

# Preserving the giants:

## The fragile journey of *pa'ua* through life and reef

*Pa'ua* populations have been severely depleted by overharvesting. The challenging life cycle of *pa'ua* makes it even more difficult for them to recover. In some areas, *pa'ua* densities have decreased to a point where they can no longer successfully reproduce.

### Mature *pa'ua*

*Pa'ua* don't move and must be close to each other to reproduce.

### Spawning

Adults release eggs and sperm into the water that must mix to create larvae.

### Drifting larvae

Only 1 out of 10,000 larvae will become an adult.

### Juveniles

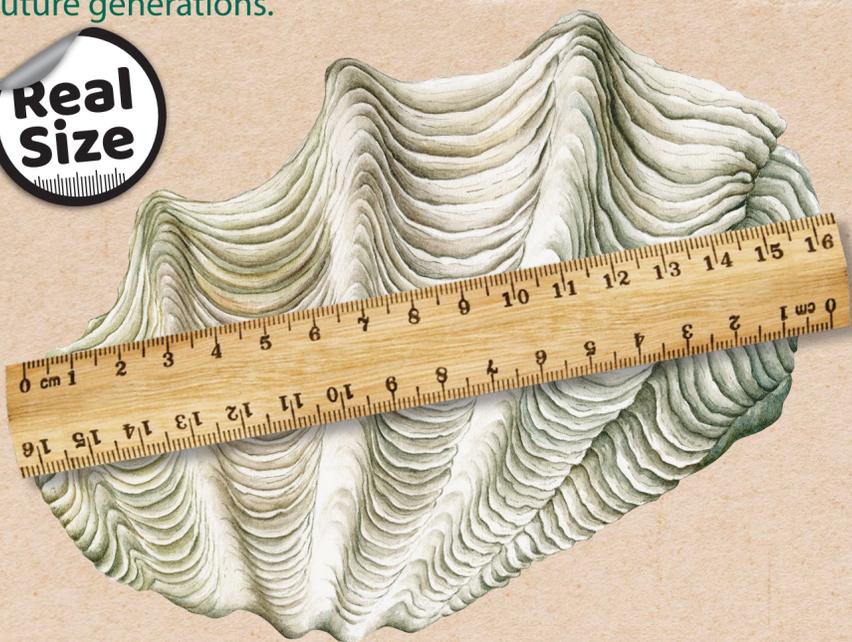
A juvenile can take up to 10 years to become an adult.

### Why should we care?

*Pa'ua* are a culturally significant food in the Cook Islands. They are also an important part of reef ecosystems. *Pa'ua* contribute to the reef structure and are a food source for other animals. Climate change may make life harder for *pa'ua*, so they need our help.

### How can we help?

By allowing *pa'ua* to grow and reproduce before they are harvested, we can keep our reefs healthy and have *pa'ua* for future generations.



Harvest *pa'ua* larger than 16 cm when they are able to reproduce.



Only harvest *pa'ua* within the reef and avoid *pa'ua* that live beyond the reef where it is more difficult for them to reproduce.



Take only what you need to eat; don't harvest *pa'ua* for sale or trade.



Respect *rā'ui* and marine reserves where *pa'ua* are protected and can easily grow big and reproduce.

Inshore Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, Ministry of Marine Resources  
PO Box 85, Avarua, Rarotonga, Cook Islands | (682) 28-721 | [www.mmr.gov.ck](http://www.mmr.gov.ck)

This document was produced with the financial support of the European Union, the Government of Sweden, the New Zealand Aid Programme and the United States Agency for International Development. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union, the Government of Sweden, the Government of New Zealand and the Government of the United States.