



*“Research and Restoration of Sea Turtles  
Culturally Connected to the People of  
Oceania”*

## Sea Turtle Workshop

18th and 19th November 2025

The University of the South Pacific, Laucala Bay,  
Suva, Fiji  
(Hybrid Event)

### SUMMARY

Co-convened by Miss Shritika Prakash (Ika Bula Consultants), Mr. Kelly Brown (Centre for Sustainable Futures, USP), Mrs. Nanise Kuridrani and Mrs. Tarisi Toroca (Fiji Government - Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry) in collaboration with IUCN/SSC MTSG-Oceania Regional Vice Co-chairs Mr. George Balazs, Dr. Thierry Work, Ms. Denise Parker and Miss Shritika Prakash.

#### AGENDA: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2025 – DAY 1

ROOM: Marine Lecture Theatre, USP Lower Campus

[In-person and online]

8: 30 AM	Registration Open	Volunteers
<b>SESSION 1</b>		
9:00 AM	Welcome Remarks and Prayers	Co-conveners
9:15 AM	Address by Discipline Coordinator – Marine Studies, USP	Dr. Brian Stockwell The University of the South Pacific <a href="mailto:brian.stockwell@usp.ac.fj">brian.stockwell@usp.ac.fj</a>
9:25 AM	Address by Director of Fisheries, MoFF	Ms. Rajieli Nataadra Ministry of Fisheries & Forestry <a href="mailto:natadra1.raijeli@gmail.com">natadra1.raijeli@gmail.com</a>
9:40 AM	Keynote Presentation: Ke'u ika me'u ikabula - stories of sea turtles as keystone species	Dr. Salanieta Kitolelei Tido Consultancy <a href="mailto:kiabukarau@gmail.com">kiabukarau@gmail.com</a>
10:15 AM	<b>Group Photo</b> MORNING TEA <i>Sponsored by Conservational International</i>	
<b>SESSION 2</b>		
10:40 AM	The Global SWOT Team	Ms. Ashleigh Bandimere State of the World's Sea Turtles (SWOT) Report <a href="mailto:bandimere@oceansociety.org">bandimere@oceansociety.org</a>
11:00 AM	Shellbank- Global Marine Turtle Traceability Tool	Micheal Jensen WWF <a href="mailto:mjensen@wwf.id">mjensen@wwf.id</a>
11:20 AM	Pacific Sea Turtle Conservation, Monitoring and Surveying	Shritika Prakash Ika Bula Consultants <a href="mailto:shritika.prakash@gmail.com">shritika.prakash@gmail.com</a>

11:40 AM	Turtle cooling in the region	Dr. Caitlin Smith WWF <a href="mailto:caitlin.smith2@jcu.edu.au">caitlin.smith2@jcu.edu.au</a>
12:00 PM	Turtle Use Across Fiji, Tonga, and PNG	Duncan Williams WWF Pacific <a href="mailto:dwilliams@wwfpacific.org">dwilliams@wwfpacific.org</a>
12:20 PM	LUNCH <i>Sponsored by Conservation International</i>	
<b>SESSION 3</b>		
1:30 PM	Blue corridors 4 turtles	Julie Pezin and Andrew Maurer WWF <a href="mailto:jpezin@wwf.nc">jpezin@wwf.nc</a>
1:50 PM	Moms on the Move: Tracking the inter-nesting movements and post-nesting migrations of Mariana Islands green sea turtles	Josefa Muñoz University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Cooperative Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Resources <a href="mailto:josefam@hawaii.edu">josefam@hawaii.edu</a>
2:30 PM	Bridging TEK and science of migratory species for global policy	Renee Richa Hill-Lewenilovo The Nippon Foundation   University of Edinburgh <a href="mailto:reneericha@gmail.com">reneericha@gmail.com</a>
2:50 PM	Duff Reef: A Sanctuary for Green Turtles	Semisi Meo Conservation International <a href="mailto:smeo@conservation.org">smeo@conservation.org</a>
3:10 PM	AFTERNOON TEA <i>Sponsored by Conservation International</i>	
<b>SESSION 4</b>		
3:20 PM	20 years of community-based conservation for Green and Leatherback Turtles in the Solomon Islands: successes and future challenges	Katherine Moseby University of New South Wales <a href="mailto:k.moseby@unsw.edu.au">k.moseby@unsw.edu.au</a>
4:00 PM	Sea Turtle Conservation in the Northern Lau: Building resilience through Community Engagement	Filimone Mate Kaibu Foundation <a href="mailto:conservation@kaibufoundation.org">conservation@kaibufoundation.org</a>
4:20 PM	Science, Rehabilitation, and Community: 25 Years of Sea Turtle Conservation at the Eco Center Bora Bora	Marion Olivry Eco Center Bora Bora <a href="mailto:marion.olivry@ecocenterborabora.com">marion.olivry@ecocenterborabora.com</a>
4:40 PM	Closing Remarks	Co-conveners
<b>End of day</b>		
<b>AGENDA: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2025 – DAY 2</b> ROOM: Marine Lecture Theatre, USP Lower Campus [In-person only]		
9:00 AM	Day 1 recap	Co-conveners
<b>TALANOA SESSION 1</b>		
9:10 AM	Theme: Local and traditional knowledge drivers of effective conservation  <i>Facilitator: Mr Kelly Brown</i>  Panelist: Mr. George Balazs (Golden Honu Services) Mr. Laitia Tamata (Blue Prosperity Fiji) Dr. Salanieta Kitolelei (ZMT)	
10:15 AM	<b>Group Photo</b> MORNING TEA	

