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TITLE: The subordination of food security to biodiversity preservation in coastal marine systems in the Indo-Pacific

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The western environmentalist ideology of the conservation biology community has in the past two or so decades influenced tropical coastal fishery management discourse and research in ways that divert scientific attention away from a fundamentally agricultural aspect of fishery production – the availability of nutrients. In much recent scientific literature, concerns about fishery-based ‘food security’ have been *retrofitted*, using a win-win argument, to an *a priori* western preservationist agenda which is based on the ‘cumulative intrinsic value’ of the large numbers of coral and other species that comprise Indo-Pacific coral reef ecosystems – a system of valuation that means little to most Indo-Pacific subsistence and artisanal fishers. An unacknowledged problem with this idea is that corals, which prefer to live in clear, *nutrient-poor* waters, transmit comparatively little of their primary production to fishery production. Estuaries, lagoons and upwelling areas by contrast can be very productive. I argue that the subordination of one moral framework - fishery production and food security - to another which is based on the western-scientific intrinsic and aesthetic values of coral reefs, misleads both scientific and policy discourse, and I illustrate with a case study from Solomon Islands, and an overview of fishery production in the Indo-Pacific region.