

ASIA / PACIFIC

PHOENIX ISLANDS PROTECTED AREA

KIRIBATI



WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION - IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

PHOENIX ISLANDS PROTECTED AREA (KIRIBATI) - ID N° 1325

1. DOCUMENTATION

- i) **Date nomination received by IUCN:** 15th March 2009.
- ii) **Additional information officially requested from and provided from the State Party:** Additional information was requested from the State Party following the IUCN World Heritage Panel, and was provided to the World Heritage Centre and IUCN in February 2010.
- iii) **UNEP-WCMC Data Sheet:** To be developed following consideration of the nomination. Datasheets for existing marine World Heritage properties were consulted as relevant.
- iv) **Additional Literature Consulted:** Allen, G.R. (2007). **Conservation hotspots of biodiversity and endemism for Indo-Pacific coral reef fishes. Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems 18:** 541-556. Gupta, A. (2007). **Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Kiribati.** Report prepared for the BirdLife International Pacific Partnership University of Hawaii at Manoa, Hawaii, USA.; Hillary, A., M. Kokkonen and L. Max (eds.) (2003). **Proceedings of the World Heritage Marine Biodiversity Workshop**, Hanoi, Vietnam, February 25 – March 1, 2002. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Paris, France.; IUCN (2009). **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.** Version 2009.1. Online: www.iucnredlist.org (Accessed on 20 August 2009).; Kelleher, G., C. Bleakley and S. Wells (1995). **A Global Representative System of Marine Protected Areas. Volume IV: South Pacific, Northeast Pacific, Northwest Pacific, Southeast Pacific and Australia / New Zealand.** Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, IUCN and The World Bank, Washington DC, USA.; Pierce, R.J., T. Etei, V. Kerr et al. (2006). **Phoenix Islands Conservation Survey and Assessment of Restoration Feasibility: Kiribati.** Report prepared for Conservation International Samoa and the Pacific Islands Initiative of Auckland University. Eco Oceania, Onerahi, New Zealand.; Roberts, C.M., C.J. McClean, J.E.N. Veron et al. (2002). **Marine biodiversity hotspots and conservation priorities for tropical reefs.** *Science* 295: 1280-1284.; Spalding, M.D., C. Ravillious and E.P. Green (2001). **World Atlas of Coral Reefs.** Prepared at the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre. University of California Press, Berkeley, USA.; Spalding, M.D., H.E. Fox, G.R. Allen et al. (2007). **Marine ecoregions of the world: A bioregionalization of coastal and shelf areas.** *BioScience* 57: 573-583.; UNEP / IUCN (1988). **Coral Reefs of the World. Volume 3: Central and Western Pacific.** IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and UNEP, Nairobi, Kenya; together with texts associated with the nomination document and identified during the evaluation mission.
- v) **Consultations:** 5 external reviewers consulted. The IUCN field mission met with the President of the Republic of Kiribati; the Chief of Cabinet, and with senior representatives of the Ministries of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD), Transport and Tourism Development, Ministry of Finance, Maritime Police, as well as the Australian High Commissioner to Kiribati, the Director of PIPA, leading scientists familiar with the property, and a range of representatives of community and stakeholder groups.
- vi) **Field Visit:** Bernard O’Callaghan and Ameer Abdulla. September-October, 2009
- vii) **Date of IUCN approval of this report:** 15th May 2010.

2. SUMMARY OF NATURAL VALUES (AA)

The Phoenix Island Protected Area (PIPA) is a 408,250 km² expanse of marine and terrestrial habitats in the Southern Pacific Ocean. The nominated property was declared a protected area in 2006 and encompasses the Phoenix Island Group, one of three island groups in Kiribati. PIPA is made up of a 7 corner polygon whose boundaries are defined by latitude and longitude coordinates in the open ocean. Given the area included within

its boundaries, PIPA is currently regarded as the largest designated Marine Protected Area in the world.

The nominated property has five main management zones. The “Core Zone” includes the protected / no take terrestrial island zone (Zone 1) of 7 islands, each with an adjoining 12 nautical mile (nm) no-take zone (Zone 2; wherein subsistence, long line, or purse seine fishing is banned). An 8th island, Kanton, allows for subsistence level harvesting of marine resources for a community of 30 individuals

but bans long line fishing for Tuna for 12 nm (Zone 3) and purse seining activities for 60nm (Zone 4). The remaining waters within the PIPA boundaries may be referred to as a buffer zone (Zone 5), wherein purse-seining and long line tuna fishing may be allowed with a Kiribati Fisheries license.

