Research sources for Sustainable Tourism

Source 1

FIJI NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FRAMEWORK 2024-2034

National Tourism Office (NTO):

Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation

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For the full Framework go to:

https://mtca.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/National-Sustainable-Tourism-Framework-2024-2034.pdf

Summary

Sustainable Tourism Context

Snapshot of Sustainable Tourism in the Country:

Fiji is transitioning from a high-volume to a high-value tourism model. In 2026, the industry is anchored by the National Sustainable Tourism Framework 2024–2034, which targets net-zero shipping and community-led growth across all 14 provinces.

Key Initiatives & Stats:

Regenerative Projects: The BULA Reef underwater conservation site and “Loloma Hour” sustainable experiences were launched to deepen visitor-community connections.

Eco-Leadership: Leading operators like Six Senses Fiji and Castaway Island use solar power and coral gene banks to restore local biodiversity.

Impact: Tourism contributes 40% of GDP, with 2025 earnings hitting a record $2.81 billion.

Accolades: Fiji was named a top Best of the World 2026 destination by National Geographic for its authentic cultural and nature-based travel.

National Sustainable Tourism Policy:

https://southpacificislands.travel/sustainable/2030-framework/

Vision

By 2030, the Pacific Islands are empowered by and benefiting from tourism that is resilient, prosperous, and inclusive. It improves the wellbeing of our communities and protects, restores, and promotes our cultures, islands, and ocean ecosystems.

Overview

Tourism is an economic powerhouse and one of the main pillars sustaining growth and development in the Pacific. It is the major driver of economic growth, foreign exchange earnings, and employment and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals across the region. This potential can only be realised by transforming to a model of tourism that is prosperous, inclusive, and resilient and supports sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and other natural disasters. The transformation to a better tourism future begins with the implementation of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework. The Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework reflects the aspirations of the SPTO and its members, the tourism industry, civil society organisations, regional organisations, and global development partners.

GOAL 1

Economic Prosperity where tourism supports prosperous and resilient economies

GOAL 2

Thriving and Inclusive Communities where tourism supports the empowerment and wellbeing of our communities

GOAL 3

Visible and Valued Cultures where tourism amplifies and promotes our culture and heritage

GOAL 4

Healthy Islands and Oceans where tourism accelerates climate action, protects our ecosystems and supports resilience

Underpinning the Framework is our aspiration to improve in the areas of Research and Statistics as the foundation for destination planning, development, management and marketing. Accordingly, a Pacific Tourism Statistics Strategy and a Digital Marketing Strategy Framework have been developed to guide our regional initiatives towards a sustainable future for the Pacific through tourism.

Sustainability is a journey and we invite you to join us in finding innovative and lasting solutions for our future generations to enjoy! The Framework calls on all partners and stakeholders to coordinate and collaborate to advance this vision for sustainable tourism through a series of policies and actions that focus on:

- Supporting Prosperous and Resilient Economies
- Empowering Communities
- Amplifying and Promoting Culture
- Accelerating Climate Action
- Protecting Ecosystems

- Building resilience

The Framework has been designed to cater to countries that are well advanced in developing and implementing sustainable tourism practices as well as for the countries that are in the early stages of sustainable tourism development. To ensure that tourism in the Pacific continues to be a driver of economic and community wellbeing, all partners are required to implement the policies and actions in the Framework to build a resilient tourism industry, fit for the challenges and opportunities the Pacific faces between now and 2030.

Statement of Commitment – Sustainable Tourism in the Pacific by 2030

In support of the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework, the Council of Tourism Ministers in the Pacific, united to support the implementation of the Framework within their countries. The high-level commitment was signed by the respective Ministers of Tourism from 19 countries. The Commitment is non-binding however it signifies the genuine intention of tourism leaders in the Pacific to build a better type of tourism for its people through tourism that is resilient, prosperous and inclusive.

Pacific Leaders Commitment

We, the Council of Tourism Ministers representing the 20 member countries of the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) commit to elevating sustainable tourism as a regional priority for environmental, socio-cultural, and economic development. We commit to making tourism in the Pacific a force for good by adopting the Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework to put the sector and our communities on a path to sustainable recovery by 2030. Strategic regional cooperation and coordination is critical but to be most effective we must demonstrate leadership at the national level.

