



The Pitcairn Miscellany

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There is no such thing as 'catch and release' while fishing in Pitcairn waters! If it gets caught...it gets eaten!

Readers who might be worried about conserving fish stocks can rest easy in the knowledge that Pitcairn sea conditions prevent any possibility of over-fishing. Long periods of strong wind and huge waves buffeting the rocky shoreline not only prevent the launching of the island fishing fleet, but also drastically reduce the opportunity to throw a handline into a sheltered pool near the tide line.

Harvesting food from the sea has always been an important part of the Pitcairn life-style. Fishhooks, perhaps a thousand years old, fashioned from bone or shells are on display in the island museum. Middens and Marae are littered with small seashells, indicating perhaps, that in times of shortage, even the smallest morsel of food was gathered from the sea.

Quite recent history tells of times when not only did the amount of food produced on land fluctuate from year to year, but the harvest from the sea was not very reliable either! A very powerful storm released such a deluge of rain that tonnes of mud and dirt slipped off the island and into the sea surrounding Pitcairn Island. It took many years for the fish stocks to recover from the smothering effects of the alluvial wash. Changes to sea temperature might also be connected to years of plenty followed by a period of shortage. In the past, a bigger population of islanders exerted much more pressure on the available fish, but of course in those days the fishing canoe was powered by two oars, not a thirty horsepower Yamaha, and the fish were attracted by a piece of cloth or leaf, not a plastic 'soft bait' manufactured in Taiwan!



Pitcairn Fish Finder

The modern fishing boat, found else where on the sea, relies on a technologically advanced 'flat screen fish finder', with knobs and dials that produce depth, range and tonnage, all at the press of a button; and in colour too, if that takes your fancy! But on Pitcairn, the men rely on a 'fish-finder' that is covered in feathers and has a wingspan of a little over a metre! An umbrella of hungry sea birds always follows small fish. Small fish are always followed by big fish. Big fish are always followed by fishermen!



Man 118 kg, Wahoo ...?

A calm sea and a hungry family are the usual precursors for a fishing trip. The fisherman (or fisherlady as the case may be) may decide to spend their time wallowing to the rhythms of the waves while drifting over a reef, trying to hook the gaudy coloured red snapper, Fafi, Nanwe or cod who swim amongst the rocks and corals. Or they might decide to put up with the noisy rattle of the outboard motor while they troll a short length of heavy monofilament and plastic tuna lure, targeting the fast swimming predator fish. Either way, very rarely do the Pitcairn fishermen come home empty handed. Stories of an unsuccessful trip are always quickly countered with the time that 'they had caught so many fish that the boat was almost sinking'!



The bigger game fish, such as the streamlined Wahoo or the chunky yellow fin Tuna are often cut into meal sized portions so as to share the prized meal of raw fish, limes and coconut milk with as many friends as possible, but sometimes these big fish are also frozen intact, so that they can be sold to visiting cruise ships. The smaller fish, hooked from the bottom of the sea are invariably steamed, battered, boiled or braised and fed to a family group or community gathering.

On a recent fishing trip, three hand lines caught eleven Wahoo in about an hour and a half! So if any of you 'game fishermen' are looking for some really productive waters, how about visiting Pitcairn Island. But you will have to bring your own rod...we don't use them...we fish for food, not for fun!

Early in the month our freight boat, the Claymore 2, brought several groups of very important visitors to our Island.

Human Rights Awareness Training. The Commonwealth Foundation, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, and the Commonwealth Legal Education Association is providing Human Rights Awareness Training that is focused on 'building human rights capacity in the British Overseas Territories of the Caribbean, Pacific and South Atlantic'.

As the smallest, and one of the most isolated of the British territories, Pitcairn Island law must conform to the same level of regard for human rights as British law. To this end, Ms Lindi Coetzee and Ms Stephanie Aiyagari, both lawyers and advocates for the Foundation, visited the island for a period of ten days. During this time they held a seminar for the islanders, giving instruction and advice on how to ensure that the laws and ordinances of Pitcairn conform to the Island Constitution with regards to human rights.

This was their second, and final visit to Pitcairn, and everybody who attended the course appreciated the friendly and relaxed style of their presentation. It was not easy for a group of 'mature' students to return to the classroom and make sense out of pages and pages of 'legal gobbledygook'! Aspirin and fizzy drink were used to dull the headaches, and everybody was relieved when Lindi and Stephanie reminded us that they were only a phone call away!

Child Safety Review. Over the same period, Dr Nichola Atwool and Dr Michael Sheaf, held one on one meetings with most of the people living on Pitcairn while they carried out their review of child safety.



Child Protection Studies Programme on Pitcairn Island

by Rae Mutu

Monday 27th June saw the first five students graduate from the inaugural Child Protection Studies Programme run on Island. The successful graduates were: Brenda Christian, Island Police Officer; Ariel Brown, Community Worker for Elderly Care; Pawl Warren, Community Worker for Child & Youth; Lea Brown, Division Manager Community Development; and in absentia, Turi Griffiths, Health Centre Receptionist.

This is an NZQA accredited qualification developed by Child Matters NZ especially for Pitcairn. The course, consisting of ten, two hour modules, was delivered via video conferencing by Child Matters Academic Director, Amanda Meynell, and tutor, Moyna Fletcher, and facilitated by the Family & Community Advisor on island, Rae Mutu. Sessions were followed by opportunities for tutorial and group discussion.

