

EXTENDING THE RĀHUI NETWORK IN POLYNESIA

Supporting **local fisheries** to **sustainably manage** lagoon resources and **preserve** local coral ecosystems

What is RAHUI ?

In French Polynesia, *rāhui* is a **traditional resource management institution**, functioning through **temporary bans on the harvesting of terrestrial or marine resources**. In recent years we have witnessed a resurgence of this cultural and political institution. To meet contemporary challenges, Polynesian *rāhui* are now contributing to the strengthening of **local environmental governance** (fighting against pollution, conservation of coral reefs, etc.) and to the design of **sustainable fisheries management strategies**.

The RAHUI forum and resource center in French Polynesia

Since 2019, the **Rāhui forum and resource center in French Polynesia** has been supporting fishers, representatives of local authorities and many other stakeholders involved in management of coral reef ecosystems. Piloted by an **interdisciplinary team**, the center seeks to support the **emergence of management** initiatives or to optimize existing ones, mostly at municipal scale. In an innovative way, this project combines a culture of traditional resource management, based on detailed **knowledge of habitats and fish** behavior with **cutting-edge scientific protocols**.

Marine Managed Areas – Local Ecological Knowledge

Rāhui – Collaborative Science



Our goals

1

Restoring or ensuring the sustainability of Polynesian coral reef ecosystems:

1. Maintaining coral reef *biodiversity*
2. Ensuring the *resilience* of coral reef ecosystems to *climate change*

2

Optimizing fisheries management and safeguarding sustainable fish stocks:

1. Supporting local communities to *assess the effectiveness* of management rules
2. Co-designing with local communities appropriate *tools* for *adaptive* marine management
3. Expanding *rāhui* or *Marine Managed Areas* across French Polynesia



Our actions

> **KNOWLEDGE** – Collect, safeguard and disseminate local ecological knowledge about fisheries and coral reef ecosystems. Documenting myths and legends, participatory mapping of coral reef habitats and vernacular place names, anthropological surveys, etc.

> **ECOLOGICAL DIAGNOSES** – Characterizing environmental state and assessment of the effect of marine resource management plans to enhance the effectiveness of existing Marine Managed Areas = Measures of pollution and sedimentation levels, ecological surveys (fish abundance and diversity, benthic surveys, water and habitat quality, etc.)

> **MODELLING** – Design operational management and governance scenarios for existing or new Marine Managed Areas = Bioeconomic modelling, marine zoning proposals, scenario analyses

> **EMPOWERMENT** – Enable local communities to implement and manage efficient Marine Managed Areas = Workshops and training for local stakeholders