

## **RESIDENT MARINE BIOLOGIST – Johnny Singh**

The Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort is proud of its Marine Biologist & Naturalist, Johnny Singh. The Cousteau Resort is the only resort in Fiji with a Resident Marine Biologist. You will see him in and around the resort helping our guests see and understand the diverse natural wonders that are to be found at and near the resort. He is continually involved in educational endeavours to enrich the guests' experience and benefit the local community.

### **Background and Community Outreach**

#### **Background:**

- Born in Suva, the capital of Fiji.
- Graduated the University of the South Pacific with a degree in Applied Sciences.
- Master's Degree in Applied Sciences from James Cook University in North Queensland, Australia,

#### **Passions:**

- Environmental conservation.
- Sustainability practices.
- Educating guests about the environment.
- Educating children in the local schools about the environment.
- Under-water photography and videography.

#### **Primary Activities:**

- Educating guests about Fiji's natural heritage.
- Interpreting the surrounding ecosystems for the education and enjoyment of the guests.
- Video presentations and educational talks.

- Diving and snorkeling with guests.
- Night snorkeling.

Not only does Johnny educate the guests about the significance of the natural world, ultimately, he educates them about the benefits of the preservation of the environment and natural ecosystems. The educational aspect of his interaction with the guests consists of educating people about the necessities of protecting our environment through direct action and advocacy in our daily lives. As Jacques Cousteau once said to his son Jean-Michel, "We protect what we love".

Johnny sees his role as a great opportunity (and an actual responsibility) to educate people from all over the world about environmental sustainability in a manner that is interesting, enjoyable and exciting.

#### **Environmental Coordinator:**

The Marine Biologist/Naturalist also acts as the resort's environmental coordinator, ensuring that the resort meets environmental standards wherever possible. Being environmentally responsible is an ongoing commitment and requires continuous focus and development. Some projects at the resort include integrated landscaping, use of eco-products, converting to renewable energy sources, organic gardening, using constructed wetlands for grey water treatments, composting, recycling, and much more. The Marine Biologist/Naturalist works closely with the various departments of the resort to ensure that the employees are educated through awareness and a hands-on approach to the importance of their task of being eco-friendly in everything they do at work and in the community.

#### **Researcher:**

We must understand something thoroughly before we are able to properly protect it. The Marine Biologist/Naturalist conducts reef checks on selected dive sites. The local community is often included in this reef assessment. Reef Check is an international standardized method of assessing the health of the coral reefs. It is used by scientists and recreational divers and snorkelers all over the world. The results are kept in a large database and published in technical reports and scientific journals. This helps the local community as well as helping to formulate government policies. Guests and other volunteers are always welcome to join the Marine Biologist/Naturalist on these reef checks.

Additionally, the Marine Biologist/Naturalist is responsible for coordinating the restoration of the mangroves in the surrounding area, repopulating the reef with giant clams, and assessing the positive effects of all the projects involving the protected marine areas.

### **Outreach**

The Marine Biologist/Naturalist visits local schools giving a wide range of presentations on ecology and environmental issues. In addition, local schools periodically visit the resort for a hands-on program to experience the resort in operation. It is a great opportunity for the Marine Biologist/Naturalist to share his knowledge of the environment with the local community. As the future caretakers of the environment, they are truly an evolving asset for Fiji that will serve to protect the future of its natural heritage.