

Formerly called CASOLINK

A newsletter for Conservation Areas in the Pacific

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## CONTENTS

1. Our Gecko is Unique...and therefore very special.  
**Sharon Marks**
2. CA News from Arnavon. A chat with John Pita. **Anna Tira'a**
3. From the Manager's Desk.  
**Joe Reti**
5. Peleliu State Increases Protection for Southern Lagoon Area. **Ilebrang U. Olkerili**
5. Coral Reef Indicators in the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme.  
**Trevor Ward**
6. Multi-use Community-based Marine Protected Areas for Samoa. **Anna Tira'a**
8. Conservation Area Summaries for July to December 2000.
12. World Heritage Convention in the Pacific.
15. Cloudy Bay Biodiversity Project Report.
16. Report on the Marine Resource Survey of Jaluit Atoll.



Snorkelling in the Funafuti lagoon

photo by Ross Corbett



South Pacific Regional Environment Programme

## Our Gecko is Unique...and therefore very special

**Sharon Marks, Biodiversity Conservation Officer, Funafuti Conservation Area Project, Tuvalu**

**Lizards are common on most Pacific islands, though generally they are only of the small variety. Little skinks that move rapidly around vegetation and fat-toed geckos that come out at night.**

Some species are common to several islands though they usually have different names. Others have developed over time, isolated from their kindred by the water and distance between islands, to become very different. These lizards are unique to that island and are not found anywhere else. Therefore, this animal is classified as being endemic.

Funafuti Atoll on Tuvalu is the home of such a species. The existence of the gecko was discovered by Dr Dick Watling, and staff of the Funafuti Conservation Area, while carrying out a bird survey in 1998. The survey provided a good opportunity to look for lizards and to make a preliminary species list as no one had done this before. We found an unrecognisable gecko with a dark brown body and a bright yellow belly that was later confirmed as a new species. It lives in rotting wood and under the bark of trees such as the sticky tree (*tausunu*). The Conservation Area Coordinating Committee has named it *Tepukapili* after the islet in the conservation area on which it was first found. It is of the Genus (family group) *Lepidodactylus* and its closest gecko relative is possibly *Lepidodactylus gardineri* from Rotuma in Fiji. Since then it has been noted that *Tepukapili* is found all over Funafuti Atoll but we

have yet to confirm that it is found on other islands in Tuvalu.

Because endemic species are not found anywhere else, that makes them both special and very vulnerable. Endemic species are susceptible to extinction for several reasons including:

- *small populations* - not many individuals and/or not many communities;
- *specialisation* - the animal is usually specially adapted to the environment it lives in and any changes to that habitat will affect its survival;
- *lack defense mechanisms* - related to specialisation above, endemic species are often not equipped to defend themselves from introduced species.

To protect an endemic species then it is extremely important to understand the ecology of that creature. Essential questions to ask include – how many are there? where are they found? do they have special habitat requirements? are there any particular threats? This information can then be included in monitoring and management plans. Endemic species, like *Tepukapili*, are special and can often be a unique mascot for conservation areas.



*The unique Tepukapili*

photo by Anna Tira'a

## CA News from Arnavon CA: A chat with John Pita

Anna Tira'a, SPBCP Consultant



John Pita

John Pita affectionately known as “JP” by his friends is the CASO for Arnavon Marine Conservation Area (AMCA) in the Solomon Islands. Before the ethnic unrest in Honiara, John divided his work time between Honiara and AMCA. For safety reasons, John and his family moved to Arnavon, where he is now based virtually full time. I caught up with John in Apia while he was attending the SPBCP Marine Indicators Workshop.

We arranged to meet for a *tete-a-tete* on the last day of the workshop at lunchtime. We got straight down to business as I knew John had other things to attend to before flying out the next day. I told him that a few other CASOs have asked about how he, and Nathaniel Lix da Wheya were doing in light of the political problems the country is facing. With a smile that lights up a room, he responded “we are fine”. He says that Lix has been promoted within the Environment Department.

### Has the ethnic unrest affected the project?

“Yes, especially with regards to communication and transport. The project activities rely on obtaining certain items from Honiara. Restricted communication and transport between Honiara and Arnavon has been tough on the project and the communities. The lack of fuel has hampered the boat patrols of the CA. Food supplies to the island have also been affected, not to mention inflation, which has pushed up the price of goods.

“Another setback is that our newly recruited Peace Corps Volunteer had to leave the country, which was a shame as she was working mainly on developing education and awareness programmes. Before she left we were making puppets to help us in getting the message across to the communities. Losing our Volunteer has been a big step back for us, but we are trying to keep the puppet programme alive.

“Despite losing our volunteer we (AMCA Conservation Officers and John) have continued making the puppet costumes. Our Alternative Conservation Officers (ACOs) will perform the puppet show in the communities. The ACOs are people from the communities who have volunteered their time to help with the puppet show.”

There is a pause while John waits for me to scribble down what he is saying (at times like this I wish I had shorthand skills). It is at this point our discussion topic changes to surveys.

“An activity that they are working on is simplifying a technical report that consists of six years of marine field survey work. The surveys were carried out with a scientist from Australia, and the final report was completed just recently.”

### Have you simplified the report yet?

“This task is proving to be quite a challenge. We plan to work on this one with Fisheries and the scientist who worked with us.” John showed me a copy of this report, and I can believe the enormity of putting this into a language that the community understands.

Our conversation moves to the Rapid Ecological Assessment on the land flora and fauna of the

*continued on page 4*

*Transect line laid down  
as part of a survey in  
the Arnavon Marine CA*

photo by Michelle Lam



## From the Manager's Desk



### Joe Reti, SPBCP Programme Manager

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Welcome to this edition of the CALL newsletter.

I am impressed with the flow of interesting articles and news coming from other interested partners of the CALL newsletter in recent months. It shows that there is a willingness to contribute and share experiences amongst conservation practitioners in our region, and I think this is a healthy sign for the future.

