



THE IUCN WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS
OCEANIA
Newsletter No. 4 2020



Bush Heritage's Pullen Pullen Wildlife Reserve Queensland – a highly significant declaration
(See story) Photo: Dell Murphy-Brice courtesy Bush Heritage

WCPA OCEANIA UPDATE

From the Vice Chair

Dear colleagues,

This is not an easy time for anyone with COVID challenging us all, but the news from recent reports is even more challenging. The World Wildlife Fund warned in a new report, *Living Planet Report 2020*, that the world's wildlife populations have fallen by an average of 68% in just over four decades – that simply constitutes the adult life of many of us. We are pushing our planet to the brink. Human activity—how we feed, fuel, and finance our lives—is taking an unprecedented toll on wildlife, wild places, and the natural resources we need to survive.

The assessed the population declines seen in more than 4,392 monitored species of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians between 1970 and 2016. The report says that the kinds of steep wildlife population decreases the Earth has seen in recent decades have not been seen for millions of years.

The regions of Latin America and the Caribbean are the world's worst-affected areas, with an average drop of 94%, the report said. The conversion of grassland, savannah, forest and wetland habitats, the overexploitation of wildlife, the introduction of non-native species and climate change are the key drivers of the drop. Experts say that freshwater biodiversity is declining fastest, with data showing that 85% of global wetlands have been lost since the

Industrial Revolution. While these statistics are deeply troubling we need to respond with additional determination to make whatever contribution we can to making a difference. <https://www.zsl.org/sites/default/files/LPR%202020%20Full%20report.pdf>

My thanks to WCPA Members Louise O'Flynn, Jason Jacobi, Rosalie Chapple, Ralf Buckley, Peter Cochrane, for contributions to this newsletter and Rebecca Peters for her assistance.

NEWS FROM IUCN

IUCN World Conservation Congress and the WCPA Oceania Vice Chair

Most members would be aware that the WCC rescheduled for January 2021 has been delayed once more, possibly to mid-year 2021. All office bearers who are normally up for election or reelection were retained in this uncertain period. However IUCN is still deliberating whether elections for the Commission Chairs will go ahead electronically in January. If so then the new WCPA Chair will nominate their global Vice Chairs to the IUCN Council and I will step down for a new Oceania VC.

IUCN new report on Agriculture

The *Common Ground: Restoring Land Health for Sustainable Agriculture* report has been released. The COVID crisis has highlighted how crucial and fragile our food systems can be. This report will help us to get prepared to build back more sustainable and resilient food systems, increasing biodiversity in soils and landscapes, and building on the common ground between conservationists and farmers. Some CEM members have participated in the development of this publication.

The report is available [IUCN Library](#) and www.iucn.org/commonground. The launch of this report is the start of a series of agriculture events in 2020, starting with an online dialogue later this month between policy makers, investors, and farmers – further details to follow. If you require further information on the report or upcoming high-level event, feel free to contact author Jonathan Davies (IUCN Senior Agriculture Advisor) at Jonathan.Davies@iucn.org

OECM-related updates.

OECMs refer to 'Other Effective Conservation Management' – a term taken from the 2010-2020 Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) Aichi Targets. WCPA has done a great deal of work to ensure those areas which countries include in this category have genuine conservation outcomes. In the context of the projected future work on OECMs, the WCPA ExCo agreed to form an [OECM Specialist Group](#) with the same membership and co-chairs.

Please follow the links for further information on each of the following items:

- Advice for Parties to the CBD and in the development of the guidelines for [Recognising and Reporting OECMs](#).
- A [workshop](#) on OECMs earlier this year.
- With support from BfN, we have translated the OECM guidelines for Recognising and Reporting OECMs into [French](#)* and a Spanish translation is also proceeding. UNU-IAS has published a [policy brief](#) on landscape approaches, with a focus on OECMs. This week, Dr. Sean Maxwell and a number of colleagues from WCPA published a paper on [area-based conservation in the 21st century](#), including analysis of OECMs.
- UNEP-WCMC has updated the [Protected Planet](#), which can now be used to obtain up to date information on OECMs. Further information Harry Jonas' harry@naturaljustice.org

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS

All members have the ongoing opportunity to contribute to IUCN WCPA's international knowledge exchange through membership of groups aligned with their specific expertise. If you are not active in any groups go to this site and contact group leaders (click on their name) to discuss joining their group and getting ideas to contribute. Most have communication networks.

