

Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (LRCP)

Monthly Project Update
August 2016

Location: Napantao Dive Resort, Napantao, San Francisco, Southern Leyte

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LRCP Project Aim

The Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (LRCP) 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 (PGSL). CCC provides the resources to help sustain livelihoods and alleviate poverty through the protection, restoration and management of coral reefs and tropical forests.

Contents

- Latest news
- Story of the Month
- Educational & Community Projects
- Survey Update
- Marine Scholarship News
- Marine Creature of the month

Latest News

CCC welcomes Janie Morton, Science Officer



Ever since I was little, I have enjoyed time in nature. In Manchester, I undertook my degree in Wildlife Conservation and Zoo Biology. I seized the opportunity to have a placement year as a research assistant with a marine N.G.O in Madagascar to discover practically how environmental conservation works in situ. It was during this time I learned to dive and gain firsthand experiential knowledge about coral reefs and their associated threats. Since then I completed an International Erasmus Mundus in Marine Biodiversity and Conservation, just recently achieving my first publication for my Msc thesis on the governance dimensions of the Scottish wild salmon fisheries. I was fortunate to join a dive survey across the Mergui Archipelago in Myanmar, and further my research skills in various working internships. I am very excited to be joining such a worthy organisation as Coral Cay and to have the opportunity to help other people find their passion in marine conservation.

Story of the Month

Maasin Football Match – Round 2

Word of the indomitable Coral Cay Conservation Football Club spread far and wide after our first match in Maasin at the end of June, and as a result, the Coral Cay FC was invited back to Maasin for another round on August 6th. The Coral Cay team had



Coral Cay FC post match, tired but pleased with their performance - photo D. Lancaster

picked up a few new recruits since their first match and arrived on the field with an impressive twelve-person team. The games were rapid fire: six on six for twenty-minute games. Coral Cay came out strong at the start of the first match, pushing back hard against the competitive Maasin team. Keeper/Scuba Instructor, Dom Revell, parried shot after shot with ninja like confidence. Our twelve-person team allowed for frequent substitutions, which kept our team fresh and on the attack. However, a single goal from the Maasin team snuck between the crossbars late in the second half leaving the final score 1-0 for Maasin.

However, Coral Cay FC was just warming up. After a fantastic Filipino lunch of fish, chicken, pork, and rice, provided by the welcoming Maasin organizers, both teams geared up for round two.

The second match was even more heated than the last, with Maasin and Coral Cay going head to head, vying for the championship. A sneaky goal from the Maasin team crept in halfway through the game. However, Coral Cay hit back hard with a killer goal by Gareth "Predator" Turner, assisted by Dani "The Wall" Contrada. Tied 1-1 the clock ticked down with Mena Kaharuddin and Ion Bacabac trading back and forth the same pair of shoes to kick the Maasin team to the curb. Dani "The Wall" took some hard hits to keep back the Maasin offence but Coral Cay couldn't hold back a final goal from Maasin late in the game. Final score was a tight 2-1 for Maasin.

Although Coral Cay FC didn't win against Maasin this time, they did take away a great sense of accomplishment in their incredible improvement and the great fun of sharing a match with such a talented and friendly Maasin team. Until next time Maasin!

Education and Community Projects

San Francisco Scouts Marine Conservation Event



Field Base Manager Claire Ogg showing scouts how to use a SCUBA kit – photo R. Pedersen

On August 5th, approximately 185 scouts from San Francisco and surrounding barangays arrived at the Coral Cay base for a morning full of marine conservation lectures, an introduction to SCUBA diving, and a chance to breathe under water for the first time.

The scouts arrived at 8am and received a brief introduction to Coral Cay Conservation and the Napantao MPA. After the scouts settled in, Claire Ogg challenged the scouts to do 5 push-ups for the 22/22 challenge, an event meant to bring awareness to the fact that 22 veterans commit suicide every day. The kids eagerly leapt to the task, and afterwards, Claire introduced the kids to SCUBA equipment, explaining the various parts of the kit, as well as explaining how it lets you breath underwater.

