

# FINAL REPORT

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<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b>	Communications Trainings to Enhance Marine Protected Area Network Development and Effectiveness in Fiji and Papua New Guinea
<b>AWARD PACKAGE:</b>	NA07NOS4630015
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## I. OVERVIEW AND PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The long-term goal of SeaWeb’s Asia Pacific Program is to foster the development of strong ocean protection measures through activities designed to increase the visibility and relevance of ocean conservation issues in influential arenas including community leaders, government officials, legislators, NGO directors and the media. Most ocean conservation groups are primarily focused on scientific outputs and policy objectives. However, few fill the critical need of communicating that information effectively to key stakeholders and thus creating an environment where ocean protection is prioritized.

SeaWeb, as a communications-based nonprofit organization that uses social marketing techniques to advance ocean conservation, is uniquely positioned to fill this gap. SeaWeb raises public awareness, advances science-based solutions and mobilizes decision-makers around ocean conservation as part of its core activities. This approach works particularly well for our Asia Pacific program as it supports the community-based Marine Protected Area networks in Fiji and Papua New Guinea (PNG), widely recognized as the strongest method of marine resource management in that part of the world. SeaWeb works specifically with the Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) network in Fiji and PNG to promote their existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and to create a climate for more, well-managed marine sites in the future.

A critical part of our formula involves improving the communication skills of local conservationists, scientists and community leaders and empowering them to spread the message of ocean conservation. These local voices – including traditional chiefs – are often most effective at elevating ocean issues in the Pacific Islands. Indeed, in Islands where community-based management is the most successful model, local leadership of conservation is critical. We also engage local journalists to increase the quality and quantity of media coverage of relevant ocean issues. As we increase the quantity of ocean champions who are able to engage key stakeholders and decision-makers and also elevate public discussion of issues through the media, the net result is an increase in the level of action and impact on ocean issues in Fiji, PNG and, increasingly, in the region.

In October of 2007, SeaWeb received funding from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to create a climate for ocean conservation in Fiji and PNG that fosters the development and effectiveness of MPAs. As outlined in our original proposal, those activities center on three key high-yield

objectives:

1. To increase the number and volume of Pacific Island voices that are trained and willing to engage external audiences to increase support for MPA networks;
2. To supply local stakeholders and decision-makers with information and motivation to create MPA networks; and
3. To help the regional media to understand and prioritize MPA networks and ocean issues by fostering lasting, institutional changes that improve interaction and communication between the scientific and media communities in Fiji and PNG.

It is important to note that SeaWeb's model of strategic communications encompasses far more than what is typically conceptualized as 'communication.' In our work, we capitalize on strategic combinations of social marketing, public relations, scientific expertise and grassroots constituency-building to foster change. Our work directly benefits LMMA experts as well as other ocean experts, who in turn build stronger support for their work among the communities connected to their programs. Community leaders benefit from increased visibility and community support, which further acts as effective encouragement for them to fulfill and expand their existing commitments to marine protection. Local journalists benefit by being offered story leads and knowledgeable sources.

A key component of our approach is our reliance upon local staff members. SeaWeb has been working in the Asia-Pacific region for eight years and this grant builds upon the experience and infrastructure we have developed in this time. Specifically, our work represents SeaWeb strategies that have been adapted by our local program staff to best fit the cultural and regional landscape of the Pacific.

As we complete our final report on Grant No. NA07NOS4630015, it is gratifying to see the cumulative impact of our efforts and the groundwork that has been laid for continued growth and success of ocean conservation and MPA work in Fiji and PNG.

## II. RESULTS/OUTCOMES

NOAA's support of SeaWeb activities has resulted in an improved climate for ocean protection in both Fiji and PNG, while markedly increasing strategic communications activities on the ground, all of which have resulted in real and lasting positive changes. Please note NOAA specifically funded the communication trainings that we offered. These trainings are the foundation of our program. But to get a full understanding of their value, it is important to understand how that activity is leveraged across our program. Here is a closer look at our communications trainings and the overall impact of our program through the lens of our three core objectives.

### A. DEVELOPING SKILLFUL COMMUNICATORS: BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR OCEAN CONSERVATION

Our accomplishments center on our communications trainings for FLMMA members (both experts and community leaders). By developing participants' communications skills, we help them build stakeholder support for conservation in communities. We then connect community leaders and scientists with members of the media so their new-found skills can be further utilized and their voices heard by wider audiences. We've discovered that the challenge in enhancing ocean conservation is often not a lack of scientific information, but rather a lack of local buy-in and political will. Our process helps address this problem by working with leaders to build support in the community for conservation work and also creating momentum for change at higher policy levels. We are pleased to report that our four planned training workshops were

highly successful in empowering new voices for conservation. In addition to these group trainings, we provide one-on-one follow up to participants and also train people individually who could not be reached through our scheduled workshops.

This effort has, without question, fulfilled our desired outcome of creating a cadre of strong ocean communicators who can use their skills to help mobilize stakeholders and encourage legislators to make ocean conservation a priority. Our partners have become more attuned to the need to understand their audiences and properly craft messages that engage their value systems. Our partners are also utilizing the power of media to advance their cause. Indeed, LMMA members are becoming powerful spokespeople for conservation as well as advocates for utilizing strategic communications to improve conservation outcomes. Our communication efforts have also helped make the LMMA network more cohesive and effective by providing a platform to work together.

Perhaps this outcome is best demonstrated by reports we have received from our partners, such as Ron Vave, from the Institute of Applied Science at the University of the South Pacific. Vave reports that communities have begun to discuss, and in some cases establish, MPAs even before the conservation community arrives. This is due, in large part, to the increased media coverage and compelling discussion of MPA success in Fiji. Indeed, Fiji can now boast well over 200 MPA sites and is a regional leader in community-based conservation. In PNG, where the network is considerably younger and smaller (20 sites), the work has begun to gain momentum and conservationists there have taken a critical step forward in creating a locally-grown NGO to guide the network. But those numbers don't tell the entire story. The success of these sites is contingent upon sustained community interest as well as a sustained public dialogue, both in the communities and at higher government levels. To that end, working with SeaWeb, LMMA experts and community leaders are engaging in more and more communication work.

In that vein, SeaWeb, as an advisor to the FLMMA communications committee, has also helped network members pursue more sophisticated outreach programs. For example, Wildlife Conservation Society in Fiji sought out our help to develop a communications plan for its Ecosystem Based Management work. We also helped the FLMMA communications committee draft a strategic communications plan for the next three years. As part of that plan, SeaWeb has helped FLMMA launch a television series on community-based management. In PNG, the new LMMA NGO, the Center for Locally-Managed Areas, recognizes that critical component of communications is the success of community-based conservation and SeaWeb is a key partner in developing its strategic communication plan. We have also been invited to help plan EBM outreach in Manus where several NGOs are working on a regional planning initiative. If our progress is to be sustainable, these sorts of outcomes must be our ultimate goal.

