



CUVIER'S BEAKED WHALE STRANDING AT UTULAE LAE & SALANI



To improve our monthly newsletter contributions from staff & stakeholders are welcomed!!

Three Cuvier's beaked whales (*Ziphius cavirostris*) were found stranded early Saturday morning at the vicinity of Utulaelae and Salani villages as reported by Tautalaaso Taulealo and Eva Selu of Utulaelae. The Ministry and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) responded to the stranding on behalf of the existing Samoa's National Cetacean Stranding Committee which comprises of representatives from relevant government Ministries and Authorities, inter-government organizations, NGOs, the private sector and the local communities.

Beaked whales are the least known of all whales as they are generally found in deep water. Some of these whales have never been seen alive and most are known from strandings that occur around the world. The Cuvier's beaked whale is one of the most widespread of the beaked whales and is found in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean. Their distributions are mainly documented from strandings.

The current stranding of the Cuvier's beaked whale at Utulaelae and Salani has now confirmed the occurrence of this whale species in Samoa. This is now recorded the second Cuvier's beaked whale to have stranded this year; the first was a single dead stranding which occurred in February 2010 in Safotulafai, Savaii. This overall brings a total of 11 species of whales and dolphins so far recorded for Samoa.

Although only one of the whales was successfully released back to sea alive, the two dead ones provided an opportunity to collect important scientific data which not only adds to our national marine mammals stranding database but also contributes to regional and global information. Some of the information includes species distribution and occurrence, population connectivity through genetics, diseases and impacts from human activities or natural phenomenon and diet.

Tissue samples were collected for genetic analysis to confirm sex, age and to determine the connectivity of Cuvier's beaked whale specimen from Samoa to other specimens collected from around the world. Other samples collected include the blubber of the whales for toxicology analysis, the contents of the stomach to understand diet and parasites. Photographs of external scarring of the whales were also taken.

The carcasses of the dead whales were cut into smaller pieces and buried by the villagers. The villagers were advised not to consume the meat of the whale as there are high levels of mercury contained in the meat which could result in mercury poisoning. The presence of the community members such as the women, children, men and Methodist Church Minister (faifeau) at the stranding scene, as well as their participation during the investigation and collection of samples was a token of strong support and interest towards the conservation of whales and dolphins in Samoa.

The Ministry acknowledges with appreciation the continuing support of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the participation and hospitality of the people of Utulaelae and Salani villages.



WORLD WATER DAY

Samoa's theme for the World Water Day (WWD) 2010 was **"Clean Water for a Healthy Samoa"**. This theme was reflected throughout all the activities presented and participated during the recent observance of the World Water Day on Monday the 22nd of March 2010 in Samoa. All the main activities of the Samoa WWD 2010 were held at the WRD/IWRM Vailima office. The day was an ideal opportunity for the Water Resources Management sectors and stakeholders to raise awareness and build capacity around water resources management concepts.

Government officials and stakeholders from different sectors were invited to the opening ceremony and Yr 12 science students from colleges around Upolu and Savaii were invited to take part in planned awareness and capacity building activities. Schools who participated include Vaipouli College, Lepa/Lotofaga College, Leififi College, Lefaga Junior Secondary, Avele College and Poutasi Junior Secondary School.

More than 300 people attended the ceremony, including the Cabinet Ministers and representatives of the Diplomatic Core. The keynote speech was presented by the Minister of Natural Resources & Environment, the Hon. Faumuina Tiatia Liuga highlighting this year's theme which was Clean Water for a Healthy Samoa. Reverend Ioane Petaia from the Vaoala EFKS offered the spiritual gratitude of the day and its significance.

The day ended with a session where students reviewed and discussed their water tests results and attending schools were presented with World Water Day Participation Certificates to commemorate this special day. It was a very successful day which was made possible through the generous sponsorship of the Water Sector Support Program (WaSSP), the Samoa IWRM Project and the Ministry's Water Resources Division.





