

Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (LRCP)

Monthly Project Update
May 2017

Location: Napantao Dive Resort, Napantao, San Francisco,
Southern Leyte

Project Scientist: Felipe Lei
lrpc@coralcay.org



LRCP Project Aim

The Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (LRCP) is a collaborative project to protect the coral reefs of Sogod Bay, providing training and conservation education opportunities for local Filipinos, as part of an integrated programme to develop local capacity and 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 Provincial Government of Southern Leyte (PGSL). CCC provides the resources to help sustain livelihoods and alleviate poverty through the protection, restoration and management of coral reefs and tropical forests.

Contents

- Latest News
- Story of the Month
- Educational & Community Projects
- Survey Update
- Marine Scholarship News
- Marine Creature of the Month

Latest News

CCC welcomes Philippa Roe, Scuba Instructor



Pippa first left the UK more permanently to travel in South America, and took her first ever SCUBA dive in Colombia. Within less than a year she had completed her Instructor training in Mexico. With a BA in Anthropology, she has always been interested in working and living within communities during her travels, and SCUBA diving was originally a platform to do this, but grew in to a passion and fascination for the world below the surface. Her most recent position was working as an instructor in the Maldives, but she now wishes to expand her knowledge and experience to the field of research, conservation and education. Pippa believes that joining Coral Cay as their Scuba Instructor will allow her to use and pass on her current knowledge, expertise and skills, and also gain valuable experience before starting her Masters in Tropical Marine Biology later this year.

Stories of the Month

Coral Cay Conservation Friendly Basketball Game Against Napantao

On May 24th, the Coral Cay Basketball Team participated in a friendly game against the local team in Napantao in preparation for the upcoming barangay tournament. Despite their lack of practice, the Coral Cay team were in good shape and the Napantao team won the first game by just one point. The second game was even better, with Coral Cay putting in a strong enough performance to win the last match of the night! The Napantao team was both extremely skilled and very sporting, the game finishing with friendly handshakes and congratulations. After these results the upcoming tournament in Napantao promises to be very exciting.



CCC Basketball team playing against Napantao – Photo. Emma Wilson.

Coral Cay Conservation Base Maintenance

On Saturday 21st May, CCC volunteers and staff decided it was a good opportunity to change some things up around the Base, bringing a breath of fresh air and lick of new paint to our home. With the help of some enthusiastic local children, and the good weather, we began the maintenance of some parts of the building. This is only the first step, but we already have some new paintings of marine creatures on our walls and we welcome everyone to come and see them!



CCC Staff and volunteers painting and redecorating the Base – Photo Felipe Lei.

Education and Community Projects

Coral Restoration Project

CCC recently deployed the initial structures for our coral restoration pilot project in the shallow waters of Napantao, and we have a very positive update on that front! In our pioneering new nursery, coral fragments that have naturally detached from the reef have been harvested and fixed into the neck of glass bottles. We are very excited to announce that after two weeks the corals are successfully calcifying onto the bottles (pictured). Although the project is still in an early stage this is a really promising sign for the future health and growth of these corals.



Photo of one of the coral fragments calcifying on top of the glass bottle— Photo. Jerome Napala.

Snorkelling and Fish Identification with Napantao Children

On the 17th May, CCC spread the word around the village for those who wanted to come to our base for a day and learn about fish identification, and spend a fun afternoon snorkeling on our awesome house reef! Before going into the water our Science Officer, Sarah Mynott, taught the children about some of the fish families present in Sogod Bay, along with the underwater hand signals that identify them. Then came the moment all the kids had been waiting for! Supervised by CCC staff they went for a snorkel around Napantao Fish Sanctuary. At the end of the snorkel the group shared their experiences of the reef whilst eating delicious pancakes!



Group picture just before going into the water – Photo. Emma Wilson.

World Oceans Day

World Oceans Day is on 8th June. It is an opportunity to celebrate our seas and take action to support the marine environment.

Removing marine litter, including plastic bottles and discarded fishing gear, helps to minimise its impact on marine life. We are facing an unprecedented challenge with regards to marine litter around the globe but we can come together to actively combat this phenomenon!

