

Project Update: July 2014

Since obtaining the second round of funding from The Rufford Foundation in January 2014, Luca and the Shallow Waters team in Cambodia have made great progress with the community conservation research project.



After 2 years of hard work, the official recognition of Koh Sdach's Community Fisheries (CFi) went through in July 2014 and plans are now underway to organise a big celebration on Koh Sdach. The official recognition sees the CFi given the legal status to manage the agreed upon boundaries - covering 12 islands of the Koh Sdach archipelago. While waiting for this official recognition, however, we have continued the training of the CFi committee by holding training workshops in order for them to build the capacity to manage the CFi based on the scientific data collected in the archipelago so far.



The CFi hold regular informal meetings, field trips and stakeholder workshops alongside Shallow Waters and national NGO MPC (Mlup Promviheathor Centre). A recent 2-day workshop held on the island garnered the attention of national television station TVK, who visited to do a piece on the development of the natural resource management project. The video shows the main interests of the CFi at this stage are to promote the understanding of the marine environment, best management of local natural resources, and looking at opportunities for alternative, sustainable livelihoods including the promotion of tourism in the region.

Please follow this link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAE_frfdt4c and enable captions in English from the menu bar at the bottom right of the screen.

The underwater research has come along in leaps and bounds thanks to the dedication of Shallow Waters staff and volunteers, since October 2012 the team have undertaken 105 surveys covering 26,250 m² of local reef. These data are being compiled for long-term ecological comparisons, is made available to international researchers, and will eventually inform the creation of a Marine Protected Area in the region.





Through our Project Scientist we also have a paper in press for the Cambodian Journal of Natural History entitled “A current status assessment of the coral reefs in the Koh Sdach archipelago, Cambodia”.

The community outreach and education has been moving forward at lightning speed thanks to the creation of The Green Protectors, a group of young people who have branched out from our weekly English classes that have got together to act on the issues facing local marine life. They have been helping with socio-economic surveys of local people, and with the help of our team they made a short film about pollution issues on the island called '[The Vendor](#)', specifically tackling the issues of plastic bag pollution. Their current project is the development of a Khmer language comic book promoting the importance of coral reefs. The members of this group have also been having snorkelling and diving lessons in order to bring them face to face with the underwater world – building on their understanding and appreciation for marine life.



I like to take this opportunity to thank my staff in Cambodia, which input, hard work and dedication has been a great source of inspiration and achievements. Thank you Owen Jones, Catriona Reginer-McKellar, Sophia Tedestam, Jessica Savage, Marina Knapp, Sea Sorn, Mara Ouch, Cpt Ta, Sarah Wilson and Alice Hazelton.