



CONFLICT ISLANDS
CONSERVATION
INITIATIVE
NEWSLETTER
Volume #1
2020



www.cici.net.au

Welcome

The Conflict Islands, based in the Coral Triangle and the center for marine biodiversity, is recognized as one of the world's marine hotspots boasting some of the largest numbers of fish species' noted in a single dive averaging 220 species of fish per dive!

The conservation responsibility now lies with the owner, the visitors and the local community to uphold all practices that safeguard this pristine and unique area of the world.

2019 -2020 TURTLE SEASON

14,915 hatchlings released

30 new hawksbills tagged

409 new greens tagged

138 nests relocated

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THE WALKING SHARK

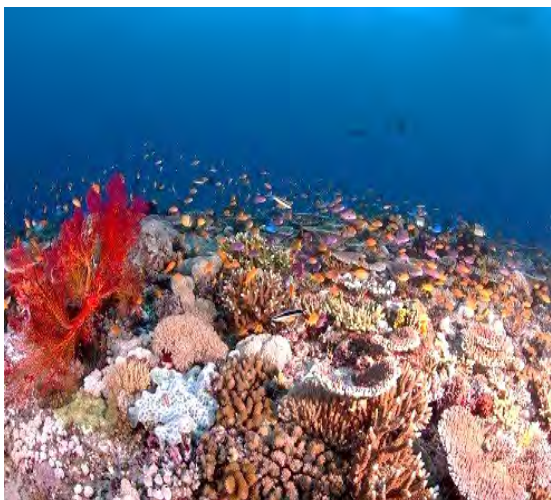
Research regarding the Milne Bay
Epaulette Shark (*Hemiscyllium
michaeli*).

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MISSION BLUE HOPE SPOT

The Conflict Islands Hope Spot
celebrates extraordinary coral
reefs and local conservation work

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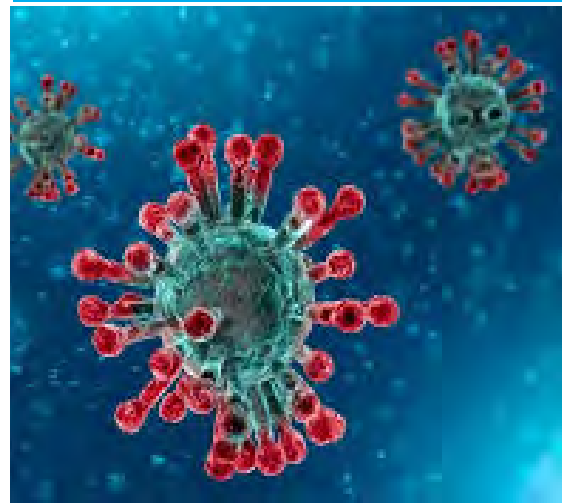
CICI & OUR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL'S

BUILDING UP WOMEN

Meet Martha Eimba, our PNG national Marine Biologist who worked full time with CICI for our Turtle Nesting Season.

Also completing her all her diving qualifications with CICI.

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CORONA VIRUS

Dealing with COVID-19 in a remote location. Protection isolation and job security.

CONTINUE READING ON PAGE .6



THE FUTURE

CICI are still busy taking bookings for this seasons 2020 – 2021 Turtle nesting season, plastic clean ups and data analysis.

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To protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment, habitats and species of the Coral Sea with a particular emphasis on the area within and around the Conflict Islands region of Papua New Guinea (PNG), and the roles this region plays in its connectedness to the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) through our joint sharing of the Coral Sea, and

To conduct research and education about the natural environment around the Conflict Islands and its connectedness through migratory marine species to the Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea.



CICI'S TURTLES

2019-2020 SEASON

What a season! It has been our busiest nesting season yet with around **625** encounters with nesting female turtles throughout the Conflict Islands Atoll. Of these encounters, **438** were new turtles to the CI Group, but only **30** were hawksbills turtles, which are the more endangered of the 2 species we have nesting here and a very disappointing finding. We relocated to our protected temperature controlled hatcheries **138** clutches of eggs with a great success rate of live hatchlings emerging, having a amazing success rate of **98%** or above !!

