

Project Update: January 2013

Large invertebrates have been monitored in six plots in seagrass meadows, three in protected areas and three outside. Animals have been counted in 1 m bands either side of 50 m transects. Results show that conch numbers increased from 1.7 to 13.6 per 100m² over 12 months in one plot at Tha Payoi village. In contrast, conch numbers remained modest elsewhere, usually <5 per 100m², including the protected area at Pak Jok. There have also been more large-sized sea cucumbers, *Holothuria scabra*, at Tha Payoi, although sea cucumber numbers are still low, usually <1 per 100m². Reasons for differences in results between protected areas are unclear. The area at Tha Payoi is better protected because it is highly visible from the village but there may also be ecological differences. Monitoring of seagrass showed a loss of cover at Pak Jok during the recent rainy season that was not evident at Tha Payoi.



A sample of conch including three species.



Counting animals along a transect line in the seagrass meadow at low tide.