



TE IPUKAREA SOCIETY

*Caring for our Environment
Taporoporo i to tatou Ao Rangi*

Kia Orana e te katoatoa. Teia te nuti no Tepetema 2020. Welcome to the September 2020 edition of our newsletter.

Te IpuKarea Society - Bird of the Year 2020

Hold on to your feathers, Bird of the Year is almost here!

In breaking news, we have decided to run the first ever Cook Islands BOTY campaign to find out which native bird will wear the crown.

Voting opens on October 19th and closes November 1st. You can choose to rank your top 5 birds or give all 5 votes to your personal favourite. Voting will be on our webpage www.tiscookislands.org.

Will you choose a favourite feathered friend from your own backyard? Or a mighty long-distance traveller? Perhaps you will choose an epic endemic, found nowhere else in the world but the Cook Islands?

We expect people will flock to the polls and will have strict measures in place to ensure no skulduggery or vote tampering occurs.

Keep an eye on our [Facebook Page](#) for updates.



The Plastic Battle comes out swinging at a sports event near you

The Plastic Battle campaign we began in 2018 is now making its sporting debut. The fight against plastic is far from over and as always, we are coming out swinging.

Working with Cook Islands Sports & National Olympics Committee (CISNOC), we are asking schools and sports clubs to pledge to make a strong commitment to tackling plastic waste at events.

The Cook Islands games which start this week, is a major event for the nation with the potential to generate a lot of plastic waste including disposable water bottles and food packaging. Tackling this requires a strong commitment from everyone in the community.

To get the ball rolling (so to speak), we have begun giving presentations to school students, starting with Nukutere, Titikaveka and

Papa'aroa schools. We show videos on plastics and marine litter and brainstorm solutions with the students.

Going forward we will be visiting more schools and clubs across the Cook Islands, to invite them to pledge and join the Plastic Battle. Together we can smash plastic bottles out of the park!



Titikaveka College Photography

And in a flash, we have now completed the second environmental photography module in our project across 6 senior schools in Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Atiu. This is funded through the US Embassy in NZ.



The wonderful Year 10 students at Titikaveka College were a pleasure to teach and have shown a strong understanding of the environmental issues affecting our islands.

A field trip to learn about coastal erosion and the impacts of seawalls plus the biodiversity of the Takitumu Conservation Area gave the students the chance to take some great shots.

Julian Zehman of Turama Photography has been sharing his photography and editing skills and helped each student to select their best shot. We will be displaying these photos in October, following the Cook Island games so watch this space.



Spotlight on Volunteers

This month the spotlight is on our new volunteer executive committee member, Natalie Telfer.

'I am a new member of Te Ipukarea Society. My mother was born in Avatiu Rarotonga in 1932 and from birth she lived with her grandmother and grandfather in Ngatangia. She is a descendant of Uriarau /Putua and Arapaii tribes. After almost 70 years living in NZ and Australia mum decided time to come home. So here we are, kicking back and enjoying her remaining years here.

I was interested in joining the committee because I am new to the island and had heard of the interesting and valuable work TIS were doing.



Natalie Telfer, one of our new executive committee members

I have also seen what happens when we don't take care of what we are given – when we ignore the legacy and the responsibility that our ancestors have given us to protect. Populations- pandemic-over fishing – waste – greed. In this changing world it is more important than ever that we group together to protect and uphold our small islands'.

Exhibition Launch with Tereora College

At least 50 people attended the launch at the Bergman Gallery on 3 September to enjoy the display of 21 photos taken of environmental issues in Rarotonga by the Year 12 sustainability class at Tereora College. You can view the students' photos [HERE on our website](#).



Alanna's news interview and footage of the exhibition can be viewed on YouTube [HERE](#).



Maiata Mussell with her winning photograph

Magic Reef Bungalows sponsored two generous cash prizes on the night. Overall best photographer was awarded to Maiata Mussell for her shot of a taro patch entitled 'Natural filtration system at our fingertips'. Maiata describes her photo:

"The 'Taro Patch' acts as a natural filtration for nutrient runoff coming from the land, before going out to sea. Maintaining Taro plantations and wetlands around the island is important, as it further protects our marine ecosystem.