This season we added **14,915** turtles into the wild population directly from our hatcheries

We rescued over **50** turtles directly from poachers on the beaches, or passing through the atoll, all of which were breeding females. They were tagged and re-released. One outrigger canoe was intercepted with 13 turtles onboard all for sale and slaughter. This was a direct result of our 8 new **Turtle Task Force** Officers, a new initiative for this season which we will continue for future seasons.

CICI hosted **Becky Diggins**, a PHD candidate from **James Cook University**. Her studies are centered around the work CICI does, sampling the nesting and foraging turtles. With the help of our Conservation Rangers we caught **174** mostly juvenile turtles using an exciting sampling technique called **Turtle Rodeo** which involves jumping onto turtles from a moving boat. We use this technique to sample a wider cohort of turtles that inhabit and utalise the Conflict Islands.

We are also undertaking a new sampling technique with Wildme.org, using photo ID techniques for all the turtles, so in the future all our encounters will be logged using photo id techniques, rather than flipper tags.

Our February cruise ships saw **68** of our hatchlings in our Nursery being adopted, Thank you to all adopters!



To Sign Up For Next Season
Starting In 2020 Head To
www.cici.net.au/turtle



"I can say
2020
was my
favourite
trip yet..."

The Walking Shark PROJECT

BY JESSICA BLAKEWAY

In 2019 my love for the Milne Bay Epaulette Shark was sparked when we spotted one on a night dive while working on the Sharks and Rays Internship.

We jumped into the water as the sun was going down and slowly descended down the reef slope toward the drop off. About 10 minutes into the dive I spotted something moving at the edge of my dive lights, so naturally I went to investigate. To my excitement it was a Milne Bay Epaulette, slowly using its pectoral fins to walk over the coral. As the rest of the group started to swim in the opposite direction I flagged down my dive buddies to share the experience and my excitement. The shark was so relaxed and didn't swim away but just sat with us for a few minutes until we had to leave to catch up with the rest of the group. This was my first experience with a Milne Bay Epaulette shark and it sparked a love and extreme interest in the animal.

.... And the walking shark project was born

There is a large gap in the knowledge of this species so we will be filling some of that gap by conducting further studies fulfilling the requirements for a PhD.

In February 2020 I headed out to CI for a third time, with the intentions of collecting pilot data to see if the methods I wanted to use would work to collect morphometrics, genetics, sex and distribution data.

Over the following month observed 15 individuals, and successfully captured and collected data from 13 individuals. 5 of them were sampled in one hour of power! One of which, Stumpy, was missing his second dorsal fin, he had no apparent scarring which suggested a genetic defect. Our smallest was a 33cm juvenile male and our largest was a 71cm male.