PIPA conserves one of the world's last intact oceanic coral archipelago ecosystems, together with underwater seamounts and other deep-sea habitats, in a nearly uninhabited region. The area contains approximately 800 known species of fauna, including approximately 200 coral species, 500 fish species, 18 marine mammals and 44 bird species. The structure and functioning of PIPA's ecosystems illustrates its pristine nature and importance as a migration route and reservoir. The key natural features of the property include 14 known submerged seamounts, which are presumed to be extinct volcanoes, and associated habitats situated in an area of ocean of up to 4,000-6,000m depth. There are three atoll islands with associated lagoons and perimeter coral reefs (Orona, Nikumaroro, and Kanton), five low reef islands surrounded by coral reefs (Manra, Rawaki, Birnie, McKean and Enderbury), two submerged reefs, and a large expanse of open and deep sea habitat. The area contains seven main habitats: island, lagoon, coral reef, deep reef, sea mount, deep benthos, and open ocean, which are all represented within both the current and proposed "no-take" fully protected zones. The large expanse of the PIPA, and its remoteness, combine to protect an area that is of high environmental quality, supporting functioning ecosystem processes including important pelagic migration routes, seabird and turtle nesting and feeding grounds, tuna spawning grounds, and an intact food web with high numbers of predators and herbivores. PIPA also supports a number of endemic and globally endangered species such as the Phoenix Petrel, Green Turtle, and Napoleon wrasse.

The coral reefs of the Phoenix Islands experienced a mass-bleaching event in 2002, following which 62% -100% coral mortality has occurred in some of the islands. A recent survey has shown exceptional recovery of the reef system, as compared with other parts of the world. This is in part due to a high abundance and diversity of the herbivorous fish communities and the low levels of reef fishing and pollution. This rapid recovery highlights the resilience of the site, which increasingly will become globally important as coral reefs around the world continue to deteriorate in the face of climate change.

3. COMPARISONS WITH OTHER AREAS

The comparative analysis presented in the nomination has been reviewed by IUCN, and augmented in partnership with UNEP-WCMC.

PIPA has a strong case for recognition in relation to criterion (vii) as one of the very few large marine protected areas in the world that contains numerous seamounts, and the only such one is in the tropics. The near pristine mid-ocean environment of the PIPA, its remoteness, the very low human presence and impacts create a substantial ocean wilderness. Twelve existing large marine World Heritage properties were reviewed in the comparative analysis (Great Barrier Reef, Australia; Shark Bay, Australia; Belize Barrier Reef, Belize; Malpelo, Colombia; Cocos, Costa Rica; Galapagos Islands, Ecuador; New Caledonia, France; Sian Ka'an, Mexico; Coiba, Panama; Tubbataha, Philippines; Aldabra, Seychelles; Socotra, Yemen). Of these, four are in the Tropical Eastern Pacific marine realm, three in the Central Indo-Pacific, two each in the Western Indo-Pacific and the Tropical Atlantic, and one in the Temperate Australasia realm (Spalding et al. 2007). The famous Australian Great Barrier Reef, currently the largest World Heritage property, lies in the Central Indo-Pacific. In contrast, both PIPA, and the currently nominated Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM), USA, lie within the Eastern Indo-Pacific realm, which does not yet have any World Heritage properties with notable marine areas (Easter Island, Chile and Henderson Island, UK are listed as terrestrial natural properties). East Rennell, Solomon Islands is a mostly terrestrial natural World Heritage property in the Central Indo-Pacific realm. PIPA is one of most extensive remaining intact open ocean seascapes, with its natural values still intact, while the threats are increasing elsewhere in the world.

