

Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (LRCP)

Monthly Project Update
September 2017

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

Project Scientist : Javier del Campo
lrpc@coralcay.org



LRCP 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

Farewell to Ben Jack and welcome to Susan Robertson, Field Base Managers.

CCC is deeply grateful to Ben Jack who has been Field Base Manager (FBM) of our site in the Philippines for the last 12 months, having carried out his duties with passion, dedication and a great sense of responsibility. As FBM, Ben has really managed to make our staff and volunteers feel like they were at home. He is returning back home to the UK willing to keep on developing a promising career in conservation. Our new Field Base Manager, Susan Robertson, is replacing Ben for the oncoming months. Susan has previously been FBM for CCC at our Montserrat expedition, so has arrived ready to apply her expertise to leading our team in The Philippines. Susan is delighted to join CCC again and to have the opportunity to work at both sites. We wish both of them great success in their respective projects!



Susan Robertson, CCC's new Philippines Field Base Manager

Education and Community Projects

Provincial Mount Nacolod Management Council Meeting



CCC participation in the meeting
Photo: Karl Mikel Pregon

CCC's Project Scientist, Javier del Campo, was invited to attend the Provincial Mount Nacolod Management Council Meeting held in Sogod on the 29th August; sponsored by the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DERN). Mountain Nacolod is a Forest Protected Area and Local Conservation Area (LCA) covering 14,000 ha in Leyte and Southern Leyte Provinces. It has been designed as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) and as one of the 5 sites to be piloted by the New Conservation Area of the Philippines Project (NewCAPP), supported by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and managed by Local Government Units (LGU). The importance of this project related to CCC's marine programme is based in the fact that Mountain Nacolod is the water head of several watersheds that run off to Sogod Bay and thus affecting the health of Sogod Bay's coral reefs. Therefore, a sustainable and responsible management of those watersheds would imply healthier reefs.

The purpose of this meeting was to present the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and the Ordinance to create the Provincial Management Council to all the stakeholders including the DERN, PGSL, the LGUs of 5 municipalities and several other NGOs. The Mountain Nacolod partners warmly welcomed CCC and really appreciated their attendance whilst providing encouraging information for possible future involvement by CCC.

This meeting was a good opportunity to strengthen CCC and PGSL's partnership and to demonstrate further commitment to conservation efforts in the Philippines.

Napantao Beach Clean-up

Due to the celebration of International Coastal Beach Clean-up day on the 17th September, CCC staff decided to organise a beach clean on the nearby beach of Napantao. On the 22nd September, a visit from the Provincial Government was scheduled for assessing the situation of Napantao MPA, so the Barangay Captain requested us to clean the beach for that visit.

A variety of games were prepared for the local kids in order to raise awareness about the importance of keeping our oceans and beaches clean. CCC staff and volunteers managed to gather 15 large sacks of rubbish weighing a total of 287kg! All kinds of items were found, from fishing lines and nets, to old flip-flops and glass bottles. A great team effort by everyone involved with Napantao Beach looking much cleaner!



CCC staff after the beach clean-up
Photo: Javier del Campo

Napantao MPA information sign



Last month CCC designed, printed and placed the new Napantao MPA information sign. Placed on a specifically erected board, the sign will act as a permanent reminder for responsible use of the MPA and the wider marine environment. The Napantao Barangay Captain requested CCC to have the sign ready for the Provincial Government assessment visit on the 22nd of September. The sign has been designed to give useful information about the MPA, including; allowed and prohibited activities, MPA boundaries, the "dos and don'ts" and species to be found. Texts have been written both in Visayan and English to increase its accessibility.

Scholarship Programme Promotion in University Communities

Last month, CCC Project Scientist (Javier del Campo), visited the university community in Tacloban with the purpose of promoting CCC's scholarship programme. All the information regarding the programme was delivered to the Students Affairs Offices of the University of the Philippines Visayas (Tacloban College), Eastern Visayas State University-Tacloban and Leyte Normal University. The Dean of Students Affairs of Eastern Visayas State University-Tacloban and Leyte Normal University showed great interest and even offered CCC their facilities for an orientation session to explain the results of our project and to promote the Scholarship Scheme further.



