

**Key Messages:**

Preservation of functional integrity of Fiji's eco-scapes through multiple stakeholder 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

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## Building Healthy Communities and Protecting Ecosystems



water (toilet water) or grey water (sink and shower water) with black water containing the highest concentration of harmful pathogens and nutrients and thus requiring more careful planning for its disposal. While the designs of wastewater treatment and disposal system vary amongst project locations, a range of solutions including wetland garden, Eco-trenches, in-ground soakers, and drainage garden areas have been used to provide appropriate treatment and disposal to each wastewater type. Where space and soil type allows, on-site systems have been designed for individual and clusters of houses which are gravity fed. Where space is limited, off-site treatment and disposal is necessary and systems have been designed to cater to 50 or more houses.

Coral Coast communities in the districts of Korolevu-i-wai, Komave, and Serua have begun to address wastewater management issues as a part of their village development and environmental management efforts. While much attention has been given to the provision of clean, safe water to rural communities in Fiji, far less attention and planning is generally given to the disposal of the wastewater generated by rural communities. However, wastewater can contain harmful pathogens as well as nutrients so how and where wastewater is disposed of can have great consequences for the health of the community and surrounding environment.

Apart from the rewards of a cleaner, healthier environment, Votua Village has also been generating income for the village and the maintenance of their system by operating a tour of their village water and wastewater system – a unique experience that most guests marvel about. Additionally, a featured benefit of many treatment systems being used in these projects are garden areas with fruit trees and flowers that are constantly feed with the treated wastewater water.

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Votua village and Qalito settlement have been the first communities in Fiji to holistically address the issues of water supply and wastewater management through pilot projects where they helped design, build, and now manage their water supply and wastewater treatment systems. Technical assistance and funding provided by partner organizations has allowed these communities to address their wastewater disposal issues using low tech, easy to maintain systems that eliminate pathogens as well as nutrient pollution from coastal creeks and marine areas and have made their communities cleaner, healthier places to live. Currently, similar projects are underway in Tagaqe Village, Navutulevu Village, and Tagaqe District Primary School.



Above: Votua Village youth show the results of their H<sub>2</sub>S water samples. Top left photo: Votua villagers preparing to lay part of the sewer system they installed in their village

Wastewater can be categorized as either black

## 2nd Fiji Conservation Science Forum

Between August 5-7, 2009, the Fiji Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) partnership of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), WWF South Pacific Programme, and Wetlands International-Oceania, hosted the inaugural Fiji Conservation Science Forum. The main goal of the Forum was to provide a platform to consolidate and synthesize the science that has been conducted in Fiji. We were also very aware at the time that, due to few opportunities to present science locally, most of our good work was being presented overseas. Therefore, the Forum represented a unique opportunity, particularly for students, to showcase their work among their peers and colleagues.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Conservation Science Forum was attended by 115 participants from various national, regional and international organizations, including participants and visitors from Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Indonesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Madagascar, and the United States. The plenary speaker for the event, Dr. Robin Yarrow, summarized the good will experienced by all with the statement, "To researchers it is a great opportunity to present their findings and to receive professional feedback and input. For post-graduate students, it is a wonderful opportunity to learn and network."

Based on the positive feedback from the 1<sup>st</sup> Forum, WCS secured support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to host a 2<sup>nd</sup> Fiji Conservation Science Forum between September 14-16, 2011 at Studio 6 in Suva. The Forum received additional local support from Fiji TV, Ricoh, Quality Print Ltd., Clariti (South Pacific) Ltd., Supreme Fuel, and Flour Mills of Fiji Ltd, to whom we are grateful.

The main theme of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum was "Confronting the Climate-Biodiversity Crisis", in recognition of the fact that climate change is an overarching threat that may be exacerbating impacts to species and habitats in Fiji and the region. As a lead off to the event, Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, Director of the Global Change Institute at the University of Queensland, highlighted the many ways that climate change is affecting biodiversity in the region and offered some thought-provoking solutions for managing the problems.

The keynote presentation was followed over the course of three days by seven thematic sessions on (1) Ecology and Management of Fiji's Watershed, (2) Terrestrial Species, (3) Marine Species, (4) Results from Fiji's Locally Managed Marine Areas, (5) Scaling-up Local Management to Meet National Priorities, (6) Socio-Ecological Tools for Climate Change Adaptation, and (7) Adaptive Management. Due to the successful advertising campaign, the room at Studio 6 was consistently full with at least 195 participants from 64 different organizations across academia, development, community, government, non-government, and the private sector.

During the first evening, WCS and SeaWeb hosted a public panel event on "Confronting the Climate-Biodiversity Crisis: Challenge or Opportunity?". The four panelists (Prof. Ove Hoegh-Guldberg of the University of Queensland, Prof. Bill Aalbersberg of the Institute of Applied Sciences at the University of the South Pacific (USP), Dr. Morgan Wairiu of the Pacific Centre for Sustainable Development at USP, and Ms. Kirti Chaya of the Department of Environment's

Climate Change Unit) kept the audience engaged with responses to questions such as, "What are the opportunities to use climate change mitigation and adaptation funds to protect biodiversity?". Prior to the closing of the event, Mr. Bernard O'Callaghan of IUCN Oceania, facilitated a lively discussion on some of the main issues arising from the Forum that included debate on how we widen focus from marine to terrestrial and other areas and whether doing conservation science in Fiji is good value for to cost.

