

A Conservation Action Plan for Phoenix Petrel and Polynesian Storm-petrel

Birds New Zealand has supported the development of a Conservation Action Plan aimed at guiding recovery efforts for two Endangered Pacific seabird species, the Phoenix Petrel (PHPE, *Pterodroma alba*) and Polynesian Storm-petrel (PSP, *Nesofregetta fuliginosa*), the latter sometimes also known as the White-throated Storm-Petrel. The plan has been a collaborative effort between in-country staff and agencies (particularly Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development in Kiribati and SOP Manu French Polynesia) together with BirdLife invasive species programme manager Steve Cranwell, conservation scientists Ray Pierce and Eric VanderWerf, and Birds New Zealand.



Fig 1 - Phoenix Petrel (above left) depicting pale throat and white leading edge to the underwing; Polynesian Storm-petrel (above right). Photos Eric VanderWerf.

The reason why these two seabird species were grouped into the one action plan is because they share many breeding islands in common within countries of the central Pacific Ocean and face many threats in common. Consequently, they would benefit from many of the same integrated management and monitoring actions identified in the Action Plan.

Key objectives and practical actions of the plan include the monitoring of breeding populations and invasive predators at key sites, improving biosecurity, restoring habitat of former breeding islands, using translocations and social attraction to restore populations, researching biology and threats to help fill data gaps in guiding conservation efforts, raising local capacity and public awareness, and raising funds to achieve the above objectives. Although invasive species are a key (and traditional) focal point where progress is being made through successful eradications on islands, increasingly climate-change and other direct and ripple effects from human impacts are needing to be addressed.

The plan actually builds on much NZ-donor environmental support to countries like Kiribati and French Polynesia over the last 20 years or more, with significant support in the past having come from NZAID/MFAT, NZDOC, Wellington UniVentures, PII, Auckland Zoo and others. Many kiwis have also contributed their skills voluntarily or as professionals on the ground to help these endangered birds - people like Richard Anderson, Derek Brown, Steve Cranwell, Dr Monica Gruber, Vince Kerr, Dr Graham Wragg and the late Sue Taei.

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