



PBIF News Briefs

Pacific Biodiversity
Information Forum

Volume I, Issue I
January, 2005

Welcome to the first issue of the PBIF Newsletter!

Wellington Results

Greetings Friends and Colleagues! Welcome to the first issue of the PBIF newsletter. On the 8th of October, 2004, PBIF convened a workshop in Wellington, New Zealand to accomplish four goals: address leadership team decisions in Oaxaca; identify a list of projects for consideration at the GTI meeting; prepare outlines of project proposals for qualifying projects; and create a list of other projects for later follow-up among PBIF members. The workshop was quite successful: the leadership team recom-

mendations regarding governance and operations were accepted without change. Virtually all in attendance (40 plus individuals from throughout the region) indicated their willingness to join PBIF, and several new projects were proposed and volunteers identified to champion the projects through the proposal development and funding processes.

The PBIF interim organizing committee is very grateful to the GBIF leadership and GTI for sharing the venue, to the staff

at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa for their support of all of the meetings and the work of our groups, and to Peter Adler of the Keystone Center for serving as the moderator for the PBIF workshop.

Workshop minutes, presentations, and other documents are available through the PBIF website at

www.pbif.org/meetings/default.html.

Highlight

- BioNET International's Taxonomy Case Studies are available online at http://www.bionet-intl.org/case_studies/



The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa across the Harbor.

Project Identification

Initial projects have fallen into two categories: Operational and Developmental.

Operational projects are intended to develop the function of PBIF and include: the PBIF website, GBIF membership, development of governance documents.

The Developmental projects will provide the bulk of the information offered by PBIF. Some examples include:

- ***Pacific Islands Biodiversity Image Gallery***

Angela K. Kepler has contributed 40 years worth of photos of Pacific Island landscapes, organisms, and culture, with supporting metadata, to be made available copyright free. New images will be going online at intervals, so visit regularly!

- ***Imagery/Spatial Data***

Gerald McCormack and the Cook Islands Natural Heritage Project are contributing data and expertise to a project linking species geographic distribution data and imagery for online service.

- ***Entomological Fiji Survey***

Neal Even-Huis of the Bishop Museum will be leading a survey of Fijian insect life. Funding has just come through for the project, and field work is slated to begin in 2005.

- ***Species 2000 A/O***

The National Institute for Environmental Studies in Japan has been leading a project to inventory the species of Asia-Oceania. This data is being made available for scientific use, as well as derived products, such as maps and modeling tools, that will support natural resource management in the Pacific region.

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Membership Opportunity

Membership in PBIF is open to any scientifically credible organization working within the fields of biological or agricultural diversity conservation and management within the western Pacific basin.

There is no membership fee, but those organizations wishing to participate in projects must be able to support their own participation

through internal or external funding sources.

To apply for membership in PBIF,

- send a letter of interest to the Gateway node manager at Mark_Fornwall@usgs.gov,
- include the contact information for a person who is authorized to sign for the organization,

- a PBIF MOU will be sent to that person,
- when the MOU is signed and returned to the Gateway node manager, it will be reviewed by the Organizing Committee,
- the organization will be notified when their membership is approved.

Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation in the Pacific: Needs & Resources

As recent events in the Indian Ocean Basin demonstrate, natural disasters have a devastating effect on fragile ecosystems, such as coral reefs. Low-lying Pacific islands would be particularly susceptible to destructive natural disasters, such as earthquakes and tsunamis, due to their terrain, location, geographic isolation, and the precarious status of many of their cultures, people, and native biota. Pacific islands are also subject to volcanoes, drought, landslides, and severe storms. The island nations of the Pacific are especially at risk because of the lack of safe places

for people or animals to retreat to, and the irreplaceability of the species unique to those islands.

Due to the fact that the Pacific basin is known to be seismically active, many countries have systems in place to warn about tsunamis. Some have plans in place for evacuation and disaster mitigation. Making provisions for the safety of people is obviously the first step in a disaster mitigation plan, but plans for the protection and repopulation of native species and habitat need to be established to increase the effectiveness of post-

disaster natural resource management.

Biological surveys and species inventories play an important part in disaster mitigation planning by providing foundation data, such as what species are in an area and what their habitat requirements are, to support the use of planning principles and tools that allow for effective conservation under extreme circumstances.

The following resources may be of use to managers during disaster planning activities:



Laysan Albatross (*Diomedea immutabilis*) and chick huddle together for protection from high winds and blowing sand during a storm on Laysan Island.

Photo by Angela K. Kepler

- Bishop Museum's Pacific Biological Survey Site (<http://www.bishopmuseum.org/research/pbs/pbs.html>)
- IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species (<http://www.redlist.org/>)
- The International Plant Name Index (<http://www.ipni.org/index.html>)
- Species 2000's Catalogue of Life Programme Website (<http://www.sp2000.org/>)
- Cambridge Scientific Abstracts Natural Disasters *Hot Topics* Series entry (<http://www.csa.com/hottopics/ndht/abstracts.html>)
- The Asia-Pacific Natural Hazard Information Network Atlas (<http://www.pdc.org/mde/explorer.jsp>)
- NOAA National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program (<http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/tsunami-hazard/>)
- University of Colorado Natural Hazards Library (<http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/library/>)

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