Overall, there was a strong feeling of camaraderie throughout the event, in support of the collective good work that is being conducted across Fiji. Further, by bringing together people from across the environment, planning, community, disaster risk management, health and development sectors, we were able to identify potential new partnerships for future collaborations. WCS looks forward to the opportunity to host a potential 3<sup>rd</sup> Fiji Conservation Science Forum and we welcome other organizations to work with us to continue the tradition.



Above: Keynote speaker Prof. Ove Hoegh-Guldberg  
Middle: One of the many interactive discussion sessions.  
Below: Lekima Copeland from IAS presenting his work.



# Vatu-i-Ra Seascape stakeholders workshop

Between September 8-9, 2011, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) hosted a Vatu-i-Ra Seascape Stakeholder management workshop held at the Centre for Appropriate Technology & Development in Nadave. The objective of the workshop was to bring together stakeholders and community members from the region to discuss moving forward on identifying important areas for management in the context of developing provincial-level integrated coastal management (ICM) plans for Ra, Lomaiviti, Tailevu and Bua.

The workshop was attended by over 65 participants from government (Fisheries, Forestry, Environment, provincial offices), NGOs (WCS, CORAL, IUCN, BirdLife International, Conservation International, Live and Learn, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society), communities, the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area (FLMMA) Network, academia (University of the South Pacific, University of Queensland), the Fiji Museum and the National Trust of Fiji.

As a starting point for discussions, on Day One participants reviewed the outputs of the successful Protected Area Committee workshop in September 2010, where provincial level administrators identified candidate sites for protection and expanded management. After presentations on how the FLMMA network is helping Fiji achieve its target to protect 30% of its waters by 2020, applications for marine zoning, and the

framework for a national coastal plan, participants were asked to discuss how zoning could potentially be applied in their respective provinces to regulate activities affecting coastal zone.

On Day Two, participants heard presentations on: local initiatives to restore and manage terrestrial areas through tree planting and invasive species eradication; an overview of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, including guidelines on when and EIA is required; and lessons learned from case studies on eco-tourism developments within the Vatu-i-Ra Seascape. Participants were then asked to discuss and respond to the following questions: (1) What types of land management activities are needed in your province?; (2) How can we work with Primary Industries to foster best practice?; (3) What are opportunities for eco-tourism in your province?; and 4) What are the areas for development (especially tourism development) that need to be regulated?.

Outputs from the workshop include draft maps of areas to zone for conservation and management, as well as specific activities that would require regulation under ICM plans for each province. WCS and other partners look forward to working closely with the four provinces of Bua, Ra, Lomaiviti and Tailevu to develop these ICM plans that are aligned with the national framework.



Top left: Community members and government from the Ra province doing some mapping exercises  
 Top right: Paulo Kolikata and Ratu Peni from Kubulau presenting back to the group on the work in Bua province.  
 Left: All the workshop participants.  
 Below: Aisake Batibasaga from Department of Fisheries provides some closing remarks to the participants.





**FOR MORE INFORMATION, QUERIES OR TO SUBMIT ANY FUTURE EBM ARTICLES PLEASE CONTACT**

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## Fiji Shark Sanctuary Campaign

### About the Campaign

CORAL, working in partnership with the [Pew Environment Group](http://www.pew.org) and the [Fijian Ministry of Fisheries](http://www.fisheries.gov.fj), is raising awareness for shark protection in Fiji through an exciting shark conservation campaign.



The campaign's objective is to create a Fijian National Shark Sanctuary that would

- prohibit the commercial fishing of sharks throughout the entirety of the Fijian exclusive economic zone;
- prohibit the import and export of shark products in Fiji;
- prohibit the sale of shark products within Fiji;
- allow recreational catch and release of sharks; and
- allow the incidental, artisanal catch of sharks by citizens of Fiji, assuming the subsequent shark or shark products are not sold.

Since February 2011, the CORAL team has been working on the ground, alongside the Fijian people, to raise support for shark protection. Because effective conservation requires collaboration, we have been engaging and educating local stakeholders from the confederacies, provinces, districts, and villages to ensure long-lasting protection for sharks.

Sharks have long held a place of respect and worship in Fiji, but past efforts to legally protect them from local and international fishing pressures were met with resistance. Thanks in part to the recent wave of shark sanctuary designations around the world, however, this current campaign is gaining momentum.

In July, Fiji's Department of Fisheries and Forests confirmed that it is reviewing Fiji's fisheries laws and is considering revisions that would include a ban on the trade of all shark fins and other products derived from any shark captured in Fijian waters. If the proposal moves forward, it is expected that the government will issue an official decree before the year's end. The passing of such a law would make Fiji the first Melanesian country to approve such comprehensive protection for these iconic animals.

The successful passing of the decree is only the first step. The second—and perhaps most important step—is making sure the new policy is effectively implemented. We will work with the Fijian people to make sure communities are aware of the law, understand its importance, and proudly support it.

This article and more information can be found at [www.coral.org/fijisharks](http://www.coral.org/fijisharks)

The CORAL team has had good success getting the word out with local press with a number of articles published recently. The documentary "Shark Hope" was launched at Village Six in Suva on October 24th, 2011.



Above left: Campaign poster Above right: Some examples of recent press on the Shark campaign