

Early Season in Vanuatu

The 2015 OceansWatch team have just had a very successful six weeks in northern Vanuatu on board the sailing yacht Anna Rose. The team have worked with three great communities on the islands of Espirito Santo, Gaua and Vanua Lava. OceansWatch have previously worked with all three communities and they were all very excited to see the 2015 team returning to continue their work.



One of the team's main objectives this year was to establish marine Community Conservation Areas in the three communities. These areas are setup and managed by the communities to promote sustainable fishing, allow access to government assistance, and better protect the marine environment. The team's role was to facilitate the communities to register their conservation areas by mapping the area and liaising with the Department of Fisheries. The team was thrilled to set in motion the two of these areas in Vatop and Pwetelut which are to be registered with the Vanuatu Government.



Work was carried out with the primary schools in each of the communities, educating students and teachers on coral reefs, fish, and marine conservation. The children were very excited to learn about the reefs around their

villages and had a great time building a mock coral reef, playing reef games, and watching marine documentaries.



The beach clean-up in Port Orly went down very well with students from the local school who competed to collect the most litter. The event was a great success and everyone had lots of fun while learning about their marine environment.



The team assessed the viability of introducing the Virgin Coconut Oil Program in Gaua, which OceansWatch currently runs in the Solomon Islands. The community was eager to learn about another source of income and are keen to see OceansWatch return next year to implement the program.



The team was very grateful for the enthusiasm and passion from the people in the communities to protect their beautiful areas and ensure a sustainable future for the younger generations. It was a privilege to be able to help them towards these goals and looks forward to continuing to work with these communities in the coming years.

The team are now preparing for the next part of the 2015 expedition and will sail to the Solomon Islands to carry out the projects work there.