

## American Samoa revives its FAD programme

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*Ta'u Island's shallow-water FAD.*

***In recent years, American Samoa's Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) has had difficulties implementing its fish aggregation device (FAD) programme. Only one FAD was in place and two FADs had been lost during deployment due to poor design. After some changes in programme management, DMWR approached SPC in order to discuss how best its FAD programme could be revived.***

As a first step, it was decided to run a FAD workshop as a refresher course for DMWR staff. The workshop was held from 30 April–04 May 2012 on Tutuila Island with the assistance of William Sokimi, SPC's Fisheries Development Officer. Twenty participants from DMWR participated in the training, which covered FAD rigging, design, maintenance and deployment. The opportunity was used to deploy two deep-water FADs.

In September 2012, DMWR also deployed two shallow-water FADs (subsurface and surface FADs) in Tau, Manua using the MV *Sili*. The subsurface FAD was deployed between Faleasao and Ta'u, and the surface FAD was deployed north of Ta'u. The choice of the deployment sites was based on the advice of William Sokimi. The FAD programme manager, TeeJay Letalie, also conducted a FAD presentation for the village community in order to brief them about the importance of FADs for the livelihood of Manua people. FADs are often very popular with coastal communities and the village asked about the possibility of DMWR deploying more deep- and shallow-water FADs in the future. To make sure that FAD catches are properly recorded, a creel survey technician is based on Ta'u to collect data. DMWR used the FAD presentation to further explain how important data collection was to eventually justify the need for more FADs to be deployed.

Related to these developments, two meetings were conducted by DMWR with members of the Pago Pago

Gamefishing Association. In these meetings, DMWR requested the cooperation of association members for the provision of data on fish catches associated with FADs. Members were asked about the best way for them to submit sport-fishing data. They suggested that a DMWR technician should conduct weekly phone calls to members for these data. DMWR, therefore, decided to assign a technician for this task. Between June and December 2012, the technician has collected data corresponding to 38 gamefishing-days, which was a major accomplishment. DMWR has tried to collect these data for many years, but it is only now, with this new phone-calling procedure that gamefishing data collection has been effective.

In October 2012, as a further step towards a better implementation of its FAD programme, DMWR sent two staff members, TeeJay Letalie and Mika Letuane, to a workshop in Vanuatu that was organised by SPC. Workshop topics covered FAD construction, deployment, use and monitoring, as well as boat safety and fisheries development. The FAD programme has become a priority for DMWR because it has proven to enhance fisheries livelihood in American Samoa.

### For more information:

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