



WCPA
WORLD COMMISSION
ON PROTECTED AREAS

THE IUCN WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS
OCEANIA
Newsletter No. 1 2019



WCPA pays tribute to the National Parks fire fighters in the front line defending our parks, their natural systems, species, heritage and human life. Photo: NPWS NSW

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

- IUCN GREEN LIST GROWS
- US GOVERNMENT SHUT DOWN IMPACTS NATIONAL PARKS
- US CALL FOR MAJOR INVESTMENT IN PARKS MAINTENANCE
- INNOVATIVE PROTECTED AREAS FINANCING AND RESOURCING SOLUTIONS
- NEW NATIONAL PARK IN ARGENTINA CRITICAL FOR REWILDING PROGRAMS

AUSTRALIAN NEWS

- NEW DIRECTOR FOR ACIUCN
- DAINTREE NATIONAL PARK DAMAGED BY CYCLONE OWEN
- ADDITIONS TO NSW NATIONAL PARKS ESTATE
- CORAL SEA MARINE PARK REEF SURVEY
- MURRAY-DARLING FISH DEATHS IN THE THOUSANDS
- REWILDING THE YORKE PENINSULA
- NEW DIRECTOR – AUSTRALIAN ANTARTIC DIVISION

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

- SCIENTIFIC REPORT INTO WETLAND LOSS
- VISITOR BEHAVIOUR PROGRAM LAUNCHED
- CAMPAIGN FOR CAMERA MONITORING OF FISHERY WILDLIFE IMPACTS

PACIFIC ISLAND & PNG NEWS

- **BIOPAMA UPDATE AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS TO SERVE ON THE ACTION COMPONENT REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
- **PACIFIC ISLANDS PROTECTED AREA PORTAL (PIPAP)**
- **FIRST STEP TAKEN TO RECOGNISING PACIFIC OCEAN AS LEGAL ENTITY**

1. WCPA OCEANIA UPDATE

From the Vice Chair

Dear colleagues,

First of course a warm Happy New Year to all members. However it has not started well for the natural environment. Australia has suffered a prolonged heatwave with great stress being put on our ecological systems – the most dramatic being the appalling mass death of fish in the Murray Darling. However we know many other species will be stressed by prolonged heat and fire events. There have been very serious fires in Tasmania and Victoria and around Christchurch in New Zealand. Meanwhile our colleagues in Queensland have suffered the most extreme monsoon rainfall on record with an extraordinary monsoon with one metre of rain falling on Townsville in the last nine days ago while in Ingham, half a metre of rain fell in just six hours.

We want to express our sympathy to the many people affected in our rural and regional communities and our appreciation to the many people who are supporting these communities at this difficult and often dangerous time.

Also very importantly we wish to acknowledge the great work of national parks staffs defending their areas and helping communities and to them and all people who try to protect and help injured wildlife.

Member Opportunities

Members Meeting Brisbane Friday 1st March!

I hope all those in the vicinity of Queensland are fully aware of an upcoming members meeting in Brisbane. The details are Gondwana Meeting Room Level 3, Department of Environment and Science (DES) 400 George St. Brisbane
5:00pm - 6.30pm.

Please advise me on personal email penelope.figgis@outlook.com if you are attending and also please note that the lifts close at 5.15pm so please arrive on time room will be open from 4.30pm.

Call for experts

IUCN has launched a call for experts to serve on the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) Programme Action Component Pacific Regional Advisory Committee (RAC). Click on the link below for further details.

Original Article: [BIOPAMA launches a call for experts to join the Pacific Regional Action Component Advisory Committee](#)

Representations

With the assistance of WCPA member experts a submission will be made on the Draft Walking Tracks Strategy Kosciuszko Summit Precinct.

News of Members

Kathy Zischka heads for IUCN Geneva



Kathy Zischka, long term WCPA member and Director of Australian Committee for IUCN since 2015 has been appointed to the World Heritage unit of the IUCN in Geneva. Kathy began her association with ACIUCN while still a student and volunteered to help at an ACIUCN AGM. She said at the time 'I'd like to work for IUCN' - 8 years later she has achieved her goal and we wish her all the best for the next stage in her conservation career.

