
Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (SLCRCP)



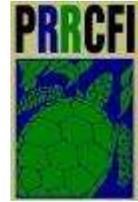
Monthly Project Update

June 2015

Location:

Napantao Dive Resort, Napantao, San Francisco, Southern Leyte

Project Scientist: Shannon Cameron



SLRCP Project Aim

The Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (SLRCP) 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 and the Philippine Reef & Rainforest Conservation Foundation Inc. (PRRCFI). CCC provides the resources to help sustain livelihoods and alleviate poverty through the protection, restoration and management of coral reefs and tropical forests.

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Latest News

CCC offers First Aid Training to Barangay Council Members and Health Workers

This month Coral Cay Conservation have been working hard to develop a new community programme, offering free First Aid Training to local Barangay Health Workers (BHW) and Barangay Council Members. Our local scuba instructor and community liaison officer, Jesse recently met with the Liga ng mga Barangay President Hon. Jesus E. Gamutan at the Municipal Government of San Francisco to discuss this endeavour. We were delighted to hear that the proposal was well received and immediately approved for action. The purpose of the training is to expand knowledge on how to react in an emergency, providing a useful qualification to all those who choose to take part. The course will be taught personally by the CCC Field Base Manager Olly McGuinness, who is fully trained as a First Aid Instructor, at our site in Napantao. A key part of the CCC aims is to provide support to the local community and we are very excited to get started on this programme very soon and begin working with and getting to know many new members of our local Barangays.



CCC's Jesse Tinapay alongside Liga ng mga President Hon. Jesus E. Gamutan and Board Secretary Servando Tiu, at the Municipal Government of San Francisco.

Story of the Month

CCC welcomes three new staff members!



Science Officer Joe joined by Shrimp (left) and Gobie (right)

Say hello to our new Science Officer, Joe Roche-Chaloner! Joe is originally from Spain but grew up in the beautiful countryside of Cheshire, England. He first learned to dive at the age of 19 while volunteering for a Sea Turtle NGO in Costa Rica. After gaining a BSc in Wildlife Conservation in 2007 Joe went on to travel the world for the next few years, completing internships with marine parks in St Eustatius and Grand Cayman and working as a PADI scuba instructor in Australia. Witnessing first-hand the damage inflicted on marine ecosystems by anthropogenic activities strengthened Joe's desire to protect and manage these systems for future generations. As such, he returned to University in 2013 and completed an MSc in Climate Change: Managing the Marine Environment. After spending last summer in a lab processing benthic towed images for his thesis, Joe is very much looking forward to getting back to the sea and (hopefully) sunshine and start his work for CCC.

Another two additions to the CCC team are our new mascots and terrifying guard dogs, brothers Shrimp and Gobie. Our new pups were adopted by two local staff members and have been named after the remarkable Shrimp-Gobie symbiosis. We are delighted to have them here on site and are sure they will learn to love the marine environment just as much as we do!

CCC visited by the SLSU Marine Biodiversity Team

The Coral Cay base recently received a surprise but welcome visit from the SLSU Marine Biodiversity Research Team. The team is made up of a number of former CCC scholars including Jollibee E. Looc, Kristine Aura C. Daga and Porferio Timblaco Jr and is led by their instructor Ma'am Naine Cabasisi Matondo, a former classmate of our very own local staff member, Jesse. We were fascinated to hear about their work; the team's current focus involves research on marine plant systems in the Sogod Bay area including seagrasses, seaweeds and mangroves. These ecosystems are hugely important for the stability of the coastal zone and as nursery grounds for commercially important coral reef fish. It is wonderful to hear that this group of scientists are working very hard to restore and protect them for future generations. These young marine biologists serve as an inspiration to Coral Cay



CCC's Olly Mcguinness and Jesse Tinapay alongside the SLSU Marine Biodiversity team at our base in Napantao

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Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project
Philippines, June 2015



and continue to train more young people throughout the Philippines. Each scholar we train is a valuable asset and a strong ally in the conservation and protection of Marine Resources in Sogod bay and throughout the Philippines.

Education and Community Projects

CCC trains a new batch of Reef Rangers

CCC is always working towards one of our ultimate goals – to develop local capacity. This involves offering training and education to local people so that when Coral Cay does leave Southern Leyte we will leave behind people with the right tools to carry on our work! The Reef Ranger training programme does just this and is one of the coolest ways to keep local students in different schools involved with our conservation effort. This month one of our previous scholars, Jason G. Tuang-Tuang organized a group of trainees composed of his sophomore SLSU classmates to take part. Despite being busy with his studies and as the editor-in-chief of their school publication Jason was still able to find the time to accompany them. Of course, he was also thrilled to have the opportunity to come back and visit his friends at CCC! The students received a warm welcome from our staff and volunteers as they arrived on site. They were then given a tour of our base and introduced to CCC, who we are and what we do here in the Philippines. Then, we got down to business! As students of Marine Biology the group were eager to learn as much as



Project Scientist Shannon delivers Reef Ranger training to a group of students from SLSU Bontoc

they could about coral reef ecosystems, the threats that they face and what they can do to help protect these environments in future. These lessons will be greatly useful to their current and future studies. Unfortunately due to bad weather we were unable to snorkel on the day. However, the students were taught how to identify numerous fish, invertebrates and coral lifeforms out on the reef. We hope to invite the students back to Napantao another day when the sun is shining and let them see what our wonderful house reef has to offer!



