

Rarotonga



The Cook Islands

By Heather Matz

Cook's Facts

- 15 islands in the South Pacific
 - 93 sq mi of land
 - 2 million sq mi of ocean
 - Avarua, Rarotonga is the only city



- In the tropic of capricorn, from 9-22° latitude
- "Winter" temperatures range from 80 to 88 °F

Rarotonga



Rarotonga



Cook's Government

- A British Dominion until annexed to New Zealand in 1900
- Self-governing in association with New Zealand since 1965



- NZ\$ and Cook Island \$
- Cook islanders speak the Maori and English

Cook's Economy

- Economy strongly depends on tourism
 - 90,000 visitors in 2006
- Offshore banking, pearls, marine and fruit exports



Cook's Culture



Dance and Music

Te Maeva Nui Festival



Animals on the Island

- Farm Animals
 - Cows, pigs, goats
- Cats and Dogs
- Geckos
- Known for their diverse aquatic species

Why I Love the Cooks

- Hitch hiking
- Motorbikes as flash lights
- Esther Honey Volunteers get discounts
- Not being hated for being a tourist



Esther Honey Foundation



- On Rarotonga
- Donation funded
- Run year-round by volunteering vets, vet students, and vet nurses
- Treatment free for all animals

Facilities

- Small building with two mini-surgery rooms & one consult room
- Outdoor kennel
 - Losing animals a common problem





The big surgery room



- Housing for clinic director and volunteers
- Monkey cages full of adoptable cats and kittens



My hut



My room



On the way to the clinic



Another view along the way



Across the street from the clinic...

Adoptions

- ~20 cats and 10 dogs up for adoption at a time
- Adopted out 18 dogs, 16 cats during my 3 week experience
 - Most dog adoptions included home visits to insure good adopting household
- Only 2 dogs allowed per household



After Pompom's first swim

An Average Day

- Volunteers worked 8 to 5, five days a week
- 6 to 12 spays and/or neuters a day
- Some appointments mostly walk-ins
- Vet students rotated through vet nurse, surgery and administrative roles
- After work: beach sunset

My First Surgeries 😊

- I did 2 dog neuters, 1 bitch spay
 - Assisted on many other surgeries including:
 - Diaphragmatic hernia repair
 - Limb amputations
 - Mass removals

Common Cases

- Car accident victims
- Fish poisoning
- Tether wounds
- Gun shot wounds



A cat with fish poisoning



Captain Hook



Interesting Facts

- Flank incisions for cat spays
- Flip flops during treatments and surgery
- No gloves during neuters



Working at the Saturday market...with Gremlin

Kid's Day



Costs

- Plane Ticket: \$1700
- Food, Fun, Bike Rental & Presents: \$600
- Free Housing

- IVSA Travel Scholarship: ~\$300
- SCAVMA Travel Grant: N/A

Favorite Activities

- Cross-island hikes
- Dancing shows
- Round-island bike rides
- Pina Colada's at resorts
- Watching sunsets
- Snorkeling
- Scuba diving



A view on the cross-island hike



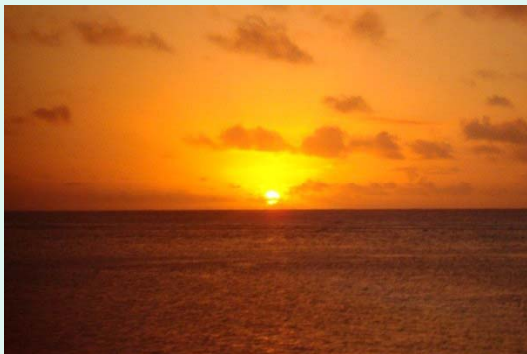
The stalking rooster



Believe it or not...not all branches can support your body weight



Maori Beach



Big Blue and I

A Great Experience

- Great place to go for:
 - Surgery practice
 - Practice interacting with clients
 - Problem solving with minimal tools
- Fun, relaxing environment
- Common place for newly graduated vets to get practice
- Offer Vet Treks

Questions?



Thank you for coming!