

ANNUAL REPORT

2006



FISHERIES  **BRANCH**
KIRITIMATI ISLAND

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4 General Background Information

Kiritimati atoll is one of the biggest atolls in the Pacific and also one of the atolls in the Line Group of the Republic of Kiribati. It is located approximately 2°N and 157°W, the sandy soil limits opportunities to develop land resources. Apart from coconuts, vegetables, fruits and root crops which are hard to grow, much of the staple food for the local communities consist of imported rice and flour. All other supplementary fresh produce to maintain a healthy diet are also imported, usually air-freighted from Honolulu in Hawaii (the nearest major port) and which are often not cheap. ***The marine resources in Kiritimati are therefore an important source of protein as well as the primary area for income-earning opportunities for the general populace of Kiritimati and to Kiribati as a whole.***

Most of the development of the fisheries on the island, though have been tried in the past, are still at an infant stage. Looking at the capture sector of the fisheries, that is, the local fishermen themselves, the normal fishing activities carried out would be mostly for consumption and any surplus catch not consumed are either preserved, given to relatives or sold locally on the island. This is because the majority of the people in Kiritimati are fishermen and the abundance of fish resources is quite high. Increasing their production and therefore increase their cash income from the fish they caught would be restricted in their capacity ***to land and to sell*** their catch. The major problems and constraints that inhibit growth in this area are associated with the following;

- a) *Fishing Gears*: Availability of suitable fishing gears needed by the local fishermen. This would also include fishing boats suitable to seek target species in remote fishing grounds, ice and coolers.
- b) *Limited Market Centre on the Island*: The current practice is that licensed fish seller are allowed to sell their catch from their residence or beside the roads. CPP branch provides the only center which they could sell their surplus catches for certain species.
- c) *Geographical structure of the island*: With four main villages in Kiritimati, only one village has good access to fishing grounds in the lagoon and the ocean.
- d) *Market link (Transport)*. One of the ultimate aims for the fishermen to increase income from their catch would be to export. At this stage very poor market link and transportation to overseas markets.

Kiritimati, like the rest of the islands in the Line and Phoenix Group, is quite remote from the main administrative center in Tarawa (Gilbert Group), a distance of approximately 1,850 nautical miles to the west. The only link between Tarawa and Kiritimati is by cargo boats calling in to Kiritimati at least once a month. Connection by air to Hawaii is once a week and which is often full both ways. It can be seen that transportation is also a problem when it comes to exportation of fish products overseas and obtaining a consistence supply of fishing gears both from the capital center in Tarawa and from overseas.

This report is based on the activities and programs implemented by the Branch of the Fisheries Division based in Kiritimati. The Sub-Division is currently manned by a Fisheries

Officer, one Fisheries Assistant, two Fisheries Technicians(one who has just recruited last June) , and two Andymen, a total of six (6) staff. We follow a regular pattern of activities and programs implemented from previous years with new programs incorporated when the need arise. Among the activities and programs implemented by the Sub-Division in Kiritimati include:

1. Monitoring of the fish resources through the collection of relevant fisheries data and surveys,
2. Monitoring of the export activities through the collection of fisheries data and issuance of licenses,
3. Promote the utilisation of marine products in a sustainable manner,
4. Provide assistance to local fishermen in the development of the fisheries on the island,
5. Monitoring of transshipment activities and
6. Monitoring and surveillance of Fisheries ponds and closed areas.

In order to implement activities and programs, the Sub-Division requested budget in the amount of AUD92,218.91. However, the Sub Division has been running with insufficient fund this year and hence most activities were not implemented.