As you are all aware, the SPBCP is already well into its phasing out phase. Transition strategies for at least eight CAPs have already been drafted and are ready for finalisation by the projects concerned. These strategies show how each project is proposing to wean itself off SPBCP support before December 2001 and be able to manage on their own beyond that. This is going to be a major challenge for many CAPs but an inevitable situation that we have been planning for all along. It is going to be the real test of how CAP capacity, built in the past six or seven years of SPBCP support, will stand up to the reality of not having the SPBCP there to provide the assistance and funding that it had provided in the past few years. I am confident that despite the anticipated shortage of funds, many CAPs, through the sheer commitment and support of governments and local communities will continue to survive.

As part of the SPBCP's phasing out strategy, this column is likely to change to become a "From the Action Strategy Coordinator's Desk". This will be an important change as it would allow all other people, not just protected area practitioners, who are involved in nature conservation in the Pacific to contribute and exchange experiences and views through the newsletter. Such a change should also ensure that the newsletter survives after the SPBCP by having SPREP and other regional partners commit to its continuation as a means of sharing information on conservation issues and concerns in our region.

I noted with interest the fast pace with which activities in many CAPs have picked up during this period. I suspect this is partly due to the fact that we are getting closer to the end of the year, a time when

staff would normally wish to implement as much as possible on their work plans before the holiday period. It is also possible that this is due to the projects wishing to do as much as they could before SPBCP resources run out. Whatever the cause, some care needs to be exercised to ensure that the "rush" to get things done does not happen at the expense of proper planning and effective supervision.

A number of CASOs attended the training workshop on the SPBCP and CA success indicators that was held in Apia in August. I was pleased to see that some of these CASOs actually went back confident to run similar courses for other colleagues at home who were not able to attend the workshop. There is no better indicator for measuring the success of the workshop than this and I want to congratulate those who didn't only say they would run these courses, but actually did. I hope you found your reversed role interesting and challenging.

The next quarter should prove a typical end of year period for many of us, with the usual buzz of Christmas and the holiday festivities a constant deterrent to the hard working mentality that I know many of you have developed. I think we all deserve a relaxing and peaceful Christmas and I for one am looking forward to having an enjoyable time with my family. I wish you would too.

So, as the next issue of this newsletter will come out well after the holiday season, here is wishing all readers and friends of CALL a safe holiday period. And thank you also for your continuing support and contribution which made this newsletter a worthy product of our continuing collaboration.

Joe Reti  
Programme Manager, SPBCP

*continued from page 2*

Arnavon Islands. The fieldwork for this exercise was completed in May, but the results have yet to be written up. He explains that they have concentrated a lot of effort on the marine side of things but very little research has been done on the land. “We are trying to balance the equation,” he said.

The project is looking to diversify its mainly marine-based income-generating activities to include land-based activities. Some ideas that are currently being explored include a small-scale timber mill and a Direct Micro Expelling (DME) coconut oil processing plant. According to John there are lots of coconuts in Arnavon!

### **How has the support from the stakeholders been?**

“We have a good relationship with all the stakeholders involved with the CA. The patrolling programme with the police is an example of a good close working relationship with a stakeholding group. The programme entails working with the police in patrolling poaching within the CA marine waters, especially during the traditional harvesting periods, such as the festive season.”

### **How did you find the Marine Indicators Workshop?**

“Good. I found the methods for monitoring marine indicators simple and easy to do. I feel comfortable and confident to go back home to train our Conservation Officers in these techniques. From what was shown, I am sure people at the community level could undertake the survey. As previously mentioned, I’ve been involved with the Arnavon

marine surveys. In comparison, these surveys were more detailed, and could not be carried out that easily by community people. Apart from being simple, it seems the marine indicator methods are cost effective. However, the challenging part will be actually doing the monitoring programme.”

I sense we are coming to the end of our conversation, so I quickly ask if he has anything else to say.

“We have had two communities from elsewhere in the Solomon Islands who are interested in establishing similar projects, visit Arnavon to learn from us. One of the communities from Choiseul visited us in April, and they have support from the World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF). The fact that others are interested in learning from us gives the communities I work with a ‘buzz’.

“It is important to show transparency and accountability on the project funds so that there are no misconceptions. During consultations with the communities on our transition strategy, the message was loud and clear—they wished to know how the money is being spent. If there is total honesty on this issue the support and commitment for the project is strengthened”.

The guy obviously practices what he preaches, in the “Arnavon News” (a quarterly newsletter produced by the project) there is a full-page cash book extract.

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*Participants from the Marine Indicators Workshop putting the theory into practice.*

photo by Anna Yire'a



## Peleliu State Increases Protection for Southern Lagoon Area

Ilebrang U. Olkeriil, CASO, Rock Islands, Palau

The Rock Islands also known as the Southern Lagoon Area will soon have additional protection. The State of Peleliu has recently established its very own Marine Law Enforcement Division, which will increase protection in the busy Southern Lagoon Area.

The Peleliu State Marine Law Enforcement staff will consist of three officers from the community: Eluais Samil, Dixon Ngiraked, and Richard Maderekuet. These local marine enforcement officers have been enrolled in the Palau National Police Academy for basic law enforcement training. They will receive more specialized training from other State and National Government Divisions in safety protocols, coastal navigation, patrolling, search and rescue situations.

In addition, the Peleliu State Government has passed a law, establishing a permit system similar to that of Koror State's scuba diving law. This new law imposes permit requirements on dive tour operators. The enforcement of the permit fee requirement will be required, as soon as the training of the marine enforcement officers is completed. The revenues generated from this permit fee will be used for conservation and scuba diving promotion in Peleliu State.

Furthermore, the community of Peleliu has faced many problems such as less fish, ibuchel, and other

organisms. The presence of marine law enforcement will help Peleliu State implement further conservation efforts. The State of Peleliu plans to establish conservation areas that would prevent further decline of marine life. The people of Peleliu want to bring into abundance the marine wealth of their waters as it was in the past and are looking forward to this new division of their government.

Koror State has experienced the greatest impact of tourism and has established many measures of protection and maintenance of the Rock Islands. Peleliu State has been getting increased tourist traffic in their waters, specifically through dive tour operations. The leadership of Peleliu State recognises that it must take actions to protect and to minimise increasing strains on its vital resources. As a result, Peleliu State is eager to coordinate resources with Koror State in order to protect and maintain the Southern Lagoon Area.