<https://www.iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-protected-areas/about/contacts-wcpa/wcpa-thematic-vice-chairs-specialist-groups-and-task-forces>

Members also should keep in mind the newsletter which can carry your story, publication or event to your colleagues. Email me personally at penelope.figgis@outlook.com

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Professor Hugh Possingham.



We congratulate Hugh on his appointment as Queensland Chief Scientist in September. Hugh has had a long and distinguished career working to improve conservation science and techniques through mathematical modelling of ecologies.

After completing a Bachelor's degree with Honours in Applied Mathematics in 1984, he attained by a PhD in Ecological Modelling in 1987 as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University.

He joined the University of Queensland in 2000 as Chair in the Department of Mathematics and Biological Sciences where he has led several research centres and held Australian Research Council Professorial, Laureate and Federation Fellowships.

In 2016 he became the Chief Scientist at The Nature Conservancy, a global conservation organisation that has protected more than 119 million acres of land and thousands of kilometres of rivers worldwide. His combination of expertise in mathematics and ecology has enabled Professor Possingham to undertake conservation initiatives that integrate spatial planning and economic factors. This is demonstrated through his co-development of the [Marxan \(external link\)](#) software for conservation planning.

Michelle Grady



Michelle is the new National Director of The Pew Charitable Trusts' Australian operations. Michelle follows **Dr. Barry Traill** who is moving on to a new chapter in conservation advocacy after 13 years with Pew. Both are long term WCPA members. Michelle has approaching 30 years' experience in conservation advocacy, NGO management and policy development at a state, national and international level Michelle has also worked in government, politics and in the corporate sector.

Michelle specializes in the area of nature conservation on land and sea and has made contributions to the creation of the National Australian and South Australian Network of Marine Parks, the Ramsar listed Coongie Lakes Conservation Zone, the Great Kimberley Marine Park, the development of the Northern Territory's Coast and Marine Management Strategy and successful advocacy for the 30% no-take marine protection targets at IUCN World Conservation and World Parks Congresses.

Michelle has a BA and Grad Dip (Business Admin), is a recipient of Australia's Centenary Medal, for service to the community in education, environment, advocacy, leadership and conservation. Michelle has lived throughout Australia, and now is based in Perth.

Photo: Nagoya, Japan 2019, CBD Post 2020 Framework regional meeting

Graeme Worboys Tributes



As you were notified a few weeks ago we lost one of WCPA's most conscientious contributors, Dr. Graeme Worboys AM, after a six year struggle with illness. Many people in Australia and around the world wanted to pay tribute to our friend. As a result, in consultation with his family, I gathered the tributes and photos of Graeme into a small publication for the family and friends. The tribute pdf is now available from the IUCN website. It can be downloaded by going to the page and clicking on the cover of the

document.

<https://www.iucn.org/news/protected-areas/202009/memori-am-dr-graeme-l-worboys#comment-1545>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

PLEDGE FOR NATURE AT UN SUMMIT ON BIODIVERSITY

Political leaders participating in the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020, representing 77 countries from all regions and the European Union, have committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. By doing so, these leaders are sending a united signal to step up global ambition and encourage others to match their collective ambition for nature, climate and people with the scale of the crisis at hand.

