

# Marine Protected Area (MPA) Law Enforcement and Compliance Training

March 28 – April 1, 2011  
Koror, Palau



The first of a series of regional Conservation Officer capacity-building workshops entitled “Marine Protected Area Law Enforcement and Compliance” was recently completed in Koror, Palau in April. Thirty-three conservation officers and program staff, hailing from Palau, Yap, Saipan, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, the Marshall Islands, and American Samoa, participated in a week long training to learn or refresh skills and approaches important for enhancing law enforcement and compliance at their respective sites or jurisdictions. Given the diversity of participants, workshop trainers from the Guam Department of Agriculture’s Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources (DAWR) and the U.S. Marshals Service of Guam focused on general instruction that would allow Conservation Officers to be more confident, safer, and more effective when performing their duties.

Workshop training included sessions on officer safety and survival; outreach and education; report writing; patrolling and surveillance; dealing with suspected violators; and advice on how to ensure cases can be pursued to completion. Additional discussion centered on how to develop or refine Standard

Operating Procedures (SOPs) to help site and program staff operate more efficiently. Outdoor scenario exercises and boat boarding activities presented participants with new techniques and advice from instructors in real-life settings.

Based on the training and consideration of their individual context, participants and instructors assessed current priority needs for enforcement and compliance in each jurisdiction. Draft site or program enforcement improvement plans were also initiated by participant teams. Moreover, the workshop activities and format allowed participants to get to know each other and share ideas about improving compliance and law enforcement for conservation among their respective programs. A certificate of completion reception and an exchange visit for some of the participants to conservation areas in the states of Ngardmau and Hatohobei concluded the workshops activities.

Following the formal training, conservation officers discussed how they can work together and share opportunities to improve their skills and the effectiveness of their programs. Several ideas were presented on how to continue enforcement capacity



building for sites and individual conservation officers, such as follow-on trainings conducted in jurisdictions, on-the-job officer exchanges with other agencies in the region, and plans for the development of a Conservation Officer specialty offered by the Police Academy taught at the Guam Community College.

The training workshop was conducted at the Palau International Coral Reef Center and supported by various partners including: the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and NOAA's Coral Reef Program,

NOAA's PIMPAC Community, the Palau Conservation Society, The Nature Conservancy, and Belau Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) Network.

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**"I truly appreciate the instructors openness and genuine desire to train others to be their best. The message I got was their dedication to doing the right thing on the job and their profound care not just for our natural resources but also for the communities they serve."**

- Workshop Participant



Workshop participants practice interacting with suspected violators in a mock scenario (left) and reviewing site enforcement plans (right).