

New video showcases community project in Fiji

Title

BirdLife Pacific has released a new video about a community conservation project in Fiji.

Mount Nabukelevu is one of two Important Bird Areas (IBAs) on the Fijian island of Kadavu, and its montane forest is of critical importance for five Globally Threatened bird species. However, in the past, unsustainable practices have caused degradation of agricultural areas, leading to pressure to clear more forest. In response, BirdLife and the local communities have worked together to develop solutions and build local skills.

This has led to the establishment of a Site Support Group (SSG), comprising representatives of land-owning *mataqalis* (clan), who wanted to manage their forest resources more sustainably. During 2012, BirdLife and the SSG have also undertaken a period of intensive survey work searching for ground-nesting seabirds on the summit of Mount Nabukelevu.

“Petrels in the tropical Pacific are amongst the most poorly known and highly threatened species”, said Sialesi Rasalato.

These charismatic and long-lived seabirds present a real challenge to conservationists, returning to land after dark and yielding only tantalising glimpses at sea. Their habits and distributions remain something of a mystery.

“In order to find out if Mount Nabukelevu is important for petrels we were working with the SSG to spotlight and listen for birds at night, search for burrows, and install nest boxes”, added Sia.

To promote the project results to the local communities, donors and wider supporters, BirdLife is today launching a short video showcasing their work.

[Click here to watch the video in Fijian.](#)

With the completion of a merger of the BirdLife Fiji Programme and NatureFiji-MareqetiViti, staff from both organisations recently visited the SSG to discuss the conservation plans for the coming two years.

“We thanked the community for their support and commitment in working together with BirdLife since 2004. BirdLife have now formally handed over the reins to NatureFiji-MareqetiViti who will be leading the work”.

The Tui Lomati (Chief of Lomati village in the district of Nabukelevu) Sairusi Waqa thanked BirdLife for all their work, and warmly welcomed NatureFiji-MareqetiViti and their support for the SSG.

“He said that the village of Lomati greatly appreciate all the developments, trainings and collaborations that has happened in the last nine years and greatly looked forwards to continuing working together through the new relationship with NatureFiji-MareqetiViti”, said Sia. “

He was also especially thankful for the capacity building of the youth through their involvement in the SSG and look forwards to building on this. He mentioned that although the projects appear small and slow to progress, they are still going and the village as a whole has ever increasing benefits from the partnership. Financial returns from these projects have contributed to the village scholarship fund, village development trust and on-going conservation activities at the IBA.

BirdLife’s projects at Mount Nabukelevu IBA have been kindly supported by CEPF, Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund, Pacific Development Conservation Trust, the GEF Small Grant Programme (GEF SGP)

implemented by UNDP, Global Greengrants Fund, BirdLife Community Conservation Fund and UK Darwin Initiative. CEPF unites six global leaders who are committed to enabling nongovernmental and private sector organizations to help protect vital ecosystems: L'Agence Française de Développement; Conservation International; The Global Environmental Facility; The Government of Japan, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; The World Bank. BirdLife also wishes to thank Chris Thompson for kindly volunteering his time to produce the video.