



APRIL EDITION 2014

Contents

- Country Director's Note
- Shark Conservation update
- Combined Projects Day - Nawaka Sevens Rugby
- Meet our Bula Face for the Month
- Photography Competition Winner

Editor's Comments

Hello, April. Highlight for this month was the Easter holidays, combined Project Day with the Shark Conservation team, and Holiday School. To all the Fiji volunteers, we would like to hear from you so please send us your photos, videos, articles, briefs or anything to tell us how you have enjoyed your time with us and we will share it with the world. It is due to experiences such as yours that others are able to be inspired.

The number of volunteers coming to Fiji this month alone has increased dramatically and we only hope to welcome more to our shores. Please read on to find out more about our project updates, our Project Day for the month and the March Photography Competition Winner. Enjoy our updates and be sure to send us your own update for the world to see. Until next month, have a Wananavu (Awesome) Time!

Tagi Koroivuki

Information Coordinator

infomanager-fiji@projects-abroad.org

Country Director's Note – Ingrid Sprake



It is Easter Time! A time to remember that all human life matters and in Projects Abroad, the staff and volunteers have the chance to show the world that we care and we are taking active steps to make a difference in the lives of so many people around the world.

I found myself looking over my time in Fiji and I am delighted to report that we are really having an impact on the local communities.

We now have many local partners working with us towards a happier future. This gives us all hope that all the hard work, passion and dedication shown by the staff and volunteers do make a huge difference to these islands in the middle of the South Pacific Ocean.

So far this year, we have seen more volunteers apply to come to Fiji than ever before. People come here as strangers and leave as friends – seeing this is one of the best parts of my job.

I feel really excited when I see the new volunteer names appear on our arrival reports as I know how this experience will be life changing.

We appreciate everyone so much for coming here and donating their time, energy and hard earned money to help us out with our important work and we are continuously humbled by the amount of effort they put into their work and the activities.

So I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone so much, because without the volunteers, these projects would not exist.

“Act locally, think globally.”

Until next month....happy volunteering!

Shark Conservation Project by Project Manager Andy Hill

Another amazing month for the Shark Conservation Project!

The last three weeks has seen huge progress with all our initiatives which included Juvenile Shark Tagging, community work, Shark Surveys, education, mangroves, recycling and the amazing cultural experiences we all encounter on a day to day basis.

We have had the great pleasure to have been visited by two of our partner scientists Dr. Demian Chapmen and Mark Bond who have been in Fiji conducting Pelagic Shark Surveys. It is always a huge boost for staff and volunteers to get to meet and hear the progress of the work we are conducting.

Our Mangrove/Recycling program has reached new heights with more than 30,000 plastic bottles collected and reused, a new mangrove nursery completed and fully operational in Galoa Village. The excitement of the local villagers, who are consonantly helping and encouraging our volunteers, is an inspiration to all.

We are making a difference in the day-to-day lives of the Fijian people and we are very excited for what the next few months will bring.

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” Mahatma Gandhi

BRUV Project by Field Coordinator Josh Fredrick



Volunteer Helen during a shark dive

Shark Count Survey Dives: This month was the trial period for Project's Abroad new data base, the Global Shark Campaign. This scientific database has brought a new direction to the shark survey dives and is working out quite well. The volunteers now carry underwater slates and take note of all the sharks, rays and turtles we observe, as well as their species, length and sex. After each survey dive the volunteers and I transfer the data to three different databases: e-shark, the Great Fiji Shark Count and Projects Abroad's Global Shark Campaign. So far we have observed five shark species, four species of rays and both species of turtles that live in Fiji. We conduct

eight survey dives a week all year round, which means we are the only project in the world collecting shark data continuously throughout the year.

BRUV's: The BRUV (Baited Remote Underwater Video) is used to assess relative shark populations by putting a bait box in the water to attract the sharks and film it. No divers are allowed within one kilometre of the BRUV to ensure that the sharks can naturally pass through the area to inspect the bait. The volunteers observe the videos and record the sharks they see noting species, quantity, length, sex and interactions with the BRUV.

By Field Coordinator Diego Cardonosa

The volunteers have been going out to the Navua River looking for juvenile bull sharks. This month the sharks do not like us very much. We have been out all this month without success. It has been raining a lot therefore the salinity and the temperature have decreased significantly. Environmental variables such as salinity and temperature have a big impact on the movements and habitat selection of fish and sharks, hence we could have been moved out from the river to higher salinities and temperatures. We will keep moving forward with our research trying to find the abundance of juvenile bull sharks in the river and to find out where they go!

Mangrove, Recycling and Reforestation Project By Project Coordinator Ronetava Ronaivakula

Mangrove Project



Mangrove Nursery

Mangrove forests are the coastal tropical rainforest where ocean, river and land meet. It's one of the most productive eco-systems on Earth, and acts as a nursery and habitat for numerous species of fish, crustaceans, mammals and birds. Many of the commercial fish species use the mangrove as a nursing ground for their juveniles. It's also an important carbon sink that counteracts climate change.

Our short term goal is to raise awareness about the importance of mangrove forests and offset our (Projects Abroad) carbon footprint. Our long term goal is to partner up with local businesses to offset their

carbon footprint with the help of local communities and schools.

