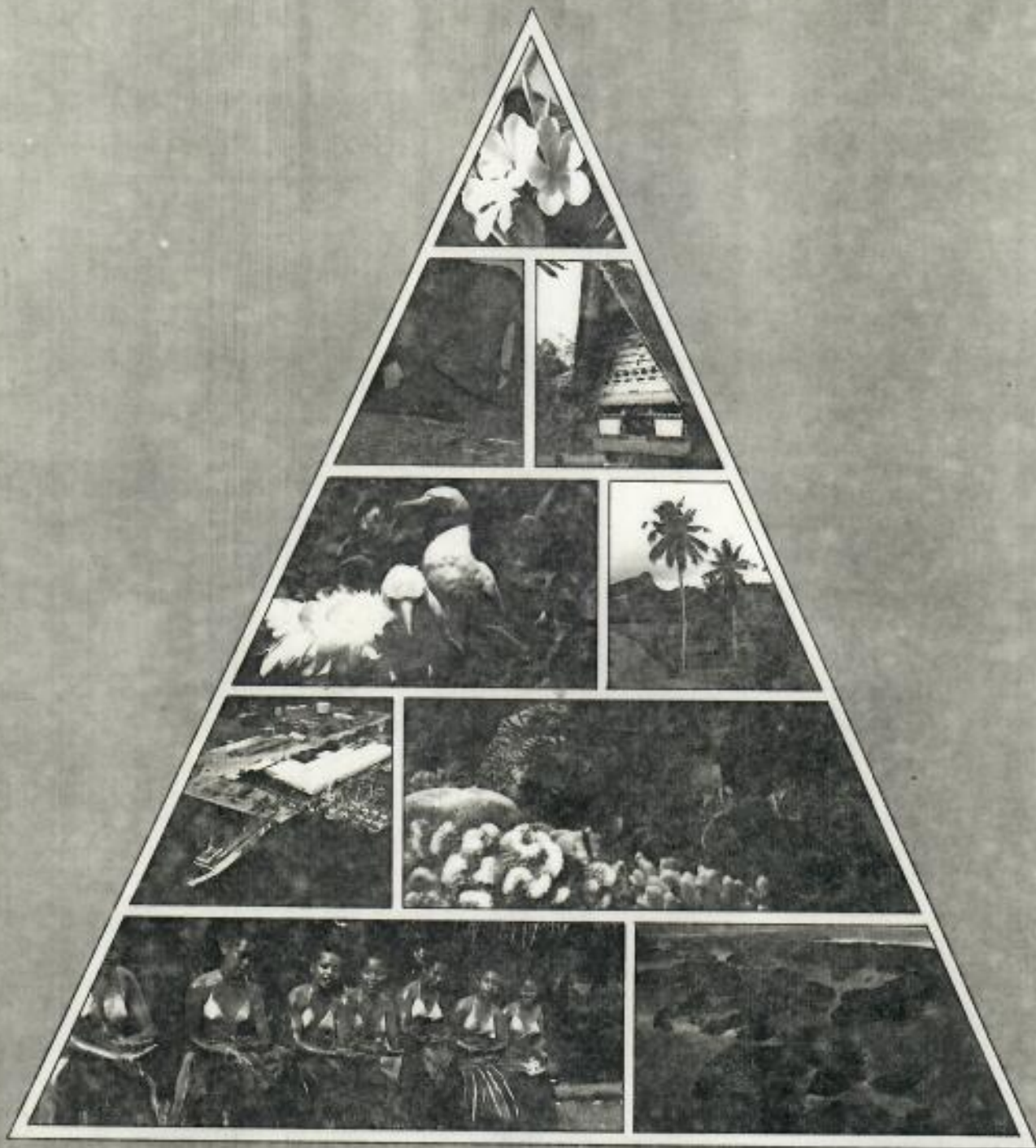


1983?



Republic of Palau

BELUU ERA BELAU



Rock Islands

Dotted southward from Babeldaob Island over 23 miles of clear waters are the beautiful "Rock Islands," Palau's foremost natural attractions.

The Rock Islands were at one time limestone coral reefs which have been lifted above sea level through time and undercut by lapping waves,

leaving notches in their bases that give many a "mushroom" appearance. Many of the islands are surrounded by nice white beaches and some are provided with shelters and picnic tables. The waters being protected by the tall Rock Islands offer excellent opportunities for water sports and recreation. In addition to their recreational attraction, the Rock Islands possess historical and cultural significance.



