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**CASE STUDY: THE APPLICATION OF TRADITIONAL MANAGEMENT
ON TROCHUS FISHERY IN VANUATU**

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The purpose of this paper is to give a brief account on a type of management method used in Vanuatu which is incorporated to modern resource management through cooperative work with the Fisheries Department Research Division. This study is being carried out at Siviri village in the North of Efate Island (Fig. 1).

The people of Vanuatu are Melanesian in origin and traditional values still govern the village life which enables the people to live in harmony with their physical environment. Customary rights over sea and land areas exists in Vanuatu and are being recognised by the Vanuatu government legislation. In fisheries, the clans or the village chief has the customary right over near shore areas especially coral reefs. The village chief sets customary law on fishery in their area and this can be in the form of closed fishing seasons in particular areas or of particular species. The idea is to impose some form of control on the fishery in ways which will ensure that the resources will continue to yield net benefit to the community.

The Vanuatu Fisheries Department respect and encourages traditional management practices in village level. The Research Division of the Fisheries Department has been working closely with the community in providing basic biological aspects of inshore resources and the types of management available while allowing the community to choose which management option suits them best. An example of such management practice is at Siviri village in Vanuatu

The village of Siviri is situated on the sea side about 25 kilometres from the main capital Port Vila, on the Northern part of the island, Efate. The population is approximately 150 and subsistence agriculture and fishery is widely practiced for living. The community usually transport their crops by trucks to the main market in Vila where they are sold. Marine resources are also considered very valuable to this community where the people rely very much on a 2 km reef which extends along the village.

The site has been known as an important area for trochus fishery where resource owners sell their catch to the existing shell processing factories in Port Vila. However, concerns were raised among the resource owners on the depletion of this resource and the need to set up management regimes in order to sustain this resource before being over exploited. Due to these reasons, the village Chief approached the Department of Fisheries for

management advice.

In responding to the request, the Research Staff undertook a site selection survey to see whether the area would be biologically suitable for a reseeding trail. Other parameters such as physical parameters were also considered. Based on the results Research Division suggested that the area be ban from trochus fishing for two (2) years so that a reseeding trial could take place. And on the 17th August 1992, a total of 1,000 hatchery reared juveniles with an average size of 2 cm basal length that were produced from Fisheries Department Hatchery were reseeded at Siviri Reef. An agreement was drawn between the Fisheries Department and the community on the security and protection of the site. Agreement includes a five (5) year ban on trochus fishing set by the community. Usually, Fisheries Department would advise resource owners to set a ban of a minimum of two to three years

The village Chiefs assign their village police to enforce the taboo and to bring to the Chief's attention anyone breaching the taboo. A fine is usually set upon any one breaking the taboo. Such a fine is traditional, usually presenting to the Chief and the community a pig with several raw food such as yams, bananas, kava and some cash (10,000 to 20,000 Vatu about AUS \$120-240.00). The Research Staff usually goes back to the area to carry out transect surveys to determine the stock currently present. A survey carried out early this year on the reef flats of Siviri village indicated that a maximum dry weight of 700 kg to 1,000 kg of legal size trochus shells can be harvested.

It is believed that through such cooperative work, the villagers would feel as being part of a country-wide management team on policy making towards the sustainability of inshore marine resources. It is also hoped that this would create a good working relationship between the government and the community.

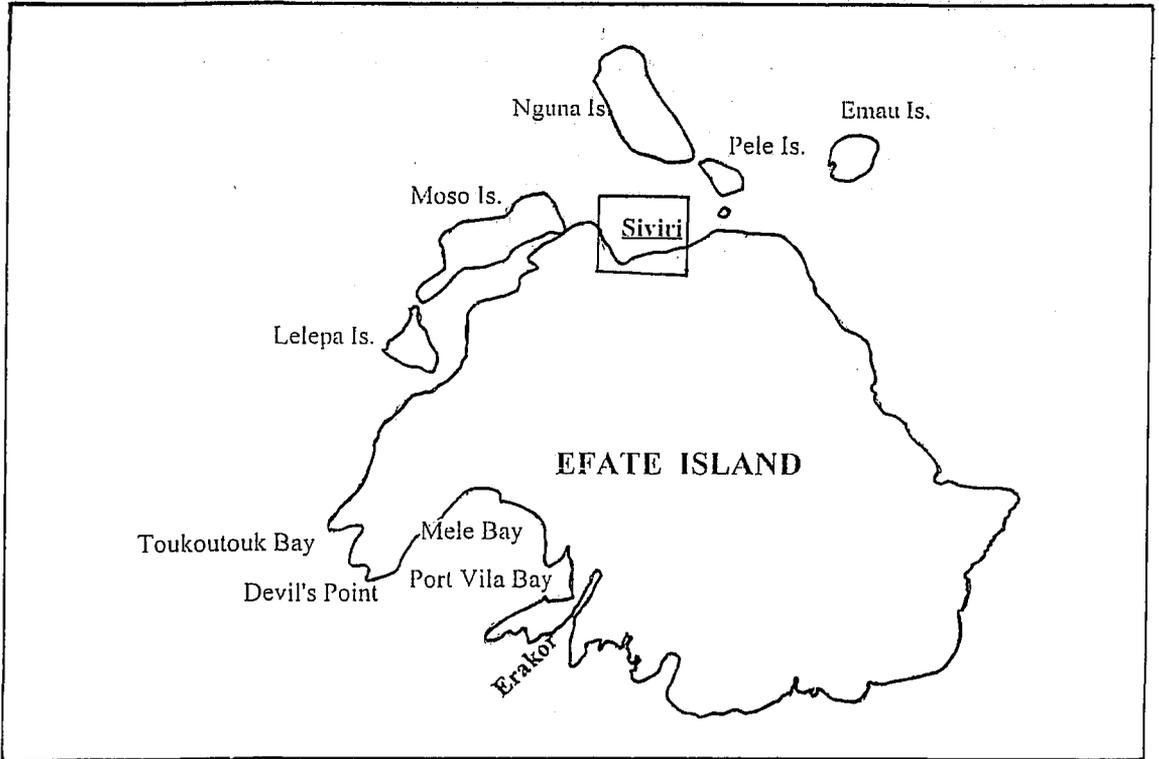


Figure 1. Map of Efate Island in Vanuatu showing location of Siviri Village