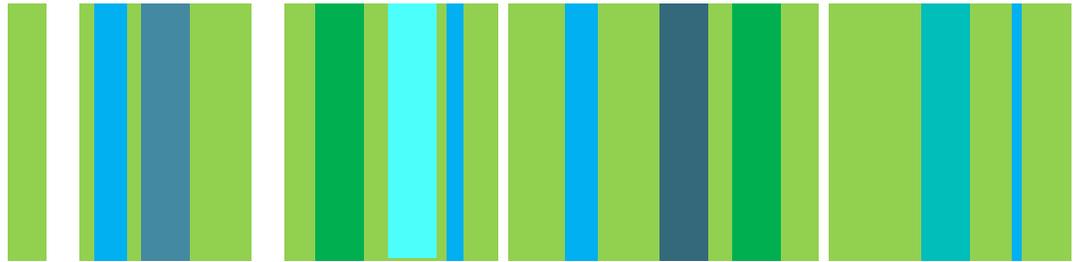




October 2018

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Ngerel a Biib **NEWS**letter

Palau Conservation Society



Iconic ambassadors and *pristine paradise in peril*

In memory of the “bird man”, Alan Olsen, 1946 - 2018

The Peleliu Lkes is an intertidal zone that has remained rich and unspoiled for hundreds of years. It is the proverbial subsistence “fish basket” for the people of Peleliu, who have experienced a seemingly endless supply of fish for the community. With similar generosity, the Lkes has been a sanctuary for a multitude of shorebirds. These shorebirds, known as Palau’s “winged ambassadors,” make annual migrations along the East Asia Australasian Flyway (EAAF). Migratory shorebirds visiting the Peleliu Lkes travel from breeding

(next page)

grounds in the arctic and subarctic regions of East Asia, Siberia and Alaska down to coastal habitats Australia and New Zealand. Southward migrations occur from August to October and then northward from March to May. A number of shorebirds spend the winter at the Peleliu Lkes because of favorable tidal conditions leading to abundant feeding opportunities.

According to the Belau National Museum, migratory shorebirds have been recorded as early as 1861 commissioned by the Museum Godeffroy of Hamburg, Germany. A recent study from 2013 to 2017 by Glenn McKinlay documented 27 shorebird species, many of which were the same species recorded over the span of 150 years by various scientists. McKinlay confirmed large flocks of shorebirds, and annual visits to the Peleliu Lkes by the Great Knot, the Bar-tailed Godwit and the Far Eastern Curlew. In 2017, the Palau Bird Records Committee, a component of the National Program for Monitoring Forests and Coastal birds, approved two new records of birds encountered by McKinlay at the Peleliu Lkes, a Black-faced Spoonbill that overwintered from December 2013 through mid-March 2014, and Palau's first record of the Eurasian Curlew was observed in 2014.

Over the course of history, Palauans and the migratory shorebirds have come to form a time-honored bond. It is marked in local values, beliefs, oral history, literature, art, and chants. This bond is displayed in the relationship between Palauans and the Far Eastern Curlew, the *Delelrok*. An ancient icon of culture, pride, and prosperity, the *Delelrok* as it is called in the Palauan language, is etched in the *Bai*, the chief's meeting house. An image of the *Delelrok* excreting *bachel*, the Palauan money is a common motif found in the beams of *Bais*. Oral tradition states that the Far Eastern Curlew brought the first monies into Palau earning its locally common name as the "money bird".

The Peleliu Lkes is the most important coastal wetland for shorebirds in Palau and earned Important Bird Area Status based on six "trigger" species that meet IUCN criteria for priority habitat conservation. Five IBA trigger species for the Peleliu Lkes IBA are the Gray-tailed Tattler, Red-necked Stint, Ruddy Turnstone, Great Knot and Far Eastern Curlew. A sixth species is the endangered Palau Megapode living in *Belualasmau* an islet nestled within the intertidal sandflats. Scientific evidence collected over the past 150 years confirms the status of the Peleliu Lkes IBA as the most important shorebird site in Palau, Micronesia, and Oceania.

