

WorldFish Stories from the Field: Climate Change

From the Mark Dubois in the Mekong

"Last year, during the drought, we experienced flash floods; this year, the rains came early. Before, the (monsoon) rains and the farming season were regular, now you cannot trust them, and people are changing their habits as a result. Migration from our homelands has increased sharply and cultural ceremonies such as those that call for the rains are being abandoned". – Mr. Ton, Salaphoum village researcher, Wetlands Alliance Project Focal Area, NE Cambodia.

The village where Mr. Ton lives is subject to frequent floods, droughts and, recently, typhoon Ketsana (see photos). The Stung Treng province and, in particular, the Ratnakiri province have been highlighted as being especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. So we have targeted some villages in these provinces.



Ta Veng Phone Shop



Dog Rescue

Our emphasis, however, is less on the idea of 'refugees' and more on community empowerment. We have been working over the last three years to support village action research and are using this as a platform to link up with UNDP, the UN's global development network, and others in using community produced media to raise awareness of and build capacity in climate change, its impacts and peoples' capacity to adapt. By also focusing on positive changes and best practices, we think there is an opportunity to learn from local successes and innovations and, thereby, add value to global debates. Of course, this is just one angle, but if this approach is of interest, I would be happy to get more involved. In terms of FTE, it would have to go through our existing allocation under the Wetlands Alliance in support of local partner work plans on adaptation to change.

From Anne-Maree Schwarz in Solomon Islands

We do work in a very interesting area of "artificial islands" where the potential is undoubtedly there for climate change "refugees". These communities are experiencing more frequent inundations of sea water to their tiny islands; through more frequent, higher tides. They depend on reef fish as they generally own no land and so cannot garden. They are identified in the

Solomon Islands NAPA as being at great threat from climate change. Sea level rise will require them to adapt, adaptation may need cash, cash can only come from fisheries for them, fisheries are declining (poor management and overpopulation), and that's where WorldFish comes in with community-based adaptive management.

Apart from the need to adapt to sea level rise, there is the threat of declining reef health on which the health of their fishery depends.

[From Natasja Sheriff in Penang](#)

One village in Bangladesh comes to mind. During my recent visit to Rajshahi in the west of Bangladesh, people in the village of Melandi, where we were working, were struggling to cope with the late rains and subsequent low water levels for the time of year. According to numerous people we spoke with in the community, weather patterns in recent years have been changing leading to less predictable and late flooding. For fisheries, this means a lower fish yield; a particular problem for people of the Melandi community, whose principal occupation is fishing. Low water will also translate into lower production from the seasonal fish culture system the project is developing.

North and Central Bangladesh were most affected this year by droughts, which were followed by flash floods. Erratic rains in Mali may also lead to similar problems in terms of fish production.