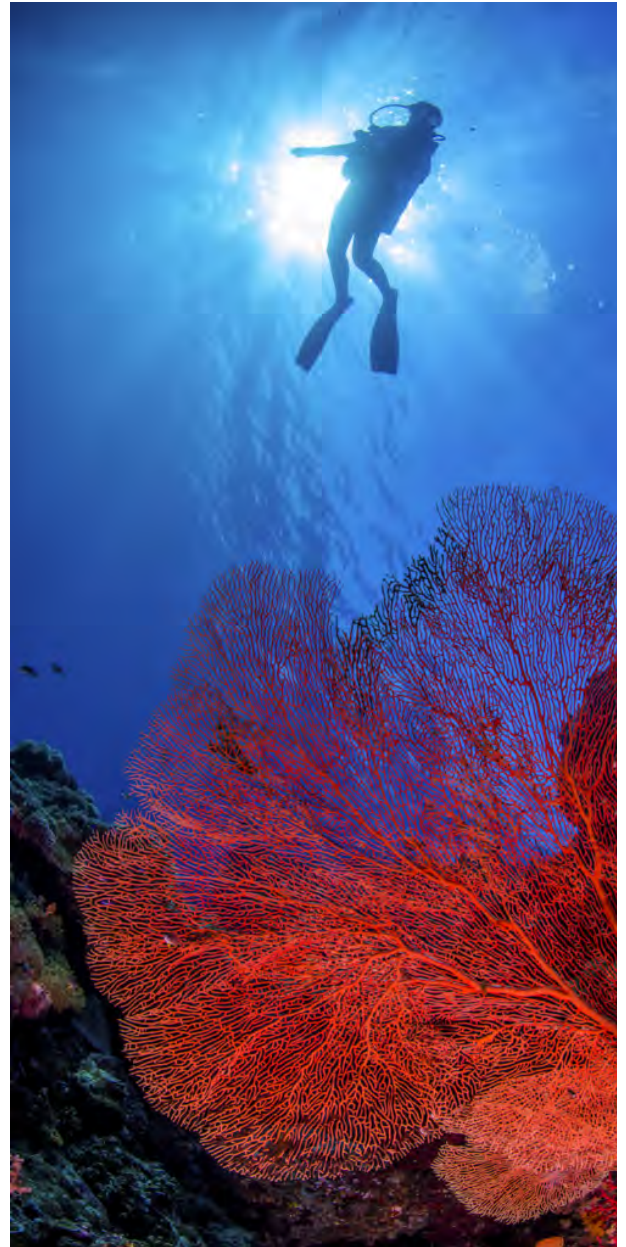
If you're interested in joining our work on the Milne Bay Epaulette or just want to learn more about sharks and rays, join up for one of the volunteer programs open for 2021. Or if you just want to follow our progress and keep up to date, check out [@the_walking_shark_project](https://www.instagram.com/the_walking_shark_project) on Instagram.

MISSION BLUE HOPE SPOT

THE CONFLICT ISLANDS' HOPE SPOT CELEBRATES
EXTRAORDINARY CORAL REEFS AND LOCAL
CONSERVATION WORK.

Mission Blue a Sylvia Earle Alliance, works with independent groups, NGO's, Government and conservation organisations aiming to recognise places of extraordinary biodiversity and environmental significance.

In February 2020, The Conflict Islands were recognised as one of the world's *Hope Spots*. Hope Spots are special places that are critical to the health of the ocean — Earth's blue heart. Some Hope Spots are already formally protected, while others still need defined protection. Under Dr. Earle's leadership, the Mission Blue team has embarked on a series of expeditions to shed light on these vital ecosystems and ignite support to safeguard them as marine protected areas. This international accolade and recognition will go along way, towards helping us achieve one of our long term goals, outright protection of the Conflict Islands Atoll. We have already captured the attention of Governor of Port Moresby and The UN. See more <https://mission-blue.org/2020/01/conflict-islands-hope-spot-celebrates-extraordinary-coral-reefs-and-local-conservation-work/>



