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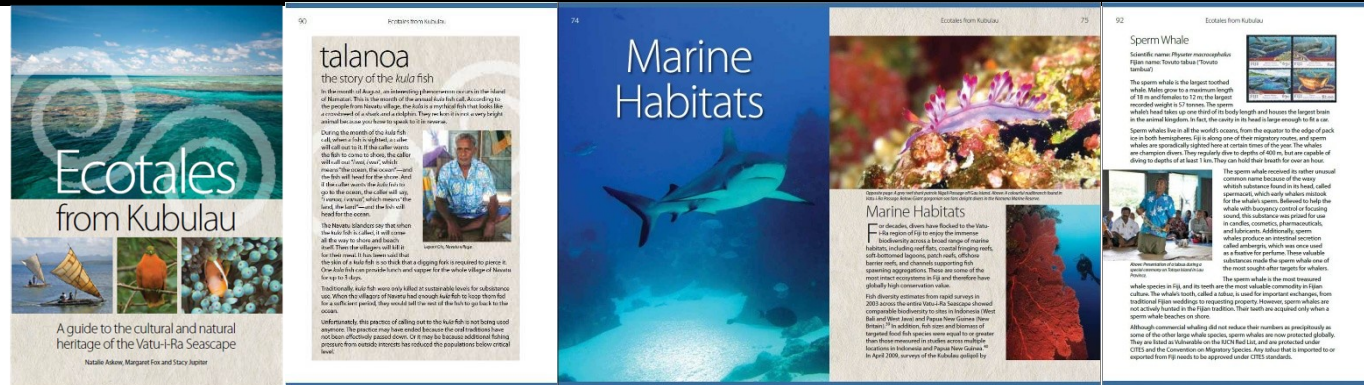
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ONGOING AND UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb 28-29:** Wainunu Management Support workshop (Nakawakawa)
- Mar 1-3:** Follow-consultations in Nadi and Solevu villages, regarding management rules and boundaries for protected areas proposed at Wainunu Management Planning Workshop (Daria, November 2011)
- Mar 5-10:** Kubulau Roadshow for changes to management rules and boundaries for district MPAs and village *tabu* areas
- Mar 15-16:** Launch of 'Adventures of Joji Goby' comic book in Kubulau and Wainunu schools
- Mar/Apr:** Kubulau fish warden refresher training
- Apr:** Wailevu Management Support workshop and consultation on proposed rules and boundaries

ECOTALES FROM KUBULAU LAUNCHED



Above: *Ecotales from Kubulau* contains stories and facts about plants and animals of Kubulau and the wider the Vatu-i-Ra Seascape.

On December 22nd 2011, WCS Fiji hosted the launch of "Ecotales from Kubulau", a joint publication by WCS Fiji and CORAL to showcase the remarkable plants and animals that are both astounding in their beauty, and culturally important to the people who live in the Vatu-i-Ra Seascape.

The book took a year to compile, with WCS Field Officer Margaret Fox responsible for recording the stories first hand from the elders of Kubulau. Originally from Bua Province herself, Margaret said "This is the first time for me to be part of a project of this sort and I am quite happy with my efforts because I was able to understand the Kubulau dialect, so language was no barrier. It was life-changing and exciting to sit down with the elders – both men and women alike – and compile their stories."

It is the hope of WCS Fiji, CORAL and the people of Kubulau

that the guide will raise awareness about the importance of the plants and animals to local livelihoods, cultures, and ecosystem functions. The stories in these pages come directly from the elders of Kubulau, who have described their associations with species for medicine, decorative arts, building materials, food, and totem spirits. By collecting these stories, the traditional knowledge that is rapidly fading away with modernization can now be preserved for the youth of Kubulau and the Vatu-i-Ra Seascape. The book was requested by the Tui Kubulau Ratu Apenisa Vuki. The formal request to WCS Fiji on behalf of Ratu Vuki was made by the Turaga Tui Nadi Ratu Peni Rasigare.

Proceeds from the sale of the book will directly support ecosystem management and community development in Kubulau. "Ecotales from Kubulau" is available to purchase from the University of the South Pacific Book Centre store and online shop.

Please send your questions and letters to the Vatu-i-Ra Community Bulletin Editorial Team, using the contact details above.

