

Project Update: July 2016

Mangrove Reforesting

“Conservation without action is pointless”. That was the theme to make students from the public school Padre Rodolfo, in Canaan-CE, to roll up their sleeves and do voluntary work to save their own “backyard”, the estuary of Mundau River. After engaging the students with the importance of mangroves to the biodiversity of marine and estuarine habitats, a group of 45 students along with five teachers went on a daily expedition to clean up and restore the margins of the estuary. A total of 15 kg plastic from an area of 1.5 ha of mangrove was taken off the margins of the estuary. While picking up all rubbish from the mangrove, students were surprised to know those plastic would take about 450 years to decompose, while threatening the lives of many estuarine and marine species.

The clean-up took the whole morning and after lunch, students were ready to plant seedlings of native bush around the mangrove. A total of 350 seedlings of the three main types of mangrove species (red mangrove, white mangrove and black mangrove) were planted. The flora composition of mangroves from the estate of Ceara is quite diverse. In Mundau we can find five species representing three different genera of the mangrove flora. Those species have their roots submerged during high tides, but they can survive for many hours when the roots are exposed in low tides. Previous studies showed mangrove roots are very important to the macro fauna of the estuaries, as many species of fish seek protection within the branches of the roots, or feed on micro algae attached to the root. There are also a large number of macro invertebrates inhabiting the mangrove roots, thus establishing a complex ecological niche in the estuary. During this expedition, the students participated on an ecological tour along the estuary, observing and photographing the various species of sea birds, crabs, and plants that compose the estuarine ecosystem.