Countries that have committed to Sustainable Tourism

The Pacific Leader's Sustainable Tourism Commitment is inspired by the Pacific nations, industry, Civil Society, Development Partners, and Global Agencies who are committed to advancing sustainable tourism across the Pacific by 2030. Pacific values and practices have ensured the sustainability of natural resources for hundreds of years and will continue for generations to come. We want to instil these philosophies into the way we plan for, develop and manage tourism operations in order to preserve the future of our destinations.

Integrated Approach

Tourism by its nature involves a destination as a whole, not only industry businesses, but also its ecosystems, natural resources, cultural assets and traditions, communities, aesthetics, and built infrastructure. Our approach must be integrated. We will work with our development partners and international financial institutions to build understanding about the need to obtain sustainable and green financing mechanisms to support sustainable tourism development and to provide accessible funding for small to medium enterprises. As

we journey together on the road to tourism recovery following the COVID–19 pandemic, we will ensure that tourism brings positive change to the lives of our people and the quality of our environment so that it can be enjoyed by generations to come. We will work together to rebuild our economies, provide decent work opportunities, reduce poverty, enhance social inclusion, and protect our natural and cultural assets. Through our work and our partnerships, our goal is to make our tourism sector resilient, prosperous, and inclusive.

The Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework encompasses our vision and the policies and actions to support it. It provides a pathway for the tourism sector to play its part in support of the Pacific's global, regional and national commitments. Our islands and oceans fundamentally underpin the health, wellbeing and prosperity of Pacific peoples and are the foundation upon which tourism depends. We acknowledge the interdependent crises of biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate change combined with the health and economic crises that impact every corner of the globe. Transformative change is needed: we cannot simply carry on as before. For tourism to be resilient, prosperous, and inclusive, we need to ensure:

- We are united as a region and work together to advance sustainable tourism through partnerships and collaboration
- We prioritise green investments to support tourism growth and work with our partners to mobilise resources
- We offer our visitors high quality, authentic, accessible and sustainable experiences that reflect our own country's uniqueness
- We create enabling legislation and policies for tourism businesses to adopt sustainable tourism practices
- Our communities are empowered by tourism and benefit from it. We protect the vulnerable and provide opportunities for young people and women
- Together we build resilience to climate change and transition to a low emission, resource efficient sector.

We invite visitors and our partners to contribute to our efforts to make tourism to the Pacific more sustainable. In endorsing this Pacific Leader's Sustainable Tourism Commitment, we commit ourselves to these goals and meaningful actions. It marks a turning point and comes with an explicit recognition that we will be judged now and by future generations on our willingness and ability to achieve our goals. Tourism has the potential to bring about positive change to the lives of our people and the quality of our environment that will be enjoyed by generations to come. We now call on our development partners, national Government colleagues, international financial institutions, regional and international agencies to support us as we transition toward sustainable tourism. We commit to meeting annually to review our progress and reaffirm these commitments.

https://southpacificislands.travel/sustainable/2030-framework/

Source 2

Fiji's Sustainable Tourism Framework: Leading the Pacific Region

https://www.fijieco.com/article/sustainable-tourism-fiji-environmental-balance

Discover how Fiji's tourism industry has successfully transformed into a model of sustainability, balancing record visitor numbers with environmental protection and cultural preservation through innovative eco-tourism practices.

Why Sustainable Tourism Matters for Fiji's Future

As tourism numbers reach record heights across Fiji's sun-drenched archipelago, the nation finds itself at a critical crossroads: how to capitalize on this economic boom while preserving the very natural wonders that attract visitors in the first place. The answer, according to industry leaders and policymakers, lies in Fiji's ambitious sustainable tourism framework that has gained international recognition.

This strategic approach represents more than just environmental protection—it's about ensuring the long-term viability of tourism while maintaining the cultural authenticity and natural beauty that make Fiji a unique destination in the Pacific region.

Critical Crossroads

With tourism at record heights, Fiji faces the challenge of balancing economic benefits with preservation of natural wonders and cultural heritage for future generations.

The Green Tourism Revolution

Fiji's tourism sector has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years, pivoting decisively toward sustainability. The government's "Pristine Fiji 2030" initiative, launched in partnership with major hotel chains and tour operators, has established some of the most progressive eco-tourism standards in the Pacific region.

"We recognized early that our natural environment is our greatest asset," says Litia Qionibaravi, Fiji's Minister for Tourism. "Our sustainability framework isn't just about environmental protection—it's about ensuring the longevity of our tourism industry and the livelihoods it supports."