*Peleliu and Koror State are to be commended for their commitment to ensure that the benefits of the Rock Islands will continue to be abundant and enjoyed by everyone. The CASO for the Rock Islands is working with both State Governments and other stakeholders in developing a comprehensive management strategy for the Rock Islands so that everyone can continue to enjoy all that they have to offer.*

## Coral Reef Indicators in the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme

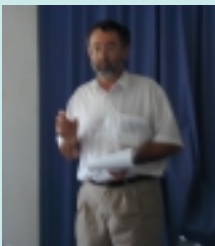
Trevor Ward, Institute for Regional Development, University of Western Australia, Perth

The SPBCP supports 17 Conservation Areas in 12 countries; 10 of these Conservation Areas (CAs) have marine components that include coral reefs.

The SPBCP recently concluded a strategic analysis of CA needs for indicators, and a field evaluation of proposed measurement techniques for the core indicators. Conservation Area Support Officers (CASOs) are currently engaged in training to identify and implement suitable tools and measurement techniques for indicators in their conservation areas.

For coral reefs, CASOs are being trained in a modified form of the global Reef Check measurement system. The standard Reef Check protocols have been modified to meet the requirements of the SPBCP system of conservation areas, and to ensure the sustainability of ongoing monitoring.

*continued on page 15*



*Trevor going over some of the explanations at the workshop*

## Multi-use Community-based Marine Protected Areas for Samoa

Anna Tira'a SPBCP Consultant

The Samoa Marine Biodiversity Protection and Management Project is a five-year project funded by the Global Environment Facility through the World Bank and executed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

The project is a partnership between IUCN, the Government of Samoa and the Districts of Aleipata and Safata. The Samoa project is a demonstration project and has "sister" projects in Tanzania and Vietnam.

I spoke with Sue Miller, about the IUCN project.

Sue is no stranger to the region. She was the Biodiversity Officer with SPREP for five and a half years until late in 1999 when she decided that it was time to move on. In January of 2000 she took up the Project Manager position for the Samoa Marine Biodiversity Protection and Management Project.

The project essentially establishes two community-based Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) on the eastern (Aleipata) and southern (Safata) coasts of the island of Upolu, Samoa. It also builds on the valuable work carried out in Samoa's coastal villages by the

AusAID supported Fisheries Extension and Training Project, and continues to work in close cooperation with the Fisheries Project.

Sue and I sat down to discuss the MPA project in the late afternoon in her office at the Division of Environment and Conservation. By this time I am usually half asleep, and I am hoping it doesn't show. However, Sue's captivating manner is compelling.

She explains that the two districts involved in the project consist of 20 villages, 11 in Aleipata and nine in Safata. There are four core staff working on the project, two District Officers (Pulea Etiseli Ifopo and Latu Afioga), a Community Extension Specialist (Foua Toloa) and Sue. It is planned to have others working on the project such as a government counterpart, and a range of consultants throughout the duration of the project.

The origin of the project goes back to early 1998, with a consultative design phase. It took 18 months to complete the project design, and at the time of this interview, the project has been running for nine months.

*The Aleipata community welcomes the participants to the Marine Indicators Workshop*

photo by Anna Tira'a



Sue makes it clear that apart from administration, project decisions are primarily made by each of the two District Committees (DCs) that have been established, these are composed of high level *matais* (chiefs) from the districts. Regular meetings are held with project staff and the DCs to discuss work and key issues, and all parties have permanent records of all decisions made.

One of the first major tasks that Sue worked on was developing a transparent financial system that met the communities' information needs. "This was no easy feat, generally, financial and progress reports are designed for the aid donors and not for the communities. There was a need for a system that caters to the community level – after all it is their project", she said.

The effort put into developing such a system has paid off. During a recent visit by a mission team consisting of representatives from IUCN and the World Bank to review progress of the project to date, feedback from the communities indicated an excellent level of transparency and accountability.

There have been other positive achievements since the implementation of the project such as the design and construction of the District Centres (the newly constructed centre for Aleipata—see photo opposite page). The labour to build the centres was provided voluntarily by the districts while the project met the cost of the materials. The project received a high profile launch via opening of these Centres.

Sue points out some of the issues the project faces. "Keeping the momentum and working with 20 villages is posing a real challenge. Motivating people is no problem, but keeping up the pace at which communities want to work and maintaining that momentum may be difficult for the small project team." She adds that there is a tendency to underestimate the time needed for fully participatory processes to achieve a task. Many aid projects are inclined to be task orientated and do not invest enough resources into good processes. As a result they lose ownership of the work and people along the way. You must maintain a good balance between

achieving the tasks and going through good processes. She gives an example. "It took a while to hire the District Officers for this project because this was done in a fully participatory manner, that is, the DCs selected the Officers through a full interview process. Yet if you or I were to hire District Officers, we would do so much faster".

The project has worked closely with SPREP on a number of activities such as a joint project to assess the feasibility for rat eradication on Aleipata offshore islands and associated baseline fauna surveys. The District Officers participated in the recent SPBCP Marine Indicators Workshop and the Community Extension Specialist was utilised as a trainer. The IUCN project has a similar perspective to the SPBCP, which has a lot of lessons that the project can draw from. Sue is obviously a great believer in learning from others and despite the project's early stage of implementation it has already begun to document lessons that have emerged. One lesson that she mentions is holding the Project Launch Workshop in September 1999 raising the expectation by the communities that work was ready to begin. However, as no key staff or office was established this expectation was not met and caused confusion and frustration at both the government and communities' level. A key lesson learned is that launch workshops should not be held until key project staff are operational.

On a general note, I asked Sue how she was enjoying her new position. "It is a real challenge, I am thoroughly enjoying the field work and I am learning a lot more about Samoan culture. I have done this kind of work before in New Zealand, although as the geographic and socio-economic situation there is totally different from Samoa, I am now brushing up on more relevant skills".

She said that she is impressed with the decision making capacity of the DCs. "I made a mistake once in the budget for the material to build the centres, which they spotted and I was fined a Vailima (a local beer) by the DC."

