

# Roatán Marine Park Newsletter

August 2011



## End of the photo competition



With over 200 entries from around 40 individuals, our 4 judges had a hard time choosing their favorite pictures from each of the 6 categories. Thanks to all those that competed and congratulations to those who will

have their winning pictures in the RMP's 2012 calendar.

## Patrol summary



South Side patrols were extremely busy with 17 incidents resulting in the confiscation of 2 full sets of dive gear, 14 masks, 6 spears and hooks and a bunch of lobster, conch and fish. Patrols within the Reserve were not as eventful; however several masks were confiscated from underage poachers.

## Turtles confiscated in Jonesville



5 turtles were confiscated from a restaurant in Jonesville and a further 2 were liberated from French Cay by RMP staff, working in conjunction with DIGEPESCA. The turtles were measured, tagged and released.

## Coral Reef Leadership Network



CRLN addressed 90 locals that work in transportation who have direct contact with tourists. These included the West End Land and the New Water Taxi Association and 2 other land taxi associations; the COSETRABIL and ASOTRASAG.

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## Introduction

August was a remarkably slow month here on the island and many of the dive shops and other businesses have noted that it's been the slowest August in years. While most businesses slow down operations during these quiet periods, the staff at the RMP continues with our projects as moorings don't fix themselves and kids won't learn about the reef unless our staff or volunteers teach them. We hope that this year's rainy season is a mild one so we can continue with our outdoor activities while staying dry. Fingers crossed as no one likes diving during Northerlies.

## Patrol

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### Sandy Bay West End Marine Park Patrols



*Fins taken from some kids*

Once again we only had one operational boat to monitor the Reserve and therefore had to depend a lot on coordinating land patrols and working with BICA's patrols. While BICA only has a small vessel which is primarily assigned to Sandy Bay, our one boat has been travelling between Mud Hole and West Bay and even as far as Cordelia. With it being lobster season, there are one or two fishermen who are licensed to collect lobsters outside the Reserve, as long as they only take legal sized lobsters and don't catch the females. We had a run in with one of these fishermen near Cordelia and



*Masks, fins and a spear gun*

after ensuring all the lobster were of legal size, his dive gear was returned to him.

### South Side Patrols

We had a very busy and successful patrol this month with lots of results from all over Roatan's south shores. In total 17 incidents were recorded and confiscations included 2 full sets of dive gears, 14 masks, 6 spears and hooks and a bunch of lobster, conch and fish. Reasons for our success were the calm seas which allowed people to snorkel out on the reef and us to find them, and then having our Ranger being accompanied by a great policeman who turned up every day, which is an accomplishment in itself. One of the incidents involved two individuals diving for coral near Maya Key. These divers had been instructed to collect corals and other items for sale as curios, fortunately we managed to apprehend them before they could cause any damage.



*Cow fish speared by snorkeler near French Cay*

## Infrastructure

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### New buoys distributed around the island



*New buoy to be installed*

One of the problems dive boats have on the south side is locating dive moorings. For the past few years we have been using the small Styrofoam buoys but these tend to disappear either due to theft or because they're ripped off when large boats tie up and the buoys are dragged underwater. With a grant from Cooperacion Espanola, we were able to purchase 60 of the heavy duty white dive buoys used within the Reserve. These buoys are currently being marked and installed on dive sites between Brick Bay and Parrot Tree. Our primary concern was that they would be stolen but so far things look ok. The downside of the buoys is that they rub either side of the knots which keep the buoy in place and therefore the lines need to be replaced each year. We ask that divers please inspect moorings around the knots and report any thin lines.

## Flowers Bay given some new moorings



*Dive moorings recently installed or renovated between Flowers Bay and Key Hole Bay*

to Key Hole would have the large white buoys used within the Park. Hopefully this will make it easier for boat captains to spot the sites, especially during the heavy rains when the northerlies are upon us.

