

NEWSLETTER - MAY



MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

2007

THE 2007 DOLPHIN AND WHALE WATCHING SURVEY OF SAMOA & BIOPSY TRAINING (29 May – 2 June)

Whale and dolphin watching is a growing industry in many parts of the world including Pacific islands such as Tonga, French Polynesia and Cook islands and has generated a great deal of revenue for these countries. Currently there is no dedicated commercial whale or dolphin watching operation in Samoa. However, dive operators operating around Upolu and Savaii undertake opportunistic whale and dolphin watching when they encounter them during their diving trips.

An initial dolphin and whale watching survey was conducted from 29 May to 2 June 2007 by the Marine Conservation Section of DEC with technical assistance by Marc Oremus, consultant

from the University of Auckland, and in collaboration with the SPREP and the Fisheries Division. The survey concentrated around the Northwestern area of Savaii being the known hotspot areas for whales and dolphins. A training on 'how to collect samples from the animal's tissues (biopsy sampling) for genetic analysis' using a modified rifle was also conducted concurrently.

The Objectives of the Survey and Training were:

1. To assess and determine the potential feasibility of whale and dolphin watching in Samoa by observing, sampling and documenting the occurrence and abundance of whales and dolphins species in the identified priority areas;

2. To collect scientific data to build and/or improve local knowledge and understanding of cetaceans and/or watching in Samoa;

3. To build capacity of local government officials in cetacean identification and biopsy sampling using a veterinary modified rifle;

Preliminary survey results reveal that during the 5 day survey, Spinner dolphins were encountered in large numbers around the Falelima area. This indicates that this was a sheltered area used by the dolphins during the day to rest and socialize.

A total of 15 tissue samples were collected from Spinner dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*), Rough-toothed dolphins (*Steno bredanensis*) and Short-finned pilot whales



Spinner dolphin in action

and trace the originality of dolphin species found in Samoa.

The DEC wishes to acknowledge the UNDP for funding this survey.

EMERGENCY SURVIVAL KIT

Preparedness for all kinds of disaster is very important, having a level of understanding and awareness of the nature of any hazard as well as what to do when such a disaster occur. One of the actions we can do for the preparedness is to prepare the EMERGENCY

• Food & Water for 3 days

- canned or dried food
- a can opener
- a primus or BBQ to cook on
- bottled water (3 litres per person per day)
- check and renew the food and water every 12 months

• Emergency Items

- first aid kit and essential medicines
- spare toilet paper & plastic rubbish bags for emergency toilet
- pet supplies

- radio and spare batteries
- check batteries every 3 months

• Emergency Clothing

- wind proof / rainproof
- sun hats
- blankets / sleeping bags
- strong shoes for outdoors

• Supplies for babies / kids

- food and drink
- change of clothing
- favorite toy or activity

• Supplies for Special Needs

- hearing aids

- mobility aids
- glasses

• Your First Aid Kit

- You should have a complete first aid kit available in your home. If you can't get or make one yourself never hesitate to ask your nearest hospital officials or a Red Cross outlet.

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National Parks / National Reserves “Good Management” Project Kickoff Workshop 29th – 31st May, 2007

MNRE (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment) and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) have recently launched a three (3) year project on the management of government owned National Parks and National Reserves. To mark the start of this project, a three-day kickoff workshop was held on 29th, 30th and 31st of May. It was a well-attended workshop, with representatives from the government, international organizations and NGOs, and participants from DEC (Division of Environment and Conservation) and F/D (Forest Division) which are the two major bodies of the project.



