

# Roatán Marine Park Newsletter

June 2010



## 2010 Photo contest



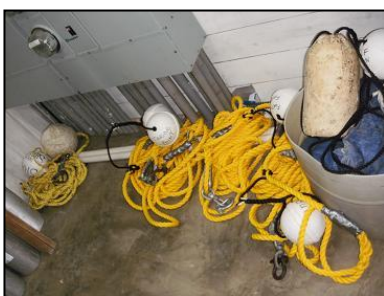
The annual photo competition is drawing to an end with only a few more days to get your best underwater photos in to have the chance of having your pictures displayed in a calendar.

## SBWEMP and RMPSSC Patrols



This month there were only 4 imprisonments, however there were numerous incidents which resulted in the confiscation of almost 100 live conch and 10 masks, 6 fins and several spears.

## Marine Infrastructure



With yacht season coming to an end, volunteers in West End helped renovate the moorings so they are ready for their return. On the South Side they changed over lines for 5 dive moorings.

## Lionfish Update



Jessi from Cocoview caught the heaviest specimen to date weighing a whopping 1 pound and 2 ounces. Coconut Tree Dive Shop organized a lionfish rodeo with David Swaine winning the \$200 bounty with a total of 126 kills.

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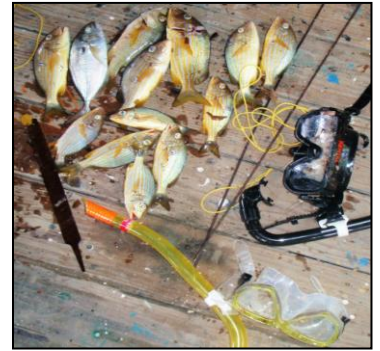
## Introduction

With slow season already upon us, staff at the RMP have been searching for new sources of revenue to assist in the continuance of current projects, as well as permitting the development of new tasks. Over the years, grants have greatly assisted in the development of the RMP, though sadly they are often unreliable. To help finance the RMP, it's extremely easy for visitors and residents to support our organization by simply purchasing the \$10 annual "User fee" which goes directly into financing all of our conservational projects.

## Patrols

### Sandy Bay West End Marine Park Patrols

Though the Navy was scheduled to arrive in June to replace the National Police on our patrols, we are still awaiting their arrival. Fortunately for us, we are still working directly with the Police, who this month, were involved in the arrest of 4 people in 3 separate incidents. Two of the occurrences involved individuals caught in possession of conch in Sandy Bay. The final arrest happened near Maya Key where 2 men were found in possession of 17 speared fish, 8 lobster, 3 masks and fins, 2 spears, and a lobster hook. After receiving reports on a weekly basis of persons removing conch and spearing fish around this area, in the coming months we intend to assign a patrol boat to Coxen Hole to guard the waters and deter further poaching.



*Fish and masks confiscated from kids*



*A small proportion of the conch relocated*

Five other incidents failed to result in the arrest of the perpetrators due either to lack of police or those involved being underage. During the first week of June, a local fishermen and previous Marine Park employee chased people out of Tom Fools Bight, a shallow bay next to Gibson Bight. They'd been collecting conch and fortunately had yet begun popping the shells. In total, over 80 conch were collected and relocated to a safer location. Other incidents also included the capture of 3 kids spearing fish in Sandy Bay, while another involved a kid collecting conch and lobster again in Sandy Bay.

As followers of this newsletter know, the killing of sharks was recently made illegal in Honduran waters thanks to the work of the Shark Legacy Project. One of the more disheartening incidents involved a local fishermen catching and killing a shark, one we believe to be a juvenile Oceanic White tip. Captain Brooks was not arrested as both the police and Marine Park staff were unsure of how to prosecute offenders under the new law. From now on, anyone found with a dead shark will be promptly arrested and have their property confiscated. We have also begun a campaign to inform the fisherman of this new law to protect the sharks in our waters.