5 Programs and Activities

Programs and activities implemented this year include the following:

WEEKLY WORK PROGRAM FOR 2006

ACTIVITIES	MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		Sat	Sun
	Morn	Aft	Morn	Aft	Morn	Aft	Morn	Aft	Morn	Aft		
Monitoring of Conservation / MPAs	1,2	1,2										
Experimental Fishing Survey									All	All		
Data Collection & Compilation of Data	F	F	F,1	F,1	F,2,3	F,2,3	F,1	F,1				
Deployment & Monitoring of Spat Collectors & Insertion of Half pearl molds									All	All		
Coordination for Observer Programme (FFA & KNOP)	F (<i>E bon waakinako aei n taina ae kainnanoaki iai</i>)											
Radio Programme	1 (<i>Aio are e na waakinna ngkana e a tauraoi ni waakinaki</i>)											

Fad Construction and Deployment	All (Aio ena tii karaoaki n tian te FAD teuana ma teuana)											
Fish Quarantine & Inspection at Airport					1	1						
Fish Pond Monitoring & Maintenance			2,3	2,3			2,3	2,3				
RV Nei Mamma (Maintenance & Engine Running)	3	3										
Patrolling of Fisheries Prohibited Areas (Fish Ponds, etc).	All (Aio ena karaoaki n taai ake e nora iai riaina te OIC b'a ena karaoaki)										**	**
Meetings, Enquiries, Report writing	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		

Note: E na boni kona n reke te bitaki n te Program ngkana iai m'akuri aika a tangira karaoaia n te tai ae waekoa.

Keys:

- Kaintoa Tairo - 1
- Orania Bataeru - 2
- Teunaia Neneuri - 3
- Tekamaeu K Bureieta - F
- Erua Tekaraba (OIC) - 0
- All hands except OIC - All
- Ngkana e kainnanaoaki - **

5.1 Pet fish Fishery

The number of Pet fish Operators has been increased to nine (9) compared to eight (8) last year. It can be noted by referring to the attachment showing monthly productions by each individual Operator. An additional Operator, Jacob Teem (Dojin Company Ltd) who is the ninth operator has just entered the venture and started to export nearly end of this year, 2006 since he was granted and approved from Fisheries Head Quarter in the beginning of the year.

Below is list of active Pet Fish Operators this year:

1. Otee Marine Export - full license
2. Kabua Pet Services - full license
3. Marine Beauties - full license
4. Moving Colors - full license
5. Marine Pettish Resources - full license
6. Willie and the Divers - full license
7. Borita Aquatika Export - full license
8. Rainbow Tropical Fish - full license
9. Dojin - purchase only

Most of these operators paid a license fee of 1,800.00 per year to harvest and export. The harvest of this lucrative resource is all done in Kiritimati and exported to Honolulu.

As shown in the tables and chart attached, the total number of pet fish exported increased from 110,098 last year to 141,675pcs this year 2006. An increase in number of pet fish exported shows on the fishery, improved fishing techniques and storage in reducing the mortality of the pet fish harvested and consequently exported to overseas markets. The value of pet fish exported this year totaled USD920,694.00, as compared to US\$639,917.75 last year, about 31% increase from last years figure.

The Flame Angel of the family *Pomacanthidae* is again the dominant species of pet fish exported from Kiritimati this year which accounts for % of the total quantity and 75% in terms of value. In looking at the total export by fish family in the chart attached, it is important to note that there are 12 fish families being harvested and exported from Kiritimati. The bulk of this year's shipment is again of the family *Pomacanthidae*, which accounts for 88% of the total quantity exported and 83% in terms of value. The Flame Angel (*Centropyge loriculus*) constitutes the major species exported under this family. Other species of the same family exported include;

- Lemon Peel - *Centropyge flavissimus*
- Emperor Angel – *Pomacanthus imperator*
- Griffis Angel – *Apolectichthys griffisi*
- Gold Flake – *Apolectichthys xanthopunctuatus*

The report on the study for Petfish resources is still yet to be produced. The Sub division noted that there are more operators requesting to enter the fishery and perhaps one of the solutions to allow more entrants into this fishery is to introduce a Catch Quota System. The report therefore would greatly assist in this area.

According to the work plan for this year, 2006, one of the activities which is to introduce a Catch Quota System in collaboration with Fisheries Head Quarter should have done this year but due to our tight program with shortage of staff, such has been ignored and planned to be included again and introduced in the coming year, 2007.

5.2 . *Lobster Fishery*

Other than the CPP, there is one more licensed exporter namely Eritaia Reiti whom he is also licensed to export fresh/frozen lobster to overseas markets as well. However, in this case, it is observed that these two exporters are now being competing in trying to attract lobster fishermen to bring in their catches.