TAKE 3 + CICI

TAKE 3's STORY

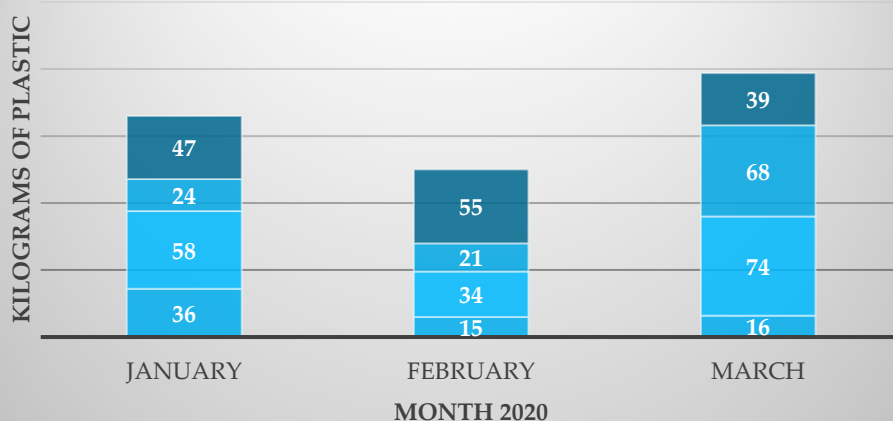


Wherever we are, we are connected to the sea. The ocean provides us with the oxygen we breathe and the climate that sustains us. We need a healthy ocean for our own survival. Plastic pollution is killing wildlife, devastating oceans and threatening the health of our planet. Plastic represents a disconnection. It's a material designed to last forever that we often use only once. Poorly managed plastic leaks into the sea. The ocean is downhill from everywhere. Through education that inspires participation, Take 3 is building a global movement of people who are connected to the planet. Join our movement today.

[#Take3ForTheSea](https://www.take3forthesea.org/)

Take 3 believes in simple actions to address complex problems. How can we stop plastic pollution from killing wildlife and suffocating our planet? In 2009, two friends set about answering this question. Marine ecologist, Roberta Dixon-Valk and youth educator, Amanda Marechal developed Take 3 – an idea where a simple action could produce profound consequences. Joining forces with environmentalist, Tim Silverwood, the trio publicly launched Take 3 as an organisation in 2010. Take 3

CICI'S PLASTIC COLLECTION



pieces of rubbish with you when you leave the beach, waterway or...anywhere, and you have made a difference. The Take 3 for the Sea movement was born.

CICI and Take 3 have formed a new partnership to tackle the plastic problem facing our oceans. We will strive to deliver new and innovative ways to deal with the hundreds of kilograms of plastic washing up on our shores weekly.

We look forward to working together.





MARTHA

cici conservation ranger

A Papua New Guinean National, Martha is a mix parentage of Milne Bay and East Sepik but was born and brought up in Milne Bay Province. Martha attended The University of Papua New Guinea and graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology. During my undergraduate studies I volunteered with a number of Non-Government Organisations such as the PNG Cancer Foundation and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of Papua New Guinea. Martha gained an interest in Turtle Conservation when she first Interned with the Conflict Islands Conservation Initiative in 2018 for the turtle tagging and turtle monitoring

Martha is a certified Scuba Diver doing all her training with CICI here on the Conflict Islands. Martha was a great addition to our Conservation Ranger team for our 2019-2020 turtle season. Having a powerful woman leading the way was key to our most successful season so far.

“I grew up along the coastal areas in my home province of Milne Bay so it was natural for me to develop an interest in ocean conservation. Seeing the diversity of life in marine ecosystems and the impacts of poaching and overfishing made me realise that we need to educate our people about the importance of marine ecosystems and how we can sustain these fragile ecosystems in the long run”





Climate
change is one
of the toughest
challenges the
world has ever
taken on.

Bill Gates

IMMIGRATIONmedia.com.au

COVID-19 IMPACTS

TIME TO REVIEW WILDLIFE CONSUMPTION

A temporary suspension of all volunteer programs will be in place until November.

CICI is in a permanent state of self-isolation due to our remote location out on the Conflict Islands (CI), which is 80nm away from our nearest “town” Alotau, being where we get our food and necessary supplies from. A blessing in disguise.

PNG has been declared a state of emergency since the 23rd of March and went to a full lock down for 14 days. Here at CICI we loaded up with supplies including medical and sanitary donations for the local island groups, with printed educational material about prevention and sanitation regarding COVID-19 for our local communities and headed out to CI.

We are closely monitoring the situation and are adhering to Governments and World Health Organisation guidelines on all aspects of safe working, quarantine and travelling. Our highest priority is the health and safety of our staff and communities.

