

## 1. As Beautiful Above as Below

The Solomon Islands are spectacularly beautiful. The images below need little introduction. The 900 islands vary from high mountainous remnants of earlier larger pieces of land that have been partly submerged when global climate changes caused the sea levels to rise by many metres. Hundreds of the islands are small, some are atolls of recent formation, or older atolls like Rennell and Bellona Islands which have been uplifted by tectonic movements. Everywhere there are reefs and lagoons and an abundance of marine life. Scientists calculate that the Solomon Archipelago has been inhabited for 30,000 years, although other more recent waves of migration have also occurred. Most of the migrations came from the north, although there has also been back-migration from groups that have settled further south in the Pacific in more recent times, only a few thousand years ago.



1.1 Basakana Island, viewed from the north Malaita mainland, 2004. (Mike McCoy Collection)

1.2 Houses on the shore of Lake Tengano, Rennell Island, 2002. In 1998, 60-square km Lake Tengano on Rennell Island, an old enclosed lagoon on an upraised large atoll, was listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Lake Tengano is the largest enclosed body of water on any Pacific island. (Clive Moore Collection)



1.3. Islands and reefs in Marovo Lagoon near Seghe, New Georgia Group, 2004. (Mike McCoy Collection)





1.4. The central mountains of Guadalcanal, 1990. The high peak near the centre in the background is Mt Tatuve. (Mike McCoy Collection)



1.5. The landscape in the 'Are'are district, Malaita, showing an inland village and gardens, 2016. (Patrick Pikacha Collection)





1.6. Gela (Nggela or Florida) Group, 2016. (Patrick Pikacha Collection)



1.7. Naru Island, Gizo Lagoon, New Georgia Group, 1994. During the Second World War John F. Kennedy's PT109 patrol boat was sunk offshore from here. (Mike McCoy Collection)





