

Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (LRCP)

Monthly Project Update
June 2017

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

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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.

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Latest News

CCC welcomes Nathan Hubot, Science Officer



After a Bachelor in Bio-engineering and a Masters in Marine biology, Nathan spent time doing research and travelling to different places. He went twice to the Huinay scientific station (Chile) to work on cold water corals and did a 6-months internship at the National Oceanographic Centre in Southampton (NOC) working on jellyfish ecology. During that time, he has been trained to become a teacher and a scientific diver. Now, Nathan is responsible for the scientific training of volunteers and the daily survey activities. After his time with CCC, Nathan will start a PhD on the role of jellyfish in the biological carbon pump at the NOC Southampton (UK).

Stories of the Month

Snorkelling with children of Napantao

On July 1st 2017, CCC welcomed eight children from Napantao to spend the afternoon with our new volunteers and learn more about the coral reef. The afternoon started with a volleyball game whilst the team waited for the rest of children to join the activities. Right after, a lecture about coral reef fish families and the importance of MPAs was given by our Science Officer before they headed out for a snorkel. Later that day, there was time to go for a swim, of which the children were really excited about it with all of them trying our new masks and snorkels. Our previous volunteer, Lisa, enjoyed snorkelling with the children so much throughout her stay during Reef Rangers events, that she donated all the new masks and snorkels to support our community work. After the snorkel, it was the time to eat some snacks, and then we started playing more games around CCC base and finished the day with another volleyball match with volunteers, scholars, CCC staff and of course, the Napantao children.



Volleyball game at the start of the day – Photo. Philippa Roe



Left: Children and CCC ready for Snorkel Time; Right: During the swim, children used underwater signals learned on the lectures to identify fish families – Photo. Philippa Roe

Education and Community Projects

World Oceans Day, Liloan, Southern Leyte

On June 8th, CCC celebrated World Oceans Day together with Liloan community by conducting a beach clean in Liloan. The event started in Liloan's municipal basketball court with pop music blaring out of the PA system and saw crowds gathering to fill the hall by 2.30pm. Of the 300 or so members of the Liloan community who came along, there were representatives from a local high school, the Local Government Unit (LGU), police, fire brigade, and coastguard members, as well as the Mayor's Office, all ready and raring to go and clean up their coastline.

Once everyone was registered, the formal proceedings began with a very kind welcome from the LGU followed by CCC's SO, Sarah's presentation. The presentation outlined the premise of World Oceans Day, and included an explanation of how the afternoon would play out, also involving a selfie competition and a World Oceans Day pledge to reduce marine litter; signed by around 200 people. After introductions and presentations, rice sacks were distributed and pairs of volunteers proceeded to spread out along Liloan's municipal coastline to rid it of trash.



CCC Science officer opening the event -
Photo. Philippa Roe



School kids heading back to weight the trash collected - Photo. Philippa Roe

Using nets fashioned out of old mosquito nets, the area along the sea wall was swept free of plastic waste. School pupils headed off to pick up waste around the town and at the back of their school site which leads out onto the coast, while representatives of the fire brigade and police service, amongst others, headed north into a slightly more residential area. As they worked, a significant number of the local residents decided to join in with the effort of their own accord, and were even offering snacks and pineapple juice around to some of the helpers to show their gratitude!

After more than an hour and a half of intensive beach cleaning, we reconvened in the municipal basketball court for a celebratory group photo and prize-giving. 25 Ocean bracelets (made from recycled plastic waste) were raffled off to those present, after which we announced the winners of the selfie competition. The competition required participants to upload a selfie to Facebook/Instagram that helped to raise awareness of the problems of marine trash, show what people can do to prevent it, and celebrate the importance of the oceans in our lives, along with a completed sentence: 'I love the ocean because...'. The star prize - an opportunity to try SCUBA

diving with Coral Cay Conservation for two, all expenses paid – was won by a young woman working in the Liloan Tourism Office, while the second and third prizes (snorkelling gear and 4Oceans t-shirts) went to a member of LGU staff and a local school pupil. Meanwhile, Ben Jack, our Field Base Manager, was coordinating the task of tying up and weighing all the sacks of trash with the help of the Liloan garbage disposal unit. By the end of the day, we had filled a total of 56 rice sacks which weighted in collectively at a whopping **864 kg**! This total meant that overall, for World Oceans Day, across both CCC sites, all participants helped removed a colossal amount of trash, 1,064kg (1.1 tons (metric))! All in all, the event was a great success, having made a tangible difference to the health and appearance of Liloan's coastline, raised awareness of the problems associated with marine trash, strengthened relationships between CCC and the wider local community, and with a lot of fun having being had! We have been overwhelmed by the support and send our heartfelt gratitude to all those involved.



Team photo with the pledge – Photo. Philippa Roe

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 perfectly 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 finished surveying a proposed MPA area in San Bernardo (Limasawa). CCC, by request of the Provincial Government of Southern Leyte, will be heading next to Libagon in order to survey four already established MPAs. This will allow the gathering of baseline data for future assessments for these MPAs established around the late 90's.

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



Sunset on Napantao MPA (View from CCC base)

Photos provided by CCC volunteers during the month of June



Soft Coral



Nudibranch.



Globe Urchin



Stone Fish

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 Jesus Fetil from Laguna, and Ryan Palacol from Quezon City; studying BS in Mathematics and Art studies respectively. Both wanting to add marine studies and conservation to their career path.

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 CCC was very refreshing. I felt like a child again – filled with so much awe and wonder. I believe the diving experience in CCC is unique in that it gives one a much larger perspective in seeing the underwater world. During my dives before the SDP, I was struck by the beauty of the underwater world; after SDP, it was even more beautiful. The knowledge acquired through the SDP gave me a better lens with which to see, appreciate, and celebrate underwater life.

I would like to thank CCC for the opportunity of having such a heart-warming experience that I will always carry with me. Everyone's positivity towards marine life was enthralling that one can't help but share such passion. I guarantee anyone who is thinking to take part in the program that the experience will keep your heart full during, and even beyond your stay."

Jesus Gabriel C. Fetil



"My experience at CCC was very memorable. One month of stay is quite long but it was too short for me to experience and learn a lot of great things. CCC is more than just an institution, it is a family. A family who are willing to help and support you to become a better person, teach you all the things that you need to learn to become an environmental steward, and push you beyond your limits for you not to give up easily in every step of the way. The CCC's Skills Development Program is very essential and useful before you can do reef check survey. Thank you CCC, the people behind it, and the volunteers for letting me experience this unforgettable expedition. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you."

Ryan G. Palacol

Marine Creature of the Month!

Our creature of the month is the **Spotted Porcelain Crab** (*Neopetrolisthes maculatus*). With white under colour and numerous red spots, they have flattened bodies as an adaptation for living in rock crevices. Also, they can establish a commensal relationship with anemones, where the crab can reside and get protection from the anemone, and the anemone will remain unaffected.

Usually small creatures up to 3.5 cm in diameter, and living in depths ranging from 2 to 23 m. Porcelain crabs can be found in oceans around the world, except the Arctic and Antarctic, but the Spotted porcelain crab is found in the Indo-Pacific and Japan.

Porcelain crabs use their big claws to defend their territory from other porcelain crabs. However, they are quite fragile animals, when attacked by predators, often, they will shed their limbs to escape, hence their common name. They feed by combing plankton and other particles from the water using a bristle-like structure on the mouthpart called setae.



Photo by Philippa Roe

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