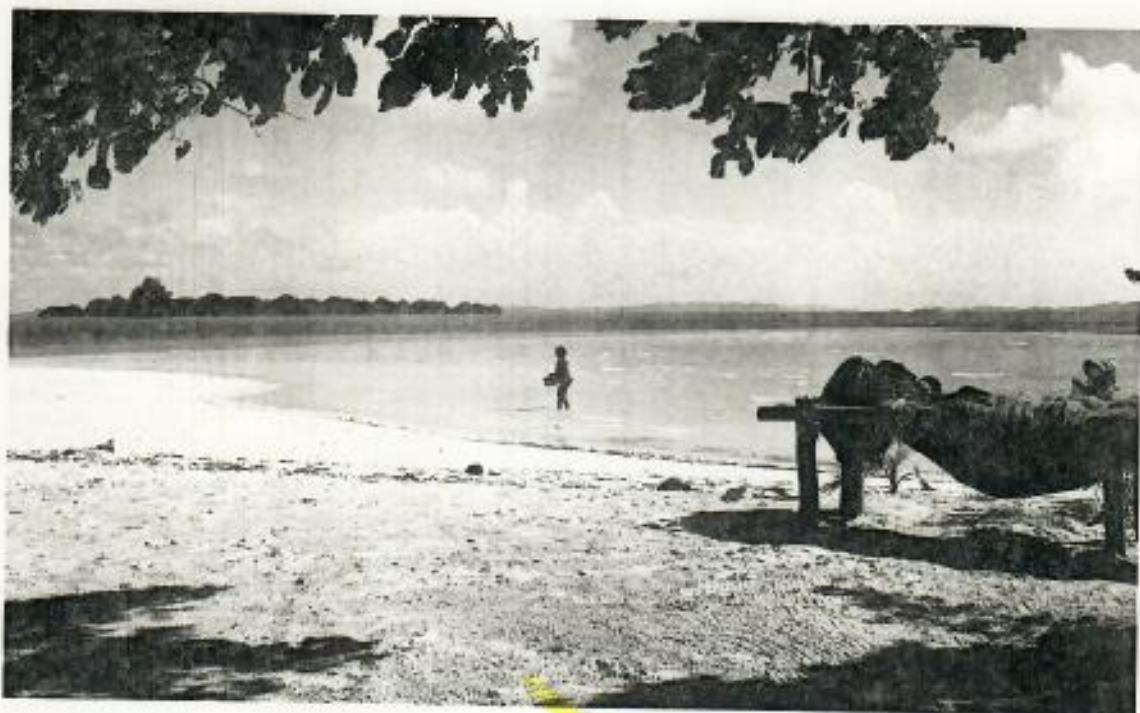
Yapese stone money was quarried from the rock islands. One unfinished piece of the stone money, measuring around 9½ feet in diameter, is located in a cave off Airai Channel. Remains of an ancient dock leading to the interior of the cave can still be found.



About ten miles southwest of Koror is Ulong Island. Ancient rock paintings (hieroglyphics) were used to record events at one time, and many such drawings may be found here. Ulong is the rock island where Captain Henry Wilson's ship, the *Antelope*, went aground in the 1700's.



The Cave of the Defenders, also off Airai Channel, is noted for the bellicose early legends of Palau. Erosion and wave action have formed underground openings in some of the Rock Islands, allowing water to enter, rising and falling with the tides, forming caves, grottoes and marine lakes in the interior of these islands. In many cases, these areas contain unique chemical and life forms, some of them found nowhere else. In some of the caves, stalactites hang both above and below the water line and are still in the process of formation. Although care should be taken in entering these caves and lakes, experienced Palauan guides are available to help explorers enter safely. In some cases, scuba gear is necessary.



One of the most popular carvings on Palauan storyboards is the Ngemelis legend of the turtle egg-laying cycle. Ngemelis, the furthestmost rock island south of Koror, is surrounded by white beaches and fringed with coconut palms for seemingly endless miles. The island was a popular refuge for turtles whose shells and meat were prized collections only the wealthy could afford. Hunting for turtles was not an easy task as no one knew just when this prized animal would come to shore to lay eggs, and thus provide an opportunity to catch it. When a young man of Peleliu and a young woman of Koror arranged a romantic rendezvous on that island, it led them to discover that the egg-laying cycle of the turtle corresponds to the phases of the moon. This method is still used today and remains a sure way of hunting for turtles.