Sadly Australia along with Russia and the US are missing from those willing to make this commitment. [View the Leaders' Pledge](#)

CBD GLOBAL OUTLOOK REPORT



The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) released the [5th Global Biodiversity Outlook \(GBO-5\)](#) in September. Published by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the report offers an authoritative overview of the state of nature worldwide. It is a final report card on progress against the 20 global biodiversity targets agreed in 2010 with a 2020 deadline, the Aichi Targets. It offers lessons learned and best practices for getting on track. A related press conference and discussion was hosted online, and additional information and links to the report in 5 languages are available at this [link](#).

Photo: Australian Orange Bellied Parrot is one of the 48 species the Report says have been saved from extinction by conservation efforts. DPIPW

The Report says that "Despite encouraging progress in several areas, the natural world is suffering badly and getting worse. Eight transformative changes are, therefore, urgently needed to ensure human wellbeing and save the planet,"

The report comes as the COVID-19 pandemic challenges people to rethink their relationship with nature, and to consider the profound consequences to their own wellbeing and survival that can result from continued biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems.

"This flagship report underlines that 'humanity stands at a crossroads with regard to the legacy we wish to leave to future generations,'" said CBD Executive Secretary, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema.

<https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo5/publication/gbo-5-en.pdf>

WCPA COVID TASKFORCE UPDATE

The Covid Task Force had its second on line meeting recently.

Recording is available here: <https://www.zoom.us/rec/share/TX-lolYbKFTy39eMJxBq4Y7z2fGUKldqvhnPuk8SUisanVslWdm6YLiabdKHt976.iAHuM2BgERAw2fDN> :
Passcode: bN25t\$Gn

We have uploaded the presentations with survey results from USA/Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia [here](#). Also, we are still collecting inputs and comments on opportunities to advance our call-to-action, especially as related to engaging with and influencing high-level political events, key institutions, and individuals here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wclVEr7x3Aj_CLuuHo1X2_jtrXN4sO7p42ABWAaT3RI/edit?usp=sharing

Please feel free to share with this group important upcoming events, reports, or any specific requests of support related to PAs and Covid. You just need to send a message to covid-pas-task-force@googlegroups.com to reach our 80 members. Our next call will be on November, 16th. Invitations will be sent soon.

ARTICLES ON PROTECTED AREA IMPACTS OF COVID

This article covers the severe impacts on remote wildlife tourism in remote parts of Canada. <https://tinyurl.com/yxmxxvlu>

The second article by Australian WCPA member Ralf Buckley asks "what the actual events of early 2020 can reveal regarding the net ecological effects of ecotourism for parks and wildlife". <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0047287520947812>

CONNECTIVITY CONSERVATION ARTICLE

Marcelo Lima and Gary Tabor have recently co-authored an article for the Cambridge Conservation Initiative titled "Connectivity Conservation: Connecting People and Nature to Heal Our Planet". You can find it online at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/y4r5kkaz>

CONSERVATION FINANCING

Many of us believe better conservation financing and incentives for conservation outcomes are critical components of a viable future for conservation efforts. IUCN has a significant theme on Business and Biodiversity which partly covers this area <https://tinyurl.com/yxo56qfs>

Also BIOPAMA, Conservation Capital and partners recently hosted an online discussion about financing and resourcing of protected and conserved areas, with a focus on case studies from Eastern and Southern Africa. This event is part of the IUCN and WCPA "Vital Sites: The Journey to Marseille", a series of online events in the run-up to the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille, France. A recording and other materials are available at: <https://biopama.org/node/386>

GEODIVERSITY

The latest issue of the International Journal of Geoheritage and Parks has a series of excellent articles on geological heritage and its management including an article by Graeme Worboys and his Korean colleague Kyung-Sik Woo on monitoring geo sites. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/international-journal-of-geoheritage-and-parks/vol/7/issue/4>

Members interested in joining the WCPA Geodiversity group should contact Kyung- Sik at happyman369@naver.com

BELT AND ROAD



The massive Chinese Belt and Road initiative is causing concern worldwide. [Horizon Scan of the Belt and Road Initiative](#) has recently been published in *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*. It identifies 11 frontier issues that may have large environmental and social impacts but are not yet recognized. Some of the issues include: threats to karst-based ecosystems via extraction for cement, BRI expansion to the Arctic, and the impacts of geopolitical rivalry on environmental and social standards and on building in conflict zones.