*The remains of a shark killed in West Bay*

### South Side Chapter Patrols



*South side patrol boat with new engine*

After struggling with an unreliable, hand operated 60hp engine for almost a year, we have, at long last, constructed a console and purchased a relatively new engine. The 2-stroke, 115hp Yamaha engine will enable our patrol to respond quicker to calls regarding poaching and other illegal activities. This month, despite rough seas, we managed to confiscate 4 spears and 1 hook. While patrols operate primarily between the airport and Oak Ridge, we receive numerous reports from Maya Cay about illegal fishing. To reduce costs and response time, we send staff from West End and use boats provided by Maya Cay to arrest the offenders.

## Infrastructure



*South side patrol boat checking dive moorings*

In anticipation of the bad weather in the coming months, we thought it time to renovate the dive moorings on the Southside. In total, five dive moorings were replaced and seven buoys were changed. The moorings replaced were at Carib Point, Forty Foot Point, Connie's Dream, Mr. Bud's Wreck and Half Moon Bay. Also, the mooring from Sponge Garden was removed as the block was damaging the coral when the mooring was in use. We will continue to check the moorings in the coming months but urge divers on both sides to call and report any damaged or missing mooring you may come across.

## Education

### Promoting recycling in the Schools

Roatan is continuing to struggle with development, people, and the trash we produce. To combat this, the Marine Park continues to drill the importance of the 3R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle into the minds of the school children we visit. The first week of June was deemed Environmental Week in an effort to increase awareness worldwide. As part of Environmental week, the Marine Park organized a contest between kids from different parts of the island. The objective of the competition was to recycle the most Pet-1 plastic bottles with the winner receiving 1,000 lempiras to go towards the construction of a greenhouse at the winning school. The competition ends July 23<sup>rd</sup> and all of the bottles collected will be sent to the city dump for recycling. We wish the kids luck and hope for more schools to become involved in recycling.



*School kids with bags of plastic bottles*

### Drawing competition hosted by BICA



*Kids drawing ocean themes for Environmental week*

In addition to organizing the recycling competition, the RMP had hosted by BICA during Environmental Week. Fourteen schools participated in this year's theme, "The Oceans," and the following were winners: first place winner was awarded to Allison Michelle Martínez of the Methodist School; second place was Joseph Mungía from Graciela O. Ramos School; and third place was the student Larissa Hernández from the Church of God School. Congratulations to the winners and all those that competed.

### Walk for Peace

The RMP was invited by Father Freddy from the Catholic Church, Heart of Mary, to join the walk for peace – "Saving Us with the Planet." Eight volunteers from Puerto Rico attended a presentation on climate change and enthusiastically prepared several banners on this topic with the help of Malika Rahmani. They were scheduled to join the RMP during the walk which was to take place June 26<sup>th</sup>, sadly however, it was postponed due to tropical storm Alex. We still greatly appreciate their efforts and hope that the next time they return to the island, the weather is more favorable.



*Volunteers from Puerto Rico painting eco themes*

## Glass Bottom boat Trip

This month, students from the Guardiola School were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to spend one morning on the Glass Bottom Boat in West Bay. On the boat, kids enjoyed learning about creatures of the sea and several RMP initiatives to protect the reef. As usual, the trip came after a visit to the Guardiola School visit where the kids were taught the importance of the reef and conservation. Our volunteers Annick McIntosh and Jon Cooper went with us and with their help we hope to expand our island-wide education program.



*Kids from the Guardiola school on the glass bottom boat in West Bay*

## Community Development

### Coral Reef Leadership Network



*Taxi drivers meeting with CRLN representatives*

Though little has been mentioned in the past few months about the Coral Reef Leader Network, representatives Juan Vualla and Artlee Brooks, have continued educating people in the tourism industry. In the past month, a total of 75 people comprised of tour guides from MC Tours, taxi drivers, and minibus drivers were taught about the history of the island and the importance of the reef. They were introduced to the idea of sustainable tourism and coral reef conservation and how they can help do their part to preserve the island. The goal is to educate all those who work directly in the tourism industry and provide them with pamphlets with guidelines on how to be an eco-conscious visitor which they can show to their customers. With an imposing number of cruise ships scheduled to visit Roatan from October onwards, it is vital

that these guides and introduced to the concept of environmental awareness. In the last 4 months a total of 435 people have been taught.