Our communication activity in Fiji and PNG has been so successful that it has become an example for other LMMA countries and we are pleased to report that LMMA leadership has asked for SeaWeb help in exporting our model to other countries. Thanks to the NOAA's support, our work in Fiji and PNG has the potential to create a model for capacity development and outreach throughout the Asia Pacific region. Indeed, that conversion to the power of strategic communications is a major accomplishment and bodes well for more sophisticated and coordinated communications activity in Fiji and PNG, with the guidance of SeaWeb staff and the manpower of the NGO community.

## **B. STORIES WITH IMPACT: CREATING MOMENTUM FOR MPA ADOPTION AND EFFECTIVENESS**

The media plays a central role in driving public awareness of critical issues and building momentum for action on ocean issues. For that reason, another core part of our program is directly engaging journalists. We do this through several touch points, including journalism fellowships, journalist field trips and a six-month marine science course for media. SeaWeb also conducts social networking events between media and scientists to continue to break down the communication barriers between the groups. In large part because of SeaWeb social "mixers" and other informal gatherings, NGOs and ocean experts have now established their

own relationships as reliable and trusted sources for media representatives.

Highlights from this reporting period also include the launch of a journalism fellowship program that brought media from PNG to Fiji MPA sites to meet with community leaders and scientists. The regional recognition of their work was a tremendous inspiration for Fiji's communities and regionally helped to foster Pacific Island ownership of marine conservation by elevating Island success in conservation and creating a dialogue between Island nations on marine issues. We sponsored a regional journalist program to the 8<sup>th</sup> Pacific Island Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in PNG, ensuring important and robust media coverage. We also held a media workshop in Port Moresby on covering the Coral Triangle Initiative. The one-day workshop was held in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and the PNG government.

Other key events include a media field trip to Kadavu, the fourth largest Island in Fiji, where journalists toured MPA sites and met with community members to discuss the challenges and benefits of marine resource management. Our experience shows that direct exposure to issues has tremendous impact on journalists, particularly in areas where limited newsroom budgets don't allow for travel. In addition to fellowships and fieldtrips, we conduct our Sea Series lectures, which serves as a 'crash course' in marine science for journalists. This six-month course helps newspaper, radio and television journalists become familiar with critical ocean issues facing Fiji and PNG communities. This course was also open to journalism students at the University of the South Pacific, Fiji Institute of Technology and University of Papua New Guinea.

A measure of our impact on these issues is increased and improved media coverage of ocean issues. Our activities have resulted in increased placement and prominence of ocean-science articles in major news outlets in Fiji. For this reporting period alone, SeaWeb Fiji garnered 630 print media stories; 195 of which were pitched and/or written by SeaWeb staff. In PNG, we 330 stories, 120 of which were pitched or facilitated by SeaWeb staff. While we cannot track radio coverage by story count, we can happily report more and more engagement and interest from radio outlets, which are arguably the most powerful means to communicate with rural audiences. We have also made inroads with television outlets. These gains represent not only the immediate gain of public attention, but institutional groundwork for continued coverage and an elevated level of discussion about MPAs and ocean conservation in the region.

Reporters are also becoming more informed about and interested in ocean science stories. One small, but illustrative, example involves the *Fiji Times*. Previously the *Times* reporter would rely on SeaWeb to write stories for Sunday's paper. Now, the reporter takes the initiative to find her own environmental stories, while relying on SeaWeb and other sources for story contacts and leads. We view this as an important signal that reporters are becoming more sensitized and aware of the ocean environment and its importance to their audience. Another concrete example of this is this past year's International Media Freedom Day theme. The PNG Media decided that Climate Change would be the theme for 2008. This is the first time that Media Freedom Day has opted for a conservation theme, and it goes to show that the media is taking conservation and environmental reporting seriously. Newspapers in PNG are constantly covering violence, poverty and HIV/AIDs, therefore it is notable that an environmental issue made it into the collective conscience of the media.

In addition, SeaWeb was instrumental in creating a one-hour broadcast special on Marine Protected Areas in Fiji. The special was the result of a communications-training workshop that SeaWeb conducted on Kadavu. The special, produced by Stanley Simpson, editor and producer for *Mai Life* media features, includes interviews with community leaders about ocean conservation issues. Due to the popularity of the show, it was run a second time. In PNG, a similar video was produced from the Fiji-PNG media fellowship by the nationally broadcast show *Tok Piksa*.

### C. INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE FOR LONG-TERM RESULTS

We continue to lay the framework for incorporating ocean conservation and science-focused journalism into the curriculum of higher learning institutions in the Asia Pacific region. As noted above, we run a six-month Sea Series for working journalists. We also invite students from the University of the South Pacific (USP), Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) and the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) to attend. Our goal is to expose the next generation of reporters to environmental journalism and to ensure they see pursuit of these stories as valuable and viable story pursuit. This is particularly important as media in Fiji and PNG have historically focused almost exclusively on government issues.

As a result of our efforts, USP is now offering an accredited course for journalism students built around our Sea Series lectures. This is a real milestone in our growing relationship with USP and is a concrete example of how our partnership will continue to grow. We are also in discussions with FIT to provide ocean science curriculum for their journalism students, which will likely occur over a week-long program. UPNG is very excited at the prospect of adding a credited journalism course and is currently considering how to formally incorporate it.

In addition to creating curricula for journalism students, we are also working with USP to add a strategic communications component to existing course work for conservation professionals. This curriculum has immense potential to impact how conservation is practiced in the Pacific Islands. We are targeting the summer programs for USP and UPNG. Given the success of the Sea Series, the opportunity to convert young, progressive Pacific Islanders to the power of strategic communications is enormously exciting and could exponentially increase the impact of our work.

## III. PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In brief, here are some SeaWeb's activities and accomplishments for this reporting period.

- Created and hosted four workshops and a series of networking events to build communication skills among community leaders and marine scientists and also network them with regional media.
- Completed one six-month Sea Series lecture program for local journalists in Fiji and began a second Sea Series lecture program.
- Conducted a weeklong journalism fellowship for journalists from throughout the region for the 8<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas.
- Launched a fellowship program that allowed PNG journalists to travel to MPA sites in Fiji.
- Led a Fiji media trip to Kadavu to give journalists a first-hand, in-depth understanding of community-based management successes and challenges.
- Enhanced our collaboration with regional universities to catalyze lasting, institutional change by creating curricula for journalism and conservation managers.
- In partnership with The Nature Conservancy and the PNG government, we organized a media workshop on the Coral Triangle Initiative in advance of a high-level, six-nation ministerial meeting in Port Moresby.
- Researched feasibility of expanding our ongoing journalist fellowship program for media from the Pacific Rim to visit LMMA sites in Fiji and PNG.
- Provided online resources, such as background on key issues and also key sources, to Pacific journalists and regional journalists who cover Pacific Island issues. We also provided a regionally focused ocean e-newsletter to 1,900 subscribers and assisted with the distribution of technical papers to lay audiences.
- Commenced a thorough program audit, which is expected to be completed in by July 2009, as a result of hiring a new Program Manager.

