

Preserving the giants:

The fragile journey of *pa'ua* through life and reef

Pa'ua populations have been severely depleted by overharvesting. The challenging life cycle of *pa'ua* makes it even more difficult for them to recover. In some areas, *pa'ua* densities have decreased to a point where they can no longer successfully reproduce.

Mature *pa'ua*

Pa'ua don't move and must be close to each other to reproduce.

Spawning

Adults release eggs and sperm into the water that must mix to create larvae.

Drifting larvae

Only 1 out of 10,000 larvae will become an adult.

Juveniles

A juvenile can take up to 10 years to become an adult.

Why should we care?

Pa'ua are a culturally significant food in the Cook Islands. They are also an important part of reef ecosystems. *Pa'ua* contribute to the reef structure and are a food source for other animals. Climate change may make life harder for *pa'ua*, so they need our help.

How can we help?

By allowing *pa'ua* to grow and reproduce before they are harvested, we can keep our reefs healthy and have *pa'ua* for future generations.



Harvest *pa'ua* larger than 16 cm when they are able to reproduce.



Only harvest *pa'ua* within the reef and avoid *pa'ua* that live beyond the reef where it is more difficult for them to reproduce.



Take only what you need to eat; don't harvest *pa'ua* for sale or trade.



Respect *rā'ui* and marine reserves where *pa'ua* are protected and can easily grow big and reproduce.

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