Landcare Tasmania, The Wilderness Society, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Highways and Byways, UTAS, My Pathways and local volunteers who all contributed to the project's success.

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

RESTORING HAURAKI GULF

Ecological Restoration is a global priority as we enter the UN Decade of Restoration. The New Zealand government have just announced a plan to restore the health of Hauraki Gulf which has suffered major decline despite its importance for the world's seabird species and breeding area for almost a third of Aotearoa New Zealand's seabirds.

The package includes:

- The creation of 18 new marine protection areas and a framework to support the active restoration of some of the most biodiverse regions in the Gulf. The 18 new protected areas will increase marine protection in the Gulf almost threefold.
- A Fisheries Plan with a range of changes to fishing practices and catch settings, including restricting trawl fishing to within carefully selected "corridors".
- Better monitoring to improve our understanding of the marine environment and track progress over time.
- An expanded programme of protected species management.
- Working together with mana whenua and local communities on local area coastal management.
- Promoting a prosperous, sustainable aquaculture industry.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2021-media-releases/bringing-back-the-health-of-hauraki-gulf/>

However Forest and Bird have called for greater ambition and more controls on damaging processes.

Forest & Bird urges the Government to increase its ambition by:

- Working with iwi/hapu to progressively increase protection from the proposed 18% up to 30%
- Phasing out bottom trawling, Danish seining, and scallop dredging from the Gulf
- Ensuring the Fisheries Plan for the Gulf protects food for wildlife as well as people
- Working with local and regional councils to clean up waterways that flow into the Gulf, and prevent new pollution and marine dumping
- Putting in place a robust feedback loop for the Fisheries Plan and the marine protected areas to increase protection if restoration of ecosystems isn't on track.

<https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/resources/step-towards-restoring-hauraki-gulf>

FOREST AND BIRD CALL FOR NATURE 'S PROTECTION TO BE KEY OBJECTIVE OF LAW REFORM

Forest & Bird has welcomed the release of the draft purpose of the Natural and Built Environment Act (NBA) but wants a clearer hierarchy to put preserving nature first. They point to the considerable degradation Aotearoa has suffered under previous laws which claimed to protect the environment.

"We welcome the Government's moves to improve environmental outcomes through this replacement of the RMA, but as it's currently drafted it won't avoid further loss of nature," said Forest & Bird's RMA reform campaign lead Rick Zwaan.

"The new Natural and Built Environment Act is an opportunity to gift younger generations the kind of healthy natural world they deserve. That's what was recommended in the Randerson Report and the draft NBA needs to be improved to do just that.

"The draft purpose explicitly balances environmental protection with a vaguely defined wellbeing of current and future generations. We need to explicitly protect and restore nature for its own sake and allow development that doesn't wreck the environment.

"The purpose of the new law must be to protect our fundamental need for a healthy environment. This should result in a rapid shift away from 'limiting losses' towards actively and urgently restoring the natural places and species we all value.

<https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/resources/forest-bird-calls-new-law-put-nature-first>

CHECKLISTS FOR INTRODUCED AND INVASIVE SPECIES FOR PROTECTED AREAS

Shyma Pagad, Deputy Chair- Information IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group from the University of Auckland, New Zealand is requesting assistance from protected area managers and experts. 's.pagad@auckland.ac.nz'

"As part of a CBD mandated project developing verified national checklists of introduced and invasive species – the Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species – we have also developed checklists of introduced and invasive species for protected areas and their buffer zones working with protected area managers. We have published close to a 100 through the portal of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

https://www.gbif.org/dataset/search?q=protected%20areas&publishing_org=cdef28b1-db4e-4c58-aa71-3c5238c2d0b5

More details of the project on the checklist pages. We have covered all national parks of South Africa and developed protected area checklists from that region; also the Galapagos, Lord Howe in Australia etc. These checklists will also made available through the CBD country profile pages. We would like to promote this initiative and encourage protected area managers to share their data and information with us. We can assist with curation and publication

https://www.gbif.org/dataset/search?q=protected%20areas&publishing_org=cdef28b1-db4e-4c58-aa71-3c5238c2d0b5

PACIFIC NEWS

COOK ISLANDS RIDGE-TO-REEF PROJECT



Photo Rarotonga Cloud Forest Keith Twyford

The Cook Islands Ridge-to-Reef Project (R2R) formally closed on 7 June 2021, bringing to an end nearly six years of work targeting biodiversity conservation and protected areas management across the islands and seascape of the Cook Islands.

The project aimed to establish and effectively manage island and marine protected areas including the operationalisation of the 1.9 million km² Cook Islands Marine Park (Marae Moana), covering all the Cook Islands inshore waters and Exclusive Economic Zone.

Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with support by UNDP, project implementation was led by the National Environment Service in partnership with key government agencies. In the last 12-15 months of the project, significant emphasis and investment was placed into building a strong foundation for future management of the Marae Moana (Cook Islands Marine Park).

Keith Twyford, long term WCPA member, has been the R2R Chief Technical Adviser since mid-2019. Keith reported that a wide range of protected and conserved areas projects were completed under R2R and included:

Development of a Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Policy Paper that will inform development of Regulations and amendments to legislation. The Policy underpins the preparation of marine plans and an ocean zoning scheme that will manage conflicts between resource uses (biodiversity conservation, deep sea mining, fishing, tourism, subsistence use, research and education).

Major technical reports that are key inputs to MSPs for Marae Moana (Biophysically Special, Unique Marine Areas of the Cook Islands; Marine Bioregions of the Cook Islands; Marine Ecosystem Valuation Report; Sustainable Financing Mechanisms Report).

Development of the first ever national Protected Areas Classification System (PACS) for classification and designation of current and future protected areas. PACS assigns each area to the most appropriate category (national park, conservation area, and so forth), and presents a consolidated inventory and database of protected and managed areas (terrestrial and marine).

Development of the inaugural Marae Moana Outlook Report 2021. A requirement under the Marae Moana Act 2017, the Outlook Report ((not yet released) is the first prepared for Marae Moana and brings together available baseline and expert knowledge to summarise ecosystem values, grade their current state (condition) and likely future trend, evaluate potential threats and the effectiveness of current management, and assess the long-term outlook for Marae Moana. The report proposes research, mitigation and management actions to minimise future risks to Marae Moana's values and to halt and reverse declining trends.

Series of tourism plans, management plans, and biodiversity survey reports for islands and inshore marine areas.

Project closure activities including final report against GEF Tracking Tools (including Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools (METTs) for six protected areas including Marae Moana); Project Performance Report; Exit and Sustainability Strategy.

The extensive array of outputs from R2R – policy papers, plans, technical reports and more - are being incorporated into an online library. Interested WCPA members can view the resources here:

<https://r2r.environment.gov.ck/documents/>

WCPA members are encouraged to contact Keith on keith.twyford@gmail.com with any enquiries about his work with Cook Islands R2R.