## IV. ACTIVITY FOCUS

### A. COMMUNITY TRAININGS

In the Pacific Islands – where bottom-up models are most effective -- community leaders are often the strongest voices for conservation. As a result of SeaWeb's workshops the strength and confidence of Pacific 'voices for conservation' continues to increase. In our communications training sessions, we work in small groups to help participants understand how to simplify messages and target specific audiences in outreach efforts. We also explain how the media works and offer suggestions on how to engage reporters and editors. Due to SeaWeb's media expertise, we often have working reporters on site during these trainings to help guide community leaders through the interview and pitching processes. The presence of media, who are simultaneously working on stories, is a great motivator for community leaders. An added benefit is that the stories these leaders have to tell about their work are both relevant and interesting to regional reporters. In addition, training and workshop participants often take back their newly learned skills to share with their peers in the form of presentations and written materials.

We conduct a separate but similar training to empower scientists and conservationists to build stronger support for effective marine resource management. The main difference between the two efforts centers on the formation of strategic communications plans, which are not necessarily appropriate at the community level.

Highlights during this reporting period we conducted four communications trainings: One training held in Suva in March 2008 for Fijian chiefs; One training in Port Moresby in April 2008 for PNG LMMA members; One for LMMA experts in July 2008 in Suva; and one training in Kadavu in September for community leaders.

In addition, in this past year, we made progress refining our outreach model. For instance, we have begun piloting an approach where we directly join NGOs in their outreach to communities, and we are pleased to report this practice shows great promise. In the past, we conducted our trainings separately from other NGOs. However, we recently joined Conservation International on a community training CI funded in Nagigi. In addition to providing communication training, our staffer Alumeci Nakeke used her media background to tell the story of conservation, not in scientific terms, but in human terms, using people's stories from around Fiji. The effect was enormously powerful and far more effective than the traditional emphasis on presenting scientific information to motivate change. This particular community, which had resisted MPAs for over ten years, began the process to designate an MPA after the conclusion of this powerful workshop.

This recent development could further help refine the process of community engagement by allowing us to work side-by-side with our partners to improve their approaches to outreach. We believe we can further leverage this success in Fiji and PNG by developing a communications guide for the Asia Pacific.

### B. SEAWEB'S SEA SERIES LECTURES: OCEAN SCIENCE FOR MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

SeaWeb offers media professionals the opportunity to enhance and further refine their ocean science reporting skills by hosting meetings with ocean experts on topics such as MPAs, coral reef communities, climate change and turtle conservation. We also focus on issues such as marine law reform and overfishing of specific species, such as beche-de-mer. The series includes six lectures, two per month, for a six-month period. We also take participants, when feasible, to visit communities and experience their issues first hand. Through Sea Series, working journalists and journalism students are afforded opportunities to develop contacts with scientists and community leaders. SeaWeb conducts social 'mixers' for journalists and science experts to provide opportunities to meet each other in social settings. This approach allows personal relationships to develop and allows some of the traditional 'walls' between the two professions to be broken

down. It is important to note that while this program is geared toward enhancing media capacity for coverage of ocean issues, it also provides an opportunity for marine experts to practice their communication and messaging skills.

This reporting period marks a completion of a Sea Series in Fiji and the beginning for our Sea Series lectures in Fiji and PNG. On April 24, eight Sea Series participants from Fiji graduated with a certificate of completion. We launched another Fiji Sea Series in March. Ten journalists and journalism students are currently enrolled in the course. In PNG, six journalists attended our first lecture for the second Sea Series in PNG in September.

In addition, we organized a successful media workshop on the Coral Triangle Initiative in advance of a Coral Triangle ministerial meeting in Port Moresby to discuss national plans of action. We held this one-day workshop in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, who approached us because of our success in hosting Sea Series lectures. This workshop was built on same format of our Sea Series.

### C. MEDIA FELLOWSHIPS

In October 2007, to ensure that the media covered the 8th Pacific Island Conference on Nature Conservation and

Protected Areas (PICNCPA) in Alotau town, Milne Bay Province, PNG, SeaWeb sponsored a journalist fellowship program for regional reporters to attend the event. A total of eight PNG journalists, three Fijian journalists and one Solomon Islands journalist participated in the program. Journalists interviewed international scientists, spoke with regional experts, attended briefings and joined in round-table discussions about marine conservation. This event provided a wonderful forum for ocean experts, NGOs and media professionals to connect and learn from one another about critical issues related to our ocean resources. More than 70 stories were filed as a result of participation in the conference and SeaWeb's training program.

In April 2008, SeaWeb undertook a journalist fellowship program focused on LMMAs, bringing a total of six Papua New Guinean journalists to tour marine protected areas in Fiji. The objective was to generate greater media awareness of this important management tool. For the majority of the PNG group, the trip to Fiji was immensely informative and eye-opening. Four of the attending journalists had never before visited Fiji and only two of the journalists had attended a SeaWeb sponsored event and were thus aware of LMMA/MPA issues. By visiting LMMA sites and hearing directly from the community leaders, these journalists were able to make connections between the Fiji LMMA sites and their own marine resources in PNG. Problems such as overfishing and destructive fishing methods, including blast fishing, were recurrent themes in their discussions.

The Fijians are well advanced in their LMMA program development and thus serve as an excellent example. Fiji has more than 200 LMMA sites, while PNG has approximately 20 sites that are recognized by the PNG LMMA Network. Therefore, awareness of MPAs and promotion of these concepts especially among media professionals has the potential to greatly advance the network's efforts and to encourage the creation of marine protected areas in PNG and elsewhere.

In September 2008, we led a journalist fieldtrip in Fiji to Cevai Village on the island of Kadavu. Kadavu is Fiji's fourth largest island and was selected both because of its success with MPAs and its desire to tell its story in the media. Seven journalists from radio, television and print attended. The fieldtrip coincided with communications training for the village leaders, which is a key motivator and relationship builder for both sides. The journalists enjoy the opportunity, in a non-aggressive manner, to discuss their craft while also gaining valuable information for their stories or segments. The village leaders are greatly motivated to learn new communication skills by the gain of immediate coverage. The other key gain is directly connecting

journalists with the subject matter in a personal way. In countries strapped with low-budget newsrooms, the direct experience of environmental challenges builds long-term interest in the issues.

#### **D. COLLABORATION WITH REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES**

As stated in the outcomes section, we are in discussions to design and take part in a communications curriculum in a course for conservation professionals at University of the South Pacific (USP) and University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). We are also in discussions with Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) to develop a science-based journalism curriculum that is appropriate for the program there. Last, we have solidified our Sea Series with the creation of an accredited course as part of the journalism program at USP.

In addition, Divine Word University (DWU) has indicated their willingness to have SeaWeb staff conduct workshops as part of communications courses or to utilize SeaWeb materials in current journalism courses.

#### **E. EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF AN EXPANDED JOURNALIST FELLOWSHIP**

To lay the groundwork for the possibility of an international journalist fellowship program, SeaWeb sent a research assistant, Melyssa Rubino, to Fiji and PNG in June and July 2008 to gather information about specific MPA sites. The aim of the site visits was to meet with local leaders and assess the feasibility of conducting a journalist fellowship program at eight sites in Fiji and four sites in PNG. Selected sites included Mali Island, Waitabu, Tavua Levu, Dravuvalu, Daku, Kadavu, Verata, and Mauivuso in Fiji, and Manus, Kavieng, Kimbe Bay and Madang in PNG. Each of these sites was selected based on the type of management underway and the environmental challenges facing these communities. As a result of this invaluable research, SeaWeb has concluded that these communities, in addition to numerous others, are eager and willing to host visits from international journalists through our fellowship program. Developing this fellowship program is a priority in the coming months.

