

BLUE VENTURES CONSERVATION

Marine reserves boost village fisheries

- Women's Association take part in exchange programme
- Temporary octopus no-take zone established on Ille aux Nattes
- Rare Pride campaign manager visits Fiji
- News from Malaysia and Fiji

Coordinated octopus reserve openings a success

The second spring tide in August 2009 marked the second coordinated opening of the network of octopus reserves within the Velondriake community marine protected area. These temporary reserves, created to protect octopus stocks during the crucial spawning and recruitment period, had remained closed to fishing since the first week of June.

A two-phase opening schedule was planned with local communities to prevent overfishing of the reserves by opportunistic visiting fishers, as well as to ensure the fisheries collection company, Copefrito, had the capacity to transport and process the large volume of octopus catch landed.

The first stage of the openings occurred on the 19th August in the northern part of Velondriake, with three reserves opening for the villages of Nosy Be, Bevato, Belavenoke and Andranombala. The second stage of the openings occurred 2 days later, when a further five reserves were opened for the central and southern villages of Velondriake, between Nosy Mitata and Ankitambagna. Blue Ventures scientists and Velondriake Management Committee members were present at each individual reserve opening to observe and monitor the events, resolve any last minute community issues and ensure the Copefrito collection ran smoothly.

For the first time since fisheries management trials began in 2004, Copefrito increased its collection prices for octopus greater than 2 kg to 1,400 Ariary/kg for the opening days, compared with 1,000 Ariary/kg normally. Octopus weighing less than 2 kg fetched a price of 1,100 Ar/kg on opening day; a 100 Ariary increase on the regular price. More than 10 tonnes of octopus were caught during the two opening days. 'Octopus parties' were held at the beginning of September to celebrate the success of the openings and to hand out prizes. A competition was run by Blue Ventures to award the fisher with the largest octopus - the largest specimen, caught by a fisher from Belavenoke, weighing an incredible 8.5 kg.

IN THIS ISSUE



Permanent reserve established in Andavadoaka P3

Six sites chosen as reserves by local communities



Marine turtle workshop held in Andavadoaka P3

Aims to raise awareness of marine turtle conservation issues



Implants provided by family planning project P4

Progesterin implants provide three year contraceptives



Research updates from Malaysia and Fiji P5

Recently established research projects continue



Above: Vezo fishers sail in pirogues to the opened reserve.



Right: The fomba (traditional blessing) takes place at the opening of the reserve.

Facilitating effective local management

These latest reserves have also proved to be a great opportunity for the Velondriake Committee and community members to improve their management and problem resolution within the MPA, since inevitable issues and complications arise around the reserve re-openings. While rare, some cases of stealing from reserves were reported in a few villages over the closure period. The Velondriake Committee fined one fisherman for trespassing in the reserve and gave two others final warnings. All villages reported much lower levels of suspected theft over the last closure period than any previous closure.

Nosy Hao limited access to their reserve for those who paid into a community fund to finance a site guardian. This effectively created the first user-fee supported reserve in Madagascar. On opening day, several community members had not paid the fee and were scolded by community leaders; however, they were not turned away from the reserve. In the future, Nosy Hao leaders promised to prevent non-payers from entering the reserve.

One of the keys to success of the latest closure was the organisation of a special communications team, the Velondriake Miara Miasa (VMM). The team consists of Blue Ventures' local staff members plus experienced Velondriake leaders, with the responsibility of disseminating information around Velondriake and collecting data on the landed octopus. One month before the opening, the VMM was sent out to tour the Velondriake villages to communicate the plan for the opening day

and help communities solve any outstanding issues with the reserves, such as rumours of theft. A few days before the openings, the VMM was sent out to confirm opening dates, communicate the new, increased prices for opening day, and assist communities with any last-minute problems, such as trespassing or destructive fishing witnessed near the reserves.

This positive result came at an opportune time for Blue Ventures and Velondriake, and supports the Velondriake Committee in the establishment of permanent reserves on coral reef, seagrass and mangrove habitats. The next round of octopus reserves are planned for November. Meetings will be held in the coming months for villages to select sites for closure, and to finalise exact closure dates.