Community Liason Officer, Jesse Tinapay, then took over and gave the group a lecture on coral biology and lifeforms, the local fish, and why Marine Protected Areas are important. The kids enthusiastically pointed out the fish they recognized on the educational presentation banners and proudly proclaimed their knowledge that coral was an animal when asked by Jesse.

The morning's final event was the opportunity to use a regulator and breathe underwater in the "bubble tanks". Jesse filled buckets full of water, sand, coral skeletons, and shells, and all of the kids had the opportunity to don a mask and make bubbles as they breathed through a regulator. The scouts said farewell at about 11am after a fun-filled, educational day.



A group of scouts sitting on the steps of the CCC Napantao Field Base during the marine conservation event – photo R. Pedersen

Survey Monthly 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, Darienne Lancaster.

Despite the arrival of Habagat, the Coral Cay survey team finished off their first Padre Burgos PAME site in Barangay Dinahugan. The team travelled the long way around Sogod Bay by bus to finish off the site in time. Thank you to the Barangay officials and locals for their hospitality and help while finishing the Dinahugan survey.

The Coral Cay team has now moved on to a proposed MPA site on the Pacific side of the island in Barangay Pandan, in Municipality Liloan. While this site shows patches of healthy reef with nudibranchs, anemone and lizardfish, and feather stars, it is dominated by sand and silt.

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>

Photos from Pandan proposed MPA in Liloan.



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.

This month we are introducing our two scholars, Camille De Castro and Jan Japay. Camille comes from Bagulo City and works at the Marine Science Institute in Diliman, and Jan hails from Oroquieta City and recently completed a Masters degree in Belgium in Marine and Lacustrine Science and Management.

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/>

“Away from the hustles and bustles of the city, the site is truly a perfect place to unwind and focus on learning about and appreciating marine life. I've always hated doing the same routines every day, but the CCC daily routine was definitely an exception. I always look forward to waking up at 6am, having breakfast and planning our day, chores (not really), learning and diving, then ending the day in my hammock watching the sunset. Also, sharing how the day went by, nominating fish and dick of the day are always something to look forward to. CCC staff and volunteers have a really good work-life balance; being able to integrate movie nights, game nights, karaoke sessions and some spur-of-the-moment things like having bonfire and smores, and playing legit football match against local skilled players. The experience was definitely one for the books. To CCC, thank you for providing a great opportunity for Filipinos to appreciate and learn more about the marine life and for treating us with utmost respect. To future scholars, just enjoy your stay and make the most out of it.”



Camille De Castro

“This scholarship allowed me to get to know another culture first-hand. Cultural differences are more than just differences in language, food, appearances, and personal habits. A person's culture reflects very deep perceptions, beliefs, and values that influence his or her way of life and the way that he/she views the world. Researchers who experience cultural differences and his exposure to different traditions are therefore crucial to truly understand the stakeholders who come from different Indigenous groups inhabiting the region that are predominately dependent to the Fisheries industry. This scholarship also helped me develop my skills and give me experiences a Philippine classroom setting may not provide. It's an opportunity for me to discover new strengths and abilities, conquer new challenges, and solve new problems. I have encounter situations that are wholly unfamiliar to me and learned to adapt and respond in effective ways. I will return this favour to our institution fostering this knowledge and skills to the team and reinforce commitment to our shared goals and objectives.”



Jan Japay

Marine Creature of the Month!

Our creature of the month is the **Ornate Ghost Pipefish** (*Solenostomus paradoxus*). A few of our volunteers and staff were lucky enough to see several of these fascinating fish while doing science training dives at Barangay Anilau, Municipality Liloan this month. These elaborate fish are masters of disguise and often mimic dead leaves, feather stars, sponges, and algae. Ghost Pipefish also come in many different colours, which helps them blend in to their surroundings. They can be bright orange or completely black and some become almost translucent, making them extremely difficult to spot.

Although we call these animals pipefish, they are not actually directly related to true pipefish and seahorses even though they look quite similar. As such, Ornate Ghost Pipefish males do not brood their young as is the case for true pipefish and seahorses. Instead the female Ghost Pipefish keeps her eggs in special fins on her pelvis that were designed like small pockets to hold the eggs. These fish are fairly small (10-15cm) and are usually found in pairs with the male typically smaller than the female.



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