



PBIF News Briefs

Second Quarter 2007

Conservation Serving Communities in a Rapidly Changing World

The 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, will take place from 22–26 October 2007, in Alotau, Papua New Guinea. The Conference is 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 theme of the Conference is ‘Conservation serving Communities in a rapidly changing world’ highlighting the inextricable link between Pacific islanders and the natural environment; people and the sustainable use of natural resources to conserve the unique Pacific environment. For more information go to: www.sprep.org/roundtable



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Photographer: A. Baum 2007

PBIF Convenes Session at Pacific Science Congress

The 21st Pacific Science Congress held in Okinawa, Japan on June 13-18, 2007 brought together scientists from around the world to share current research efforts and facilitate collaboration. PBIF Gateway Node Manager Mark Fornwall led a session during the conference on biodiversity databases in the Asia-Pacific region and offered the opportunity for discussions on current informatics research. The session was followed by a scientific poster presentation entitled, "Applying biodiversity and ecosystem informatics to enable local level biodiversity and sustainable resource management in the Pacific region". The PBIF effort is increasingly gaining support as the appropriate vehicle to provide access to credible scientific information that is both easy to find and targeted to specific needs of the people in the region. The 11th Pacific Science Inter-Congress will be held in Tahiti, French Polynesia in March 2009. The theme of the Inter-Congress is "Pacific Countries and their Ocean: Facing Local and Global Changes".

GBIF Launches New Data Portal

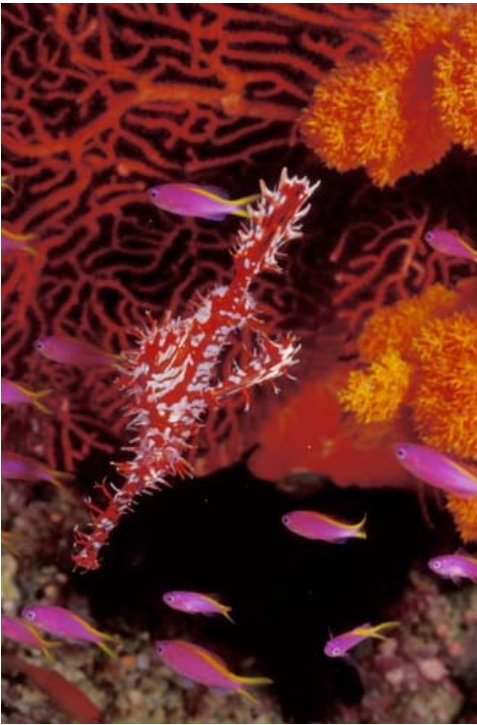
On July 2nd, 2007 the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) announced the release of a much improved data portal as the gateway to more than 130 million data records provided by over 200 institutions scattered in over 30

countries around the world. The portal is a single-point-of-entry to these millions of records where you can search for a species by name, particular country or search for a specific dataset, provider or network. GBIF makes the portal, as well as software for data providers, freely available.

PBIF is an associate member of GBIF and aims to serve as a Pacific region biodiversity data portal. PBIF has plans to launch a ‘Pacific node’ to GBIF in September of 2007.

Work Continues on Image Digitization

PBIF has recently hired two image database technicians to help us in our effort to digitize and catalogue the work of local biologists. The PBIF online image gallery currently has over 4000 photos available copyright free for non-commercial uses and our estimates indicate we should have over 6000 by the end of the calendar year. Much thanks to the University of Hawaii at Hilo for their help on this project. To access the gallery, go to: www.pbif.org/images/default.html



Photographer: J. Maragos 2005

Pacific Protected Areas Database

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. 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 intention is for the information gathered in the database to feed directly into the larger international initiatives such as the World Database on Protected Areas, UN List of Protected Areas, and MPA Global. A meeting on the PPAD is scheduled to take place in Papua New Guinea prior to the 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in October.

Pacific Island Roundtable Report on Nature Conservation

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. Members of the Pacific Island Roundtable collaborated in the drafting of a report on the progress of the Action Strategy to be presented at the 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. The report highlights the work done on conservation and suggests recommendations on the contents of the strategy and how to improve operations of the Roundtable. Progress was difficult to assess because of the breadth of the objectives encompassing the environment, economy and society with 77 targets. The report recommends a narrowing of focus to conservation and reducing the number of objectives and targets. PBIF will continue to be engaged in this strategy and provide data management support.

A Leap for All Life—EoL

On May 9th, 2007 the worlds leading scientific institutions celebrated the launch of the Encyclopedia of Life. EoL is an effort to document all 1.8 million named species of animals, plants, and other forms of life on earth. The collaborative effort, led by Harvard University, the Field Museum of Natural History, Marine Biological Laboratory, Smithsonian Institution, Missouri Botanical Garden, and the Biodiversity Heritage Library, is working to bring com-

Photographer: J. Maragos 2005



prehensive species information together with technical experts from around the world. The project is supported by a new \$10 million grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and \$2.5 million from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The driving force behind the EoL is well described by E.O Wilson, "Our knowledge of biodiversity is so incomplete that we are at risk of losing a great deal of it before it is ever discovered." More information can be found at: www.eol.org

PBIF is working with the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program, Conservation International, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, and others to assure collaboration between regional biodiversity information initiatives and full interoperability with global efforts such as EoL.

Upcoming Events

- August 20-25, 2007 18th meeting of the US Coral Reef Task Force, American Samoa
- October 14-17, 2007 Global Biodiversity Information Facility Governing Board 14, Amsterdam
- Oct. 20, 2007 PBIF Organizing Committee Meeting and Pacific Protected Areas Database Planning Session, Alotau, Papua New Guinea
- Oct. 22-26, 2007 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, Alotau, Papua New Guinea
- Oct. 29 - Nov. 3, 2007 Inaugural International Geographic Union Commission on Islands, Taipei, Taiwan

Contact Us!

Allison Baum: abaum@usgs.gov

Rhyn Davies: rdavies@usgs.gov

Mark Fornwall: mark_fornwall@usgs.gov