

## Turtle database launched for trial in Vanuatu

Information to support turtle conservation in the Asia-Pacific region is now more accessible due to the redevelopment of a turtle database.

Launched for trial on 12 June, the Turtle Research and Monitoring Database System (TRENDS) is a Pacific-wide research database that will coordinate the large volumes of data collected from turtle research and monitoring.

The database can store information on tag deployment, nesting beach and foraging ground monitoring data, clutch and hatchling information, and biological samples (such as genetic data). It can systematically inventory tags used per project, help standardize data collection protocols, and generate project-specific and site-specific summary reports.

Since 2004, SPREP has been working with a network of government agencies, non-government organisations, and community groups to collate all historical and current data on turtles



*Members of Wan SmolBag, Western Fisheries Regional Management Council, Marine Research Foundation, and SPREP outside the Wan Smolbag office in Port Vila, Vanuatu.*

available at SPREP, and in member countries and territories.

SPREP has also supported various turtle monitoring programmes throughout the region such as the Wan Smolbag Theatre Vanua Tai Monitoring Programme that has been tagging turtles and promoting marine turtle conservation since the 1995 Year of the Sea Turtle Campaign.

*For more information contact Anne Patricia Trevor, SPREP Associate Turtle Database Officer, [annet@sprep.org](mailto:annet@sprep.org)*

*To learn more about the WanSmolBag visit: [www.wan-smolbag-theatre.org](http://www.wan-smolbag-theatre.org)*

Turtle Talk is developed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) as part of the 2006 Pacific Year of the Sea Turtle.

### In this edition we feature:

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# 2006 Pacific Year of the Sea Turtle



# Samoa releases 16 turtles to mark national launch

In celebration of their national launch, the Samoan Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Meteorology (MNREM) tagged and released 16 turtles that had been kept in captivity in the Malua Theological College fish pond.



Volunteers releasing a tagged turtle into the ocean.

For the past three years, the College has been collaborating with MNREM to tag and release turtles in support of the national conservation programme.

The turtle population in Samoa is known to be declining, and the Division of Conservation and Environment of MNREM has been working with communities to help save and protect the remaining turtles species found in Samoa. These are the Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and the Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*).

The launch coincided with Samoa's Biodiversity Day, and marks a significant commitment to promote turtle conservation efforts.

The Division continues to work closely with SPREP (based in Samoa) to promote initiatives that support turtle conservation including the regional satellite tagging programme.

For more information contact Malama Momoemasu, MNREM, [malamas.usu@mnre.gov.ws](mailto:malamas.usu@mnre.gov.ws)



Photo: Yoshi Akasaki, MNREM, 2006

Left: Dr. Otele Perelini from Malua Theological College



Photo: Yoshi Akasaki, MNREM, 2006

Photo: Te Mana o te Moana

## Mayor of Moorea celebrates World Ocean Day by releasing turtle

The Mayor of Moorea, French Polynesia, Teriitepaiautua Maihi, released a green turtle into the wild in support of World Ocean Day celebrations on 8 June.

Attended by more than 80 school children, tourists and representatives from hotels, the day-long celebration included exhibitions, displays, creation of a mural, as well as the official launch of the Citizen of the Ocean Passport in French Polynesia.

World Ocean Day activities were coordinated by Te Mana o te Moana, with the support of the Moorea Dolphin Center and the Hotel InterContinental.

Te Mana o te Moana is a non profit association that strives to protect the marine environment of French Polynesia and to educate the public.

For more information contact Dr. Cecile Gaspar, Te Mana o te Moana, [cgaspar@mail.pf](mailto:cgaspar@mail.pf)



Above: The Mayor of Moorea, French Polynesia, Teriitepaiautua Maihi, with some helpers.

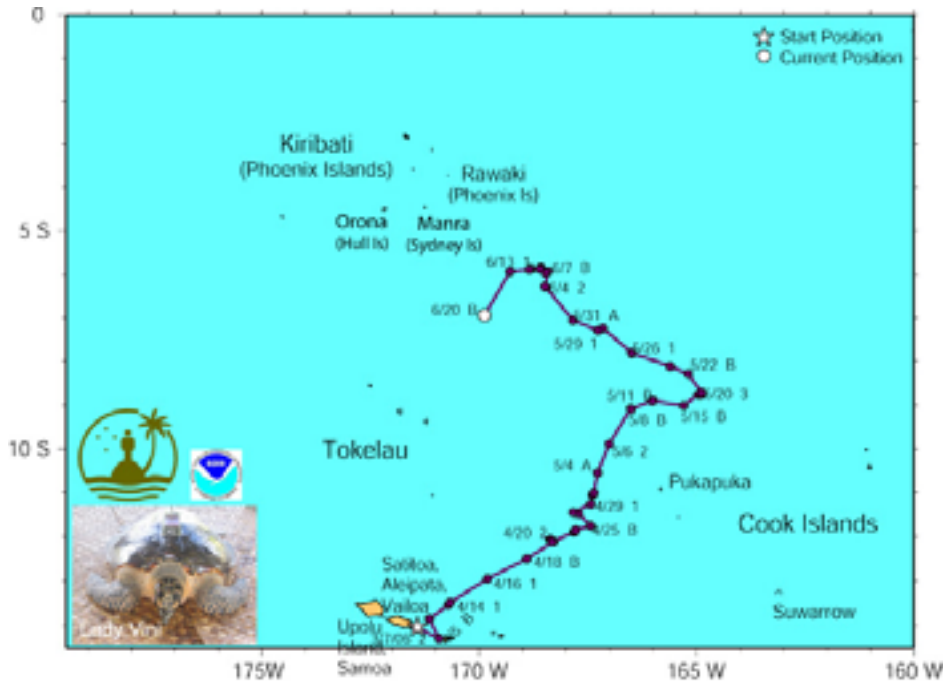
Right: Participants at the World Ocean Day celebrations