#### **E. PROGRAM AUDIT**

In November, as we welcomed new leadership to guide SeaWeb's activities in Fiji and PNG, we embarked upon a thorough assessment of the Asia Pacific Program. This 'gap analysis' is based on a series of interviews with partners, experts and community leaders as well as a comprehensive audit of outputs and outcomes achieved in the eight years since SeaWeb began its work in the Pacific Islands. Factors under consideration include conservation objectives, geographic reach, human and financial resources, external partners and internal opportunities to leverage other programmatic work.

Our goal is to gain an even more informed basis from which to make future strategic and resource allocation decisions about SeaWeb's Asia Pacific program. We intend to gain a better understanding of SeaWeb's impact to date, how community and partner needs are evolving and, most importantly what modifications we can make to address these needs. The expectation that this milestone audit will be completed by July 2009 and will guide our program's future activities, which we hope to continue to conduct with the NOAA's support.

#### **F. TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES**

In addition to our training and networking activities, we have produced a variety of informational resources.

- We have updated our website, [www.seaweb.org/programs/asiapacific](http://www.seaweb.org/programs/asiapacific), and will be undergoing a full-redesign and additional updates this year.
- We have revised and updated our communications training press kits by including an informational DVD, a Science of Marine Reserves booklet, Media-Check List, SMART chart, and Message Box to help participants engage the media.
- On an as-needed basis, we collate and synthesize science information to support individual reporters. For example, we often complement a technical report with an explanation of the researcher's bottom line, any local implications, and how the findings fit into our understanding of the issue.
- SeaWeb distributes a e-news bulletin summarizing ocean news stories in the region to interested subscribers. Asia Pacific Ocean News allows us to share articles with regional journalists who do not

have easy access to a wide array of news feeds and sources. It can be found at <http://www.seaweb.org/secure/newsletter-asia-pacific.php>. In the six months, circulation of this listserv has increased by 19 percent; our current readership stands at more than 1,900.

## V. ADMINISTRATION

### A. STAFFING CHALLENGES

It is with great sadness that I report the death of one of staffers, Vasemaca Rarabici. Va had been suffering from illness and died in late December 2008. This was a major blow to our program as Va brought so much knowledge and passion to our program in Fiji and was highly regarded by many in the Fiji conservation community and the media. Va's colleague Alumecei Nakeke has admirably taken over the responsibilities in leading the Fiji office and we could not report more positively about her ability to meet this new challenge.

In addition to Va's passing, over the past year, we have experienced some staffing transitions. Patty Debenham and Liz Neeley left the program in early 2008. Over the summer, we completed an exhaustive recruitment for a new manager who will be based in Honolulu. We are pleased to announce that Scott Radway joined the SeaWeb team on Oct. 27, 2008. Radway is an award-winning science journalist who has worked and lived in the region for the previous seven years. He brings diverse experience in the Islands and already a strong network to build on.

We are confident that the appointment of a dedicated and seasoned full-time manager for the Asia Pacific program will bring greater opportunities for mentoring and development of our local staff. Scott will assist SeaWeb's senior management team in determining the immediate needs of the program as well as long-term strategies. Despite the tumultuous recent months, we continue to operate a strong program and anticipate entering our most stable period. We expect to hire a second staffer in Fiji and PNG in the upcoming months.

### B. FUNDRAISING

To support and expand the scope of our activities in the Western Pacific, SeaWeb continues to pursue additional funding opportunities beyond that received from NOAA.

- We have 12 months remaining in a three-year grant from the MacArthur Foundation. The \$225,000 grant supports our efforts to create a climate for ocean conservation in Fiji by sharing the stories and lessons learned in the FLMMA Network.
- We have received a renewal of an 18-month, \$400,000 grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to support our communications training activities and programs in Fiji and PNG.
- We received a one-year \$25,000 grant from the Natural Resources Council of America and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors to support our work in Fiji and PNG. This grant runs the 2009 calendar year.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Building on our previous work, SeaWeb has conducted a range of activities in Fiji and PNG. Our work is intended to improve local visibility of and support for ocean conservation. We have trained spokespeople, from scientists to community leaders, to present clear and compelling accounts of scientific research and broader ocean issues to a range of audiences. These communication skills, gained and enhanced through SeaWeb's efforts, have helped build the stakeholder base for ocean conservation in communities and increase media coverage. We have also worked to help journalists gain a fuller understanding of ocean issues so that our experts' messages are accurately conveyed and acted upon. We have brokered relationships between ocean conservation and media professionals to encourage close ties between these two communities, and we have provided a range of resources to support and inform all those involved.

SeaWeb's work has directly benefited LMMA members and other ocean experts who are working toward the

establishment of an increased number of MPAs. Our communication efforts help them build stronger support for their work among the communities connected to their programs. By offering local journalists story leads and introducing them to MPA experts and other authorities in the field of marine conservation, we have significantly increased the level of ocean-focused media coverage in the region. By serving as a resource for journalists, scientists, and community leaders, we have enhanced awareness of marine issues and, more importantly, instilled in many the knowledge that by doing their part, they can encourage others in the Asia Pacific region to fulfill and expand upon their existing commitments to marine protection.

As we move forward into our next year of activities, we are excited to build on all the good work to date and to further capitalize on the capacity that now exists in Fiji and PNG. The support of the NOAA has been invaluable to our efforts and we look forward to many more years of partnership ahead. As we complete our program audit, noted above, we look forward to discussing the path forward for SeaWeb's Asia Pacific program.

## APPENDIX A SAMPLE CLIPS FROM REGIONAL MEDIA

Feature

# Villages protect marine areas

By ASHWINI PRABHA

**T**HE people of the Nakavatu, Dreketi, Macuata, Sasa and Mali have in the past two years, implemented set actions for the use of their *iqitigoli* (fishing ground).

They have successfully set aside nine areas, totalling 117 square kilometres within the *iqitigoli* as *tabu* (marine protected area), for the purpose of restocking the *iqitigoli*.