This strategic shift has positioned Fiji as a leader in sustainable tourism practices. Over 80% of major resorts now operate on renewable energy sources, primarily solar, with several properties achieving carbon neutrality. Water conservation technologies and waste reduction programs have become standard across the industry.

Pristine Fiji 2030

Government initiative setting progressive eco-tourism standards across the Pacific region.

Renewable Energy

Over 80% of major resorts operate on renewable sources, with several achieving carbon neutrality.

Conservation Tech

Water conservation and waste reduction programs now standard industry practice.

Marine Conservation Tourism

Fiji's spectacular marine ecosystems have always been a major draw for visitors, but now they're being protected through innovative tourism models. The establishment of locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) has created a network of protected zones where traditional fishing practices are balanced with conservation goals.

These marine sanctuaries have become tourism attractions in themselves, offering visitors unique opportunities to participate in coral restoration projects, scientific monitoring, and marine conservation education. The award-winning "Reef Guardian" program allows tourists to sponsor coral planting and receive updates on "their" coral's growth over time.

Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort in Savusavu stands as a pioneer in this space, operating its own marine biology lab where guests can engage with researchers studying coral resilience and marine biodiversity. Similar programs have sprouted across the islands, creating a new category of educational eco-tourism.

Cultural Preservation Through Tourism

Sustainability in Fiji extends beyond environmental concerns to encompass cultural preservation. The "True Fiji" certification program ensures that cultural experiences offered to tourists are authentic, respectful, and directly benefit local communities.

Village homestay programs have been carefully structured to prevent cultural commodification while providing visitors with genuine insights into Fijian life. These programs operate on a rotation system among participating villages, preventing over-exposure of any single community to tourist presence.

"The cultural component of sustainable tourism is often overlooked," explains Ratu Semisi Tonawai, a traditional chief and sustainable tourism advocate. "When done correctly, tourism strengthens rather than dilutes our cultural identity, creating pride in our traditions and economic incentives for their preservation."

Village Homestays

Rotation system prevents over-exposure while providing authentic cultural experiences and community benefits.

True Fiji Certification

Ensures cultural experiences are authentic, respectful, and directly benefit local communities.

Luxury and Sustainability: No Longer Mutually Exclusive

Fiji has successfully challenged the notion that luxury and sustainability are contradictory concepts. The country's most exclusive resorts have embraced environmental stewardship as a core element of their luxury offering, recognizing that today's affluent travelers increasingly demand ethical vacations.

Turtle Island Resort, long a favorite of celebrities and high-net-worth individuals, generates 100% of its electricity from renewable sources, grows much of its food organically on-site, and operates extensive conservation programs. Similarly, Six Senses Fiji has pioneered zero-waste luxury, eliminating single-use plastics and operating its own water bottling facility.

These properties command premium rates while delivering on sustainability promises, demonstrating that environmental responsibility can enhance rather than detract from the luxury experience. Properties like Tambua Sands Eco Resort exemplify this new generation of sustainable luxury accommodations.

Economic Benefits to Local Communities

Perhaps the most significant achievement of Fiji's sustainable tourism model has been its success in ensuring economic benefits flow to local communities. The government-mandated Community Development Fund requires all major tourism operations to contribute a percentage of their revenue to infrastructure and education projects in neighbouring villages.

Additionally, locally-owned tourism enterprises have flourished under mentorship and microloan programs specifically designed to increase indigenous Fijian participation in the tourism economy. From boat operators to handicraft producers, local entrepreneurs are capturing a growing share of tourism spending. Visitors can support these efforts directly through experiences like women's weaving collectives and local craft workshops.

Community Impact

The Community Development Fund ensures tourism revenues directly support local infrastructure and education, while microloan programs help indigenous entrepreneurs capture growing tourism opportunities.

Challenges and Future Direction

Despite these successes, challenges remain. The increasing frequency of extreme weather events linked to climate change poses threats to coastal infrastructure. Transportation

between islands still largely relies on fossil fuels, creating a carbon footprint that contradicts sustainability goals.

Looking ahead, industry leaders are focusing on technological solutions to these challenges. Electric ferry prototypes are being tested for inter-island transport, while climate-resilient building standards are being incorporated into new development approvals.

