



**PIPA
MELAD**
PO Box 234
Bikenibeu Tarawa
Phone No: 29762

PIPA Newsletter

The Phoenix Islands Protected Area

www.phoenixislands.org

Photo: Cat Holloway

New Grant to Support the Phoenix Islands Protected Area

The [Waitt Foundation](#) and [Oceans 5](#) have agreed to make a new joint grant of \$1 million per year for 5 years to implement the full closure of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area to commercial fishing in the Republic of Kiribati. This was announced at the recent Pacific Remote Island National Monument event hosted by the US Secretary of State Kerry in Washington DC. The grant underscores the commitment of these two private organisations to reducing overfishing and creating marine reserves as a tool for achieving that goal.

The grant is a result of the remarkable commitment made by President Anote Tong in 2008 to establish the protected area, and then last June at US Secretary of State Kerry's Oceans conference where the President announced the accelerated full closure of the protected area to all commercial fishing. Beginning in January 2015, the Phoenix Islands Protected Area will become the world's third largest protected area closed to commercial fishing.

The joint grant will be paid through the PIPA Trust, an independent non-profitable organization that provides financial support to the PIPA Implementation Office and the Government of Kiribati. It will support staff salaries, enforcement activities, equipment, capacity building, and an independent evaluator to monitor progress.

Chairman of the PIPA Trust Board and chief scientist for Conservation International, Dr. Greg Stone said: "The Kiribati commitment in June was inspiring, but it was also a call for action and the Waitt Foundation and Oceans 5 answered. Private support for conservation efforts like the PIPA, which are led by developing nations, is necessary for their long term success."

Reacting to this exciting news, the Executive Director of the PIPA Trust, Dr Teuea Toatu, said, "This is a very generous and significant contribution from private organisations that will go a long way to bolstering the financial strength of the PIPA Trust - thereby ensuring that PIPA successfully achieves its conservation goals and, by extension, the wider socio-economic benefits that will accrue as a result of the closure".

Hon. Tiarite George Kwong, Minister for Ministry of Environment which houses the PIPA Implementation Office also expressed his deepest thanks, on behalf of the people and Government of Kiribati for this greatest generosity which fruits will not only benefit the people of Kiribati but the rest of humanity.

About The Waitt Foundation

The Waitt Foundation (www.waittfoundation.org), established by Gateway, Inc. co-founder Ted Waitt in 1993, specializes in public-private partnership and supports a variety of national and international programs concentrating on ocean health. Partnering with unique coalitions of government, foundations & philanthropists, NGOs, academics, and business, the Waitt Foundation supports high impact projects with the ultimate aim to "restore our oceans to full productivity."

About Oceans 5

Oceans 5 is an international funders' collaborative comprised of new and experienced philanthropists dedicated to protecting the world's five oceans. Oceans 5 is a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Inc. Projects are focused on stopping overfishing and establishing marine reserves, the two highest ecological priorities identified by marine scientists. Oceans 5 is inspired by opportunities, particularly ones that can bring lasting benefits to coastal communities. For more information, please visit <http://oceans5.org>.

The Phoenix Islands Protected Area Trust Board 8th Meeting is now in Session in Boston

The PIPA Conservation Trust Board 8th meeting is now in session at the New England Aquarium in Boston—11th to 13th of October 2014. The Board which meets once a year on annual basis used to change its meeting venue between Kiribati and the US.

In April this year, the Board held a special meeting in Tarawa and it was in this meeting on the 12th of April that a Conservation Agreement was entered into between the Government of Kiribati and the Phoenix Islands Conservation Trust (PIPA Trust) as an expression of their agreement with respect to their mutual interests and promises, and commitment to the goals of the Phoenix islands Protected Area. This Agreement is underpinning the common desire to protect and preserve the biodiversity of the entirety of the PIPA, which stands now as the largest and deepest MPA in the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. The Agreement highlights these commitments and promises and now with the full closure of the PIPA to be enforced from 1st of January 2015, there are more works to be looked at in terms of stepping up the surveillance, and higher attendance to tasks laid in the PIPA Management Plan 2010-2014 and those to come forth in the new PIPA Management Plan, which is now nearing its completion.