Photo: Top China Travel

PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION



Long term WCPA members and authors Nigel Dudley and Sue Stolton are both authors in this important new paper in *Nature* which provides a useful reference on private conservation initiatives and their growing global importance.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-2773-z>

Sue and Nigel also have a book out on sale at:

<https://www.routledge.com/Leaving-Space-for-Nature-The-Critical-Role-of-Area-Based-Conservation/Dudley-Stolton/p/book/9780367407537>

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN BRAZIL REPORT

This publication addresses the political and legal context of traditional peoples and communities territories in Brazil; The report launched by ISPN presents the legal situation of Indigenous Peoples, Quilombola, extractivists and other traditional communities and the relationship of their areas and territories with the concept of ICCA", in <https://ispn.org.br/this-publication-addresses-the-political-and-legal-context-of-traditional-peoples-and-communities-territories-in-brazil/>

Intermediary report version in English:

- <https://ispn.org.br/site/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ICCAs-Analysis-of-the-Legal-Context-and-Territories-Implementation-in-Brazil-.pdf>

EAST AFRICAN PIPELINE THREAT

This article warns of a major pipeline likely to impact severely on critical elephant, lion, and chimpanzee habitats and 12 forest reserves. Its proposed route skirts Africa's largest lake, and crosses more than 200 rivers and thousands of farms before reaching the Indian Ocean.

Such a project is ready for construction, to bring to the world oil from new oil fields in the heart of Africa. It is the East African Crude Oil Pipeline. Construction work has begun at the Kingfisher and Tilenga oil fields, where the China National Offshore Oil Corporation and French giant Total intend to sink 500 wells. They have already spent an estimated \$4 billion on infrastructure, and made enemies among local communities by grabbing land and providing paltry compensation. <https://tinyurl.com/y3ds3kpk>

NEED FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

A thought provoking article for our troubling times.

For decades, scientists have been raising calls for societal changes that will reduce our impacts on nature. Though much conservation has occurred, our natural environment continues to decline under the weight of our consumption. Humanity depends directly on the output of nature; thus, this decline will affect us, just as it does the other species with which we share this world. Díaz *et al.* review the findings of the largest assessment of the state of nature conducted as of yet. They report that the state of nature, and the state of the equitable distribution of nature's support, is in serious decline. Only immediate transformation of global business-as-usual economies and operations will sustain nature as we know it, and us, into the future. <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/366/6471/eaax3100>

INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE PROTECTED AREAS REPORT

The International Land Conservation Network (a project of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy) - United Nations Development Programme has published a report entitled, "[International Outlook for Privately Protected Areas.](#)"

The report provides an overview of the status of Privately Protected Areas in 30 countries throughout Latin America, Asia, the Pacific, and Sub-Saharan Africa. It includes individual profiles of the status of PPAs and opportunities for PPA establishment and recognition in each country, based on a 2018 desk review and in-country expert vetting process. You can access the Summary Report and Country Profiles on ILCN's [website](#) and on the NBSAP [Forum](#). Your feedback and input on the report and country profiles is welcome. Please email landconservation@lincolninst.edu with any questions.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL NEWS

PILOT WHALE STRANDING – TASMANIA SEPTEMBER 2020



Tragically, on 21 September, we were all alerted to the mass stranding event approximately 470 long finned Pilot whales in Macquarie Harbour on the East coast of Tasmania. This has since been reported to be the largest known stranding event in the history of Tasmania and potentially Australia. The Tasmania Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment immediately responded to the event, with specialists

from the Marine Conservation Branch and Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service establishing an Incident Management response based from the small coastal community of Strahan.

