Tropical Cyclone Pam Marine Debris Removal Project

The Data

Number of Diving Days	34
Number of individual dives	278
Kilograms of debris collected	12,101
Amount of (Kg):	
Metal	3960
Wood	1287
Fiberglass	4731
Electronics	184
Batteries	388
Other rubbish	1551

The aim of the project was to remove debris created by Tropical Cyclone Pam from the waters of Port Vila Harbour. Whilst the clean up on land had started in earnest, nothing was being done about the marine debris. This is likely due to the debris being out of site and inaccessible to most local people. Big Blue used their employee divers to manually collect the debris and bring it onto shore. A truck was used to remove some of the larger items from the water and dispose of the debris either by taking it for recycling or to the landfill.

An area of 20,000 square meters of seabed was cleared in a 50 meter wide strip next to the sea wall at the northern end of the wall from The Rossi to the bend in the seawall.

During cyclones debris from the land is blown and washed into the ocean. In addition to this usual increase in marine debris, in Port Vila Harbour many boats were wrecked during cyclone Pam. The foreshore of Port Vila town was strewn with debris from wrecked boats as well as debris blown from structures on the land. These boats were made of fiberglass, aluminum or wood and some of the hulls were smashed in to small pieces. Nearly four tonnes of metal and over four and a half tonnes of fiberglass were removed from the marine environment.

The contents of the boats also littered the seabed. Electronics, cookers, plumbing ropes, sails and many other pieces of boating equipment were amongst the debris. Many of these items are designed to last a long time in the marine environment and are often made from man-made materials such as plastic or nylon.

Ropes and sails are designed to last a long time in salt-water condition. If they were not removed they would have stayed there on the seabed smothering the marine life for a long time.

Crocodile fish living amongst the cyclone debris

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