

Cambodia Reef Conservation Project (CRCP)

Monthly Project Update

March 2013

Location:

Prek Svey Village, Koh Rong, Sihanoukville, Cambodia

Project Manager - Sophie Clay



Ministry of Agriculture,
Forestry and Fisheries
Fisheries Administration

CRCP Project Aim

The Cambodia Reef Conservation Project (CRCP) is a collaborative project surveying the coral reefs of Koh Rong and Koh Rong Samloem Islands in the Municipality of Sihanoukville. The programme provides training and conservation education opportunities for local Cambodians as part of an integrated programme to develop local capacity, and to ensure the long-term protection and sustainable use of marine resources throughout the region. Coral Cay Conservation (CCC) is working at the invitation of and in partnership with the Fisheries Administration of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

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Latest News

March has been a busy month, with great progress made both in water and in the community! As part of our community engagement programme we have been conducting perception interviews with members of the Prek Svay village. So far we



have met with 33 people including the village chief, the fisheries chief, teachers, monks, fishing families and other community members. The aim was to gather more information on their relationship with the marine environment, their reliance on fishing and associated activities, and the levels of awareness and understanding of the Marine Fisheries Management Area and marine conservation in general.

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Story of the month

This month has seen the CCC volunteers and staff leave site for a three day camping trip to the south west of Koh Rong island to conduct survey dives on more distant sites. We camped in hammocks on Sok San beach, also known as Five Mile beach. As the name suggests, this is one of the most beautiful beaches on Koh Rong and we had some amazing dives, seeing a huge number of our target species and more besides! We were lucky to encounter numerous sharks and rays,



Volunteers and staff settle in to our temporary camp site on Sok San beach

amazing schools of fish, a stunning array of nudibranchs and other spectacular sights during our time away. Each night saw us cooking and sleeping under the stars, swimming in the bioluminescence and waking up to the amazing view of an endless stretch of empty beach each morning! This was definitely a highlight for both volunteers and staff alike and we plan many more camping trips away to survey other sites further afield.

Survey Update

Survey background: Our baseline-surveying programme is designed to gather data about the biological and morphological standing of Koh Rong and Koh Rong Samloem Islands. This data is combined with information on human and natural impacts on the reefs, along with oceanographic data, to ultimately produce a Geographical Information System 'map' of the various habitats of the islands. It is like a 'stock-take' of the current marine resources. This will provide policymakers and concerned institutions with information necessary to effectively manage those resources. We are also monitoring the reefs for signs of bleaching, following the mass bleaching event in 2010.

March has been a very busy month indeed, the volunteers and staff have been working very



hard this month, and it has definitely paid off with nearly 20 more full surveys being completed! The majority of these have been on the Northerly sites close to base, but 3 more on the Southern tip of Koh Rong while on a camping trip. We've got a great bunch of volunteers and a scholar in our team at the moment and will be working just as hard during April to survey more of the island, and will also be planning multiple camping trips around Koh Rong to collect as much data as possible!

Marine Creature of the Month

Atelomycterus marmoratus
Family Scyliorhinidae

The Marine creature of the month for March is a Coral Cat Shark! Whilst on our camping trip we saw a couple of these beautiful sharks hiding out under overhangs and ledges. The Coral Cat Shark grows to about 70cm and spends the day resting before hunting by night for small fish and benthic invertebrates. The Coral Cat Shark reproduces oviparously (by laying eggs), producing two eggs at a time. This species is classified as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List, who state that with increased data on species abundance this could meet the criteria for Vulnerable listing.