Our plan of action so far is to plant as much propagules as we can with the help of the volunteers. We have planted approximately 9,000 mangroves in four months. This was done with separating volunteers into different groups with a group preparing the plastic bottles, e.g. cutting plastic bottles in two so that they form 'propagules bags' and drilling holes in the plastic bottles so that the plants are not waterlogged. Another group puts soil in the propagules bags and sets propagules into them creating a 10*10 'box' that has 100 planted propagules. We are partnering up with local schools and communities to build nurseries in their premises whereby we will utilize their resources, e.g students and villagers helping in the whole process of planting propagules and this will see an exponential growth in our mangrove planting output. So far we have a nursery in the Galoa Village which is capable of storing up to 6,000 mangrove propagules and another at Pacific Harbour Multi-Cultural School. An interesting initiative that arose out of this project is the Recycling Project.



Collected recycle bottles from Galoa

Recycle Project

Every Monday we go to the Galoa and Dranikula village to buy plastic bottles at \$0.03 a bottle. This project has been instrumental in getting the local village to clean up its surroundings. Over the last month, we have seen a gradual reduction of plastic in the village, on its beach, the Mangal and surrounding area including the farming areas. We can see villagers going through their rubbish, digging and looking for plastic on the beach, forests and

even in the Mangal. In buying these plastics bottles we also put in much needed financial resource to the local villages.



Volunteer with Projects Abroad Coordinator Ron collecting plastic bottles



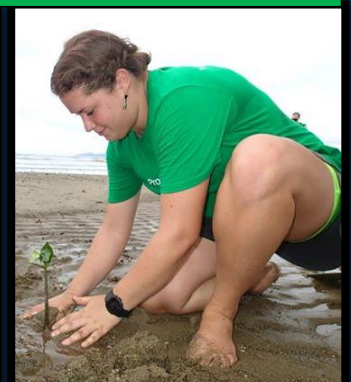
Volunteers collect plastic bottles from villagers

We separate our volunteers into two groups with one group counting, collecting and paying the villagers for their plastic bottles. The other group goes to the beach and Mangals to collect propagules for the nursery. We use these plastic bottles for seedling bags to plant the propagules and the rest which we do not need or cannot use are properly disposed of.

Reforestation

We are very excited to announce that we are currently in the process of planting these grown propagules! We have replanted approximately 1,500 grown propagules in Galoa Village. This has been a massive achievement in just four short months. We are very excited at the prospect of this Project and look forward to more of our mangrove warriors joining us.

Volunteers participating in mangrove propagule replanting at Galoa village



The mangrove propagules at Galoa village providing more habitats for marine organisms

Combined Project Day – Nawaka Rugby Sevens Tournament

Projects Abroad Fiji held a combined Project Day at the Nawaka Sevens Rugby Tournament in Nadi. The Shark Conservation team joined the Nadi Projects team to offer their services to the locals and do what they do best, help. Three corners were up and running from the morning.

The Kids Corner - Included puppet shows, face paintings and colouring all based on the shark awareness theme. This had definitely attracted all the children in the tournament who enjoyed all the activities prepared for them.



The Health Corner – Volunteers were trained to check the patients' blood sugar levels, high blood pressure and measuring the risk of non-communicable diseases by checking waist and hip measurements. A lot of adults were happy to receive health checks and even health advice by our Health and Wellness Consultant, Mr. Rosan Lal.



Animals Corner- Volunteers assisted with the raising of funds for the animal clinic and assisted with looking after the animals that were up for adoption.

It was a great time for the public to enjoy what Projects Abroad Fiji had to offer and on behalf of all the staff a HUGE VINAKA (thank you) to all the volunteers who worked so hard throughout the day especially picking up rubbish after the tournament...Hats off to you.



(Sitting L-R) Second from left Ingrid, Andy and Diego with the Naduruniu Sharks Rugby Team

Meet our Bula Face...

Mr Prashneel Goundar is the Deputy Director for Projects Abroad Fiji. He handles the Finance department, Administrative department and overlooks the operations for the Nadi Office. Check out his profile below:

Name: Prashneel R. Goundar

Nick Name: Mr P, Sunny, Prash, Goundar, Mr Goundar....

Age: I forgot this when I was born :) **Birth Place:** Fiji **Relationship Status:** Single

How would you describe yourself: Passionate, enthusiastic, patient and motivated.

Favourite food & Drink? Anything from the Sitar Restaurant and of course my mom's cooking. I enjoy drinking all non-alcoholic drinks.

Favourite colour? Why? White, it is a representation of pure and genuine thoughts. It is a highlight of peaceful comfort.

What is your most attractive feature? My smile or so I am told.

How long have you worked with Projects Abroad? I started working with Projects Abroad in August 2011.

What were your best achievements while working with Projects Abroad?

- Completing a thorough compilation of English Language course lesson plans within a month.
- Writing the Holiday School Handbook which has been used in other destinations of Projects Abroad.

What do you enjoy about your work? Why? Everything is about team work so I love the team I work with every day. Everyone is unique and very special in their own ways. I spend a lot of time at work and I enjoy it because my colleagues are truly wonderful to work with.

What would be your guilty pleasure? Sleeping late without being interrupted, I love to just take the weekend and sleep in the afternoons.

Where do you see yourself in ten years from now? Catching my breath after travelling to more than 30 countries and planning my next trip

Favourite quote? "No Risk, No Fun" which simply means if we fail to take risks, we will not be able to enjoy life or learn valuable lessons by making mistakes.



Monthly Photo Competition Winner

Our April Photo Competition winner goes to Sonia Mu who is from our sister Island Australia. Sonia went sky diving during her last week in Fiji and thought to take photos of our beautiful island. We thank Sonia for sharing with us the lovely view from up above.

We urge everyone to continue sending in your photographs for the monthly competition and remember the sky is the limit ☺

