

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

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| Organization Legal Name: | Fiji Nature Conservation Trust |
| Project Title: | Conservation of the Endangered Fiji Flying Fox <i>Mirimiri acrodonta</i> on Taveuni Island, Fiji |
| Date of Report: | 25 March 20010 |
| Report Author and Contact Information | Dick Watling [watling@naturefiji.org] |

CEPF Region: Polynesia-Micronesia Hotspot

Strategic Direction: Build awareness and participation of local leaders and community members in the implementation of protection and recovery plans for threatened species.

Grant Amount: \$20,000

Project Dates: February 1st 2009 – January 31st 2010

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

- NatureFiji-MareqetiViti – lead in all components (Fiji Flying Fox Research; Community Awareness Campaign, Site Support Group; Cave Inventory & Endangered Pacific Sheath tailed bat).
- Annette Scanlon (Ph.D. researcher, Univ. S.Australia) – lead field researcher
- National Trust for Fiji – personnel and financial support for Community Awareness Campaign;
- BirdLife International – financial contribution for Community Awareness Campaign
- Conservation International (Fiji Programme) – logistic support
- Cakaudrove Provincial Council – administrative and logistic support
- Depts Forestry, Agriculture and Fijian Affairs – participated in Awareness Campaign

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

- Undertook the most detailed research/survey ever undertaken of the monotypic endemic genus Fiji flying fox *Mirimiri acrodonta*, a critically endangered species restricted to an important Key Biodiversity Area, Taveun. Recorded the first observation of this species for 19 years and only the fifth ever since it was described. Confirmed its continued existence but extreme rarity (Project Report);
- Prepared a Species Recovery Plan for the Fiji flying fox (Project Report);
- Compiled a Preliminary Inventory of the Caves of Taveuni and in doing so recorded two caves with the Endangered Pacific sheath-tailed bat *Emballonura semicaudata* (Project Report);
- Undertook the most comprehensive community awareness campaign for conservation and protected areas targeting all the significant forest landowners on Taveuni and settlements of farmers where encroachment into the Taveuni

Forest Reserve is occurring (Project Report). Taveuni is recognized as a priority site for CEPF intervention with the 2nd highest number of globally threatened species in the CEPF list of 60 sites. Used the Fiji flying fox as a flagship species for Taveuni's forests (Poster prepared).

- As a result of the meetings Dept. of Forestry immediately sent a team and demarcated the Taveuni Forest Reserve boundary.
- NFMV is working with landowners and Provincial Office to cease all farming within the boundary.
- Advocated widely and re-awakened the 15 year old proposal for the creation of the 'Taveuni National Park' by combining the Ravilevu Nature Reserve, the Taveuni Forest Reserve and the Bouma National Heritage Reserve. And, in addition, the placing of Taveuni on Fiji's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites.
- Updated the Fiji Protected Areas Committee on needs of communities in terms of capacity to contribute towards the conservation value of Taveuni

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal.

- Recorded the first observation of Fiji flying fox for 19 years and only the fifth since it was described. First ever capture release of this species all others ended up in museums;
- Progress made on how to distinguish the species in the field from two other pteropid flying foxes – difficult because of extreme rarity;
- Prepared a Species Recovery Plan for the Fiji flying fox;
- Did not set up a Site Support Group because no immediate suitable group/location was apparent. Instead focused on developing a relationship with the Cakaudrove Provincial Council which has greater coverage and significant authority – this was highly successful;
- Undertook two rounds of an Awareness Campaign involving 12 all day presentations – 88 landowners from 19 villages from the 3 districts on Taveuni attended the first round; 148 villagers and settlers mainly from farming settlements or villages associated with encroachment attended the second round of meetings. The comprehensive coverage of the “*Strengthening Taveuni's Protected Areas: Taveuni Conservation Awareness Campaign*” was made possible by the financial contribution of the National Trust and BirdLife International.
- Undertook successful work on the Endangered Pacific sheath-tailed bat

Please provide the following information where relevant:

No new areas were established as 'protected', however, the project was successful in getting Dept of Forestry to demarcate the boundary; the Dept of Agriculture/Provincial Office to prevent encroachment. Most importantly several landowners have now started removing settlers who are encroaching within the Reserve on their lands.

Hectares Protected: Taveuni Forest Reserve – assisted in Protection 13,000 ha

Species Conserved: All Taveuni's 24 globally threatened species are within the Taveuni Forest Reserve.

Corridors Created:

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

- While the research on the Fiji flying fox was successful – its extreme rarity meant that determining its ecology, behavior and landscape usage could not be gained in the short term. The Species Recovery Plan documents appropriate follow up research;
- The challenges of field research in Taveuni's wet and rugged forests should not be underestimated;
- Setting up Site Support Groups for protected areas cannot be predetermined, to an extent they need to emerge organically. Being flexible and recognizing the potential of working with the Provincial Council will achieve the same goal, though when a Site Support Group does emerge it needs to be nurtured.
- An Awareness Campaign can bring together different Government Departments (4 in this case) at the community level to engage in a forum on government's plans and how they can be integrated.
- The need to engage landowners and farming communities on their own terms to better realize conservation-oriented projects.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

- The rarity of the Fiji flying fox given the research effort put in was surprising
- The level of cooperation and the contribution of the Government Departments (Forestry, Agriculture and Fijian Affairs in the Public Awareness presentations was much more positive and forthcoming than had been expected;
- Forestry Dept immediately sending a team to demarcate the Taveuni Forest Reserve boundary was entirely unexpected given the financial constraints currently being experienced by Government Departments.