Fiji's journey toward truly sustainable tourism remains ongoing, but its progress offers valuable lessons for other island destinations. By demonstrating that environmental protection, cultural preservation, and economic growth can be complementary rather than competing goals, Fiji has created a tourism model that points the way toward a more sustainable future. Travelers can participate directly by joining tree-planting initiatives and following reef-safe practices.

A Blueprint for Responsible Tourism

For travelers seeking authentic, responsible experiences that benefit local communities and preserve natural environments, Fiji's sustainable tourism framework offers a blueprint for how tourism can be a force for positive change in the 21st century. Experience paradise responsibly while contributing to its preservation.

Source 3 – **does not mention Fiji directly but applies to Fiji**

Illegal fishing and coral harvesting practices

Wikipedia

Blast fishing, fish bombing, dynamite fishing or grenade fishing is a destructive fishing practice using explosives to stun or kill schools of fish for easy collection. This often-illegal practice is extremely destructive to the surrounding ecosystem, as the explosion often destroys the underlying habitat (such as coral reefs) that supports the fish.[1] The frequently improvised nature of the explosives used, and undetonated charges, means danger for fishermen and divers as well, with accidents and injuries.

Although outlawed in some parts of the world, the practice remains widespread in Southeast Asia, as well as in the Aegean Sea and coastal Africa. In the Philippines, where the practice has been well-documented, blast fishing was known prior to World War I, as this activity is mentioned by Ernst Jünger in his book Storm of Steel. One 1999 report estimated that some 70,000 fishermen (12% of the Philippines' total fishermen) engaged in the practice.

Extensive hard-to-patrol coastlines, the lure of lucrative, easy catches, and in some cases outright apathy or corruption on the part of local officials make enforcement of blast fishing bans an ongoing challenge for authorities.

Commercial dynamite or, more commonly, homemade bombs constructed using a glass bottle with layers of powdered potassium nitrate and pebbles or an ammonium nitrate and kerosene mixture are often employed. Such devices, ironically termed expanding bait,[6] may explode prematurely without warning and have been known to injure or kill the person using them, or innocent bystanders.

Underwater shock waves produced by the explosion stun the fish and cause their swim bladders to rupture. This rupturing causes an abrupt loss of buoyancy; a small amount of fish float to the surface, but most sink to the seafloor. The explosions indiscriminately kill large numbers of fish and other marine organisms in the vicinity and can damage or destroy the physical environment, including extensive damage to coral reefs.

Inefficiency

Blast fishing is inherently inefficient in retrieving killed and stunned fish. For every ten fish killed, only one or two float to the surface, due to damage caused to their otherwise buoyant internal air bladders. The rest sink to the bottom.

Impact on coral reefs

Researchers believe that destructive fishing practices like blast fishing are one of the biggest threats to the coral reef ecosystems. Blown up coral reefs are no more than rubble fields. The long-term impact associated with blast tanks is that there is no natural recovery of the reefs. Coral reefs are less likely to recover from constant disturbance such as blast fishing than from small disturbance that does not change the physical environment. Blast fishing destroys the calcium carbonate coral skeletons and is one of the continual disruptions of coral reefs. In the Indo-Pacific, the practice of blast fishing is the main cause of coral reef degradation. As a result, weakened rubble fields are formed and fish habitat is reduced.

The damaged coral reefs from blast fishing lead to instant declines in fish species wealth and quantity. Explosives used in blast fishing not only kill fish but also destroy coral skeletons, creating unbalanced coral rubble. The elimination of the fish also eliminates the resilience of the coral reefs to climate change, further hindering their recovery. Single blasts cause reefs to recover over 5–10 years, while widespread blasting, as often practiced, transforms these biodiverse ecosystems into continuous unstable rubble.

Cyanide fishing is a method of collecting live fish, mainly for use in aquariums, which involves spraying a sodium cyanide mixture into a habitat in order to incapacitate the fish there. This practice affects not only the target population, it also has negative and damaging effects on many other marine organisms, including coral and coral reefs.

History and geography

Cyanide fishing is practiced mainly in saltwater fishing regions of Southeast Asia. Since the practice of cyanide fishing was never widely publicised or officially approved, its origins are uncertain; but it is believed to have originated in the 1950s in the Philippines. Later in the

twentieth century, the practice was adopted by some fishing operators in Indonesia, Thailand, the Maldives, and Taiwan, among others. Cyanide fishing was initially developed to stun and capture fish for aquariums and collectors, but it was soon also used for catching fish for human consumption. It is illegal in many of the countries in which it is practiced, although these laws are often minimally enforced. Grouper, wrasse, and coral trout are among the more popular species of fish captured through cyanide fishing.

