

THE PARK NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1


January 2025

Dear partners of the Coral Sea Natural Park and Fisheries Service,

We would like to wish you all the best for the New Year. We are delighted to look back with you on the highlights of 2024, a year that was special in many respects, but rich in initiatives to preserve our exceptional marine heritage and promote New Caledonia's fishing industry.

Click on  to open the links.

► Extension of Protected Areas


On 1 January 2024, the decree increasing the area of New Caledonia's maritime space under enhanced protection (from 2.3% to 10%) came into force. This decree, adopted by the Government of New Caledonia in October 2023, led to the creation of new nature reserves and integral reserves within the Park. This expansion, the result of extensive consultations with all stakeholders and subject to approval by the public in 2023, is designed to enhance the protection and resilience of our marine ecosystems in the face of environmental challenges... 

► The Park receives the IFRECOR Coral Reef Award

On April 9, 2024, the 'Palme des Récifs coralliens' (Coral Reef Palm) was bestowed upon New Caledonia for the creation of high protection zones within the Coral Sea Natural Park.

Since 2011, the Palme IFRECOR – 'the French Coral Reef Initiative' – has rewarded initiatives in the French overseas territories to preserve coral reef ecosystems.

This award highlights the nation's recognition of the collective efforts made to enhance the protection of our marine territory through a collaborative process that engaged all segments of New Caledonian society.

IFRECOR had already rewarded the Park and New Caledonia in 2018 for the first decree establishing high protection for the Park's wild reefs and lagoons... 

► Celebrating 10 years of the Park

On 23 April 2024, celebrations began to mark the tenth anniversary of the creation of the Coral Sea Natural Park by the Government of New Caledonia.

In honour of ten years of marine biodiversity conservation, an art contest was organised, inviting painters, photographers, and sculptors to showcase the breathtaking beauty and abundance of our ecosystems. The selected pieces were displayed at the Tjibaou Cultural Center during a festive event of speeches and accolades... [▶](#)

The grand prize, '*Cœur corallien*' ('Coral Heart'), a mesmerising pastel artwork, was bestowed upon the talented artist Charlotte Mollet. Other winners included talented local artists, including Mathieu Venon and Lucie Beauvir in the graphics category; Sylvain Flory, Mathieu Macias and Amélie Favard in the photography category; Baptiste Bodin, Melem Tiaou and Stéphane Hamon in the sculpture category... [▶](#)

► A photographic exhibition at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre

From April 23rd to 24th, the [Tjibaou Cultural Centre](#) held an exhibition in its main hall, titled 'A Gem of Azure and Emerald: The Coral Sea Natural Park'.

This series of 40 photos with comments allowed visitors to discover the treasures of the park through the eyes of talented local amateurs and professionals. They included Amandine Aupetit, Tristan Berr, Magalie BouSSION, Gil Chabaud, Nicolas Job, Mathieu Macias, Bastien Preuss, and many more... [▶](#)

The exhibition was also on display at the *Médipôle* (New Caledonia Hospital Centre) from July 26 to October 26 as part of the National Science Festival... [▶](#)

► A six-part documentary series to explore the Park

On the 9th of June 2024,, the television channel '*Nouvelle-Calédonie la première*' aired the first episode of the six-part documentary series '*Mer de Corail, Trésors et convoitises*' (Coral Sea, Treasures and covetousness), produced by Zealandia Prod with support of the New Caledonian Government.

Over six 26-minute episodes, airing weekly until July, director Émilie Baptiste delves into the intimate connection that Caledonians share with this extraordinary region, which intersects with various critical topics. [▶](#)

In partnership with the NGO PEW Bertarelli, three episodes were shown at CinéCity, from 7 November to 5 December 2024, as part of the 'Doc'Océan' screening debates. The fascinating contributions of Marc Oremus, Florian Baletaud and Christophe Sand were featured.

► Always more science

In 2024, numerous scientific missions were carried out in the Park: TONIC (NC University), NIWA (New Zealand), HOPE (IRD), ESSANTEA (IRD), KASEAOPE (IFREMER), SUBCOM, BOUGAINVILLE, etc.