With rainy season on the horizon and having already experienced some early northerlies, it's that time of year again to fix the dive moorings between Key Hole Bay and Flowers Bay. While many of the lines are still in place, the buoys, floats, bottles or whatever was used to mark the site have long ago vanished. While we're concerned about the lines and buoys being stolen in the Flowers Bay area, it was decided that sites from Pirate's Cove

## Education

### Solid Waste Management Program



*Kids being taught the 3Rs at the Dale Jackson School*

Three more schools have been included in our raising awareness on solid waste management program. These schools include Dale Jackson in La Colonia, Elfrida Brooks School and ESBIR both near Coxen Hole. With help from two Honduran volunteers from the Catholic University of Tegucigalpa, it was possible to present to all the kids of the Dale Jackson School from La Colonia and all the students from Elfrida Schools that attend in the afternoon. We also began teaching the students from Guardiolas Institute on the importance of mangroves. Not only are mangroves something that every child should know about, it was even more important at this school as they are now involved in the mangrove nursery which was recently constructed on school grounds. In total, our staff and

volunteers addressed 378 students from Guardiola, ESBIR, Dale Jackson and Elfrida Brooks Schools.

### Tourism students from the Guardiolas Institute



*Tourism students at Maya Key*

This month, 21 tourism students from the Guardiolas Institute were fortunate enough to visit Maya Key. The staff at the key didn't just show the students the replica Copan Mayan ball court and hieroglyphic staircase, they also got the chance to see all the animals at the exotic animal rescue and rehabilitation center. Having already been on the



*Day trip to the Cordelia Banks to snorkel*

glass bottom boat in West Bay, the students were even more fortunate to be taken to Cordelia Banks to snorkel. The purpose of the exercise was to show the difference in the health of the reef between the two sites, which was clearly evident to the students. Sadly due to the rapid increase in tourists and development in West Bay over the past few years, the reef's health has hastily declined. Hopefully by increasing public awareness and better local enforcement regarding sewage disposal and unregulated developments, what ever remains of the reef can be preserved.

## Mangroves making their way onto the curriculum

Thanks to the help of our volunteer Norma Peña we finished building the tree nursery at Guardiolas Institute in Coxen Hole. Twenty one students will be responsible for looking after the seedlings as part of their social work for this year. Having received a presentation on mangroves, we decided to take the kids to Sandy Bay to collect the mangrove seedlings which will be the first plants to be grown at the nursery. During the trip, they were taught about the 4 types of mangroves that we have on the island and also picked leaves and seeds from these species so they could make an album that would stay at their school for other students to learn from. With mangroves being relatively slow growing, it will be a good couple of months until the seedlings are transplanted to their final destination. First graders from ESBIR have also received visits from our volunteers and taught about the importance of mangroves.



*Kids visiting the mangroves*

## Working with students from the Instituto Technico

Over 400 students from the Instituto Técnico Islas de la Bahía received presentation from our staff members on the reef and the importance of recycling. In addition to the presentations, students from the eleventh grade had the opportunity to clear the mangroves in Brick Bay of trash. With recently purchased Wellington boots on hand, the teenagers collected 50 bags full of trash from the mangroves. During this exercise, we practiced the lessons learned about waste separation and collected plastics bottles and aluminum cans for recycling.



*Students getting stuck in the mangroves*

## Kids learn about lionfish



*Kids observing a lionfish dissection*

This month around 40 students from the Methodist School and Guardiolas Institute had the opportunity to learn more about our recently launched Responsible Restaurants Campaign. In addition to this activity, students had the chance to learn and help with the lion fish study that Greg and Astrid have been conducting involving the analysis of lionfish stomachs. A total of 100 lionfish were dissected to study stomach contents and the results will be available shortly.



*Lionfish with over 20 fish in its stomach*

## Meetings and workshops

### Socialization of the new Fishing Law



*Organizations meet to discuss new fishing laws*

Last month saw the first socialization of the proposed new fishing laws. The meeting was held at Fantasy Island and attendees included the minister of Agriculture of livestock, director of Dirección General de Pesca y Acuicultura, Director of OSPESCA, the mayor of Guanaja, representatives from municipality of José Santos Guardiolas and Roatan, APESCA and staff from BICA and the RMP. Topics discussed at the meeting included fines, how the communities and the co-managers can get involved, and how the government is going to encourage artisanal and industrial fishing. The government is going to continue with the socialization on the rest of the country before seeking approval from Congress.

## National training workshop

This month the RMP had the chance to participate in a national training workshop held by WWF and USAID on the use and management of the Fisheries Inspectors Manual. The workshop took place in La Ceiba and during the event the RMP had the chance to discuss with authorities from the fisheries department, DIGEPESCA. The outcome of the meeting was that park rangers and boat captains for the RMP, BICA and Fundación de Cayos Cochinos will be officially certified to provide them with more authority while they patrol within the protected areas.



