



**REEFS
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IT'S TIME TO
GIVEBACK**



Caroline Vieux presenting Benagio his Winner's Pack for first place in the poster category in the "Legends of the Reef" competition.

Pacific legends competition winners announced

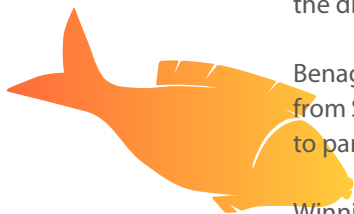
Students from Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, and Vanuatu took top honours in a two-month-long regional competition that illustrated the cultural value of coral reefs and showcased the creativity of Pacific students.

The 'Legends of the Reef' competition was part of the 2008 Pacific Year of the Reef campaign run by SPREP and partners and was open to all residents of SPREP member countries and territories between ages five and twelve.

First places in the overall, legend, and story categories were shared between Vaiala Beach School of Samoa and Samoa Primary School. Subjects of entries included patterns of turtle shells and tattoos, the origin of reefs, and dolphin sightings at a particular location. Entries from Niue Primary School and Apii Te Uki Ou of Cook Islands took second and third places, respectively, in the overall category. Both legends were about the distribution of fish around their islands.

Benagio from Vila East School in Vanuatu received his Winner's Pack for first place in the poster category from SPREP's Coral Reef Management Officer, Ms Caroline Vieux, when she visited Vanuatu in early August to participate in CRISP programme activities.

Winning entries can be viewed on the campaign web page at www.sprep.org/PYOR. Individual winners will receive prizes, as will their schools. Each participating school will receive an education pack.





The winning poster in the 'Legends of the Reef' competition by Benagio from Vila East School in Vanuatu.

STRONG REEFS STRONG ISLANDS

From the Editor

Welcome to the third edition of Reef Talk!

Year of the Reef campaigns have continued throughout Pacific island countries and territories after colourful and successful Environment Week celebrations in June. Among the articles in this issue you'll find reports of groups in the final stages of implementing their action plans for the 'challengecoralreef' competition and news of the Pacific campaign's participation in international events, such as the Olympic mural work in Beijing and the 11th International Coral Reef Symposium.

Updates on other coastal and marine work of SPREP and partner organisations are also included in this edition, from a marine managed area project in Wallis and Futuna, a governance project in Vanuatu, wetlands management training in Kiribati, to planning shark protection.

A calendar of events encourages you all to get involved in these and other activities in your part of the Pacific and take action to save our reefs.

Happy reading!

American Samoan youth paint Beijing mural

The American Samoan youth art event representatives pose with one of the Olympic murals. Photo: Coral Reef Advisory Group, American Samoa.



Four youth representatives from American Samoa joined world famous artist, Wyland, in July in Beijing, China to help paint an epic mural of more than four dozen 50-foot canvasses as part of a global art project titled “Hands Across the Ocean” in celebration of the world’s waters.

The canvasses represented the United Nations and Olympic member countries, forming a two mile-long mural depicting the connectedness of Earth’s waters and the tremendous impact individuals can have on waterways and the diversity of life they sustain.

The delegation from American Samoa was led by the Director of the Department of Commerce and included Claire Painter, 10; Zachary Faulkner, 13; Jennifer Kim, 15; and Havasinia Mortenson, 16. The students were chosen to represent the territory based on their creativity demonstrated through a 100-word submission on ocean conservation during an art contest hosted by American Samoa’s Department of Commerce.

Education and outreach tours also gave the delegation a taste of local culture and history with visits to the Great Wall, Beijing Aquarium, Temple of Heaven, Tiananmen Square, and Imperial Palace.

Participation in the Beijing art event followed a visit by Wyland to American Samoa in April where a mural of sea life he painted with students was unveiled during Flag Day celebrations.

Jeremy Goldberg and Derek Toloumu are with the American Samoan Coral Reef Advisory Group and can be contacted at jeremy.goldberg@doc.as and derek.toloumu@doc.as, respectively.



Part of the Lycee du Grand Noumea 'challengecoralreef' team ready to survey their project site. Photo: Lycee du Grand Noumea.