As PNG has only 1 confirmed case which was removed from the country, its greatest challenge will be to prevent any further cases. We should all take a moment to reflect how we can impact on the recovery from this global pandemic and help to prevent such devastation occurring in the future. One huge step will be to **STOP** the consumption of wildlife including animals such as marine turtles. If wild animal consumption continues unabated, outbreaks like SARs and COVID-19 are likely the new norm.

We all must do what we can to find alternatives for people who rely on wild animals as a food source and educate and inform them of the risks. Alternate income, sustainable harvest and consumption, quality and relevant education programs are all essential to help mitigate future pandemics, such as the one we are facing today.

Rest assured CICI will be here for everyone on the other side of this.

INTO THE FUTURE

CICI has put a temporary suspension on all volunteer programs, at this stage until November when our Turtle season begins again. We are still taking bookings but are waiving the deposit fee until things become clearer for what the future will hold in terms of travel restrictions.

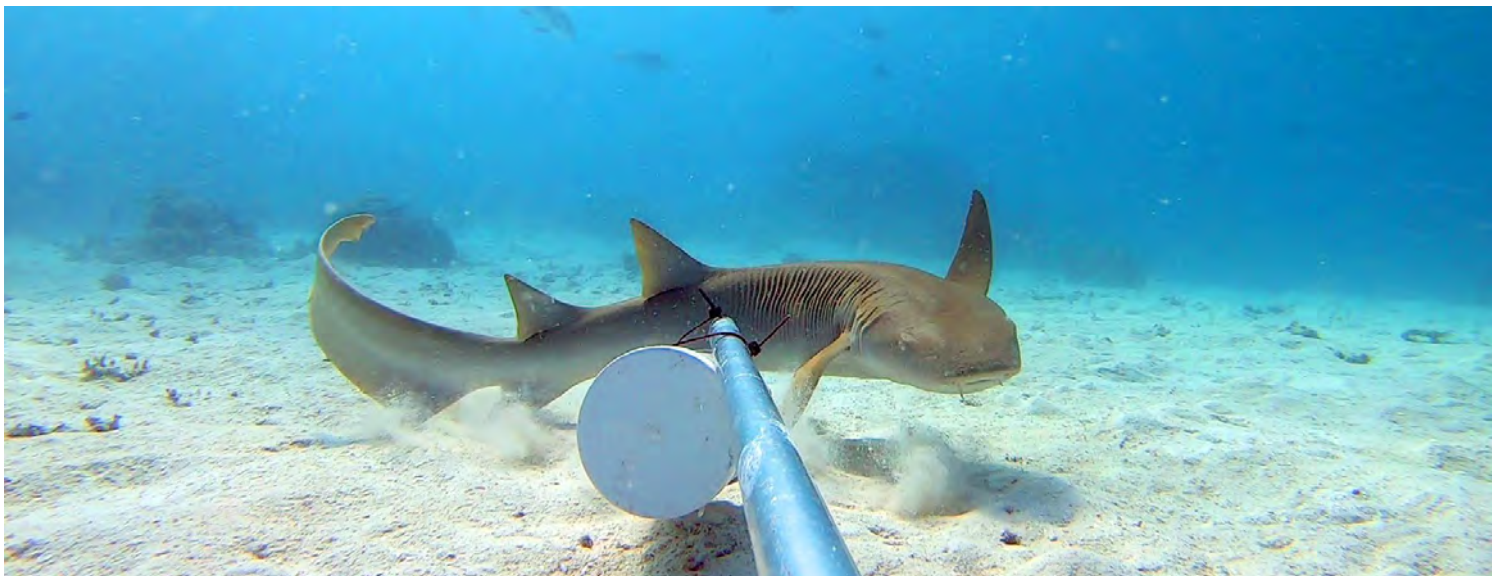
That does not mean the conservation work out here will stop. We are still going ahead with plans for our Coral Reef and Fish surveys, as well as doing detailed reviews of footage from our Shark and ray program and uploading all of our Turtle facial ID's to wildbook.org global database and our weekly plastic collection program will continue.

