Pacific Islands Roundtable
for Nature Conservation

PIRT Species Working Group
Update on member activities 2016-2017

Co-Chairs: Helen Pippard, IUCN Oceania; Michael Donoghue, SPREP

Key activities and highlights

Objective 1, Aichi Targets 1, 19:- Raising Awareness of biodiversity values



SPREP

CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND

-Oceanswatch - Raising awareness to combat logging and mining in Temotu



Photo: Facebook

-UN Oceans Conference

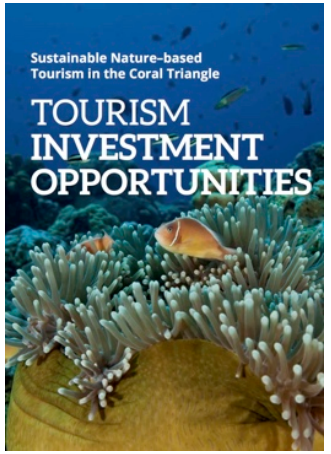
-Seagrass Dugong project in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands

SPREP WWF WCS

Key activities and highlights (cont.)

Objective 2, Aichi Targets 2,3,4,6,7,8:- Biodiversity conservation and development support sustainable livelihoods

-Promotion of ecotourism
UN Conference – value of sanctuaries
for tourism as well as species protection



-Live and Learn Vanuatu: Scoping the potential for
Payments for Ecosystem Services in Gaua and Santo

Key activities and highlights (cont.)



Arnavon Islands © TNC

Objective 3, Aichi Targets 5,6,7,11,14,15:
Conserve and manage priority sites and habitats

-Arnavon Islands declared as “The Arnavon Community Marine Park (ACMP)”, Solomon Islands’ first legally recognized PA under the PA Act 2010. Important site for hawksbill turtles

-IMMA Pacific Islands – Marine Mammal Protected Areas Taskforce IUCN/SPREP

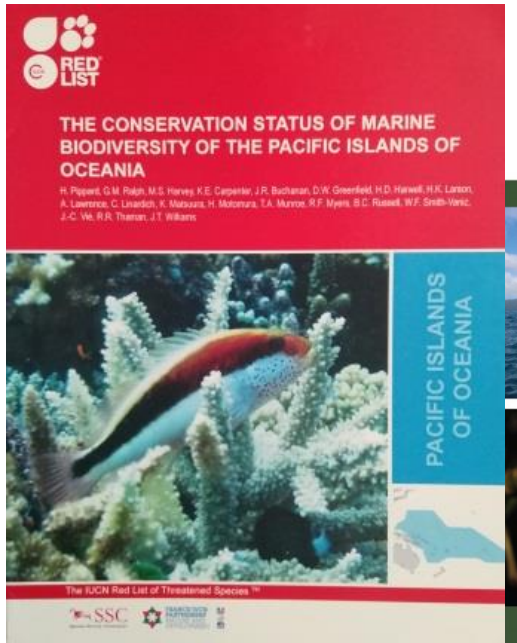
-Marine Managed Areas (MMAs) in the Vatu-i-Ra Seascape, Fiji have draft management plans and regulation to gazette the MMAs. Important sites for migratory humpback whales

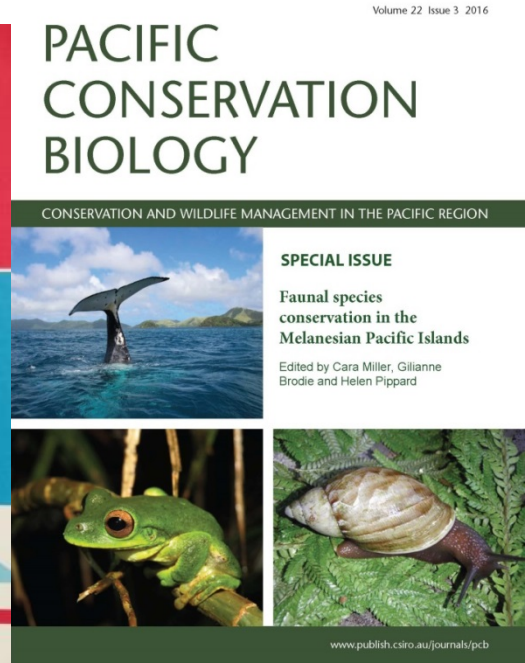
Key activities and highlights (cont.)

Objective 4, Aichi Targets 7,9,12,13,16,18,19: Protect and recover threatened species, especially those of ecological, cultural or economic significance

Knowledge

- Revision of IUCN Red List status for birds
- Conservation Status of Marine Biodiversity in the Pacific
- Publication and launch of Pacific Conservation Biology special issue





Key activities and highlights (cont.)

