



## ISSUE 13 – APRIL, 2015



Welcome to the April edition of SPREP-Tok. I have the pleasure of writing to you this month as our Director General is in New Caledonia to attend the third Oceania 21 Summit. Also in attendance at the event is our [recently appointed SPREP Youth Ambassador](#), Ms Brianna Fruean, who will use the opportunity to network with other young environmental leaders and share their collective hopes for the future.

As clean-up operations continue in many Member countries in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Pam, staff here at the SPREP campus have been fundraising to support our friends across the region. Earlier this month a team from SPREP travelled to Vanuatu following a request to assist in the preparation of a World Bank-led damage and loss assessment. We will keep you all up-to-date with further developments in this area as the information becomes available.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of SPREP-Tok and I urge you to contact us with any feedback – good or bad – so that we can ensure that the newsletter is interesting and useful to our readers.

Kosi Latu  
**Deputy Director General**

## LATEST NEWS



### SPREP ACCREDITED TO MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR CLIMATE FUND

SPREP has been successfully accredited to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as a Regional Implementing Entity, one of the very first to be approved. In order to achieve accreditation, SPREP had to meet strict fiduciary, governance, project management and other organisational performance standards. As an accredited Regional Implementing Entity, SPREP is now able to submit applications for funding of project and programs on behalf of countries, of up to USD 50 million. [Read more...](#)



### MAKING THE PACIFIC A SAFER AND CLEANER PLACE FOR ALL

The Pacific islands are renowned for their natural beauty. But sadly, poor waste management is a major threat to sustainable development in Pacific island countries and territories. It has negative impacts on biodiversity, water quality, fisheries, agriculture, tourism and quality of life in general. Notably, some types of waste also pose a grave threat to human health. A partnership between the European Union and SPREP promises to address some of the Pacific region's most pressing, and dangerous, waste issues. [Read more...](#)



## SPREP APPOINTS FIRST EVER YOUTH AMBASSADOR

In March, 16 year old Brianna Fruean was appointed as the first ever Youth Ambassador for SPREP at a special ceremony that recognised her achievements in environmental conservation. She is the first recipient under the SPREP Youth Ambassador programme which aims to develop and strengthen the voice of young people in the Pacific on the key issues of the environment and climate change. This reinforces SPREP's work to provide a platform for young Pacific people to have their say on the environment, which includes the Pacific Emerging Environment Leaders Network (PEEL). [Read more...](#)



## REVIEWING TWO YEARS OF WORKING TOGETHER IN CHOISEUL

Earlier this month, more than 100 community leaders, government staff and project partners arrived in the Provincial capital of Taro, Solomon Islands, to discuss the 11 projects operating under the Choiseul Integrated Climate Change Programme – a partnership that has become a model for the Pacific region. The programme aims to increase the resilience of Choiseul Province against climate change and natural disasters, enhance food security and strengthen the resilience of natural ecosystems. [Read more...](#)



## JICA-SPREP RENEW COMMITMENT TO COMBAT WASTE IN THE PACIFIC

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and SPREP have committed to review the Pacific Regional Solid Waste Strategy that ends in 2015 and develop a new, integrated Pacific Regional Waste Management and Pollution Control Strategy. An estimated USD 150,000 has been allocated by JICA to fund the development of the new strategy which will improve waste and pollution management in the region until 2025. This strategy will expand integrated solid, hazardous and pollution control strategies and improve waste and pollution monitoring and reporting efforts. [Read more...](#)



## GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE TRAINING A SUCCESS

The Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit was a highlight of a successful Pacific Gender and Climate Change Training that took place in Apia in March. The toolkit helps to provide real case studies and project documents as a focus point for activities and learning. While the toolkit was specifically designed for use of practitioners in climate change, it also has tools that can be used to analyse existing gender policies and general thematic policies. [Read more...](#)



## CELEBRATING WORLD WATER DAY IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

The Republic of the Marshall Islands celebrated World Water Day with a wide range of activities opened by President HE Christopher J Loeak who recognised the challenges small island states face in ensuring there is sufficient safe water. The event was also an opportunity to learn from school students who shared presentations on water conservation and the water cycle. School involvement in commemorating World Water Day continued throughout the week with a Water Quality and Monitoring Training Workshop for school teachers and a few selected parents and students. [Read more...](#)



Photos L-R | Isabella Chowra, Wikimedia Commons

## SIZE DOES MATTER: THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE FIDDLER CRAB

Fiddler crabs, comprising around 100 species of the genus *Uca*, are small, semi-terrestrial marine crabs common throughout the Pacific region and beyond. Their preferred places of residence are inter-tidal mud flats, swamps and lagoons, all of which present perfect conditions for finding food and building and maintaining a burrow. Burrows are used as a refuge from predators and as a nursery for baby crabs – adorably known as crablets.

