

PROTECTING SAMOA'S REEFS

Coral reefs nurture fish and other marine life, and are key to local food and economic security, and provide recreational, spiritual and cultural services. They also buffer coasts from ever increasing frequent and volatile storm events.

Overfishing in Samoa, and throughout the Pacific region, has had a significant impact on reef health and productivity in recent years. The amount of fish taken from coastal reefs has doubled in Samoa in the last decade. In the last Samoa State of Environment Report, inshore overfishing was identified as a major issue that will continue to threaten the integrity and sustainability of coastal resources and coral reefs if continued unabated. Meanwhile, the effects of climate change—increased storm and cyclone activity, rising sea levels and temperatures, and increasing ocean acidification—is further impacting reef health. In the past, it's likely that these reefs would have naturally rebounded from these events, however, with continued overfishing, reef resilience is low and its capacity to regenerate is of concern.

To reduce these pressures, Conservation International are working with the government to increase local awareness of the importance of healthy reefs to human wellbeing and to promote their sustainable management. This effort, focused on no-take zones, is being carried out with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and is designed to improve local food security and economy.



Program in Focus
SAMOA

Increasing coral reef resilience

For reefs to increase their resilience to high disturbance events, coral and the other marine life must be allowed to replenish and regenerate, which means increasing their protection.

Conservation International and the Samoan government are working directly with Samoan villages to set up no-take zones on their reefs.

A no-take zone is an area set aside by a village or the government where nothing may be removed. These zones are often used within broader marine management areas to conserve marine resources.

Promoting food security and livelihoods

No-take zones improve reef health which in-turn supports healthy fish populations inside and eventually outside of the zone.

This provides reliable food supply to villagers, and supports the local fishing and tourism industries, the latter holding multimillion-dollar economic potential through growing sport fishing and diving activities.

Empowering local stewardship

No-take zones also provide essential scientific information to allow better management of marine resources through long-term monitoring, comparisons between villages and countries, and measuring of the impacts of human activity to protected areas.

We strongly believe that by empowering local stewardship and supporting their efforts, we can help to make Samoa's inshore fisheries sustainable.

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