All this will be done, unfortunately without the help of our volunteers. Keep in touch and up to date with all CICI is doing by visiting our facebook page and insta feeds regularly. We will be continuing to post and keep you in the loop via our social media channels, to show you all what great things you can sign up to do when international travel once again opens up.

@cici_png_

www.facebook.com/cicipng

www.cici.net.au



CICI – Board of Directors

CHRISTINE MADEN HOF – AUSTRALIAN DIRECTOR



I'm an adventurous spirit with a goal to make a difference. As a marine scientist, I'm motivated to conserve and protect the greatest natural resource on Earth – our marine environment. It's not a job; it's a passion. I work with a diverse team – not just WWF staff but people on the ground. I specialise in threatened species conservation by bringing people together to research, manage and advocate for a healthier marine environment and to reverse the trajectory of turtle and dugong populations racing towards extinction. I try to communicate our conservation impact to bridge the gap between good science, people, and policy within the Great Barrier Reef, Coral Sea and at an international level. I've travelled extensively, researching dolphins and whales in the US, and Australia. Stemming from my background in coastal and marine planning and policy, I bring to WWF project management, research and monitoring skills, and the design of conservation and community-driven initiatives to hopefully make a greater conservation impact. If I'm motivating people to make a change then I'm doing my job, the work of WWF and other conservation movements – helping to save marine turtles and dugongs.

The important thing is that I know we're making a difference for our great-grandchildren so they have a healthy natural environment to depend on and the species and places we love to enjoy.



CHRIS BARTER - AUSTRALIAN DIRECTOR

Chris Barter is a Managing Director at King River Capital, a venture capital fund based in the US and Australia. He spent the first 19 years of his career at Goldman Sachs (1993-2012), based in Frankfurt, London and Moscow. From 2007 to 2012 he was the CEO of Russia and CIS responsible for the securities, investment banking and private equity investing activities. In that role, Mr. Barter built out the Firm's bank and broker-dealer operations and established many of its key business and political relationships. He also led many of Goldman Russia's landmark investments in the technology and financial services sectors. Prior to this role, Mr. Barter was co-Head of the European Financial Institutions Group in the Investment Banking Division. While in this role, he co-founded a fund management business which today commands a multi-billion dollar market valuation. He was named a Managing Director in 2000, made Partner in 2004, and served on the Firmwide Growth Markets Operating Committee.

Prior to co-founding King River Capital, Mr. Barter and partners launched two fund management platforms that collectively raised >US\$600M. Since leaving Goldman he has focused on deploying capital as a dedicated global venture capital investor. He has led investor syndicates in multi-stage software ventures via CKA Capital and other entities resulting in 28 early to mid-stage investments in verticals including Fintech, AI enabled businesses, Data Analytics and Digital healthcare. His portfolio includes a number of tech Unicorns (including companies like Flipkart, DiDi, Palantir, Wish, Ola, and Meituan). In this capacity, he has lent portfolio companies strategic support in the areas of business development, capital raising and market expansion strategy.

Mr. Barter has a long-term track record of building profitable businesses and generating strong portfolio returns. His global VC fund, founder and financial institution networks in Europe, the US and Australia have provided effective sourcing channels.

He serves on the boards of Ariadne Australia (listed investment manager), CNG Fuels (UK energy infrastructure), FinClear (Australian financial services), WarChild Australia, and on the advisory board of GreenSync (Australian energy SaaS). He also serves on the President's Leadership Council at Brown University.

Mr. Barter obtained a BSc in Physics from Brown University (1990) and an MSc in Physics from Harvard University (1993).



SANDRINA POSTORINO - AUSTRALIAN DIRECTOR

Sandrina is Managing Director of Crissan Property Pty Ltd, a property investment and development company operating in NSW and QLD, and Trinity Ventures, which invests in unlisted high-growth companies, focussing on Seed and Series A rounds. She started her career as a management consultant at the Boston Consulting Group and worked for a number of large Australian and international corporations, including Westpac, TABCORP and Macquarie Group in corporate strategy design and implementation.