Today the Northern Peleliu Lkes is in peril. An islet adjacent to the Lkes has been leased to a foreign developer for \$300,000, with the intent to develop it into a resort. Regrettably, a resort on the islet will have disastrous consequences for the shorebirds utilizing the adjacent tidal flats. The establishment of human

presence associated with resort operations on the islet will encroach into the reef flat and result in the degradation of this critical habitat for endangered shorebirds and other wildlife. As similar ecosystems in Asia are lost to development pressures, the importance of the Peleliu Lkes as a refuge for migratory shorebirds in the EAAF cannot be overstated. It will also have real negative implications to local livelihoods whom today still enjoy easy access to the area to fish in a sustainable fashion—both women who collect land crab for *makit* (*market*), and the men who fish to feed their families and relatives, as well as to sell when there is excess catch.



PAWS and PCS team up to protect biodiversity and show LOVE to cats



Palauans are animal lovers and have a deep respect for nature and the environment. This is reflected in many of the stories and legends told to us by our elders, including the story of the *Cat and The Sea Snake*. This tale of unlikely siblings, reminds us to be kind to animals – when animals are treated well, they will be loyal.

The Palau Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and Palau Conservation Society (PCS) have teamed up to remind the community of the best ways to be kind to cats and protect

biodiversity at the same time.

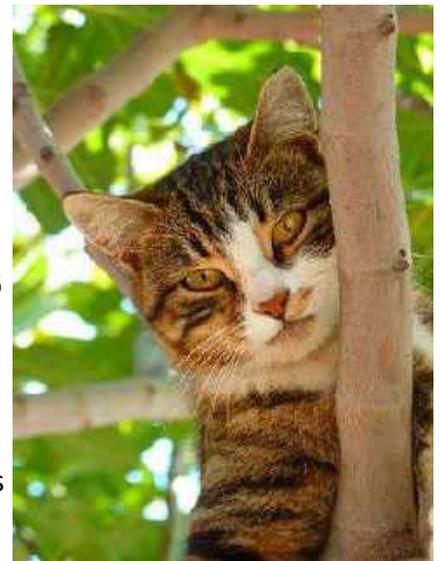
First and foremost, the campaign emphasizes the importance of spaying and neutering cats (selkosk el katuu). A spayed/neutered cat helps reduce the population of homeless cats in the community and reduces roaming, fighting, and the marking of territory with urine. Non-spayed/neutered cats have the potential of becoming feral or free-range and given the opportunity to reproduce, one non-spayed cat can produce 36 cats in just 16 months.

Cats are superb hunters and have the ability to catch all sorts of prey, including birds. Many of Palau's birds are endemic and even endangered. The more cats we have roaming our forests, the greater the threat to Palau's birds and reptiles. A recent study suggests that cats are the principle threat to almost 8% of critically endangered birds, mammals, and reptiles, with island birds particularly at risk.

PAWS is a non-profit organization that can help members of the community spay and neuter their cats. For more information, visit the PAWS website www.pawspalau.org or call 775-PAWS (7297). You can also contact Yalap Yalap at PCS to learn more - 488-3993 or yyalap@palauconservation.org.

References:

- BirdLife International (2015) Prioritizing islands for feral cat population management.
- Medina, F. M., Bonnaud, E., Vidal, E., Tershy, B. R., Zavaleta, E. S., Donlan, C. J., Keitt, B. S., Le Corre, M., Horwath, S. V. and Nogale, M. (2011) A global review of the impacts of invasive cats on island endangered vertebrates. *Glob. Change Biol.* 17: 3503–3510.
- Peta: <https://www.peta.org/issues/animal-companion-issues/overpopulation/spay-neuter/>



4 ways to be kind to cats and protect biodiversity

1. Do not abandon your cats in the forest. If you have an unwanted cat, call PAWS: 775-PAWS.
2. Spay or neuter your cats to control the cat population and prevent roaming.
3. Feed your cat healthy meals. Most grocery stores now have dog and cat food or look for recipes online.
4. Consider becoming a member of PAWS, PCS, and other organizations that protect animals and the environment.

