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FACTSHEET

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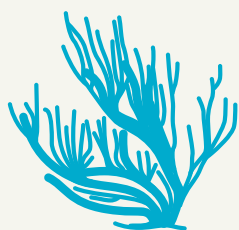


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WWF Priority Places- Southwest Pacific

Macuata Qoliqoli Cokovata- Fiji

Conservation Focus



**FIJI'S GREAT SEA REEF,
IS THE THIRD LONGEST
BARRIER REEF IN THE
WORLD**

The Macuata Qoliqoli Cokovata essentially encompasses four districts, Dreketi, Macuata, Sasa and Mali, which collectively retain custodial ownership over fishing grounds for a section of the Great Sea Reef, the third longest reef system in the world. The area is located in the mid section along the northern coast of Vanua Levu, the second largest island in Fiji. The Great Sea Reef is over 150 kilometres in length, sustaining an exceptional level of marine biodiversity and endemism. The entire reef itself is considered of global significance and identified as one of five marine global priority areas in Fiji. WWF was instrumental in facilitating one of the first comprehensive marine surveys in the area in 2004 of which documented approximately 55 per cent of all known coral reef fish in Fiji (with a predicted actual value of 80 per cent), 74 per cent of all known corals found in Fiji and in total 40 per cent of all the known marine flora and fauna in the Fiji Islands. Additionally, 117 species of sponges, 31 species of coelenterates and 12 species of ascidian were collected. Populations of at least 12 species listed on the 2004 IUCN Red List of threatened species were observed which included 10 species of fish, green turtles and the spinner dolphin. With hard corals, 43 new records were documented and 16 species were found to be new additions to the flora of the Fiji archipelago. The number of species recorded from this survey remains the highest of any other reef area surveyed in Fiji.

Site Profile

The Macuata Qoliqoli Cokovata site collective covers a land area of approximately 2064km², with a total marine area or qoliqoli of 1,349km². In total the site encompasses 37 villages located on the mainland and three outlying islands, Mali, Kia and Macuata-i-wai within their qoliqoli. Also included within the boundaries of the four districts is a number of cane farming homesteads and settlements. The collective population is over 4,000 with 75 per cent of households in the area deriving an income from the extraction of natural resources.

Conservation- Safeguarding Nature and Community Interests

The project site is WWF's largest in Fiji and its site involvement began in November 2004, when WWF participated in a FLMMA (Fiji Locally Marine Managed Areas Network) organised community workshop in the area. The participants included the traditional leaders and chiefs from the four districts who collectively voiced their concerns with regard to the increasing environmental threats impacting upon the viability of their marine and terrestrial resources. One of the major threats identified was the over exploitation and poor management of their fishing grounds resulting in degradation and poor fish catches and the excessive outflow of sediment into their qoliqoli due to poor land management. As an outcome of this community workshop, WWF was invited by the Tui Macuata, the Traditional Province High Chief, to work collaboratively with the communities in the four districts to address and mitigate the degradation of their marine environment

Since then WWF and its project partners have been working with community members and the provincial administration to promote sustainable management practices of marine and land resources in the area. Through this initiative there has been a development of a network of marine protected areas through participatory stakeholder consultations and community driven management approaches. Aside from ensuring the communities appreciate and actively work towards conserving the areas unique biodiversity, WWF has also actively promoted sustainable livelihood initiatives to ensure a complimentary approach to this objective.



Mangrove Islands are also a special feature of Macuata's Qoliqoli Cokovata. In addition to its ecological importance, the mangrove islands have a special cultural significance and are regarded as the fish basket of the province. Fish caught for cultural ceremonies are taken from Talailau's reefs; this is one of the most significant mangrove islands situated 3km off the main coastline of Macuata and is 19.24km² in area. WWF has been applying an ecosystem based management approach to managing the areas community network of marine protected areas and ensuring an integrated approach to conservation through community engagement, participation and capacity building.

WWF Community Assisted Achievements at a Glance

- The first ever systematic effort to document the marine biodiversity of the Great Sea Reef region of Fiji
- The establishment of a network of community marine, mangrove and forest protected areas
- The establishment of a Qoliqoli Cokovata Management Committee to oversee the long term management of the protected areas network
- Turtle Monitors Network Community based turtle monitors who support the recovery of marine turtles through specific awareness and advocacy programmes with their communities
- Support to site committees in securing community grants to implement key community actions such as reforestation programmes, developing model farms and sustainable income options.
- Capacity building for community fish wardens to ensure enforcement and compliance of marine protected areas management plan

For more information

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Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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