There were academic requirements that the students had to fulfill, including an Assignment Workbook that covered each module; a Book Review of a set text; a Multi Choice Test; a presentation to the group; and six weeks after the course was completed, a post course report. The written work was a real challenge for most, having not been part of formal studies for many years, but the group responded very positively, supporting each other through to this very successful conclusion.

The proceedings were held with family and friends in the Town Hall, with Moyna and Amanda being able to acknowledge and participate in their students' graduation through the video link.

As part of the ceremony, the Governor's Representative, Marion Guthrie, read out a message from the Governor, Vicki Treadell, offering her congratulations to the graduates, as well as her thanks to Child Matters in being prepared to adapt and deliver this programme in this creative and experimental manner.



The Queen's birthday is traditionally celebrated by holding a 'sports day' on Pitcairn Island. The Alwyn grass and Routi grow quickly during the summer, and 'Big Grass' looks more like a forest than a sports ground, but a few hours of thrashing by the grass mowers quickly chases the wasps and roosters away, and leaves a nice flat play ground. Sports day 2011 arrived, but it didn't look too promising, with thick, wet looking clouds swirling about the top of the island.

A few keen sports fans played volleyball and tennis in the rain, before retiring to the sports shed to tell lies/stories and squash mosquitoes! As the rain drops got bigger and the wind got stronger it was decided that Her Majesty would rather we sat in front of the TV on her birthday, than risk catching the flu!



Short Stories from Pulau School

After school Nana got ready to go fishing. We went down the Landing. I caught a fish. It was an opapa. I slammed it down on the rock so it can't flick. I put it in water so it can be fresh. I caught five boohee and we went home. I scaled the fish at home.

Tama Jellyfish

The red car and the blue car had a race. They went up the hill and down the hill. The blue car went too fast and went into the muddy pool. The red car slowed down to help.

Solo Seahorse

Lightning flashed, swaying tree tops burst into flames. Trees were falling as Jack ran through the forest. Jack looked around. He saw a lake in the distance.

Jack was almost there when BANG a tree smacked down in front of him. Jack backed up then jumped over it. He went rolling down the hill into the water.

Jack waited for a while until he found a cave above the water. He scrambled up the hill into the cave.

The next morning Jack was starving so he stood on the rocks to fish. But when he got up to throw the line in he saw a boat. Jack started yelling, taking off his shirt and waving it. The boat turned around and picked him up.

Ranjeet Crab

One day I was walking down to Nana's. I saw a little bag in the drain. I went and picked it up and opened it. The bag had \$3000 in it. I ran home and told Mum. Mum said, "Give it here." "I said, "NO." So I took it in my room and hid it. Next I ran down to Nana's and said, "I found \$3000 in the drain."

Finstar Sprat

Pulau School Art Gallery



“THE PITCAIRN BEAT”

The “Pitcairn Beat” is intended to give feedback and identify issues on the island from a Community Policing perspective.

This is the end of the first month back on the island for me and as expected time has flown past. The first weekend back was the busiest I have experienced with 5 yachts arriving plus the Claymore doing its rotation. As well as the “yachties” walking around “The Rock” there were also two tourists, two Human Rights Trainers and two of the Child Review team. I’m sure all enjoyed the “Pitcairn experience”.

One of the yachts mentioned was the source of a few concerns. Two of the crew in particular, were involved in some incidents that required intervention. Frankly, they were con artists intent on gaining both sympathy and then financial gain for themselves. As things turned out the ledgers were balanced and we waved goodbye to them from the Landing. Their behaviour as visitors was a rare experience on this Island. Sadly it is becoming more common in other places. Their pleading of poverty doesn’t ring true. I imagine an owner/skipper of a yacht would only want crew who can meet their financial contributions and be supplied with proof that they can, before departing. Just remember people who can afford to travel to Pitcairn are probably wealthier than you are.

The Sea Scouts have had a slow start to the next six month term. Preparation has been lacking on my part and coupled with a session where all the kids were sick for the day has contributed to this. We have played some sports up at Aute Valley and last week they helped in the tidying up of the Island Cemetery. We have things planned for later in the year revolving around learning about the weather, radios and some survival skills.

Well, that is all I have for this month so I hope July is good for you all and some settled weather arrives. Russ

Russell TORR, Sergeant, Pitcairn Island Police.

Do you have an issue for your Community Police Officer? Please feel free to call in at McCoys or alternately email police@pitcairn.gov.pn

May 2011 Weather by Jacque		
Total Rainfall	278mm	
Greatest Daily Rainfall	54mm	15 th
Days of Rain	16	
Av Humidity	79	
Av Pressure	1019.1	
Max Temp	25.7	1 st
Min Temperature	16.4	8 th
Sunshine Hours	175.6	



Diary for June 2011

- 1st Video Link with Governor in NZ
Ariel Brown’s birthday
- 2nd Claymore 2
- 3rd Irma Warren’s birthday
SV Lorraine D
- 4th SV Maggie, SV Kuheli, SV Marae
- 5th SV Ivalu
- 9th Charlene Warren’s birthday
- 24th Long boat fishing
- 26th Steve Christian’s birthday
- 27th Fishing Club Fish Fry
- 28th Meralda Warren’s birthday