

ists who are more selective in terms of required comfort and are better served by multinational tour operators. Local owners cannot compete with foreign-run companies. Of the \$418 million generated by tourism annually, only \$63 million enters the local economy. And of the 80 tourism boats allowed to operate in the Galápagos, only about 40% are owned by locals.

The Galápagos Conservancy, which supports preservation and research in the Galápagos, states that the islands have become "Disneyfied" and tourists who arrive on big boats that sit in the port neither stay in locally-owned hotels nor do eat in the local restaurants. And, the huge success of the travel business in the Galápagos draws mainland Ecuadoreans to move there with the hope of getting a share of the tourist money. So newcomers flock to the islands, putting pressure on natural resources and introducing invasive species. The Galápagos now has 748 species of introduced plants compared with 500 species of native plants, many of which have the potential to cause severe impacts to native biodiversity. The Ecuadorean government, conservation groups, and other organizations are working to develop a new sustainable plan for the Galápagos Islands. No one wants to dissuade tourists, but they wish that visitors would stay longer and spend money at local companies or those that are trying to benefit the local economy.

NY Times, 27 January 2008, by Jennifer Conlin

[Ed.: Does anyone see a parallel here to what is happening on Easter Island?]

HAWAI'I

MORE THAN 200 ACRES OF LAND that once belonged to the Kingdom of Hawai'i before the United States took control a century ago will be returned to Native Hawaiians, according to terms of a \$200 million settlement. The agreement, still to be approved by the Legislature, intends to end a long-running dispute over ceded lands, including about 80 acres of resort area on Banyon Drive in Hilo, currently occupied by hotels and a golf course. In January, State leaders raised questions about the settlement, predicting that it would not be favored by native Hawaiians. Former Governor Ben Cayetano said the offer he previously made was a better deal for native Hawaiians: "In 1999, we offered Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) \$251 million plus 20% of the ceded lands ... which I estimated at 365,000 acres." The current proposed settlement would resolve the OHA claims to the former Hawaiian monarchy lands used by the state by promising that the state would give OHA \$15.1 million a year, plus nearly \$200 million worth of state property including the resort property in Hilo, and portions of Kakaako and Kalaeloa. Cayetano said his offer was more generous, but it called for an agreement that OHA would not sue the state for future claims. "I insisted on a global settlement because I wanted to protect the state from more lawsuits," Cayetano said, adding that OHA trustees were dismissive of the im-

pact on the state, arrogant and greedy. Cayetano halted negotiations with OHA and talks stalled for nine years. Cayetano said although money and land was transferred from the state to OHA, it still belongs to the state. "I think people should remember that OHA is a state agency. Whatever OHA gets ... is still state property. For obvious political reasons, there is literally no oversight from either the Legislature or governor on how OHA spends its money;" and, "The Legislature and governor should hold OHA accountable for its fiscal decisions..." said the former governor. The sovereignty question makes a decision on whether the Legislature should approve the OHA settlement even more complex, because a future native Hawaiian government still could sue to get control of state lands.

Honolulu Star-Bulletin, January 2008, Richard Borreca

WHAT'S NEW ELSEWHERE

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART has announced the opening of new permanent galleries, The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing for the Art of Oceania and the Art of Native North America. The Museum's galleries for Oceanic art have been redesigned and reinstalled. The Pacific galleries present a larger portion of the Museum's holdings than previously and feature masterworks from the permanent collection as well as recent acquisitions and display sculpture and decorative arts from Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia, Australia and Island Southeast Asia.

PARIS AUCTION. In June 2007, Christie's auction in Paris had many ethnographic objects on sale, mostly from Africa. However, there was one item from Rapa Nui: a *kava kava* woodcarving. It was described as dating from the seventeenth century (but how that was ascertained was not made clear). Apparently its authenticity was not in doubt, because it sold for 280,000 Euros, which works out to \$395,000! (*Thanks to Herbert von Saher for this bit of news!*)

WHAT'S NEW IN HANGAROA

THE ISLAND'S NEW AND FANCY – and very expensive new Explora hotel, Posada Mike Rapu, is getting a lot of copy in upscale travel magazines as THE place to go. All the writers who plug the Chilean-owned chain seem to overlook the fact that the money goes off-island to the Chilean firm whereas, if tourists patronize hotels owned and run by Rapanui islanders, then the money stays on island and benefits the locals. And, the experience of staying with a local family or small hotel is totally different from that of an expensive chain that may provide luxuries but not the experience of getting to know the Rapanui people themselves.

