

WELKAM TU KIBCA NEWS FO MARCH 2015

KIBCA has been busy since the last Newsletter. You can read all about our many activities including:

- Ladies Bushwalk to Patu Kolo;
- Recruitment of new Rangers and Guides;
- Ferguson's presentation on Climate Change at the World Parks Congress;
- Marine management training at Tetepare;
- Awareness Workshop at Momeini;
- Reef to Ridge Workshop with WWF;
- Visit by Ministry of the Environment;
- Ranger training in Choiseul with WWF;
- Erection of new signs in the protected area;
- Honeybee training at Vavanga;
- Significant capture of monkey-faced bats;
- Scholarship Program 2015.

LADIES BUSHWALK TO PATU KOLO

As part of its awareness program, KIBCA sponsored transport for 20 ladies to go up to the Protected Area in October 2014 for a walk to Patu Kolo, led by our AVI volunteer Meri Billington, and Guide David Pania. For these women it was the first time they had the opportunity to see the Protected Area firsthand.



Despite constant rain, the women were undaunted and appreciated the chance to see Kolombangara from a different perspective. They marvelled at the cool atmosphere of Imbu Rano, the very large trees, the sounds of mountain-dwelling birds, the myriad of ferns and the different type of vegetation found in the

mountains, as well as the kastom sites and views to the coast.

KIBCA is keen to provide more opportunities like this for the people of Kolombangara, as we believe that people who have seen the Protected Area with their own eyes will have a new appreciation of the value of protecting this special environment.

RECRUITMENT OF NEW STAFF

KIBCA grew in size with the addition of 6 new Rangers in September:

- Victor Kelly (from Pine),
- Remy Loka (Kena),
- Janet Itiae (Vonunu/Ringgi),
- Laeneck Vavsegaiva (Hunda),
- Delson Pabulu (Poitete), and
- Bryce Solomon (Ariatu).

Recently KIBCA said goodbye to Wayne Tefenoli who has worked with KIBCA for 3 years, Janet Itiae (who will take up studies in Honiara) and Delson Pabulu. Our new replacement Rangers are:

- Anansa Dakei (Choiseul/Ringgi) and
- Barnabas Ghele (Ghatere).

KIBCA believes it is important to demonstrate healthy gender balance and is very pleased to welcome women members of staff. In addition to Ranger duties, Anansa will also work as Sustainable Livelihoods Officer, replacing Meri (our AVI volunteer) when she goes back to Australia.



Our new Rangers are being trained by Peter Butler (our other AVI volunteer).

KIBCA has also recruited new Guides to lead visitors on hikes in the protected area. They are:

- Alphonse Alata (Bokolo)
- Iro Fale (Bokolo)
- David Pania (Malaita/Ringgi)
- Joebert Alekefu (Vila)
- Donley Seiko (Tututi)

Our longest-standing Guide is Moffatt Faneri (Olisusu) who has many years of experience leading researchers and other visitors in the Protected Area. Some of our new Guides and Rangers have been on Orientation Walks to Mt Veve and the Crater with Moffatt who has generously passed on his knowledge so that the new Guides will be able to guide visitors. More Orientation Walks are planned for those who have missed out.

WORLD PARKS CONGRESS

Rangers from countries all over the world came together at the World Parks Congress in Sydney Australia in November 2014. The Congress provided Ferguson a valuable opportunity to hear how other national parks are being managed, the issues they are facing, and the management solutions being developed to meet the various challenges. For example in Australia two big issues experienced in national parks are fire management in a dry climate, and pest management with foxes, rabbits and wild goats causing millions of dollars' worth of damage.

This was also an opportunity to present the issues being experienced in the Solomon Islands to do with logging, and in particular Kolombangara Island. Ferguson made a presentation at the session on climate change and explained how the conservation of intact tropical forest on Kolombangara helps stabilise the climate and protect the water supply, as well as providing habitat for specialised plants and animals.

MARINE MANAGEMENT TRAINING AT TETEPARE

In September 2014 Ferguson Vaghi, Bryce Solomon and Wayne Tefenoli attended marine management training for Rangers at Tetepare. The training was hosted by The Tetepare Descendants Association (TDA), and delivered by Alec Hughes from SICCP and Michael Esbach from the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH).

A total of 17 Rangers attended the "look and learn" training, coming from Malaita, Guadalcanal, Marovo and Kolombangara. This was a great opportunity for rangers from different places and different

environments to meet with each other, compare their experiences and share ideas. They learnt about protecting and managing marine resources including coral, seagrass, fish, trochus, and clams. Bryce said he enjoyed the training and was impressed by the knowledge of local women from Tetepare at identifying and using scientific names for the different types of seagrass.

The participants also learnt the basics of carbon trading. This included measuring the diameter of trees, estimating their height and calculating how much carbon a single tree contains. Another skill the Rangers learn was the use of GPS.

AWARENESS WORKSHOP AT MOMEINI

In October 2014 the community at Momeini hosted a 3-day workshop to learn about sustainable resource management. As well as KIBCA staff, Michael Esbach (AMNH) and Alec Hughes (SICCP) also attended.

Unfortunately this workshop coincided with the Women's SDA Congress at Munda so many of the women were absent. Despite this, the people at the meeting decided to form a Marine Protected Area at Momeini. This will help to conserve the habitat for turtles and hopefully prevent poaching. Three volunteer rangers were selected and trained on how to monitor the marine environment.



REEF TO RIDGE WORKSHOPS WITH WWF

WWF is supporting KIBCA with a Reef to Ridge Project with CEPF funding support. Phase 1 will be on Awareness and Phase 2 about Implementation. Up until now, conservation efforts have tended to focus on one part of the environment, that is, marine areas or terrestrial areas. WWF is now rolling out a program which explains that these areas are connected, and that we need to be concerned about the health of the whole ecosystem, not just one part.