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| Lessons Learned |
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Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

- The outputs of the project far exceeded those that could be expected from the level investment put in the original project. Good design enabled a researcher to be co-opted at modest cost and the project attracted significant additional funding which enabled the public awareness campaign to be significantly more comprehensive than it would have been given the original investment;
- The level of awareness amongst the land-owners and farmers of Taveuni on the island's conservation and biodiversity values was surprisingly low; on the other hand, their willingness to learn about and participate in conservation-based ideas, proper land-use practices was very positive.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

- Tremendous dedication in difficult conditions provided by the field researcher;
- Utilising on-island experience and expertise brought the Provincial Council as a significant partner in the project

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

- Landowners and the general public are willing to participate in and learn about Fiji's unique biodiversity. They do not yet have the capacity to do this. Conservation based NGOs and institutions must communicate their research results – not only to the scientific community – but, more importantly, to relevant stakeholders, landowners and local residents of their research site.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

| Donor | Type of Funding* | Amount | Notes |
|---|------------------|------------|--|
| National Trust for Fiji - <i>UNDP-GEF Programme of Work on Protected Areas (National Trust of the Fiji Islands)</i> | B | US\$12,000 | Used to augment the Community Conservation Awareness Programme |
| BirdLife International - <i>Darwin Initiative</i> | B | US\$2,500 | Used to augment the Community Conservation Awareness Programme |
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***Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)
- B** Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)
- C** Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

- The rarity of the Fiji flying fox prevented the hoped for gain in knowledge about how to identify the species in the field and an initial understanding of its ecology and landscape usage.
- The planned Site Support Group did not eventuate, although leads have been initiated which NFMV intend to follow up
- Developing the Fiji flying fox as a flagship species for Taveuni and the Taveuni National Park appears to have been successful

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

- The lack of SSG development was more than offset by the relationship established with the Cakaudrove Provincial Office and the Government Department office's responsible for Taveuni

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

None Required

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets

(01 February 2009 – 31 January 2010)

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

| Project Results | Is this question relevant? | If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period. | Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date. | Describe the principal results achieved from 01 February 2009-31 January 2010. (Attach annexes if necessary) |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved. | No | | | Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one. |
| 2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement? | None | | | Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one. |
| 3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares. | Yes, | 14,000 | 14,000 | Conservation management of the Taveuni Forest Reserve and the Ravilevu Nature Reserve is at a very low status, however, this project certainly elevated the protection needs and the Department of Forestry which is responsible, responded with field activities and boundary demarcation. The Cakaudrove Provincial office, landowners and Government Departments responded for the first time on the issue of agricultural encroachment into the Taveuni Forest Reserve. |
| 4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares. | Yes | 5,000 | | By making presentations directly to all the forest landowners on Taveuni. They learned for the first time of the richness of the island's forest biodiversity and their traditional responsibilities and identity as custodians of their forests. Their response was very good |
| 5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below. | No | | | |

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table.

Table 1. Socioeconomic Benefits to Target Communities

Please complete this table if your project provided concrete socioeconomic benefits to local communities. List the name of each community in column one. In the subsequent columns under Community Characteristics and Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit, place an X in all relevant boxes. In the bottom row, provide the totals of the Xs for each column.

| Name of Community | Community Characteristics | | | | | | | | Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|-------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|---|--|--|-------|--|
| | Small landowners | Subsistence economy | Indigenous/ ethnic peoples | Pastoralists/nomadic peoples | Recent migrants | Urban communities | Communities falling below the poverty rate | Other | Increased Income due to: | | | | Increased food security due to the adoption of sustainable fishing, hunting, or agricultural practices | More secure access to water resources | Improved tenure in land or other natural resource due to titling, reduction of colonization, etc. | Reduced risk of natural disasters (fires, landslides, flooding, etc) | More secure sources of energy | Increased access to public services, such as education, health, or credit | Improved use of traditional knowledge for environmental management | More participatory decision-making due to strengthened civil society and governance. | Other | |
| Adoption of sustainable natural resources management practices | | | | | | | | | Ecotourism revenues | Park management activities | Payment for environmental services | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit:

Additional Comments/Recommendations

If Taveuni is to realize its potential to become a World Heritage Site (Chape 2006), then the issues relating to the "Protected Areas" on Taveuni need to be resolved and the "National Park" plan (in whatever appropriate form) needs to be realized. This will require a great deal of advocacy and discussion on Taveuni and with Government in Suva. Following the current project, the stage has been set for this as the uptake amongst communities, the Provincial Council and local Government departments has been very good. The Fiji Flying Fox has become an ideal, and now quite well known, flagship species for this purpose.

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

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Chape, S. 2006. *Assessment of the Suitability of Placing the Taveuni Forest Reserve and Ravilevu Nature Reserve on Fiji's World Heritage Tentative List*. Unpublished Report prepared for BirdLife International, Fiji National Committee for World Heritage and National Trust for Fiji, Suva.