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MPA Tip: On setting up a monitoring plan

The LMMA Network is a group of practitioners - including traditional leaders, conservation staff, university researchers, and others - working to improve locally-managed marine areas in the Indo-Pacific through the sharing of experiences and resources (www.lmmanetwork.org). The Network recently released *The LMMA Network Community Storybook* featuring lessons and experiences gathered at a network-wide meeting held in November 2008. It offers an array of useful tips on initiating planning processes, monitoring programs, and enforcement systems, among other subjects.

The following advice on setting up a monitoring plan was adapted by *MPA News* from the Storybook, which is available at www.lmmanetwork.org/Site_Page.cfm?PageID=64.

Tips:

- Monitor things in the marine area that are important to the community. Monitoring plans should consider topics, items, and/or species of local interest and importance.
- To ensure consistency, try to use the same people for monitoring every time.
- Involve poachers in monitoring to get them to see the importance of the conservation work. Often poachers have special skills and knowledge of spawning areas. In Fiji, poachers are invited to participate in awareness and management activities so that they can gain an understanding of these efforts.
- Present results back to the community in simple language and visuals that they can understand; don't use lots of technical terms and complicated graphs.
- Take pictures or video of the marine life while monitoring, and use these to show community members how species and corals are coming back.

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