An in-depth study of the effects of closure length and the season the closure occurred in is underway using octopus catch data from 2004 to the present. The results of this analysis will be integrated into the management strategies of the Velondriake MPA to maximise effectiveness of the short-term seasonal closures to octopus fishing and ensure long-term sustainability for octopus stocks.



Above: A happy fisherman with a large octopus caught after the reserve opening.

First permanent reserve closure in Andavadoaka; Oriagn driake

In 2006, a series of workshops was held throughout the Velondriake region discussing the benefits of permanent marine reserves and encouraging communities to consider choosing a small number of coral reef sites as permanent no take reserves. The local communities chose six sites known to them as having "soa-hara" (good coral cover). The sites are distributed evenly throughout the MPA area, and their choices were reaffirmed after completion of marine surveys and a detailed habitat map.

On 14 September 2009, the first permanent site finally closed: a 17.4 ha area surrounding a patch reef, known as Recruitment Reef or Oriagn driake. Not only does Oriagn driake exhibit exceptionally high levels of coral cover and fish biodiversity, the reef has also shown tremendous recovery of coral cover over 6 years of monitoring since 2003, with coral cover almost tripling from approximately 30% to 80% cover.

Navigation buoys were obtained from Toliara to delineate the permanent reserve boundaries. Once the buoys were ready for deployment, the village elders of Andavadoaka held a traditional sacred religious ceremony, or fomba, led by community elders Nahoda Noely and Nahoda Alex Norbert in Andavadoaka. During the ceremony, Nahoda Noely requested assistance from the ancestors to protect the reef from fishing or unauthorised entry. He asked the ancestors to make Oriagn driake sacred and proclaimed a Dina (local law) prohibiting illegal entry, to protect the reef so that it will serve to improve fisheries catches in the surrounding area. Further speeches followed wishing the reserve to have similar success to the region's octopus reserves, and thanking the community for its assistance.

Following traditional custom, a Zebu was sacrificed and shared by the community in the feast that followed. Further blessings took place on the beach and two of the village's other sacred sites around the village of Andavadoaka. The elders then sailed in open canoes to the reserve site where the buoys were being installed and Nahoda Noely led a final blessing.

Oriagn driake is now a permanent reserve and cannot be fished by any member of Velondriake or outside fishers. Anyone caught fishing in it will be fined 500,000 Ariary (160 GBP) and required to provide a zebu for the village. It is the first of six permanent reserve closures within Velondriake. The next five closures will take place in the coming months and will also be protected through traditional Dina. It is hoped that these faly ceremonies will further integrate the Vezo traditional belief system into the management of natural resources, improving sustainability and community acceptance of conservation initiatives.



Above: Community elders lead the traditional sacred religious ceremony.

Marine turtle fishers visit Andavadoaka for awareness raising workshop

In late October a two-day workshop was held in Andavadoaka to raise awareness of ongoing turtle conservation efforts. The workshop, involving 24 fishers from 10 villages within Velondriake, coincided with the start of the turtle nesting season. The perceived threats to turtles were explored in small focus groups of both fishers and local data collectors involved in BV's turtle fishery research. A concept model for threats to the turtle populations in the region was developed collaboratively with the workshop participants and will be used as a basis for the turtle management plan for the Velondriake region. The concept model maps the threats, contributing factors and possible management strategies concerning marine turtles in the Velondriake region. Among the strategies considered were improved enforcement efforts during the nesting season and a voluntary ban on the sale of turtle meat.

Following this workshop, Thomas (BV research assistant to the turtle research project) provided an introduction to basic turtle biology to increase education in the run up to the nesting season. Awareness-raising posters were distributed offering a reward for any pristine turtle nests reported to the Blue Ventures team in Andavadoaka. Since 2005, there has been a reward of 100,000 Ariary (approximately 28 GBP) for each nest reported, an equivalent price to the fisher for the eggs and female turtle they could have sold. The reward has only been claimed once, in 2008, when two nests were discovered for the first time in living memory, on a beach in Lamboara. It is hoped that more nests will be discovered and subsequently protected this nesting season. This nesting beach currently remains protected by the village of Lamboara and no further rewards will be offered for any nests found here.