	<i>Sponsored by IHG Hotels &amp; Resorts</i>	
<b>TALANOA SESSION 2</b>		
10:25 AM	Theme: Strengthening sea turtle conservation through partnership  <i>Facilitator: Mrs. Laura Williams</i>  Panelist: Ms. Karalaini Rereavosa (WWF Pacific) Mrs. Saras Sharma-Gounder (Waitt Foundation) Mr. Kelly Brown (The University of the South Pacific)	
<b>TALANOA SESSION 3</b>		
11: 25 AM	Theme: Inspiring conservation action through education and awareness  <i>Facilitator: Mrs. Laura Williams</i>  Panelist: Ms Angelique Amon (Lissenung Island Resort) Mr. Filimone Mate (Kaibu Foundation) Ms. Shania Chand (The University of the South Pacific) Ms. Marion Olivry (Eco Center Bora Bora)	
12:25 PM	LUNCH <i>Sponsored by IHG Hotels &amp; Resorts</i>	
<b>SESSION 4 MINI WORKSHOPS</b> ROOM: M107A, USP Lower Campus [In-person only]		
1:30 PM	Harnessing the power of environmental education	Jason Tuatani National Trust of Fiji <a href="mailto:jtutani@nationaltrust.org.fj">jtutani@nationaltrust.org.fj</a>
2:30 PM	Turtle talk with George Balazs	George Balazs Golden Honu Services <a href="mailto:honumazu@gmail.com">honumazu@gmail.com</a>
3:15 PM	AFTERNOON TEA <i>Sponsored by IHG Hotels &amp; Resorts</i>	
3:30 PM	TREDS Database: Turtle Data Collection in the Pacific	Shritika Prakash Ika Bula Consultants <a href="mailto:shritika.prakash@gmail.com">shritika.prakash@gmail.com</a>
5:00 PM	Closing Remarks	Co-conveners
<b>End of workshop</b>		

## Workshop format and participants

The workshop adopted a dynamic and inclusive format that blended multiple modes of engagement to maximise participation and knowledge exchange. On Day 1 it opened with a keynote presentation that set the thematic foundation for the event, followed by a series of in-person and online presentations that enabled broad regional representation. On Day 2 Talanoa sessions provided an open, culturally grounded space for dialogue, allowing participants to share experiences, challenges, and insights in a collective setting. These were complemented by hands-on workshops designed to deepen practical understanding, strengthen skills, and foster collaboration across diverse stakeholder groups.

Across the two-day workshop, a total of 55 participants took part, with approximately 80% attending in person and the remaining 20% joining online. While the majority of participants were based in Fiji, the workshop brought together a truly diverse regional and international audience, including representatives from American Samoa, Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Hawai'i (U.S.A.), Hong Kong SAR (China), India, Kiribati, Maldives, Mexico, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Taiwan, Tuvalu, the United States of America, and Vanuatu.



*Day 1 with workshop participants*



*Day 2 with workshop participants*

**Take-Home Points from the Sea Turtle Workshop 18-19 November 2025**

- Sea turtles are a keystone species in Oceania, valued both ecologically and culturally.
- Reef passages act as the arteries of island ecosystems, connecting people, habitats, and species across vast distances.
- Legends and myths about sea turtles can help build cultural and conservation synergies.
- Integrating indigenous knowledge with scientific approaches leads to more effective conservation and management outcomes.



