

Cambodia Reef Conservation Project (CRCP)



Ministry of Agriculture,
Forestry and Fisheries
Fisheries Administration

Monthly Project Update

September 2013

Location:

Prek Svey Village, Koh Rong, Sihanoukville, Cambodia

Project Scientist: Ben Thorne

CRCP Project Aim

The Cambodia Reef Conservation Project (CRCP) is a collaborative project surveying the coral reefs of Koh Rong and Koh Rong Sanloem Islands in the Municipality of Sihanoukville. The programme provides training and conservation education opportunities for local Cambodians as part of an integrated programme to develop local capacity, and to 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 Fisheries Administration of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

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Latest News

This month saw the arrival of our new Science Officer, Elena Bollati. Elena is a recent graduate as a Master of Marine Biology from the University of Southampton. She has a strong background in all aspects of marine science from ecology and oceanography, to molecular biology and environmental law. She will be a significant asset to our team for the 4 months she will be on site.

Whilst the weather has been incredibly wet for most of the month, the team has successfully completed numerous biophysical surveys and a range of community projects. These community projects involved working with local children to clean up a local beach, learning the Cambodian small-scale farming methods, and participating in the International Coastal Clean-up Day.



Our new Science Officer, Elena Bollati

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A successful group of meetings by the science management staff in Phnom Penh has created a priority-based structure for upcoming community development programmes and biophysical surveys. During these meetings further development to resource use designation zones for the proposed Marine Fisheries Management Area (MFMA) occurred.

Story of the month

On September 21st the CRCP team were part of a brilliant International Coastal Clean-up Day in Cambodia, despite the weather's best efforts to drown out the day. In the morning we went underwater on the reef around Song Saa Private Island, armed with gloves, dive knives and a large collection of mesh bags. Our challenge: collect as much rubbish as possible. Our team of six managed to remove more than 50 kg in just over an hour! Sightings of an octopus, blue spot ribbon tailed ray, scorpion fish and numerous nudibranchs, followed by the consumption of some incredible handmade pizzas for our efforts, made for a happy team!



Local residents of Prek Svay getting stuck into the beach clean. The day was enjoyed by all - the environment included!

The afternoon saw us collaborate with the Song Saa Foundation for a large-scale beach clean-up in Prek Svey, with many of the village locals joining in – kids, adults and the owners of Song Saa! It's nice to see how excited local children get when they are out on the beach getting their hands dirty. On days like these you certainly realize just how much of an adverse impact humans have on coral reefs around coastal communities. Through our best efforts we removed over 60 large bags of rubbish from the beach, yet the total volume of debris was little dented. With more clean-ups planned for the near future we will continue to make a difference – watch this space...

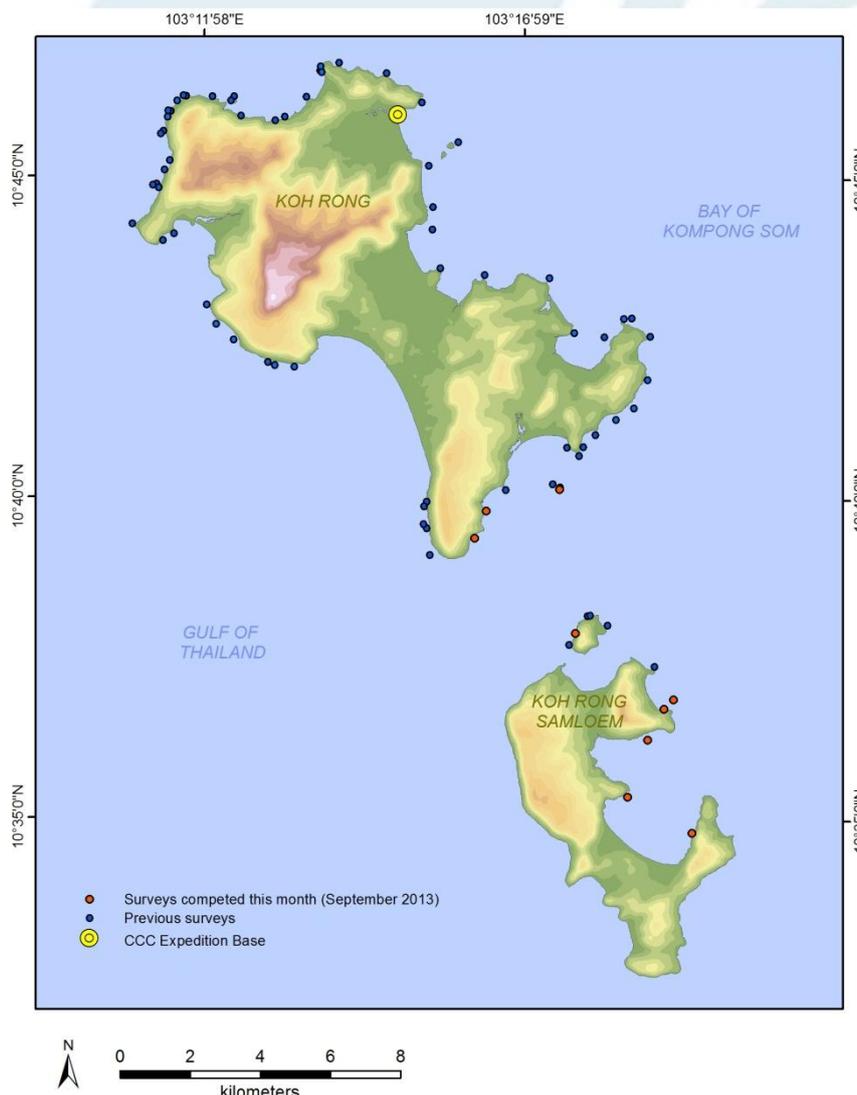
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Survey Update

Survey background: Our baseline-surveying programme is designed to gather data about the biological and morphological standing of Koh Rong and Koh Rong Samloem Islands. This data is combined with information on human and natural impacts on the reefs, along with oceanographic data, to ultimately produce a Geographical Information System 'map' of the various habitats of the islands. It is like a 'stock-take' of the current marine resources. This will provide policymakers and concerned institutions with information necessary to effectively manage those resources. We are also monitoring the reefs for signs of bleaching, following the mass bleaching event in 2010.

September saw two of our volunteers, Nichola Munro and Karen Brown, complete our Skills Development Program (SDP) training and subsequently begin assisting with the biophysical surveys of local reef systems. Currently weather conditions are preventing us from accessing sites to the west of Koh Rong, so our surveys this month have mainly been conducted along the eastern side of Koh Rong Samloem.



Marine Creature of the Month

Golden Sea-slug
Chromodoris leopardus

Family: Chromodorididae

This exquisite species of nudibranch is relatively uncommon on the reef system around the Koh Rong Archipelago. It is usually found in sheltered habitats and has a distribution range from east Australia, across the Philippines and Indonesia, to Cambodia and eastern Thailand.

This nudibranch grows to a maximum length of 6 cm and can sometimes be confused with similar species, *Chromodoris geminus* and *Chromodoris kumiei*, which have comparable markings and colouration. This particular species has large purple or purple-brown spots or marks, usually ringed with white, an often-reticulate brownish background, and a purple border.



Learn More!

To learn more about CCC's project in Cambodia, to join the expedition, or to find out about local Marine Scholarships, visit www.coralcay.org.