Whilst the exploitation of marine turtles is prohibited by Malagasy law and was therefore included in the original Velondriake Dina, no steps have been taken to reduce the level of the fishery because of its strong cultural significance amongst Vezo fishing communities. For this reason, enforcement of these laws by the Ministry of Fisheries is rarely practiced and is generally considered to be of low priority. The turtle fishery has now been monitored in the Velondriake region for over two years, with the aid of local data collectors, thereby allowing the community to report turtle catches without fear of prosecution.



Above: Navigation buoys are installed to mark out the reserve.



Above: Attendees of the turtle workshop create a concept model for marine turtle management in Velondriake.

This relationship between BV, the Velondriake community and the turtle fishers, in particular, has allowed for the first steps of turtle fishery management to be explored in this region, with full community support.

Progestin implants provided for women in Andavadoaka

In August 2007, Blue Ventures opened a family planning clinic in the village of Andavadoaka to provide access to reproductive health services to women in the community, in particular where there was an unmet demand for family planning. Over the last 2 years, this project has grown steadily, and now forms a fully integrated component of Blue Ventures' activities in Velondriake. This September, fifteen women at the clinic were fitted with progestin implants, following a promotional tour of Velondriake's villages to identify demand for the 3-year contraceptive. Blue Ventures' family planning team hosted Dr. Joseph from the Morombe district hospital who fitted the implants after each candidate received thorough pre-treatment counselling.

The women who received implants are trailblazers in their communities and were given t-shirts to both reward the choice they made and to advertise to others in their community that they have made this choice, making it easier for others to follow.

Dr. Vik Mohan, manager of Blue Ventures' family planning project, oversaw this milestone in the project's development, training and coaching staff. The day also featured two community group plays focusing on the benefits of family planning and its link to community health, conservation and food security. Blue Ventures volunteers led interactive games illustrating the problems of over-fishing and its relation to population growth. A Malagasy film discussing STIs, HIV, and the risks of unprotected sex was well attended following the day's events.

Continued collaboration with Malagasy state health workers is being enhanced by a new partnership with outreach teams from reproductive health NGO Marie Stopes International. Working in partnership with Marie Stopes the Velondriake family planning team is working to diversify the available options of LARC (long-acting reversible



Above: Women from Andavadoaka are fitted with the progestin implant as part of Blue Ventures' family planning project.



Above: Community group plays help to illustrate the benefits of family planning.

contraception) methods including definitive surgeries.

Women's Association exchange

The Women's Association of Andavadoaka and Lamboara recently took part in an exchange programme organised jointly by WWF and BV. It was held in the Rural Commune of Manombo, south of the Velondriake region, from 12-19 July 2009.

Six representatives of the Velondriake women's associations took part in the exchange (four from Andavadoaka: Netsa Ernestine, Viviane, Balbine and Nanie and two from Lamboara: Hollande and Alphine). They were accompanied by Lalao Aigrette (BV's Women's Association manager) and Eualie Tanteliniony (WWF socio-organiser) who facilitated the workshops in the six villages visited. The six selected villages- Tsandamba, Ankaramifoka, Salary North, Salary South, Bekodoy and Andravony - are similar to those found in the Velondriake region, with the majority of the population directly dependent on marine resources for their livelihood. Velondriake's women's associations currently manage a number of small businesses, including sea cucumber farming, handicraft sales, and catering for village events.

The primary objective of the exchange was to raise awareness of the activities of Velondriake's women's associations and to run workshops for the women of these six villages to create their own organisations. Women's associations were promoted as a tool for the identification and promotion of alternative revenue-generating activities for women. Women from coastal villages throughout southwestern Madagascar participate in octopus gleaning on reef flats for subsistence and income. The long-term hope is that fishing pressure on nearshore reefs may be reduced by the creation of women's associations to generate viable alternative sources of income.

The exchange visit was considered a resounding success and as a result of the impressive speeches given by representatives from Andavadoaka and Lamboara, two of the six villages visited created their own women's associations as a direct result of the workshops. WWF continue to work in the remaining villages to facilitate the formation of more Women's Associations in the southwest of Madagascar.