Vale John Sinclair 1939-2019, champion of Fraser Island and all World Heritage



Many of us who have 'been around' conservation circles for a long time will have warm memories of John Sinclair. John is best known for his tireless battle to protect the natural heritage of Fraser Island. In 1971 he founded the Fraser Island Defenders Organization, FIDO to protect K'gari (Fraser Island's) pristine lakes and forests from the threats of sandmining and logging. That battle was eventually won and working with the Australian Conservation Foundation it became World Heritage. In 1976 he was named as the Australian newspaper's Australian of the Year. However, John paid a high price being bankrupted and forced out of his livelihood. He never stopped advocating for Fraser but extended his passion to all World Heritage Areas – he set up a tour company and shared his love of these special places and his advocacy for their protection. For all his work John was honoured by Australian Honour (AM) and by the prestigious international Goldman Prize and the UN Global 500.

2. INTERNATIONAL NEWS

IUCN GREEN LIST GROWS

The IUCN Green List aims to increase the number of natural areas delivering long-lasting conservation results for people and nature by giving recognition to well-managed and well-governed protected and conserved areas. In November 2018, IUCN admitted 15 new natural sites to the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas. Sites in Egypt, France, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru and the United Arab Emirates were added bringing the total number of sites on the Green list to 40. Keep up to date with Green List matters at: <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/iucn-green-list-protected-and-conserved-areas>

US GOVERNMENT SHUT DOWN IMPACTS NATIONAL PARKS



Yosemite National Park
Source: Dakota Snider

National parks in the US are suffering as the ongoing government shutdown has left areas open to visitors with few staff on duty. Overflowing garbage, sewerage and illegal off-road driving in fragile areas are overwhelming some of the iconic national parks with concerns raised that natural resources and cultural and historic artefacts could be damaged.

Parks across the US are closing camping areas, while in some parks that remain open, local business owners have stepped in to help maintain the parks in lieu of rangers, by emptying overflowing bins, sweeping and stocking restrooms that remain open and providing information to visitors.

Unlike shutdowns in some previous administrations, the Trump administration has left parks open to visitors despite the lack of staff raising concerns about safety and significant damage to the natural resources in parks and potentially to historic and other cultural artefacts.

US CALL FOR MAJOR INVESTMENT IN PARKS MAINTENANCE

In better news the Members of Congress are putting investment in national park infrastructure back on the legislative table. A bill has been reintroduced the Restore America's Parks and Public Lands Act to address the backlog of repairs at national parks and in the Senate side, the Restore Our Parks bill has been brought back.

Both bills call for a portion of unobligated royalties paid to the federal government from energy development on public lands and waters to be directed to priority parks and public land repairs—up to \$6.5 billion over five years. The following article gives the top five reasons why protected area management and maintenance is vital to the many values of the parks including their vital economic role. <https://pew.org/2ld5xm6>