The tables below show the total weights (lbs) of lobsters landed at CPP(Table 5.2.1) and Eritaia (Table 5.2.2). In most cases, all lobsters landed are for export and rarely retained for consumption purposes. The method of fishing is free diving outside the breakers and normally carried out at night and trucks are used as transportation for divers. The current landed price for lobsters at both CPP and Eritaia is maintained at \$3.00 a pounds.

Table 5.2.1: Lobsters landed at CPP from January to December 2006

Months	No of females	No of males	Total weight(lbs)
Jan	216	196	368.6
Feb	394	353	678

March	77	82	152.6
April	15	21	31.6
May	195	130	183.4
June	714	435	1,107.1
July	264	369	449.5
August	89	41	99.1
Sept	0	0	0
Oct	0	0	0
Nov	469	266	576.1
Dec	122	59	381.8
Total			4,020.5

Lobster landed at CPP complex showed a dramatic decrease from last years figure of 41,311 lbs. This does not indicate the decline in the lobster resource in Kiritimati but rather the demand of lobsters by CPP and the willingness of the divers to fish for lobsters. The existing Fisheries regulations on lobsters are maintained at all times. Although lobsters inspected carry no eggs and above the minimum size limit of 85 mm, the Sub-Division, again noted with concern that in all inspections, the females have been cleaned of their eggs. This is a draw back in the existing regulation in that fishermen can still get away catching egged females for commercial purposes without being prosecuted. The size limit poised no problems in that undersize lobsters are returned to the sea.

Table 5.2.2: Lobster landed at Eritaita from June to September 2006

<i>Month</i>	<i>Number of Fishermen</i>	<i>Female Lobster</i>	<i>Male Lobster</i>	<i>Total no. of Lobster</i>	<i>Total wt. (lb)</i>	<i>Av. wt. (lb)</i>
<i>June</i>	139	541	1399	1940	3364.1	1.73
<i>July</i>	66	280	566	846	1752.4	2.07
<i>August</i>	7	12	49	61	125.3	2.05
<i>September</i>	29	101	246	347	928.07	2.67
TOTAL	241	934	2260	3194	6169.9	1.931 7

5.3 Conservation Areas and Ponds

Monitoring and patrolling all Fisheries Conservation Areas and Ponds is maintained at least twice or thrice a week depending on the suspicion of the daily movements of the trucks, motorcycles and boats carrying gillnets observed moving around near these areas. This is done more frequent when ships call in from Tarawa. Demarcations of all areas have been completed to ensure that fishermen are not confused as to what ponds and areas to fish. This, however, does not deter the poaching activity that still goes on in these areas as it is quite impossible to monitor twenty-four hours on a daily basis remote areas such as the Fisheries ponds.

5.4 Bonefish Fishery

At this stage there are proposals of laws for prohibiting the harvest of bonefish but is yet to produce may be due to some certain circumstances. Hopefully, legislation of laws will be soon done for the preservation of this particular species.

However, since no representative from the Fisheries Sub Division selected to be member of the Business Licensing Committee of the Kiritimati Island Council as used to be in the past during the time such committee persisted under the Ministry of Line & Phoenix Islands

Development before the establishment of the Kiritimati Island Council, the said committee has been strictly directed from the Fisheries Sub Division not to encourage the commercial harvest of bonefish in Kiritimati. The Division noted with concern the increasing activity in the gill net fishery catching fish indiscriminately for food and for local sales. Though the sale of bonefish is not encouraged, quite a significant proportion of bonefish are being caught in the lagoon and on reef flats for food.

5.4.1 Pleasure Fishing

Pleasure fishing for bonefish is one of the major tourist attractions in Kiritimati. Tourists engaged in this activity are required to pay a license fee of 35.00 AUD which is valid for the duration of their stay. The Catch and Release Program is maintained at all times in areas designated for this purpose. Tourist however, still practiced the program in all areas visited during their game fishing whether it be in the Fisheries areas or in unprotected areas.