New Caledonia school continues underwater trail

Secondary school students of Lycee du Grand Noumea have designed and marked an underwater trail to educate divers about areas of high biodiversity at one of Noumea's most popular beaches in a bid to raise awareness of the need to protect the surrounding area.

The trail, completed in July, was an activity students in years nine and eleven at the school developed as part of their 'challengecoralreef' action plan to realise the educational potential of the scenic Baie des Citrons beach close to Noumea city centre in New Caledonia.

Signs and interpretation boards will complement the underwater trail which has been marked with four concrete poles, that do not extend above the sea surface, to guide divers to places of interest under the sea.

Students have also made public results of a water quality test they conducted to investigate water from the reef in front of Baie des Citrons beach and the impacts of waste water piped out to sea. Results of these activities will be presented at the Fete de la Science 2008 in New Caledonia.

The 'challengecoralreef' group is also developing an evaluation of the impacts of the project that would include a visitor's poll tallying numbers of repeat visitors and numbers of professional divers to the site.

Students have benefited from working with Dr Claire Goiran of the Noumea-based Institut de Recherche pour le Developpement and hope to expand the project next year to include other aspects of reef protection that would involve other stakeholders.

More information on Lycee du Grand Noumea's activities can be accessed at http://www.ac-noumea.nc/lgn/svt/CS_2008/site_BDC/index1.htm and a regular blog is available at <http://culturescience.skyrock.com/>.

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Fijian community supports youth reef protection initiative



Namamanuca Primary School 'challengecoralreef' team in their competition uniforms. Photo: MES.

Shore clean ups and acquiring new reef monitoring skills has helped students of Namamanuca Primary School in Fiji garner support from their community elders for protecting part of a reef surrounding their island.

The group of form two students leading the project that is part of the national "challengecoralreef" competition has led by example with daily clean ups of the beach in front of Yanuya village, on the island of the same name. The students have been assisted by the Mamanuca Environment Society (MES) action plan.

According to the school teacher in charge, Ms Taina, students have been eager to implement their project.

"The afternoons are the most anticipated time of each day for students as they take pride in being fully involved in the beach clean ups," Ms Taina said.

An information session was held between MES and students on coral reef biology, threats facing reefs, and possible ways to reduce identified threats. Students were taught simple reef check methods for coral health and fish populations, and new snorkelling gear was presented to the team to practice their new skills.

A joint presentation to village elders by MES and a student representative on the action plan implementation progress was made at the invitation of the weekly village meeting. The dedication of students spurred elders to endorse a 5km/hr speed limit for boats traveling close to the project site. The Turaga ni Koro (village headman) and the meeting supported the construction of a sign board advising boat users of the speed limit.

The Namamanuca Primary School group will complete its activities during the last week of August.

More information on Namamanuca Primary School's progress can be accessed at www.mesfiji.org, or contact Fesi Isimeli and the Mamanuca Environment Society at fesi@mesfiji.org.

'challengecoralreef' is a regional competition run by SPREP and CRISP as part of the 2008 Pacific Year of the Reef campaign. Phase 1 required interested groups to submit an action plan of activities to help remedy problems facing a coral reef they wanted to protect. Funding was provided to implement 11 action plans during Phase 2 which ended on 1 September. The selected winner will report the results of their successful action plan implementation at the International Youth Coastal Conference in Townsville, Australia from 19-22 October.



Youth action showcased at coral reef gathering



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Actions addressing problems facing coral reefs as identified and developed by secondary school-age students during the Pacific regional 'challengecoralreef' competition were the focus of a presentation at the Education Center at the week-long 11th International Coral Reef Symposium that concluded in mid July in Fort Lauderdale, USA.

The presentation was made by SPREP's Coral Reef Management Officer, Ms Caroline Vieux, as part of a series on the 2008 International Year of the Reef campaign. Key messages of the presentation and the Coral Reef Initiatives for the Pacific programme were also highlighted by two senior Pacific journalists, Samisoni Pareti and Titi Gabi, and interviews with ABC radio of Australia.