INNOVATIVE PROTECTED AREAS FINANCING AND RESOURCING SOLUTIONS

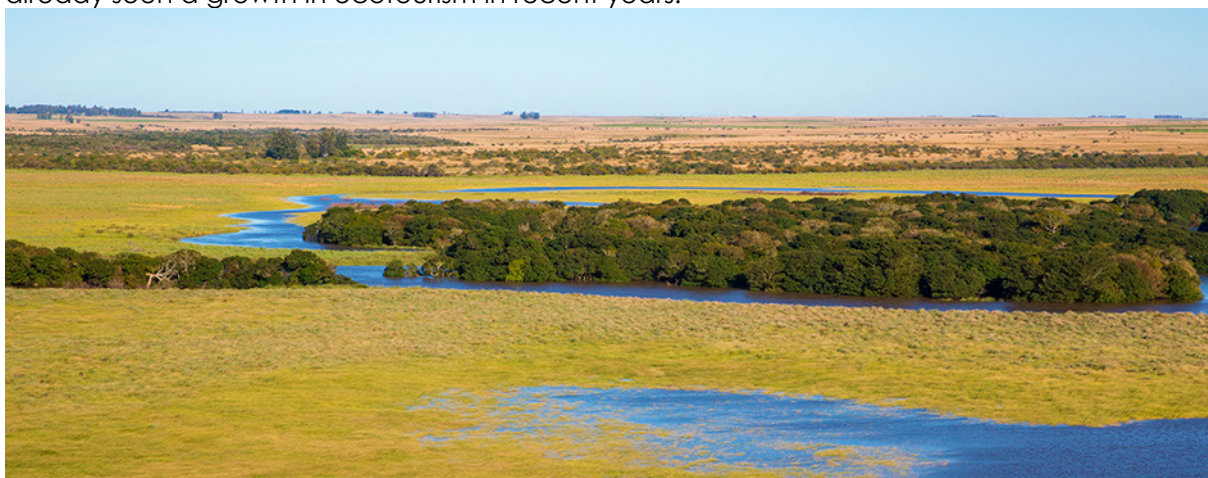
The 2018 [Pathfinder Award for innovation in nature conservation](#) focused on identifying and celebrating solutions from around the world that address the problem of insufficient investment of finance and other resources in protected areas. In a recent webinar co-organized by PANORAMA and BIOFIN, the award winners introduced their ground-breaking innovations from the Balkans, Scotland, South Africa and the Philippines. If you missed it, you can [view the recording](#).

NEW NATIONAL PARK IN ARGENTINA CRITICAL FOR REWILDING PROGRAMS

In December 2018, the Congress of Argentina passed legislation approving the creation of the nearly 160,000-hectare Ibera National Park. Previously a private protected area the park was donated the property to the public. The new national park abuts a much larger protected area, the Ibera Provincial Park, whereby establishing one large contiguous parkland centered on one of the largest freshwater wetlands in South America.

It is hoped the park will support jaguar rewilding program in a country where 95% of its habitat has been lost and only an estimated 200 individuals remain.

It is estimated that in ten years, Ibera Park will receive more than 100,000 visitors a year, promoting economic prosperity in the local communities surrounding the park, which have already seen a growth in ecotourism in recent years.



Source: <http://www.theconservationlandtrust.org/eng/ibera.htm>
<https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/return-jaguar>

3. AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL NEWS

NEW DIRECTOR FOR ACIUCN



Tandi Spencer - Smith has been appointed the new Director of the Australian Committee for IUCN. Tandi is Master of Science in Biodiversity Conservation with over fifteen years of experience in the not-for-profit, corporate and government sectors, Tandi has held senior roles at the National Parks Association of NSW, the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative and most recently, worked as the Manager, Marketing & Communications for Greening Australia. She has broad experience in conservation and restoration across public and private land; community outreach; science communications; species management and conservation; strategic planning; and program and business development. Tandi is a member

of the IUCN Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group and a founding member of the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative.

DAINTREE NATIONAL PARK DAMAGED BY CYCLONE OWEN

Cyclone Owen wreaked havoc in Daintree National Park in December 2018 with flooding and landslides leading to the closure of roads through the park as council workers attempted to clear fallen trees and debris.

A short video of the flood waters in the national park is available on the ABC website at:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-12-12/cyclone-owen-causes-flooding-and-landslides-in-daintree-park/10613058>

ADDITIONS TO NSW NATIONAL PARKS ESTATE

In late 2018, NSW added 4500 hectares to the national parks' estate. The additions included koala habitat, an upland swamp-threatened ecological community in Upper Kangaroo Valley, significant areas of rainforest in the Upper Hunter and sites of significant cultural heritage. The additions are:

- Part of Carrai State Forest (2080 hectares) to Willi Willi National Park
- Yarrowa State Forest (120.6 hectares) to Budderoo National Park
- Part of Mernot State Forest (1144 hectares) to Curracubundi State Conservation Area
- Yango State Forest (647.5 hectares) to a new Yango State Conservation Area
- Muldiva State Forest (513 hectares) to be vested in the Minister for the Environment for the purposes of Part 11 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

CORAL SEA MARINE PARK REEF SURVEY

The largest reef survey of the Coral Sea Marine Park commenced in 2018 with three voyages undertaken. 2018 was the first of a three-year project to monitor 20 large reef ecosystems in the Coral Sea Marine Park.