Our 'Ridge to Reef' are connected, therefore we must ensure we protect all of the natural ecosystems found in between. This image was taken at a taro patch right outside the Motu of 'Oneroa'".

The award for 'Most Aspiring Photographer' was given to Eileen Vakapora for her photo 'The Selective Eye'.



Most aspiring photographer Eileen Vakapora with Lawrence from Magic Reef Bungalows and Alanna from Te Ipukarea Society

Tutaka Overalls - Tipani by Ani O'Neill

From the wonderful PrEtTy/uGly exhibition at LBV recently (curated by Nanette Lela'ulu), was this poignant reminder from local artist Ani O'Neill of the need to work WITH nature, not against it!



Ani O'Neill - 'Worker in Progress': Artist activation of Tutaka Overalls - Tipani (2020) Image: Fe'ena Syme Buchanan

Ani explains her piece: 'In beautifying our homes here in the Cook Islands, we look to planting exquisite plants and flowers in our gardens. We value the prized tivaivai placed in our care. We are encouraged to plant food to sustain our families and share with neighbours - all practices that bring us joy, satisfaction and hope.

Why then, in the same breath, do we cut down our grandparents' trees, spray our fertile soil with punishing toxic cocktails, slash and burn everything natural that was put here to nourish us? What value do we place on trees for clean air, shelter from the sun and peace for our birds?

When the Public Health's Tutaka dates are announced, the sharp screams of chainsaws and cutters, days and nights of plastic-poisoned smoke, clearly signals the 'clean up'. It suffocates my spirit.

The tension between the natural

beauty of our island and what our people do in the name of keeping things 'clean and tidy' is a space that needs deep mediation"

Deep Sea Mining series

In the interest of awareness raising we have begun a series of articles on impacts of deep sea mining with a Cook Island focus. These are available for reading [HERE on our webpage](#). We are grateful to volunteer Nicholas Kirkham for helping develop this series.



Discovered in 2007, at around 1500 meters deep in California this deep-sea white octopus 'Casper' is thought to have an astonishing 4 year gestation period.

More Pool Floaties Please!

Our executive committee member Sabine at [Circle Cooks](#) has been busy making these great bags from pool floaties and other material so nothing goes to waste! She is calling out for more floaties, so if you have any old, unfixable pool inflatables sitting around, please drop them to our office, or call Sabine on 55238.



O Te Motu Creations

Meitaki everyone for their support, we have almost completely sold out of the beautiful Raukura (feather) earrings. We only have 4 pairs left at \$45 each. 100% of the price of the earrings goes to Te Ipukarea Society.

These upcycled earrings are made from bicycle inner tubes and were gifted to our society by NZ based company O Te Motu Creations, to sell as a fundraiser to support our society's mahi.



Teuru Passfield modelling earrings from O Te Motu Creations

Insect of the Month – Water Walkers

In other exciting news from Joseph Brider of the Natural Heritage Trust, 3 new water walking insects have recently been identified in the Cook Islands, making a total of 6 known water walkers.

These newly discovered insects include: a second Water-strider, a second Water-treader and for the first time ever, a tiny Velvet Water-bug (Hebrididae) – a mere 1mm in length.

It is likely the newly discovered insects are all native, that is, species that occur or arrived naturally. At present we have only a dozen insects endemic to the Cook Islands.



The as-yet unidentified Water-treader, with a body length of less than a millimetre, compared to much-larger Water-striders with a body length of around 20mm

[The Cook Islands Biodiversity Database](#) lists nearly 650 species of insect and it is estimated we have around 1,300 species.

The micro-world of insects, spiders and mites is a trove waiting to be discovered. The next time you are by a pond or a creek, take a look, you may be surprised by what you see.

Meitaki from all of us at Te Ipukarea Society!



MEITAKI

to our generous supporters



GOLD



SILVER



ECO RETREAT

BRONZE