*Meeting to discuss Fisheries Manual*

## Conservation in action

### Turtle confiscation in Jonesville



*Large green female rescued*

Several months ago, after working on installing new dive moorings along Roatan's south shore, our patrol boat stopped for lunch at a restaurant in Jonesville. While eating we noticed that they had several animals on the property including terrapins, crocodiles, lobsters, sea turtles, iguanas and monkeys. After returning the following month, we noticed that there were no longer any turtles or iguanas and the restaurant owners denied ever owning any. If this wasn't a red light, hearing the following week that they had 5 turtles in their pen, our staff jumped into action to halt their operation. Coordinating with the Fisheries Department and accompanied by the National Police, we travelled by boat to Jonesville. Under the dock at the restaurant we found 2 pens, each containing turtles comprising of greens and hawksbills. Also inside the pens were dozens of large lobster which had been fed on scraps and whose future was uncertain. Four of the turtles, including a 50lb+ green specimen, were carefully removed from the pens, with the final juvenile green turtle escaping through a hole cut in the fencing by our staff so the lobster could also taste freedom.



*Two green and a hawksbill turtle confiscated from a restaurant in Jonesville*

Currently on the island there is a turtle specialist working for ProTECTOR, an organization spearheading turtle conservation in Honduras. She was delighted to hear that we had several turtles to measure and tag. One of the turtles, specimen 101-10, had actually been marked and tagged the year before in the same area, however its tags had been removed. The largest turtle, a 50lb+ green female, had a large amount of fishing line stuck in her throat and it was decided that she should be kept in the pen at the Sherman's Iguana Farm so she could be observed. A week later she appeared healthy, so much so that she managed to sneak out of the pen. Two additional juvenile hawksbill turtles were removed from Sherman's pen and brought to West End. In total, two green turtles were released at Cocoview, two hawksbills and a green in Half Moon Bay and the big female made a break for it in French Cay. To see more photos on the mission, please visit our [facebook page](#). ICF is currently working on confiscating and relocating the rest of the animals found at the restaurant in Jonesville. More on that next month.



*2 turtles released at CocoView*

Specimen 101-10 being retagged and measured



*Specimen 101-10 being retagged and measured*

More on that next month.

## Inspections

### Inspectors visit La Selva Eco Estate Resort

The SINEIA was once again called to make an inspection for the project La Selva Eco Estate Resort in Sandy Bay. The developers are planning to construct 106 properties, a hotel, a lagoon, a soft ball field, an amphitheater, a park with trails, and possibly more. The government is currently analyzing the project and deciding whether the project is environmentally friendly and deciding on whether to issue a license to the developer. This project's been in the works for several years and it appears it may take several more before completion.



*Inspectors walking around the property*

## Raising awareness

### Coral Reef Leadership Network

This month with the CRLN grant, the RMP managed to inform 90 locals that work in transportation and have direct contact with tourists. We worked with the West End Land and the New Water Taxi Association and with other 2 land taxi association; the COSETRABIL and ASOTRASAG. We also started to work with the BITCA tour guides and this with the collaboration of AIDE, they will start to receive information on how to be good tourist guides and the importance of protecting the marine reserve (in the future what is plan is to certificate the tourist guide).



*More participants reached by CRLN*

### Results of the photo competition



After receiving over 200 photos from around 40 contestants, our four judges had a very hard time choosing the best photos that would be suitable to appear in next year's calendar. We would like to say a huge thank you to all those who entered this year's competition and congratulations to those that won. The winning photographs will appear in the RMP 2012 calendar which will be available shortly. Those that didn't win, there is always next year so remember to always have your camera on hand whenever you're diving.

## Wrapping things up



### Donation to the schools

Members of the Blaymires and Puncher families of Ontario, Canada, donated school supplies and soccer balls to the students of Roberto V. Stanley School in Sandy Bay. On a previous visit, the Blaymires recognized the need for these supplies and got them.



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 +504-2445-3130 or from the U.S. at +1-970-300-4078.

*As always, we would like to thank all our supporters and volunteers for the help they've given us in the past month. If you have any comments or suggestions, feel free to email us at [info@roatanmarinepark.net](mailto:info@roatanmarinepark.net). For more information, please visit our [website](http://www.roatanmarinepark.net) or stop by our offices in Half Moon Bay and Barefoot Cay.*

*Nic, Arlene, Wendy and Cesy*

