

Project Update: June 2017

Although the 'capacity building in the Solomon Islands to enhance leatherback sea turtle conservation' project is no longer covered by your respective grants, we feel you may be interested to hear of the recent successes communicated to us by the Wai-hau Conservation Foundation.

Rangers from Waisurione and its surrounding villages continue to patrol the beach, tag turtles, collect biometric data; and relocate and protect leatherback nests; fully funded by Wai-Hau's own fundraising and with the full support of all stakeholders in the region. There is now a dedicated hatchery safe from tidal inundation and beach erosion, which has successfully been producing hatchlings (pictures attached); and some of the rangers have recently completed further ranger training in Morovo, Western Province.

Additionally, this year one leatherback tagged in 2015 returned to the beach and nested.

As a result of the increased capacity, education, and support given by our project, the Wai-Hau foundation was able to secure \$1 million project last year, allowing them to build a research centre in addition to the conservation centre your grants made possible. They also managed to get funding of \$5,000 last month and around \$55,000 last week, both for forestry protection, while factoring in the knock on implications to protect the beach.

These successes can be attributed to the initial funding provided by yourselves, and is an example of how a 'seed' of a project can help a community grow and flourish to the benefit of local flora and fauna.

All the villagers are hugely grateful for the support and insight they received related to this project, and say they could not have got to where they are without us. I also wish to extend MRF's gratitude once again for your financial support.

Should you wish to check in on the activities and successes of the Wai-Hau foundation and its villagers, you can do so at their facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Waihauconservationfoundationinc/>