In this Boston meeting, the PIPA Trust Directors and supporters will be updated on the progress of the GEF PAS PIPA Project and results of the mid-term review that was independently conducted by a hired consultant, Dr. Jamie K. Reaser. The Board will also be updated on progress of the new PIPA Management Plan which is still in the making. This PIPA Management Plan is expected to guide all works highlighted in the Conservation Agreement, and to abide by legal requirement stipulated in the PIPA Conservations Trust Act 2009 and in the PIPA Regulations 2008 for the next five years (2015-2019). Funding from the Waitt Foundation and Oceans 5 will greatly assist the PIPA Implementation Office and all of relevant Government Ministries and PIPA partners to deliver their respective tasks.

Other important matters will be discussed like progress on the Pacific Oceanscape and other related developments in the region. The next issue will share some of these updates.

Quotation of the Month

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

(Mahatma Gandhi)

PIPA Implementation Team now Completes

The PIPA Implementation Office (PIO) in Tarawa and on Kanton atoll in the Phoenix has appointed two more staff on the 19th of May 2014. This makes the PIO structure, as spelt out in the PIPA GEF Document, complete. This also means that at this stage the PIO with the full support of the PMC is now able with full force to attend to its duties of maintaining and preserving the PIPA, as world-class World Heritage MPA through delivering remaining tasks laid in the PIPA Management Plan 2004-2010 and the PIPA GEF Document.

They are Mr. Iannang Teaioro, the former secretary for the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and marine scientist by profession. Mr. Teaioro is now the PIPA-Kanton Coordinator whose role amongst others is to make the presence of PIPA visible and known in the Phoenix Group. He will man the PIPA-Kanton Office and to work closely with the Kanton community of 35 people and the visitors to PIPA from time to time. Mr. Teaioro will be greatly assisted by Mrs. Rakentai Kaiuea, who is the PIPA-Kanton Assistant and PIPA Biosecurity Officer. The two are now placed at main PIO Headquarters and engaged with other Ministries especially the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Environment and Agriculture, the National Tourism Office, Immigration, Customs and the Patrol Unit of the Police. These week-long attachments to each of these offices is part of the orientation which will help the two to see the critical roles these Government offices are playing in protecting and help developing the PIPA initiative.

At this time the prefab houses and office for the Kanton setup are on their way from China to Tarawa. They are expected to arrive in Tarawa on the 24th of October 2014. The PIO then will arrange chartering a ship to deliver these houses and the



Model picture of PIPA prefab houses to be set up on Kanton.

new staff to Kanton sometimes in November 2014.

There are also plans to install the internet satellite station (VSAT) on Kanton that will allow the timely connections of PIO two office - in Tarawa and in Kanton. The PIO has

invited the bids and now ready to select the winning local supplier. The other major need is solar power which is needed to power the water system for the houses and PIPA office in Kanton and the VSAT, computers and lights. Bids have been invited also and again selection of winning bids will be finalised in the new week. The challenges now facing the PIO is the limited funding. The GEF PAS has funds for the house and the VSAT but the solar sets, builders of the PIPA houses and charter of the vessel are hurdles that now stand in the way. PIO will work closely with PIPA Management Committee and all PIPA partners to find the practical solution.

PIPA Management Committee Advisory Groups

The PIPA Management Committee (PMC) in its meeting of 28th August 2014 has approved the establishment of 3 advisory subcommittees namely the PIPA Surveillance Advisory Committee (PSAC), the PIPA Tourism Advisory Committee (PTAC) and the PIPA Biosecurity Advisory Committee (PBAC). These subcommittees are comprised of all Government ministries whose works are directly and indirectly related to the work of the PIPA Implementation Office to deliver the duties and tasks highlighted in the PIPA Management Plan 2015 - 2019. Their core tasks are stipulated in their own Terms of Reference but the overarching purpose is to provide practical advice to the PMC which steers the progress of the PIPA Initiative.

The PIPA is whole-of-Government setup and though the PIO is just a small office to coordinate the daily chores in delivery of tasks and many other obligations, the whole of Government approach is relied upon as the only way forward to fulfill and accomplish the tasks of protecting the PIPA so it will stand tall as a global MPA leader.

Each of these advisory groups has met to further define their terms of references and before end of this month, they will present to the PMC their respective work plans. The Surveillance advisory group is comprised of reps from the Fisheries, Patrol Unit, the Immigration, Customs, the Environment and the Attorney General. The PTAC was comprised of reps from the Tourism, Commerce, Fisheries, Culture, and Attorney General. The PBAC has members from the Agriculture, Environment, Fisheries, Customs and the Attorney General. PIO rep sits on all committees with a view to offer secretariat support.