The World Resources Institute (WRI) determined that approximately 20% of the live fish traded on the Philippine market in 1996 were caught using cyanide; assuming this is reflective of southeast Asian practice as a whole, environmental engineer David Dzombak estimates that 12,000 to 14,000 short tons (10,710 to 12,500 long tons; 10,890 to 12,700 metric tons) of live food fish are caught each year using this method.

Colourful, particularly eccentric, and therefore rare coral reef fish are packed into plastic bags; up to two thirds of these fish die during transport. Estimates suggest 70% to 90% of aquarium fish exported from the Philippines are caught with cyanide. Due to the post-capture handling stress and the effects of the cyanide, fish are bound to have a shorter life-span than usual in aquariums. According to an interview with experienced aquarium owners, they were willing to pay more for net-caught fish, because of the higher survival rate.[5] They also said they would not trust an ecolabelling system, which can be misleading.

The basis for this illegal fishing method is, among others, the rising demand for live fish in the higher-class restaurants of the big cities, particularly in rich, nearby countries, which pay increasingly high prices. The extremely low wages of the fishermen in remote, underdeveloped areas, where there are no alternative sources of income, drive them to endure the health risks and possible prosecution.

The practice has led to conflict between Chinese fishermen and the Taiwanese coast guard.

Method

The fishermen dive into the sea, usually without artificial breathing aids, although some use a highly dangerous apparatus (commonly garden hose surface-fed from the type of air compressor commonly used to power jackhammers). When they reach the coral reefs, they spray the poison between the individual layers, after which the yield is collected. Edible fish, of which a number are sold for general consumption, are first placed for ten to fourteen days in clean water for 'rinsing'. Recent studies have shown that the combination of cyanide use and stress of post capture handling results in mortality of up to 75% of the organisms within less than 48 hours of capture. With such high mortality numbers, a greater number of fish must be caught in order to supplement post-catch death.

Cases have been reported of fishermen dumping drums of concentrated cyanide in places where fishing is difficult or economic times are hard. Such high concentrations normally kill

most of the haul, but in these cases, the objective is no longer to catch live fish, but to catch the largest amount possible.

Mechanism

In seawater, sodium cyanide breaks down into sodium and cyanide ions. Cyanide inhibits cellular respiration, leading to death. Coral polyps, young fish, and spawn are most vulnerable; adult fish can take somewhat higher doses. The use of cyanide is known to cause mortality on laboratory corals in measured doses, however these data are very difficult to quantify in regard to wild populations.

Habitat destruction

Many fishing and diving areas across the whole of South East Asia, already severely damaged from the impact of dynamite fishing, have been ruined or totally lost through cyanide fishing. Cyanide concentration slows photosynthesis in zooxanthellae, which results in coral reefs losing colour; it also eliminates one of their major food sources. Even at very low doses, cyanide results in higher mortality levels among corals.

Source 4

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315871019_A_systematic_analysis_of_blast_fishing_in_South-East_Asia_and_possible_solutions

Destructive fishing is a significant area of focus for fisheries management. It is at odds with a sustainable fisheries management policy. Key examples of destructive fishing include blast fishing, cyanide fishing, illegal netting, and bottom trawling. It is characterized by indiscriminate killing, stunning, and/or waste of marine life. These methods are attractive to fishermen due to the high initial value of catches, however, the value of catch rapidly depletes as the habitat and surrounding eco-system is damaged or destroyed. For many South-East Asian (SEA) countries the loss of fisheries resource has been a sensitive topic that has been largely ignored. The traditional paradigm towards combating this problem has been to only consider the use of marine-based enforcement strategies. However, even under optimum conditions, current marine based enforcement strategies are ineffective, inefficient, and wasteful; failing to disrupt the majority of blast fishermen. This paper considers three major aspects of blast fishing; the problem, the strategies used to eradicate it, and the motivations of the fishers. This study utilizes a database of over 850,000 blast records collected by detectors in Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Philippines since 2006. Analysis shows three different groups of blast fishermen as well as an increase in the size of explosive charges over time, the latter compensating for the reduction in fish stocks. Furthermore, interviews with blast fishermen reaffirm the different groups. Potential solutions based on providing fishermen and their family with alternative livelihoods, education, and associated actions are suggested. Progress of any eradication method implemented can be monitored

through the continued collection of background blast data from areas. The results can also regularly indicate the effectiveness of the efforts made to stop blast fishing.