- Strong partnerships enhance the delivery of conservation messages to communities.
- Partnerships with communities are essential and should be actively encouraged.
- Understanding your roles within communities and being willing to share conservation messages is critical.
- Education and awareness must be accessible to all age groups, including children, youth, and elders.
- Storytelling is a vital tool for passing down traditional knowledge.
- Environmental education increases people's understanding of environmental challenges and builds the skills needed to address them.
- Online platforms can be used effectively to share accurate information with wider audiences.
- Developing global and regional maps of sea turtle nesting sites can provide valuable resources for policymakers.
- Various tools and resources such as databases on sea turtle distribution and genetic diversity can support effective monitoring.
- The Blue Corridors Programme can help bridge gaps between science and policy by compiling connectivity data on nesting, migration, and foraging.
- The Pacific BioScapes Programme aims to strengthen capacity for turtle monitoring across the Pacific.
- The Turtle Cooling Project offers an accessible management tool to address climate driven feminization and sex ratio imbalances.
- Turtles remain one of the most harvested marine resources for cultural purposes.
- Genetic studies allow turtles to be traced back to their nesting beaches, which is essential for population management.
- Understanding key habitats used during nesting, migration, and feeding is crucial for conservation planning.
- Traditional knowledge also provides valuable insights into the life cycles and migration patterns of highly migratory species.
- Satellite tagged green turtles in Fiji show both short and long-distance migrations to feeding grounds.
- Twenty years of community-based conservation for green and leatherback turtles in Solomon Islands has resulted in increasing nesting trends.
- Survey challenges include sea level rise, limited access to equipment (such as tags), and funding constraints.
- Conservation initiatives in Northern Lau include habitat mapping, training and capacity building, and community education and awareness.





### Event Highlight: World Heritage in Young Hands

*Workshop by Jason Tuatani from National Trust of Fiji*

This is a program out of classroom learning experience that empower children. Environmental education engages children through activities or toolkits, for example, children living in harmony with nature program, nature camp and heritage in young hands (HIYH). The learning approach is to touch, to know and to care. This program considers freshman, trainees and junior rangers. The power lies in what you have and using it. The program has its own challenges, but it has proven to interest young children in environmental stewardship.



Learn more (click link below):

[The State of the World's Sea Turtles | SWOT](#)

[Blue Corridors for Turtles report | WWF SWIO](#)

[ShellBank Project – Global Marine Turtle Genetic Database](#)

[Pacific BioScapes | Pacific Environment](#)

[Turtle Research and Monitoring Database System \(TREDS\) | Pacific Environment](#)

[Heritage In Young Hands](#)

Media visibility

Ministry of Fisheries - Media Release

Social media

**Centre for Sustainable Futures-USP**  
19 Nov 2025 · 🌐

A sea turtle workshop is currently underway at the USP Lower Campus, bringing together a vibrant network of experts, students, and partners dedicated to the protection and restoration of sea turtles across Oceania.


Co-convened by Ika Bula Consultants, the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries, and USP, this year's workshop explored the theme "Research and Restoration of Sea Turtles Culturally Connected to the People of Oceania."

Participants joined both in-person and online from Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Australia, Denmark, French Polynesia, and the United States, representing academia, NGOs, undergraduate students, and members of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Marine Turtle Specialist Group.

Day 1 of the workshop was held in a hybrid format and featured an inspiring lineup of speakers. They include Dr. Salanieta Kitolelei who opened with a powerful presentation on the cultural stories of sea turtles and their role as keystone species. Josefa Munoz shared insights on tracking and post-nesting movements of Green Sea Turtles in the Mariana Islands, while Kristian Miles and Semisi Meo from Conservation International highlighted their work on the Green Turtle Sanctuary at Duff Reef.

Day 2, currently underway, shifts into panel discussions with speakers exploring a range of topics aligned with this year's theme—deepening conversations on research, restoration, and cultural connections across Oceania.

**#FijiSeaTurtleWorkshop #OceaniaConservation #SeaTurtleResearch #MarineConservation #SustainableFutures**



**Ministry of Fisheries, Fiji**  
20 Nov 2025 · 🌐

**#FijiFisheries** | **Fiji Hosts Regional Sea Turtle Workshop to Boost Conservation and Cultural Heritage** 🌊


The Ministry of Fisheries, in partnership with the University of the South Pacific (USP), successfully co-hosted the two-day Fiji Sea Turtle Workshop from 18–19 November 2025. The hybrid event, facilitated by Ika Bula Consultants, brought together regional experts, community representatives, researchers, and conservation organisations to strengthen collaboration on sea turtle conservation across Oceania.

The theme of the workshop, "Research and Restoration of Sea Turtles Culturally Connected to the People of Oceania," highlighted the deep cultural significance of sea turtles to Pacific communities and the shared responsibility to protect these migratory species.

Delivering the Fiji Government's keynote address on behalf of the Ministry and the Director of Fisheries, Senior Research Officer Ms. Rajjeli Natadra emphasised the importance of integrating scientific research with traditional knowledge, noting that conservation is not only about biological protection but also about safeguarding cultural identity.

Read more 📖  
<https://www.fisheries.gov.fj/fiji-hosts-regional-sea-turtle-workshop-to-boost-conservation-and-cultural-heritage/>

**#SeaTurtleConservation #OceaniaCulturalHeritage #MarineProtection #PacificEnvironmentalAction #SustainableFutures #CommunityStewardship #BiodiversityProtection #FijiWildlife**



**Event partners and sponsors**



This event was brought you by our major partners, sponsors, and a collective of dedicated organisations, researchers, individuals and volunteers committed to regional conservation and community empowerment.

**Contributor(s) of this document**

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