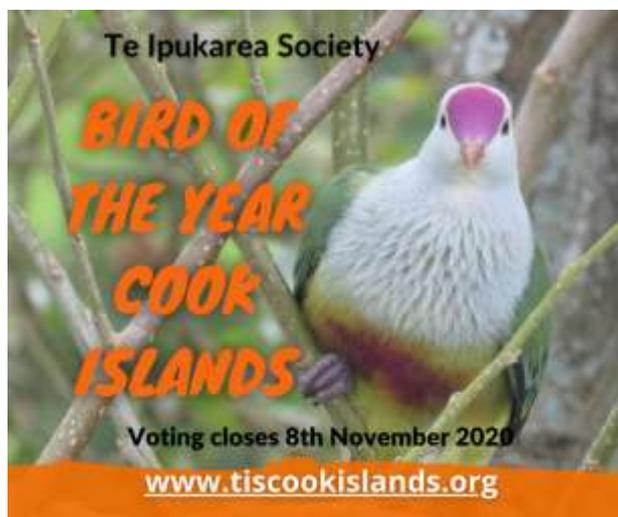




TE IPUKAREA SOCIETY
Caring for our Environment
Taporoporo i to tatou Ao Rangi

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

Update on BOTY Cook Islands Competition – The Halfway Count



Our first ever Bird of the Year Cook Islands competition has gotten off to a flying start with a huge number of votes cast already and we're only halfway!

If you haven't seen our advert running on Cook Islands Television you can [check it out on YouTube here](#).

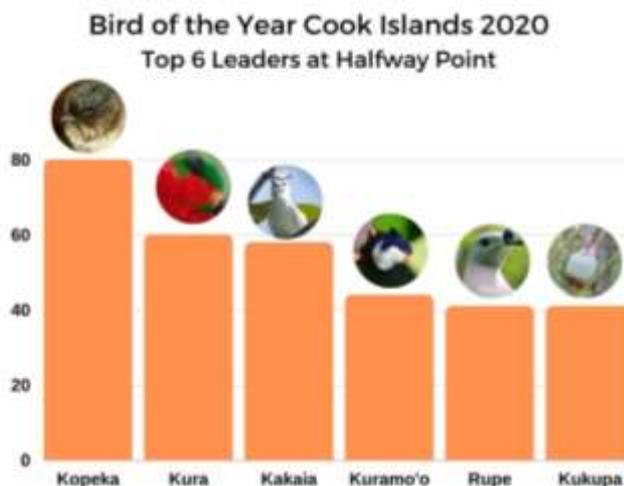
The hot favourite Kakaia (White Tern) shot out of the gates to take a strong lead. But after a big surge in votes

over the weekend we now see the two Atiu contenders have teamed up! The darling Kopeka (Atiu Swiftlet) has swooped into the lead, supported by the brightly coloured Kura (Rimatara Lorikeet) as second running mate.



Will we see a late charge from Mangaia for their special Tanga'eo (Kingfisher)? Or perhaps a challenge from Aitutaki for the Kuramo'o (Blue Lorikeet) currently sitting in a strong 4th place? Things are really heating up now.

Unsurprisingly the much lesser known migrants such as the Manu Kai Moa (Marsh Harrier) and Mokora (Grey Duck) have received only a handful of sympathy votes, but there is still time!



You can [Vote Now](#) on our webpage until November 8 and you can choose to give all 5 votes to your personal favourite or share the love around.

New Advocacy role for Deep Sea Minerals

We are very pleased to welcome Teuru Tiraa-Passfield as our new Deep Sea Minerals campaign consultant.

As part of her recent Masters in Conservation Leadership, Teuru completed a professional placement with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in the U.K looking at environmental standards and guidelines in Deep Sea Mining.

This is a short term role that's been created to try to raise awareness among the Cook Islands community on the potential environmental impacts of deep sea mining. We feel there is a real gap in information currently being provided and want to make sure that our people are fully informed before critical decisions are made on the future of our Marae Moana.