## Conservation Area Summaries for July to December 2000

News from the SPBCP-supported CAs

The year 2000 International Environmental Award of the German Travel Agents and Tour Operators Association (DRV) has been awarded to the Ecotourism Project of Abaca (Koroyanitu CA)

### KOROYANITU (FIJI)

The Koroyanitu Conservation Area Project is in the process of creating and establishing the Koroyanitu Development Trust. A Trust Deed is being prepared to declare Koroyanitu a National Heritage Park and for its Board to manage the Park for the benefit of the landowners, the communities of Koroyanitu and the wider national Fiji interest.

In September, a one-day community meeting was held in Abaca village to create a better understanding for the draft Koroyanitu Trust Document. The training was facilitated by the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) Assistant Manager, Joreti Dakuwaqa, NLTB Estate Officer, Matai Bolatagane and CASO, Unaisi Tawake. The meeting focused on:

- Lease, Rights of the Tenant, and the Lease Document
- Trust, Powers and Authority and the Trust Document
- Why Lease and the establishment of the Trust

The Navilawa Rest Room Facility was completed and an official opening was held on 30 September. Japan Pacific Economic Co-operation Council (JANPECC) funded the rest room. The people of Koroyanitu acknowledged JANPECC for their assistance.

Trudy Jones, a New Zealand consultant was contracted to conduct training on PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) for a team of local counterparts. The team then carried out PRAs in four villages (Nalotawa, Vakabuli, Korobebe and Tukuriki) of the Conservation Area not covered in earlier appraisals. The team consisted of representatives from the Agriculture Department, NLTB, community members from Abaca and Navilawa and the CASO.

The project's tour guides and members of Navilawa village took part in a training programme on "Partnership in Recovery" with the Tourism and Hospitality Department. NZODA and SPREP jointly funded their participation. Thirteen participants took part which covered four different areas as follows: Creating a great first impression; Quality customer care and hospitality; Communication - interacting with confidence; and Grooming, sanitation and hygiene.

Koroyanitu CA (Fiji) wins DRV 2000 International Environment Awards based on the proposal of the Japan Pacific Economic Co-operation Council (JANPECC). JANPECC is one of the project partners for the Koroyanitu CA. Congratulations Koroyanitu!

### VATTHE (VANUATU)

A design of a logo to symbolise the CA was finalised and a local printing company printed the product. This is part of the new signage and interpretive strategy drafted by the CA team.

A travel writer, Elizabeth Light, visited Vathe to write an article on the CA for the "Destinations" travel magazine.

Vathe Lodge continued to receive a steady flow of visitors this year. Sara and Matantas villages have enjoyed increased benefits from tourism in 2000. A business plan was also completed

for the lodge that reviews expenditures and revenues of the past few years and guides the profitable management of the lodge and tour activities in the future.

Work is underway to complete a community land-use plan for Vathe. Preliminary discussions are being held with the communities of Matantas and Sara.

Successful negotiations were made to obtain 20 volunteers from Canada's "Youth Challenge International" to work with Vathe in the first quarter of 2001.

There is a general lack of support to the CA from the communities. To help address this problem, the CASO will continue regular meetings with different village groups, and consult with provincial authorities to gain support for the CA.

### ROCK ISLANDS (PALAU)

SPBCP Executive Officer, Selestina Pule'aga visited the project from October 3-13 to, amongst other things, review how funds are being managed and used.

The CASO accompanied officials from UNDP, UNESCO and SPREP's Education Officer on a day-trip to the Rock Islands in October.

In the second week of October, the CASO participated in the "Tourism Awareness Week Outreach". This event provided a good opportunity to promote the Rock Islands Conservation Area (RICA).

The CASO participated in the SPREP Sub-regional Workshop on Avifauna Conservation for Micronesia, Guam, 5-10 November. The CASO found the workshop useful to know about the conservation status of birds in Palau and Micronesia. The CASO also attended The Nature Conservancy facilitated "Site

photo by Greg Sherley, SPREP

The award winning Koroyanitu Conservation Area





Conservation Planning Workshop for the Rock Islands, 13–17 November”, which was under the auspices of the Governor of Koror State. Representatives at the meeting were from government and non-government organisations. One aspect of the workshop that the CASO found very interesting was developing management plans for conservation sites.

The CASO has drafted an Education Strategy/Outreach Plan for RICA, which is currently under review by various key agencies involved in the CA project.

The first of collaborative meetings between environmental agencies and the Ministry of Education was held on 18 October to look at ways to improve and promote science and environmental education in Palau. The meeting was initiated as a result of officials visiting Palau from SPREP and UNESCO. The CASO attended two follow-up meetings in November. This was a great opportunity for the Palau Conservation Society to try and integrate projects such as the Rock Islands into the public education system.

On 5 December, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) rewarded the Rock Islands Rangers for their efforts in maintaining and protecting the Rock Islands. This has helped in raising appreciation throughout Micronesia for Koror State’s efforts in conserving the Rock Islands (see article on page 5).

## UTWA-WALUNG (FSM)

The CASO participated in the SPBCP Marine Indicators Workshop held in Apia, Samoa from August 14–25, 2000. The workshop looked at simple marine monitoring survey techniques and analysis that communities can easily carry out themselves.

Approval to construct boardwalks in the mangrove area based on recently prepared blueprints is being sought from the CA Board and SPBCP.

A part-time assistant was hired to help the CASO implement project activities. Salary for this position is being funded from revenues generated from the Conservation Area.

A workshop focusing on potential income-generating activities for the CA was held with the communities and facilitated by small enterprise consultant Bill Parr of New Zealand. The workshop participants compiled a list of activities, and the final report of findings will be used to guide the project in developing income-generating activities.

To assist with income-generating activities, Natural Lines, a group of specialists in signage design and interpretation were contracted to help the CASO in designing interpretative signs for the CA and develop a signage strategy for community and visitor awareness.

An aquaculture evaluation was carried out with the help of Micronesia Marine and Aquaculture Services, a consultant company based in Pohnpei, FSM.

Draft reports for each activity above (Pre-feasibility assessment for income generating options, Aquaculture evaluation and Signage and Interpretive Strategies) have been prepared.