The author cites Edgard Hereveri, president of the Chamber of Tourism, who wants to take pressure off the archaeological sites and develop other attractions, including fishing, surfing and boat trips to the newly-created marine reserve. And, he mentions that, although Hereveri

welcomes Explora, he is concerned about the effects of the new hotel. "It's the first," he says. "The gate is open. We're facing pressure for more development from outside investors." Plans for *three new hotels* with non-island owners are in the works, including one on the empty north coast!! [Ovahe? 'Anakena? La Pérouse?]

With tourism rising by 20% each year, Hereverí wants the Chilean Government to stop treating Rapa Nui like "a golden credit card" and establish laws to protect its traditions and culture: "The island has collapsed once before from too many people. We need infrastructure and regulations to cope with the effects of foreign investment. Rapa Nui needs control. Lose it and we become just another Tahiti or Hawaii."

Ian Belcher, TimesOnline, 2 February 2008

A FINNISH TOURIST WAS ARRESTED after breaking off a piece of a statue's ear at Ahu Nau Nau, 'Anakena. Marko Kulju, 26, a tourist from Finland, was fined US \$15,750 and banned from the island for three years. A Rapanui woman told authorities she witnessed the theft March 26th at 'Anakena beach when she saw Kulju break off the end of an earlobe from one of Ahu Nau Nau's statues and flee from the scene. Although he got away, she was able to describe him to the police who later identified him by the distinctive tattoos on his body. (Moral; if you have tattoos and commit a crime, wear a shirt). Islanders (and others) were outraged, and conservators from Santiago have flown to the island see what can be done to mitigate the damage. Repairs are likely to be expensive. Hangaroa's outspoken mayor, Petero Edmunds, suggested that the punishment fit the crime: Cut off one of Kulju's ears! A contrite Kulju whined that he just "wanted a souvenir."

A TRAGIC ACCIDENT involving Rapanui fishermen has been reported from the island. Four men who were fishing off Hanga Nui (the bay near Tongariki) were struck by a large "rogue wave" that capsized their fishing boat. One man, Jorge Tepihi, died when he was dashed against the rocks. The other three were saved by fellow fishermen, but they were badly injured from being battered upon the rocks of the shoreline.

SIGNS OF LA NIÑA ARE EVIDENT in the unusual weather patterns on Rapa Nui: 2007 was one of the wettest winters that most can recall. But then, from November to March, little rain fell. The long dry spell brought a new problem in the form of insects, new to the island, which seem to have arrived with shipments of fresh produce. These are *Homoladisca coagulate* (glassy-winged sharpshooters), nasty bugs that suck the moisture from leaves, killing the plants. There is now a quarantine on all plants coming to or leaving from the island. Should these insects make their way to Chile, they could do extensive damage to the grape industry. CONAF and SAG are hoping to identify ways of getting rid of the hungry pests. Now that the rains have returned to Rapa Nui, plants and trees again are flourishing

and Rano Kau's lake, unusually full, has *Scirpus* reeds more than four meters high (12 feet!!) growing around the edges and extending into the middle of the lake's mat surfaces. (Thanks to Candace Gossen for this island update).

A FIRE IN JANUARY surrounded the satellite station at the base of Rano Kau, causing a 24-hour blackout of transmissions.



A LARGE RECTANGULAR water catchment, 3 x 5 meters, and constructed of beautifully dressed *paenga*, was discovered by Rapanui archaeologist, Sonia Haoa, and excavated by the German Institute of Archaeology under the direction of Burkard Vogt. The *puna*, as it is called, is at the end of an arroyo leading down from Rano Aroi toward Akahanga. Nearby was a small *ahu* and a 2 meter *moai*. This new find is evidence of the intensity of food production that included control and distribution of water, a critical resource. The *puna* is at the end of a narrow section of a former creek and about 500 m above the road to 'Anakena. (Thanks to José Miguel Ramírez for the news; photo credit: Melinka Cuadros H.). On April 6th, news from the land stated that two Rapanui men had vandalized the site; they claimed they were digging for water for their horses, but when apprehended they had dug into some prehistoric artifacts.

EXCAVATION of the site where the *puna* (water catchment) was found also revealed the ruins of a small *ahu*, Nua Nua Mea, and a *moai*. The statue's eyes were not "opened" so we assume it had not been placed on its platform.

Photo by
Melinka Cuadros H.

