



Western Pacific Blue Corridors Workshop

Connecting traditional knowledge, science and policy to conserve whales and dolphins
Nadi, Fiji | 23 – 25 February 2026

© Adobe Stock/409383381

Whales and dolphins are integral to the cultural heritage of the Pacific region. Growing scientific evidence highlights their crucial role in ocean productivity and supporting local economies through ecotourism. Many species undertake long-distance migrations, crossing national and international waters along "blue corridors" - vital oceanic routes that connect key habitats where they feed, breed, socialise and nurse their young. However, cetaceans in the Western Pacific are facing mounting, overlapping threats including from fisheries bycatch and entanglement, ship strikes, climate change, pollution, and habitat degradation. These challenges place growing pressure on populations and their marine habitats.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) and the International Whaling Commission (IWC), as part of the GEF-FAO Common Oceans Tuna Project, are hosting **a collaborative workshop that will bring together indigenous and community leaders, fisheries representatives, researchers, government representatives, technical experts and conservationists to engage in cross-cultural sharing and technical knowledge exchange on cetaceans in the Western Pacific.** Over two and a half days, we will explore the following themes:

- (i) *Traditional knowledge:* Identify and share knowledge on cultural values, beliefs and local insights on cetaceans of the Western Pacific.
- (ii) *Highlight regional threats and growing risks:* Increase understanding of key threats including interactions with fisheries, shipping activities, pollution, disease, climate change.
- (iii) *Latest science, knowledge gaps and enablers* for robust responses from research, conservation and management agencies.
- (iv) *Conservation opportunities and solutions* that can contribute to global and regional biodiversity and ocean goals by conserving ecological connectivity with benefits to a range of marine life.

Day 1 (23 February 2026): Knowledge Sharing and Key Challenges

Cetacean blue corridors in the Western Pacific: what do we know, lessons learned, and how can it be applied to conservation? Discuss the significance of cetaceans in Pacific culture and examine the growing threats across Western Pacific blue corridors with traditional knowledge holders, science community and industry representatives.

Day 2 (24 February 2026): Identifying Opportunities and Solutions

Explore regional threats in detail with focussed discussions on fisheries bycatch, climate change, vessel traffic and pollution, and opportunities to better conserve and protect cetaceans including sustainable whale watching tourism, marine protected areas, policy development related to regional and national (30x30) commitments, and mitigation to minimise fisheries interactions. Identify opportunities that cover (i) enabling investment, (ii) innovative technology, (iii) influencing policy.

Day 3 (25 February 2026): Action Planning and Workshop Closure (0.5 day)

Reflections & next phase: engage in strategic action planning that outlines responsibilities, timelines and communication strategies to disseminate workshop outcomes for regional and local conservation planning.