

# Roatán Marine Park Newsletter

May and June 2011



## Patrol summary



From 25 incidents, 25 masks, 11 fins, 8 spears, 7 gaffs, 4 knives, 2 traps and a speargun and net were confiscated. 4 individuals were imprisoned while 4 others were subjected to community service. From these incidents, 85 live conch were seized and rereleased.

## Marine Infrastructure



A total of 14 new chain cement groundings were installed at dive moorings around the island. These new sites include “Dead man’s anchor” near Caribe Point, “Parrot Tree Point” at Parrot Tree Plantation and “Three Brothers” by Deep Sea Quest. In addition,

20 lines were replaced with new 1” poly rope.

## Launch of the new Seafood Guide

Best Choices	Choices with Cautions	Avoid Eating
Tuna (Skipjack, Blackfin & Little Tunny)	Lobster	All Other Grouper
Cero	Conch	Reef Snappers (Oreo, Schoonmaker, Lane, Mahogany)
Kingfish	Barracuda	Parrotfish
Spanish Mackerel	Dog Snapper	Shark
Wahoo	Mutton Snapper	Triggerfish
Jack & Trevallies	Deepwater Snappers (Black, Blackfin, Red, Queen, Yellowtail)	Sea Turtle
Mahi Mahi	Red Hind Grouper	
Yellowtail Snapper	Rock Hind Grouper	
Lionfish		
Squid		

For years we have been trying to educate businesses and visitors on which seafood they should and shouldn’t consume. Finally the Sustainable Seafood Guide is available and is being launched in conjunction with the

Responsible Restaurant Program. While the lionfish poses a huge threat to the reef, it may be the solution in providing a sustainable alternative to grouper and snapper.

## Quickly...

- Introduction ... page 2
- SBWEMR patrols ... page 2
- South side patrols ...page 2
- Renovating moorings .page 3
- Expanding education .page 3
- Beach cleanups ... page 3
- Common Tides ... page 4
- West End School receives photocopier ...page 4
- Recycling in Schools ...page 4
- Science Fair ... page 4
- Cordelia Banks ... page 5
- Spiny Lobster Initiative meet in La Ceiba ... page 5
- Glass recycling... page 5
- CRLN expands ... page 5
- FORCE visit Roatan ... page 6
- AGGRA workshop ...page 6
- Mahogany Bay ...page 6
- Nurse shark release... page 6
- Responsible seafood guide launches... page 6

## Introduction

*A project which has been in the works for years and was finally launched this month is the Responsible Restaurant Program and Sustainable Seafood Guide. We hope that you take the time to find out more on this project and begin supporting the businesses which support this cause.*

## Patrols

### Sandy Bay West End Marine Park Patrols



20+ conch confiscated from one poacher

In May and June, there were 9 incidents our Park Rangers were involved with. These resulted in 4 individuals being imprisoned and 4 others be sentenced to beach cleanups. A total of 10 masks, 4 sets of fins, 2 gaffs, 2 fish traps, 2 knives, 2 spears, a spear gun and a net were confiscated along with 26 live conch, 10 dead conch and 8 lobsters. These figures



Confiscated mask, fins and conch

are relatively low due to BICA's assistance with patrols in Sandy Bay, where poaching is most prevalent. BICA's patrols were involved in 14 incidents resulting in the confiscations of 59 live conch, 15 masks, 6 fins, 4 lobsters, 4 gaffs, 3 spears and 2 knives. Though sharing patrolling responsibilities has definitely paid off, there are still frequent reports of late night poaching so there is always more to do.

As mentioned in previous newsletters, our Park Rangers are unable to respond to all calls regarding poaching beyond the SBWEMR's boundaries. We often receive calls from concerned supporters about people spear fishing or collecting conch up east, however due to fuel costs and time, it's usually impossible to respond. Nets, however, are a different matter. One evening in May, a fisherman contacted us to report a net by the golf course. With daylight waning, it was a race to get the patrol boat up east and find the net. Fortunately the information on its location was exact and our patrols quickly removed the turtle net. The net was confiscated before any turtles or other sea life were ensnared but the owners were never found. This was great news for the turtles but there are still dozens of other nets being used around Roatan, some maybe as close as Sandy Bay. If you see a net, please contact the RMP office immediately so we can continue confiscating these indiscriminate killers.