Source 5

The Fiji Times: Explosives a concern

Local News | Published: October 27, 2016 | Last Updated: October 27, 2016 | 2 min read

By Luisa Qiolevu

THE use of explosives is a nationwide concern on illegal fishing activities around Fiji, says the Minister for Fisheries, Semi Koroilavesau.

Mr Koroilavesau said the use of explosives had become a common complaint around the islands on illegal fishing activities.

“It’s a subject that needs to be considered in totality on the way that we tackle it and one of the main issues is the licence that is issued by the ministry,” Mr Koroilavesau said.

He said there was a need for them to be more coherent in getting information back from the islands or from illegal fishermen.

“In this way we can look at how the fishermen renew their licences and the other issue is the selling of fish products that they obtained through their licence.

“It is one of the things that I want to take up to Government for consideration to also license people who sell fish and if we only target the fishermen and then there’s an opportunity for them to sell and the sellers or the merchants that sell fish are not licensed than it is difficult to control the illegal operators.

“If we are able to issue licences to the fishing operators and we do not licence the people that sell the product it would be difficult because there’s always a demand,” he said.

“Everything is demand-driven, the supply and demand so we need to try and figure out where we can have a better control to be able to handle illegal fishing.”

Source 6

The Fiji Times: Dynamite fishing issue

Local News, News | Published: March 15, 2019

Ministry of Fisheries has raised concerns on dynamite fishing

FISHERMEN suspected of using dynamite to catch anchovies will be taken to task, says Ministry of Fisheries director Aisake Batibasaga.

In response to queries from this newspaper, he said authorities had zeroed in on areas where people were allegedly using explosives to catch the local delicacy.

“The issue of dynamite fishing in the Ba and Lautoka area has been received by the ministry for the past month when the seasonal fish called nethli (anchovies) are found in schools along the Ba, Lautoka and Lomolomo coastal mangrove areas,” he said.

“Fishermen along these areas use nets to catch this species, whereas those along the coast of Ba are the ones suspected to be using dynamite to catch them.”

The issue came to light after people travelling near the Ba River mouth posted pictures of the alleged perpetrators on social media site, Facebook.

Mr Batibasaga said a coordinated effort was being made to address the issue.

“The Fiji Police Force and Fiji Navy, with the ministry are working towards combating the use of this destructive fishing method.

“The agencies are supporting the ministry through strengthening surveillance operations and acquiring intelligence and information on its use and on persons of interest.”

Mr Batibasaga said he could not comment any further on those who had been caught because the matter was with police and investigations were in progress.

Source 7

Fiji fisheries law: When is fishing activity illegal in Fiji's nearshore waters?

Mar 7, 2018 11:10:22 AM / by Emily Samuela and James Sloan

https://www.sas.com.fj/ocean-law-bulletins/fiji-fisheries-law-when-is-fishing-activity-illegal

The challenges of determining what nearshore fishing activity is legal and illegal

A walk along Suva’s seawall in the early morning or early evening will provide stunning views of mangroves, ocean, fringing reef, nearby islands, mountains, sun rises or sunsets as well as nearshore fishing activity. This fishing activity may or may not be legal and it is not always easy to tell.

having a commercial fishing licence or commercially fishing using one of the 3 excepted methods (spear, line from the shore or portable fish trap) still means that all the other laws of Fiji apply to the fisher, including the Fisheries Act, and Regulations and the Endangered and Protected Species Act, 2002 (as amended). Indeed, these laws apply regardless of whether the fisher is fishing for a commercial or subsistence or recreational purpose and apply to:

Various fishing methods are illegal regardless of whether a licence is held or not. This includes:

- Using dynamite or other explosives
- Poison which includes any chemical or chemical compound, any substance containing derris or its active principal rotenone, or any plant belonging to the genera Barringtonia, Derris, Euphorbia, Pittosporum or Tephrosia or any of its extracts or derivatives
- Other methods banned from time to time by Regulations
- Use of UBA (underwater breathing apparatus) (banned by Fisheries Regulation pursuant to section 9 of the Fisheries Act).

Destructive Fishing Methods

Many fishing methods are considered destructive because they are damaging to the environment; they are non-selective, so many species and all life stages of a population are captured; or they are potentially dangerous to the people who use them.