Temporary octopus no-take zones on the Illes aux Nattes

In early September, Blue Ventures marine scientist Georgi Robinson visited Ile aux Nattes, a small island situated off Ile St Marie in northeast Madagascar to assist local NGOs, Association Santé et Développement (St Marie) and Agniribe Mihetsika, in evaluating the potential of establishing temporary octopus no-take zones on the island. Blue Ventures first developed the use of octopus NTZs as a fisheries management tool to demonstrate the benefit and functioning of marine reserves to communities in 2004, and today the technique has been replicated by communities throughout Velondriake and southwest Madagascar.

The mission focused on identifying training and capacity building needs and making recommendations to capitalise on the momentum already gained in the creation of a community marine park in the region.

A second visit from Blue Ventures is scheduled for November 2009 to lead workshops focusing on advising technical and institutional aspects of marine reserve creation. These will include training and capacity building on the use of the local law, Dina; creation of management committees; and development of protocols for surveillance and enforcement of Dina.

Rare Pride campaign manager travels to Fiji

In August 2009, Blue Ventures socioeconomic researcher and Rare Pride campaign manager, Gildas Andriamalala, visited Fiji as part of his ongoing work developing a social marketing campaign to address the challenges of destructive fishing in Madagascar. He travelled halfway across the world to share his knowledge and experience in managing marine resources with coastal communities in Fiji at a workshop hosted by Rare (www.rareconservation.org).

The overall goal of the workshop was to support partner agencies understanding of Rare's model for planning and fostering local community conservation by using social marketing techniques. In particular the workshop aimed to enhance the capacity of local community leaders to build momentum for conservation by creating the constituencies necessary for initiating policy changes, undertaking legislative reform, developing new conservation targets and enhancing protected areas.



Above: Blue Ventures socioeconomic researcher, Gildas' visit to Fiji makes history.

Participants at the workshop included current campaign managers and their supervisors from Madagascar, Fiji and Chuuk (Federated States of Micronesia), members of the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area (FLMMA) network, local marine experts and representatives of partner organisations. Gildas said of his time in Fiji, "This is my first trip to Fiji and I came to share lessons and experiences from home about marine and resource conservation. Fiji is more developed compared to Madagascar and the environment is very green unlike home. Most of the communities in coastal regions are dependent on the coral reef for survival so I came to share my experience with the community in Fiji."

News from Malaysia

Reef monitoring programme increases scope

Over recent months the Tioman Island reef monitoring programme has been expanded in scope considerably, incorporating several new sites that encompass a range of levels of degradation and human and Crown of Thorns starfish (COT) impact.

Surveying this range of sites will allow us to monitor the spatial and temporal changes in reef health, biodiversity, and indicator species abundance. Survey results are being shared with the Marine Parks Authority to help them formulate COT management plans to control the populations of these coral reef predators.

Green Fins

The Government of Malaysia is in the process of implementing a new initiative to benefit the islands of peninsular Malaysia. Green Fins is a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) funded project that began in Thailand and is planned to be extended to the rest of Southeast Asia. Green Fins is aimed at dive operators to encourage them to follow responsible diving practices, and to educate tourists about potential threats to the world's coral reefs.

Blue Ventures is working with Green Fins to encourage local



Above: A Blue Ventures volunteer finds a Crown of Thorns starfish whilst surveying the coral reefs.

businesses to adopt sustainable initiatives and to set up a network of dive operators that can help each other maintain responsible diving standards. A network of organisations, working together to manage the reefs relied upon for livelihoods, will have one, united voice with which to approach other stakeholders and the official management body of Tioman's reefs.

'Carelessness kills' responsible tourism campaigns

Blue Ventures volunteers in Malaysia have also been working hard on regular 'Carelessness Kills' campaigns around Tioman Island. Run entirely by volunteers, these campaigns have been targeted at tourists to encourage sustainable tourism.

