

Project Update: September 2005

The monitoring programme for *Dobsonia moluccensis* is underway now. After the first fieldtrip to train Kore Tau to undertake this project, she has successfully visited various caves and stone holes and started to take reproductive data.

She is also taking data for her honours thesis which aims at identifying what types of caves the bats prefer, and whether it is the cave's structural parameters, the ecological surroundings of the cave, or human disturbance-related variables that most influences bat choice. She is also taking tissue samples from the bats to eventually do a genetic analysis in this population. I hereby present a summary of her field report as part of this report:

"My name is Kore Tau. Silvia Lomáscolo and the staff from Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) have trained me to carry on a monitoring programme of *Dobsonia moluccensis*. I am in the process of collecting data around Herowana Village (Eastern Highlands Province, PNG) for my Honours Thesis. My first trip with Silvia, I visited a cave and some stone holes with bats, collected data on the reproductive condition, and counted population numbers. I also measured some variables inside and outside of the cave and stone holes so as to understand what particular roost characteristics the bats prefer. Importantly I'm also measuring variables of human disturbance to see if this has an effect on the absence or presence of bats in caves or stone holes. This data collection is the beginning of the monitoring programme around Herowana village and will hopefully include the other villages in the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area in the near future."

The second part of the project, which focuses on the role of bats as seed dispersers of trees of the genus *Ficus* (Moraceae), is also continuing successfully. Partial results were presented at the 4th International Symposium in Frugivory and Seed Dispersal, which took place in Brisbane, Australia, this past July.