The whales had stranded in shallow waters, in remote parts of the harbour, creating very challenging and logistically complex issues with limited access by vehicle or vessel. Fortunately, the semi-submerged nature of their location, wet weather conditions over many days, and limited tidal fluctuation, meant that many were able to remain alive for longer than would normally be the case.

Healthy whales were manually lifted and carried to deep water and then individually strapped to the side of local fish farming vessels for transport to open water, beyond Macquarie heads. This slow and exhausting, but successful method resulted in over 111 whales being saved in the first week. Over the remaining two weeks, the remaining 350 who did not survive were transported to sea for disposal.

The success of this operation is a testament to an incredible collaboration and well managed response, comprising almost 100 DPIPWE staff, trained volunteers, local aquaculture industry operators; science and research organisations, and of course the local Strahan community. Photo: Brodie Weeding – The Advocate Newspaper

REVIEW OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

The landmark review into the 20-year-old Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act, Australia's national environment laws, was released in July and called for a major reforms, including establishing an "independent body" to oversee implementation. The Federal Government immediately rejected the report's call for an independent regulator

The review also flagged legally enforceable "national standards" to stop the decline of Australia's natural environment stating that "The current environmental trajectory is unsustainable."

"The foundation of the report was that there is too much focus on process and not enough focus on outcomes and that should be changed entirely," Graeme Samuel, the review's independent author, said that Australia's environment was getting worse under the laws designed to protect it. "Australia's natural environment and iconic places are in an overall state of decline and are under increasing threat,"

The Guardian: [Australia's environment in unsustainable state of decline, major review finds](#)
The Sydney Morning Herald: ['Fundamental failure': Environment Department not protecting koala habitat](#)

ABC: [Federal environment law review calls for independent cop, but Morrison Government rules it out](#)

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST EVER 'SPECIAL WILDLIFE RESERVE'.



Bush Heritage Australia's Pullen Pullen Reserve in western Queensland was recently declared the first ever 'special wildlife reserve'. Special wildlife reserves are a new class of protected area that provides national park level protections to privately owned land. The designation permanently protects land from possible incompatible land uses such as mining, timber harvesting or grazing. Queensland is currently the only state in Australia to this level of protection to private land.

Photo: The very rare Night Parrot Nick Leseberg

Pullen Pullen was purchased by Bush Heritage Australia to protect critical habitat of one of the world's most elusive and endangered birds – the night parrot. Pullen Pullen will continue to be managed by Bush Heritage Australia. The declaration of the Special Wildlife Reserve is of great importance to the land's Traditional Owners, the Maiawali First Nations People, who have been working closely with Bush Heritage Australia to identify and protect the reserve's ecologically and culturally important values.

<https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/nature-refuges/special-reserves>

FUNDING OF \$10 MILLION FOR JOBS BOOST IN REEF CATCHMENTS

The Queensland Government has announced \$10 million for the Reef Assist program, as part of the [Unite and Recover for Queensland jobs](#) strategy. The program will deliver priority environmental projects and employment opportunities in Great Barrier Reef catchments.

Projects, which will receive funding through the program are likely to include practical, on-ground land management work such as streambank rehabilitation, tree plantings, pest and weed control, and landscaping. Skills ranging from project management to labouring will be required and there will be some on-the-job training.

The program will also deliver environmental and conservation outcomes such as improved resilience to natural disasters, improved water quality, habitat restoration and improved green spaces.

More information <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/coasts-waterways/reef/reef-assist>

FITZROY RIVER NATIONAL PARK VITAL

The McGowan Government is currently implementing their 2017 election promise to establish a new Fitzroy River National Park in the West Kimberley. This was part of commitment to not allow the river to be dammed and support sustainable development in the river catchment. Progress on the proposed National Park is going well with consultation being carried out in partnership with Traditional Owners. The national park will be joint managed with the three Native Title holder groups of the region, enabling economic opportunities and supporting jobs in tourism and land management on Country in the Fitzroy Valley.