The survey findings will help to improve understanding of coral reef health and fish communities and provide the opportunity to discover new marine species and measure levels of ocean pollution.

Voyage leader, Professor Morgan Pratchett, said the most recent voyage in December 2018 would increase understanding about how reefs are connected, the impact of coral bleaching, and reef recovery. To read more, visit:

<https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/news/largest-ever-coral-sea-reef-survey/>

MURRAY-DARLING FISH DEATHS IN THE THOUSANDS



The long and divisive debate over the health of Australia's major river system the Murray Darling has become a national issue of major concern as many thousands of fish have been killed in the rivers leading some experts to fear entire populations of local native fish including the Murray cod may have been wiped out.

WCPA members Drs. Jaime Pittock and Richard Kingsford have both been prominently quoted experts. According to The Guardian, two years ago the lakes were close to full, however, since

then water has been extracted for irrigation at a rate that has left the lakes with just 2.5 percent of water remaining.

Richard has written an excellent analysis of the origins of what many regard as an ecological catastrophe.

<https://johnmenadue.com/richard-kingsford-the-catastrophic-fish-kill-on-the-darling-river-decades-in-the-making/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/jan/07/hundreds-of-thousands-of-native-fish-dead-in-second-murray-darling-incident>

REWILDING THE YORKE PENINSULA

WWF-Australia is proud to be working with government and non-government partners to restore and rewild the Yorke Peninsula in South Australia. 27 native species are already extinct from this area, and many others are considered at risk of extinction.

The rewilding program has set the goal to reintroduce locally extinct species across 170,000 hectares of the southern Yorke Peninsula over the next five years. This includes threatened species like woylies, red-tailed phascogales and bandicoots.

The program involves working with the local community, farmers, businesses and the government to restore the natural ecosystem so that the landscape degraded from years of agricultural and industrial use, can thrive again. For further information, visit: <https://www.wwf.org.au/what-we-do/rewild-the-yorke#our-partners>

NEW DIRECTOR – AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC DIVISION

Kim Ellis was appointed as the new Director of the Australian Antarctic Division in December 2018. Kim, previously the Executive Director of Botanic Gardens and Centennial Parklands in NSW, will commence in the role in February. Kim will take over the role from Dr Nick Gales, who has retired after more than two decades working in the Division.

4. NEW ZEALAND NEWS

SCIENTIFIC REPORT INTO WETLAND LOSS

A scientific report recently published in the New Zealand Journal of Ecology details wetland loss in Southland by analysing and comparing satellite images of wetlands taken in 1990 and 2012. This covers a longer timeframe than any other Southland wetland loss study.

The New Zealand government introduced legislative tools after 1990 to protect the natural environment and it was anticipated that the rate of wetland loss would decrease with this added protection. However, the report shows that of the 32,814 ha of wetland in the study area, 3,452 ha have been completely lost and a further 3,493 ha are at risk due to drainage and vegetation decline.

In response to the report findings, the Department of Conservation is investigating options for wetland sites to be protected under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and is working with the Ministry of the Environment to develop policy to improve wetland protection.

The report is available at: <https://newzealandecology.org/nzie/3355>

VISITOR BEHAVIOUR PROGRAM LAUNCHED

The New Zealand government launched a visitor behaviour program in December 2018 to encourage visitors to “understand the need to have as little impact as possible on our wild spaces and natural areas” Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage said.

In addition to enhanced and increased visitor information, the Department of Conservation will spend an additional \$3.6 million over the summer period to maintain facilities on public conservation land, including on cleaning toilets and track maintenance and visitor compliance. Additional rangers have also been employed.

CAMPAIGN FOR CAMERA MONITORING OF FISHERY WILDLIFE IMPACTS



The deaths of four Hector's dolphins in fishing nets in and five critically threatened Antipodean albatross in a single long lining incident have strengthened a campaign by Forest and Bird for cameras on fishing vessels.

“These tragic deaths show there is a major problem in our fisheries, and raises serious questions over the industry's dismal record of killing threatened native species,” says Karen Baird, Forest & Bird Ocean Advocate.

