



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 3, 2011

Contact:
Alumeci Nakeke
anakeke@seaweb.org
SeaWeb Fiji Office: (679) 331-9084

SeaWeb announces Fiji Ocean Journalism Awards Winners
Journalists honored for excellence in reporting on critical marine issues

SUVA, Fiji— Recognizing the growth in quality ocean journalism in Fiji, SeaWeb announced the winners of the inaugural Fiji Ocean Journalism Awards at a ceremony in Suva, Fiji on Nov. 3, 2011. The Awards, which were established by SeaWeb, in partnership with the University of South Pacific (USP) and the Pacific Islands News Association, honors reporters who have shown a commitment and level of excellence in covering marine-related stories.

The winning entrees focused on such critical issues as protecting fish spawning sites, mangrove degradation, shark finning and community-led marine conservation efforts. Held at the Suva Civic Center, with more than 70 people in attendance, journalists were awarded cash prizes and canoe carvings by a local craftsman. Presenters included the Department of Environment director and chief guest, Jope Davetanivalu, International Union for Conservation of Nature regional director, Taholo Kami and the head of the USP Journalism program, Marc Edge. The event's emcee was Manasa Vatanitawake, communications officer for the Pacific Conference of Churches.

“The Awards are an important milestone in the development of ocean journalism in Fiji and recognize the power Fiji journalists have to elevate public discussion of marine issues that impact the economic, social and cultural health of Fiji,” said Scott Radway, SeaWeb’s Asia Pacific Program Director. “The Awards also recognize the individual work of these dedicated journalists, who deserve much credit for their dogged coverage of issues critical to the country’s future,” Radway added.

The event also featured a graduation ceremony for nine participants of SeaWeb’s Sea Series program. Established in 2006, Sea Series connects journalists with ocean experts, policy makers and communities involved with marine conservation issues.

2011 Awards recipients and winning entrees:

- **Newspaper**
Samantha Rina, for a series of stories entitled, “Underwater Garden,” “Size Matters,” “Changing Mentality on Mangroves” and “Fish Spawning.”
Fiji Times
Judge’s comments: The reporter’s body of work successfully conveys the human impacts of ocean issues, while presenting information in an appealing, creative

manner. She has also shown a commitment to reporting on marine conservation issues.

- **Magazine or Online Publication**

Matilda Simmons, “Horror of Shark Finning”

Mai Life Magazine, October 2010

Judge’s Comments: A well-written and researched account of a shocking phenomenon, coupled with the effective use of photographs, facts, first-hand research and expert opinion. The type of journalism that could result in actions taken to alleviate the issue.

- **Television**

Geoffrey Smith, “Yanuca Conservation”

Close Up by Fiji One, March 6, 2011

Judge’s Comments: The reporter presented thought-provoking and challenging issues faced by communities today. The story presented information in a way that is easily consumed by its audience, and provided content that revealed the shifting perspectives of various demographic groups.

- **Journalism Student**

Koila Valemei and Verenaisi Matanasiga, “A Future Without Fish”

Wansolwara, October/November 2010.

Judge’s Comments: The journalists showed tenacity in reporting a balanced, well-rounded story by interviewing fishermen, scientists, University and agency officials. The authors also presented the numerous issues involved in sustainable fishing, which informed readers of the subject’s complexity.

There were no entries submitted for the Radio category.

SeaWeb will continue to hold its Ocean Journalism Awards in Fiji annually, and encourages journalists to continue to cover marine conservation stories. SeaWeb also welcomes additional Fiji journalists to participate in its annual Sea Series Fellowship, which will begin in March 2012.

About SeaWeb

SeaWeb is the only international, nonprofit organization exclusively dedicated to strategically communicating about ocean issues. SeaWeb uses the science of communications to fundamentally shift the way people interact with the ocean. To accomplish this important goal, SeaWeb convenes forums where economic, policy, social and environmental interests converge to improve ocean health. We transform knowledge into action by shining a spotlight on workable, science-based solutions to the most serious threats facing the ocean, such as climate change, pollution and depletion of marine life. We work collaboratively with targeted sectors to encourage market solutions, policies and behaviors that result in a healthy, thriving



ocean. By informing and empowering diverse ocean voices and conservation champions, SeaWeb is creating a culture of ocean conservation. www.seaweb.org

About Sea Series

Sea Series is a program of SeaWeb, in which journalists participate in a six-month fellowship in Fiji. The program introduces journalists to top marine conservation experts and local leaders who discuss global issues such as ocean acidification and climate change, to local topics such as community-based marine protected areas. The course includes a powerful field trip so that journalists can see firsthand the impact of environmental change on communities and the critical issues facing the country. The fellowship also features insightful discussions about the challenges associated with covering ocean issues in Fiji and the Pacific.