

OceansWatch



OceansWatch is a not-for-profit Trust registered in New Zealand and established in 2007 by a group of sailors and divers concerned about marine environments and their associated coastal communities.

OceansWatch aims to be the premier NGO amongst the global yachting community for marine conservation and humanitarian aid work. By working in partnership with sailors, as well as individuals and organisations actively involved in marine conservation and humanitarian work, OceansWatch offers practical solutions to problems experienced by coastal communities and in their associated marine environments.

Although young, the organisation is receiving strong support from a rapidly growing membership as well as the media, both in NZ and internationally. Our membership is made up of medics, engineers, divers, international development specialists, marine biologists, teachers and many more skilled individuals committed to using their expertise in a positive way.

OceansWatch aims to harness these human resources to work on a variety of marine conservation and humanitarian assistance programmes, initially in the Pacific region, but ultimately world-wide. The organisation has already generated so much interest that plans are being made to establish an OceansWatch presence in Australia, the USA and Europe.

In the marine environment OceansWatch will initially be working under 2 protocols:

CoralWatch www.coralwatch.org is used to measure the effects of pollution and global warming.

Reef Check www.reefcheck.org is used to measure the effects of pollution, over-fishing, the aquarium and curio trade - all demands placed on reefs by local populations as they struggle to make a living.

The lack of alternative livelihoods for coastal communities is a very important issue and one that OceansWatch aims to work on in partnership with them, exploring more sustainable ways for them to earn an income.

In this first year of operation projects are being focused in the Western Pacific on Vanuatu, Tonga and PNG where OceansWatch team members are already familiar with the local conditions.

Initially, OceansWatch will work with existing organisations such as Project MARC (Medical Assistance to Remote Communities) www.project-marc.org, the Red Cross and Fisheries Agencies, but will gradually be initiating its own projects as it identifies and develops relationships with communities in need.

OceansWatch is developing a Yacht Management Programme in partnership with owners who would like their boats to be involved in environmental and humanitarian projects. The long term use of their first yacht under management, *Magic Roundabout*, was gifted in January 2008 by Alice Sowerby in memory of her brother, Tom, who was en route to New Zealand when he tragically died at the age of 23.

As a member of OceansWatch there will be opportunities to up-skill with a variety of training programmes. The first course is planned for April 2008 when a group will go to Tonga for Reef Check training. Glenn Edney of OceanBlue Adventures www.tonga-dive.com will host the training at his centre in the Ha'apai Island group. A trainer from Reef Check will instruct participants in the methodology of surveying coral reef health and once accredited they will have the opportunity to join in with the 2008 surveys.

As well as practical projects, OceansWatch is also a forum for discussion and networking amongst like-minded people and organisations all working together for the benefit of our marine environment and its associated communities.

To find out more about us and how you can become involved please visit our website: www.oceanswatch.org