The first campaign, a drive to promote responsible tourism, has been developed for participating resorts to show visitors how they can reduce the environmental impacts of their holiday. An information leaflet, produced by volunteers, has been distributed to partner hotels to highlight 'responsible' tourist activities. Following these activities, a mooring buoy campaign was developed aimed at visiting yachts to remind them of the reasons for using mooring buoys and to discourage anchoring on coral reefs. T-shirts with eye-catching designs were made by hand with one of three slogans: 'Pick me up buoy', 'Use me buoy' and 'Tie me up buoy'. The T-shirts were distributed around the marina to promote awareness of the buoy system amongst yachtsmen. Feedback from yachts provided various suggestions about how to improve the mooring buoy system on Tioman, which included providing more information on the position of the buoys, the quality of the ropes, the depths around them and the weights that they could take. Regular maintenance of the buoys would mean that yachts had greater

confidence in them and would be more willing to use them.



Above: Blue Ventures volunteers make t-shirts for the responsible tourism campaign.

SeaMester and Blue Ventures Malaysia join forces

In August, Blue Ventures joined forces with SeaMester, a college programme for North American students who travel aboard S/Y Argo, a 112 ft schooner, to learn about marine biology, oceanography and sailing. Blue Ventures volunteers provided students with training in coral reef species identification and basic reef assessment methodologies.

New species identified in reef surveys

During its work on Tioman Island Blue Ventures has identified several fish species that have not previously been recorded in the region, indicating that species diversity may be even higher than previously thought.

In addition, a nudibranch species inventory is being collected as well as other mobile invertebrates, such as sea cucumbers, sea urchins, sea stars and many more. As well as an inventory, species photos are being collected by keen volunteer photographers, to build up a species library, with the aim of constructing an online database accessible to all. This will run alongside Blue Ventures' existing database – WIOMweb (www.wiomweb.org) and the Malaysian SyMBiosIS database (<http://symbiosis.nre.gov.my>).



Above: A ruffled nudibranch is photographed on the reef

Socioeconomic survey

Between May and June 2009, four students from the University of Kebansaan came to Tioman to work on their internships. As well as helping with the school conservation programmes, learning to carry out underwater surveys and giving Malaysian language classes to volunteers, they conducted Blue Ventures' first socio-economic surveys on Tioman, investigating local community perceptions and current knowledge of the marine environment and conservation activities underway in the region.

News from Fiji

Establishing a network of marine protected areas within the Kubuna Waters of the Lomaiviti Group

Fiji's biodiverse coastal and marine ecosystems are under threat from diverse human activities and their associated impacts, including climate change and coral bleaching, population growth, unsustainable and destructive commercial and recreational fishing practises, tourism, increased coastal development, invasive species, agricultural clearing and run off, and pollution. This is a consequence of more than 80% of the population residing on the coast and therefore relying heavily on marine resources for their subsistence and livelihoods. Coupled with these anthropogenic threats are destructive natural events, such as cyclones and floods, which compound the threats facing the region's marine environment. Fiji has a significant economic and cultural dependence on the marine environment, so it is vital to the future of Fiji that the ecosystems are effectively and sustainably managed.

In 2003, priority marine areas for protection and recommendations for a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) were identified in The National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (NBSAP). During a world conservation summit held in Mauritius, the Fijian Government committed to protecting 30% of its waters by 2020. The Fijian government is working directly with the indigenous community to utilise the wealth of traditional ecological knowledge of the local area, and to give coastal communities throughout the islands the power to monitor, conserve and manage their regions' resources. To achieve this goal the government is supported by the University of the South Pacific (USP), the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area network (FLMMA), and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF). This prioritisation of community involvement in marine resource management helps local communities take ownership of their fishing grounds and coastal biodiversity as a crucial step in improving their livelihoods and fisheries sustainability. Locally these areas are called "Tabu" areas, and fishing or extracting marine resources from the area is strictly prohibited once announced by the chief.

Blue Ventures recently initiated a new project site on Leleuvia Island in the Lomaiviti Group. Leleuvia Island is located within the Kubuna Waters of the Central Division of Fiji, which occupies an area of approximately 300 km² and sustains the communities of seventeen villages. In a partnership with the Department of Fisheries, Blue Ventures is working to collect a comprehensive marine resource data set in the region that will help local communities make informed decisions regarding the sustainable management of their marine resources. This baseline

assessment is recording benthic composition, fishery invertebrate densities, fish trophic level abundances and targeted fish densities and biomass. The baseline assessment is currently underway within the Kubuna Waters, surveying every all coral reefs in the region, and is expected to continue into 2010.