During Earth Day on the 22nd April, CCC teamed up with 4Ocean to conduct a local beach clean event and contribute to 4Ocean's efforts worldwide. After Earth Day, the total amount of rubbish removed during 4Ocean supported beach cleans in USA, Philippines, Montserrat, Bahamas, and Haiti was around 50,149 pounds!

After this great achievement, CCC will join forces with 4Ocean again and we will orchestrate a larger scale beach clean in our local town, Liloan, on June 8th, to mark World Oceans Day! Get in touch if you would like to be involved!

Survey Monthly Update

Survey background: Since January 2013, survey efforts have been focused on assessing potential and existing Marine Protected Areas in Sogod Bay to provide appropriate management recommendations. To do this CCC uses an expanded version of the Reef Check protocol, which has been customised to fit our work in Sogod Bay. Prior to this, a baseline appraisal of marine resources in Sogod Bay was carried out. If you would like more information about our surveying please contact our Project Scientist, Felipe Lei.

Coral Cay Conservation recently finished surveying a proposed MPA area in Cogon (Pintuyan), as well as two sites off San Bernardo (Limasawa), while the surveying of another proposed MPA area is currently underway.

Scientific reports from all CCC surveyed sites around the world are available on our website at <http://www.coralcay.org/science-research/scientific-reports>

Photos provided by CCC volunteers during the month of May



Nudibranch in Napantao MPA



Ribbon eel in Napantao MPA



Blue Ringed Octopus in Padre Burgos



Nudibranch in Napantao MPA



San Bernardo, Limasawa

Marine Scholarship News

Each month CCC offers Filipino nationals who display an ambition to study and protect the vital marine ecosystems of the Philippines an opportunity to take part in our Marine Conservation Scholarship. The programme lasts for one month and involves training in SCUBA diving to the level of PADI Advanced Open Water. Scholars then take part in an intensive Skills Development Programme giving them the knowledge and expertise to conduct marine surveys of the coastline.

This month, we welcomed Adrian Medina from Bontoc with a BSc in Marine Biology, and Jessa Cortes from Aklan, New Washington, with a BSc in Marine Biology. For both, as Marine Biology students, the training offered is closely related to the line of work they want to pursue and they are both very excited about the experience.

If you would like to apply for the CCC Marine Conservation Scholarship programme or read more about it, please visit: <http://www.coralcay.org/volunteer/scholarship-opportunities/>



"My experience in coral cay was unforgettable. I have learned a lot of things and gained experience in my scuba dive training. One of the greatest highlight in my stay in CCC was to see the full body of the shark at south wall outside its cave. But the greatest highlight was knowing everyone and spending time with them and also listening to their most embarrassing moments. I already miss the smile of everyone that i always see every morning and everyone's voice saying "Good morning" and "Goodnight", for short I MISS the CCC family I had during my training. My message to CCC is to keep on helping, teaching and inspiring scholars to join the cause and goals of CCC to protect and conserve everything that we love, the Ocean."

-
Adrian Medina

Marine Creature of the Month!

Our creature of the month is the **White Tip Reef Shark** (*Triaenodon obesus*). This species of shark is small, normally not exceeding 1.6m in length. The main characteristic that help identify this species is their white-tipped dorsal and caudal fins. Very common on the Indo-Pacific Coral reefs, they can be found from South African to Central American reefs, typically between 8 and 40m deep.

During the day, they spend most of the time sleeping in caves, like the whitetips found on our house reef in Napantao. Most sharks need to be on the move constantly to be able to breathe, but whitetips can pump water over their gills and lie still on the bottom. They leave their resting areas at night to hunt, most commonly feeding on fish, octopus and crustaceans.

White tips are rarely aggressive to humans but they can come close to investigate you. The IUCN has listed white tips as 'near threatened' due to the increasing levels of unregulated fishing.



Photo by Felipe Lei

Learn More!

To learn more about the CCC Philippines project, to join the expedition, or to find out about local marine scholarships, visit www.coralcay.org