TAQOMAKI NI NODA VEIKABULA



The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is a U.S. based international NGO, with conservation programs all around the world, including Fiji. Over the past century, the WCS has worked to establish more than 130 parks and protected areas on land and at sea as well as working on threatened species. WCS works to save wildlife and wild places by understanding and resolving the critical problems that threaten key species and large, wild ecosystems around the world.



VATU-I-RA COMMUNITY BULLETIN



Ni sa bula vinaka! Welcome to the twenty-first edition of the VATU-I-RA COMMUNITY BULLETIN. The bulletin brings together news and results from ongoing activities by the Wildlife Conservation Society within the Vatu-i-Ra Seascape.

VOL. 21. FEBRUARY 2012

KEY EBM MESSAGES:

Preservation of functional integrity of Fiji's ecoscapes through community based management.

- Successful 'ridge-to-reef' management depends on broad stakeholder input
- Inland and coastal communities need to manage their actions and resources together
- 'Ridge-to-reef' management protects habitat for all stages of life
- The success of protected areas for conservation and livelihoods relies on combining bottom-up community engagement with top-down planning
- Public health and livelihoods depend on environmental health
- Healthy ecosystems are the best defense against climate change impacts to livelihoods

WAILEVU MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The Wailevu Management Planning Workshop was held in Nabalebale village from the 31st January to the 2nd February 2012. The workshop was attended by 25 villages from the district of Wailevu. This workshop was also attended by Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Land Use Department, Cakaudrove Provincial Office, FLMM, representative from the Cakaudrove Yaubula Management Support Team (CYMST), Partners in Community Development Foundation (PCDF) and WCS staff.

On the first day of the workshop, participants were informed of results WCS Fiji research and government programs in Wailevu East and West. "The communities found out more about their natural resources, how they are threatened, and the ways in which these resources can be protected. This is important information for the communities to build into their management plan", said Akuila Cakacaka, WCS marine

biologist. On the 2nd day of the workshop, the participants set visions, conservation targets, threats and strategies for the diverse threats their terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and coastal, and marine habitats – such as farming on river banks and destructive fishing methods. On this, on the 3rd day the participants set management rules and formulated community action plan for mitigating the threats. The results of these exercises will be used to compile a 'ridge-to-reef' management plan for the district. "Overall there was positive indication from the participants on setting *tabu* areas as a management strategy for forests, reefs and rivers", added Akuila.

The Roko Tui Cakaudrove in his closing remarks said that the Provincial Office will monitor these plans to ensure that real progress is made in implementing them on the ground.



Top left: Wailevu Management Planning Workshop participants in Nabalebale. Top right, bottom row: participants during group discussions.

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KUBULAU SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2012

The Kubulau Resource Management Committee has received the applications for 2012 Kubulau scholarship awards and they will soon announce the names of the successful candidates.

During the January Bose Vanua meeting, it was decided that names of the successful candidates will be announced after all the villages finalise and submit the list to KRMC for consideration. Following this, KRMC and KBDC is going shortlist candidates for Bose Vanua for endorsement.

The Kubulau scholarship fund was started in 1997 and since then has help 130 students to get assistance for tertiary education. The scholarship fund has been set up as a result of the dive tag program which was implemented by Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL) based on the recommendations from the chiefs of Kubulau to invest in their future generations.



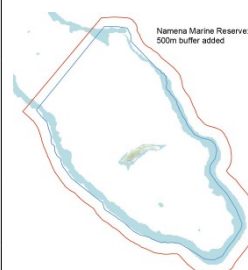
Sereima Kalouniviti, one of the recent graduates sponsored under the Kubulau Scholarship Fund, now working as a Researcher for the SOPAC Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, in their Disaster Reduction Programme.

BOSE VANUA MEETING UPDATES

On 17th January the Bose Vanua had their first quarterly meeting for 2012, in Kiobo village, to make several important resource use and other district level decisions. This meeting was also attended by the KRMC, CORAL, and WCS.

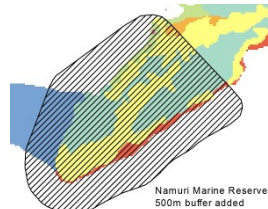
The agenda of the meeting included scholarship fund awards for 2012 (see above) and endorsement of reconfiguration recommendations from the Kubulau Adaptive Management workshop and the Management Support Workshop, poaching and enforcement.

