

Project Update: July 2007

Activities:

1) Finalize monitoring plan with help partners (2 weeks)

Currently there is no standardized monitoring protocol for the reserve, although a basic monitoring plan has been drafted from the SCMR management plan. This activity would focus on finalizing this document integrating existing research and monitoring strategies from a range of local, national and international partners.

Update:

The SCMR monitoring plan was approved in December of 2006. A trip was made to Belize City in November of 2005 to meet with the Fisheries Department and other researchers to discuss the elements of the Monitoring Plan. The plan was also circulated widely to scientists and managers in the region and internationally to ensure that it was as inclusive as possible. The goal of the monitoring plan is to provide a framework for all further monitoring activities within the SCMR. This plan is currently being implemented. A copy of the monitoring plan is attached.

2) Train local team in monitoring methods (2 weeks)

With help from partners a key team of local people potentially including: staff, university students, local fishermen and tour guides; will be identified and trained to enable quality data collection. This team (8-10 people) will provide managers with a trained core of volunteers for data collection

Update:

A monitoring team was trained in May of 2007. This team consisted of members of the Punta Gorda Fishermen's Association, Toledo Tour Guides Association, students from the University of Belize, as well as interested community members. This training was highly successful. All participants learned coral and fish ID, basic monitoring methods as well as coastal ecology. This training consisted of two half day in class sessions and a three day field session. The agenda and pictures from this training are attached.

3) Develop database for monitoring data (2 weeks)

Based on the finalized monitoring plan a simple database will be developed which will allow for centralized storage and retrieval of relevant biological information. Currently there is no easily accessible and centralized location for the biological data collected at the SCMR.

Update:

A database for data has been developed. This database and filing system can store all hard copies and digital data for biological monitoring in the SCMR. This system is supplemented by a number of digital databases developed by MBRS and TNC which store additional monitoring information.

4) Implement monitoring program (1 year)

With a trained team it will now be possible to implement the finalized monitoring plan. The data collected will provide managers with valuable biological information about the conditions within the reserve, giving them a powerful tool for management decision making.

Update:

The monitoring plan is currently being implemented with data being collected according to the developed schedule. These activities have been supported by the Rufford funds, especially in regards to fuel and supplies. This data is being added to the SCMR database and is being used to assist with management decision making.

Future Activities and Plans:

This grant has been highly successful to date. It has provided human and financial resources which have allowed TASTE to successfully develop and implement the SCMR monitoring plan. The success of this grant to date can be supported by the further funding of the project by the Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation Programme (COMPACT). This organization has committed to expand the community researcher program and to provide stipends for people to assist with research. In addition, it will provide funding to carry out the implementation of the monitoring plan and provide additional equipment.

Future plans for the remaining months of the Rufford project include continued use of community researchers in the implementation of the SCMR monitoring plan, as well as the purchase of additional needed monitoring supplies.

Budget Overview to Date:

Activity	Funds Spent	Funds Spent
Purchase of computer for database	BZ\$2,658.18	£797.45
Stipend and Travel	BZ\$2,500.00	£750.00
Local travel	BZ\$475.98	£142.79
Honorarium for trainers	BZ\$1,200.00	£360.00
Training activities and food	BZ\$2,050.00	£615.00
Fuel	BZ\$800.00	£240.00
Monitoring supplies	BZ\$200.00	£60.00
Food for monitoring trips	BZ\$230.60	£69.18
Total	BZ\$10,114.76	£3,034.43
Total Disbursed	BZ\$16,650.00	£4,995.00
Funds Remaining	BZ\$6,535.24	£1,960.57



Left: Collecting data. Right: Studying the fish.