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.

Latest News

CCC welcomes Claire Ogg, Field Base Manager

This will be Claire’s third FBM contract with CCC, having managed both the Philippines and Montserrat site in the past. She began working in the marine conservation industry in 2009 teaching diving to gap year volunteers on a remote beach in the Fijian Islands. This was followed by two years as operations manager at a diving centre on one of the main Fijian islands and a year on a small Maldivian island where she continued to develop her knowledge of the tropical Indo Pacific under water eco system. Claire holds a degree in Agricultural and Environmental sciences which allowed her to work in a wide variety of science based roles prior to embarking on her overseas adventures.

As well as being an experienced PADI instructor, Claire holds a certificate in Offsite Safety Management, a RYA boat masters license and is a Scubapro technician. She is an Expedition Care Programme and a First Aid at Work instructor and is a Remote Emergency Medical Technician.
Story of the Month
Tough Competition for Coral Cay Conservation in Annual Maasin Football Match

On June 30th the Coral Cay team headed to Maasin to participate in a friendly football match against a local, Maasin team. Coral Cay’s team was small with only 8 players to their competitors 19. Unpractised and without proper gear, Coral Cay made up for their lack of training with ample enthusiasm and determination. The Maasin competitors were also very generous and let CCC borrow their star keeper. The game was off to a good start until Project Scientist Darienne Lancaster, scored an amazing goal on her own team. Nevertheless, the Coral Cay team rallied and pushed back against their well-honed Maasin opponents. Despite the pouring rain and lack of substitute players, Coral Cay fought hard and managed to survive two halves. Volunteer Alex Wady, assisted by Science Officer Maryann Watson, scored an impressive goal at the end of the last half, which brought the final score to 8-1 for Maasin. The Maasin team was both extremely skilled and very sportsmanlike and the game finished with friendly handshakes, congratulations, and a photo to commemorate the epic match.

Scuba Instructor Dom Revell lets fly in Maasin – photo R. Cahambing

Coral Cay Conservation team and their Maasin competitors after the football match – photo A. Galviola

-I LOVE SOUTHERN LEYTE-

– photo G. Turner
In honour of World Ocean’s Day on June 8th, CCC Philippines Science Officer, Maryann Watson, organized a beach clean-up on our house beach in Napantao.

The entire crew showed up in the afternoon to clean up our house beach. In less than one hour the team managed to collect eight full rice bags of garbage. The trash included items like plastic bags, candy wrappers, plastic cups, fishing line, and bottle caps. After our successful clean up these objects are no longer a threat to house reef and the animals, like sea turtles, who live there.

Maasin Anniversary Celebration Parade

This month, Coral Cay Conservation also took part in the annual, end of June, Maasin Anniversary Celebration Parade. The parade this year was celebrating 56 years since the founding of Maasin in 1960. The Coral Cay Team marched from downtown, Maasin Plaza, all the way to the Capital with the help of their fishy puppets. It was a great chance to say hello to the people of Maasin, including the Maasin Senior Citizens Group who posed for a photo with the team. We also found some fantastic helpers in the form of enthusiastic kids from the crowd, who carried our fish puppets most of the way to the Capital.
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.

We have started work on two brand new sites in Sogod Bay. Both of our new survey locations are Protected Area Management Enhancement (PAME) Project proposed MPA sites. PAME proposes to create between 12 and 20 new MPAs by the end of 2016.

Our first site is in the proposed MPA site of Cuasi, San Francisco. This beautiful site is often visited by marine science students from SLSU and offers a great diversity of corals, invertebrates, and sponges.

Our second site is in Dinahugan in Padre Burgos. This site has numerous invertebrates and many small patches of healthy coral.

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

Species found at survey sites Dinahugan and Cuasi.
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, Dionn Hubag and Alenah Dy. Dionn is a Community Empowerment Facilitator and is starting work as a Divemaster in Cebu in July. Alenah has a BSc in Fisheries and has worked as a Community officer for the Philippines Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation Inc.

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/

I was a previous scholar last January 2016, which was captivated in Marine Conservation during the scholarship programme. Then, luckily I got another chance to be back for my dive master training. It was a unique experience of a lifetime that could not be replaced especially with the awesome people I’m with at the base. I would also like to thank Coral Cay Conservation for having me back for my dive master training. CCC will always be in my heart; it kindled the flame in me to have my own conservation project someday. If given another chance to go back again at the base I would definitely have no second thoughts of doing so.

As an environmentalist, roads will never be easy for you. Challenges are a usual struggle but giving up is never an option as long as you have the drive to fight for what you believe. When I joined CCC, I was in a confusing stage of my career. I was considering changing the path of my journey and settle for something safe and easy because I was depressed with my previous job. But, I’ve decided to give my career in conservation another chance and re learn the things that made me interested in conservation. And CCC did not fail in helping me find my inspiration again. They helped me see that the Earth is beautiful and hosts a huge biodiversity of creatures. I’ve not only learned diving, I was able to fall in love with nature again.

- Alenah Dy

- Dionn Hubag
Marine Creature of the Month!

Our creature of the month is the Saddle Butterflyfish (Chaetodon ephippium). This beautiful fish is named for the large saddle shaped pattern above its tail fin. They are one of the larger species of Butterflyfish and can reach 30cm in length. Butterflyfish are brightly colored and patterned to confuse their prey, which often cannot tell the back end of a fish from the front end. This confusion allows Butterflyfish to see their predators approaching and make a quick escape into the coral.

Saddle Butterflyfish, though not common, can be spotted by observant divers in Sogod Bay, especially on the house reef in Napantao. Like most Butterflyfish, the romantic Saddle Butterflyfish usually mates for life with its partner, so these fish are typically seen in twos. Sometimes, you can see multiple couples grazing on the reef, eating exposed coral polyps and small invertebrates.