Figure 5-1: Revenue generated through pleasure fishing from 1988 to 2006

One may note that although the overall number of tourists visiting Kiritimati has increased since 1988 as shown in the chart and table below, and a slight increase from years visitors. However, there are still complaints made by tourists and tour guides concerning the decline in the average weekly catch as compared to previous visits. A study on the bonefish stock is now almost completed by SPC and the Fisheries to help determine the management plans needed to protect the bonefish stock in Kiritimati.

Table 5.4.1: Annual number of Bone Fish Anglers visiting Kiritimati

Year	Number of Bonefish Angler	Average Angler per month	Fishing Permit (Value AU\$)
1988	666	56	23,310.00
1989	657	55	22,995.00
1990	617	51	21,595.00
1991	389	32	13,615.00
1992	379	32	13,265.00
1993	684	57	23,940.00
1994	813	68	28,455.00
1995	828	69	28,980.00
1996	666	56	23,310.00
1997	539	45	18,865.00
1998	853	71	29,855.00
1999	1,019	85	35,665.00
2000	951	79	33,285.00
2001	837	70	29,295.00
2002	663	55	23,205.00
2003	723	60	25,305.00
2004	249	20	8,715.00
2005	345	28	12,075.00
2006	396	33	13,860.00

Tourist also visit Kiritimati for Pleasure Diving. In the previous year, 2005, there were in

total 28 divers as compared to 38 divers visiting Kiritimati this year. It could be also noted that number of tourists visiting Kiritimati in 1999 which is the peak year, has never been reached.

5.5 Fish Landings

Provided in the two attachments are: 1). *Monthly Summary of fish Landed at CPPL -2006* by CPP's staff and fish purchased from the local fishermen on Kiritimati, and 2). *Yearly weights of fish landed at CPPL-2006*. The total weight of **38,221.96** pounds of fish landed at CPPL complex. This shows a slight increase compared to last year's figure of **24,111.2** pounds.

5.6 Personal Consignment and Quarantine Services

One staff is currently on a full time basis monitoring marine products sent overseas for personal consignment as well as for export. All marine products sent overseas are inspected and issued with an export permit. For personal consignment, a maximum allowable weight of 20 kg for each passenger and required to pay \$2.00 for each accompanied box. For export purposes, \$3.00. This year, a total of 13,598.5kgs comprising of reef fish, ocean fish, milkfish, lobster and mixed species (ocean fish, reef fish, milkfish, and lobster) were sent to Honolulu, Fiji, Tarawa and other Countries. *Please see Monthly Summary provided in the table below:*

Table 5.6.1: Monthly Summary of Personal Consignment - 2006

SUMMARY OF PERSONAL CONSIGNMENT 2006						
ALL WEIGHTS ARE IN KILOGRAMS						
Month	Reef Fish	Ocean Fish	Milkfish	Lobster	Mixed Species	Total
January	0	0	5	0	17	22
February	83	7	409	0	297	796
March	29	20	549	0	187	785
April	312	72	309	27	315	1035
May	66	16	211	21	278	592
June	80	0	1159	12	199	1450
July	215	0	1103	24	264	1606
August	156	100	1182	63	1410	2911
September	272	1	326	2	538	1139
October	239	5	391	0	479	1114
November	269	61.5	90	30	861	1311.5
December	33	135	210	0	459	837
TOTAL	1754	417.5	5944	179	5304	13598.5

From the table above, it can be noted that milkfish constitutes the major species which accounts for 44% of the total weights of fish taken as personal consignment. For this particular species, most were taken to Tarawa which accounts for 58.4% while 34.1% to Fiji and as low as 7.5% to Honolulu and other countries.

5.7 Pearl Spat Collectors

There is only one 50m spat longline left between Tabakea and Saint Francis High School which is still active while the other at passage between London and Cook islet has been heaved and taken ashore after being broken apart by the big swells. This is one of the ongoing activities which is regularly monitored and checked once a week on every Monday.

The Sub Division in Kiritimati has been planning to deploy more spat long lines around leeward side of the island but due to unavailability of materials needed, such has been ignored and planned to be carried out again once the required materials arrived from Head Quarter. A list of requirement has already been sent to Fisheries Head Quarter and seems to be still pending there for over a year. Along with the requirement, the Sub Division also requested for two or three sets of Scuba Diving gear and Compressor as well if possible as these are extremely required for carrying out several underwater activities such as monitoring of Pearl Spat long lines, Marine Park - Cook Islet plus other Fisheries related underwater activities.