Since 2015, Sandrina has been a committee member of Sydney Angels Inc., and she also serves on a number of Not-For-Profit boards, including Take 3 for the Sea, and the Rona Ellis Foundation. Sandrina has a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Wuerzburg in Germany and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Cornell University in the USA. She is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD). Sandrina is also a passionate scuba diver and ocean lover.



FIONA MCCUAIG - AUSTRALIAN DIRECTOR

Fiona has recently worked for the reputable Australian Marine Conservation Society in the campaign to establish a Marine Park for Sydney. She has worked in property development for twenty years, and always weaved in wildlife and marine conservation throughout this time. She spent seven months volunteering in Africa, America and Sri Lanka in wildlife rehabilitation, volunteered in the London, Beijing, Amsterdam and Taronga zoos and was head of the youth committee for the Foundation for the National Parks and Wildlife. Fiona was a full-time volunteer for

Sea Shepherd for two and a half years – she went on four dangerous campaigns including three anti-whaling campaigns in Antarctica and the Faroe Islands and volunteered in America doing television and radio media for the discovery channel called Whale Wars. Fiona has strong financial credentials and has operated several businesses. She will primarily work with Ian Gowrie-Smith on the financial management of the Conflicts Island Conservation Initiative to achieve the desired results.



SARAH BEARD - AUSTRALIAN DIRECTOR

Sarah is the newly appointed CEO of Take 3 for the Sea. Prior to this role, she has had a career spanning over 25 years' as a film and television producer delivering content to commercial clients, broadcasters and for feature release. Since 2012, Sarah has worked at Northern Pictures focusing her work on producing natural history series for international networks. As an ocean conservation advocate, marine themed stories have always been Sarah's

passion. Most recently Sarah co-produced and was the Impact Producer for the award-winning ocean conservation documentary BLUE. BLUE has been called one of the most significant environmental films of our time. Aligning with Blue's theatrical release in 2017, Sarah developed and implemented a 3-year multi-faceted impact campaign, working with over 65 partners from the not-for-profit, education, government, philanthropic and private sectors in Australia, the Pacific Region, Europe and Nth America. The BLUE education curricula have been used by over half a million Australian school children and the film and its outreach won the Banksia Foundation sustainability media award for its contribution to the UN sustainability goals. As a result of Sarah's work with Blue she has extensive experience in delivering, measuring and reporting on impactful campaigns. Sarah's work with Take3 for the Sea, began in 2014 when she launched and managed youth programs. She served on the board as a Director for three years.



IAN GOWRIE-SMITH

CEO and Atoll Custodian

The Conflict Islands are privately owned by British-based Australian, Ian Gowrie-Smith and his family. They are part of an elaborate plan to create a legacy of protected wilderness' around the world. With internationally renowned success as a global entrepreneur, Ian Gowrie-Smith is passionately dedicated to ensuring the centuries' long protection of the Conflict Islands.

Hayley Versace - Project Manager



Conservation and the beauty of the underwater world has been the driving force behind Hayley in all of her endeavours. Since graduating high school and going to James Cook University to study marine biology and zoology her life has revolved around the oceans.

Working for 13 years as a dive guide, skipper and marine biologist in various locations around the world, from humpback whales in Tonga to whale sharks in Tofo, Mozambique and the macro life of Sipadan marine park Hayley has been lucky in her life's marine encounters.

After starting and running her own successful underwater production company with her husband Ed, Migration Media- Underwater Imaging for 5 years on the Ningaloo reef it was time for a change and to start giving back to the oceans who had supported her through out her career.

Given the opportunity to start and develop The Conflict Island's Conservation Initiative in a remote area of the world like Papua New Guinea, with the full support of IGS, where she had worked in previous years was an opportunity too good to be true. Already having witnessed the devastating effects outside influences and environmental pressures have in this area the understanding of what was needed to be accomplished was clear.