The proposed National Park will protect the upper reaches of the Fitzroy River including ancient Devonian gorges and help implement the Government's historic 'no dams' commitment. The park will make an important contribution to the protection of the outstanding biodiversity and cultural values of the National Heritage Listed river and surrounding landscapes. However business interests seeking to establish an irrigation industry in the Fitzroy catchment have mobilized in opposition of the proposed Fitzroy River National Park. However, the National Park proposal has widespread support from the Government department, Traditional Owner groups, and the Western Australian community.



Dangu Geikie Gorge was carved by the Fitzroy River through part of an ancient limestone barrier reef which snakes across the west Kimberley. The proposed National Park will extend the Geikie Gorge National Park further along the Fitzroy River to the north and the Margaret River to the east. Photo credit: Adam Monk.

SA LEADS ON PLASTIC BANNING



The seabirds, whales and dolphins of the southern oceans became a little bit safer recently as South Australia voted to become the first Australian state to introduce laws banning some single-use plastics.

Environmental campaigners say the laws, likely to come into force in early 2021, are historic and will help protect wildlife on land and in the oceans.

South Australia's laws mean that selling, supplying or distributing a "prohibited plastic product" will be illegal. On the list of banned items are single-use plastic straws, cutlery and drinks stirrers, as well as polystyrene cups, bowls, plates and clamshell containers. The legislation also lists other items that are under consideration to be added to the banned list.

The SA environment minister, David Speirs, said no specific date has been set for the laws to come into force, with Covid-19 restrictions still having an impact on society and the hospitality industry. <https://tinyurl.com/yxcap2vo>

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

NATURE ON PRIVATE LANDS NEEDED MORE PROTECTION REPORT

Hundreds of areas of native habitat are being deliberately and unlawfully harmed around the country with near impunity, a report released by Forest & Bird NZ has found. The report [See no evil: biodiversity loss on private land](#) documents hundreds of instances of deliberate damage to native habitat, some of it large scale, or of high significance. The report also details dozens of local and regional councils with little ability to detect illegal habitat destruction, let alone proactively protect the natural environment for which they are responsible.

Using data provided by regional and district councils under the Local Government Official Information and Meeting Act, Forest & Bird has documented blind spots, inconsistencies, and ineffectiveness in the country's ability to protect native forest, wetlands, and coastal and river margins.

"There is simply no guarantee that important habitat will be protected, regardless of its size, importance, rarity, or classification. It is telling that in three years, there have been less than 10 prosecutions for native habitat destruction, despite there being hundreds of instances of known unauthorised clearance," says Kevin Hague CEO of Forest and Bird.

STEWARDSHIP LANDS NEED STRONGER PROTECTION.

Forest and Bird have also published a discussion paper on the need for New Zealand's Stewardship lands, public Crown lands, to have better legal protection. The stewardship lands constitute some 30% of conservation lands which have been transferred to DOC since the Department's creation in 1987. The paper argues for the importance of these lands for conservation, but their vulnerability to development proposals from their lack of a specific conservation legal status. There are over 3000 parcels of such land representing many outstanding natural landscapes and habitats for many threatened species. The paper can be downloaded at:

<https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/resources/stewardship-land-conservation-land>

NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION HERO



Graeme Atkins of Ngāti Porou is a Department of Conservation ranger. He has recently been awarded the Loder Cup which since 1926 has honoured New Zealanders who work to investigate, promote, retain and cherish the indigenous flora of Aotearoa.

Photo: NZ Herald

In awarding the Cup, Minister of Conservation Minister, Eugenie Sage said, that through his

passion for taonga and rongoā (traditional healing), Graeme has made an outstanding contribution to the conservation of Aotearoa's native plants. His protection of very rare plants on the East Coast has been vital to plant conservation in a region which is relatively under-studied." Graeme learnt rongoā from his grandmother and credits his passion for plants to his tohunga ancestor.

