

Cambodia Reef Conservation Project (CRCP)



Ministry of Agriculture,
Forestry and Fisheries
Fisheries Administration

Monthly Project Update

October 2013

Location:

Prek Svey Village, Koh Rong, Sihanoukville, Cambodia

Project Scientist: Rónán Mag Aoidh and 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.

Contents

- Latest news
- Science Update
- Survey Update
- Marine Creature of the Month

Latest News

We welcome our new Project Scientist, Rónán Mag Aoidh, this month, who will be a valued asset to our team. Rónán studied Marine Science at the University of Ulster, and when he was still a student there he volunteered with CCC at our expedition site in Tobago. He found this to be a very enjoyable and worthwhile experience - learning to dive, going through the Skills Development Program (SDP), taking part in surveys, and making some good friends. After graduating, he gained a Fellowship at the Marine Institute of Ireland and worked in the Benthos Ecology Team, building on the skills he had learned at university. While working here, Rónán also completed a Research Masters in Environmental and Biological Science at University College Dublin. He has also spent some time at sea working onboard various Research Vessels (RV Celtic Explorer and RV Thalassa) as well as helping out on a research project at Trinity College Dublin. He arrives in Cambodia eager to help achieve the goals of this project



Our new Project Scientist,
Rónán Mag Aoidh

Cambodia Reef Conservation Project October 2013



and assist in the creation and effective management of Cambodia's first Marine Fisheries Management Area (MFMA).

High season appears to have arrived with a month of glorious sunshine (the occasional evening storm aside). This has meant that all of our volunteers have successfully completed the Skills Development Programme (SDP) with some incredible visibility. Sightings of remoras and giant jellyfish has made the diving here even more enjoyable.

Science Update

After further successful meetings in Phnom Penh this month, the MFMA is getting ever closer to its inauguration. Zonation activities are in the final stages of drafting before private sector consultation begins; Rónán has been made the CCC representative of the MFMA Technical Working Group; the EU Attache for Natural Resource Development in Cambodia, Georges Dehoux, and the Head of UNIDO Operations in Cambodia, Sok Narin, both wish to visit the CCC site in the New Year; and the National Methodologies Workshop for Marine Research is due to take place over the coming weeks.

Also, big congratulations to our former Science Officer, Simon Miller, who successfully completed his PADI Divemaster this month under the instruction of CCC's SCUBA Instructor Fern Langran-Goldsmith.

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 Sanloem 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.

October saw CCC volunteer Karen Hedges complete the Skills Development Program (SDP), preparing her to join the survey teams next month. With good weather bringing high visibility and perfect water conditions, surveys this month have focused on the western side of Koh Rong which has been difficult to access due to high winds and heavy rains in recent months.

Marine Creature of the Month

Jellyfish

Crambione mastigophora

This large species of jellyfish can have a bell of over 1 foot across. It is not a strong swimmer and large aggregations of over 100 individuals can be observed during late summer. It has the ability to deliver a painful sting and, as can be seen from the photograph below, small fish take advantage of this by swimming close by for protection. The extent of its distribution has not been documented, but it has been seen in the regions of Indonesia, Micronesia, Polynesia...and now Cambodia.



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.