200+ft turtle net confiscated near the Black Pearl golf course

### South Side Patrols



Mask and fins confiscated near Barefoot Cay

The patrols on the Southside have had to fight against high winds and rough seas in the past months, including near gale force winds (>30 knot). In addition, due to a downsizing of the police force on Roatan, we've been unable to effectively man the patrol boat to provide the enforcement required to confiscate dive gear and materials. This has resulted in a lower number of confiscations and arrests than expected. In May, our patrols found three young men poaching near Barefoot Cay. They had three small already-popped conch and a lobster in their possession. Their snorkel gear was confiscated but as they were underage, they were not sent to jail. Throughout May and June, the patrols found several other groups of kids snorkeling with homemade spears near French

Cay. As all were underage, the spears and gear were taken and they were warned. We plan to shake the patrol schedule up a bit in July, weather and police permitting, with hopes of catching the poachers operating during antisocial hours including dusk and dawn.

## Infrastructure

### Renovating dive moorings around the island



*Inserting chain into dead reef*

The dive moorings on Roatán's south shores had a major revamp with our staff focusing on sites between French Cay and Calabash. While replacing the mooring lines, we were surprised to find that a large number of moorings east of Media Luna Resort consisted of rope or chain wrapped around clumps of coral as groundings. This method is considered outdated, destructive and unreliable. Our intention is to replace all those which still use this design. In total, 10 new chain-cement groundings were installed to replace old ones while 10 of the old dive lines were replaced with new 1" polypropylene rope along with new buoys. The dive moorings within the SBWEMR

were also subjected to some rejuvenation with a total of 12 mooring lines changed and 4 new sites installed. These sites were "The Wife" near Hole in the Wall, "Hole in the Wallet" next to Over Heat, "Chloe's Coral" just west of Buchos Bank and "Three Brothers" by Deep Sea Quest. We hope that you and your students all appreciate these new lines and please while you are diving, continue to check the lines and report any that look worn where the buoy is knotted at the surface where abrasions occur.



*Adding cement to stabilize grounding*

## Education

### Expanding education program

Our education director Wendy and volunteers were busy these months giving presentations about the 3 R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and the importance of the marine environment to over 1000 children, 400 of which were from Punta Gorda. We also took 94 kids to the Glass Bottom Boat with help from Professor Artly Brooks. The much beloved school outing would not be possible without the continued support of John Caruso and the staff of the boat in West Bay. The RMP staff also gave presentations to 142 students, 60 of which are from the Honduran Institute in Jonesville, on garbage management and the effect that garbage has on the marine environment.



*Kids from Honduran Institute, Jonesville, pay visit to W.E*

### Beach cleanups around the island



*Kids from the West End School collect trash in HMB*

Beach cleanups were organized with students from the West End School and the Centro Basico Jose in Santos Guardiola. Kids from the West End school split into two groups, "the sea turtles" and "the sea grass", and collected trash from the water and the beach of Half Moon Bay. Both teams did a great job filling 10 large garbage bags, but the winners were the Sea Turtles, who collected 6. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, the kids from CBJ spent the day cleaning up the Iguana, Lagarto, and Ingles neighborhoods of Punta Gorda and removed 10 big bags full of trash. Congratulations to all those who helped out and please contact us if you can recommend some communities that our school groups can visit and help tidy or are a teacher and wish to participate in this project.



*Punta Gorda doing their part to collect trash*

## Common Tides pays a visit to the Bay Islands

The RMP assisted a group called Common Tides, a non-profit that brings volunteers from all over the world to benefit children from developing or undeveloped countries. They provide a free hands-on marine science education program, giving children an experience which will help them gain a greater opportunity to protect, learn, and develop an increased understanding of their environment. This trip, the vessel travelled around the Bay Islands and took local school children out sailing and snorkeling. Along the way, they're taught about the local reefs and other surrounding habitats. The aim is to strengthen the student's educational background in regard to their marine environments so that they may one day help develop strategies to protect, serve, and become leaders towards their marine environment. During this visit, 94 kids from 5 schools around Roatan got to participate in this program. We look forward to their return next year.