Photo WWF NZ

Forest and Bird cite the increase in declarations once cameras were used and claim the industry cannot commit to transparency while opposing evidence based oversight.

<https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/resources/five-endangered-albatross-die-one-long-line-still-no-cameras-boats>

5. PACIFIC ISLAND & PNG NEWS



BIOPAMA UPDATE AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS TO SERVE ON THE ACTION COMPONENT REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The implementation of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Programme (BIOPAMA) is gathering momentum!

This global initiative of the **ACP Group of States financed by the European Union's 11th European Development Fund** aims to improve long-term conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. In the Pacific, BIOPAMA is led by IUCN's Oceania Regional Office in partnership with the **Joint Research Centre of the European Commission** and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The initiative focuses on the 15 independent states of the region, which have over 580 protected areas, as well as numerous locally conserved and sustainable use areas. For further information on BIOPAMA see <https://biopama.org/>.

In June last year, the programme held its regional inception workshop in Samoa. This brought together nearly a hundred representatives from government, academia and NGOs to discuss protected and conserved area priorities. BIOPAMA also welcomed two new team

members in September. Paul van Nimwegen joined as the Regional Coordinator and will oversee the implementation of the programme in the Pacific. Clea Farrow has commenced as the Protected Areas Officer.

Looking ahead, the regional focus of BIOPAMA will be to support partners and communities to improve the effectiveness and livelihood benefits of marine and terrestrial protected and conserved areas. This will be achieved by implementing activities under four main work areas:

- Facilitating regional projects to access BIOPAMA grants (or Action Component). The programme has a € 20 million grant facility for on ground activities in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.
- Developing a comprehensive protected areas regional resource-hub that supports reporting and evidence based decision-making. In the Pacific, BIOPAMA has partnered with SPREP to develop this through the Pacific Islands Protected Areas Portal (or PIPAP).
- Producing reports that outline the current status of protected and conserved areas in the Pacific.
- Conducting capacity building activities for communities and protected area practitioners focused on priority needs.

IUCN has recently released a call for applications seeking experts to serve on the BIOPAMA Action Component regional advisory committees, which include the Pacific. These committees will play an important role in evaluating and recommending grant proposals. Experts from WCPA are encouraged to apply.

PACIFIC ISLANDS PROTECTED AREA PORTAL (PIPAP)

WCPA Members with an interest in Pacific issues are encouraged to access this portal and also sign up for an excellent newsletter. PIPAP is housed in SPREP and supported by BIOPAMA and other sponsors. It aims to provide a doorway through which Pacific Islands protected area practitioners can share expertise and benefit from opportunities. It has a wide range of materials on the Pacific and is constantly developing.

<https://pipap.sprep.org/>

FIRST STEP TAKEN TO RECOGNISING PACIFIC OCEAN AS LEGAL ENTITY

Ocean experts from eight countries met in New Zealand in November 2018, to discuss the feasibility of recognising the Pacific Ocean as a legal entity with its own legal rights. The experts produced a Statement on collective thinking, recognising and acknowledging human kinship with the Ocean and 'our' responsibilities to the Ocean.

The Commitment includes a feasibility study leading to the drafting of a regional convention, open to all signatories by 2020 and recognising the Pacific Ocean as a legal entity with its own legal rights. Such a framework has been successfully applied in New Zealand (the Whanganui River, Te Urewera National Park and Mount Taranaki), in India (Narmada River), and in Colombia (Colombian Amazon, Pisba Highlands and Atrato River).

The Statement is considered an historic first step towards a paradigm shift in how humans treat the Ocean. For further information, visit: <https://www.sprep.org/news/we-are-the-ocean-and-the-ocean-is-us>

6. UPCOMING

Dr Jane Goodall DBE, world-renowned ethologist, humanitarian, conservationist and UN Messenger of Peace is coming back to Australia in 2019.

Join JGIA in welcoming Dr Jane Goodall to Australia and share in her stories of inspiration and hope. <https://www.janegoodall.org.au/2019-jane-goodall-australian-tour/>