In relation to ecosystem processes, IUCN considered PIPA's key features alongside PMNM and three closest comparators amongst inscribed World Heritage properties, identified from within those noted above. Key points of comparison are as follows:

- PIPA (Kiribati): equatorial, archipelago of atolls and low islands in remote deep sea, maximum water depth of 6,147 m, over 14 large seamounts up to a height comparable to the Mont Blanc, largest MPA in the world, 2,551 ha land;
- Tubbataha Reefs (Philippines): atoll in deep sea, maximum depth of 2,000 m compared to 6,147 m in PIPA, some seamounts, marine area of PIPA over 420 times larger;
- Aldabra Atoll (Seychelles): atoll but no archipelago, mostly shallow water compared to deep water in PIPA, marine area of PIPA over 2,910 times larger;

- **PMNM:** tropical / subtropical transition zone, oceanic islands over volcanic hotspot, archipelago of atolls and low and eroded high islands in deep sea, maximum depth of 4,600 m compared to 6,147 m in PIPA, large seamounts, 2nd largest MPA in the world after PIPA, 1,400 ha land;
- **Galapagos Islands (Ecuador):** equatorial, oceanic islands over volcanic hotspot, archipelago but no atolls, maximum depth of 4,000 m compared to 6,147 m in PIPA, some seamounts, marine area of PIPA 3.1 times larger than the one of Galapagos.

PIPA is distinguished, aside from its very large area, by the wide range of intact marine ecosystems from coral reefs, submerged reefs, seamounts to deep sea. It has a high degree of remoteness and naturalness; with predator-dominated ecosystems, healthy fish, coral and sea turtle populations, and with a demonstrated resilience of its reefs to coral bleaching. It has a larger maximum and average water depth than any existing World Heritage property or nominated properties with full vertical and lateral connectivity between terrestrial, ocean floor and open ocean habitats. The horizontal and vertical scale of the property, its sheer size, and its pristine nature provide a compelling case for the recognition of the property under criterion (ix).

In relation to biodiversity values, IUCN has also considered the range of large marine protected areas, including those included on the World Heritage List, together with global assessments and gap analyses. In terms of species richness neither PIPA nor PMNM can be compared with the marine diversity found in the Coral Triangle, New Caledonia or the Great Barrier Reef. PIPA is not a marine centre of endemism, marine biodiversity hotspot, or a priority ecoregion for global conservation. Its small land areas are part of the large terrestrial biodiversity hotspot Polynesia-Micronesia, but make a relatively small contribution to its biodiversity values. BirdLife is understood to be in the process of designating up to six Important Bird Areas in the Phoenix Islands because of their importance for seabird. Compared to existing large marine World Heritage properties, Tubbatana, Socotra and Aldabra have more coral species than PIPA; whilst New Caledonia, the Great Barrier Reef, Coiba and Socotra have more fish species. PIPA is relatively less species-rich largely because of its location in a relatively species-poor region in the middle of the Pacific: overall biodiversity decreases from west to east across the Pacific. A recent assessment of the distribution of 3,919 species of Indo-Pacific coral reef fishes found that neither Kiribati nor Hawaii is among the countries with the highest richness. However, while the Hawaiian Islands are among the top-ranked sites based on their number and percentage of endemic species, Kiribati does not show high endemism in

coral reef fishes. A comparison between PIPA and PMNM has been included in the evaluation report of the latter, and notes that PMNM has a more substantive case for recognition under criterion (x) than PIPA, including due to its greater number of endemic species and its role in supporting the largest tropical seabird rookery in the world.

It is difficult to establish the current importance of PIPA for seabirds. Historically, millions of seabirds have been reported for PIPA, including 19 breeding species. The nomination notes that, together with Kiribati's Line Islands, PIPA supports among the largest assemblages of tropical seabirds in the world both in term of species diversity and population sizes. A recent assessment concluded that, whilst PIPA still supports a wide diversity of seabird species, this diversity is under continuing and serious threat from invasive mammal species, most notably rats and rabbits. Two globally threatened seabird species breed in the Phoenix Islands: the Endangered Phoenix petrel and white-throated storm-petrel. In terms of total numbers, PIPA does not have large breeding populations of these birds. IUCN considers that the role of the property in protection of threatened species is clearly of significance, but is not sufficient, considering comparisons with other World Heritage properties, to provide a strong basis for the application of criterion (x) to the property.