Above: Leleuvia Island, Fiji.

Marine turtle research initiated

Marine turtles are globally threatened and Fiji is no exception. Marine turtles have a considerable cultural connection with many Fijian communities and turtle meat is considered a delicacy - eating marine turtle flesh has traditionally been considered a sign of chiefly status or wealth. Noncompliance with traditional hunting rights, coupled with increasing human populations and advancing fishing technologies, have led to the decline of marine turtles in Fiji.

Marine turtles are protected in Fiji under the Fisheries Act – Protection of Turtles Amendment, which was initiated in 2004 and expired in 2008. The cabinet decision regarding this moratorium - which prevents any killing, selling or harvesting of meat, eggs or shell for the extent of the period unless permission is granted by the Department of Fisheries - has been extended for 10 years thanks to the hard work of the Department of Fisheries, WWF and other relevant stakeholders. However, marine turtles are still hunted and sold illegally around Fiji, and in some locations they are captured as hatchlings and kept in plastic containers as "pets" or tourism attractions, despite the government ruling.

A recovery plan for marine turtles was produced by the Department of Fisheries, the University of the South Pacific, WWF and other stakeholders in 2008. The recovery plan covers a broad-spectrum of locally relevant key components that were set with the ultimate objective of improving Fiji's marine turtle population. The five components identified by the steering committee include:

1. Significantly reduce the mortality of marine turtles by addressing domestic consumption, bi-catch and compliance with the moratorium
2. Develop programmes and protocols to monitor marine turtle populations in Fijian waters
3. Manage factors that impact on successful marine turtle nesting
4. Identify and protect habitats that are critical to the survival of marine turtles
5. Communicate the results of recovery actions and educate stakeholders

Blue Ventures has recently received approval for a detailed research proposal to document marine turtle populations in the Kubuna Waters

and Moturiki Qoliqoli. The relevant stakeholders are excited about the beginning a detailed and focused marine turtle research programme in the region, which seeks to ultimately aid in the accomplishment of the recovery plan's objectives. The project will initially estimate marine turtle populations and identify their distribution within the region before progressing onto various nesting surveys for the upcoming nesting season in December.



Above: Volunteers diving the coral reefs off Leleuvia Island, Fiji.

By working together with local stakeholders such as the ministry of Fisheries, WWF, and USP, we are aiming to dramatically increase Fiji's knowledge of the declining marine turtle populations to conserve the culturally and ecologically important marine turtles for future generations.



Above: Identifying and sorting post-larvae in the hatchery.

Conferences and workshops

ARDA Workshop

From the 30 August – 3 September, Blue Venture's Mariculture Development Coordinator, Georgina Robinson, attended an aquaculture workshop at Le Port, Reunion, hosted by Association Réunionnaise de Développement de l'Aquaculture (ARDA) in collaboration with the RUN Sea Science Project.

The workshop focussed on Post-larval Capture and Culture (PCC) - an innovative technique used to provide tank-raised fish for the marine aquarium trade. The technology employs light traps to capture a small percentage of pelagic post-larvae - which are normally subject to 90% natural mortality - and thus causes a minimal impact to natural marine ecosystems. Gilles Lecaillon, a PCC specialist from Ecocean, taught participants how to capture post-larvae in CARE© traps, identify, sort and rear them in tanks until they reach marketable size (~3 months). The latter part of the workshop, hosted by Virginia Tech's Aquaculture Extension Specialist, Michael Schwarz, focused on marine hatchery systems and management with an emphasis on live feeds. The PCC technique has direct relevance in Blue Ventures' ongoing work in Madagascar and Fiji as a viable alternative to replace current unsustainable techniques used to catch adult fish for export to ornamental markets. It also has potential applications for restocking programmes in conjunction with marine protected areas and for artisanal aquaculture of herbivorous fish as a means of increasing food security of coastal communities.



Above: CARE© light trap used to capture post-larvae. Photographer credit: Yann von Arnim.

6th Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) Scientific Symposium

Between the 24th and 27th August 2009 WIOMSA hosted the 6th scientific symposium in La Réunion in collaboration with l'Université de la Réunion, l'Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) and l'Institut Français pour la Recherche et l'Exploitation de la Mer (IFREMER). This year's symposium was the largest to date with over 500 members of the Western Indian Ocean scientific and conservation community attending.



