



Wedge-tailed shearwater plastic pollution monitoring

Pacific BioScapes Programme - Vanuatu

Known as Koroliko in Vanuatu, **wedge-tailed shearwaters** are a common seabird that forages over wide areas of the Pacific Ocean. There is a large colony on Laika island (estimated to be between 10,000 and 20,000 breeding pairs), which are harvested by the island's traditional owners.

Unfortunately, seabirds such as these are known to ingest plastics. Studying this species on Laika could potentially prove that the Koroliko could be monitored as an indicator of plastic ingestion in Pacific seabirds. Furthermore, this species is also harvested by local communities for consumption and any potential human health risks are currently unknown.

BirdLife International will work with local communities in Vanuatu to examine harvested birds, collect any dead chicks, or carcasses of adult birds, to examine for plastic ingestion and to undertake toxicological analysis.



CENTRAL ISSUES:

- Plastic pollution is present globally and across the Pacific
- Seabirds ingest plastics and are harvested for consumption by Pacific Island communities
- Levels of plastic contamination in Pacific birds is mostly unknown

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY SUMMARY:

- Confirm that koroliko can be used as to measure plastic debris ingestion
- Develop a guide to collecting samples from other Pacific koroliko populations
- Investigate potential human health on local communities from harvested consumption

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