

Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (LRCP)

Monthly Project Update
October 2017



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

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LRCP 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.

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Story of the Month

Sea Turtle identification in Napantao MPA

Last month our former scholar, Mary Jane Lamoste, gave two lectures to CCC staff and volunteers about life history, ecology and threats to sea turtle, in addition to providing information about Apo Island turtle research and conservation project. One of the most interesting topics was the use of photo identification to track the movement of the turtles, through the uploading of the photos into a common database. This led to CCC staff to explore the option of beginning a new project dealing with the identification and tracking of sea turtles using Napantao MPA as home, breeding or feeding ranges.



CCC former scholar Mary Jane Lamoste giving a lecture (left) and turtle in Napantao MPA (right).

Photos: Javier del Campo and Rachel Taylor

Education and Community Projects

Basketball matches in Napantao



Basketball match in Barangay Napantao
Photo: Javier del Campo

Sports can be the best way of linking people. Bearing that in mind, CCC have been organising basketball matches at the Barangay Napantao court on a regular basis. CCC staff, volunteers, scholars and local people from the barangay get together to enjoy a good time far from obligations and other responsibilities. We really have some fun!

Beach Clean-ups

CCC's Community Liaison Officer (CLO), Jesse Tinapay has a strong commitment to our beaches and endeavours to keep them as clean as possible. He has removed a huge amount of trash from the beach every year since 2015 and this year has been no different! In 2017 he has undertaken solo beach clean-ups 79 times at 4 different sites (Napantao (San Francisco), Sta. Paz MPA (San Francisco) Anilao (Liloan) and Abgao (Malitbog)) – a true eco-warrior! These beach clean-ups have taken him over 79 hours, having collected 183 sacks, weighing in at over 1,000 KGs.



CCC CLO Jesse Tinapay – the eco-warrior!

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, Javier del Campo.

This month Coral Cay Conservation finished surveying Himbangan MPA in Saint Bernard and Napantao MPA in San Francisco Municipality. CCC conducts surveys in Napantao MPA twice a year (April/October) in order to assess the effectiveness of small-scale community-managed marine protected areas in the Philippines. CCC has also been requested on behalf of Local Government Unit (Liloan) to conduct new surveys in their already established MPAs to assess trends in the evolution of these areas. Furthermore, CCC is planning to begin with new surveys in Libagon Municipality. This will allow the gathering of baseline data for future assessments for these MPAs established around the late 90's.

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



Survey in Himbangan MPA
Photo: Javier del Campo

Photos provided by CCC volunteers during the month of October:



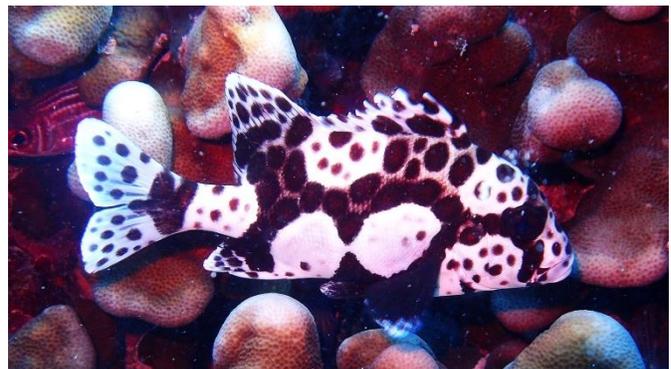
Coral Grouper



Squat Shrimp



Funeral Jorunna



Many-Spotted Sweetlips



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 marine surveys of the coastline.

This month we welcomed Samuel P. Amor Jr. from Bontoc, who studied criminology with Southern Leyte State University. Samuel is passionate about conservation and is keen to expand his knowledge in marine conservation.

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/>



"My experience at Coral Cay Conservation was like living in my dreams. Being raised in a coastal community, I have witnessed how important marine ecosystem is. Unfortunately, with the current situation, marine resources has been depleting thus, this realization encouraged me to apply the scholarship.

I have been so blessed to be trained and be part of the amazing pool of experts of CCC. As an aspiring police officer, with my one month training, I am now eager to help the Local Government Unit and other NGOs in saving the depleting natural resources applying the knowledge gained from my CCC expeditions.

I will never forget the warm welcome and accommodation given to me. Although it was my first time to mingle with diverse culture, they never left me behind. My diving instructor was so patient and very much willing to help me. Even there was a time that I was about to give up, still they pushes me to go beyond my limits. The experiences, knowledge and memories that I gained from my one month expedition will forever be treasured for the rest of my life.

All I can say to the CCC is that to continue their advocacy in protecting and saving marine ecosystem. Encourage more scholars to apply be an agent for change. To the future scholar, never give up. Although some task may be difficult, but if you just try your best nothing will be impossible."

Samuel P. Amor Jr.

Marine Creature of the Month!

Our creature of the month is the Scrawled Filefish (***Aluterus scriptus***). Scrawled Filefish belong to the group of Filefishes (Monacanthidae family), also known as leatherjackets, composed of approximately 102 species. Filefishes are close relatives of the triggerfishes but differ from them by having more compressed bodies and, generally, a more pointed snout. Scrawled Filefish is the largest species from the family, with a body length over 110 cm.

Filefishes are able to modify their colour to match their surroundings and some of them even develop small skin flaps which further enhances their camouflage.

Scrawled Filefish feed on a wide variety of benthic life, including algae, seagrasses, hydrozoan (such as stinging corals), gorgonians, colonial anemones and tunicates.

Scrawled Filefish are a solitary species and can be found in coastal, lagoons and outer reefs between 2 and 80m deep in tropical seas. This species is present in the Philippines and is a common visitor to Napantao MPA.

According to UICN, scrawled filefish have no major conservation concerns, although in Japan and Australia, filefishes are important commercial fishes.



Photo: Rachel Taylor

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