



VATU-I-RA COMMUNITY BULLETIN



Ni sa bula vinaka! Welcome to the sixteenth 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 group.

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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*

SPREADING EBM PRINCIPLES INTO WAINUNU AND WAILEVU DISTRICTS

WCS and the Kubulau Resource Management Committee (KRMC) recently completed introductory workshops in Wainunu district in Bua and Wailevu district of Cakaudrove. Lessons learned were shared by the KRMC in implementing Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) and to begin to develop management institutions and plans for the neighbouring districts. The districts of Nadi and Solevu (Bua Province) also attended the Wainunu workshop at their own expense to learn about establishing their own resource management committees and management plans.

The workshop presented the principles of EBM and sustainable financing. Groups did mapping exercises highlighting their traditional ecological knowledge. Participants listed their future vision for their respective tikina, identified threats and management solutions to the threats. The platform was also set for the establishment of new district resource management committees.

Workshop reports will be distributed in February. For more information on upcoming activities in 2011 see page-4.



Above: Participants from the Wainunu workshop



Above: Participants from the Wailevu workshop



Above: Interactive group mapping activities held at both Wainunu and Wailevu workshops

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BACTERIAL DISEASE STUDY BY DR. ILANA BRITO

Typhoid has been a serious threat to health within Fiji. Typhoid disease can be transmitted by contaminated water and food and people are vulnerable to becoming infected following severe cyclones.

In February, a study will take place to try to understand the main ways in which people get infected in order to determine the most effective ways to reduce disease burden. Specifically, we will be focusing on whether flooding has increased disease transmission in different areas and whether specific agricultural or land use practices may increase or decrease

flooding. The ultimate goal of the study is to determine whether there are any ecosystem management schemes that may help reduce disease burden.

The study also will involve a campaign to increase hand-washing. Hand-washing is a key factor in reducing the spread of communicable diseases. Hand washing is effective with regular soap or laundry soap.

The study will be performed in collaboration between Dr. Ilana Brito, a biologist at Columbia University in New York and researchers at the Fiji National University School of Medicine, the

Wildlife Conservation Society, and Wetlands International-Oceania. The study team will visit community members within villages in the Wainunu and Macuata Districts in order to understand how bacterial diseases may be transmitted. The study consists of a questionnaire and analysis of biological samples from people, animals and the environment. This study has support from the Ministry of Health and the Northern Province Health Centers. The results of the study will be beneficial not only to the communities directly involved in the study but to communities across Fiji as well.

PROTECTED AREA COMMITTEE WORKSHOP WITH PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATORS

For the first time ever, Roko Tui and Senior Assistant Roko Tui of the 14 provinces of Fiji were invited to join members of the national Protected Area Committee and the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area network to a National Planning Workshop, facilitated by WCS at Nadave training centre. During the workshop, the participants were briefed on the following issues: (1) the work to date by the National Protected Area Committee in assessing progress against Fiji's national biodiversity targets under the current system of terrestrial and marine protected areas; (2) the role that government, NGOs and other agencies have played in prioritising areas for protection and management to conserve Fiji's unique biodiversity and preserve livelihoods; (3) the partnership arrangement that exists amongst these agencies and the local communities in terms of the management of their protected areas; and (4) the need for the Roko Tui and their staff to be more involved in these activities and support the communities in the management and planning activities of their *qoliqoli* and land areas within their respective tikina and provinces.

The Roko Tui were exposed to a series of related lectures delivered by distinguished speakers on issues such as Fiji's marine eco-regions, mangrove ecosystems, endemic plant and fish species together with the wetlands and their connectivity areas. The Roko Tui were also be introduced to the evolution



Above — Stacy Jupiter leading an interactive mapping exercise.

Below — Workshop participants, Roko Tui's, Assistant Roko Tui's and workshop facilitators.



of both the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area (FLMMA) and the terrestrial protected area networks to allow them to have an in depth knowledge of the conservation strategies employed in both ecosystems. A major part of the workshop was devoted to conservation planning using maps and charts to assist the Roko Tui and their community leaders involved with both the marine and terrestrial protection to identify critical areas within both ecosystems that the villages, tikina and provinces could expand their conservation activities into. English and Fijian versions of the EBM Guide were distributed to all participants.

Workshop outputs included: (1) maps of candidate natural and cultural heritage sites proposed for protection; (2) strategies on how to communicate to their communities critical issues discussed in the workshop; and (3) action plans for next steps implementation on the ground in each province.

"FROM THE WESTSIDE TO THE WEST PACIFIC"

"From the Westside to the West Pacific" program will provide youth the opportunity to engage with internet technologies, science and each other. The program developed by the Chicago Field Museum will involve Marist Brothers High School in Suva and the Voise Academy in Chicago, USA. Akanisi from WCS will facilitate the program and will be assisted by FLMMA.

The goal of the program is to increase young peoples understanding of biodiversity and engage them in real conservation practises. Using a combination of tools including an online cartoon coral reef (www.whyville.net) and real life examples, students will learn to experience and understand the connections between species, culture, science and technology.

More than 50 youths from Chicago and Fiji will be involved in this program to gain knowledge in reef biology. They will learn about the signs of healthy reef and find out what can make it sick. Find out about different creatures that live in and around a coral reef, and find out who eats who on a reef.



