

# WAKATOBI NATIONAL PARK

## *Partnerships for Marine Protected Area Management*

Wakatobi is an acronym for the the four main islands of Wangi-Wangi, Kaledupa, Tomia, and Binongko that, together with smaller islands, comprise the Tukang Besi Archipelago at the southeastern tip of Sulawesi. Renowned by divers for its spectacular coral gardens, Wakatobi's 3.4 million acres of islands and waters were declared a national park in 1996. Wakatobi ranks as one of the highest priorities for marine conservation in Indonesia in terms of diversity, scale, and reef condition.

Like many of Indonesia's marine areas, Wakatobi's diverse coral habitats are threatened by overfishing and destructive fishing practices. To address these issues, The Nature Conservancy and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) are working with the Wakatobi National Park Authority to redesign the park's management plan and zoning system. We are consulting with a broad range of stakeholders, including the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, the Ministry of Forestry, the district government, communities, and resource users.

In the next year, the Conservancy and WWF will work with the Park Authority to conduct scientific surveys of the park's natural resources, raise awareness of the importance of marine protected areas (MPAs) for sustainable development and biodiversity protection, and develop community support for collaborative



Wakatobi shore ©Peter Mous/The Nature Conservancy

MPA management. At the same time, we will take action to reduce destructive fishing practices in the park. We will also build the capacity of park rangers and local NGOs through training in MPA management, monitoring and surveillance, sustainable resource use, and spawning aggregation protection.

Our ultimate strategy is to protect Wakatobi's coral reef resources by building a resilient network of MPAs that are linked by ocean currents and designed to preserve the area's most important biodiversity in the face of local and global threats to coral reefs. This will also support the livelihoods of local people by replenishing fish stocks and providing new employment opportunities through

sustainable tourism. By involving communities, focusing on collaborative management as a key project strategy, and building a firm legal foundation for park zoning and enforcement, we will ensure that conservation at Wakatobi is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

Our long-term goals are to: 1) maintain Wakatobi's biodiversity at 2003 levels and contribute to the long-term sustainability of local fisheries; 2) ensure that the park covers its costs through sustainable sources of financing; and, 3) create a resilient network of mutually-replenishing MPAs, anchored in Wakatobi, to ensure the protection of the area's globally important coral reefs.