The PMC in its last meeting on 18th of September, saw the renewed interest of members especially with the completion of the advisory groups which shows them that they have now an active role in delivering planned tasks to protect the PIPA, which is the source of pride to Government and the people of Kiribati. In this same meeting that the PMC expressed its desire to have the PIPA Implementation Office setup be more visible as it is now far from the public access.

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The school children in the capital look at the PIPA with pride. One of the approaches used by the PIPA in its outreach is to localize the term PIPA not merely to enrich the vocabulary but to nurture the conservation mindset.



Children of the Sunrise Primary School in Temaiku Tarawa.

The PIPA message underscores the importance of conservation. There are two main approaches adopted in delivering this golden message. To the very young at the primary and junior secondary levels, the message dwells on the love of animals, trees, the fish,

the birds, the cats, dogs and the pigs. To the senior, living the *pipa* lifestyle is fashionable.

It is quite common in Kiribati that animals are animals and therefore deserve to be treated as such. In the same way the trees are trees and can be treated and dealt with anyhow. One student said that one of their exciting games was to throw at the birds on coconut leaves. Other supporter to the outreach shared his habit of tying loads onto tails of dragonflies, which he enjoyed watching when he was young, especially when the insect flew off struggling with a heavy load. In these tales, the children were guided to see the contrast between kindness and being cruel or ruthless - to animals and trees.

In the PIPA outreach, the children are enlightened that the PIPA initiative is centered on loving all kinds of animals, trees and birds, fish, sharks, turtles, corals and so forth. On top of this, the serenaders have composed songs with special meanings to nail home these very points on loving nature, its beauty and the beauty of all creatures and managing the natural resources. This approach is working especially when there are songs specifically written and powerfully sung with aims of adding meaning with emotion to the message.

The PIPA outreach in close collaboration with the Curriculum Unit is now engaged in crafting a new culture and new fashion which is to love and appreciate nature. The schools are now teaching these conservation values through the Community and Culture subject in local language at class one and two.

At junior secondary level, the children easily come to terms with these values and some of them even showed up and stated that they will *pipa* nature from now on. It was expressed in one Roadshow event by a senior student that to be fashionable is to have a pet that he will look after well, and to have a garden of vegetables and flowers that he will attend.

It is PIPA's strong hope that changing the mindset now will have lasting effects on the lives of these young people who in their on ways in the future will help build this world a better and richer place to live in.

On the 27th of June 2014, the New Zealand High Commission approved the PIPA proposal for 7 rainwater tanks for the island of Kanton.

“The procurement of these seven 5-ton tanks through the open competition New Zealand Small Grant was really a blessing,” said Tukabu Teroroko, the Director of the PIPA Implementation Office. The proposal was approved because it matched well with the goals of this grant, to help support food security issues in the remote islands. Kanton island passed this criteria because it a very a remote island.

Kanton's other name is Abariringa, which means Land of the Sun and this refers to the highly dry and droughty condition of the island.

Total cost of the 7 tanks is AU\$8,414.70 and this also covers costs of the gutters and concrete bases. Tukabu said that these rainwater tanks will greatly help the Kanton community of 35 people and the families of the two PIPA staff who will be on the island before end of the year.

The polyethylene tanks are molded locally by Rotamold and are said to be of top quality. The 7 tanks are now waiting for the chartered vessel to Kanton and the Government of Kiribati usually pays for the freight of items in support of food security.



Seven 5-ton rainwater tanks for Kanton

PIO will therefore approach the Government to seek financial help to allow the transfer of the tanks to Kanton.

The new PIPA office and residential setups on Kanton will be provided with 4 of these tanks while the other three tanks will be given to the Kanton community, which will decide on another central location. The idea is to have all of these 7 tanks be accessible to all people in Kanton especially in times of drought.

The PIPA is expressing its deepest thanks to the New Zealand High Commission for providing these tanks, which will address the prevailing problem of freshwater scarcity on the island of Kanton.

The SEA, NEAq and Woods Hole Institute studied the PIPA last July 2014.

SEA Semester, New England Aquarium and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution arranged a training last July in which two I-Kiribati participated.

Mr. Iannang Teaioro, the PIPA-Kanton Coordinator was also on the this scientific expedition which began with a classroom session of orientation at the NEAq and then the 4-week trip into the PIPA from Honolulu. Iannang reported on his return, on they left Honolulu on 2nd of July and disembarked in Apia on 10th of August.

