



INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE GREEN SEA TURTLE

Their name refers to the green fat found

- beneath their shell, which ranges in color
- from olive to black.

Green Sea Turtles may live up to 80 years in the wild. They migrate distances of up to 1600 miles (2575 km) and depend on sandy beaches for nesting.

Located 33 miles north of Tahiti, Tetiaroa consists of a ring of 12 islets surrounding a turquoise lagoon. One of the islets, known as "Bird Island," is classified as an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International. The atoll is recognized as a Hope Spot and is considered one of the most pristine marine environments in the South Pacific due to limited human activity.

WHY IS TETIAROA ATOLL IMPORTANT?

- Home to healthy and ecologically important coral reefs.
- The largest nesting site for Green Sea Turtles in the Windward Society Islands.
- One of the most important seabird breeding sites in all of French Polynesia



TETIAROA ATOLL French Polynesia

THE PROBLEM

Islands represent a disproportionate amount of plant and animal diversity for their size and are the epicenter of the extinction crisis, with invasive species now the primary threat. Tetiaroa supports thousands of nesting seabirds, including four IUCN locally threatened species making it one of the key seabird breeding sites within French Polynesia. The atoll is also a major nesting site for Green Sea Turtles.

The presence of two invasive rat species threatens the atoll's flora and fauna. Rats feed on the seeds and seedlings of native vegetation and prey on nesting seabirds, Green Sea Turtles hatchlings, and land crabs. The once-thriving seabird population has been significantly reduced by rat predation, impacting both terrestrial and marine ecosystems due to decreased nutrient inputs through guano.

Near-pristine coral reef.

THE SOLUTION

Following the successful removal of invasive rats from Tetiaroa's Reiono Island in 2018, Tetiaroa Society, Island Conservation, and partners are now working together to remove invasive rats from the entire atoll to secure habitat for native birds and Green Sea Turtles. The partners are also researching the effects of invasive rat removal on Tetiaroa's terrestrial and marine environments to inform coral reef conservation efforts that may be underinvesting in island restoration as a conservation tool



TETIARIOA ATOLL SUPPORTS

Potential site for translocation of endangered, endemic birds.

THE RESULTS

Restoring balance for terrestrial ecosystems will protect endangered native birds and turtles and enhance the resilience of surrounding coral reefs, making them more resistant to the impacts of climate change. Additionally, restoration is expected to benefit reef fish populations, ensuring food security for local peoples who are intimately connected to healthy coral reefs both economically and culturally. Removing rats also eliminates reservoirs and vectors of several human diseases bringing significant benefits for island communities.



A stable population of locally threatened Coconut Crab.

PROJECT STATUS

Baseline monitoring of native species is underway while the partners are seeking the funding necessary to support the removal of invasive rats and the collection and analysis of data. Tetiaroa Society, Island Conservation, and our partners hope to implement the project over 2020 and 2021