Building capacity to get results: Conservation organizations come together to impact change



Palau is globally renowned for being a leader in conservation of natural resources. In mid-September, conservation practitioners from around Palau converged upon the ground floor of Bai ra Maiberel for a week-long training focused on honing their skills in Results Based Management (RBM). RBM is a management approach that centers on best practices in project design and implementation. The nearly 30 attendees represented Protected Areas Network (PAN) offices from Hatohobei, Ngchesar, Airai, Ngatpang, Ngwal, Aimeliik, Melekeok, Ngaraard, Kayangel, Ngardmau, and Peleliu. In addition, staff from the Palau Marine Sanctuary (PNMS), PAN Fund, and Friends of the PNMS participated.

Over the course of five days, the interactive sessions and exercises covered topics such as: effectiveness and efficiency, communication, work plan development, terminology, performance, and reporting. Desired outcomes from the training were two-fold: increased effectiveness when it comes to implementing conservation projects and strategic plans and secondly, increased capacity of the practitioners in attendance.

The workshop was facilitated by a committed Working Group that comprised of partners from The PAN Office, the Association of State PAN Coordinators, Belau Watershed Alliance, The Project Management Office and Palau Conservation Society.

At the end of the week, participants were awarded a certificate of completion as they shook hands with PCS Chairman Toribiong. Many reported being better equipped to execute their management plans and strategic plans with effectiveness.



Some attendees even expressed their interest in additional RBM-focused trainings.

Special thanks to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme whose support will allow similar workshops to take place over the next several months.



Local businesses, our conservation superheroes



Palau's economy is closely tied to the health of the environment. Over 100,000 people throughout the world come to Palau each year to experience the rich biodiversity that exists on land and in the ocean. Many businesses understand this connection and are committed to taking an active role to protect and improve Palau's environment by contributing as part of Palau's Corporate Partners for Conservation (CPC). CPCs give at least \$1,000 each year to the work of Palau Conservation Society. So far in 2018, these businesses include: IP & E (\$5,000), Palau Pacific Resort (\$5,000), Blue Bay Petroleum (\$5,000), Palau Royal Resort (\$3600),



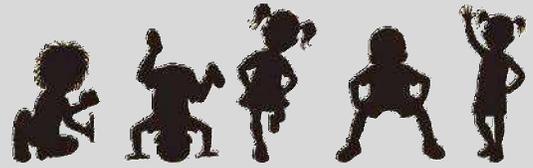
Bank of Hawaii (\$2,000), Sun's Flower Shop (\$1000), Belvedere Apartments (\$2000), SPACO Finance (\$1000), MVP Space Rentals (\$1000), Rock Island Tour Company (\$1,000), Palasia Hotel (\$1,000), Western Caroline Trading Company (\$1,000), Matson Foundation (\$1,000), and Bank of Guam (\$1,000). PCS looks forward to receiving additional donations as we close out 2018.



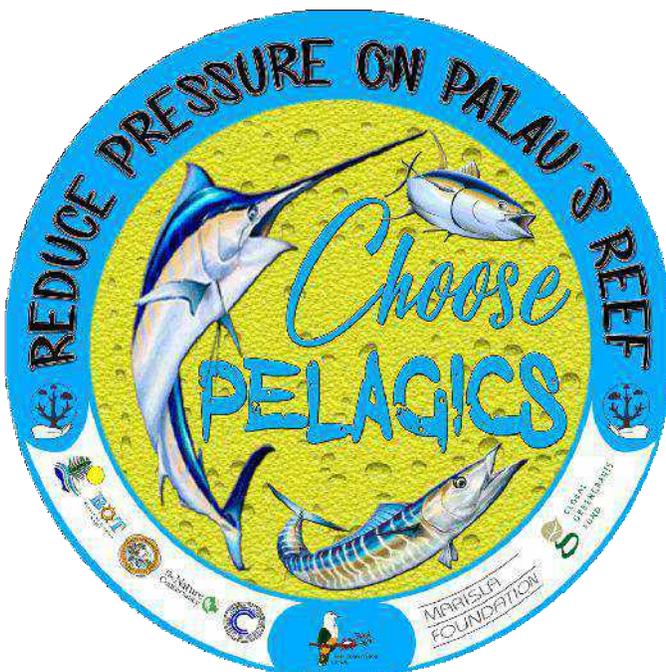
PCS Kids Corner

Ocean Animal Jokes—LOL!