One of the greatest pleasures of the Rock Islands is their calm surrounding waters, which allow water skiing and sailing. Palau is without question one of the top-rated areas in the world for underwater photography. Inside the reefs, swimming, snorkeling and line, net, and spear fishing also are popular. Outside the reefs, an abundance of large, tough billfish make Palau an excellent ground for deep-sea fishing throughout the year. Blue marlin, wahoo and tuna, to name a few, present an exciting challenge for the angler.

Flora and Fauna

Land wildlife is limited in Palau. Mammals are rare, and are confined mostly to those which have flown in, such as fruit bats, or those introduced by man, such as dogs, pigs, cats, cattle, goats, rats and monkeys. (Monkeys were first introduced in Angaur.) Reptiles are numerous. Small geckos are plentiful and there are two species of seawater crocodile, the large monitor lizard, toads, and—though rarely seen—centipedes. Two species of snakes exist on land. Neither are poisonous.

Food plants throughout the islands are numerous. Figs, bamboo shoots and the Malay apple are gathered wild. Cultivated plants include numerous types of taro, sweet potatoes, tapioca, coconut, breadfruit, lime, orange, pineapple, various bananas, some melons, mango, avocado, passion fruit and sugar cane. Temperate garden produce does not do well, although cucumbers, chinese cabbage, eggplant and green peppers grow and may be found now and then at the local produce markets. Nipa palm is used for thatching, pandanus for matting, and coconut fiber for thatching and basketry. Various tropical hardwoods are present in small supply, yielding woods for carving and lumber. The Areca palm yields betel nut, which is chewed with lime and pepper leaves for its mild narcotic effect. Medicinal plants exist and are still used, although they have not been catalogued. In many areas, jungle is dense and

