

# **Marine Conservation Activities for Small-scale Fisheries in Tiaro Bay Community, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands**

By Tiaro Marine Conservation Committee, Western Guadalcanal Constituency, Guadalcanal Province, Solomon Island

Our community "Tiaro Bay" is located at the western areas of Guadalcanal Island in Solomon Islands. About 300 people live in the community, and live in about 15 villages around the bay. It is a remote area, and about 80 km far from the capital city, Honiara. Because there is not any access road to the community, we have to always arrange a small boat to go outside of the community. The mobile network is too weak for making a call to the community. This is an isolated place from a modernized society.

There are well-developed coral reefs in very clean water around Tiaro Bay. Therefore, we enjoy to harvest and consume marine resources, such as reef fish and shellfish, to sustain our foods and lives. However, as logging activities have been conducted in forest areas outside of the bay areas, we seriously consider how we should preserve and maintain our precious marine resources for the present and the future of the community.

Since 2017, our community has been working for Community-based Resource Management (CBRM) in Tiaro Bay in cooperation with the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR). We organized "Tiaro Marine Conservation Committee" (we call Conservation Committee) as a community association to strengthen conservation activities for marine resources in/around the bay areas. Especially, trochus shells, giant clams, and sea cucumbers are designated as main target species for regular monitoring of their resources. First of all, youth members engaging in the Conservation Committee were trained as "resource rangers" under the MFMR CBRM program. They learned a standard method of transect monitoring, how to check species and how to count resources in water. They voluntarily conduct resource monitoring practices by snorkeling in reef areas, and regularly check the resource condition of the target species.

Moreover, the Conservation Committee regularly holds a community meeting to discuss a proper management and harvest control of marine resources for contribution to community livelihood. We also decided to set a management area in reef areas of the bay. Currently, we do not take any marine species in the management area without consensus of the community.



Photo 1: Resource monitoring activities at the management area by community rangers. Rangers composed 3 members' youth teams to observe and record the identified resources of target species by the advices of MFMR officers.



Photo 2: The villages (families) owning respective zones harvested trochus shells only in the 5 days open period. Youth resource rangers checked harvest sizes and amounts at respective zones, and reported their harvest records.



Photo 3: The Conservation Committee often records fish catch from the outside of a management area, when local people bring their fish to a solar freezer house. We check the weight and the amount of fish by species.



Photo 4: The CBRM signboards have been designed by the discussion in the community. Through a participatory process, we give more clear ideas on community-based management to community people.

Every year, the Conservation Committee opens a trochus shell harvest for only 5 days in a year to support community livelihood. Trochus shell can be sold in the capital as material of shell bottoms and crafts. It makes cash income for community households. In the harvest period, the Conservation Committee organizes some teams to visit all villages around the bay, and advise and control the harvest amount in regulated size. We also deployed one unit of simple fish aggregating device under the national government project to promote going fishing at the outside of the management area. Under those efforts, we try to maintain marine resources properly by ourselves.

To sustain the community livelihood effectively from marine resources, the Conservation Committee also manages a solar-powered freezer to preserve caught fish for a longer period. The freezer unit was installed under the MFMR CBRM program. Before, in spite of catching fish from the outside of the management areas, we could not keep them overnight under high temperature. Now, we can keep fresh fish in the freezer for self-consumption. Some of us start carrying fresh fish to Honiara, and selling them at market to earn alternative income for personal and community benefits.

Uniquely, the Conservation Committee is also promoting backyard gardening activity by a technical assistance of a local NGO, "Kastam Gaden Association" in order to grow and consume local vegetables together with a women group in the community. Backyard gardening is a part of alternative income generation in collaboration with marine conservation. We intend to take an integrated approach for resource management not only in marine side, but also in land side. Through the gardening activity, many women join the field programs organized by the Conservation Committee.

Currently, we are working on drafting the "Community Fisheries Management Plan" (CFMP) together with MFMR. If we can finalize our CFMP, it will be the first case approved by the national government. Based on our experiences and our above-mentioned work, we will make the effort to prepare a final draft of CFMP for our future small-scale fisheries.

Map of Solomon Islands