## HUVALU (NIUE)

A fortnightly newsletter prepared by the Environment Division will include a column on the happenings at Huvalu. In addition, the project plans to promote the CA through the Division’s regular television and radio programmes.

An ongoing bird-monitoring programme has indicated that bird numbers are increasing within the CA.

To encourage full ownership of the project, a new CACC has been formed comprising community members from the stakeholding villages of Liku and Hakupu. The old CACC felt that their composition was lacking

*The Niue DME coconut-oil activity remains a pilot project. Economic conditions and community expectations on Niue makes this small cottage industry, ideally suited to the islands.*

photo by CBEMP project, SPREP



community input due to most of its members being public servants, in this case, not enough time was given to the project because of their formal work commitments.

As part of its income generating activities, the project started selling caps and T-shirts, and has established a small Direct Micro Expelling (DME) coconut oil processing operation.

A feasibility study was completed on the DME coconut-oil operations and one of the key recommendations referred to technical improvements urgently needed. Dr Dan Etherington, the inventor of the DME visited the Hakupu Coconut-oil Enterprises focusing one-week’s activities on technical repairs to the dryer, added training in DME processing and coconut soap making.

Interpretive panel designs have been prepared to create awareness of the importance of the biodiversity within the CA. The panel designs, based on input from the project, were created by the Australian company, Scribly Gums, who specialise in protected areas interpretative signs. The interpretive signs form the basis of the Huvalu Forest Nature Walk between the villages of Liku and Hakupu.

## TAKITUMU COOK ISLANDS

The CASO assistant, Tungane George resigned from her post after being offered a position with a local resort. Her services in the

office will be greatly missed by the project. Due to the CASOs workload, the CACC has agreed to hire another assistant, which will be funded from the Project’s income generating activities.

The CA has increasingly become a conservation subject matter for schools on Rarotonga. The CASO, Ian Karika and Conservation Officer, Mataiti Mataiti gave presentations on the TCA to Avatea School. They also accompanied three separate classes to the CA in the third quarter. Another class from Avarua School was also taken on a field trip to the CA on August 30. The 1-hour class presentation includes slides and is followed by a two and a half-hour field trip into the CA. The Environment Service has kindly assisted by providing teaching material for the presentations.

Greg Sherley, SPREP’s Avifauna Conservation/Invasive Species Officer, met with the CACC in August to discuss the Kakerori Recovery Programme (KRP) and associated budget matters. SPREP’s Regional Avifauna Conservation Programme and the SPBCP are currently funding the KRP jointly. Kakerori are found mainly in the CA.

CACC member Tom Daniels accompanied Ed Saul (Technical Advisor to the KRP) to the islands of Aitutaki and Atiu to survey them as possible translocation sites for the Kakerori. While on the islands they discussed



*Kepirohi waterfall in Madolenihmw, a municipality part of the Pohnpei Watershed Conservation Area*

photo by Francois Martel, SPREP

with the island council the purpose of their trip. The CASO, Ian Karika accompanied Ed to Mauke Island for the same purpose. The CACC have given permission to transfer 10 young Kakerori to the island of Atiu.

Fieldwork on the KRP commenced in August with the arrival of New Zealand's Department of Conservation scientist, Dr Hugh Robertson to help conduct the annual kakerori census. The staff helped Ed with the rat control programme, which began in September and finished at the end of December. Invaluable assistance in laying out rat poison was provided from Global Volunteers: Malcolm Johnson, Paul Holland, Terry Trusdale and Rhiannon Hoeweler. Other volunteers have shown interest for the 2001 season. The population of Kakerori stands at 202 individuals.

A community meeting was held on July 18 to inform those present on the developments of the project to date. A presentation was made by the CASO with the CACC members on hand to assist with some of the questions asked by the community.

The CACC is looking at ways to retain the services of Ed Saul whose contribution to the KRP is a vital part of the programme. The Nature Walk component of the income-generating activities is virtually a full-time occupation for the CO.

The project has received a cheque for NZ\$1,620 from the

Cook Islands Environment Service to help with awareness activities that will be implemented in the first half of the year in 2001.

The CASO attended the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) Workshop in Suva, Fiji, in October. His attendance was funded by the SPBCP. The workshop looked at funding mechanisms for biodiversity projects. The CASO also attended the 7<sup>th</sup> and final Multipartite meeting held in Wellington, New Zealand in November in his capacity as an Environment Councillor on the Environment Service board. The Technical Management Advisory Group's recommendation for the TCA is that funding will cease at the end of June 2001.

The CO, Mataiti Mataiti won The Cook Islands Sun's "Meitaki Award". Visitors make nominations for this award based on excellent service given by locals involved in the tourism industry. Evelyn Von Oest from the Netherlands nominated Mataiti for the award. She experienced Mataiti's excellent tour guiding skills on one of the TCA's tours. His win has provided extra promotion for the project.

The first planned Cook Islands Birdwatchers tour took place from November 10-18. CACC member, Tom Daniels accompanied the group to the outer islands. The guides that attended the tour guides workshop organised by the project in 1999 were hired as guides on their respective islands.

The 1999 award for the 'Most Progressive Conservation Area' was presented at the SPREP IGM meeting in Guam in October. The Cook Islands Minister of Environment, the Hon. Norman George received it on behalf of the TCA.

## POHNPEI

Until recently, the Lead Agency for the project was the Pohnpei State Department of Natural Resources. With the help of TNC, a new NGO called the Conser-

vation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) was established in 1998. CSP has recently taken on the lead agency role for the SPBCP component of the Pohnpei Watershed Project. TNC has proposed a follow-up phase to the SPBCP and a new GEF/UNDP/TNC project has received financial support to pursue activities beyond 2001.

SPREP's Socioeconomics Officer, François Martel paid a visit to the Project to consult with key stakeholders in preparing for the project's draft transition strategy and clarifying SPBCP reporting procedures.

An Environmental Awareness Officer, Ms Alissa R. Takesy, was recruited by CSP, and will assist in promoting activities and developing an outreach strategy for the project. The position is funded by GEF/UNDP via TNC.