Vision and purpose

- To protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment, habitats and species of the Coral Sea with a particular emphasis on the area within and around the Conflict Islands region of Papua New Guinea (PNG), and the roles this region plays in its connectedness to the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) through our joint sharing of the Coral Sea, and
- To conduct research and education about the natural environment around the Conflict Islands and its connectedness through migratory marine species to the Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea.
- The conservation of endangered marine turtles, sharks and rays in the North Coral Sea, many of which are common and in some cases migratory between PNG and the GBR;
- The conservation of coral reef habitat that are common to and have connectivity between PNG and the GBR;
- The encouragement of marine biodiversity through the Coral Sea and in particular the potential to seed the northern reaches of the GBR from the Conflict Islands by protecting them;
- Education, awareness, empowerment and training of local communities to protect their natural environments, including through beach clean-ups and the prevention of rubbish, particularly plastics, being disposed of in the ocean;
- Implementation of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAS's), within the Coral Sea and the waters of Milne Bay
- In line with the goals of the 2017 Commonwealth Blue Charter, the Blue Economy and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), to work with local land and sea owners and the Governments of PNG and Australia for the sustainable use of ocean resources, whilst preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem.

Our goals call for sustainable ecological and economic conservation and management arising from a concerted and passionate effort from all our affiliates and partners. We work in partnership with a local PNG company, The Coral Islands (TCI), on the delivery of the conservation and education initiatives in the Conflict Islands. CICI plans to become a world-renowned conservation organisation by establishing itself as a registered charity and registered environmental organisation.

Turtle Adoption News

Thank you all for your adoptions

Kim Crilly

Anne Chandler

Marlene Constable

Michie Vinje

Sophie Pennefather

Janice Ferret

Kerry Mason

Rob Elliott

Marilyn Kaitler

Caroline Smith

Patricia Moran

Bill Wielinga

Ray and Cherril

Sheehan

Sally Smart

Gail Mulligan

David & Zorka Phillis

Kay Harris

Susan Smith

Michelle Steele

Joel Robinson

Diane Malone

Donna Rocka

Gordon Morey

Margaret West

Christine Scott

Tracy Maythers

Mikayla Ward

Samuel Jones

Rebecca Dunk

Erica Chambers

Michele Roberts

Lucas Greene

Angela Nutt

Oliver Collins

Sage Goes

Paul Hay

Taylah Duck

Carrol Hanley

Marc Poulus

Janet Wojtylak

Saxon Grimsey

Lucy Clifford

Corey Barker

Vicki Miller

Savannah Pace

Aiden and Evie Rankine

Kristi Beams

Kellie Thomas

Allan Moore

Claire Howarth

Wanda Huggins

Jessica Dobbs

Jessica Dobbs

Melissa McNeice

Greg Wreford

Lyn & Brian Earle

Leanne Costello

Jade Fiscalini

Karen Pitson

Joanne Casey

Madden Pickett

Nikki Bertram

Samantha Jones

Deb Edwards

Bella & Corbin

O'Conner

These turtles were released on the 29th of March <https://www.cici.net.au/cruise-adoptions>

Roki

AMC

Jodie-Lee

Del Mar

pip

Pop

Akira

K M

Isla

Paddy Percy

Tina

Yoyo

Caspian

Baby Sheehan

Rubi

gohgoh

INDIANA

Bevan

juliet

Squirtle

Robbo

Gunna

Hoppy

Shelby

Rami

Tik tak

Flip

Gilbert

Dude

Dunky

Kit Kat

Tilly

Terry

Lachie

Oli

Billie

paul

Sybie

Bebe

Ru

Poppy

Saxon

Lucy

Bob

Vix

Waltall

Waltall

Kristi

Thommo # 9

Arnie

Caretta

Elias

Ethan Jr

Bede

Roxy

RooMoo

Ava-Lulu

SAM

Snaps

THAGI

Mia-Moo

Madden

jax

Petal

Jones

Henry

Celestial

Nebula

Alexis

Tiny