

Project Update: July 2016

By end of June 2016, ORC had finished the underwater biophysical surveys of all five MPAs in Silago as well as the MPA Management Effectiveness Assessment Tool (MEAT) survey consisting of focus group discussions (FGDs) among all MPA management councils and a community perception survey. The comparison of the results with the MPA study of ORC from 2012 shows a significant increase in overall target fish family abundances in the MPAs, except for Lagoma MPA that had no previous data (as it had declined to participate in the 2012 ORC underwater survey). Results of the MEAT survey show that the MPAs are generally perceived by the Silago community to be adequately managed only because of the presence of *bantay dagat* (marine guards) and *barangay tanod* (village deputies) in the MPA guard houses. However, all MPA management councils have admitted that enforcing the MPAs have been problematic due to lack of guidance and coordination with the local municipal government. In fact, they revealed to have little understanding of the role and function of MPA management councils and have been unaware of existing MPA management plans that were developed by previous barangay councils.



Left: Mercedes barangay (village) captain guides ORC dive team. Right: ORC dive team surveys Lagoma MPA



Figure 1. ORC dive team surveys Mercedes MPA