The KRMC chairman, Paulo Kolikata, and CORAL/WCS field liaison officer, Sirilo 'Didi' Dulunaqio, presented to the Bose Vanua the recommended reconfiguration options for the district and village level *tabu* areas. These options were based on the results of scientific research by WCS. WCS staff used data collected in survey dives to feed into a computer program called MARXAN. This computer programme draws the 'best' options for arranging *tabu* areas while minimizing impacts to fishers.

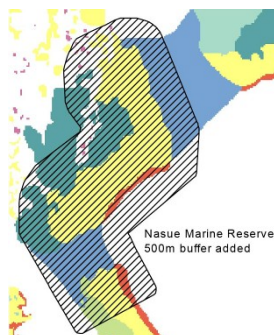


NAMENA: The Bose Vanua has endorsed the option selected by KRMC, to add a 500m buffer to Namena Marine Reserve, including protection to North (Save a Tack) and South passages. The Bose Vanua also confirmed that there

was a boundary marker was installed to indicate this during the 2009 MPA blessing ceremony.



NAMURI: The Bose Vanua also endorsed the option chosen by KRMC, for the addition of 500m buffer to the site, giving extra protection to Namuri and Drokana. Drokana is important as an aggregation site for fish



NASUE: The Bose Vanua endorsed the option selected by KRMC, to add a 500m buffer zone around Nasue Marine Reserve.

The village level *tabu* area information can be obtained from the *turaga-ni-koro* or respective KRMC members during *bose-ni-koro*. The above changes to Kubulau's *tabu* areas, together with changes to village *tabu* areas, will be mapped by WCS and incorporated in the updated management plan. WCS staff will visit villages in Kubulau in March, to present the new boundaries to the communities.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR MOORINGS

In October 2009, the Bose Vanua declared Namena marine reserve as an 'anchor free zone' following installation of 6 moorings within the reserve. There were 3 near shore moorings also installed, making the costal villages accessible to dive boats.

During the 2011 Stakeholders meeting in Kilaka, KRMC has agreed to install one additional mooring in Namena to make it more accessible to the dive boats. The mooring installation in Namena Marine Reserve was part of threat reduction initiative to prevent anchor damage to the delicate coral reefs.

Since then, Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL) has helped Kubulau Resource Management Committee (KRMC) develop a mooring maintenance plan to look after these moorings. The mooring maintenance plan's major aim is to assist KRMC in keeping the mooring safe and ready for use through: 1) regular maintenance; 2) periodic inspections; 3) implementing a reporting system; and 4) maintaining record-keeping system.

During the 2011 Kubulau Management Support Workshop, the KRMC decided that moorings will be checked twice a year,

before and after the hurricane season (September and May respectively).



Kubulau community members checking the mooring and buoys during the 2009 mooring installation in Namena Marine Reserve.

REEF RESILIENCE TRAINING IN SUVA

The reef resilience training was held in Suva from 8-9 February, this was organized by the Wildlife Conservation Society Fiji (WCS Fiji) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

This training was targeted at Fiji Locally Management Marine Area (FLMMA) network members who work closely with communities in managing resources for biodiversity protection, fisheries and/or food security such as the Yaubula Management Support Team (YMST) and FLMMA partner organizations.

The aim of the training was to extend the use of reef resilience principles in designing marine protected area (MPA) networks to protect resilient reefs in the face of climate change for conservation and management of biodiversity and food security.

In July 2011, Yashika Nand from WCS represented Fiji during the "Training of Trainers" workshop in Palau. The Suva workshop was part of the implementation plan that all participants developed in Palau to implement in their countries, through communications, biological monitoring and/or training other reef managers in the region.

The Suva workshop was also attended by Ana Tagivetaua, who went to Bali and attended a similar "Training of Trainers" coral reef resilience workshop sponsored by Coral Reef Alliance. Ana presented on her current reef resilience awareness raising efforts within women groups of Lomaiviti.

"An important outcome of this training is going to be a development of a Fiji bleaching response plan which can be used by communities as a responsive and preventative action plan during a bleaching event", said Yashika.

Workshop participants suggested good ideas for materials which would help them easily share their training with their communities. For example, a poster on how to spot coral bleaching, leaflets on coral disease, and a brochure on MPA network design principles. WCS Fiji is considering these proposals and will try to provide as many useful materials as possible.



Participants learning how to select MPAs during the workshop