

Cambodia Reef Conservation Project (CRCP)



Ministry of Agriculture,
Forestry and Fisheries
Fisheries Administration

Monthly Project Update

July 2013

Location:

Prek Svey Village, Koh Rong, Sihanoukville, Cambodia

Project Manager Sophie Clay

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

July has been a busy month on the Coral Cay project site in Prek Svey, with new volunteers, Sarah, Matthias and Ian arriving. We have also said goodbye to James Clark, our Science Officer, so many thanks to him for all his hard work over the last six months and we wish him all the best for his next adventure!

Sophie Clay, our Project Manager, and Sok Sopheary, our Project Coordinator also went to Phnom Penh for a workshop on sustainable financing options for protected areas. The workshop was hosted by Fauna and Flora International (FFI) and brought together



Sustainable finance workshop hosted by FFI in Phnom Penh

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various government departments, including the Fisheries Administration, the Ministry of Tourism, provincial level government representatives, and NGOs including FFI, CCC, and the Song Saa Foundation. The workshop was run by Dr Jesse Hastings of the National University of Singapore, a specialist in Marine Protected Areas financing and governance.

A range of options were discussed for the proposed marine fisheries management area (MFMA) around Koh Rong, including: external opportunities such as foreign assistance, Debt for Nature swaps, and Biodiversity Enterprise Funds; internal options including taxation at both national and local levels, and fines for non-compliance; and market based options such as Tourism User Fees, Payments for Ecosystem Services, Biodiversity Offsets and Benefit Sharing approaches.

The workshop provided an ideal starting point for discussion on which opportunities may be best suited to the Cambodian situation and each area was considered in terms of a range of factors to preliminarily assess suitability and feasibility. The ideas presented and addressed at the workshop promise to assist with development of a sound portfolio of sustainable finance streams to ensure the long term objectives of the MFMA are facilitated.

Story of the month

July 1st was Cambodian National Fish Day and CCC's Project Coordinator, Sok Sopheary, celebrated the end of 6 weeks of hard work on her education program in Prek Svey with an awards ceremony and various activities. The event was run by the students involved with Sopheary's lessons over the previous weeks and was a great opportunity to show their friends and families, as well as other members of the community everything they had learned!



Cambodian National Fish Day with Sok Sopheary and her students

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The day started with everyone singing the National Anthem of Cambodia, and was opened with speeches from Sopheary as well as the Director of Prek Svey School, and Sophie Clay, CCC's Project Manager.

Sopheary and her students had developed a play about sustainable fishing called "Together Help to Protect Fish and Other Life Under the Sea", with the students acting as characters from the village, including the head of the Community Fisheries, and some illegal fishermen. Put together mainly by the students themselves, the play was thoroughly enjoyed by all, especially the parents who had never seen their children perform in school plays! There was a lot of laughter, but most importantly a strong message about the need to use marine resources sustainably.



Students perform their play "Together Help to Protect Fish and Other Life Under the Sea"

The students dressed up in costumes and face paints they had designed themselves, with some acting as fish, Fisheries enforcement officers, fishermen and students learning about sustainable marine resource use. The costumes were brilliantly done and all the students loved using the face paints to get into character.



The classroom was decorated with pictures of the natural environment drawn by the students

The classroom was decorated with pictures of the natural environment drawn by the students, and photographs of other activities such as World Environment Day. Also on the walls were educational and informational materials to illustrate the objectives and importance of the Marine Fisheries Management Areas currently being developed by the Fisheries Administration and other partners, including CCC and Fauna and Flora International.

As well as presenting their play, students also sang an environmental song, "Help to Keep the Sea Clean" and read poems including "Marine Beauty in Prek Svey".

Then it was time for everyone to get involved, playing the Sustainable Fishing game developed by CCC's Sok Sopheary and Sophie Clay. The game was led by the students themselves and illustrated what happens when everybody takes as many

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fish as possible each time until there are none remaining. As each round progresses the game shows that by catching fewer fish and leaving some in the sea, sustainable fishing can ensure long term availability of fish.



Everyone gets stuck in playing the sustainable fishing game

Finally certificates of attendance and prizes were given to all students who had worked so hard, both in the lessons, and to develop the play and other activities to celebrate Fish Day.

National Fish Day was an excellent end to a great education program so many thanks to Sopheary and all her students for investing so much time and passion to develop such a great day with a valuable message!