Vieux undertook these communication activities in addition to attending a selection of sessions on the latest scientific research and conservation management lessons from over 2500 oral and poster presentations, 26 mini-symposia, special sessions, and plenary speeches.

Among research results that maybe of interest to the Pacific were findings of a study along Australia's Great Barrier Reef that demonstrated reef resilience but a loss of coral diversity in response to climate change.

"Results mirrored those found in Kiribati where coral cover rates recovered after a bleaching event in 2005, but a shift in prevalence to fewer but more resilient species of coral was also recorded," Vieux said.

"This has implications for fish populations as more resilient coral species are usually of the massive type that afford fish little protection, and reefs of fewer coral species are more susceptible to other threats," Vieux explained.

Discussions on conservation management highlighted the potential negative impacts of conservation projects on community dynamics and structures by empowering non-traditional leaders.

The official Outcomes Overview have been issued by Symposium organisers as well as an International Call to Action for Coral Reefs. These can be accessed at www.sprep.org/PYOR.

Workshop participants conducting household surveys on Arno in Marshall Islands as part of a training workshop in May. Photo: Caroline Vieux.



Pacific training wins global friends

Regional coordinators developing socio-economic monitoring guidelines for six global regions shared experiences of their training programmes and agreed to establish a network that could explore opportunities for joint projects at a retreat in July in Florida, USA.

Coordinators from the Caribbean, Central America, East Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia welcomed the contribution of the Pacific coordinator and SPREP's Coral Reef Management Officer, Caroline Vieux, who explained the Pacific training programme involved a week-long workshop in May and a six-month trial in participants' home countries.

Participants in the Pacific training programme attended a workshop in May where trainers helped each work through the draft SEM Pasifika Guidelines to define survey objectives, design questionnaires, select indicators, conduct surveys, analyse data, and report findings. Funding was then provided for participants to test the guidelines in marine protected areas in their home countries over six months.

According to Vieux, coordinators across the globe faced common challenges and found ways to resolve some of these.

"All coordinators identified data analysis as a problem and resolved to explore a joint project across a number of regions to address this issue. Agreement was also reached on a common reporting format to enable some comparison within and across regions, and a long term goal of the network is to publish accumulated data," Vieux said.

Long term socio-economic monitoring using the SEM Pasifika Guidelines, which will be launched in October at the IUCN's World Conservation Congress with other regional guidelines, will be possible through the provision of funds from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Fishermen focus group discussion during field work in Arno, Marshall Islands. Photo: Caroline Vieux.





The socioeconomic and marine resources survey teams.

Vanuatu conducts MPA and governance surveys

Marine resource and socioeconomic data collection in villages in northern Efate, Pele, and Emao islands in Vanuatu was completed in mid-August by teams of staff from Government and non-Government agencies, a research institute, regional organisations, and community members as part of the second phase of a multi-agency governance project.

The recently developed SEM-Pasifika Guidelines for socioeconomic monitoring were used to conduct 200 surveys in eight villages over a two-week period. The surveys, led by SPREP's Coral Reef Management Officer Caroline Vieux, afforded training to staff of Government agencies and the local non-Government organisation partner, Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP) – Vanuatu, and community members.

Marine resources surveys were concentrated around one village in order to test survey methods with further surveys to cover the remainder of the project area planned for later this year and next.

According to Ms Vieux, the collected data will serve at least two immediate purposes.

“The baseline data collected in this second phase will contribute to a GIS database of relevant environment data to support decision-making and will assist FSP Vanuatu assess the impacts of a marine protected area they helped establish two years ago,” Ms Vieux explained.

Initial results of these surveys will be presented to communities in November when a third visit is planned to study the appropriateness of the scale of management, which currently exists at village level. A full report of this second phase should be available next year.

This most recent visit built on support given to the project in February by Government agencies and village representatives. The project is part of the Coral Reef Initiatives for the Pacific programme and is led by the Noumea-based Institut de Recherche pour le Developpement and supported by SPREP.

Gathering fishing location information in Emua village as part of socioeconomic surveys.



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CRISP



The Coral Reef Initiatives for the Pacific (CRISP) programme is an initiative of the French Government that aims to support contributions of different scientific disciplines and crosscutting network activities.