Ferguson Vaghi participated in R2R Workshops at Kena, Hunda, Ghatere and Vavanga on the west coast of Kolombangara.



These workshops were facilitated by David Boseto from Ecological Solutions and coordinated by WWF with funds from CEPF. About 30 people attended in each village and the message was well received. The communities said they were impressed by the workshop and they were impressed by KIBCA's efforts with the conservation of the Protected Area and had a better understanding of what it meant. For KIBCA, the "reef to ridge" is an important reminder to continue efforts for the conservation of land and sea.

KIBCA was also proud to support capacity building for three of its rangers at a Reef to Ridge Workshop at Poro Poro on Choiseul. The workshop was facilitated by John Peter from The Nature Conservancy (TNC). About 40 people from the community attended and were pleased to hear about the story of KIBCA and the Kolombangara Protected Area.

The participants at the workshop were able to observe the connections between terrestrial and marine ecosystems firsthand by visiting a beautiful upland waterfall, and then the protected reef in the Marine Protected Area which is populated by giant clams, a diversity of fish, mussels and other organisms.

Bryce Solomon, Raxy Loka and Victor Kelly from KIBCA said they found the 3-day workshop very beneficial and hope they will be able to undertake more training of this kind.

VISIT BY MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

In November last year, KIBCA received a visit from Agnetha Vave-Karamui, the chief Conservation Officer and Elizabeth Cotterill, a volunteer Protected Area Advisor from the Ministry of the Environment. This was part of a tour by the ministry to see the various Protected Areas through the Solomons and meet with the organisations who are responsible for managing them.

NEW SIGNS FOR THE PROTECTED AREA

KIBCA Rangers have been working hard to prepare a series of signs for the Protected Area. They are now being erected – some on the Ring Road to show the way



to Imbu Rano Lodge, and some along the tracks near Imbu Rano showing the way to Patu Kolo, Mt Veve, Vila River etc.

KIBCA has also bought anodised metal signs for marking the boundary of the Protected Area at the 400 metre contour. The purpose of these signs is to put a permanent, visible marker to show everyone where the Protected Area starts. Beyond these signs, no one is allowed to cut down trees, kill animals or damage the bush.

KIBCA will shortly approach the chiefs of each village in the customary land area where there is a road going up to the Protected Area for permission to erect these signs.

NEW RECORDS OF MONKEY-FACED BATS

Last month, a researcher from the University of Queensland, Tyrone Levery, reported the capture of 6 monkey-faced bats at Vanga. This is the highest number of individuals caught by Tyrone in his surveys throughout the Western Province including New Georgia, Rendova, Kolombangara and Choiseul.

This record is also of great significance to the scientific community and to the people of Kolombangara as Monkey-faced bats have not been recorded since 1992 and it was thought that logging activity had caused this species to go extinct. Monkey-faced bats and other bat species play a very significant role in the lowland forest environment for seed dispersal.

HONEYBEE TRAINING WORKSHOP AT VAVANGA

In the last week of February, 20 enthusiastic ladies from Irii, Ghatere, Ringgi and Vavanga came together to attend a Honeybee Training Workshop conducted by NRDF at Vavanga. The workshop was the first example of an important partnership between KIBCA and Natural Resource Development Fund (NRDF).



This workshop was also the first training to be delivered under KIBCA's Sustainable Livelihoods Program which is supported by Global Environment Fund (GEF) through its Small Grant Program, UNDP. There are many reasons why honeybee farming is well-suited for communities on Kolombangara including:

- No felling of timber or clearing of vegetation is needed;
- Bees are important pollinators for the Protected Area;
- Providing the hives are visited regularly the bees do all the work!
- Apart from the start-up costs, ongoing costs are low;
- KIBCA can provide support and harvesting equipment for communities to use.

The training was delivered by Tony from NRDF who has over 20 years' experience in honeybee farming. The ladies had "hands-on" experience at building frames, harvesting honey from a beehive, and using a honey extractor. KIBCA hopes this is the first of many more honeybee workshops for communities around Kolombangara.

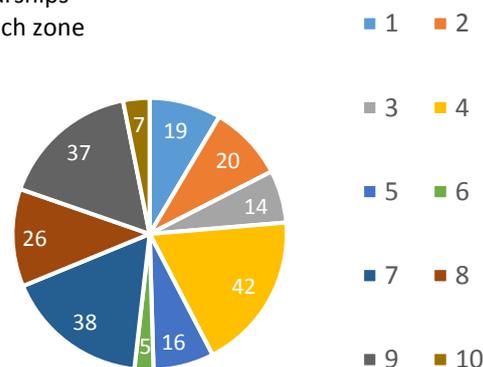


KIBCA'S SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Applications closed on 28 February for this year's Scholarship Program. Scholarships are awarded for Forms 1- 7. This is the first year that students in Form 1, 2, and 3 were eligible.

A total of 224 scholarships will be awarded from the \$124,500 generously provided by our donors - Solomon Islands Community Conservation Partnership (SICCP), 4Nature, and Kolombangara Forest Products Limited (KFPL).

No. of scholarships awarded in each zone



Zone 1	Varu - Iriva
Zone 2	Poporo - Hambere
Zone 3	Kukundu - Taghoapa
Zone 4	Vavanga - Ghatere
Zone 5	Pine - Ireke
Zone 6	Korare - Kuzi
Zone 7	Kaza - Ravai
Zone 8	Ringgi - Vao
Zone 9	Poitete - Rapata
Zone 10	Guhele - Nusamahiri