



PBIF News Briefs

January 2, 2008

Happy New Year 2008!

We hope this newsletter finds you well and eager to tackle the challenges of conservation and management in 2008. Our Five-Year-In-Review Fact-sheet was published and circulated in time for the 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. To view this comprehensive look at PBIF's progress or to read previous newsletters go to:

www.pbif.org/about/default.html.

Conference Success in Alotau!

The 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, took place from 22–26 October 2007, in Alotau, Papua New Guinea. The Conference was a key regional meeting of government agencies, NGOs, community based organizations, and donor bodies to discuss and develop a joint vision for conservation in the Pacific islands. The conference drew in nearly 400 participants as the residents of Milne Bay Province rolled out the red carpet for this important and historic conference event. Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare officially closed the meeting with words of encouragement and a challenge to appreciate the real value of oceans. The Republic of Marshall Islands will be hosting the 9th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in 2012. This year's conference proceedings are scheduled to be released in February 2008.



Photographer: A. Baum 2007

Action Strategy for Nature Conservation 2008-2012

The Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands (2003–2007) is the Pacific's overarching framework for biodiversity conservation. The Action Strategy provides a broad framework for conservation in the Pacific involving partnerships between conservationists and governments, the private sector, and civil society. During the five days of deliberations at the Nature Conservation Conference in Alotau, the Action Strategy was significantly revised for the next 5 year term. While the previous mission, vision and goals will remain the same, the 18 objectives and 77 targets have been replaced by 4 comprehensive objectives. A subtitle has also been added "Empowering local people, communities and Pacific institutions" to emphasize the overarching foundation of the Action Strategy. Implementation of the strategy is the responsibility of Pacific island countries and territories with the first phase of implementation

targets needing to be set by governments, NGOs and others implementing the Strategy. The Action Strategy will be presented to the SPREP annual governing council meeting in 2008.

PBIF hosts Pacific Protected Areas Database Planning Session

On October 27, 2007 PBIF hosted a planning session for the Pacific Protected Areas Database in Alotau, PNG. Over 25 people attended the session and response

for the database was overwhelmingly positive. We received commitments from nearly a dozen partners to help develop an information system for sharing and documenting data on Pacific PAs including UNEP-WCMC, The Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society, IUCN-WCPA, Conservation International, WorldFish Center, CSIRO, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program and the Japan Wildlife Research Center.

Created in 2003, the Pacific Protected Areas Database (PPAD) is a work in progress to document protected areas in the Pacific islands region of Oceania (Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia). The Pacific Biodiversity Information Forum is working to engage national, regional and international stakeholders to further the development of the database and increase the ability for managers, scientists, policy makers and community members to gauge the distribution, representation and effectiveness of PA's across the region.

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Photographer: J. Maragos 2005

The 'New' PBIF Organizing Committee

When the PBIF was formed in 2003, an interim advisory group was selected to help the forum in its development. This past year, PBIF has successfully transitioned from an 'interim' organizing committee to a more permanent advisory body. The new PBIF Organizing Committee convened for the first time in Alotau, Papua New Guinea on October 25, 2007 marking the final step of the transition. At the meeting the group reviewed progress over the previous five years and is now in the process of approving a

strategic plan for the next three years. Our new organizing committee will provide guidance on the strategic direction and activities of the PBIF and help improve the relevance and impact of its work. For meeting proceedings go to: www.pbif.org/about/meetings.html

International Year of the Reef 2008

The ICRI International Year of the Reef 2008 is a worldwide campaign to raise awareness about the value and importance of coral reefs and threats to their sustainability, and to motivate people to take action to protect them. All individuals, corporations, schools, governments, and organizations are welcome and actively encouraged to participate in IYOR 2008.

The Pacific has embraced the 2008 International Year of the Reef and the Secre-

tariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program is coordinating the Pacific Year of the Reef 2008 campaign as their successful 2007 Year of the Sea Turtle campaign draws to a close. The Pacific Ocean is home to over 75 percent of the World's reefs that are now under threat. From 1968 to 2004, approximately 600 square miles of coral reef has disappeared each year. Since 1995, the rate of this disappearance has doubled. For more information go to www.sprep.org.

Upcoming Events

- Feb 25-28, 2008 Second International Conference on Health and Biodiversity, Galway, Ireland
- March 7-11, 2008 4th Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands, Hanoi, Vietnam
- April 14-16, 2008 Capacity-Building Workshop on Implementing NBSAPs and Mainstreaming Biodiversity for the Pacific, Fiji
- May 19-30, 2008 Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-9) Bonn, Germany
- May 22, 2008 International Day for Biological Diversity, Multiple Venues
- July 7-11, 2008 11th International Coral Reef Symposium, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

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Improvements to the inventory include regular comprehensive data calls for updated information, increased online functionality, improved visual representation via Geographic Information System tools, and reclassification under the World Conservation Union protected areas category system. The PPAD will serve as the regional information center to the World Database on Protected Areas.

Taxonomic Expertise Database

With technical support from PBIF, PACINET now offers a Taxonomic Human Resource Database. This database provides a list of people with taxonomic and identification experience in the Pacific, their speciality areas and contact information. PACINET, the Pacific regional LOOP of BioNET International, is working to encourage Pacific Island regional experts and those with parataxonomic or vernacular taxonomy and identification expertise and skills to register. PACINET and PBIF hope that this database will strengthen collaborative regional taxonomic human resource use and capacity building.



Photographer: J. Maragos 2005

Contact Us!
Rhyn Davies: rdavies@usgs.gov
Mark Fornwall: mark_fornwall@usgs.gov