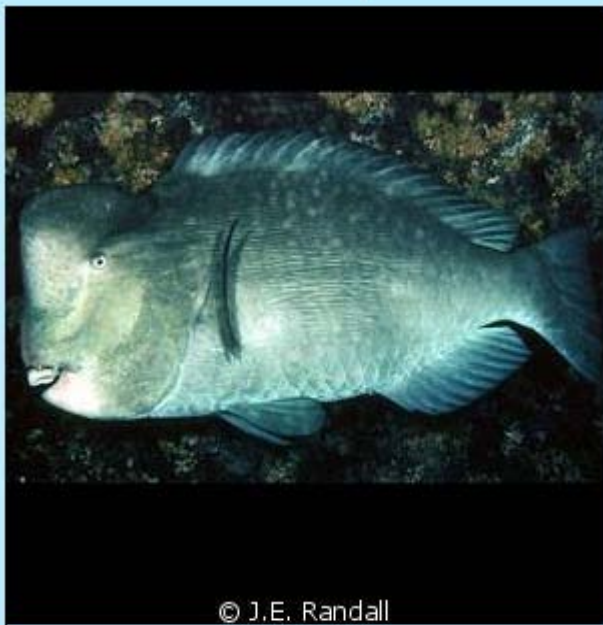
Above—Students from Voise Academy in Chicago, USA, learning about Fijian reefs online with www.whyville.net

Whyville



Above—The internet reef simulation on WHYVILLE. Students click on the fish or coral and information will be available like below on the Green Humphead Parrotfish.

Green Humphead Parrotfish *Bolbometopon muricatum*



© J.E. Randall

100 cm

Encyclopedia of Life



[Visit this species on the Encyclopedia of Life to find out more!](#)

Lifestyle



I don't like being alone! You will always find me in a small group with other Humphead parrotfish. During the day I will swim and eat, and at night I sleep in cave or even shipwrecks. My friends and I enjoy long lives on the reef. Most of us live to be at least 40 years old!

Fun Facts



Check out the noggin on me! My head is enormous! But don't make fun, it's totally useful; I ram my big head into coral to break it up into smaller pieces. I do this because I feed on coral. I also have a very strong beak-like mouth that I use to grind the coral into a paste that I can eat. I eat a lot, up to 10,000 pounds of coral every year! This might seem like a bad thing for the coral, but it can help new coral to grow.

Menu



Coral and turf algae are my favorite foods! I will spend all day munching on coral and chomping turf algae that grow on the bottom of the reef. Because I eat both animals and plants, I am an omnivore.

Threats



Overfishing is a big problem for us! Overfishing means too many of us are being caught by humans. We are very easy to catch at night when we are sleeping. Because of this we are almost extinct in Guam, the Marshall Islands, parts of Fiji and East Africa.

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ONGOING AND UPCOMING EVENTS

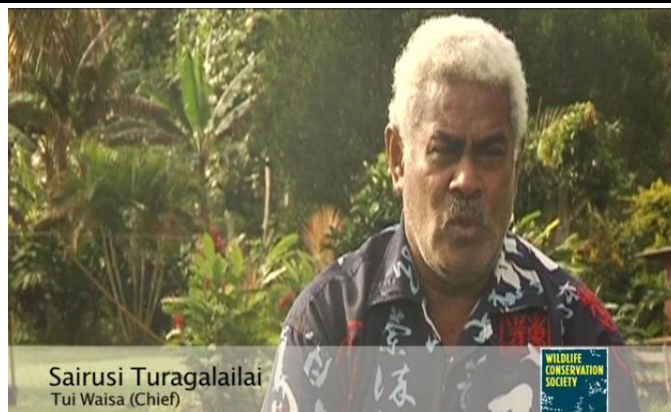
- February 2011—CENT workshop with CORAL
- February—March 2011—Socio-economic surveys in Wainunu and Wailevu.
- February—March 2011—Health surveys in Wainunu by Dr. Ilana Brito.
- March—April 2011—Baseline marine biological surveys in Wainunu, Wailevu, Nadi and Solevu.
- Mid- 2011—Release of the Ecoguide to flora and fauna of Kubulau.

IN MEMORY OF TURAGA NI YAVUSA WAISA-SAIRUSI TURAGALAILAI

WCS was sad to hear of the passing of Sairusi Turagalailai in late 2010. Sairusi significantly contributed to the management planning in Kubulau and WCS would like to publicly acknowledge his contributions to conservation in Kubulau.

Sairusi featured in the making of Paulo's Triumph DVD. In this he said, *"we are very fortunate that WCS join us in observing our qoliqoli, the milestone of it...we signed our management plan."*

Further, *"we use our traditional Fijian system of trying to call on the people of Kubulau and the surrounding areas, telling them 'please keep these qoliqoli areas tabu because Kubulau is benefiting from it.'"*



WCS Community engagement officer, Sirilo Dulunio writes...

Sairusi was a very strong conservation advocate, easy to talk to, down to earth and he understood the Ecosystem Based Management concept very well. He was a very strong member of the Bose Vanua. Through his leadership his village managed to extend their tabu area.

I even recall Turaga ni Yavusa Waisa when showed Stacy this extended tabu area on the map he said the reason we want this tabu because it is right in front of Nasue and Drokana because of the spill over effect. Fish will definitely come here and rest. This tabu will support the two district tabus. That was Sairusi Turagalailai at his best.

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.