- Q: What was the Orca's favorite game show?
A: Whale of Fortune
- Q: What is the difference between a piano and a fish?
A: You can tune a piano but you can't tuna fish.
- Q: What did the shark say after he ate the clownfish?
A: This tastes a little funny.
- Q: How did the octopus make the whale laugh?
A: With ten-tickles.
- Q: Why are fish so educated?
A: They swim in schools.
- Q: What does a shark and a computer have in common?
A: They both have megabites.



Choose Pelagics to Feed a Crowd! Fostering the development of an offshore fishery market to reduce coastal ecosystem degradation in Palau



The marine ecosystem provides resources that are important to livelihoods, especially those that live on islands like Palau. With local preference for reef fish and a booming tourism industry, coastal fisheries are being threatened by overfishing. This initiative aims to build greater awareness of fishery status in Palau and to promote a market shift in the demand for coastal fishery products to offshore fishery products. With the help of local restaurants and our partners, we can protect livelihoods and promote food security for future generations of Palauans. Choose Pelagics to feed a crowd! (see next page)

Choose Pelagics 2 Feed A CROWD

Background



*Reef Fisheries are in poor condition.
*Overfishing is the major threat to coastal fisheries.



High demand for reef fish drives overfishing



Reef Fish are declining and getting smaller

Why Pelagics

1

Pelagic fish grow faster than reef fish (up to 15lbs/yr vs. less than 2lbs/year)

2

Pelagic fish reach early sexual maturity than reef fish

3

Pelagic fish have a shorter life span than reef fish

4

Pelagics: Faster growth rate means faster recovery

Short Survey Results



Restaurants that serve fish

Restaurants that serve tourists



Restaurants that serve reef fish

ALL

Restaurants serve locally sourced fish from the wild

Findings are based on a short phone call survey to restaurants and hotels with restaurants, as listed in the yellow pages of the Republic of Palau Telephone Directory 2018-2019

Recommendations

Reduce reef fishing pressure by promoting pelagic fish at local restaurants

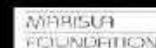


Support a National Sustainable Seafood Strategy

Implementing Partners



Grant provided by:



Community supports PCS at Annual Gala

Palau Conservation Society (PCS) held its 13th Annual Gala on October 11. With over 200 people in attendance, the event was a sold out success. Event highlights included a speech from new Chairman Francis Toribiong where he encouraged Palauans to look to their culture, language and traditions to find solutions to the environmental challenges facing Palau. PCS also recognized its dedicated Corporate Partners for Conservation.

The highlight of the evening was the live auction, which has become a tradition in recent years. Auctioned items included Marshallese handicrafts, a Palauan handmade spear, a “ridge to reef” trip in Ngardmau, and an open sea fishing trip. The most popular auctioned item, sponsored by Koror State, was a trip to the Rock Islands for ten people that included sites most people don’t get to visit. After a bidding war by several enthusiastic individuals, the once in a lifetime trip went for \$2,260.

In total, PCS raised over \$42,000. All money raised will go toward protecting Palau’s environment for present and future generations.



Thanks to all who made PCS 2018 Annual Gala & Live Auction a Success!

Premier sponsors: **RAYMOND JAMES®**



Additional Gala Sponsors & Donors: Sarah's Yum Yum-Live band entertainment | HOD Vice Speaker Delegate Lucio Ngiraiwet, Ngardmau State | Delegate Marino Ngemaes, Aimelik State | Delegate Lee T. Otobed, Ngatpang State | Jackson Henry, Summit Realty | Tom Bowling, Biota Marine Life Nursery | Gerahardt B Braeckel & Salvadora Katosang | Changeina Masang, FSM Honorary Consul | Dr. Gregory Dever

Thanks also to the organizations who purchased tables: Council of Chiefs | Office of the President | Embassy of Republic of China-Taiwan | Speaker of the House of Delegates Sabino Anastacio | Kayangel State Government & Legislature | Koror State Government & Legislature | Ngardmau State Government | Friends of PNMS | Bluebay Petroleum Inc. | IP&E | Ministry of Finance | Ministry of Education | Ministry of Natural Resource, Environment & Tourism | PAN Fund | Western Caroline Trading Co (WCTC)

As always, thanks to our Corporate Partners for Conservation for supporting year after year:



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PCS staff update: A sincere welcome, heartfelt goodbyes, and a promotion



There have been some shifts with the PCS staff as of late. In July, PCS welcomed Lei Nagata as the new Accountant and Human Resources Manager. Lei brings a strong background in accounting and many years of experience to PCS. A graduate of Portland State University, Lei came highly recommended by her previous employers and members of the community. Lei will be working alongside PCS' longtime accountant Susan Toribiong until the end of the year when Lei will take the reins and Susan will start her much deserved retirement (we will have more on Susan in the next newsletter).