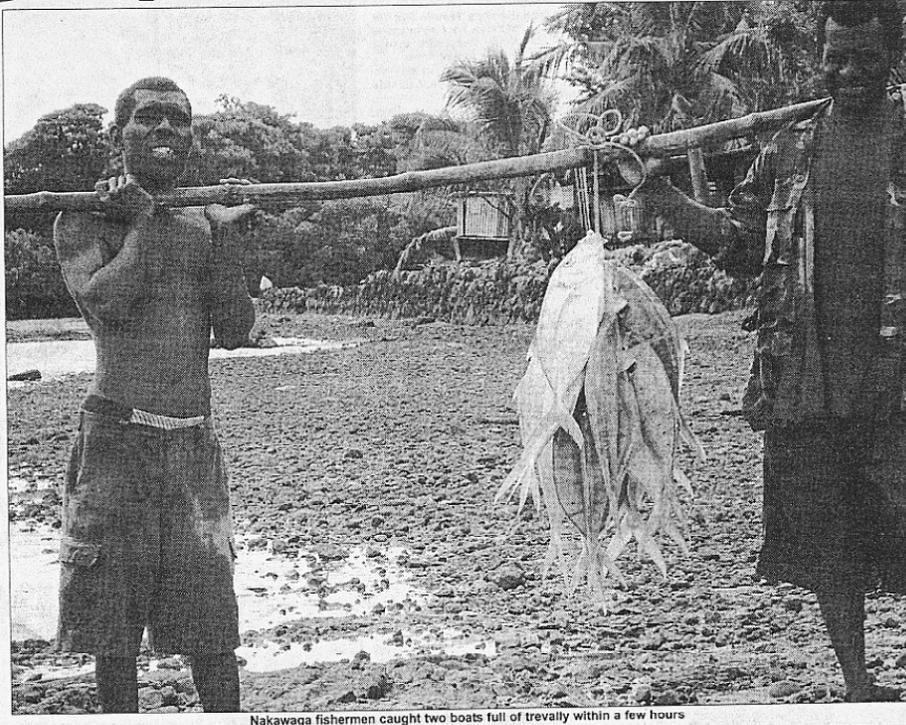
The people of the *Qoligoli* Cokovata are talking about larger fish caught near the shore as in the past and different types that had not been seen in recent years are surfacing again.

"This week we went out fishing everyday and came back with a full catch compared to few years ago when we would go out one day and have a good catch and the next three to four days we would hardly catch anything," said Emosi Baya, one of the *qoligoli* committee members from Nakawaga, Mali Island.

"These changes have increasingly attracted illegal fishers into the *iqitigoli* and the *tabu* areas," said Baya.

WWF (World Wildlife Fund) Fiji and partners (government, FLMA) are working with the Macuata communities by assisting in the development and implementation of resource management plans.

It is also educating and training the community to undertake activities outlined in their management plans, training fish wardens and building community capacity (through



Nakawaga fishermen caught two boats full of trevally within a few hours

household financial literacy training, community messaging, community biological and socio-economic surveys).

With WWF's support ending in three years, there is a commitment by WWF to assist the *qoliqoli* committee to secure funding with which the *qoliqoli* communities will continue to manage their *i qoliqoli*.

### Long term finance

A 12 month fundraising plan (May 2007 to June 2008), with four activities, targeting \$100,000, has been developed to generate funding for the management of the *i qoliqoli*, spearheaded by the *Qoliqoli* Cokovata management committee of the *vanua* of Nabekavu, Tikina Dreketi, Macuata, Sasa and Mali.

"A review of the 2004 management plan showed that the *qoliqoli* committee lacked dedicated funds or a plan to seek funds for the implementation of this plan which includes the actions by fish wardens in stemming illegal fishing," said Sanivalati Navuku, Project officers, WWF Fiji Programme.

The first fundraising event is the upcoming Great Sea Reefs (GSR) sevens rugby tournament, on November 9-10 at the Subrail Park, in Labasa. The tournament targets to raise \$15,000.

Ten top national teams will be invited to participate, with part of their travel and accommodation costs supported by the *qoliqoli* committee through sponsorship.

A total of 56 teams are expected to participate, including boys teams of 17, 16, 15, 12, 9. The inclusion of the boys team is expected to pull in parents and families to travel to the games venue in Labasa.

Mr Baya who is involved in the fundraiser said, "the GSR sevens is not just to raise money but will help *i qoliqoli* owners to come

Working to manage our *i qoliqoli* has brought many of us together, from the inland villages and coastal villages for the first time. Some of us are visiting some *i qoliqoli* in other villages for the first time as well.

EMOSI  
BAYA

together to work towards the protection of their natural resources. Working to manage our *i qoliqoli* has brought many of us together, from the inland villages and coastal villages for the first time. Some of us are visiting some *i qoliqoli* in other villages for the first time as well."

"When WWF started this project (MPA) in 2004, I was the only representative from the island of Mali.

"Today the number of representatives from Mali and other villagers has increased," he said.

"These efforts are helping re-establish our traditional links."

Other fundraising activities by the *qoliqoli* committee includes inviting 50 selected people in Fiji to become honorary *qoliqoli* owners, targeting \$9000, connecting *qoliqoli* members living outside of Fiji, targeting \$10,000 and vil-

lage based fundraising and dinner by invitation, targeting \$42,000.

"Effort is being made to increase the communities' involvement and participation in the management of their resources. The communities need to take ownership in protecting their natural resources starting with MPA projects," said Sanivalati Navuku, Project officer, WWF Fiji.

Fiji's precious marine ecosystem is under attack from overfishing, unsustainable and destructive harvesting of live coral and exotic fish for aquarium, and increasing levels of pollution. Climate change is also playing its part in the degradation of the marine environment.

In November 2005, seven chiefs of the province of Macuata launched the first of the country's networks of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) on the Great Sea Reef, the third largest barrier reef in the world.

This came about as a result of the Great Sea Reef survey, a first in the area, conducted in 2004 with the support of WWF and partners, which highlighted its unique biodiversity. WWF has witnessed the benefits of MPAs to biodiversity and marine resources and the people who rely on them around the world.

Hence it is supporting the Government and the people of Fiji in the development and implementation of its commitment to have 30 per cent of the country's EEZ under MPAs by 2020.

Together with FLMMA and other key organisations, WWF is facilitating policy dialogue, scientific research, community capacity building and financing.

■ Ashwini Prabha is the communications co-ordinator for the WWF Fiji Programme

# The importance of coral reefs to ecosystems

**Coral reefs in Papua New Guinea and throughout the Pacific islands are becoming over fished and degraded as communities turn to destructive methods of fishing. FRANCIS GABRIEL writes**

**I**MAGINE if plants and trees take a year to grow a centimetre or a millimetre, obviously, there would not be enough oxygen for everyone to survive on.

Well, for marine life, whose survival depends very much on coral reefs, may not be around for long to supplement our diet or meet our social and economical needs as that is how long it takes for corals to grow back when damaged.

Fast growing corals, however, take six to nine months to grow, according to one of Fiji's marine scientific officer Iliapi Tuwai.

Coral reefs in Papua New Guinea and throughout the Pacific islands are becoming over fished and degraded as communities turn to destructive methods of fishing such as fishing with poison ropes, dynamite and unsustainable practices such as coral harvesting to raise cash for their daily needs, especially in the making and selling of lime (kambang).

Marine resource depletion has negatively affected the health and the prosperity of island communities.

Coral reefs play a dominant role in the ecology and functioning of tropical ecosystems because they are highly productive and provide habitat and food for a complex array of marine life.

It was highlighted by Green Peace's Jenny Baing in one of the Sea series lectures conducted by SeaWeb and attended by journalists recently that coral reefs are the most diverse of all marine ecosystems, with estimates of reef species ranging from 600,000 to more than nine million species worldwide.

