

# Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (LRCP)



## Monthly Project Update

January 2019

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.

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## Latest News

### Goodbye to our Field Base Manager, Gareth

We are taking the opportunity to say farewell to our Field Base Manager, Gareth Turner, who left our site in the Philippines this month. Gareth first joined us as an Expedition Management Intern in 2016, and since then has led teams of staff, volunteers and scholars to great success in Montserrat and the Philippines. Gareth was an excellent manager and wonderful friend to have on base, and it won't be the same here without him.

Gareth, you will be greatly missed and we wish you all the best in your future endeavours. Your new staff team, wherever that may be will be lucky to have you!



Gareth living it up with a survey team earlier this year on our boat – Nudi Hunter!  
Photo: Gareth Turner.

## Hello to Our New Field Base Manager, Pete

As we said goodbye to our old FBM, we also welcomed our newest member of the team, who will be taking over from Gareth, Pete Jones. After a decade working in the equine industry all around the world, Pete decided to use his Zoology degree from the University of Exeter in the aquatic realm. Combining his passion for quality marine science and diving has allowed him to run and work on multiple projects. Along with his management experience and sound scientific knowledge, Pete is also a PADI Instructor. This allows him to combine his skills in and out of the water to deliver quality education and sustainable change to people through the projects he has worked on. Ultimately the reasons behind this line of work are to protect the wonders of the aquatic environment and educate those on how to negate detrimental human impacts. Welcome to the team, Pete, we hope you enjoy your time here!



Pete Jones, CCC's  
new FBM.  
Photo: Pete Jones.

## Story of the Month

### Quiz night

Although our team works tirelessly through the week, we do like to let our hair down every now and again. This month, it was time for a quiz night! We split staff and volunteers into two teams and battled it out through music rounds, general knowledge, picture rounds and an ingenious last-ditch attempt to win the night by throwing tennis balls into a bucket and answering questions about the month's on-goings on site. Although it was a close call, PS Manon's team just managed to take the lead at the end and win the night, and the crown! Fun was had all round and we hope there is another quiz being written up for our new volunteers next month! There's still time for the crown to be won back before Jordan and Manon say goodbye to the rest of the team next month!



PS Manon (left) and SO Jordan  
(right) after the madnness of quiz  
night. Photo credit: Jordan  
Williams.

## Educational and Community Projects

### Community Day at Nueva Estrella Norte

On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> of January, CCC returned to Nueva Estrella Norte (NEN) to conduct a community day, a follow-up to the recent survey efforts on the barangay's reef as an impact site from this year's BACI protocol. The community day was nearly cancelled when the group arrived because strong winds had caused a power cut in the community, raising concerns on whether or not we would be able to set-up our projector. Fortunately, it did not need power to operate and we were able to proceed with our presentation!

NEN's MPA was established 3 years ago and has now been revisited in order to assess how/if the reef has improved due to the establishment of an MPA. About eight members of the community, all of which were members of the barangay council, were present for the presentation and a group of about ten students showed up just in time for the quiz. Since CCC has visited NEN before the discussion led by Project Scientist, Manon Broadribb, focused not only on what an MPA is and how it draws on the community for success, but also on the effects of plastic waste in the environment and how this can be managed. The community were very engaged, and asked a lot of questions about the success of their MPA, and how to improve this.

At this point our projector died, so Manon passed on her presentation to volunteers Sian Humphryes and Angus McReynolds to lead everyone in a plastic-themed quiz! The two did their best to get kids from the community engaged and to remember the questions from their quiz. Special thanks to our Scholar, Karla Cuguerra, for translating both the presentation and the quiz for everyone!

After finishing the quiz and appropriately gifting candy to those who participated, everyone joined in on an EcoBricking workshop! One local solution comes in the form of an EcoBrick. By collecting and shredding select plastic waste items one can tightly pack and fill plastic bottles. By collecting enough plastic-filled bottles it is possible to use them as blocks to construct various designs, including: chairs and tables, staircases, and other structures that can be found online. All the kids got involved and, in spite of the power cut, it turned out to be a very successful, enjoyable morning!



Top: PS Manon giving a talk on CCC's work and bottom: kids from the Barangay getting stuck into eco-bricking! Photo credit: Jordan Williams.

