



**GOVERNMENT OF NIUE
OFFICE OF THE PREMIER**

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**Press Release
Niue's Scientific Expedition to Beveridge Reef**

Alofi, Niue, 27th September 2016: The Government of Niue have supported the collaboration between the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and Pristine Seas as well as the National Geographic to conduct the first ever comprehensive baseline survey and scientific research of Niue's marine ecosystems including Niue's remote atoll Beveridge Reef.

Under the auspices of the strong private-public partnership relationship between the Niue Government and the Tofia Niue (Implementing agency) for Oceans 5 Niue Oceans Wide (NOW) project including the recently launched Niue Ridge to Reef Project, this baseline survey and scientific research will enhance the work clearly identified in work plans for both projects.

Beveridge Reef is an uninhabited, but anchorable atoll, about 200km Southeast of Niue. It is a submerged atoll located in Niue's Exclusive Economic Zone. Part of the reef is only visible at low tide however most of it is under shallow water.



In early 2015, the Government of Niue approached Oceans 5 to propose the development of a “sustainable and integrated approach to ocean conservation and management.

Niue has begun a 3-year planning process to create a Marine Management Plan that will define an Exclusive Economic Zone wide network of resource use zones. There is strong support for the creation of a largescale, “globally significant Marine Protected Area.” To this end, the survey team which includes Niue Fisheries staff will soon depart for Beveridge Reef to conduct the research and surveys.



A major component of the expedition for Niue is to carry out genetic profiling work on giant clams. The objective is to determine if Beveridge Reef is a source of recruitment for Niue’s coastal fisheries. The research is hoped to provide scientific bases for future Government decisions on the use and conservation of Niue coastal reef and Beveridge Reef.

The National Geographic team will film a documentary of the process and the pristine nature of the environment. This will expose Niue to the world and compliment Niue’s tourism marketing efforts.

Benefits to Niue

This expedition will establish a baseline to better understand the health of Niue’s Exclusive Economic Zone and measure the effects of human activities, climate change and/or future conservation and management measures. The assessment will provide a better understanding of how the entire ecosystem works, therefore helping to inform better management of the area.

The Government of Niue hopes to receive critical information to better inform its planning processes and overall goal of creating a marine protected area.

During the past twenty years, the Government of Niue has sent several fishing boats to Beveridge with local fishermen on board. The most recent of such trips was on the Tahitian cargo vessel that came to Niue as part of the Tahiti recovery assistance following Cyclone Heta in 2004. These have largely been for reconnaissance purposes only.

The current expedition is expected to spend several days at Beveridge Reef before returning to Niue.