"Almost a third of the world's marine life species are found on coral reefs, where it plays a significant role in protecting small island states from storms, erosion and flooding."

Corals help plants on land to remove and recycle carbon dioxide. Excessive amounts of this gas contribute to global warming.

Reefs shelter land from harsh ocean storms and floods. They also provide resources for fisheries. Food items include fishes, crustaceans, and molluscs.

As an economic benefit, coral reefs attract tourists.

The coral reef is an intricate ecosystem and contains a diverse collection of organisms. Without the reef, these organisms would die as it provides biotic services, for example, habitat maintenance, biological support through mobile links, such as fish that move from mangroves in the juvenile stages to coral reefs in their adult life.

The coral reef provides a living laboratory as it provides information services such as climate record. Both students



Undamaged coral reefs surrounded with marine life that depend on it.

and scientists can study the interrelationships of organisms and their environment.

It is very important to note that the growth rate of corals and coral reefs depends on factors such as light intensity, water temperature, salinity, turbidity, food availability, competition for space, and predation.

As supported by Seaworld Adventure, upward growth of coral colonies is generally between 0.5 to 4 inches (1-10cm) a year.

"Although various types of corals can be found from the water's surface to depths of 19,700ft (6,000m), reef-building corals are generally found at depths of less than 150ft (46m), where sunlight penetrates. Because reef-building corals have a symbiotic relationship with a type of microscopic algae, sunlight is necessary for these corals to thrive and grow."

Reefs tend to grow faster in clear water. Hence, if we pollute and make our seas mucky, then we are indirectly killing our coral reefs, eventually leading to the extinction of other marine life.

Ocean pollution poisons corals. Pollution takes on many forms including oil slicks, pesticides and other chemicals, heavy metals and garbage.

Fertilizer runoff and untreated sewage also adds to the pollution of coastal ecosystems. These elevated pollution levels promote algae growth. Unfortunately, high concentrations of algae or solid sewage can overwhelm and smother corals.

However, under normal conditions, herbivores fish and some invertebrates keep the algae population in check.

Deforestation degrades more than just land habitats. When tropical forests are cut down to clear land for agriculture, pasture, or homes, topsoil washes down rivers into coastal ecosystems. Soil that settles on reefs smothers corals and blocks out the sunlight needed for corals to live.

Coastal development and dredging ravages reefs, such development includes building seaside homes, hotels and harbours.

Careless handling of nets, lines and lobster traps also causes damages to reefs.

International seashell and aquarium trades have put a strain on coral reefs and reef inhabitants. Excessive collecting decimates reef species and has upset the balance of the reef ecosystems.

Careful monitoring of these trades will help make sure that the demand for reef species does not exceed the sustainable supply.

Souvenir trade has also created an international market for coral skeletons, shells, sponges, and other reef animals. Coral skeletons are used for decoration aquariums, or fashioned into jewelry and sculptures.

Careless water recreationist also damage reefs. Divers and snorklers that stand on, sit on, or handle corals can injure the delicate life forms.

Dropped boat anchors can

gouge reefs and crush corals. (Boaters should be very careful when navigating around coral reefs. Anchors should not be dropped directly on the reef, but on near-by sandy areas. Divers should rest by floating or standing on the sandy bottom. They should be very careful not to grab on to any coral formations.)

It is also understood that changes in sea level is detrimental to established corals and reefs.

A drop in sea level exposes corals. And a rise in sea level decreases the amount of available sunlight and may inhibit growth, and can also release pollutants trapped in soil.

Sometimes major tropical storms can strip corals from miles of reef habitat.

In regulating and protecting these slow growing animals, corals should not be collected, either alive or dead. The government should prohibit the removal or destruction of corals from all areas within certain limit.

According to Susan Ewen, the coordinator of the Papua New Guinea locally-managed marine areas (PNG LMMA) network that is administered within The Nature Conservancy, coral reefs can also be managed and protected under the LMMA network programmes.

The management programmes carried out in marine protected areas (MPAs) in the maritime provinces can maintain its efforts to divert the degradation of reefs and

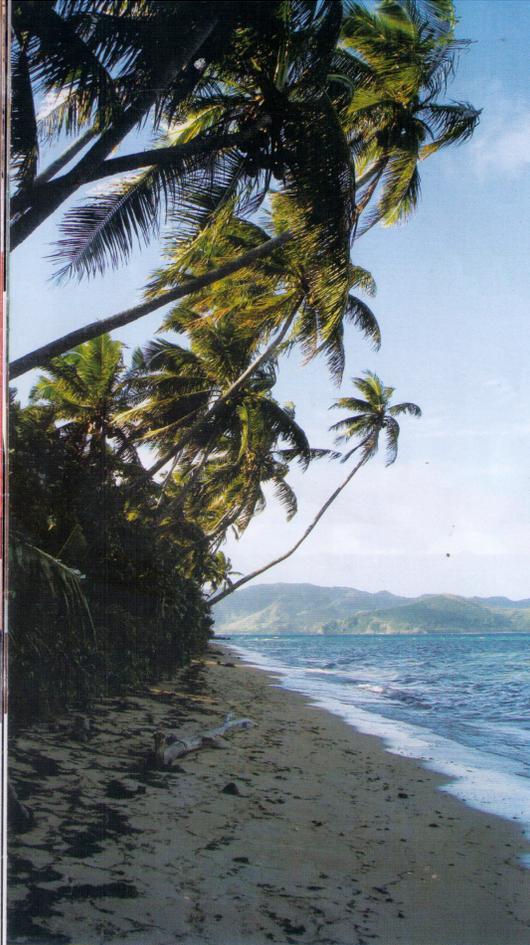
resource depletion by working in partnership with resource owners in empowering them to take full responsibility of the wise utilisation of their resources and the protection of coral reefs.

However, most of these programmes carried out in Papua New Guinea are mostly funded and facilitated by overseas non-governmental organisations, hence, the impact is limited to the targeted areas.

Therefore, to have the best out of these programmes in order to save our coral reefs for our benefit now and in the future, these programmes should use an integrated approach whereby collaborations should be made with relevant government ministries, local non-governmental organisations and private sectors.

This is so that the programmes complement the efforts of the stakeholders involved to ensure that through their projects, they help to assist in meeting the national goals and policies.

To complement the programmes under the current marine protected areas, the government should look at establishing marine sanctuaries or preserves to help ensure that this ecosystem is protected now and in the years to come. Hence, if corals take a year to grow a centimetre, and maybe some thousand years to bring it to what we now appreciate as coral reefs, just imagine if we deplete everything and wait for it to grow back.



# a little slice of Kadavu

by Stanley Simpson

***Soup fish for breakfast! Freshly caught the same morning.***

***Ladies fussing over you to ensure everything you needed was provided, and trying to force you to have another serve of fish.***

***The men greeting you warmly and promising that you will enjoy the grog and the grog session, with the singing and the merrymaking.***

***Welcome to Kadavu, I said to myself...and I had just barely arrived.***

The bread and tea I would probably have been having for breakfast in Suva was a scornful thought.

I was in Cevai village, in the border between the districts of Tavuki and Ravitaki, at the invitation of Seaweb, an NGO that helps promote healthy oceans and sustaining marine resources.