## 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. In 2018, CCC will be using a revised approach to assess the effectiveness of CCC's previous efforts in establishing Marine Protected Area's (MPAs) with the goal of understanding the barriers associated to their establishment in the Southern Leyte Province. If you would like more information about our surveying please contact our Project Scientist, Manon Broadribb at [lrcp@coralcay.org](mailto:lrcp@coralcay.org).*

### Surveying at Manglit Begins!

Our first survey site of 2019, Manglit (municipality: Pintuyan) was selected to be assessed through talks with PENRMO and our team here in San Francisco. Approved in 1997, Barangay Manglit Fish Sanctuary covers over 15 hectares of the reef just to the north of the Barangay. Since approval, however, it hasn't undergone any biophysical assessments. MEAT (MPA management effectiveness tools) surveys have been carried out periodically, and so Coral Cay hopes to combine this social data with the biophysical data we collect in order to advise on best management practices when moving forward.

We have so far completed four transect surveys within the MPA, two at 6m and two at 12m. The reef looks to be in good shape, although it is quite shallow so most of the biodiversity was seen at the two 6m transects (where target fish and invertebrates, as well as various types of different substrates, were recorded). We now need to complete four transects outside of the MPA, in order to compare the two. Once the data is all collected and analysed we will be able to report back to the Barangay council and local community of Manglit, which we are really looking forward to!



An example of the substrate within the MPA at Barangay Nueva Estrella Norte. Photo credit: Sian Humphries.



Boat marshal Dodong giving PS Manon and volunteer Angus the OK to jump in and begin surveying! Photo credit: Sian Humphries.

**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>**

## 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 welcomed Karla Ceguerra, who is currently studying for an MSc. in environmental science. Karla already had her PADI advanced open water when she joined us, so got stuck straight into our skills development program! She came to CCC in order to hone her marine taxonomy and reef ecology knowledge, and she really excelled. Her background means she is already well aware of the need for MPAs and she even taught us a thing or two during her time here! We really hope she gained a lot from her experience, and wish her the best of luck in all her future studies and endeavours.



Karla carrying out a coral watch dive on our house reef here in Napantao. Photo Credit: Matthew Bialand.

*"I have always been fascinated by the underwater world so I couldn't wait to start my month in CCC, and when I finally arrived in Napantao, I instantly felt home. My month-long stay started with meeting a diverse yet united group of people, and getting introduced to the site. For the first two weeks, we (I and new volunteers) worked hard to familiarize ourselves with the substrates, invertebrates, fish and other organisms in the reefs so we can become certified Reef Check Eco-divers, and contribute to data collection for CCC's studies. After finishing the SDP, I have experienced an actual survey in the new site in Manglit. I am really grateful for this opportunity, especially because soon, I will be starting my thesis and this new skill is vital for my data collection. Most importantly, I want to say my never-ending thanks to all the people I spent my 28 wonderful days with, for all your stories, all our conversations, games and movie nights together. Thank you for being a family to me. Thank you for your time and cooperation." – Karla Ceguerra, January 2019.*

**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



Berry's Bobtail Squid. Photo credit: Coral Cay Conservation.

CCC's *Creature of the Month* goes to the Berry's bobtail squid (*Euprymna berryi*)! These tiny cephalopods are found throughout the tropical waters of the central Indo-Pacific area from Indonesia to the Philippines. They have a nocturnal life, preferring to stay buried in the substrate during the daytime. A group of divers had the privilege to spot one during a recent night dive outside of our house reef!

Berry's bobtail squid is incredibly small; males are no bigger than 3 centimetres (1.2 in) while the female reaches 5 centimetres (2.0 in) length. The round body is compact and rounded, possessing eight arms and two tentacles with a pair of small lateral fins on the back of the squid. It's colour of the body is translucent with a number of dark blotches all over their bodies. They also have a number of glue glands that allow the squid to cover their back, head, and upper arms in sand for camouflage while they swim!

Their prey primarily consists of krill and small crustaceans. To hunt these other creatures, the Berry's bobtail squid uses a bioluminescent organ located in the gill cavity which emits just enough light to not reveal its silhouette to potential predators!

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