4. INTEGRITY, PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

4.1. Protection

The Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA) was created by the Phoenix Islands Protected Area Regulations 2008 under the Environment Act 1999 – these regulations are currently in-force in the area. The regulations seek to clearly delineate the boundaries of the PIPA, establish the PIPA Management Committee and seek to ensure that a Management Plan is in place for PIPA. A number of measures are prescribed for the longer-term management of PIPA. Essentially all activities within PIPA require a permit as stipulated under the Regulations. The current legal protection provides a sufficient basis to develop effective protection of the nominated property. Measures for application for permits are clearly described in the nomination. All the land and sea within the boundaries of PIPA is owned by the Government of Kiribati.

IUCN requested information from the State Party on the status and development of fisheries and no-take zones in the nominated property. The State Party provided a detailed response mostly based on the management plan (2010 – 2014), as updated and approved after the submission of the nomination. Zonation is described as a core management tool. The plan suggests a two-

phased approach. The objective of the current phase 1 of the zonation is to secure the protection of islands, lagoons, reefs and near-shore habitats. These no-take areas total 3.7 % of the overall surface of PIPA. Phase 2 is intended to result in a 25 % increase in the no-take zone coverage, and will be implemented once the PIPA Trust Fund income reaches an adequate capitalization level to compensate the Government of Kiribati for any losses in DWFN (Distant Water Fishing Nation) license fees associated with such limitations. This would include seamounts, enlarged zones around the islands, and a connection of the no-take zones between the two groupings of islands among other areas. The exact boundaries are to be defined during the implementation of the management plan taking into account possible tourism development and, in the case of Kanton Atoll, local subsistence needs. The State Party expects both phases to be implemented by December 2014.

IUCN appreciates this clear, positive and creative strategy, but also notes that implementation of it has just begun, and that the main phase of zonation, which would establish effective levels of protection through no-take zones is contingent on the capitalization of a Trust Fund.

IUCN considers the protection status of the nominated property meets the requirements set out in the Operational Guidelines within the areas identified as no-take zones, but notes that at the present time the extent of these areas is very limited in relation to the area of the property as a whole. Taken as a whole the property does not fully meet the requirements of the Operational Guidelines at the present time, but should increasingly do so, as the plans to create PIPA proceed.

4.2 Boundaries

PIPA's boundaries are clearly defined. The boundaries are mostly straight lines with some adjustments to the boundaries to align with the Exclusive Economic Zone (200 NM) of Kiribati. There various clearly delimited zones within PIPA as described in the Management Plan and World Heritage Nomination and noted above. Marking of the boundaries relies on their inclusion in relevant charts, and notices to mariners, as site specific demarcation is not practical.

IUCN considers that the boundaries of the nominated property meet the requirements set out in the Operational Guidelines.

4.3 Management

A proposed PIPA Management Plan was provided with the nomination, and is understood to have been approved in November 2009. IUCN has reviewed the management plan and considers

that it is adequate for the short-term given the low level of visitation to the site, but would need to be adapted should visitation increase. The plan could also be developed further to be more comprehensive, including further plans to improve the values of the terrestrial aspects of the site and ensure full operation of the management of the site. Further development of the measures for rehabilitation of ecological values on some islands affected by invasive species and other impacts would be valuable, together with consideration of cultural heritage values.

The significant concern regarding the management of the nominated property, in relation to its nomination to the World Heritage List is the currently limited state of development of the management system. There are currently no permanent government staff solely dedicated to the management of PIPA. The one staff member acting as the Director for the PIPA initiative is currently funded by supporters including Conservation International and the New England Aquarium. Other government agencies are aware of the PIPA initiative, and many of the proposed management measures required within the PIPA fall with the mandate of agencies such as the Ministry of Fisheries and the Maritime Police, Department of Environment and Ministry of Interior and Social Affairs. Current enforcement capacity on the water is limited, especially considering the scale of the property. There is one patrol boat operated by the Marine Police to monitor all of the waters with the EEZ of Kiribati. This patrol boat may enter the Phoenix Islands 1-2 time per year. Response to encroachment is limited as it may take 4 days to steam from Tarawa to sites within PIPA. An agreement on patrolling with the US Coastguard is in place, but this is also limited in scope to 1-2 trips per year. A Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) has been established for licensed fishing boats operating in Kiribati waters, but this system is not able to detect illegal fishing. Occasional flyovers take place by French, Australian and New Zealand Authorities and could make a contribution to enforcement.

