

Tari fishing in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands

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During a visit to Tamea Bay on North-West Guadalcanal during August 1992 I observed an interesting type of traditional net fishing for trevally which I have not seen described before. Information was provided by the fishermen who came from the nearby village of Tamea.

Tari fishing is named after the type of nets used. It does not take place during any particular season, but rather whenever the sea is fine and schools of baitfish come close inshore. Apparently **tari** fishing is still carried out all around Guadalcanal and also, with slight variations, in other islands. The target species is trevally (*Caranx melampygus*) known as **mamula** in Solomon Islands Pidgin and **mancholu** in the local language.

The **tari** net looks like a scoop net 2.5–3.0 m long. It consists of a length of bamboo cane bent back on itself at one end to form a long loop about 1.5 m long by 0.75 m wide. A net of 2–3 in mesh is threaded around the loop, forming a scoop net, but it is not made fast at the handle end of the loop. Thus, if a fish hits the net this will slide to the end of the loop, forming a pocket that traps the fish.

The fishing session I observed started just before dawn and continued until midday during which time the tide was on the ebb. Ten fishermen used **tari** nets, which were spaced at intervals of 10–20 m along the sandy shore. Each net was placed in the sea perpendicular to the beach, with the aperture

open to fish swimming along the shore and the end of the bamboo handle propped up on a cleft stick stuck into the sand at the water's edge. Some of the **tari** fishermen and other participants also carried **panggo** (bamboo pole-and-line rods). The lines used were nylon and the lures were made of traditional materials, such as blacklip pearl shell, or more modern material, such as the shafts of spoons.

Most of the fishing session consisted of patiently waiting for the schools of baitfish to move near to the shore. When a school of baitfish was attacked by **mamula**, the school frequently moved into the shallows attempting to escape. This was the cue for the fishermen to jump into action, using **panggos** to attempt to hook a feeding trevally. Lures were dunked into the seething masses of baitfish and any hooked **mamula** were swung ashore. The panicking baitfish swam along the sea's edge as close to the beach as possible, some fish actually jumping ashore in their attempts to avoid the predators. The baitfish swam through the **tari** nets unhindered, unlike trevally which would hit the net with enough force to cause the **tari** to fall off the cleft stick. At this, the fishermen rapidly pulled the **tari** ashore. Small boys tied beached baitfish to hooks and threw these in the path of feeding **mamula**.

Eight **mamula** weighing around 3–6 kg were landed using **tari**, **panggo** and hand lines during the fishing session, which involved about 15 fishermen and a number of boys.

I Galaide

by John DelRosario

At a friend's house last weekend for a barbecue, I noticed a bowl of juvenile yellowtail goatfish crushed and mixed with fresh lemon, salt, pepper, onion leaves and a little ginger. This was fish **kelaguen**. My taste buds were flooded with saliva as my belly screamed shamelessly for some of it. Personal restraint or denial was in order, so I started tracing the process it took to bring that juvenile yellowtail goatfish **kelaguen** to the table.

The family had purchased a Japanese-made fishing net, costing several hundred dollars, a while back. With his older sons, the head of the household fitted it together in preparation for July – August, when juvenile fish usually enter the various chan-

nels and head to shore to avoid being devoured by predators. Along the shore, the family spreads its net as others pace the beach with throw-nets on their arms and shoulders.

When the 20 ft deep pocket is filled with fish, the net is slowly hauled in with men behind it, lifting portions that run up against coral or large objects. On the shore, the fish in the pocket is slowly unloaded onto the beach. A good catch could net a pick-up truck full of fish or several five-gallon plastic pans full.

The owner divides the catch among the family members and relatives who joined in the outing. He