



▶ CCC CARRIED OUT AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REEFS IN AND AROUND THE SAN AGUSTIN-LUGSONGAN MPA, LIMASAWA BETWEEN MARCH AND APRIL 2013



▶ THE REEF IS IN GOOD HEALTH GENERALLY WITH A MIX OF HABITATS. THERE ARE HOWEVER SOME SIGNS OF OVERFISHING IN THE AREA.



▶ ELECTRONIC COPIES OF THE FULL TECHNICAL REPORT ARE AVAILABLE FROM OUR PROJECT SCIENTIST

A REPORT BY CORAL CAY CONSERVATION

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San Agustin- Lugsongan

MPA

AMPINGAN TA ANG KABTANGAN SA KADAGATAN ALANG
SA ATONG UMAABOT NGA PANGINABUHI

The San Agustin-Lugsongan MPA, Limasawa was established in 2008 and is one of the largest MPAs in Southern Leyte, covering an area of 45 hectares.

The current status of San Agustin-Lugsongan MPA

Surveys conducted by CCC found that overall numbers of fish and invertebrates were not higher inside the MPA. However, there were more Alibangbang inside the MPA.

Hard coral was more common inside the MPA. Outside, the reef was mostly sand and rubble with patches of hard coral.

Many commercially important species of invertebrates and fish, such as giant clams and lapu lapu were uncommon and small in size. Non-target sea cucumbers were more abundant

outside the MPA, but commercially important species were entirely absent.

Crown of Thorns sea stars (CoTs) were found in low numbers and do not currently pose a threat to the reefs.

Levels of discarded fishing gear were low, however levels of household trash were relatively high outside the MPA.

Overall the reef is in quite good health but showing signs of overfishing and high levels of trash. More active enforcement is required.



Why are MPAs important?

MPAs protect areas of reefs from human impacts. Within an MPA, fish are protected and can grow larger, producing more offspring. This leads to 'overspill', increasing fish numbers outside the MPA. In the Philippines many very successful MPAs have been created including the famous Apo Island MPA. Not only do these well managed MPAs help to enhance fish stocks, they also provide income from tourism and other benefits such as protection of coastal habitats from storms.



CCC's Assessment of San Agustin-Lugsongan

The potential for ecosystem protection, dive tourism and key recommendations for management

Human pressure on reef ecosystems can have a big impact. The lack of large fish such as lapu-lapu and other important animals like giant clams both inside and outside the MPA suggest that fishing is very common in the area.

The removal of these important or 'keystone' species can affect the balance of reef ecosystems.

Fishing inside and close to the MPA was observed during the surveys. Any positive effects of the MPA can be quickly destroyed if poaching is permitted.

Other human impacts such as discarded fishing nets, anchor

damage and blast fishing were very low in the area.

However, household trash outside the MPA was in some areas very common. Trash such as plastic and polystyrene can have harmful effects on reef creatures.

Many animals such as turtles mistake trash for food. If they eat the trash it can kill them. Plastic can also smother corals which will causes them to die.

Key Recommendations:

- Increase enforcement and acceptance of the MPA through education and if necessary punishment for breaking the rules.

- Provide a guard house and equipment for Bantay Dagats and have them present at all times.

- Deploy MPA demarcation buoys and signage to clearly define the MPA boundaries and deter illegal fishing.

- Consider ways to improve trash disposal on land to prevent it entering the marine environment. This may include more waste and recycling bins.

- Use the MPA Management Effectiveness Assessment Tool to highlight management successes and areas for improvement.

CROWN-OF-THORNS ASSESSMENT

Magallanes, Limasawa



In addition to the San Agustin-Lugsongan MPA survey CCC also conducted a Crown-of-Thorns assessment in an area proposed as a potential new MPA, close to the town of Magallanes.

Crown-of-Thorns (CoTs) are predators of coral. In low numbers they are an important part of the reef. However when there are too many in one area they can cause a lot of damage and kill a lot of coral.

Our assessment indicates that there are very low levels of CoTs in the area proposed as an MPA and so the treat of an outbreak is low at present.

We recommend that there is continued monitoring of the area for signs of future outbreaks. This will help prevent large scale damage to the reefs.



Religious statue placed in Magallanes

In April 2013 CCC was pleased to assist with a community project in the town of Magallanes. The project aimed to place a religious statue underwater, offshore from the shrine of the First Mass. At the request of Father Esquibel, our team was asked to locate a suitable site for the placement of the statue. It was important that the site was deep enough to avoid collisions from fishing boats but also shallow enough to be visible to visitors snorkelling at the surface. After a short search a suitable sand patch was located and marked ready for the placement of the statue.



Father Esquibel with Project Scientists Casper van de Geer and Alex Ferguson



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With Special Thanks to:

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