An official from the TNC office in New Zealand provided on-the-job training in financial management and reporting for CSP's office manager.

The team of consultants from Natural Lines Ltd also paid a short visit to Pohnpei to look at existing signage and interpretive initiatives in Pohnpei. With the assistance from CSP and TNC, they reviewed existing work and assessed the need for an appropriate signage and interpretive strategy in support of the Pohnpei Watershed CA activities.

*Project Manager's note: Due to a major restructuring of the former lead agency, it has been a while since we last heard from this project. Great to hear the project is being boosted along with the help of a new lead agency.*

## UAFATO (SAMOA)

The CASO assisted with an Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed expansion of the Salelologa Township in Savai'i. The area contains one of the best remaining coastal rainforests in Samoa. The assessment involved surveying birds, bats and plants.

The honey beekeeping income-generating activity has officially

*Lenger Island, a new community-based marine protected area supported by the Conservation Society of Pohnpei*

photo by Francois Martel, SPREP



begun in Uafato. Mr Leicester Dean, a Samoan Professional beekeeper from Saleimoa village, is assisting the community of Uafato in setting-up 30 new beehives for their beekeeping development activity. This initiative has the potential to make Uafato village one of the largest producers of honey in Samoa.

The CASO and the CO participated in the two-week long Marine Indicators Workshop held in August, in Apia, Samoa. Uafato was used to trial the indicators, the CASO and CO were familiar with the techniques demonstrated and helped the other participants with the field survey part of the workshop.

An ongoing six-weekly monitoring survey of pigeons and doves was carried out on October 20. The purpose of the monitoring survey is to detect population changes of these birds, which are harvested for food by locals. About a year's worth of data has been collected so far. The project staff are working closely with SPREP's Avifauna officer in carrying out the survey.

The CO and CASO have finished the bi-weekly fish catch and effort surveys as part of the SPBCP marine indicator trials. Twenty-six weeks worth of data have been collected on the marine resources harvested for subsistence and commercial purposes. The data is being analysed by SPBCP consultants involved in developing the trial indicators.

A special one-day event was held in the village to encourage the replanting of pandanus trees in Uafato in an effort to reduce the number of *ifilele* trees being harvested.

In collaboration with the Capacity Building for Environmental Management in the Pacific (CBEMP) project, a second lagoon survey was completed using the methodology designed for collecting and measuring marine indicators. A report will be compiled to provide the data and a comparative analysis with measurements collected last year will be conducted.

The CASO is currently discussing the set-up of a small-scale certification scheme for the sustainable use of *ifilele* timber and trees to be implemented by the community and the various carving groups.

## SA'ANAPU-SATAOA (SAMOA)

The CASO participated in a two-day IUCN Traditional Knowledge and Resource Mapping Workshop held at the IUCN Safata Centre. Information derived from this workshop will be used as baseline information for a planned reef survey for the Safata District, which includes Sa'anapu and Sataoa.

In December 2000 the CASO hosted a delegation from the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund. The objective of the group is to support activities including aid for foreign and Japanese NGO-administered nature conservation projects in developing countries. The group expressed great interest in the project and the CASO has since submitted an application for funding for the boardwalk construction in the CA.

Joanna Axford and CASO Iteli Tiatia are currently working on the signage strategy for Sa'anapu-Sataoa, this includes information panels for the two information foles and the six boardwalk signs for Sa'anapu. The purpose of this signage strategy is to complement the ecotourism activities in the CA and improve awareness of the area for visitors to Sa'anapu-Sataoa. This is to be completed within the first quarter of 2001.

Two Tourism Managers were hired, one from each village to help with the implementation and coordination of the ecotourism strategy in the CA.

Samoa's Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) is now involved to provide support and training for the Tourism Management Committee and tourism managers. Training in small en-



Keidanren President, Hirofumi Higuchi, partaking in the traditional kava ceremony at the Sa'anapu-Sataoa conservation area

photo by Joe Reil, SPREP

terprise skills will help with the set-up of the Trust Funds and general management of the tourism ventures.

## JALUIT ATOLL (MARSHALL ISLANDS)

Leti Abon replaced John Bungitak as CASO (see brief profile on back page).

Former CASO, John Bungitak, was formally appointed new Director of the Environmental Protection Agency of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. John is now the head of the Lead Agency for the Jaluit Atoll Conservation Area, the CA he himself helped set up while President of the Jaluit Atoll Development Association. Congratulations John!

A Marine Resource survey of key harvested species and their distribution within the lagoon was undertaken with the help of a consultant, two locals and the CASO (see summary of report on page 16). During the event, a community meeting in Jabor was held to discuss the survey.

The CASO attended the SPBCP Marine Indicators Workshop in Samoa from 14–25 August.

The CASO and four CACC members visited the communities of Jaluit, Mejrrirok, Jabor, Jabonworen and Narmij to discuss project activities such as

renovation of Jabor airport terminal, ecotourism development, island beautification, handicraft co-op, and fish and clam monitoring. The CACC are keen to use a building at the terminal for selling handicrafts and food. This has met with approval from the island council. Work has commenced on renovating the building.

As part of the CACC action plans together with their input, implementation of the following activities were completed: "A Welcome to Jaluit" sign is now erected at the airport terminal on Jaluit. And to help reduce the amount of rubbish floating in the lagoon from boats throughout the Marshall Islands, a large rubbish skip was placed at the wharf along with "Do Not Litter" signs. Activities were funded by SPBCP.

A feasibility assessment and support mission was completed by consultant Robin Aiello (through *terra firma associates*). The mission's main objective was to update the Jaluit community ecotourism action strategy and plans, and provide adequate advice to CASOs and the various CA sub-committees at the initial stage of their initiatives.

## World Heritage Convention in the Pacific

To date, there is only one World Heritage natural site in the insular Pacific. It is East Rennell in the Solomon Islands. It is on customary land and is inhabited by about 500 Polynesian people living in four villages.