Seaweb was conducting a media training workshop, in partnership with the Fisheries Department and the Kadavu Yaubula Management Support Team, a group of villages and mataqali on the island that are working hand in hand to protect their qoliqoli and traditional fishing grounds from both overfishing and exploitation.

Over 20 representatives from about seven nearby villages and coastal communities were in attendance, particularly the Turaga ni Koro (village headmen) and the

head of Mataqali with qoliqoli grounds.

The aim of the workshop was to train the villagers, particularly village spokesmen from isolated islands like Kadavu, on how they could better use the media and effectively get their issues reported by the media, hence creating wider awareness, understanding and action on their concerns.

Listening to them was a humbling experience.

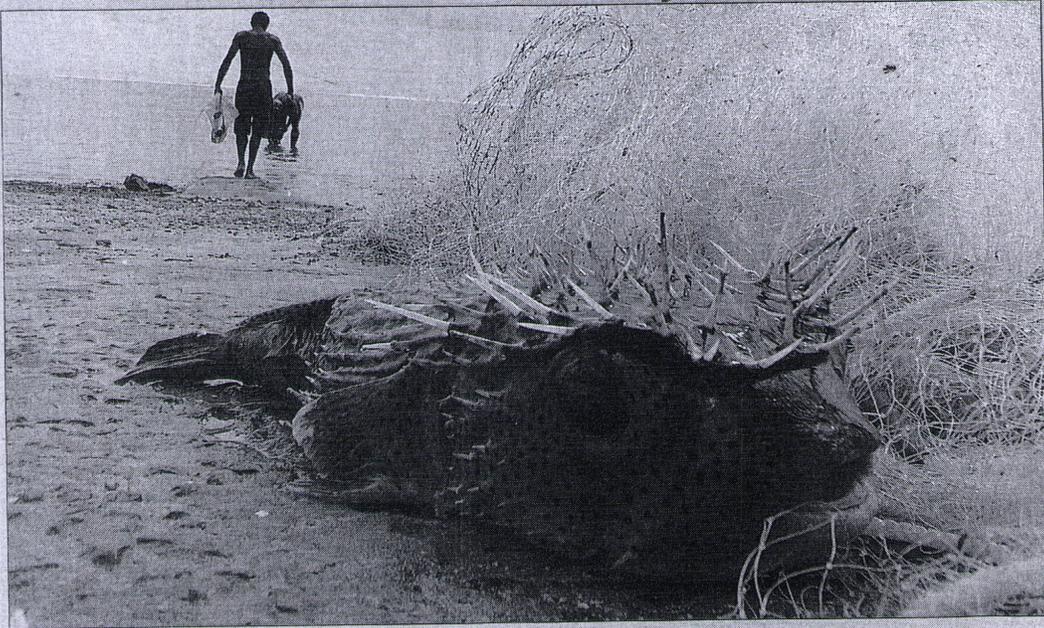
Here were people with big hearts whose issues would most likely be considered 'small' by the mainstream media in the national scheme of things.

But these small issues were real issues, and matters close to the heart, as they were matters of everyday livelihood and survival.

These were not politicians or businessmen trying to score political points or manipulate public opinion for their

**Please note this is only the first page of this magazine feature.**

It is a big day because the people would carry out a special traditional fishing method called the "yavi rau" or fish drive where the whole village is involved. There would be so much fish for everyone.



## Pollution is one of the problems which affects the corals and fish

By ALUMECI NAKEKE

At a special time of the year, the villagers in Bua eagerly await the announcement by the traditional priests to prepare for a fish drive. Everyone would be ready with plaited coconut fronds and vines and hoping for a good catch by the end of the day. They catch would normally include salala or mackerel and tovicl or ribbon fish.

When the fish is sighted the priests will greet the fish with a special greeting only known to the villagers and then the conch shell is blown to alert everyone of its arrival.

It is a big day because the people would carry out a special traditional fishing method called the "yavi rau" or fish drive where the whole village is involved. There would be so much fish for everyone.

But those are the good old days according to 79-year-old Alumita Degel, of Tiliva Village in Bua. Today the number of fish have diminished in their fishing ground and she blames the younger generation.

"We used to catch so many as they would travel up the river in schools. This part of our tradition is gone because we are not following the proper way of catching this fish and we are sharing it with other villages, which is not allowed because it is a chiefly fish," said Degel.

Village turaganikoro Jale Dren said that compared to past years, fish no longer come up the

The problem faced by the villagers prompted them to approach the University of the South Pacific Institute of Applied Science to conduct a marine management plan workshop.

The workshop would help the villagers identify the problem, who was causing the problem and what actions to take.

One of these actions was to have a marine protected area meaning to close off a portion of their fishing ground so that the fish numbers could return.

The villages involved are those included in the Bua district which are namely Tiliva, Dalomo, Wattabu, Navunievu, Koromasolo and Nawallevu.

IAS Project Officer Ron Vave said they agreed to the village request but after first discussing with the village headman on what their work would involve.

"We first discussed with the turaga ni Yavusa because at first there was some miscommunication

he said.

"And we were there to discuss what problems was affecting their reefs and rivers and try to address them and by taking action to rectify it."

He said the villagers were concerned they had lost their traditional fish which is harvested in the traditional calendar of "Vula I werewere" or June, including two of their commonly eaten shellfish called "dredrevi" and "aue".

The villagers were also concerned with the decline in their mud crabs but did not question why thinking it was normal. But Vave said that during the workshop, the villagers themselves were able to point out the problems, who caused it and how to address it.

Each village were then asked to come up with ways in which they could address their problem which they then presented after the workshop.

Pollution was one of the problems which the villagers faced with plastic

people being lazy to carefully dispose off their rubbish. For Navunievu they said it was because people were being inconsiderate and irresponsible.

As part of their solutions, the villages said they were going to dig holes for rubbish that could not be burnt especially plastics, bottles and cans. And this was something they were going to bring up in the next village meeting.

Logging was another problem which the villages faced because it caused soil erosion resulting in mud being washed into the sea from the rivers and killing corals and other marine life.

They said soil erosion would have to be addressed by planting more native trees and they suggested to seek advice from the provincial council. Forestry department and logging contractors.

Vave said river banks also suffered from soil erosion and it could have been caused by outboard motors carelessly parking

now the houses are right beside the river. They now have stone walls to protect them but downstream its eroding and even the old village site is also eroded with skulls and bones found by the riverbanks," he said.

Tarusila Velbi, 46, a former Fiji Pine employee, said that pine trees sucked up water so rivers and water catchment levels would fall causing their shallowness.

The villages said pesticides and weed killers also seeped into rivers killing seashells and other marine life. They would address the problem by banning its usage.

Fishing licences was a sensitive issue, said Vave and most had wanted to raise its cost or get rid of it but they would have to take it up to the district meeting.

However, Velbi, said that 20 years ago they had so much shellfish and bivalves and lots of crabs in their mangroves.

"They come out at high tide but now its hard for us to find them because

boat fuel and sawmill because I had experienced this when working for Tropic Mill in Lautoka. The chemicals running off the mill killed all the marine food resources in the Matawalu area," she said.