His advocacy for restoring the health of the forests of the Raukūmara Range has helped secure a record \$34 million investment in Te Raukūmara Pae Maunga project. It is a partnership between Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti Porou and DOC to control deer, goats, possums and other pests over 150,000 hectares to protect the Raukūmara forests, ensure species such as whio/blue duck, kaka, kererū, and Hochstetter's frog can thrive once again, and strengthen ahi kaa for manawhenua."

PACIFIC ISLAND & PNG NEWS

NEWS FROM OCEANIA - PIPAP

I have previously drawn Members attention to a top weekly newsletter on Pacific conservation issues. SPREP's Vainuupo Jungblut compiles these excellent briefings for the Pacific Islands Protected Areas Portal (PIPAP). If you wish to keep abreast of Pacific issues I recommend you subscribe by contacting Vai at vainuupoj@sprep.org

THE AMAZON OF THE PACIFIC



Research just out from New Guinea states that New Guinea the highest plant diversity of any island on earth, surpassing Madagascar, (11,832 species), Borneo (11,165 species), and Sumatra (8,391 species). Over 13,600 species were documented on New Guinea, the world's largest tropical island which is politically split in half - Papua New Guinea in the east, and Indonesian-ruled territory in the west.

Photo Exclusive Travel.com

A team of international researchers has produced the first verified checklist of the vascular plants on mainland New Guinea and surrounding islands, and published their findings in the journal *Nature*.

New Guinea's flora was also highly unique, with the new study finding more than two-thirds of its plants were endemic, meaning they were only found on the island.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/422889/new-guinea-has-most-diverse-plant-life-on-earth>

PALAU EXPANSION OF PA NETWORK



In Palau Sonsorol state has become the 16th state to join the Protected Areas Network (PAN). Their nominated site, Merir Protected Area, has a rich ecosystem that supports a variety of habitats that includes diverse mariner and terrestrial organisms such as birds, green turtles, coconut crabs, fish, and other marine species. The Merir Island is a critical area to include into the Network of Protected Areas in Palau as it bears the largest nesting site for melob (green sea turtles)

Photo: vacationstogo.com

<http://islandtimes.us/sonorol-becomes-16th-state-to-join-pan/>

SAMOA'S SUSTAINABLE OCEAN STRATEGY

Apia, Samoa (16 October, 2020) - The EU and IUCN have extended warm congratulations to the Government of Samoa on the successful launch of Samoa's Oceans Strategy 2020 – 2030. The Samoa Oceans Strategy (SOS), a first for the island nation, was developed following the country's commitments to the protection and management of its ocean space at the UN Ocean Conference in 2017 in New York

The Strategy will set out principles, provide an indicative framework for the relevant Ministries, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, private sector and members of the public to coordinate oceans' work. The EU will support the Government, through IUCN, in providing technical support towards the Marine Spatial Planning component under the SOS. The four year project begun in November 2018 and will run until December 2022.

While congratulating the Government of Samoa on the launch of their Oceans Strategy, the Ambassador of the European Union for the Pacific, HE Sujiro Seam said, *"The small Island States of the Pacific are big Ocean States. More than anywhere else, oceans are essential for food, livelihoods, biodiversity and resilience, but threatened by unsustainable practices and climate change... Marine spatial planning is a key tool to promote the sustainable development of the maritime and coastal economies. The ambition of Samoa and the Pacific on Oceans strongly echoes the European Green Deal"*.

"IUCN is pleased to provide technical support to Samoa as they develop their marine spatial plan. Samoa is a world leader and IUCN is privileged to join them in their journey to sustainably manage and protect their ocean biodiversity and heritage", said Mr Mason

PACIFIC CONGRESS ON LINE



Many of us were looking forward to the great conservation gathering of the Pacific Congress on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in Noumea this year. However fate had other plans and now with great human ingenuity you are invited to join a different but equally important event.

Now coming as a virtual event from 24-27th November 2020. Registration opens 6 November <https://www.pacificnatureconference.com/> or contact pacificconference2020@sprep.org.