The main purpose of the trip is to conduct research and sample collection. The research vessel SSV Robert C. Seamans operated and owned by Sea Education Association (SEA) is equipped with sophisticated analytical devices and instruments such as (i) a water sampling device that collected samples at different depth for different chemicals analyses (ii) multiple opening/closing net and environmental sensing system (MOCNESS) that takes samples of planktons and some environment parameters at different predetermined depths, (iii) Neuston net that collects plankton samples on the surface (iv) Instrument that measures primary production, salinity, temperature and colored dissolved matter (v) ADCP which determines how the current are moving (vi) Chirp subbottom profiler which provides the depth of the ocean and layering of the seafloor.

Reef shark and manta ray tagging was carried out during the trip. Shark biopsies via catch and release was also carried out. Some reef fish species were also collected for DNA analysis. Otoliths were also collected from these reef fish.

In the local press release on this trip aired on Radio Kiribati on the 17th of July, this scientific research was the first of its kind to be done in the PIPA. Dr. Jan Witting, Chief Scientist of the voyage and Professor of Oceanography with Sea Education Association, was instrumental in bringing about the collaboration between SEA Semester, New England Aquarium and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. According to Witting, "This voyage of discovery brings together a diverse group of people from across the globe. Our ship carries a community of 33 students, ocean scientists, mariners, and conservation managers from the U.S., Kiribati, Tahiti, India, Australia and Europe. As diverse as we are as a group, we have a strong unity of purpose."

Dr. Randi Rotjan, co-organizer of the expedition and Associate Research Scientist at New England Aquarium, expounded on the purpose of the voyage: "There have been so few scientific visits to the Phoenix Islands; every new set of eyes, every new set of voices, every new set of data points are critically important. On top of that, this voyage is the first opportunity to observe oceanographic information within PIPA borders—and with the upcoming closure (January 1, 2015) of commercial fishing in the area, all data from the Phoenix islands are valuable, now more than ever. PIPA continues to be a model of what ocean conservation can look like."

Iannang commented that the participating American students do get academic credits out of the trip in two areas, oceanography and nautical science, toward their University degree through an arrangement between Sea Education Institute and US universities. I hope a similar arrangement can be facilitated by the Government of Kiribati through appropriate authorities so that few selected Kiribati students studying at the University of the South Pacific (USP) toward a Marine Science Degree and/or Kiribati Fisheries Assistant trainees who are also taking USP courses as part of their training are given the opportunity to participate in the program to learn and experience science at first hand, and get credits toward their USP degree at the conclusion of the trip. This may require formulating a special academic arrangement between SEA, USP and Government of Kiribati as part of the PIPA program.

General Updates

Kiribati was once again hit by peculiar high tide on the 8th and 9th of October, 2014.

The Antenon community, midway between Bikenibeu and Bairiki, was the worst affected with homes flooded to almost a meter high with seawater as it peacefully rolled over the shores into homes from the Oceanside.

More than 100 homes with all their belongings, animals and houses flooded. People have to move out of their houses with water up to their wastes. Electric supply was damaged but luckily no casualties reported.

The sea, which we always treat as our future is beginning to show signs that it will no longer be but our doom. According to the people living in the worst hit areas, they said that these tides are peculiar and very new; they have never seen them in their life time. This event is but the onset of more frightening tides with more damages expected in the future. Kiribati is the country that stands by the claim that carbon emission from the industrialized countries causes all this and urgent steps need to be put in place before it is all too late for frontline countries like Kiribati. (Translated and photo extracted from Te Uekera newspaper, Issue 41, 13 October 2014).

One of the flooded homes in Antenon village during the high tide on 9th of October, 2014. (Uekera)



PIPA Public Outreach Calendar for October 2014

PIPA Night of the Shark Events

1. Tuesday, 14 October: St. Christopher Community Bonriki;
2. Friday, 17 October: Nei Nouo Teaoaereke Community;
3. Tuesday 21 October: Eita Community;
4. Friday, 24 October: Bairiki Community;
5. Friday, 31 October: Nanikaai Community

PIPA Roadshow

1. Wednesday, 15 October: Bareaumai Primary School, Bonriki;
2. Friday, 17 October: Aratokotoko Primary School, Buota;
3. Monday, 20 October: Tabontemaneaba Primary School, Bikenibeu;
4. Wednesday, 22 October: Sea-Bee Primary School, Bikenibeu;
5. Friday, 24 October: JSS Teaoaereke