Among the projects commissioned by the Government of New Caledonia, the TIC TAC mission, led by the IRD ([French public research institute](#)), focused on the coral reefs of the d'Entrecasteaux atolls and the Chesterfield plateau: the four campaigns carried out in 2023 and 2024 were designed to measure the impact of marine heatwaves on these reefs. The findings will be unveiled to the Park's collaborators in the year 2025... [▶](#)

► From 24 January to 7 March 2024, a team of researchers led by the IRD carried out a mission to study and monitor breeding seabirds on Chesterfield and d'Entrecasteaux islands. The goal of this campaign was to produce a 'reference report' during the warm season, along with observations from the cool season of 2023. This would allow for the coverage of different bird-breeding periods. This successful project validated a monitoring methodology that will be implemented regularly in the future... 📄

► And Still More Monitoring

Throughout the year, the department continued to develop "S²P" ('*Suivi & Surveillance du Parc*'), a tool for monitoring and surveillance of human use of the Park, developed with the technical and financial support of the French government since 2022, and already operational in many respects: an application, custom-developed which, on the one hand, enables precise and comprehensive monitoring of human use of New Caledonia's maritime space and, on the other hand, thanks to the use of innovative technologies, superimposes different sources of detection (satellite imagery, radar, etc.) and to reinforce the means of surveillance of our protected areas. This surveillance is carried out in partnership with the *CFIM*, the Maritime Information Fusion Centre.

► A master plan for deep-sea fishing, the main economic activity in the Park

In 2024, the 'pôle Pêche' (SPNMCP fishing division) developed an action plan for the Deep Sea Fisheries Master Plan, a landmark document that will be our roadmap for upcoming years. The process of reviewing the legal and regulatory framework was also launched in 2024 and will remain at the heart of our activities in 2025.

Despite the challenges of selling their products due to the riots of May 2024, industry players have shifted their course towards greater financial self-reliance, demonstrating pragmatism and adaptability. Although the fishing industry is not yet fully self-reliant and able to sell its products on the domestic market, a transition has taken place. At this stage, the industry is on a path to prosperity... 📄

► Tuna fishing: closer cooperation with the Forum Fisheries Agency


On July 24, Louis Mapou, President of the 17th Government of New Caledonia, and Manumatavai Tupou-Roosen, Director General of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding tuna. This agreement strengthens New Caledonia's partnership with the FFA in managing tuna in the Pacific region, promoting the interests of the Pacific States and Territories... 📄


► Participation in WCPFC Meetings


In accordance with its status as a participating territory, New Caledonia takes part in the annual meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), as well as in the meetings of its subsidiary bodies, which are the Scientific Committee and the Technical and Control Committee. This participation strengthens our commitment to the sustainable management of fisheries resources, as well as contributing to strategic discussions on the conservation of tuna stocks and related species... 📄

► Partner of the 14th Sublimage Underwater images festival

From 30 September to 6 October 2024, the celebration room at Noumea Town Hall played host to the Sublimage Festival and its international underwater film and photography competition.


The SPNMCP unveiled its newest publications, offering immersive experiences in the park with 3D headsets, as well as showcasing the winning entries from the anniversary art contest. The CIE.NC association (environmental initiation centre) was also there to promote the educational materials that they had developed with the SPNMCP for their Park-themed events... 

► On October 2nd, the 'Park Evening', dedicated to the emblematic animals ('Stars of the Park'), brought together a number of specialists: Manuel Ducrocq, head of department, and the scientists: Marc Oremus (sea turtles), Angélique Pagenaud (seabirds), Solène Derville (marine mammals). Émilie Baptiste also presented extracts from her documentary series... 

► On Saturday, 5th October, the various prizes were awarded in the 'Stars of the Park' category: Adrien Moineau (gold star), Magali Boussion (silver star), Pauline Fey (bronze star)... 

► New guidelines for the governance of the Park

On 12 September 2024, after ten years of existence, the composition and operation of the Park's Management Committee were revised at its 20th meeting and subsequently adopted at a formal meeting of the Collegial Government. The aim of these adjustments is to strengthen the consultative role of the Management Committee, modernise its operation and rationalise its composition.

Once the 18th government is in place, the co-presidents of the Park (the French State and New Caledonia) will be responsible for appointing the members and personalities who will serve on the advisory committee and scientific council, the new bodies created for the Park... 

The Government of New Caledonia is also seeking to have the Park included on the [IUCN Green List](#). The expected revision of the Park's management plan will need to meet the criteria and standards required for this certification.

► Upcoming Projects for 2025

This dynamic year has allowed us to fine-tune several initiatives:

- Monitoring the Park's megafauna, set to begin in 2025;
- Kickstarting the Walpole Island restoration project, slated for May 2025;
- The 'Coral Sea Conservation Fund', created to mobilise international funding, is currently being considered by Congress.

This brief summary of the highlights of 2024 shows a team effort requiring the involvement and mobilisation of all stakeholders, in line with the park's founding principles: ensuring reconciliation between uses and conservation within this exceptional maritime heritage. Undoubtedly, 2025 promises to be just as fruitful.

We look forward to seeing you soon for more marine adventures!



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(The Coral Sea Natural Park
and Fisheries Department Team