Photo: Te Mana o te Moana



# Turtle's journey marks need for regional collaboration



## Lady Vini

(Hawksbill nester)

Tagged and released: 6 March 2006

Satitoo, Aleipata, Upolu Island

Samoa

Map date: 23 June 2006



Top: Malaki Iakopo from MNREM releasing Lady Vini after attaching a satellite tag in March.

Left: Map as of 23 June 2006 marking Lady Vini's journey.



Since being tagged and released on 6 March 2006, Lady Vini has crossed the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of five Pacific island countries and territories, clearly illustrating the need for regional cooperation to conserve sea turtles.

SPREP is working to coordinate a regional dialogue to develop an Memorandum of Understanding and associated Conservation Plan for the conservation and management of marine turtles in the Pacific.

For more information contact Lui Bell, SPREP Marine Species Officer, [luib@sprep.org](mailto:luib@sprep.org).

**You can track Lady Vini's journey online by visiting: [www.sprep.org/yost](http://www.sprep.org/yost)**



Photos: Tetepare Descendants' Association, [www.tetepare.org](http://www.tetepare.org)

## Tetepare Descendants' Association Protecting their natural heritage

Since 2002, the Tetepare Descendants' Association has been working with its key partners to implement a community-based turtle nesting monitoring programme.

Tetepare Island, in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands, is the largest uninhabited island in the South Pacific. Formed in 2002, the Association represents the descendants of the original Tetepare Islanders who fled the island 150 years ago.

Their conservation work includes community education training and initiatives to support nest and egg protection of nesting turtles.

Turtle monitors collect basic biological data such as track width, number of nests and number of hatchlings on known turtle beaches.

For more information contact Allan Bero, Tetepare Descendants' Association, [tetepare@solomon.com.sb](mailto:tetepare@solomon.com.sb) or visit [www.tetepare.org](http://www.tetepare.org)



## Pacific Year of the Sea Turtle Campaign Coordination Committee



- ❖ American Samoa (Kate Schletz Saili)
- ❖ CI Pacific (Sue Miller-Taei)
- ❖ Fiji (Manasa Sovaki)
- ❖ IFAW
- ❖ IOSEA (Stephanie Dunstan)
- ❖ JCU (Mark Hamann)
- ❖ Marine Turtle Research Program, NOAA (Dr George H. Balazs)
- ❖ PNG (Vagi Rei)
- ❖ Queensland Parks Authority (Dr Colin Limpus)
- ❖ Samoa (Malama Momoemausu)
- ❖ Solomon Islands (Tia Masolo)
- ❖ SPC (Lindsay Chapman & Brett Molony)
- ❖ SPREP (Lui Bell & Dominique Benzaken)
- ❖ USP (Kenneth T. MacKay)
- ❖ WPRFMC (Irene Kinan)
- ❖ WWF Pacific (Penina Solomona)



## New materials available



3 TV commercials to support Year of Sea Turtle activities.

Now available: [contact tamaral@sprep.org](mailto:tamaral@sprep.org)



“Turtle Song”: 3 minutes in duration, also with supporting film-clip.

Now available: [contact tamaral@sprep.org](mailto:tamaral@sprep.org)



**Pacific Turtle Education Kit:** SPREP is working with WWF to develop a teacher’s resource to support turtle education in classrooms.

Contact Tamara Logan, [tamaral@sprep.org](mailto:tamaral@sprep.org) to access existing materials

## Upcoming events

### Launch of Turtle Bags in Samoa



*The Turtle Bags aim to change behaviour through providing alternatives to plastic bags*

Partners in this initiative include ANZ Samoa, AQM, Pacific Forum Line, and the Samoan Broadcasting Corporation as media partner. A key element of the Turtle Bag initiative is the creation of the ANZ Save the Turtle Fund. For every Turtle Bag sold, ANZ Samoa will donate SAT1.00 towards community-based turtle conservation initiatives.

*The Turtle Bags will be officially launched in Apia, Samoa in August.*

For more information contact Tamara Logan, SPREP Education and Social Communications Officer, [tamaral@sprep.org](mailto:tamaral@sprep.org), or Mark Ricketts, SPREP Solid Waste Officer, [mark@sprep.org](mailto:mark@sprep.org)



For more information please visit the Year of the Sea Turtle web site [www.sprep.org/yost](http://www.sprep.org/yost)



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SPREP, PO Box 240, Apia, Samoa, Ph: (+685) 21929, F: (+685) 20231, [sprep@sprep.org](mailto:sprep@sprep.org), [www.sprep.org](http://www.sprep.org)