We have continued our series of articles on impacts of deep sea mining with a Cook Island focus. These are available for reading [HERE on our webpage.](#)



Obviously delighted with her new role, our deep sea mining campaign consultant Teuru Tiraa- Passfield

Spotlight on Volunteers

This month we at the Te Ipukarea Society office were very grateful for the volunteer support of Mark Boyd and his wonderful team at [Stay Here Rarotonga](#). Our office was treated to a whole yard clean up and they even

chipped some branches for us to use as mulch in our garden. Looking spick and span now!



Shout out to the team from Stay Here Rarotonga for their hard work cleaning the TIS office yard

Corporate Membership support from Cook Islands General Transport

You may have heard about the project currently underway to retrieve old, abandoned cars in Rarotonga which are then crushed and sent offshore for recycling. This is a Global Environment Facility small grants project awarded to the youth group from the New Hope Church.

As well as being a great project to support, we at Te Ipukarea Society also benefit by receiving \$20 for each car collected. This money goes towards our waste management advocacy in the Cook Islands.

A big Meitaki Ma'ata to our Corporate sponsor Cook Islands General Transport for coordinating this and for all the good work they do towards reducing waste in the Cook Islands.

A Step in the Right Direction

For many years, we been advocating for an alternative, more natural approach to coastal protection from the rock boulder walls commonly used here.

These hard coastal protection systems do a good job of protecting assets such as roads and buildings from the power of the ocean, but often result in other problems. Wave action reflects off the wall, scouring the beach area in front of the wall and increases erosion at either side of the wall.

The Society is currently demonstrating an alternative approach to rock revetment walls to stabilize the area south of the Japanese funded jetty at Avana, which is suffering from a great deal of erosion.



Project site in Avana with serious coastal erosion

This project will use a combination of geo-textile cloth, as well as Elcorock geotextile bags (geobags). These are supplied from Geofabrics, a company based in Australia and New Zealand. This project is the first to use Geobags in the Cook Islands.

These bags will be filled with sand or other suitable material and will be placed on top of the geotextile mat. They will be placed in a step like formation ranging from 2 to 4 steps, depending on the shoreline contour.

These bags have a number of advantages over boulders, including:

- Easily removed if the erosion risk is less in future
- If the revetment is damaged by waves, then the bags can be cut open and removed, leaving only sand behind on the beach.
- They are nicer/safer to sit on and walk over, especially for access to fishing boats.
- Unlike boulders, they do not have to be quarried from the sensitive inland area of Rarotonga, with the associated environmental impacts of that process.

They do also however have some disadvantages, including:

- The bag fabric has a life span (though this is now in the decades)
- They may still be displaced by waves, just as boulders can, but at least they can be easily removed, unlike a pile of rocks that get displaced by waves and ruin the beach.

In addition to the geotextile sandbags, this project will also be planting mostly native vegetation inland of the sandbags, to offer a second layer of defence with erosion control and nutrient absorption. Vetiver grass, which is great for erosion control and nutrient uptake will also be used

We are grateful for the support of the Ministry of Agriculture for donating these native trees. We will also use the introduced vetiver grass, which is well known to be efficient in erosion control and nutrient uptake.



Our minion interns test out the new Elcorock geotextile bags which will be filled with sand for coastal protection in Avana

Announcing our Position on Deep Sea Mining

We are very pleased to announce our Te Ipukarea Society's official position statement on Deep Sea Mining. This announcement follows closely on the heels of the recent launch of the Exploratory Licensing phase by the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority.

Recognising the vast amount of uncertainty surrounding the potential environmental impacts, the Society supports the call by a number of Governments and Non-Governmental Organisations around the world for a minimum ten-year moratorium on deep-sea mineral exploitation.

Considering that the National Marae Moana Spatial Plan, that maps out where certain activities can and cannot be undertaken is not completed, the Society calls for no further tenders for exploration within our Marae Moana until this is completed.

Noting that the current Exploration Tender Areas map does not exclude Special Unique Marine Areas (SUMAs) from the available areas for exploration, we request that exploration licences under the current

tender process are not finalised until these SUMAs are accounted for.