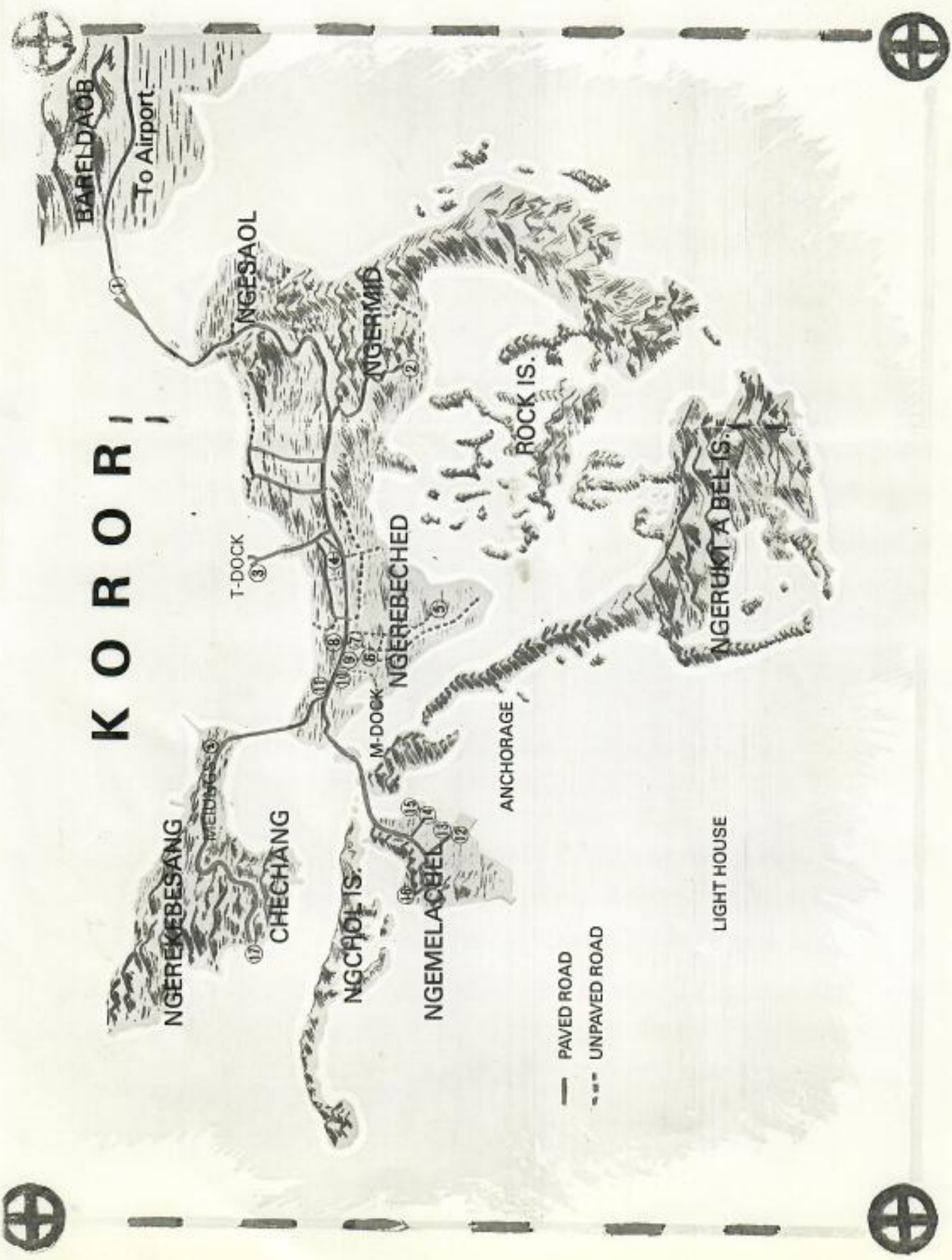


includes huge trees and bamboo, tree ferns, and much smaller growth, sometimes well laced together with spiny rattan vines. Poisonous plants, some of them related to poison ivy, may be encountered. The islands are in many places edged with mangrove swamps.

Marine life, in contrast to that of the land, is abundant and varied. There are more than 1,500 different types of tropical fishes and 700 corals and anemones in the lagoons and on the reefs. A rare sea mammal, the dugong, still grazes on the eel grass in limited numbers. Sea turtles are caught for food. The reef system, which includes barrier, fringing and patch reefs, is the basis for a complex ecological system which feeds the people of Palau through the efforts of their excellent fishermen.



KORORI;



- ① Koror
- ② Nikko
- ③ Pala
- ④ Koro
- ⑤ Mus
- Ento
- ⑥ McD
- ⑦ Legis
- ⑧ Micr
- ⑨ Bure
- ⑩ Cour
- ⑪ Agric
- ⑫ Com
- ⑬ Van
- ⑭ Fishc
- 13 Micr
- ⑯ MME
- ⑰ Com
- ⑱ Nger

Micronesian Mariculture Demonstration Center

The Micronesian Mariculture Demonstration Center (MMDC) is a marine laboratory dedicated to the dual goals of research and education. MMDC, which is evolving into an international non-profit corporation called the Palau Marine Research Institute, is located on Malakal Island, not far from Palau's commercial docks. Initiated in 1973, the laboratory has grown from a staff of three to approximately eighteen scientific and technical personnel.

MMDC programs presently fall into three main categories:

MMDC STAFF PROJECTS are mariculture or conservation oriented programs employing MMDC personnel and directed by either MMDC project leaders or foreign scientists funded by outside sources. At present, MMDC staff projects are being carried out on Hawksbill Turtles, Giant Clams, and Trochus Shells. The MMDC projects are aimed at obtaining a balance between commercial exploitation and conservation of these living resources. For example, the aim of the Giant Clam project is to produce large numbers of juvenile clams in the laboratory and to use these "seed" clams for both commercial farming and restocking of depleted reef areas.



PROVISION OF VISITING SCIENTIST FACILITIES is an important part of the function of MMDC. Scientists wishing to work in tropical marine environments may request laboratory and dormitory space. The center can accommodate up to fifteen researchers at any one time. In the past, researchers from the United States, Japan, Australia and other Pacific nations have carried out projects ranging from the study of sea grass beds to the underwater filming of the chambered nautilus. Scientists wishing to carry out research at MMDC should write to the Director, MMDC, P.O. Box 359, Koror, Palau 96940 for further information.

THE MARINE SCIENCE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, sponsored by MMDC in cooperation with Koror State and the Palau Department of Education, is designed to introduce students to the possibility of choosing marine science as a career, and to provide teacher and student training in marine sciences and applied marine development projects.