Some of the methods are now illegal, such as using dynamite or cyanide to catch fish, but people still persist in their use. Destructive fishing methods can be categorised as follows (in decreasing order of impact on the environment):

Explosives

Modern poisons: cyanide, bleach, pesticides Physically destructive practices: fish drives, manual breakage of corals. Traditional poisons: plant and animal compounds that stun or kill fish. Other methods that lead to overharvest of one or more species. All of these methods have been used in the Pacific islands. Most are used in in-shore marine areas, but there are a few reports of their use in rivers and bays. Unfortunately, the magnitude of their use has not been adequately documented throughout the region and although there is a general acknowledgement of their existence and, in some cases, persistence.

In general, there is little information on the detail of how many of these methods are practised; under what conditions they are in use; of the effects of these practices at the levels that they are in use; or of the extent of their use in relation to other less destructive fi shing practices.

Only a few reports specifically document destructive fishing and collecting methods in the Pacific Islands region (Cox 1979; Eldredge 1987; Gatty 1947; Paxton & Lewis 1988). Most of these reports focus on the effects of these destructive methods on fisheries; they consider environmental effects only if they are related to fisheries

Unfortunately, although dynamite or blast fishing is illegal almost everywhere in the region and it is a very common means of catching fish. It has been used in American Samoa (Craig, pers. comm. 1995), Chuuk Lagoon (Johannes L976; Cornelius 1994 and Zann 1994), Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu (David 1994), and Western Samoa. Other areas where dynamite use has been documented are Indonesia (Yap & Gomez 1985), Kenya (Saimolys 1988).

Blast fishing began in earnest in the Pacific islands with the explosives made available by World War 2. In Palau, for instance, during the war, Japanese troops gave fishermen hand grenade and other explosives to use while fishing (Newton 1985). There are several reports from around this time (1940s and early 1950s) about dynamite fishing in Fiji, New Caledonia and Western Samoa. Dynamite is now obtained in several Pacific Island countries through various means. In Fiji, it is sold and after it has been taken from mining operations. In American Samoa, fishers have obtained small explosives from commercial purse seine operations (Craig, pers. comm. 1995).

Construction sites, public works departments, and unexploded World War II materials continue to provide supplies of dynamite (SPREP 1988). Several fishers in Papua New Guinea have lost their lives while attempting to take explosives from old abandoned war bombs (Raga, pers. comm. 1995). In American Samoa (Craig, 1995), Papua New Guinea (Anon 1986), and Vanuatu (David 1994), at least, the use of dynamite may be declining, partly due to a lack of supplies. However, in in Papua New Guinea it has been noted that dynamite use may be increasing around urban areas as the demand for fish increases (Raga, 1995)

Modern poisons

Modern poisons kill or physically maim their aquatic targets. In addition, they can be very harmful to the environment, to the people who use the methods, or even to those who eat the poisoned fish. It appears that the shift from natural to man-made poisons was easy. In Palau, for instance, the same term is used for both types of poisons (Johannes 1981). It is not known if the use of modern poisons is more common in places where traditional poisons were commonly used; in some areas such as Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, modern poisons do not appear to be as much of a problem, despite the fact that there is a history of use of plant poisons (Diake, pers. comm. 1994; Raga, 1995).

There may be a trend towards a greater use of the more potent, and often readily available, modern chemicals as traditional plant and animal poisons are seen as less effective (Cornelius, pers. comm.1994). Regardless, these poisons are only used when there is access to them. In Fiji, for instance, cyanide-soaked rags that are discarded from the gold-mines are

smuggled away from the site for use in fishing. Fertilisers and pesticides can be obtained from sugar cane farms or from local garden suppliers. Lime was obtained by people from nearby quarries. Bleach is readily available in most supermarkets. Once these compounds are obtained, they are used much like traditional poisons. They are sprinkled in the water, or squirted into crevices in the corals and rocks. The stunned or dead fish are then easily collected.

