ANNUAL REPORT BY TE IPUKAREA SOCIETY

Introduction

BirdLife and Arcadia have established a Conservation Partnership Fund to support the development of BirdLife Partners around the World. The programme goal is to support the development of a dynamic network of high impact, self-sustaining conservation NGOs who are working effectively with local people, local and national governments and the international community, and to empower these organisations to better protect key species, sites and habitats in their own countries.

As part of its annual reporting to Arcadia, BirdLife has been asked to provide a brief annual report of activities and achievements by each of the participating Partners.

Please provide a short (2 page) report covering the following (1) organisational stability; (2) organisation development, and (3) conservation impact.

We also ask that you provide information on any changes in Context of the project; and an Overview of Progress as detailed below.

Please also provide FOUR GOOD IMAGES – one of people, one species, one site and one habitat image that we can use in the report and our powerpoint presentation to Arcadia.

1. Highlights/achievements in 2015 -2016 in terms of organizational development

- We have formed an annual workplan for Arcadia Project for May 2015-April 2016
- A committee was formed to review the current constitution in July 2015 and revised the constitution to account for employing full time staff and reduce the maximum number of the exec committee to 8 people to streamline operations.
- Have taken steps towards producing an induction program for new staff
- Developed a process for staff annual appraisal
- Developed a standard format to appraise staff performance – still needs to be further refined.
- Ran a membership drive which increase membership revenue by more than 10% than last year (2014)
- Promoted both of the part time project officers recruited in January 2015 to full-time.
- Our finances were audited for April 2014 to March 2015, no issues identified
- Held our AGM, elected office bearers
- A strategic plan review subcommittee has been formed and has had several meetings.
2. Highlights/achievements in 2015-2016 in terms of conservation action

- A draft report on the status of shearwaters and petrels in the Cook Islands has been completed and we are still adding information to the document. It is possible it will be turned into a journal article in the future.
- The Biosecurity Action Plan for Suwarrow has been completed following workshops held in 2014 and 2015, as comments on the original draft from a number of stakeholders have now been incorporated.
- Suwarrow Biosecurity Sign board and information pamphlets have been created – aimed at promoting biosecurity amongst yachtyes. The materials aim to prevent the re-introduction of rats onto Suwarrow, as well as keeping other invasive threats such as invasive ants, plants and fruit flies from establishing on the atoll.
- TIS is organised a Suwarrow Biosecurity Workshop in September 2015 which brought together stakeholders on Rarotonga to finalise and endorse the final draft of the plan.
- Have contacted the Cook Islands Natural Heritage project and have agreed that one or more of our staff will assist them in conducting a population survey of the Rimatara Lorikeet in Atiu as well as a search for any remaining Mynah birds on the island. The survey is likely to be carried out next year.
- TIS team travelled to Mangaia in February 2016 and talked to the chair of the site support group to ensure the wellbeing of the Mangaian Kingfisher. The TIS team also interviewed school children, presented on local (Mangaia) and National TV news and are currently producing a documentary about the bird and associated conservation efforts.

3. Lessons Learnt 2015-2016
Please provide an evaluation of 2014-2015 achievements and whether the activities were the most effective and efficient way of achieving the objectives of this year planned. Also

- In terms of producing a biosecurity sign for Suwarrow, there was a disagreement by the National Environment Service, as it was believed a large sign 1.2 x 2.4m would cause visual pollution of Anchorage Island, which is understandable. They also stated there were already 2 smaller signs on the islet, some of the information overlapping with our proposed sign. We are now proposing that the new sign is only displayed during the months when the caretaker has left the island (Usually leaves in early November and returns in June annually).
- Several new executive members elected at our AGM, and helping them to settle in to their new roles is a modest challenge.
- One of our two project officers has gone on an internship to study deep sea biodiversity in Hawaii and will not be returning until mid-December. Her absence has meant increased workloads for the remaining two staff, but we feel this is worth it due to the capacity building nature of the internship.
- TIS has learnt that they need to ensure lease agreements with office landlords are secure.
- We will make sure we continue to network with other stakeholders both in and outside the country in order to open up more opportunities for capacity building.

4. Challenges/Obstacles

Outline any issues or problems that have occurred or been managed including details of what the issue was, who has dealt with it and what has been done. What actions could have been taken to avoid any negative outcomes?

- We need to find new and affordable premises in the near future.