Survey Update

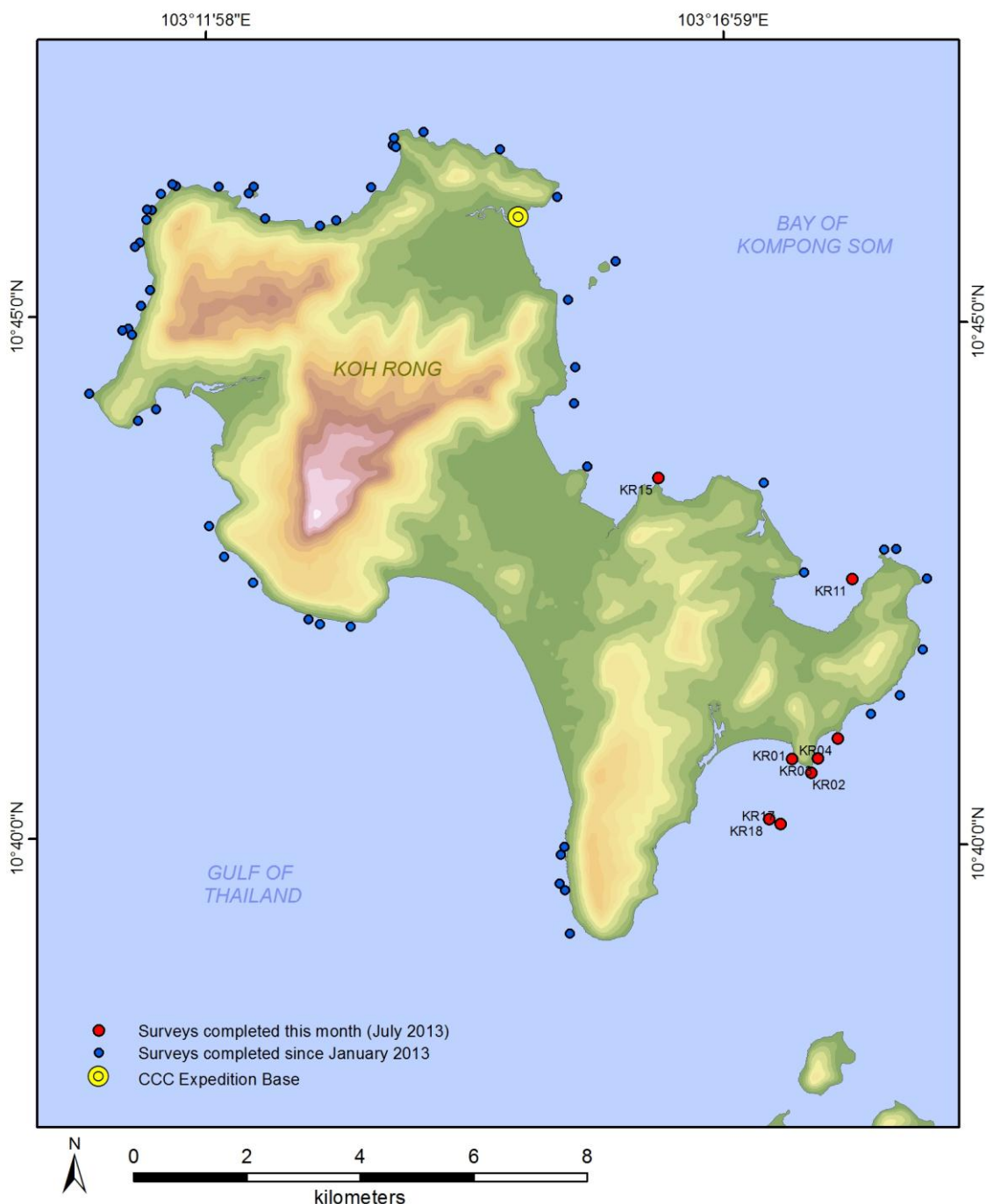
Survey background: Our baseline-surveying programme is designed to gather data about the biological and morphological standing of Koh Rong and Koh Rong Samloem Islands. This data is combined with information on human and natural impacts on the reefs, along with oceanographic data, to ultimately produce 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.

July has been a busy month for new volunteers going through dive training and the Skills Development Program (SDP). Congratulations to all our newly certified Advanced Open Water Divers! SDP is now in full swing, teaching everyone how to

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identify our target species before they start conducting surveys in the coming weeks. Along with dive training and SDP, surveys have been conducted at a range of sites on the east and south of Koh Rong. With over 70% of our identified survey sites around Koh Rong now completed, we are well on track to complete the second round of baseline surveys around the island by the end of the year.



Marine Creature of the Month

Family Ovulidae (Allied Cowries)

Phenacovolva birostris

Allied cowries are a close relative of the more commonly seen cowries, part of the superfamily Cypraeaacea. In general cowries are highly prized for the curio trade due to their beautiful glossy shells, historically cowries have even been used as currency in various countries, particularly Africa. They are often egg shaped and have a diverse range of patterns and colours. The mantle of the cowrie helps to keep the shell beautiful and glossy in contrast to many other gastropods. Cowries feed on either soft corals or sponges and are frequently found hiding in cracks and crevices of rocks. This rare find was spotted on a recreational dive in the waters of Koh Rong feeding on a soft coral. Allied cowries have an amazing adaptability to camouflage themselves depending on their natural environment as you can see here!



Learn More!

To learn more about CCC's Cambodia project, to join the expedition, or to find out about local Marine Scholarships, visit www.coralcay.org.