Every participant was welcomed with a beautiful lei upon arrival, then the workshop was officially opened by the JICA representative Mr. Yoshifusa Shikama and MNRE-CEO Dr. Tuuu Ieti Taulealo. It was followed by an overview of the project by the Project Coordinator Ms. Sayaka Tsutsumi (details to follow below);

The Project Goals are;

- 1) Samoa's national parks and reserves will be
 - Upgraded
 - Properly managed
 - Expanded

And continue the level of good standard into the future

- 2) Samoa's general public will become fully aware of the importance of national parks and reserves for the benefit of our present and future generations

The project at the same will engage in installing a SELF SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM that goes like clockwork so that at the end of the three

year period the particular areas will produce a Management Plan which is as good as implemented and custom made for Samoa.

The project will focus on three (3) backbone activities that are;

1. Formulate management plans for One Pilot Site each
 - O le Pupu-Pu'e NP
 - Vailima Reserve
2. Implement the plans
 - Install self-monitoring system
 - maintain / fix your hand-made bicycle
3. Awareness programs throughout the period of project
 - then if successful, expand to other parks/reserves of Samoa (And possibly other countries of the region as well)

After the project briefing, all the participants stood up and made a big circle, and introduced themselves in a friendly and humorous manner, which was a nice icebreaking for the workshop.

This was followed by an informative presentation on basic project design by DEC-ACEO Mr. Faumuina Pati Liu and F/D-ACEO Mr. Nanai Tony Leutele, then on the history of O le Pupu-Pue National Park and Vailima Reserve by Mr. Faleafaga Toni Tipama'a, Nialuga Evaimalo and Mr. Aukuso Leavasa. National Parks and Reserves concepts from an international perspective was lectured by Mr. Stuart Chape from SPREP.

The first day ended with an enthusiastic discussion on the project goal.



The second and third days were mainly for the continuation of discussions, with

topics widely covered from community involvement, sustainable park management, ecological surveys, legislation review and awareness aspects.

The workshop concluded with a fruitful breakdown of workplan, which will



guide the project for the rest of the three years.

Final congratulations were given to those who stayed until the last minute of the workshop, and a beautiful gift was handed to each one of them by JICA staff.

The evaluation of the workshop given by the participants reflects that it has successfully put together the project body into a single task force and that a strong teamwork was built. Congratulations, and looking forward to a successful implementation of the project.



Monthly Summary of Earthquake Events in Samoa

May 2007

Geophysics Section Samoa Meteorology Division

Significant Events:

Samoa Islands:

Earthquake: The most significant earthquake event this month for the Tonga Islands occurred on Thursday 17th May at 10:49:02(pm) Samoan time. A magnitude **5.2 earthquake** occurred in the Tonga Islands region, approximately 265 kilometres west south west of Apia, at a depth of approximately **41.4 kilometres** below the seabed. The event had a **Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI) 2-3**, meaning that the earthquake was felt by most if not all people both indoors and outdoors. No tsunami had formed as a result of the earthquake. If anyone noted any damages to their homes or

property in general as a result of this event, please notify the National Disaster Management Office at phone number 23702 or 23701 for documentation.

Applications of the information

The information provided may be useful for all members of society in the context of disaster and risk planning as well as management, and also for engineering purposes. In particular, the information provided reminds us of the devastating nature of tsunamis, and the importance of undertaking necessary preparation measures to minimize and mitigate the impacts of this hazard at all lev-

els of society in Samoa, should a disaster of this type occur.

For more information, please contact the Geophysics Section or the National Disaster Management Section of the Samoa Meteorology Division.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

IF YOU NOTE ANY SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE TO YOUR HOME, PROPERTY, OR PUBLIC UTILITIES AS A RESULT OF AN EARTHQUAKE EVENT, PLEASE NOTIFY THE NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT SECTION OF THE SAMOA METEOROLOGY DIVISION FOR DOCUMENTATION.

Table 1: Summary of earthquake events for the month of May 2007

Total number of earthquake events recorded:	21
Highest magnitude event recorded	6.5 on the Richter scale
Lowest magnitude event recorded	4.4 on the Richter scale
Average magnitude of events recorded	5.6
Major region(s) of events' occurrence	Approximately 60% of the events recorded occurred in the Tonga Islands region; the remaining 40% occurred in other parts of the Pacific Rim as well as adjacent regions.