### Background

The World Heritage Convention was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972 and its main purpose is to protect the world's cultural and natural heritage that is of outstanding universal value. Under the Convention, outstanding sites achieve listing and cooperation between countries is promoted to protect these properties. The Convention is unique in that it links together the conservation of nature and culture, and acknowledges that the cultural identity of different peoples have been formed by the environment where they live. One of the objectives of the Convention is to encourage the participation of the local population and "...to give the natural and cultural heritage a function in the life of the community." Once sites have been listed, it is recognised that their protection is the duty of the international community, as well as the country where the site is located.

### World Heritage Sites in the Pacific

The UNESCO Regional Office in Apia, Samoa services 16 member countries throughout the Pacific. Of these, four countries have joined the Convention (Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Kiribati). To date, there is only one World Heritage natural site in the insular Pacific. It is East Rennell in the Solomon Islands. It is on customary land and is inhabited by about 500 Polynesian people living in four villages. They are the landowners and they have agreed to sustainable development of their land.

They are currently developing a resource management plan for the World Heritage site with assistance under the World Heritage/ Ecotourism Programme. The New Zealand Government through the NZODA Bilateral Aid Programme with the Solomon Islands Government has been working on Rennell and in Marovo Lagoon, another possible World Heritage site, for a number of years. These are long-term programmes because they deal with communities.

The other sites in the Pacific are Lord Howe Island (off the east coast of Australia) listed for its unique plant communities; Henderson Island, one of the Pitcairn Group, an uninhabited coral island listed for its geology, flora and fauna; and Easter Island with its historical stone statues, is a cultural site. The World Heritage criterion that could possibly apply to Niue for example, is that of "cultural landscape" where the special significance of an area; the tapu on Huvalu Forest, has created a natural area of high value for conservation and diversity as well as the area having important cultural significance.

### Costs and Benefits of Joining the World Heritage Convention

The annual cost to a country is one per cent of the annual fee paid to UNESCO. It is not a large sum. For Nauru, Samoa, Tonga and Niue it is



Another possible World Heritage site, is Morovo lagoon. Pictured above is Onne Village overlooking the lagoon.

photo by Michelle Lam

*The Convention is unique in that it links together the conservation of nature and culture, and acknowledges that the cultural identity of different peoples have been formed by the environment where they live*

photo by Lucille Overhoff, SPREP



US\$28 per year. The country would benefit from training opportunities and financial assistance and it would also be able to request expertise and technical assistance to help when problems arise. There is international recognition in becoming a State Party to the Convention and in having sites listed as World Heritage sites. This often raises awareness in-country and increases “pride-of-place” as the Government and local people become more aware of the sites of national and international value that are around them. Often this leads to greater protection and conservation efforts for those sites. There are other benefits for the people of the country as the sites will provide educational resources for students and they will also be an attraction for tourists as they will know they are visiting an internationally outstanding site.

Most Pacific countries are already part of the Associated Schools Programme (ASP) which is a Young People’s World Heritage Education Programme that is promoted worldwide by UNESCO. Teachers and students will already be benefiting from this through teacher training courses, “paired” schools and participation in the Pacific/Asia Youth Congress. By becoming a State Party, the country would automatically be included in the regional training programmes. One of the greatest benefits is that the country will belong to an international community where the protection of outstanding examples of natural and cultural heritage is the unifying concept.

### **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance to countries that have signed the Convention can be requested through the World Heritage Fund. Revenue for the Fund is raised by an annual fee and voluntary contributions. The Fund provides about US\$4m dollars annually to support

activities requested by States Parties needing international assistance. Applications can be made by the State Party for Preparatory Assistance (up to US\$30,000 per project) to prepare a State Party’s tentative list, for nomination of properties, or to prepare conservation project proposals. The Fund also covers Training Assistance (up to US\$20,000) and supports group training activities. Technical Cooperation (up to US\$30,000) covers requests for expertise and material support for conservation activities. Emergency Assistance (up to US\$75,000) is for urgent action to repair damage by human activity or natural disasters.

### **Process for Ratifying the Convention**

This is straightforward and comprises a letter signed by the Head of State, Prime Minister or Minister of Foreign Affairs. The letter is sent to the World Heritage Centre in Paris and the country would become a State Party to the Convention in three months time. There is no requirement for additional legislation.

### **Requirements of the World Heritage Centre**

Once a country has become a State Party to the Convention, they are requested to prepare a tentative list of possible natural and cultural sites. This is to help the World Heritage Centre predict the comparative studies that will be needed to establish which are the best sites or monuments of a particular kind, internationally. The country can request financial assistance for the preparation of the tentative lists and this could cover costs of holding meetings, air-fares for experts to attend and so on. This list does not have to be exhaustive and not all of the sites have to be nominated. Once a country has a site listed, it is required to report on it, once every six years.



*Dr Elspeth Wingham, World Heritage Officer for the Pacific with friends*

Some of the SPBCP Conservation Areas could also be nominated as World Heritage sites, if they are of “outstanding universal value”

**Process for Nominating a World Heritage Site**

To nominate a site from the tentative list, the State Party prepares a nomination document. This has a prescribed format and the country establishes why the site is of “outstanding universal value”. When completed it is submitted to the World Heritage Centre who arrange for the site to be evaluated by experts. They visit the site and prepare a technical report on whether the site fits the Convention criteria, and if there is suitable legislation in place to protect the site such as an Environment Act or a Heritage Act. The World Heritage Bureau examines the Report and may ask for further information. They will make a recommendation that will be considered by the World Heritage Committee and a decision on listing is announced. The time-scale from submitting a nomination document to receiving a final decision on World Heritage listing, is 18 months.

**Assistance for Pacific Countries**

The UNESCO Regional Office, Apia has officers responsible for World Heritage Education, Culture and natural heritage. In January 2000, Dr Elspeth Wingham was appointed as World Heritage Officer for the Pacific and has been visiting UNESCO member states to promote the Convention and encourage them to join. So far she has visited Nauru, Niue and Tonga and all expressed interest in joining the Convention.

Dr Wingham has also visited most of the countries that have joined. In PNG she has been working with staff from the University of PNG and the National Museum and Art Gallery to assist them with preparation of the nomination of Kuk. This is an outstanding cultural site where there is evidence of

8,000 years of agriculture. In Kiribati, information has been given on the Convention, preparation of tentative lists and the nomination process. A visit is planned to Fiji in early November to assist with the preparation of the nomination document for Levuka. This was the colonial administration centre and many of the original buildings remain. It would be proposed as an outstanding example of “an intact colonial era capital”.

