



IUCN Oceania

Marine Programme



Pacific Islanders have a deep connection to the ocean. It features in their dance and art, linking closely to their cultural practises, while providing the necessities for their sustenance. The terrestrial and marine environments of the Oceania region support enormous biological diversity, including large numbers of endemic and endangered species. IUCN Oceania's priorities include marine conservation and acts to catalyse the sustainable management of fisheries, ecosystems and resources.

What are the programme's goals?

The goal of IUCN Oceania's Marine Programme is: To achieve significant improvement in the conservation of marine biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources in marine and coastal ecosystems, throughout Oceania, and is based on that of the IUCN Global Marine Programme. IUCN Oceania intends to build capacity and support the work of Pacific Island countries by closely linking with the relevant expertise in Australia, New Zealand and the world.

Importance of the programme to the Pacific

The Oceania region is the largest continuous marine habitat on the Planet. Its coral reefs, mangroves, sea-grass beds and other coastal habitats and associated marine life are highly diverse. Deeper areas of the ocean are largely unexplored. The marine environment is under pressure from growing human population and development, thus making ocean resource management more important now than ever before.



Projects Completed/Planned 2009

IUCN Oceania's current activities fall predominantly under the Oceanic Fisheries Management Project (OFMP). The OFMP is a 5 year initiative designed to improve the management and conservation of oceanic fishery resources in the Pacific Islands region. Work under this project involves conducting an assessment of the impact of long-line fisheries on seamounts in the Pacific. In particular it aims to determine:

- proportion of pelagic long-line conducted on seamounts;
- incentives for targeting/not targeting seamounts; gear and methods used;
- whether predation is more of an issue near seamounts; catch rates of target, incidental and discard species; and
- implications related to the effects of pelagic long-lining on seamount functioning

To achieve these objectives, interviews with pelagic long-line fishermen regarding methods, gear and strategies for fishing on sea mounts, have been completed in four countries: Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga and Fiji. A total of 31 fishing boat captains have been interviewed, and the results stored electronically. Data analysis has been completed, and the draft report is nearing finalisation.



Other planned activities include: Outreach with relevant stakeholders including national governments and long-line industries; and preparation of an information paper outlining possible management techniques for long-line fishing vessels.

IUCN Oceania is also working on the Pacific Ocean 2020 Initiative which is calling for new commitments towards a healthier Pacific Ocean and the Pacific Mangroves Initiative – focusing on mangroves and associated coastal resource management.

To learn more:

Visit: www.iucn.org/oceania for the latest news on activities or to download publications.

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