UPDATE WEBSITE

MNRE website has been updated and the following publications are available to download:

- Corporate Plan 2006 - 2008
- Management Plan 2006 - 2008
- Service Charter 2006 - 2008
- Heritage Calendar 2006
- Monthly Newsletter
- Weekly Newspaper Articles

LIVE CANE TOAD FOUND AT MATAUTU UTA – Need to eliminate it now!



A report was received by the Division of Environment & Conservation (DEC) early Wednesday, 30th May 2007 from the Quarantine Division at Matautu tai that a **live Cane Toad** (*Bufo marinus*) is in the office brought over by a staff of the Alaimoana Hotel at Matautu uta. The cane toad was reported to be found

on the premises of the hotel.

This positive and unexpected finding initiated DEC and Quarantine to distribute information leaflets, interview families and conduct night and day surveys and the search started off that very same morning and information was disseminated on this cane toad and its impacts to our Samoan environment. DEC in collaboration with Quarantine and Samoa's National Invasive Task Team (SNITT) throughout the month of May and June 2007 conducted surveys in search of the invasive cane toad.

The surveys were mainly conducted from Matautu-uta (starting at Juliana Rentals) to Moata'a (ending at Church), Apia Park Complex, Levili and Vaipuna.

This is the first time a live cane toad has been found but there have been regular sightings since the end of 2006 to present from Tuana'imato, Siusega, Pesega, Vaivase and now Matautu-uta. Volunteering support from the Ministry and various partners of the Ministry had joined these searches and a great faamalo to all who have supported this although there was noth-

Support and assistance from the villagers and communities around Matautu-uta, Vaivase (Samoa College), Pesega, Siusega and Tuana'imato are welcomed to report any sightings or call by cane toad and/or catch and bring them to the Division of Environment and Conservation, Vaiala, House #7. Everyone is welcome to report sightings of this invasive animal to the Division of Environment & Conservation through phone numbers 31198 or 31197 or if a live one is caught the Division is happy to receive it.

New Recruits:

Moeumu Uili

-Marine Conservation Officer

Mandria Ulberg

-Strategic Planning Officer

Pisila Pauli

-Administration Officer

Promotion:

Siosinamele Lui

-Senior Scientific Officer - Geophysics

Resignations:

Tepa Suaesi

-GEF Consultant

Sigalo Tavita

-Administration Officer

Josephine Toomata

-Second Secretariat to the Minister

NOTICE BOARD “WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY” 5TH JUNE

@@@@@ **Hilarious Reading** @@@@@@
HR AMENDED POLICY

Dress Code:

It is advised that you come to work dressed according to your salary. If we see you wearing Prada shoes and carrying a GUCCI HOOGI bag, we assume you are doing well financially and therefore do not need a raise. If you dress poorly, you need to learn to manage your money better, so that you buy nicer clothes, and therefore you do not need a raise. If you dress just right, you are right where you need to be and therefore you do not need a raise.

Sick Days:

We will no longer accept a doctor's statement of proof of sickness. If you are able to go to the doctor, you are able to come to work.

Annual Leave Days:

Each employee will receive a 104 Annual Leave Days a year. They are called Saturday and Sunday.

Lunch Break:

Skinny people get 30 minutes for lunch, as they need to eat more, so that they can look healthy. Normal size people get 15 minutes for lunch to get a balanced meal to maintain their average figure. Chubby people get 5 minutes for lunch, because that's all they need to drink a Slim-Fast.

Restroom Use:

Entirely too much time is being spent in the restrooms. There is now a three-minute time limit in the stalls. At the end of 3 minutes, an alarm will sound, the toilet paper roll will retract, the stall door will open and a picture will be taken. After your second offence, your picture will be posted on the bulletin board under the chronic offenders category. Anyone caught smiling in the pic-

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