1.8. Supizai Island, Choiseul, 2005. (Mike McCoy Collection)



1.9. Kirakira Bay, Makira, 2014. (Mike McCoy Collection)



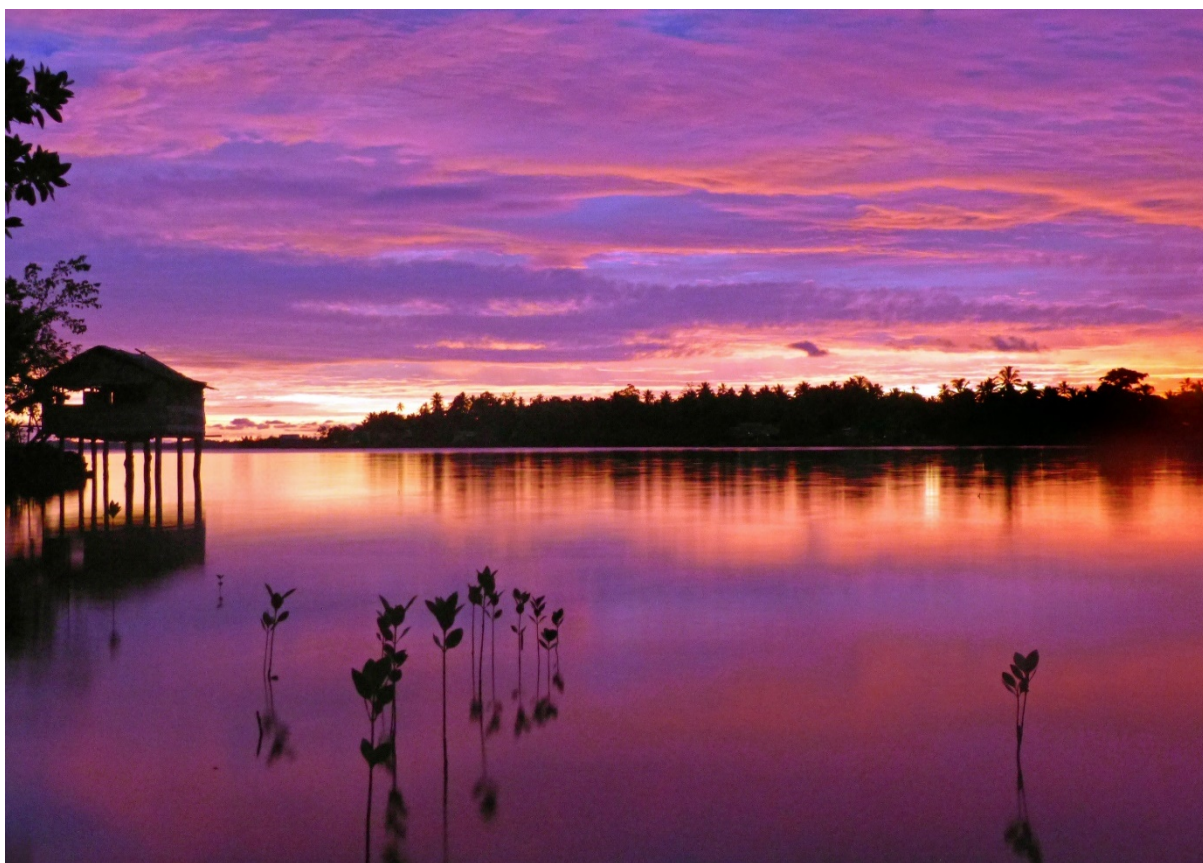


1.10. A yellow-bibbed lorikeet. These birds are endemic to Solomon Islands and are often kept as pets. (Annie McCoy Collection)



1.11. A prehensile-tailed skink, Shortland Islands. This lizard is the world's largest skink and is endemic to the Solomon Islands, where it is widely known as *unu* or *hunu*. (Mike McCoy Collection)



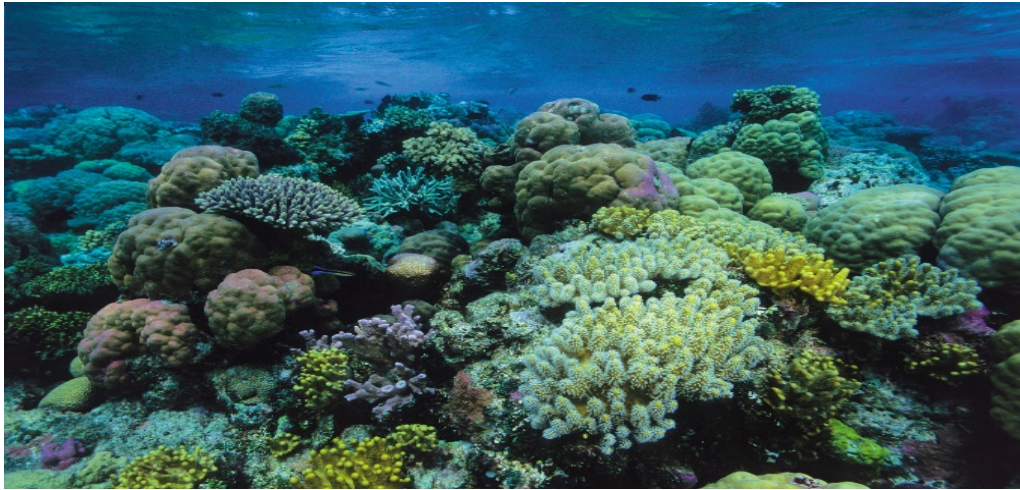


1.12. Sunset at Arabala, Langalanga Lagoon, Malaita, 2013. (Annie McCoy Collection)



1.13. Soft corals and reef fish, offshore from Mbahovu, Guadalcanal, 1993. (Mike McCoy Collection)





1.14. Solomon Islands has thousands of coral reefs and a huge marine life. (Mike McCoy Collection)



1.15. Solomon Islands coral reefs are places of great beauty. (Mike McCoy Collection)



1.16. A diver at a Second World War aircraft wreck, Guadalcanal. (Mike McCoy Collection)





1.17. The outer reef of Lau Lagoon, Malaita, 1998. (Mike McCoy Collection)



1.18. Laulasi, an artificial island in Langalanga Lagoon, Malaita, 2005. (Clive Moore Collection)