Overharvest of coral

The harvest of corals for a variety of purposes appears to be a growing industry in some areas of the Pacific. Precious corals (that is, black and red corals that are used in jewellery-making and sculpture) are collected in large amounts from deep waters near the Philippines (Carleton & Philipson 1989). Black coral is processed on a small scale in Hawaii, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Tonga. More serious is the growing harvest of ornamental

Source 8

FIJI NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR CORAL REEF CONSERVATION 2026 – 2031

https://mecc.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/FINAL-WCS-NAP-CRC-Report-2Oct2026.pdf

Fiji's coral reef ecosystems are one of the nation's most valuable natural assets, underpinning national food security, coastal protection, biodiversity, cultural heritage, and key sectors of the economy, including fisheries and tourism. These ecosystems contribute substantially to national well-being and to the livelihoods of communities across the archipelago. Despite their ecological and socioeconomic significance, Fiji's coral reefs are increasingly threatened by climate-related impacts, unsustainable fishing practices, land- and sea-based pollution, and coastal habitat degradation. While many reefs have demonstrated notable resilience, the cumulative and compounding nature of these pressures requires a coordinated and nationally driven approach to safeguard these ecosystems for present and future generations.

The National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation (2026–2031) – hereafter NAPCRC or Action Plan - establishes a coherent, evidence-based framework for addressing the most pressing threats to Fiji's coral reef ecosystems. Developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC) and supported by the Fiji National Hub for Coral Reef Conservation (NHCRC), the Action Plan reflects extensive consultation with government agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, traditional leaders, and communities.

The Vision of the Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation, as articulated by diverse stakeholders, is:

“A future where coral reefs and associated ecosystems are resilient, sustainably managed, and remain central to the well-being of our nation. Our coral reefs will continue to support the national economy, sustainable livelihoods, ensure food security, and foster resilient, empowered communities through inclusive and collaborative stewardship.”

It promotes a balanced pathway where environmental protection, economic development, and social inclusion are mutually reinforcing, ensuring that coral reefs remain a foundation of Fiji’s prosperity and resilience for present and future generations. Central to this Vision is the principle of inclusive and collaborative stewardship, reflecting Fiji’s commitment to community leadership, equity, and strong partnerships among government, traditional authorities, NGOS, CSOs, academia, development partners, and the private sector.

The Action Plan aligns with major national strategies and supports Fiji’s global and regional commitments. Through this alignment, the Plan strengthens policy coherence, enhances cross sectoral coordination, and provides clear national priorities for coral reef conservation

Source 9

Fiji's Best Tours, Handpicked (2026)

https://seefiji.com/diving-into-coral-nurseries-and-reef-restoration-efforts-in-fiji/

Diving into Coral Nurseries and Reef Restoration Efforts in Fiji

Fiji, a beautiful archipelago located in the South Pacific, is renowned for its stunning coral reefs that are teeming with vibrant marine life. However, like many coral reefs around the world, Fiji’s reefs are facing threats from climate change, overfishing, and pollution. To combat these challenges and protect the delicate marine ecosystems, coral nurseries and reef restoration projects have been established throughout the islands.

Coral nurseries are special areas where small fragments of coral are grown and nurtured before being transplanted onto damaged reefs. These nurseries serve as a crucial tool in reef restoration efforts, as they provide a safe environment for corals to grow and develop. In Fiji, coral nurseries can be found in various locations, including marine research centres, resorts, and local communities.

One such initiative is the Coral Gardening Project run by the non-profit organization, the Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL). This project aims to restore degraded coral reefs in Fiji by propagating and transplanting corals onto damaged sites. Through community engagement

and scientific research, the Coral Gardening Project has made significant strides in restoring coral reefs and promoting sustainable marine conservation practices.

In addition to coral nurseries, reef restoration projects in Fiji also involve activities such as coral planting, artificial reef construction, and marine protected area management. These initiatives are essential for enhancing the resilience of coral reefs against environmental stressors and preserving biodiversity in the region.

One of the most successful reef restoration projects in Fiji is the Mamanuca Environment Society's Coral Replantation Program. This community-led initiative involves local volunteers in collecting and replanting coral fragments onto degraded reefs in the Mamanuca Islands. By engaging the local community in conservation efforts, the program not only restores coral reefs but also raises awareness about the importance of protecting marine ecosystems.

Exploring coral nurseries and reef restoration projects in Fiji offers a unique opportunity to witness firsthand the efforts being made to safeguard these valuable ecosystems. Visitors can participate in coral planting activities, learn about coral propagation techniques, and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges facing coral reefs in the region.

Overall, coral nurseries and reef restoration projects play a crucial role in preserving Fiji's marine biodiversity and ensuring the long-term health of its coral reefs. By supporting these initiatives and promoting sustainable marine conservation practices, we can help protect these precious ecosystems for future generations to enjoy.