Meeting with Eastern Visayas State University's Students Affairs Dean

Meeting rounds with Barangay Captains



Meeting with Hindagan Barangay Captain
Photo: Richard Sajol

CCC Project Scientist and the Community Liason Officer have initiated a round of meetings with Barangay Captains who are responsible for the Community-managed Marine Protected Areas (MPA) located in their Barangays. The purpose of these meetings is to keep the Captains informed and updated of all the activities concerning the surveys conducted by CCC. Thus, an initial meeting is organised to inform them when the surveys have begun and to explain the methodologies to be used and the schedule. A second meeting is organised to discuss preliminary results of what has been found and the last meeting has the intention to notify that our work has ended and that soon a report will be delivered and a public presentation of the results will be organised.

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, Javier del Campo.

This month Coral Cay Conservation finished surveying Hindagan MPA in Saint Bernard Municipality. CCC is currently surveying an already established MPA in Himbangan (Saint Bernard) and is planning to go on surveying, in the short term, four different MPAs in Libagon by the request of PGSL. CCC has also been requested on behalf of Local Government Unit (Liloan) to conduct new surveys in their already established MPAs to the efficacy of the established MPAs. All 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>



Survey in Himbangan MPA
Photo: Javier del Campo

Photos provided by CCC volunteers during the month of September:



Bullock's Hypselodoris



Harlequin Shrimp



Granular Sea Star



Yellow-tipped Phyllodesmium

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 Mary Jane Lagusad Lamoste from Maasin City, having studied a BS Biology major in Marine Biology at Visayas State University. Mary Jane is passionate about conservation and is really keen to expand her knowledge in marine conservation. 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/>



“One month with Coral Cay Conservation is not enough but really worth it. The house itself is like a home full of laughter and education. The house reef whom teaches me a lot of what is underneath. The sunset and lightning makes every end of the day special. For sure one of the highlights will be the after-dinner creature. It was fun to hear the story anticipated to be discussed and argued.

From the CCC Scholarship Programme I was able to do diving and collect data at the safest level whilst having fun at the same time. If every diver all throughout the world knows how to conduct survey or knows what they are seeing underwater the chances of fast forward MPA conservation will be possible.

To the future scholar, I hope you will see the meaning of your experience. Love what you do and be passionate about it. Knowledge is nothing without application and sharing. I had a whale of a time, thank you for the great experience, great people!

Mary Jane Lagusad Lamoste

Marine Creature of the Month!

Our creature of the month is the **Semicircle Angelfish (*Pomacanthus semicirculatus*)**. Angelfishes are close relatives of butterflyfishes and until recently were considered to belong to the same family. This species belongs to the colorful genus *Pomacanthus* that represents the classic reef fish for many underwater naturalists. However, in the tropical Indo-Pacific region the angelfish family is dominated in species number by the small elusive members of the genus *Centropyge*.

Angelfishes are greatly dependent on the shelter of boulders, caves and coral crevices and so traditionally inhabit areas of heavy coral growth or high-profile rock spills. The species belonging to the genus *Pomacanthus* feed on sponge, algae and benthic invertebrates.

This species exhibits dramatic changes from the juvenile to the adult stages, such as colour patterns or behavior.

The Semicircle Angelfish is a solitary species and can be found in sheltered reefs to 40m. It ranges from East Africa to Fiji and from North of Japan to Southwest Australia.

Angelfishes are often targeted by the aquarium trade, and are well known for their brilliant array of colours. Divers are sometimes startled by the powerful drumming or thumping sound which is produced by large adults of the genus *Pomacanthus*.



Photo: Rachel Taylor

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