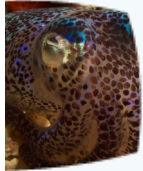


- CCC CARRIED OUT AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REEFS IN THE COASTAL WATERS OF BARANGAY NAPANTAO BETWEEN MARCH AND APRIL 2015



- THE REEF IS IN GOOD HEALTH BUT SHOWS SIGNS OF OVERFISHING. IT WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE PERMANENT RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A BANTAY DAGAT TO PATROL THE MPA TO PREVENT ILLEGAL FISHING ACTIVITIES



- ELECTRONIC AND HARD COPIES OF THE FULL TECHNICAL REPORT ARE AVAILABLE FROM OUR PROJECT SCIENTIST

Barangay Napantao MPA

The Napantao MPA was established in 1996 and covers a total of 5 hectares. Located in the Municipality of San Francisco, it is a premier dive site in southern Leyte and home to a diverse coral reef community, with the effects of the MPA showing positive signs .

The Current Status of the Napantao MPA

Surveys conducted by CCC found that the diversity of fishes was higher inside the MPA than outside. Although their abundance was not.

The abundance of commercially important species surveyed was low whilst being classed as small in size (21-30cm).

The size and low abundance of the commercially important fish is concerning and suggests that too much fishing is taking place.

However, the biomass (kg) of Parrotfish, Grouper and Snap-

per was higher inside the MPA than outside.

Only two Crown of Thorns Seastars (CoTs) were recorded during the whole survey, posing no threat.

Hard coral was the dominant substrate both inside and outside the MPA, which is a positive sign.

Despite fishing, other human impacts were recorded as low.

Overall, the reef is in good condition, however the area is showing signs of illegal and overfishing.



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 and communities from storms.

CCC's assessment of the Napantao MPA

The coral reef across the whole survey site is in good health. However, the amount of small sized commercially important fish is a concern.

Many fish take a long time to grow in size and need to reach a certain length before they become sexually mature. In addition, larger fish produce more offspring. Therefore, fishing large, adult fish, and removing them from the coral reef means that less offspring are produced and the population decreases and cannot recover.

A permanent Bantay Dagat needs to be re-established in the MPA. The infrastructure is already there and this will increase the compliance of the MPA by local fishers. This will allow the "spill-over" effect to take place and increase fish size, abundance and diversity in the area.

As the coral reef's health and the cover of hard coral increases, the potential for dive tourism increases.

With a well-managed and attractive coral reef, the frequency of paying divers will increase, further increasing the amount of income into the Barangay of Napantao.

Key Recommendations:

- Based on the CCC's survey of this site, it is recommended that the local community start consultations to designate a permanent Bantay Dagat to be placed at the MPA to patrol against illegal fishing inside of the MPA.
- Reduced illegal fishing will allow commercially important species to increase in size and 'spill' out of the MPA, benefitting members of the local community of Napantao with larger, more valuable fish such as *Lapu Lapu* (Grouper) and *Mul Mul* (Parrotfish).
- Promotion of the MPA and its amazing wildlife, as well as the efforts by the local Napantao Barangay in protecting it are recommended.

Below: Anna's Chromodoris, a beautiful nudibranch species found inside the MPA.



Why are turtles important?

Turtles, but more specifically, the Hawksbill Turtle (pictured below) allow hard corals to colonise and establish by removing sponges from coral reefs.

Equipped with a strong beak-like mouth, as their name suggests, they forage on marine sponges commonly found on coral reefs. This is important because the sponges directly compete with hard, reef-building corals for space. These hard corals are important to build and support a healthy coral reef.

A healthy coral reef will support an abundance of large sized commercially important species of both fish and invertebrates such as Groupers and Giant Clams. When Hawksbill Turtles are removed, other fish are unable to remove the sponges, and hard coral cover will decrease along with the health of the reef.

Turtles are also extremely valuable for generating income from ecotourism, as divers will pay to swim on a healthy reef with lots of turtles!



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