There is currently no dedicated budget from the Government for management of the PIPA, although grants are being made available to the Government of Kiribati from partners in the PIPA initiative including Conservation International and New England Aquarium. A GEF Project Proposal "Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA)" is currently under development, and is seeking \$890,000 towards establishing management regimes for the PIPA. It is projected that this three-year project would commence in 2010.

Initiatives are being taken to develop a future sustainable financing for management of the nominated property. Legislation to support PIPA financing is provided in the PIPA Conservation

Trust Act (No. 1 of 2009) – An Act to provide for the establishment of the PIPA Conservation Trust and for incidental matters. This has been passed to provide for the establishment of the Trust to provide sustainable income from the returns on the capital of the trust. The primary activities of the Trust will be to support the administration of the trust, management of PIPA and ensure limited exploitation activities in PIPA, and to provide the Government with reasonable compensation for the loss in revenues occasioned by the measures for the protection of the PIPA. The Trust is not yet operational, but it is anticipated that an Executive Director for the trust will be appointed in early - mid 2010, and that by-laws to facilitate operation will be put in place on the same timelines. The Management Plan for the nominated property indicates that the Government of Kiribati will provide financing of USD 2.5 million subject to co-financing from external sources.

IUCN noted to the State Party its concern about these issues, and requested information on the timeline and list of activities anticipated to establish effective management of the nominated property, including the Trust Fund. In its response the State Party recognizes there is limited but growing capacity which is consistent with the phased approach it is taking to the establishment of PIPA. It notes that there is a whole of government approach to PIPA, that the management plan is endorsed by the Cabinet which is the highest level of support and commitment, and that there are functioning partnerships with academic, non-governmental and governmental (U.S.A, Australia, New Zealand) institutions. In the case of monitoring this has already lead to prosecution and fining of a vessel fishing illegally. It also notes success of early management projects related to invasive species, and that the remoteness of the property affords a relatively high degree of protection. The response states a total investment of USD 3 million has been made since 2000. A broad range of ongoing activities has been carried out based on different sources of funding, and the GEF project is expected to financially support the implementation of the management plan. The State Party further notes that the Trust Fund is based on and defined in national legislation and now has confirmed board members. Conservation International has confirmed an anticipated USD 2.5 million commitment and fundraising is underway, including in relation to the State Party's contribution.

Whilst acknowledging this progress, IUCN is concerned that at the present time the lack of definitive positions regarding the key requirements to managed the property, viz: adequate and sustainable finance and staffing. At the present time financial resources are not sufficient from state government allocations for management of the nominated property, and there is insufficient

enforcement capacity and human resources for management of the site property. Should the trust fund be established and funded, to a minimum level of USD \$13 million as proposed in its business model, this would enable the staffing of the management authority to be addressed, assist in longer-term enforcement and provide resources for the more effective management and monitoring of the site. IUCN considers that these aspects should be put in place and consolidated prior to recommending possible inscription on the World Heritage List. In this way the possibility of inclusion on the World Heritage List may also assist the State Party to galvanise the necessary additional support to assure the establishment of PIPA on a secure and adequately funded basis. Addressing these issues will take some time, considering the scale of the project and work required to establish a fully functioning management system, and should also be the subject of further verification through an official evaluation mission. IUCN considers that the World Heritage Committee should provide guidance and support to this work.

IUCN considers the management of the nominated property does not meet the requirements set out in the Operational Guidelines, at the present time, but with adequate established resourcing would have the potential to do so.

4.4 Threats

Although the isolation of the PIPA reduces the scope of threats to it, there are still a range of immediate threats to the property. The most significant of these are related to illegal fishing by licensed fishing vessels is able to be monitored through GPS based fishing management system operated by the Ministry of Fisheries. Illegal fishing by unlicensed vessels is more difficult to address, considering the challenge of identification of vessels with the limited enforcement capacities. Alien and invasive species on the islands require continued eradication measures. The nomination notes that first eradications of invasive mammal species were conducted on Rawaki (rabbit) and McKean Island (rat) in 2008 and that it is expected that bird populations will recover to previous levels. However this may be a long process, requiring careful monitoring.

