

Cambodia Reef Conservation Project (CRCP)



Monthly Project Update

January 2014

Location:

Prek Svey Village, Koh Rong, Sihanoukville, Cambodia

Project Scientist: Rónán Mag Aoidh



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

Following the Christmas Holidays, staff arrived back on base eager to follow on from where they left last year. This is going to be a pivotal year in the Marine Fisheries Management Area (MFMA) planning process and subsequently the conservation of the reef and wildlife around the Koh Rong Archipelago.

We said goodbye to Elena Bollati who spent four months on the island as our Science Officer. During her time here she led volunteers through their Skills Development Programme and performed many surveys, helping us complete the second round of surveying around Koh Rong last year.

At the start of the year, we welcomed two new members of staff to our base in Prek Svey. Jerry Slater has taken on the role of Science Officer while Amy Hornett is our new SCUBA Instructor.



CCC's new SCUBA Instructor, Amy Hornett



CCC's new Science Officer, Jerry Slater

During Scotland's sunnier months Jerry enjoys a career as a project and communications manager in government and the corporate world. He has an Honours degree in Civil & Environmental Engineering, and a Masters degree in Operational Research. When winter approaches he escapes to the tropics to indulge in his passion for adventurous travel and exotic wildlife. He has dived in over 20 countries and counting, including working as a Divemaster in Honduras and Fiji. Having volunteered with CCC in the Philippines in 2013 and loved it, he jumped at the opportunity to join CCC's staff team in Cambodia in 2014.

Amy has been diving for 10 years now, since taking her Open Water course in Mozambique. Two manta rays and a whale shark later, she was hooked. Since then she has dived all over, from the Bahamas to Malaysia. Eventually, her love of the underwater world finally pushed her to leave her job in Advertising in order to take up diving full time. She became a PADI MSDT and EFR instructor in Bali and has since then been working her way around the world, discovering more about what our wonderful oceans have to offer.

Story of the Month

Planning for the management of the future MFMA is continuing to progress. Our Project Scientist, Rónán Mag Aoidh, attended a meeting of the Technical Working Group (TWG) for the MFMA held in the Provincial Hall at Sihanoukville on 8th January. This was attended by national and regional government officials, Fauna and Flora International, representatives from the Community Fisheries, the Cambodian Navy, police, and private sector groups. Following the meeting, it is hoped that the declaration for the TWG will be ratified in the near future.

Fauna and Flora International is one of our main project partners in Cambodia and when their Board of Directors was in Cambodia this month, they called into our expedition base in Prek Svey to gain a greater understanding of the work we do here. Following a tour of our site from Field Base



Project Scientist, Rónán Mag Aoidh, explaining the work of Coral Cay in Cambodia; l-r Amelia Salzman; Katie Frohardt; James Perkins; Rónán Mag Aoidh; Berry Mulligan.



Cambodia Reef Conservation Project January 2014



Manager Ben Thorne; Project Scientist, Rónán Mag Aoidh, gave a short presentation about our current work, results, and future plans.



Field Base Manager, Ben Thorne, giving a tour of the base; l-r Thomas S. Foster; Ben Thorne, Chea Phallin, Adam Henson; Amelia Salzman.

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.

Early January saw the arrival of the first group of volunteers to the site in 2014. They are steadily working their way through their Skills Development Programme training and will finish soon. Once qualified they can take part in surveys and contribute to our important data collection.

Just before the break last year, our team successfully reached our target of completing the surveying of all the sites around Koh Rong. This means that we will now concentrate on finishing

up the surveying of all the sites at Koh Rong Sanloem. This will entail some camping trips and should be great fun as well.

Marine Creature of the Month!

Cuthona yamasui

Family: Tergipedidae



This gorgeous nudibranch of the family Tergipedidae was photographed by CCC's Science Officer, Jerry Slater. The *Cuthona yamasui* was cruising along a sandy patch at 8m depth at Oyster bay (KR35) on Kong Rong, no doubt searching for a tasty patch of hydroids on which to feed.

Learn More!

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