

# Cambodia Reef Conservation Project (CRCP)



## Monthly Project Update

February 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.*

### Contents

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

## Latest News

This month we were pleased to welcome Chhim Volux to our team at Prek Svey, who has joined us in the role of Community Liaison Officer. Born into a poor family in Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia, Volux studied and worked hard to find money to support his studies at university, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in Management Information Systems. He is passionate about conserving and sustainably managing his country's natural resources and has great knowledge about Cambodian society and culture. We are sure that he will be a huge asset to our team and will help CCC to protect the marine resources of Cambodia, as well as raising environmental awareness amongst the population in Prek Svey.

Also this month, following the ratification of the Technical Working Group of the Marine Fisheries Management Area of Koh Rong Archipelago (TWGMFMAKRA) in January, the inception meeting of the TWG took place on the 24th February,



CCC's new Community Liaison Officer,  
Chhim Volux

and saw all stakeholders attend to discuss various issues such as the outer boundaries of the MFMA, and zonation in the MFMA. This meeting is another important milestone in the process of creating the MFMA, and it is great to see the high level of interest and communication between all groups.

The monthly NGO forum for the Koh Rong archipelago took place on 27th January, and was hosted by Friends of Koh Rong (FOKR) down in Koh Touch on the South of Koh Rong. Project Scientist, Rónán Mag Aoidh, representing CCC updating the others on the latest CCC news and listening to the work of the others. FOKR also kindly donated teaching materials to CCC for use in our educational programme, some of which have already been utilised and enjoyed by the children at Prek Svey School.

## Story of the Month

Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> February, the National Workshop on Fisheries Refugia was held in Sihanoukville. CCC's Project Scientist, Rónán Mag Aoidh, was invited by the Director of the Department of Fisheries Conservation to attend and assist as a working member.

Fisheries Refugia are defined as specific areas where management measures are applied to sustain important fisheries species during critical stages of their lifecycle. These areas will protect habitats that are critical for activities such as spawning or feeding, or where juvenile fish seek shelter until they reach a certain point in their development. As such, identifying and protecting these areas is key to sustainable fisheries management. This three day event was part of an international project involving six countries, co-ordinated by the South East Asia Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC). It is hoped that some areas in the proposed Marine Fisheries Management Area around the Koh Rong Archipelago can be identified as fisheries refugia.



*Some of the working team of the National Fisheries Refugia Workshop I-r: Mr You Chanpraseth (FIA), Dr Taweekiet Amornpiyakrit (SEAFDEC), Mr Ouk Vibol (FIA), Rónán Mag Aoidh (CCC), Mr Ing Try (FIA), Mr Berry Mulligan (FFI), Mr Chea Phallin (FFI)*

## Community and Education Projects

One of our new Community Liaison Officer's roles is to teach in the school in Prek Svey. Volux teaches classes which consist firstly of general English, and then one or two lessons a week focusing on the marine world and environmental issues. The English lessons give the opportunity to introduce and practice the relevant vocabulary and phrases for the environmental lessons. This means that the kids can concentrate on the issues rather than the language in these lessons. Some issues are quite complex, and these classes are taught in Khmer, the students' native language, to ensure full understanding and appreciation of the content.

Volux's teachings have proven extremely popular, with the attendance rates rising so much that he had to split up the children into three different classes! In between science training and surveying, volunteers with CCC also contribute to this educational work and have as much fun during the classes as the children that they teach.



*Volux gives a lesson in Prek Svey school*

## 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.***

Before the end of 2013 we finished surveying all the sites around Koh Rong, and this year our focus is solely on surveying around the coast of Koh Rong Sanloem. This month our teams completed four full surveys around Koh Rong Sanloem. March will see our staff and volunteers heading out on various camping trips to optimise their time and survey as many sites as possible. February saw the arrival of a further four volunteers and three scholars. This was the first time most of them had ever dived, but Amy, our resident SI, is pleased to announce that they are all now qualified PADI Advanced Open Water divers. On top of this, they have all commenced their Skills Development Programme science training and are making good progress. This training should be complete by early March, allowing them to take part in surveys on the up-coming camping trips!

## Marine Creature of the Month!

***Pedum spondyloidum* - Coral Clam**  
**Family: *Pectinidae* (Gmelin, 1791)**

A lot of interesting creatures were spotted this month – a Star Pufferfish (1.5m long), some colourful Cuttlefish, a steely eyed White Eyed Moray Eel, a cool looking Magnum Sea Cucumber, some seriously territorial Saddleback Anemone fish, and much more. However, we thought the title of 'creature of the month' should be awarded to the unassuming animal in this photo.



Science Officer, Jerry Slater, took this photo at our science training ground – Coral Island, at the North of Koh Rong. The common name of this organism, the coral clam, is somewhat deceptive as it is in actual fact a scallop and not a clam.

Up to 8cm in size, this scallop can be found in crevices of living corals; with only the shell opening, mantle and minute eyes along the margin visible. These eyes are actually light and pressure sensitive cells that signal for the shell to close when disturbed.

### 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](http://www.coralcay.org).