Left: The newly trained Reef Rangers receive their certificates

Survey 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, Shannon Cameron.



Science Officer Nick teaches local scholar Lovely how to lay a survey line

MPA and we look forward to helping Catig and Liloan achieve this by fully assessing the area and finding the appropriate boundaries to house a new Marine Protected Area.

Scientific reports from all of CCC's sites around the world are available on our website at <http://www.coralcay.org/science-research/scientific-reports/>

Right: *International volunteer Chris practices recording fish abundance along a transect*



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 sub-marine surveys of the coastline.

CCC was very happy to host two new scholars this month - Lovely Joy Heyres and Kimberly Mamburam. They are both currently studying for a BSc in Fisheries Science at the University of the Philippines – Visayas. Kimberley is from Pontevedra, Capiz and joined us for two reasons: firstly, to gain knowledge and develop her diving skills, allowing her to enjoy the underwater world first-hand. She is also eager to widen her knowledge about the marine environment and learn how to conserve it. After finishing up with CCC, Kimberley has planned to travel to Cagayan for practicum in order to complete an internship in fisheries work.

Lovely, from Iloilo, City joined the Scholarship Scheme to meet new people from around the world and learn how to dive to help her fulfil her ambition of travelling and diving in new places. Of course, she also wants to widen her knowledge about marine creatures and learn how to conserve them for the future. She believes that CCC is the way to fulfil this. Both girls have successfully become PADI Advanced Open Water Divers and been certified by Reef Check as qualified to survey coral reefs worldwide. We wish them the best of luck with their studies and are confident that both will put their newfound skills to great use in the future.

“This experience is one of a kind. It’s like a fulfilment – a dream come true. I’ve met wonderful people, learned new things and been given the privilege to learn how to dive which is the one of the best things that have happened in my life. CCC is wonderful! All the fishes, corals and special thanks to the sea cucumbers and sea snakes that still frighten me, always!”

- **Lovely Joy D. Heyres**



Field Base Manager Oilly with scholars Lovely (left) and Kimberly (right)

“My journey in CCC has undeniably been a matchless experience for me. I have met different people and made friends, ate, drank and laughed with them. I have gained a lot of knowledge and experience that I could have not gained from school. CCC itself has been a great opportunity for me. I am truly glad that I have been a part of this expedition.”

- **Kimberley Mamburam**

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/>

Marine Creature of the Month!

This month CCC would like to introduce our “Marine Creature of the Month” as the Clark’s Anemonefish (*Amphiprion Clarkii*) and his hoard of a thousand eggs!

Anemonefish are a firm favourite of scuba divers and underwater photographers throughout the Indo-Pacific and one of the best known examples of symbiosis in the animal kingdom. It is not surprising, therefore, that they were chosen as the subject of the Academy Award winning picture, ‘Finding Nemo’. Symbiosis is the intimate ‘living together’ of dissimilar organisms with benefit to both parties. In this case the fish live within the protective sanctuary of the stinging anemone which, in turn, receives protection from the fish which exhibit aggression to chase away predators.

The eggs were spotted by our local dive instructor, Jesse on Napantao house reef at approximately 10m depth. Anemonefish tend to live in pairs; while the female is the largest and most aggressive fish, it falls to the male to tend to their nest which is typically located on a rock within the vicinity of the anemones protection. It is exciting to see that we will soon have a number of new anemonefish recruits in the coming weeks.

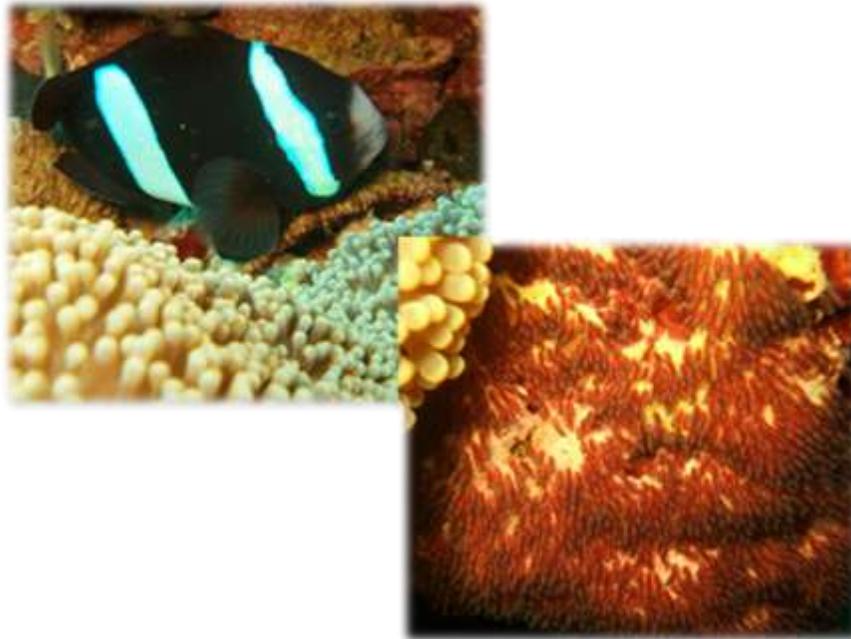


Photo Credit: Jesse Tinapay

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.