It is believed that the presence of the scuba diving gear here would also greatly assist in minimizing spending on the related vote as usually, we hire three sets of scuba dive gear for nearly sixty dollars per set per day from Dive Kiribati (Kim Anderson) which is quite expensive.

5.8 Export

There is an increase in number of exporters this year compared to the previous year and hope to be increased again next year as the Sub Division has already received quite a number of applications requesting to invest in the fishery in Kiritimati. Beside CPPL Branch, there are two other entrants operated with limited commodities to export such as lobster, sea cucumber and shark fins. Eritaia Reiti was granted to export sea cucumber/shark fins(Class C) and frozen lobster(Class B) while Ivin Rimon is licensed to export sea cucumber and shark fins only. Also number of Pet fish operators has been increased too as previously discussed in *Pet fish Fishery(2.1)*

Fishermen and the private sectors are quite keen in investing in the fishery in Kiritimati. Interests are often discouraged for lack of suitable facilities and incentives but more important for lack of capital to start off a business. Number of companies now involved with export has been increased compared to last year. Commodities exported include pet fish, Tuna, Lobsters, Sea cucumber by CPPL while only lobster and sea cucumber exported by Eritaia Reiti.

The following tables show 1). Table 5.8.1: *Monthly Summary of fish exported by CPPL 2006* and 2). Table 5.8.2: *Weekly shipment of Sea cucumber exported by CPPL 2006:*

Table 5.8.1 Monthly Summary of fish exported by CPPL 2006

Monthly Summary of Fish Exported from CPPL in Kiritimati for year 2006					
Month	Species	Type of Products	Weight (lbs)	Price/Lb (USD)	Total Amount
January	nil				
February	nil				
March	nil				
April	nil				
May	nil				
June	nil				
July	nil				
August	Tuna	chilled	4413.32		
September	nil				
October	Wahoo	chilled	1923.02		

	Mahimahi	chilled	36.52		
November	Wahoo	chilled	2631.75		
December	Wahoo	chilled	1326.27		
	Mahimahi	chilled	17.49		
Annual Total			10,348.37		

Table 5.8.2 Weekly Shipment of Sea cucumber exported by CPPL 2006

BECHE-DE-MER EXPORTED BY CPPL- 2006			
Date of Shipment	Species	Weight (KG)	Weight (lbs)
7/26/2006	surf redfish	301.45	663.19
	green fish	30.10	66.22
	Prickly redfish	172.80	380.16
8/8/2006	surf redfish	254.20	559.24
	green fish	24.25	53.35
9/20/2006	surf redfish	73.15	160.93
	Black teat	5.50	12.10
	green fish	6.90	15.18
	Prickly redfish	306.35	673.97
10/4/2006	surf redfish	567.09	1247.60
10/25/2006	surf redfish	594.15	1307.13
	Brown sand	30.85	67.87
	Tiger fish	21.80	47.96
	Lolly	1.70	3.74
	green fish	0.70	1.54
	Prickly redfish	20.60	45.32
10/22/2007	Tiger fish	64.90	142.78
	surf redfish	563.10	1238.82
12/6/2006	surf redfish	383.00	842.60
	Prickly redfish	43.25	95.15
	Black teat	24.25	53.35
	Tiger fish	58.85	129.47
	Curry fish	3.40	7.48
12/15/2006	surf redfish	78.55	172.81
	Lolly	27.20	59.84
	Brown sand	87.30	192.06
	Black teat	0.50	1.10
	Prickly redfish	11.90	26.18
	Tiger fish	58.35	128.37
TOTAL		3816.14	5260.18

Some private companies have shown interest to explore the possibility of starting an export business in these areas: Coral farming, clam farming, pearl farming and fish canning. The sub-division is working closely with the fishermen/exporters, giving advice and encouragement in improving the export activities.