Objective 4, Aichi Targets 7,9,12,13,16,18,19: Protect and recover threatened species, especially those of ecological, cultural or economic significance



Gau Banded Iguana © Mark Fraser

Knowledge

- New iguana species described from Gau, Fiji

USGS, Taronga Conservation Society Australia, The National Trust of Fiji and NatureFiji-MareqetiViti

-New species of freshwater fishes described from Solomon Islands and Vanuatu – *Eleotri bosetoi*, *Lentipes kolobangara* and *Schismatogobius essi*



Lentipes kolobangara© C.Lord

Key activities and highlights (cont.)

Objective 4, Aichi Targets 7,9,12,13,16,18,19: Protect and recover threatened species, especially those of ecological, cultural or economic significance

Knowledge

-Location of Newell's Shearwater and Titan (White-bellied) Storm-petrel on Rapa

-Becks Petrel - single bird captured, fitted with a satellite transmitter and monitored

-The Emperor, the King and the Little Pig: Status of the lost rats of Guadalcanal - presence of one, most likely *Uromys rex* – the King rat –was recorded by UQ

-Tagging of 152 Admiralty cuscus with microchips on Manus Island, PNG

-NYBG surveys in Tafea, Vanuatu

BirdLife INTERNATIONAL
Together for birds and people

CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND

IUCN

WCS

Key activities and highlights (cont.)

Objective 4, Aichi Targets 7,9,12,13,16,18,19: Protect and recover threatened species, especially those of ecological, cultural or economic significance

Species Management

-Protection of **Fijian Free-tailed Bat** breeding cave in Vanua Levu (the only known breeding cave in Fiji) - Nature Fiji and partners

-Kiribati Shark Sanctuary

-Tonga Whale Sanctuary

-Sea cucumber management plans in Fiji

-Turtle management and monitoring

SPREP

WWF

WCS

The Nature Conservancy

Key activities and highlights (cont.)

Objective 5, Aichi Targets 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,14:-
Manage threats to biodiversity, e.g. over-exploitation

CITES COP17 September 2016
-Support to Fiji for listing proposal for mobula rays on CITES Appendix II
-Provision of technical support to Oceania Parties for rays and sharks
-Training in identification for listed species



-UNEP support to SIG for developing new regulations for Wildlife and Protection Act

-Not eating, buying or selling kawakawa or donu (grouper) during spawning season, June to September

Key activities and highlights (cont.)

Objective 6, Aichi Targets 17,18,19,20
Build capacity and partnerships around science, policy, indigenous knowledge

-Collecting **traditional ecological knowledge** and traditional resource management practices through digital storytelling in PNG
-JCU working with **Kwaio** in Solomons to strengthen documentation of indigenous knowledge related to medicinal plants
-University of Queensland and **ESSI,** conducting courses on mammal survey and data collection techniques.
-Wai Hau Conservation Foundation Look and Learn trip to Marovo to improve monitoring and management of leatherback turtles in Are'Are, Malaita
-Seagrass and dugong trainings in Vanuatu, with Solomon and Vanuatu participants

Lessons learned

- Difficult to get money just for species work. Issue of financial sustainability
- Community engagement and relevance – economic benefits will help
- Main activities bringing partners together have been the Pacific Islands Species Forum and the SCB Oceania conference
- High quality, robust scientific research is being undertaken on a variety of species in the Pacific; focus biased towards data gathering
- But species management and recovery efforts are increasing - data can feed into species management plans, protected area designation, national legislation and international Conventions
- Increasing networking and collaborative opportunities can help to achieve conservation outcomes
- Publication of results and findings is vital – collaborative efforts only useful if messages reach government, decision makers, and community conservation managers

2017-2018 Priorities

- Solomon Islands Species Forum
- CEPF work on priority species – Amphibians, Flying Foxes, Dugongs, Turtles, Tongoa Megapode, Plant species – including species management plans
- Dugong and Seagrass - WorldFish, SICCP, VESS
- PEUMP project, turtles – SPREP
- Seagrass/mangrove IKI in pipeline
- Sustainable Use/CITES

SPREP, USFWS proposal for increased support to PI Parties

Significant Trade CITES – Solomons

Management of Crocodiles - Solomons

Shark/bycatch UN Voluntary commitment – SPREP, WWF

Opportunities for collaboration with PIRT partners

- *Habitat based management – e.g. Marine sanctuaries*
- *PAWG? KBA re-visiting*
- *Environmental Law WG – CITES and other Conventions, Acts*
- Capacity Building, teaching in taxonomy