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Applying Traditional Management Practices Informed By Modern Science: Fisheries and Conservation on Ulithi Atoll, Micronesia

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The outer islands of Yap, one of the Federated States of Micronesia, are home to some of the most isolated human communities in the world. Subsistence is heavily dependent on marine resources, and there is little, if any, commercial exploitation by local fishermen. Despite low population levels and minimal export, most communities report a decline in their fisheries. We describe the fisheries of Ulithi Atoll and patterns in shallow-water fish communities and coral reef habitat across a range of anthropogenic impacts and environmental factors. We explain management and conservation efforts led by chiefs and community leaders to monitor their fisheries, recover damaged habitat, and restore fish populations. Contrary to many conservation programs in tropical marine systems, these efforts emphasize restoration of traditional management practices over establishing permanent no-take reserves, and represent an evolving compromise between burgeoning food security issues and the necessity of developing sustainable fishing practices despite cultural modification and climate change. Given their nutritional and cultural dependence on marine resources, these communities have fewer conservation alternatives than coastal communities from Western countries, but their approach towards these issues and the evolution of their management strategies could inform our own policies for conservation and fishery management.

See more of: [Balancing Conservation and Utilization to Sustain Fisheries](#)
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