5.9 Artisanal Survey

This is one of the tasks that Fisheries Sub Division aimed to conduct on the northern line Islands (Kiritimati, Tabuaeran and Teeraina) this year. Unfortunately, this was conducted only in Kiritimati due to insufficient fund which could not afford travel expenses for three

officers assigned to carry out Artisanal Survey. Hence, to date Tabuaeran and Teeraina are still left untouched.

The Survey on Kiritimati was conducted from September,2006 to October,2006 by four staff of the Fisheries Sub Division. Artisanal Survey Data for Kiritimati is yet to be produced as the Fisheries Sub Division is now still in the process of compilation. This will be soon submitted once compilation is completed in a near future.

5.10 Incoming Foreign Fishing Vessels

As one of the Fisheries routine duties to check and inspect the incoming Foreign Fishing vessels, this is usually done by one or two officers (when required) from the Sub Division. Information regarding the arrival of each fishing vessel, it is the sole responsibility of the Shipping Agent to inform all Boarding Party members a few days before the actual date of the ships arrival and the provision of transportation, etc. for boarding when the incoming vessel arrives.

See list of Incoming vessels provided in the attachment .

5.11 Bech-de mer Fishery

This year, there are two licensed exporters namely Eritaia Reiti and Ivin T Rimon approved from Fisheries Head Quarter to export sea cucumbers to overseas markets. Each of them paid the amount of \$1,450.00 and were issued with both Establishment License and Species License Class C for nine (9) species of sea cucumbers and shark fins. Along with the License, they were also provided from the Fisheries Branch Office with Conditions and Size limits for each species of sea cucumber.

The following table shows the weight of sea cucumber exported by Eritaia Reiti:

Table 5.11.1 Monthly weight of sea cucumber exported by Eritaia Reiti

Bech- de- mer Shipment by Eritaia - 2006			
Date of Shipment	Species	Weights (KG)	Weights (lbs)
28-Jun-07	Green fish	37.00	81.40
	Black teat	6.00	13.20
5-Jul-06	Green fish	11.00	
	Black teat	6.00	
	Prickly redfish	2.00	
2-Aug-06	Surf redfish	32.00	70.40
	Prickly redfish	105.00	231.00
	Green fish	2.50	5.50
9-Aug-06	Prickly redfish	99.00	217.80
	Surf redfish	287.00	631.40
23-Aug-06	Green fish	61.00	134.20
	Prickly redfish	137.00	301.40
	Surf redfish	159.00	349.80
30-Aug-06	Surf redfish	76.00	167.20
	Prickly redfish	25.00	55.00
Total		1045.50	2258.30

5.12 Fish Farm

Maintenance/repair and monitoring of the Fish farm is maintained twice a week on every Tuesday and Thursday. Traveling to the fish ponds is considered to be the highest consumption of fuel of the truck as the area where ponds are situated is as far as 57 to 60km from Fisheries Office in London. In addition, the truck should also be traveling around, covering the whole huge area of Fish farm checking all ponds sluice gates, etc. which covers another 10 to 20 km.

Harvest of milkfish is also done in the Fisheries ponds once or twice a week depending on the demands from the local people. The Fisheries Branch is planned to improve harvesting method in the future which will lessen time-consuming on fishing caused by using gill nets. This means that scoop net is recommended to be used instead of gill nets as harvesting of milkfish is done in the channels but not in the ponds. However, small mesh size of nettings (5 sq. mm) is needed. The usual length of time spent on harvesting of milkfish using gillnet is around 3 to 4 hours to get a 200 lb. cooler box filled up full and that can be reduced to 1 hour by using scoop net.

Annual production of milkfish being harvested from the ponds and sold to the locals this year totaled **9,786.77**pounds and **AU\$9,786.77** in terms of value as sold at \$1.00 per pound.

At present, most of main sluice gates (inlet and outlet) such as Huff Dam, Poland and London channels which are the very important ones contributing in milkfish restocking by milkfish fries coming through them from the lagoon. They are now in bad condition and therefore extremely need to be either repaired or renovated in a near future before reaching the latter stages that beyond repair. By referring to the Budget Estimates for 2006 and 2007, it could be noted that estimate for the renovation of Huff dam was also included.