## Inspections

### Inspection around the island

In the last week of June, a series of inspections were organized throughout the island with representatives from SERNA, BICA, RMP, ZOLITUR, and UMA invited to attend. The places visited included Infinity Bay Beach Resort, Maya Lounge in Half Moon Bay, Blue Ocean Reef, Bojangles in Coxen Hole, Cocoview Resort, and several other locations. At the end of the inspections, representatives from the different organizations gave their opinions on the proposed renovations to the developments and how they could minimize their impacts on their surroundings. Hopefully, under the supervision of the Municipality, any recommendations made during the inspections will be followed.



*Inspection at Infinity Bay in West Bay*

## Lionfish

### Lionfish update



*Largest specimen caught to date at >1lb*

With the recent loss of our volunteer Lionfish expert, Matt Nawrocki, the collection of information regarding lionfish kills has petered off since his departure. However, having talked to dive shops around the island, divers are still actively hunting them and culling their numbers. The heaviest assumed specimen killed to date was by Jessi from Cocoview which measured 11.5 Inches and weighed a whopping 1 pound and 2 ounces. Even with increased hunting pressure in the Sandy Bay West End Marine Reserve, divers are still recording kills of upwards of ten in a dive. We ask you continue hunting the lionfish and encourage others to do so. After waiting months to acquire an export permit, we finally received the paperwork to allow for the lionfish specimens to be shipped off for the Lionfish Tissue Repository in the United States. To find out more about the project that many of you participated in by providing us with samples, please visit their [site](#).

### Hunt-a-thon in Camp Bay

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the RMP volunteer team led the first Lionfish Huntathon. A minibus full of thrill seekers headed to Camp Bay to educate the local fishermen about lionfish and catch a few in the process. After a swift briefing on the Hawaiian Sling and lionfish safety, the hunting squad took to the water with murderous enthusiasm. Despite their efforts, they only managed to kill two large specimens. Despite the meager total, it remained a highly enjoyable outing and spirits were kept high with superb hospitality from the Adventure Hostel and perfect snorkeling conditions. The RMP hopes to continue running the Hunt-a-thons and spreading the word about lionfish control to all parts of the island. For anyone interested, it is a great way to see some of the more remote areas of Roatan, meet new people and do your bit to protect the reef.



*Adult lionfish speared in Camp Bay*

### Wrapping things up



#### Beach cleanup

Due to strong East winds, plenty of garbage gathered on land next to Barefoot Cay. The majority of trash was from French Harbour and Los Fuertes. Collaborating with Barefoot Cay, hundreds of bags were filled and taken to the Municipal dump. Any recyclable plastics were separated from the trash.



#### Become our fan on Facebook!

We have a **Facebook** page which we post a host of relevant links and photos. Stop by, check it out, and become our fan to receive updates and invites. So far we have over 2,450 fans. Recommend us to your friends and let's break that 2,500 mark!



Our newsletter is sponsored by Roatan Life Real Estate & Roatan Life Vacation Rentals. Roatan Life will donate 10% of net commission earned on the sale of any property or any vacation rental to the RMP if the customer mentions that they saw Roatan Life on the Marine Park Newsletter. Please contact Roatan Life for all of your real estate and rental needs at [www.roatanlife.com](http://www.roatanlife.com) and [www.roatanlifelvacationrentals.com](http://www.roatanlifelvacationrentals.com) or +504-445-3130 or from the U.S. at +1-970-300-4078.

*Nic, Wendy and Licario*