EARTHQUAKE SUMMARY

Listed in Table 1 is a summary of earthquake events recorded at the Afiamalu Seismic Station (AFI AS095) for the month of April 2010. A total of 12 earthquake events were recorded, and there were “6 FELT” earthquakes recorded for the Samoan Region within this month.

Table 1: Summary of earthquake events for the month of April 2010

Total number of earthquake events recorded	12
Highest magnitude event recorded	6.9 (Southern Qinghai, China)
Lowest magnitude event recorded	4.7
Average magnitude of events recorded	5.5



Table 2 given below outlines the details of individual earthquake events that were recorded at the Afiamalu Seismic station (AFI AS095) this month.

Table 2: Summary of individual earthquake events recorded at AFI AS095 April 2010

Date	Mag	Time (SLT)	Latitude / Longitude	Depth (km)	Region
<i>Apr 11</i>	<i>5.0(Felt)</i>	<i>4:54 pm</i>		<i>35</i>	<i>Samoa</i>
Apr 12	4.6	9:38:43 pm	20.211°S, 178.417°W	35	Fiji
Apr 13	6.9	12:49:37 pm	33.271°N, 96.629°E	10	Southern Qinghai, China
Apr 14	4.9	01:36:38 am	18.707°S, 167.260°E	10	Vanuatu
Apr 15	5.6	02:45:15 pm	54.450°N, 160.900°W	30	Alaska Peninsula
Apr 16	5.2	11:44:16 am	23.725°S, 176.972°W	177.7	South of the Fiji Islands
<i>Apr 17</i>	<i>4.7(Felt)</i>	<i>6:33:49 pm</i>	<i>15.196°S, 172.299°W</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>Samoan Region</i>
<i>Apr 21</i>	<i>6.2(Felt)</i>	<i>06:20:31 am</i>	<i>15.239°S, 172.828°W</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>Samoan Region</i>
“	<i>5.2(Felt)</i>	<i>5:02:40 pm</i>	<i>15.146°S, 173.279°W</i>	<i>45.2</i>	<i>Tonga</i>
<i>Apr 24</i>	<i>5.6(Felt)</i>	<i>11:30:49 am</i>	<i>15.964°S, 172.339°W</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>Samoa</i>
Apr 25	6.5	3:59:52 pm	22.219°N, 123.711°E	22.2	Southeast of Taiwan
<i>Apr 26</i>	<i>5.0(Felt)</i>	<i>10:11 am</i>		<i>35</i>	<i>Samoa</i>

OVERSEAS

**UNITAR -
Management and Conservation of
World Heritage Sites**

Ms. Molly Faamanatu Nielsen (*Senior Capacity Building Officer*) attended the series on the Management and Conservation of World Heritage Sites, held in Hiroshima, Japan from March 18-23. This series is one of the main programme pillars of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office for Asia and the Pacific (HOAP), aims to facilitate a better utilization of the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention through support to national policy making and planning, and information exchange on best practises and case studies.

UNITAR training workshops are designed specifically to train heritage site managers and assistants in a “*values-based approach*” to cultural and natural heritage resource management. The 2010 session focused on the management and conservation of World Heritage sites in conservation for peace and monitoring. Peace and values of particular resources are intangible and fluctuating, as interpreted and designated by different people over time. Similarly, heritage sites are surrounded by people and are very much part of society. Designation as World Heritage can potentially entail significant changes to a site’s tangible and intangible aspects. The two sites in Hiroshima have continually seen shifts in their significance over time and therefore provide living case studies to those experts tasked with safeguarding natural and cultural resources on behalf of the whole of humanity.

The World Heritage Convention aims to achieve the long-term protection, conservation and management of Outstanding Universal Value as presented by the 890 properties inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. Central to this is the relationship with their communities.



**SAMOA WILL COMMEMORATE
THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
BIODIVERSITY 2010,
& WORLD BIODIVERSITY DAY ON
17TH MAY.**

*“Biodiversity is Life –
Biological Diversity is our Life”*

The World Biodiversity Day (WBD) is held annually on the 22nd of May, as being endorsed under the Earth Summit in 1992, Rio De Janeiro.

It reminds the world the importance on the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity and environmental resources.



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