In the Solomon Islands, East Rennell is already listed as a natural site and is assessing the possibility of listing as a cultural site also. Work on development of resource management plans and sustainable development are continuing. This is difficult with the current unrest but Mr Newman Tegheta (Paramount Chief of East Rennell), Mr Ben Devi (Programme Manager for World Heritage and Deputy Director of Tourism) and Mr Lawrence Foaota (Director of National Museum) are attending the World Heritage Regional Managers’ Meeting in late October, 2000 at Tongariro World Heritage site in New Zealand.

**SPBCP Conservation Areas and World Heritage**

Some of the SPBCP Conservation Areas could also be nominated as World Heritage sites, if they are of “outstanding universal value”. The first step is for countries to join the Convention.

If a country needs assistance or more information, they can contact the World Heritage Officer at UNESCO Regional Office, Apia.

produced by SPBCP, SPREP

*Montage of Conservation Areas under the SPBCP programme. Some of the CAs could be nominated as World Heritage sites*



## Cloudy Bay Biodiversity Project Report

This fairly comprehensive 46-page report by Environmental, Cultural and Spiritual Conservation Services, Papua New Guinea was completed and submitted to SPREP recently. SPREP provided financial assist for this project. Cloudy Bay Area is in the Ahau District, Central Province, Papua New Guinea.

The report was made from a series of awareness campaigns and field visits to the area from September 1999 to December 1999. The main activity undertaken was a series of awareness campaigns focusing on the importance of conserving the Environment and Biodiversity. Other work included observation and collection of relevant data on species with their significance to the area and the people. The team of six carried out the following during the field visits: sketched maps of the project area, conducted awareness campaigns and mobilised the resource owners, observations, study and species identification (in brief), interviews and collation of data, and measurements of physical properties of water and soils.

The coverage of the biodiversity of the Cloudy Bay area was done as an appraisal study which could give a challenge to the policy and decision makers, to

give consideration to the protection of the rich diverse species of flora and fauna. Especially when it comes to the engagement of large scale resource development projects such as logging (forests), agroforestry, mining and agricultural projects within this area.

Cloudy Bay got its name from the ever present daily cover of clouds which are responsible for rain almost every day. It contains the biggest mangrove network in the Central Province. These mangroves extend inwardly for at least 10 kilometres up to the foothills of the Central Mountain ranges. The densely and intensified forests are untouched and dresses the landscapes from plainlands into the mountains.

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Where is the best location for the "transect"?

photo by Anna Tira'a

*continued from page 5*

The modifications to the usual Reef Check protocol are:

- only a single depth is used (the 3-4m depth), and only snorkel is used—no scuba;
- replicate 20m sub-transects (4) are an available design option where the full 100m transect is not feasible or achievable;
- replicate 100m (or groups of 4 x 20m sub-transects) are encouraged for more comprehensive spatial coverage;
- the point intercept substrate measures are reduced to 5 points on the 20m line, and specified as 1 m<sup>2</sup> points; and
- monitoring is conducted as frequently as can be achieved with the available resources, and subject to the need for data and information.

With these modifications, the Reef Check coral reef monitoring is expected to be able to be satisfactorily completed by most CAs with the support of village-based volunteers, consistent with the approach of the SPBCP for achieving conservation and management of coral reefs and their resources.

The coral reef monitoring is complemented by lagoon condition monitoring, and fish catch and effort monitoring, also using low technology, community-based monitoring systems.

The standard SPBCP monitoring protocols provide for data analysis and interpretation using a pre-formatted standardised data entry and analysis system, suitable for use and management by local communities with guidance from the CASOs.

## Report on the Marine Resource Survey of Jaluit Atoll

Field work for a marine resource study for the Jaluit Atoll Conservation Area has been completed. The collected data is now being reviewed and the report finalised. The study is intended to provide the basis for a resource management plan for this Project, which is a critical part of the planning for the Project's future transition to other funding arrangements after the completion of the SPBCP at the end of 2001.

The following is an excerpt from the executive summary of the report, which is written by Stephen Lindsay.

To evaluate the marine resources of Jaluit atoll visual resource survey methods (manta tows, timed swims and line transects) were used. A total of 231 tows (199 lagoon, 32 ocean side) covering 80 hectares were conducted during the evaluation. Data collected for each tow included: water depth, tow width, tow length, total number of trochus, clams, pearl oysters, fish, sea cucumbers, per cent coral cover, per cent cloud cover, wind conditions and latitude and longitude coordinates.

The marine biodiversity and coral reef condition is high in Jaluit atoll. Invertebrate and vertebrate species diversity and stock abundances were high with reproduction and recruitment occurring. Reef passes and ocean side reefs had higher species diversity than lagoon reefs. No evidence of destructive fishing methods were found. Nine mangrove forests are located within the atoll, all of which are unique and require further scientific evaluation.

Four areas of the Jaluit lagoon are recommended to be developed as marine reserves (north western section of the lagoon and the three main water passes). The selection criteria determining these reserve locations involved species diversity, species abundance, accessibility and uniqueness. The dimensions and precise location of the four suggested marine reserves are flexible and must be determined through discussion with all stakeholders. All reserve areas should include the reef flat down to the 30-meter mark. All organisms located within this area should be protected.

### New CASO for Jaluit CA—Leti Abon

Leti replaces John Bungitak, who was acting CASO, as full-time CASO for Jaluit Atoll CA, Marshall Islands. Leti is from Jaluit (where he will also be based), and thus, has a good understanding of the atoll and its people. Leti is excited about his new post, and feels that being a CASO will be a gratifying position. He also hopes that the project will further enhance people's appreciation for the conservation of Jaluit's resources.



Further information on the Jaluit Survey report can be obtained by writing to:  
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### Common acronyms

SPBCP:	South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme
CASO:	Conservation Area Support Officer
CAP:	Conservation Area Project
CA:	Conservation Area
CACC:	Conservation Area Coordinating Committee
SPREP:	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme