

NatureFiji-MareqetiViti welcome BirdLife Fiji staff

Title

NatureFiji-MareqetiViti has now merged with the Birdlife Fiji Programme and has welcomed two new members of staff. Together the new team are managing a combined program of work in Fiji on community, conservation, ecosystem services and environmental education.

Mere Tabudravu is currently managing three projects which include 'Environment education', funded by KEIDANREN Nature Conservation Fund (KNCF) and 'Community conservation' funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) and an 'Ecosystem services project' funded by Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation (Jensen).

The Environment education project that began in the year 2011, focuses on the education of children who reside near 'Important Bird Areas' (IBAs), in learning about the significance of the site. Activities featured under the project include a two day eco-camp for primary school students between classes 6-8. Two school based eco-camps have been conducted at Navitilevu Primary School for IBA FJ05 (Vatu-i-ra) and three schools within the Natewa/Tunuloa Peninsula for Natewa/Tunuloa IBA FJ03. The eco-camp included the production of information materials specific for the IBA, that includes bird-guide pocket books, comic books and the provision of vegetable seedlings and native tree plantings with materials for a nursery within the school compound.

The materials were provided to encourage the school to promote environmental education. The Ecosystem services project aims to provide a quantified value of the Fijian ecosystem services in order to promote and increase the benefits of sustainable forest management for people and biodiversity. This activity, which is the first for the Pacific region, will be undertaken in the following sites, Natewa/Tunuloa IBA FJ03, and Taveuni island in recognition of its nature reserve and Wainawa village, which NFMV is currently undertaking a sago restoration project. This aspect of the site will take into consideration the commercial side of ecosystem services. **Elenoa Seniloli** has joined NFMV after 6 years with BirdLife and is now managing the 'Seabird Island Restoration Project' funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and CEPF. The island restoration project has been in operation for over six years in eleven islands within the Fiji group, that is Vatu-i-ra, Ringold group (seven islands), Monuriki and Kadomo in the Mamanuca's, Mabualau near Bau island and Vatuvara in the Lau group. Ten of the eleven islands have been removed of invasive predators; rats, cats and goats to restore seabird colonies. Since the merger, NFMV who is now overlooking the project is working on bio security plans with communities to prevent the re-introduction of invasive species. Development of management plans with communities to safeguard the islands has

also been drafted. The eco-tourism project is part of the sustainable livelihood project that is thought to support the long term sustainability of the invasive free seabird islands. Two islands identified for the project are Vatu-i-ra and Mabualau island, as the islands have been assessed to have eco-tourism potential.