The status relating to the Deep Sea mining in PIPA needs to be clarified in both the regulations and management plan. However, all activities within PIPA such as Deep Sea Mining require a permit subject to an EIA. A National Tourism Strategy is currently being prepared. There are plans for tourism development in at least two of the islands. These plans need developed to ensure that environmental impacts are minimized. Re-introduction of invasive species is a further concern, and it is important all visitors to the islands take necessary measures

to avoid the introduction of invasive and alien species. Measures to protect islands from invasive species are highlighted in the visitor permit system and would require effective operational control and monitoring. Deep sea trawling is a further threat, but as the area is very deep and this is unlikely at the present time, and would require a permit. Climate impacts, such as the coral bleaching event sea level rise and ocean acidification are also of concern, and global climate change may have continuing impacts on the property.

The current and potential threats to the property require adequate and effective responses through the creation and operation of the management system for the property, as noted above.

In summary, IUCN considers the nominated property does not meet the conditions of integrity as outlined in the Operational Guidelines.

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

ICOMOS provided comment to IUCN on the cultural values of the nominated property and noted that the islands have material evidences and immaterial associations of periodic occupation over one to two millennia. Cultural associations are described in the nomination document, and work is underway to determine the importance of the cultural values. ICOMOS note that the area has not been extensively studied in the academic literature. Identified cultural values relate to archaeological evidence of early colonization by Micronesians and Polynesians, ancient and recent oral traditions, and archaeological remains of post-contact land uses from the 19th and 20th centuries. ICOMOS considers that further work would be required to determine whether there might be justification for the use of cultural criteria in relation to the link between the atolls and migrations across the Pacific. It considers that the ICOMOS Thematic Study on Cultural Landscapes of the Pacific Islands would be relevant to guide any further work that might be undertaken in a comparative context. Even though ICOMOS considers that, on the basis of current evidence, the use of cultural criteria could not be justified, it nevertheless encourages the State Party to identify and respect the cultural values in the management of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area. IUCN concurs with the views of ICOMOS in this regard.

6. APPLICATION OF CRITERIA

The property has been nominated under natural criteria (vii), (ix) and (x):

Criterion (vii): Superlative natural phenomena or natural beauty

With an average water depth of 4,500 m and a maximum depth of 6,147 m, PIPA has a large bathymetric range. It is one of the very few large marine protected areas in the world that contains numerous seamounts and the only such one is in the tropics. The highest peaks rise more than 5,000 m above the seabed and a number reach the surface where they are capped by coral atolls and reefs or have a near surface manifestation. The near pristine mid-ocean environment of the nominated property, its remoteness, the very low human presence and impacts are key attributes that make PIPA one of most extensive remaining intact open ocean seascapes globally.

IUCN considers that the nominated property meets this criterion

Criterion (ix): Ecological and biological processes

PIPA is distinguished, aside from its very large area, by its range of intact and functioning marine ecosystems from coral reefs, submerged reefs, seamounts to deep sea. It has a high degree of remoteness and naturalness; with predator-dominated ecosystems, healthy fish, coral and sea turtle populations, and with a demonstrated resilience of its reefs to coral bleaching. It has a larger maximum and average water depth than any existing World Heritage property. There is vertical and lateral connectivity between terrestrial, ocean floor and open ocean habitats. The horizontal and vertical scale of the property, its sheer size, and its pristine nature are exceptional.

IUCN considers that the nominated property meet this criterion.

Criterion (x): Most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity including threatened species of outstanding universal value

Whilst the property certainly has important values for biodiversity conservation, and this should be an ongoing priority, the marine ecosystems of PIPA not strongly recognized as global conservation priorities. The levels of species richness and endemism, and number and percentage of threatened species are lower than in existing marine World Heritage properties inscribed under this criterion. The terrestrial ecosystems of PIPA are small and not a significant contribution to Polynesia-Micronesia biodiversity hotspot. Significance as a breeding site for seabirds is also not at the levels of existing island World Heritage properties inscribed under this criterion; a diversity of seabird species are still

far below historic levels due to impact from invasive mammal species and habitat conversion.

IUCN considers that the nominated property does not meet this criterion.

