

SPREP-Tok

A monthly e-bulletin from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme



SPREP

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

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Programme régional océanien, garant de nos subsistance et de notre patrimoine en harmonie avec nos cultures.



It is my pleasure, as Acting Director General, to introduce the latest issue of our SPREP-Tok newsletter. Here in Samoa it feels as though the whole country is bursting with activity in the lead-up to the UN Conference on SIDS in September.

We are all very excited about SPREP's role in this landmark conference and will continue to keep you up-to-date on our activities through this newsletter and on a custom created webpage which can be found at www.sprep.org/sids.

Preparations are also well and truly underway for the 25th SPREP Meeting to be held from 30 September – 2 October in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Information and documents for the meeting will be sent out by email to our members in the coming weeks and will also be available online.

I hope you enjoy the latest issue of SPREP-Tok. As always, we welcome your feedback and invite you to send through any comments to sprep@sprep.org.

Kosi Latu
Acting Director General

LATEST NEWS



Photo: S. Chape/SPREP

US ANNOUNCE EXPANSION OF MARINE PROTECTION

SPREP has welcomed a decision by the US President to extend Marine Protection boundaries. In a video address to the recent landmark Our Oceans conference, Barack Obama declared a vast area of the central Pacific Ocean off-limits to commercial fishing and oil and gas exploitation. The United States of America is a long term and valued member of SPREP. Mr David Sheppard, Director General of SPREP, has applauded the United States President for his great vision and leadership in this area. [Read more...](#)



CLOSER TIES ACROSS THE PACIFIC TO MANAGE HAZARDOUS WASTE

In the ongoing struggle to manage hazardous and radioactive waste, stronger ties between SPREP and the Basel Convention Regional Centre in Beijing China have been forged which will bring greater benefits to the Pacific island region. The Basel Convention is an international agreement that addresses the transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal. This has been further adapted for the Pacific island region through the Waigani Convention which focuses on the Pacific region and includes a ban on the importation of radioactive waste. [Read more...](#)



Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum 2014

ASIA-PACIFIC CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION FORUM 2014

Registrations are currently open for the 4th Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum. This key forum will assist participants from all levels of government, in business and society become more effective in addressing the challenges of development in a changing climate through critical reflection on the roles of actors involved and how new partnerships for resilient development can be secured. [Read more...](#)



BETTER WASTE PRACTICES FOR SAMOA

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Health and the Samoa Tourism Authority, in partnership with SPREP and UNEP, have embarked on a campaign to help address the forecast increase in waste generated during the third International Conference on Small Islands Developing States which is taking place in August and September this year. The campaign, which includes a waste audit, will also look at ways to improve waste management practices beyond the conference. [Read more...](#)



CLIMATE AND DISASTER RESILIENCE PLANS FOR BROADCASTERS

National broadcast stations of eight Pacific island countries will have Climate and Disaster Resilience Plans developed by April 2015. The National Broadcasting Climate and Disaster Resilience Plan project will help broadcast stations strengthen their ability to provide quality and timely information without fail. This will enable communities to prepare and respond to natural disasters, and to ensure that stations are well prepared and equipped to continue broadcast coverage during times of emergencies, while ensuring that staff remain safe. [Read more...](#)



IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) programme is stepping up activities to capture and share the vital knowledge it has generated over the last five years. PACC was the first major adaptation initiative in the Pacific region, and one of its main goals has been to lay the knowledge foundations for future adaptation efforts. Five years in, a great deal has been learned about building resilience, especially in the areas of food security, water resources management and coastal infrastructure. We are now focusing on capturing and sharing this knowledge so that future projects can build on it. [Read more...](#)



NATURAL SOLUTIONS FOR ISLAND RESILIENCE IN ACTION AT TAFATAFA

SPREP is working with partners in Samoa to educate local communities about nature conservation and beach erosion. The shoreline strengthening project at Vaiula Beach in Tafatafa has seen the planting of native coastal trees species. Each tree species also has a sign next to it explaining how the plant benefits the beach and the local community. Not only do these trees enhance the natural beauty of the site, they also provide shade, fruits and help strengthen the coastline. Furthermore, a newly installed cut-out billboard, provides a fun photo opportunity and promotes good environment practices. [Read more...](#)



Photo: (c) N.Hayward



THE FRIGATEBIRD – SAILOR OF THE SKY

For those of us who have a tendency to fix our eyes skyward, the imposing outline of the frigatebird is a familiar sight over our tropical ocean spaces. Though reasonably common, the sight is always a breathtaking one on account of this seabird's sheer size, wingspan and uncanny ability to hover in one spot – like a kite fixed to a string.

When we see a frigatebird in this pose it may not necessarily be looking towards the ocean for its next meal – it may be looking to the sky. Frigatebirds are known for keeping an eye out for other seabirds, particularly boobys, that look to be especially well-fed. Once they've identified a suitable candidate they will fly towards it at great speed with the intention of delivering such a fright that the victim regurgitates the contents of its stomach – providing the pursuing frigatebird with a ready-made feast. This tendency to harass other birds has earned the frigatebird the nickname of 'man'o'war' or 'pirate bird'.

