



WCS EBM Kubulau Bulletin



Ni sa bula vinaka. Welcome to the first edition of The WCS EBM Kubulau Bulletin, which will bring together news and results from ongoing activities by the Wildlife Conservation Society within the Kubulau area.

News:

New Staff Welcome and Farewell to Kathy

WCS is pleased to introduce three new arrivals. Martin Callow (top left) will be moving from the UK to join the team in late May as the new Project Director. Stacy Jupiter (top right), originally from the USA, has just moved to Fiji from Australia to take up the role of Associate Conservation Scientist to supervise WCS research activities in the region. Akuila Cakacaka (bottom left) has arrived as the new Marine Biologist, having just completed a Masters degree at USP. Kathy Walls (bottom right), the current Director is leaving by the end of June to return to her native homeland in New Zealand. Farewell, Kathy, and good luck on your next adventure.



Project Update:

EBM monitoring results from 2007 surveys: Fish abundance

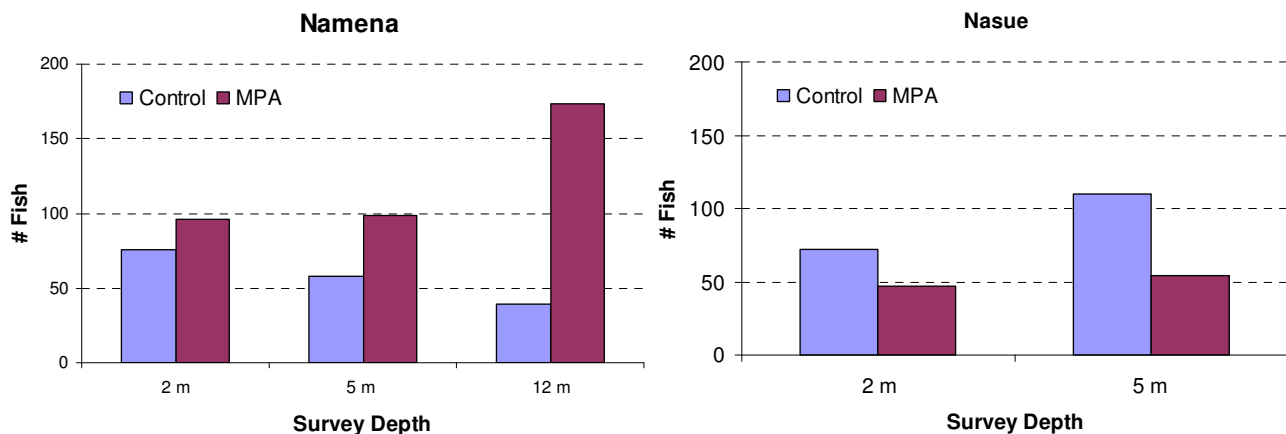
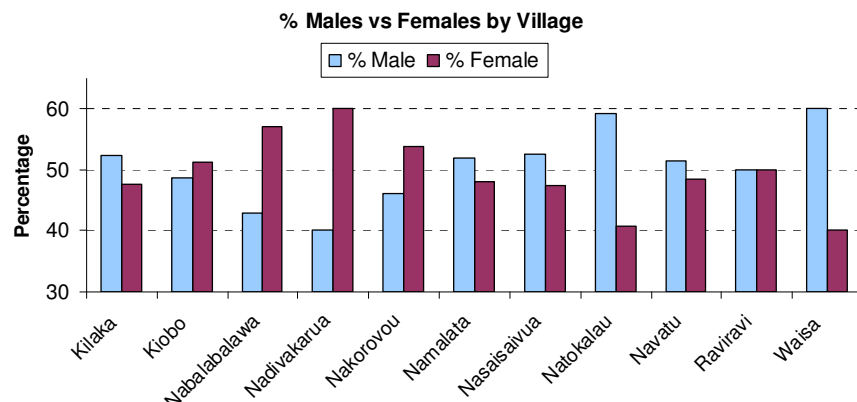


Figure 1. Graphs show total number of fish observed per transect within and adjacent to the Namena MPA (left) and the Nasue MPA (right)

Contrasting patterns: Preliminary findings show that fish are more abundant and are larger at all depths surveyed in the much older Namena MPA than at control sites outside the MPA boundary. Around the Nasue MPA, fish outside the MPA are larger and more abundant. Recent data collected during biological monitoring surveys this April-May may help explain whether the differences are due to the number of years that the reserve has been in place, fishing pressure or differences in fish species found at each location.

Where are all of the Men and Women in Kubulau?



While in total there are just about equal numbers of men and women within the entire qoliqoli, analysis of socioeconomic survey data collected by Betani Salusalu for WCS in 2005 show that some villages have much higher proportions of men, while others have more women. (Note: the census data includes children as well as adults)

Recent Work Completed:

- Biological monitoring of fish, invertebrates and coral habitat, April-May 2008
- Community monitoring training, March-April 2008

Work In Progress:



WCS Workshops in May

1. Catch Per Unit Effort/Fish Tagging Workshop. Location: Navatu

Fish catch monitors will be trained from Raviravi, Navatu, Nakorovou and Kiobo on how to identify fish and invertebrate species and measure lengths of catch. Each volunteer will then collect information on fish catch from every boat landing at their village in a 24 hour period, once per week for one year. In addition, representatives from the 10 villages in the qoliqoli will be briefed about what to do if they catch a tagged fish. This month, WCS researchers led by Daniel Egli will begin tagging fish within the

MPA to determine if fish move outside and how far they move. This will allow us to show how MPAs can contribute directly to fish catch outside the MPA.

2. Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment. Location: Raviravi

WCS staff Thomas Tui will lead discussions with representatives from all villages in the Kubulau qoliqoli to try to improve preparedness for future climate change scenarios. Topics that will be addressed include: vulnerability of different habitats, consequences of sea level rise, food security, and development of a crop calendar.



Upcoming activities

- Community monitoring: socioeconomic data to be gathered (May 2008)
- Management committee site inspection of MPAs (May 2008)
- Seagrass habitat mapping by visiting student, Lindsay Aylesworth (May-June 2008)
- Coral reef habitat mapping (June 2008)

Thank you very much to all the villages in Kubulau. Your support drives the project's success.