Above: WIOMSA logo for the 6th Scientific Symposium

Blue Ventures' Research Coordinator, Frances Humber, presented results of BV's ongoing research into the artisanal marine turtle fishery in southwest Madagascar, and three other members of Blue Ventures' Madagascar team presented posters on our current work with Velondriake: Mariculture Development Manager, Georgina Robinson, on the sea cucumber aquaculture project; Ecological Economist Coordinator, Kirsten Oleson, on the octopus no-take zones; and, Natural Resource Monitoring Manager, Lalao Aigrette, on community-based monitoring. This was Lalao's first opportunity to attend an overseas conference and of her experience away she said, "it is the first big conference that I've attended. It was very motivating and very helpful because I can talk with interesting people and get many experiences about my work through oral and poster presentations."

Introducing new partners: Tortues Illes Barren

Blue Ventures has established a new working collaboration to support an important turtle conservation initiative in the Maintirano region of western Madagascar. Local NGO 'Tortues Illes Barren', which also works in collaboration with the national marine institute in Toliara (IHSM), has established an initiative called 'Melaky Miaro ny Tontolo Andriakany,' which means 'the Melaky people protect their marine environment.'

The project aims to reduce the local consumption of sea turtles and their eggs, while also helping to raise awareness and develop local strategies to conserve not only the marine turtle population, but the broader marine and coastal environment, which includes a remote archipelago of islands and reefs, 20-40km offshore, fringed by some of the country's healthiest coral reef ecosystems. For more information on this project please visit www.tortuesillesbarren.org.

Getty Scholarships

Le Programme ROGER SAMBA pour l'Éducation Supérieure en Conservation Marin.

Mr Roger Samba, president of the Velondriake committee and winner of the 2008 J. Paul Getty Award, described as 'the Nobel Prize for Conservation' has announced 'Le Programme ROGER SAMBA pour l'Éducation Supérieure en Conservation Marin', a number of scholarships for promising Malagasy students of Marine Conservation.

Mr. Roger Samba was nominated by Blue Ventures and was selected in recognition of his outstanding community leadership in support of conservation in the remote coastal village of Andavadoaka, southwest Madagascar. The indigenous semi-nomadic Vezo people of Andavadoaka depend on artisanal fishing activities for their livelihoods, but recently these marine resources have faced increasing threats from coastal population expansion, unsustainable tourism, and an increase in international fishing fleets. Mr. Samba has spent the last five years working to protect the region's fragile marine biodiversity and habitats, and organised the world's first community-run no-take zone for octopus, a local species critical to the regions' economy. Seasonal closures of octopus fishing areas resulted in increased abundance and size, and the project's success has led to its use as a model for the implementation of similar projects across the country.

The blueprint created by Mr. Samba for empowering local communities to engage in the management of coral reefs and related habitats has inspired the development of alternative livelihood and environmental education initiatives, influenced national fisheries legislation, and brought unprecedented attention to marine and coastal conservation issues.

Administered by WWF, the J. Paul Getty award carries a \$200,000 prize fund, which Mr. Samba will now use to create the 10 scholarships offered by the programme, 5 for undergraduates and 10 for postgraduates. Further details of the programme including application materials can be found at the Velondriake website at <http://www.livewiththesea.org/velondriake/gettyfr.htm>

2009 Publications

Cripps, G. (2009) Understanding migration amongst small-scale fishers in Madagascar. Blue Ventures Conservation Report for ReCoMaP.

Dunn, D. (2009) Can this man help save Madagascar? Conde Nast Traveler magazine, November 2009, p. 52, 60, 63.

Gough, C. (2009) Ecological and socioeconomic study of the villages and coral reef ecosystems of the region south of Toliara: a preliminary report. Blue Ventures Conservation Report for Madagascar National Parks.

Gough, C., Thomas, R., Ettienne, B., Harris, A., Humber, F., and Roy, R. (2009) Socioeconomic Monitoring: a baseline survey of villages in the Androka and Itampolo regions of Southwest Madagascar. Blue Ventures Conservation Report.

For these and other publications, please [click here](#).

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