

Francis Hukporti

LAGOON CRAB FISHING

SAKUMONO LAGOON



Image above:
Mr. Francis Hukporti.

Images to right:
Crab fishing tool.

Image to left:
Mr. Francis Hukporti
crab fishing at the
lagoon.

We meet Mr. Francis Hukporti in the Sakumono Lagoon, east side. He is checking his crab catching devices.

What is your job and where do you live?

I am Francis Hukporti. I used to live for a long time in Community Two and fish in the

lagoon. Then I went inland and became a batik professional. But I often come back here for my craft: crab fishing.

What is the Sakumono Lagoon used for?

Some people come here to worship the gods of the lagoon; they used to come every year around Easter before they started their fishing season. But now I do not see them.

I myself go to the lagoon to fish for crab. I go around looking for the holes. When I find a hole, I'll mark it with a red rubber and set the trap. First you have to open the trap, then put some cassava in and set a small broomstick on it. If the crab enters, it will pull the cassava under the stick. The crab is the trigger, it catches itself! I know how it works; I come here for a long time already, started crab fishing in 1982.

Has the lagoon changed much since that time?

Yes, it has changed very much. Before, there were many, many coconut trees, all lined along the beach. And the fishing boats went fishing from there. Now it is all rocks along the coast. Because the sea is eating the land; the sea is chopping the land, it wants to take the road.

In earlier times, a lot of seawater was coming in and out, but now it is only very little water. There is much pollution coming into the lagoon. It does not damage the crabs but it damages the fishes. That is because of all the grass you see. There used to be a little bit of grassy area: there was a river over here, and a lagoon. But the polluted water that enters the lagoon from the upper side is now making this grass, lots of grass, it has covered almost

every place. The water in this part of the lagoon used to be very salty. But now, it is not salty anymore; it's dirty. You cannot drink it: in the old times because of the salt, and now because it is polluted.

What do you hope the lagoon will look like in 20 years time?

I hope that the lagoon will be beautiful. With coconut trees, sand and many, many birds; like there used to be in the earlier days. And that the water of the lagoon will be clean again, so we can fish. Maybe then the tourists can come here as well, they can watch the birds, eat the crabs and buy some batiks!