Ceremonie kava
chefferie Sigave.
Photo: Magali Verducci.

Un plan de gestion de l'espace maritime a Wallis et Futuna

Le PGEM s'inscrit dans la composante 1A (Aires marines protégées et gestion côtière intégrée) du CRISP dont l'objectif est de renforcer les AMP, et de participer à la gestion intégrée des ressources marines dans le Pacifique ».

Le but est d'élaborer ce plan de gestion avec les populations riveraines et les utilisateurs de cet espace. Il est basé sur la concertation grâce à de nombreux échanges. Il est

- un compromis entre, la protection de l'environnement, l'exploitation des ressources marines, l'occupation de l'espace et les activités terrestres.
- Un consensus entre les différents acteurs du développement

L'élaboration du PGEM de Wallis et Futuna comprend 4 phases :

- la faisabilité du PGEM dans la collectivité concernée
- les études et rendus techniques concernant l'état des lieux à la fois physique, biologique et humain,
- l'élaboration du plan de gestion suite à la restitution des données et à la concertation,
- le suivi du plan de gestion.

La phase 1 a mis en évidence les points suivants, communs aux différentes îles, ont pu être identifiés :

- Une diminution des ressources marines ;
- Des pratiques de pêches destructrices ;
- Un manque d'informations sur l'environnement marin ;
- Une demande d'informations et de sensibilisation sur le thème de l'environnement en général ;
- Une volonté de prendre des mesures pour gérer les ressources.

La phase 2 qui comprend donc l'analyse du milieu naturel, l'analyse du milieu humain, l'évolution naturelle du milieu (si aucune mesure de gestion n'était entreprise) et les mesures à prendre pour assurer un développement durable a également été achevée et remise aux autorités de Wallis.

La phase 3 est en cours de préparation, ce sera la phase la plus longue car elle doit aboutir sur un zonage et une réglementation acceptée par tous.

Lors de cette phase il est prévu le déplacement de personnes vivant à Wallis et Futuna en Polynésie française pour permettre un échange entre les différentes collectivités. - **Annie Aubanel** (annie.aubanel@urbanisme.gov.pf)



Map of Noto Village in North Tarawa, Kiribati - site of the proposed Ramsar Site.

Kiribati designates first Ramsar site



Kiribati has moved several steps closer to becoming a party to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Kiribati is currently implementing a Ramsar small grants project to help them undertake the necessary work for joining the Convention. Along with community and stakeholder consultations, the country will also need to designate its first Wetland of International Importance ("Ramsar site") under the convention, for which Noto Village in North Tarawa has been selected.

Noto has a total area of 1,033 hectares and contains 27 hectares of natural mangrove (12 stands) along with numerous mangrove restoration sites on the lagoon side of the village. The proposed site also encompasses two lagoon patch reefs with a combined area of 1km² and the entire fringing reef on ocean side of Noto, also about 1km². All together the Noto Ramsar site will manage 2 square kilometers of intact reef habitat.

SPREP's Associate Ramsar Officer, Vainuupo Jungblut, and SPREP's Marine Conservation Analyst Paul Anderson, spent a week in June to help MELAD staff and village leaders delineate and document the proposed Ramsar site.

"Right now we are hoping that all the necessary work under Kiribati's Ramsar's project will be completed by August to enable them to join the Convention by the 10th Conference of the Parties in October," said Jungblut.

Part of the process involved mapping and clearly demarcating boundaries of the site. This was carried out in conjunction with the community of Noto as part of the training. The training covered theory, practical field applications, and concluded with a session on data processing and cartography.

"We were successful in mapping the entire Ramsar site — both ocean and lagoon side — during the training. This is important given that the management will be different within the Ramsar site," said Anderson.

By October, Kiribati should be a signatory of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands with Noto Village listed as its first Ramsar site.

The Ramsar Convention, named for the city in Iran where it was signed in 1971, promotes the conservation and wise use of the world's wetlands.

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RAMSAR

The shark management framework now under development is designed to turn back the tide on recent declines in shark populations in the region. Photo by Jim Maragos.