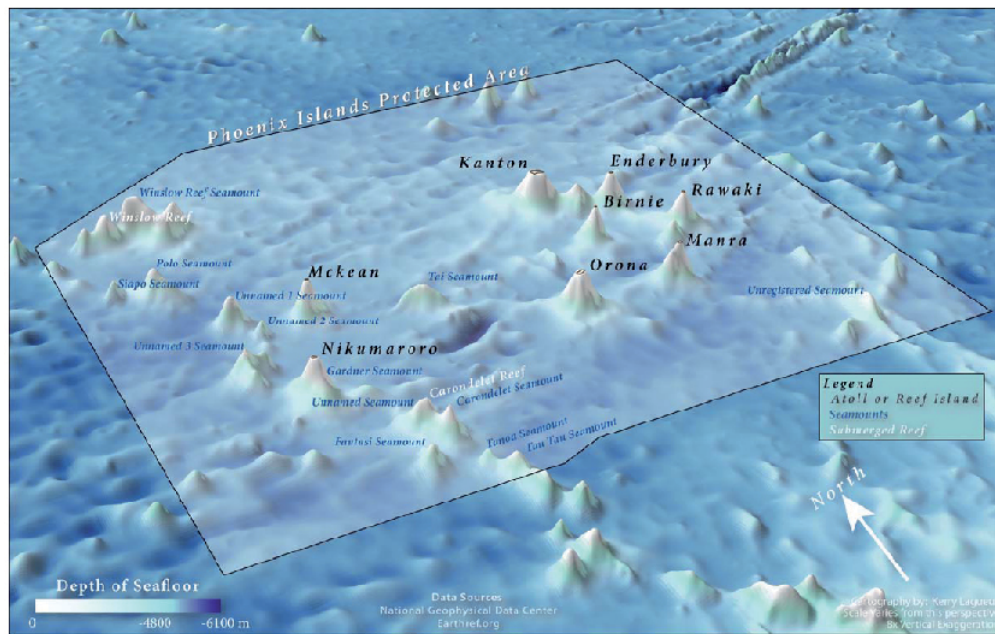
7. RECOMMENDATIONS

IUCN recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopt the following decision:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents **WHC-10/34.COM/8B** and **WHC-10/34.COM/INF.8B2**,
2. Defers the examination of the nomination of the **Phoenix Islands Protected Area, Kiribati** to the World Heritage List under criteria (vii), (ix) and (x);
3. Recommends the State Party to:
 - a) Refocus the nomination on the values and features within the Phoenix Islands Protected Area in relation to criteria (vii) and (ix);
 - b) Consider refocusing a revised nomination on the most significant areas of Phoenix Islands Protected Area, where the required integrity, protection and management requirements set out in the Operational Guidelines have been fully established, and possibly complemented by further extension(s) when additional areas of the nominated property have also met these requirements;
 - c) Strengthen the management framework for fisheries, considering extension of no-take areas, measures to prevent degradation of seamounts and concrete timelines for the phasing out of tuna fishing;
 - d) Establish a fully functional Management Authority for the Phoenix Islands Protected Area;
 - e) Allocate an appropriate budget towards the management of Phoenix Islands Protected Area through a funded and functional trust fund or through other appropriate mechanisms;
 - f) Ensure capacities and resources for refined and systematic monitoring, surveillance and law enforcement;
4. Highly commends the State Party on the efforts that have been made towards the establishment and protection of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area, including the exemplary multi-agency approach;
5. Also highly commends the State Party on the many successful activities carried out over the last years, such as eradication of terrestrial invasive species in several areas and encourages the State Party to continue these efforts for both marine and terrestrial invasive species through eradication programmes and prevention of new invasions through establishment and enforcement of appropriate protocols;
6. Welcomes the sister site agreement between the Governments of Kiribati and the United States of America on the management of Phoenix Islands Protected Area and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument respectively, and encourages State Parties to continue and, as possible, expand on this collaboration;
7. Welcomes the strong support from the States Parties Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States of America, as well as from international institutions and non-governmental organizations and encourages these partners to further support the management, surveillance and funding of Phoenix Islands Protected Area, including the nomination of the area for inscription on the World Heritage list.

Map 1: Three dimensional map of the underwater topography of PIPA



This three dimensional map shows the underwater topography of PIPA. The atolls (4), reef (4) islands, submerged reefs (2) and 9 of the 14 confirmed seamounts have been named. Average depth of the seafloor is about 4,500 metres, with a maximum of 6,147 m. Details on each of the topographic features are provided elsewhere in the nomination document.