"Another new thing I learnt was the effects of wastes and plastic as it smothered the corals. Also that the use of scuba diving equipment was not intended for us because God just gave us enough breath to get our food and not to go to those deep places and take things out from there."

There were about 35 participants from the five villages that attended but after the first day the numbers increased because they also wanted to learn more.

Other facilitators were Pio Radikedike from IAS, and Feni Cavuilagi from the Macuata YMST and there was also a group from Kubulau. Bua who were very helpful in talking about the success of their MPAs.

The participants also went out to do a reef survey on one of the reefs as part of their workshop.

According to the villagers, the three-day workshop had been a total success where they learnt so many new things which they had always taken for granted.

They hope that after the next three years, their traditional fish drive would be revived bringing in more fish which could feed their family, their village and probably the whole district.

Ms Nakeke is an Ocean Science Reporter for

# The National What's in Weekender

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## Marine preservation lessons from Fiji

By FRANCIS GABRIEL

IF there is something to learn from Fiji, it would be tourism. However, without preservation and conservation of the islands' pristine beaches and exotic underwater world - an important development goal for Fiji's government, non-governmental organizations and citizens - tourism would not be possible.

I was privileged to be part of a group of journalist from media organizations in the country to visit Fiji, not to see how tourism works but to see how powerful marine conservation is to trigger tourism.

The trip was co-organised by SeaWeb and Fiji locally marine managed area (FLMMA) network.

The objective of our trip was to visit locally marine managed areas (LMMAs) and marine protected areas (MPAs), view their operations and learn from their experiences.

The experience can then be shared through the media to improve LMMAs and MPAs in PNG.

During our week there we visited four villages (Korolevu-i-wai in Namada, Namaqumaqua in Serua, Muaiwuso in Navakavu and Ucunivanua in Verata) with a group of traditional leaders from New Caledonia accompanied by New Caledonia WWF marine officer Sebastien Faninoz, who were there on a similar mission.

We first visited Korolevu-i-wai in Fiji's western province of Namada, almost four hours drive out of Nadi.

We were welcomed by the village chief, Ratu Ulaeasi "Stila" Taukei, and the village FLMMA representative Bola Tubuna and accorded a traditional sevusevu (kava welcome) ceremony.

We spent a night in Korolevu-i-wai, where we experienced Fijian life and hospitality, laid out mats covered with different delicious Fijian dishes and fruits at every meal followed by countless bowls of kava.

My Post-Courier colleague Pearson Kolo and I were honoured to dine with and be accommodated by Ratu Stila during our stay.

We were taken on a tour of the village's plantation, which in Papua New Guinea is just an ordinary garden. During our plantation walk, we planted two avocado trees, one for the New Caledonian team and the other for us, as per Ratu Stila's request to mark our visit.

The PNG team also went snorkeling to see the village's eight-year-old MPA, which is part of the coral coast reef - a diving destination for tourists.

Like all good experiences, this one too had to come to an end, and it brought tears to some of us when we had to part with our host, both men and women folks, singing Isa Lei (Fiji's farewell song).

We also visited the Sand Dunes, which is part of the Fijian National Habitat Park. The Sand Dunes, which are as high as mountains, are formed by winds blowing at a 45 degree angle, and changes forms depending on the force of the wind.

The Sand Dunes is also a training ground for the invincible Fiji rugby union national team.

Our visit to Namaqumaqua, was an eye-opener as it was our first time to see corals farmed - never thought that was possible.

Please note: This is only the first page of this story.

NATION

# Media marks freedom by planting mangroves



University of PNG trains journalists armed with their mangrove seedlings and spades/shovels planting at the Tahira Bay, 20 minutes outside Port Moresby on Saturday while celebrating the International Media Freedom Day. — Nationalist by WILLIAM WILLIANDU.

**By JULIA DAIA BORE**  
THE International Media Freedom Day last Saturday in Port Moresby was dedicated as "media mangroves climate day".

About 100 working journalist and media personalities converged on the Tahira Bay, about 20 minutes east of Port Moresby, armed with shovels and spades and planted about 300 mangrove seedlings as part of the Media Freedom Day.

The occasion capped off the previous day's workshop on climate change at which journalists and journalism students discussed the various effects of climate change and its links to PNG.

The organisers of last Saturday's event at Tahira Bay said the plantings were also in honour of conserving the PNG environment because vegetation in the bay area had died out.

Guest speaker on the day was Autonomous Bougainville Government deputy Speaker Francisca Somoso who urged the PNG media to use its freedom to fight all forms of corruption at all levels of government, and also inform people of PNG and the Pacific on development issues.

One organiser UPNG Matapore research centre director Thomas Maniwavie said he had planned for 200 seedlings to be planted but they ended up planting 385 seedlings at

three different locations during the two-hour operation.

Mr Maniwavie said that mangroves were important in nature's ecosystems, and that many coastal dwellers depended on them for their livelihood, as fuel and as building material.

"We need to protect and preserve mangroves as our coastal fisheries and communities are dependent upon healthy ecosystems of which mangroves play a key role. They act as buffer zone between the sea and the land," Mr Maniwavie said.

Media Freedom Day was also celebrated at Madang's Divine Word University school of communication with debates, drama and visits by journalism students to various communities to discuss press freedom and freedom of expression. Their community visits were aired live on the school's FM radio station.

The day culminated with the presentation of the UNESCO-DWI Development Communication Award for the best news article on the 2008 WFFD theme.

At the UPNG campus in Port Moresby, there was also an open exhibition and the PNG Media Council's organised workshop on climate change that culminated in the planting of mangroves on Saturday that was covered live by the National Broadcasting Corporation.

## 'Respect is lacking among us'

**By PETER MIVA**  
CRIMES are committed by people who have no respect for others and themselves. Law and Justice Sector media working committee chairman Joe Kanekane said in Lae on Friday.

Mr Kanekane challenged the media to play a bigger role in getting people to respect each other in an effort to minimise or stop crime.

He said that because people had no respect for others as well as themselves, they became irresponsible members of the community.

The media should play a crucial role and cultivate an environment to promote respect between

## PINA deplores latest deportation

THE Pacific Islands News Association has deplored the action of the interim Fiji government to deport Fiji Times publisher Evan Hannah on the eve of World Press Freedom Day.

PINA president Joseph Baledona said, "The deportation is a blatant attack on the freedom of the media in Fiji."

Mr Hannah was taken from his home in Suva by immigration officials and put on a Korean Air flight last Friday despite a high court order for him to be presented in court on Friday afternoon.

The publisher was told that he had breached the condition of his work permit and taken from his

home in front of his one-year old son and Fijian wife Dr Katarina Tuinamuna.

"The arrest and deportation is clearly calculated to intimidate and silence voices critical of the interim government. This strikes at the heart of democracy and a free media," said Mr Baledona.

PINA called on Fiji's Interim Prime Minister Commodore Frank Bainimarama to stick to his promise of upholding media freedom.

Commodore Bainimarama must allow journalists and media outlets to do their work without fear or favour, Mr Baledona said.

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