The most notable physical characteristic of the male fiddler crab is that it has one claw, or chela, which is much larger and often more brightly coloured than the other. The disparity between the size of the major and minor claws is quite remarkable – the large claw is longer than the entire body of the crab and accounts for more than one third of his entire body weight.

This asymmetric claw is so big, relative to the crab itself, that he cannot even use his oversized chela for practical purposes such as eating. But this giant claw does have a number of important functions – it is designed to look imposing, impress the lady crabs and, most remarkably, to communicate.

If you've ever stood for a moment on the shoreline to observe a consortium of fiddler crabs, you will have noticed male fiddler crabs waving their giant claws about in an exaggerated manner. Gloriously, these seemingly uncoordinated gestures are not at all random. The fiddler crab's movements and gestures are very deliberate and constitute a language of sorts – with different sub-species using different signals to communicate messages.

This special crab sign language has been studied by scientists for many decades. Of course we can never know exactly what they may be saying, but from careful observation we can certainly guess. In his book, *Mai Veikau*, Dick Watling interprets these gestures as meaning: "This is my territory, my burrow – move off" or "You're coming too close, I'm getting ready to fight."

Watling observes that fiddler crabs carry on a lot about fighting but it's all a bit of a bluff: "In fact, actual physical combat is rather rare, everything is sorted out diplomatically with signalling. And we call such creatures primitive!"

In the world of the fiddler crab, size certainly does matter – a female fiddler crab will choose a mate based on the general impressiveness of his courtship routine and, most importantly, the size of his claw. As female crabs generally move in to the male crabs burrow after mating, it is thought that the female crabs have learned to associate the size of a male crab's claw with the width and roominess of his wetland burrow.

A bigger claw, therefore, means a much nicer home in which to raise the crablets!

### FIDDLER CRAB FACTS

- Fiddler crabs get their name from the movement that the male crab makes while eating. As he moves his smaller claw towards his mouth it makes him look as though he is playing the violin, or fiddle.
- Like all crabs, fiddler crabs shed their shells as they grow. If they lose any legs or claws, new ones will appear when they next moult.
- If a male fiddler crab loses his big claw, a new one will grow back on the opposite side.
- Fiddler crabs eat by shovelling mud and sand into their mouths, sifting out the microscopic algae and organic detritus, and then spitting out the sand and mud in little balls.
- This eating method plays a vital role in the preservation of their wetland environments. While they eat, the crabs sift through the sand and aerate it – thus helping to oxygenate the water.

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT: NAHEED HUSSEIN

Naheed Hussein – Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change project (PACC) Finance and Operations Officer – has been working for SPREP for two years now as part of the PACC project which is due to finish in June 2015. He was attracted to the position because it was a short but interesting journey into a challenging role which is results driven. Naheed explains:

“Fully contributing your knowledge and expertise in the area of adaptation and mitigation and assisting successful delivery of expected results is really satisfying.”

“I like my job because it is difficult, challenging, satisfying and life changing,” he continued. “Difficult and challenging because you are dealing with the needs of the most vulnerable people seeking ways to adapt to counter the effect of climate change which not only touches people’s lives but survival of their heritage and culture. And it’s satisfying because you know that your contribution, regardless of how small or big, has made significant impact in changing the lives of these people who are part of our Pacific family.”

When asked about his aspirations as a child, Naheed noted that not all children have the privilege of thinking about their aspirations, as the struggle for daily needs and survival becomes more important. “That struggle becomes their path towards the future. Some are lucky to achieve while some fall. I am one of those who are happy to at least still be on the achievement path which has indeed made me respect my area of work,” he said.

Naheed started his career in Fiji as an auditor, and has since worked on a raft of environmental and development projects across the region including in Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau, Federate States of Micronesia, Tonga and Vanuatu.



“Finally, I came to Samoa to take up this role at SPREP for the PACC project and, more recently, to act as Project Manager for the Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Energy Project (PIGGAREP)” Naheed said.

“Before joining SPREP, I was definitely an environmentalist. However, the insight and experience after joining SPREP has really changed my perception, making me realise that environmental impacts and behaviours are everyone’s business. Regardless of your area of expertise, your contribution does make an impact.”

Naheed’s work at SPREP has certainly made an impact. In March, Naheed was one of the recipients of the Director General’s Commendation Award for his outstanding work and dedication to the SPREP organisational values.

And when he is not making an impact or winning commendations, Naheed loves nothing more than drinking kava with friends, family and colleagues!

– By Leilani Curry

COMING UP

- 11 - 13 May:** Pacific Climate Change Roundtable (Samoa)
- 1 - 5 June:** *Journées bleues* – Bue Days – conference (French Polynesia)
- 1 - 9 June:** Ramsar COP 12 (Uruguay)
- 20 - 23 July:** Pacific Meteorological Council and Ministerial Meeting (Tonga)
- 21 - 25 September:** 26th SPREP Meeting (Samoa)
- 30 November - 11 December:** UNFCCC COP 20 (France)



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**Our vision:** The Pacific Environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.