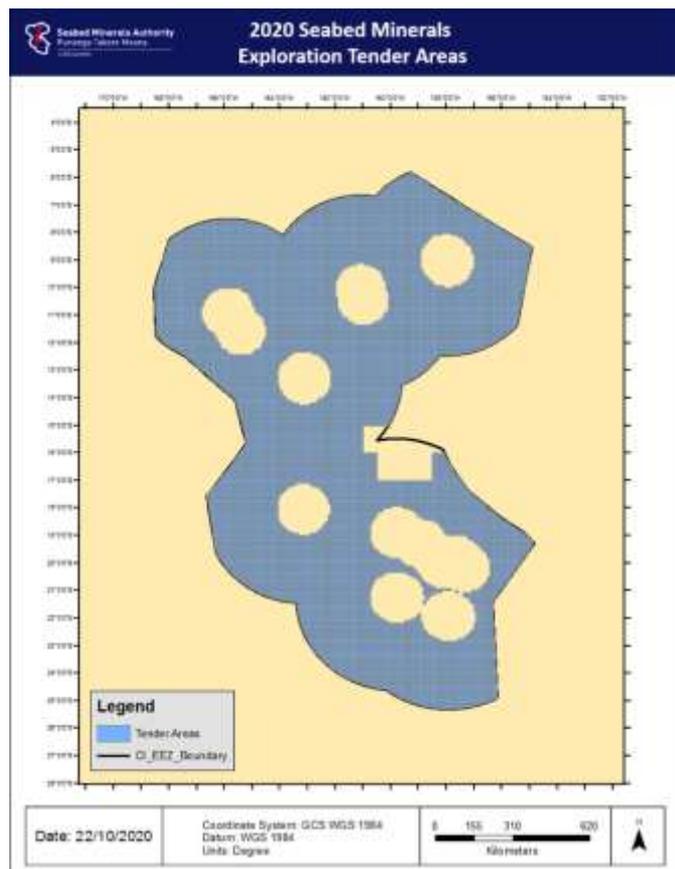
Understanding that measures to help deal with uncertainty in environmental management do exist, the Society believes the current level of scientific uncertainty around the deep sea and deep-sea mining means these measures will not be effective, and therefore, that a minimum 10-year moratorium is the most appropriate application of the Precautionary Principle. This would also:

- a. align with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030;
- b. allow for more international scientific research to be carried out, particularly by non-mining institutions, resulting in reduced uncertainty;
- c. allow time to complete the Marae Moana Marine Spatial Plan;
- d. allow time to further investigate the potential for a resource-efficient circular economy without the need to mine for new metals;
- e. not interfere with the Cook Islands efforts to contribute to global biodiversity targets;
- f. allow time for the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority (SBMA) and the International Seabed Authority to improve efforts to transparently and effectively engage stakeholders in decision-making processes; and
- g. allow time for the SBMA to invite independent research organisations to assist the Cook Islands with deep sea research, in order to avoid conflicts of interest that would inevitably arise if this research is carried out solely by mining companies.

While the Society are predominantly concerned with impacts of mining for polymetallic nodules in the Cook Islands context, we appreciate that Cook Islanders are also beneficiaries of the common heritage of mankind, and the Cook Islands is sponsor state to an exploratory contract on the international seabed.

As such, we are concerned about all types of deep-sea mining, and the lack of scientific information around the entire deep-sea and the global industry.

Our full position statement will be found on our webpage very soon.



From the SBMA website. The blue colour denotes nearly all of the Cook Island's waters is available for Tender for Deep Sea Mining despite no marine spatial planning (which will identify high biodiversity areas etc) having been completed.

Meitaki from all of us at Te Ipukarea Society and congratulations to all the participants in the Cook Islands games this month!



Te Ipukarea Society REPRESENT – Charlee and Alanna sailed the Marumaru Atua for Atiu in the Cook Islands games. They also participated in other events, as did our executive member Sabine Janneck and new staff member Teuru!

MEITAKI

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