While this bullying behaviour – known as kleptoparasitism – is very interesting, it's important not to overstate its frequency as it accounts for only a small percentage of the frigatebird's diet. The rest of the time the frigatebird will hunt for fish, squid and baby turtles on the surface of the ocean and will also prey on the chicks of other seabirds.

With its imposing size and aerial prowess – the realm of the frigatebird is truly in the sky. Frigatebirds have the largest wingspan to body weight ratio of any bird on Earth and can stay aloft for more than a week. This is rather lucky as they cannot swim or take off from a flat surface, nor walk on land with any confidence, let alone grace.

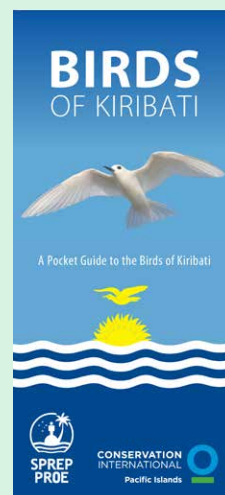
Frigatebirds belong to the fregata genus in which there are five species. Two of these species are common in the Pacific islands region – the great frigatebird (*Fregata minor*) and the lesser frigatebird (*Fregata ariel*). Birds of both species are mostly black in colour, but males have a red sac on their throat which they can inflate as part of the courtship ritual.

Frigatebirds are of symbolic importance in many Pacific island cultures. In Nauru, for example, the practice of catching and training frigatebirds has taken place for hundreds of years. This tradition is not very common any longer, but still occurs in some areas.



In Kiribati, the frigatebird (known as 'te ei tei') features on the country's flag and is often depicted in local signs, stamps, paintings and woven into mats or garlands. The bird is said to have played an important role in helping i-Kiribati fishermen to navigate while lost at sea and is also closely observed in order to predict weather events. This forecasting method is quite reliable as frigatebirds will often ride the updrafts of a weather front so their sudden appearance over an atoll can indeed signal an incoming storm.

BIRD GUIDE AVAILABLE ONLINE



In 2012 SPREP joined forces with Conservation International to produce a [pocket guide to the birds of Kiribati](#). This guide, available for free download, features information on the great and lesser frigatebird along with details of other bird species including the endangered Kiritimati reed-warbler.

THE TECH ONE TEAM

Since Alofa Salima Tuuau commenced work at SPREP 12 years ago, she has seen a great deal of positive change. As Finance and Administration Adviser, Alofa heads up a team of 15 people, who look after a wide variety of essential services ranging from travel, property maintenance, internal control and day-to-day financial management of the organisation.

Over the past decade, the development and adoption of new technology has had a massive impact on all these areas, but particularly in the delivery of financial services.

Recently, Alofa’s team worked closely with the Information and Communication Technology section to oversee the ‘go live’ of SPREP’s new Financial Management Information System (FMIS) called Tech One. SPREP’s IT Manager, Christian Slaven, believes it is important not to underplay the significance of this project which has been 12 months in the making:

“The Tech One system has replaced our previous ACCPAC finance system which served us well for the last 20 years. Through a review of our Finance Management System we identified the need to upgrade the financial systems to support the growing needs of the organisation, to meet donor requirements, compliance to international standards and implement best practices. It’s only been a short time since the new system went live but already we can see how it is meeting those needs, bringing radical changes and improvements to our processes and procedures.”

Maraea Slade-Pogi, SPREP’s Accounting and Administration Officer, explains that as a result of the new system all of SPREP’s requisition to purchasing/procurement is now electronic which will substantially improve services to business partners and suppliers:

“Tech One really changes the way we operate, from the way we perform our work on a daily basis, to how we trade with our suppliers; making our processes and procedures more efficient and effective.”



Pictured above (L-R): Alofa Salima Tuuau, Christian Slaven and Maraea Slade-Pogi.

While Alofa, Christian and Maraea were three of the key people involved in the development and roll-out of the system, all three emphasise that reaching this milestone has been a team effort. Alofa explains:

“A huge number of people have been involved to get to this point. The SPREP Executive and Senior Management Team have lead the initiative and staff from the finance and IT teams have done a lot of work behind the scenes. Over the coming weeks and months even more people will be involved as all our staff will be trained in the new system. So, regardless of where you work and what you do – you might just find that Tech One has an impact on you too! Let’s just hope it’s a very positive one.”

COMING UP

- 29 July – 1 August:** Forum Leaders’ Meeting (Palau)
- 1 – 4 September:** UN Conference on SIDS (Samoa)
- 25 September:** COP to the Noumea Convention (RMI)
- 26 September:** COP to the Waigani Convention (RMI)
- 29 September:** Pacific Environment Forum (RMI)

- 30 September – 2 October:** SPREP Meeting of Officials (RMI)
- 6 – 14 October:** CBD COP 12 (Korea)
- 4 – 9 November:** CMS COP (Ecuador)
- 1 – 12 December:** UNFCCC COP 20 (Peru)



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