Regional framework for shark protection

Recent years have seen a sharp and alarming decline in shark stocks in the Pacific and worldwide, driven largely by “shark-finning” and other unsustainable fishing practices including by-catch. Clearly, prompt and effective action is required to ease this trend.

At its annual meeting in 2007, SPREP Members endorsed the inclusion of sharks in its regional marine species management framework and directed its Secretariat to collaborate with other regional organisations to develop a regional action plan. As a result, SPREP proposed that a working group of technical staff from Pacific regional organisations active in these meet, at the earliest opportunity, to begin work on developing a Pacific Regional Plan of Action for Sharks.

The first meeting of this group took place in Port Vila, Vanuatu, 9 June 2008. Representatives from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) joined SPREP in laying the groundwork for creation of what is hoped will be a comprehensive shark action plan for the Pacific.

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) is also a key partner in this initiative, but was unable to attend the Vanuatu meeting.

After receiving updates on current stock estimates and trends, the meeting focused on developing a plan of action and a draft document for consideration by Pacific island governments. If adopted after extensive consultations, this document would likely serve as a precursor to more formalised institutional arrangements.

The working group concluded that a consolidated regional approach would be the best way and that it would provide the ability for Pacific island countries to meet their obligations under the WCPFC’s Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for Sharks. They also stressed the importance of an approach consistent with existing global shark management guidelines established by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

Currently, more than 50 highly-migratory shark species are planned to be included in the regional management programme. It is hoped that the programme will expand to include additional coastal species in the future.

Several shark species are listed in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, with some species also listed in Appendices I & II of CITES.

Calendar of Pacific Events



REEF TALK

Find out more about upcoming campaign events in the Pacific from our website at www.sprep.org/pyor or from www.iyor.com.

**7
Jul**

- Coral parade and carnival in CNMI
- ★ 11th International Coral Reef Symposium
- Hawai'i Year of the Reef campaign begins
- "Conservation through art" exhibition in Hawai'i
- 16th Annual Hawai'i Conservation Conference under the theme "Island Ecosystems: The Year of the Reef" (29-31)
- 10th Festival of Pacific Arts begins in Pago Pago, American Samoa

**8
Aug**

- ★ Phase 2 of CRISP governance project in Vanuatu led by IRD and SPREP
- "Battle of the Minds" secondary school quiz contest starts in Samoa
- "Sunset on the Beach" event at Waikiki Beach, Hawai'i (31)

**9
Sep**

- ★ Phase 2 of 'challengecoralreef' competition closes
- Marine studies course for secondary schools begins in Fiji
- Australian Underwater Federation shark count in Melbourne (6 Sep-6 Oct)
- ★ 19th SPREP Meeting side event on PYOR'08 (8-12)
- 3rd Steering Committee Meeting of the Pacific partnership on Sustainable Water Management in Samoa (10)
- ★ World Water Monitoring Day (18 September)
- Coral Monitoring Session in Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia begins (27 Sep-10 Oct)

**10
Oct**

- ★ IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain (5-14)
- "Take the Right Route" in CMNI (10)
- ★ Intl. Pacific Marine Educators Network Conf., Townsville, Australia (16-19)
- ★ Intl. Youth Coastal Conference, Townsville, Australia (19-22)
- Port Douglas IYOR Festival in Australia features underwater films, beach clean ups, educational fair, and futures forum (24-25/10)
- 'Ridge 2 Reef Scavenger Hunt' in Saipan, CNMI (25/10)

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is an intergovernmental organisation working with Pacific islands countries and territories to strengthen environmental management and promote sustainable development.

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Help us save and protect our Pacific reefs.

- Let us know about your Pacific Year of the Reef activities
- Provide pictures and articles on coral reef science for our website and newsletters
- Share links to educational material for use by all
- Contribute to the Pacific Reef Trust Fund
- Co-fund 'challengecoralreef' and 'Legends of the Reef' competitions
- Let artists know about SPREP's programmes during the Pacific Arts Festival
- Support the development of a behaviour-change workshop kit

Campaign resources

Our 2008 PYOR webpage has useful information and resources for coral reef education. Visit it at www.sprep.org/pyor.