In August, PCS brought former intern, Uchellaz Fritz, on as an employee within the Conservation and Protected Areas Program. Uchellaz, who will serve as a Project Officer, is a recent graduate of University of Hawaii-Hilo where he focused on Environmental Studies. Uchellaz brings his youth, a strong work ethic, and a passion for the environment to PCS. He is currently working on a site monitoring plan for Kerradel Conservation Network (KCN) and Ongedechuul System of Conservation Areas (OSCA), among other projects.

In mid-September, PCS said goodbye to Kaipo Recheungel, Project Coordinator in the Policy and Planning Program. Kaipo had been with PCS for four years and contributed greatly. Most recently, Kaipo had been effective in rolling out PCS' Results Based Management Project, an approach that promotes effective conservation outcomes. With Kaipo's friendly personality and team-oriented style, he was effective in connecting with members of the community in various outreach initiatives. We will miss Kaipo, but wish him well in his personal and professional goals as he continues his education in Japan.

Last but not least, a special congratulations to Heather Ketebengang, long time project coordinator for the Conservation and Protected Areas Program. Heather was recently promoted to Communications and Community Outreach Manager. Her skills in graphic design, photography, behavior change, community outreach, and grant writing/management, will be essential in her new role, especially as PCS strives to increase its foot print among schools and communities.

PCS in Belgium for BirdLife partnership meeting



Last month Palau Conservation Society (PCS) Executive Director, Bola Majekobaje, traveled to Wallonia, Belgium to attend the BirdLife International Partnership Meeting. She joined over 200 people representing 117 partners who gathered for the event that happens every four or five years. PCS is the BirdLife partner in Palau and the only partner in Micronesia. PCS was among a small but mighty group of Pacific partners that included BirdLife Australia, Forest and Bird of New Zealand, Te Ipukarea Society of the Cook Islands, Nature Fiji, Manu of French Polynesia, and the BirdLife Pacific Secretariat.

Highlights from the highly productive meeting included: a review of the progress partners have made toward the 2013-2022 strategy, a discussion on moving forward work related to Important Bird Areas (IBA) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA), and securing stronger financial sustainability of the partnership as a whole. At the meeting, Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias was elected Chair of the Global Council, as were the regional council members. Additionally, there was a number of workshops that focused on critical topics such as biodiversity, preventing extinctions, flyways, forests, and more.

Board update: new executive team

In June, the Palau Conservation Society (PCS) Board of Directors hosted the Annual General Membership Meeting. With over 70 people in attendance, the meeting was a success and participants enjoyed hearing about the status of the organization and the achievements of the previous year. At the same meeting, five individuals were elected to fill open Board seats. Recently elected board members are: Francis Toribiong, Vivian Rivera, Min. Sinton Soalablai, Min. Elbuchel Sadang, and David A. Orrukem. The full Board roster also includes: Sandra S. Pierantozzi, Dr. Minoru Ueki, Min. F. Umiich Sengebau, and Min. Faustina Rehuher-Marugg.

In July, at the third quarter Board Meeting, the new Executive team members were elected. New PCS Officers are:

- Chair – Francis Toribiong
- Vice Chair – Vivian Rivera
- Secretary – Min. Sinton Soalablai
- Treasurer – Min. Elbuchel Sadang

A heartfelt thanks was presented to Maura Gordon, Sudo Moses, and Leilani Reklai, three board members who have recently rotated off the Board.



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Palau Conservation Society

P.O. Box 1811

Koror, PW 96940

+680-488-3993 or

+680-488-4716

admin@palauconservation.org

www.palauconservation.org