*Island kids spend a day on the sail boat with Common Tides*

## West End School receives photocopier machine



*West End School with their new photocopier machine*

Yachtie season is drawing to a close as hurricane season kicks into full gear. Thankfully, it was a busy season and the moorings were often occupied. As you all know, the RMP implemented a mandatory mooring fee last May. Part of the money raised went to renovating and installing new yacht moorings while the rest went to fund community projects here in West End such as the swim zone in Half Moon Bay and renovations on the school. In addition, a photocopier machine was donated to the West End School. On an almost daily basis, children from the school used to come to the RMP office to make copies. This donation was for our piece of mind and will clearly benefit them greatly by having their own.

## Recycling in the Schools

The recycling program is going well with new collections locations being added each month. The newest school to our program is the Methodist Institute in Coxen Hole which will now be collecting PET-1 plastic bottles for recycling. In addition, recycling bins are being made to distribute around the island. If you are interested in sponsoring a recycling bin, please contact the RMP office. For now, Serrano's Hardware is helping the RMP transport the plastic bottles to the recycling company. However, we expect the Cervecería Hondureña to take over the transportation in the near future.



*Students with 55gallon bags stuffed full of bottles*

## Science Fair at the Sandy Bay Alternative School



*Mariana Ramos with winning project*

More than 40 kids showed their skills as young scientists at the Sandy Bay Alternative School's science fair held at Land's End Resort, West End, in May. Projects presented at the Fair included how hair can be used for oil spills, finding out if seeds grow better in soil or sand and comparing which group of people has the best lungs. Thanks to science teacher Ms. Casey Personius for inviting out staff to judge the fair, and all our congratulations to winning participants Mariana Ramos for her project "Comparing our Lungs", and Alexis Petty who demonstrated with her experiment "Let's Get Cookin'", that cookies can be baked in solar ovens. We look forward to participating in future science fairs and hope to encourage more schools in getting involved in similar events.

## Meetings and workshops

### Consolidation of two Community Advisory Councils for Cordelia Banks



*Consolidated council with representative from ICF*

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the Cordelia Banks may be the largest remaining stand of *Acropora cervicornis* in the Caribbean. It's also an important spawning site for grouper, snapper, jacks and Atlantic spadefish, as well as habitat for two shark species, the nurse shark and Caribbean reef shark. In a joint effort between the RMP, CORAL, Healthy Reefs, TNC, ICF, DIGEPESCA and WWF, it was possible to move forward by consolidating two Community Advisory Councils for Cordelia Banks. Now that the councils have been created, it will be possible to have more community engagement in the management of this treasure of the Caribbean. A grant to purchase a new boat was recently awarded by the Ocean Foundation and will greatly assist the RMP in patrolling the Banks.

### The RMP presents at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Symposium of the Spiny Lobster Initiative

The Spiny Lobster Initiative hosted a 3 day event in La Ceiba called "Strengthening lobster fisheries through a better management, governance, administration and a healthier environment". The RMP was invited to present about the job being done in regards to the lionfish and Sustainable Seafood Guide. Participants showed a lot of interest about the best choices, choices with cautions and those which should be avoid eating. Participants asked many questions about the lionfish and enjoyed the delicious recipes of ceviche, fish in garlic and bread crumbs prepared by Grazzia and Doña Rosy Moya from Río Esteban.



*Lionfish being prepared for guests at the symposium*

### Meeting to discuss Glass recycling on the Island



We are happy to announce the RMP had a meeting with representatives from Reciclaje VICAL, with the purpose of discussing actions that could be implemented to launch a glass recycling project on the island. This company is already doing glass separation, collection and recycling in other places in Central America and Roatan would be incorporated to the target sites. The idea is to start placing recycling bins within the Municipality of Roatan, continue educating children in schools and community members, and finally collect the glass and take it away from the island for recycling. We will keep everybody informed of the advances of the project and of course, the location of the bins when they eventually arrive.

### Coral Reef Leadership Network

This month the CRLN focused on three target groups for training; Patronatos, fishermen, and dive shop employees. We met with the Patronatos of Policarpo, Las Brisas, and Spring Garden and taught them about importance of the 3R's and our marine environment. The CRLN representatives also visited the fishermen from Punta Gorda, Diamond Rock, and Policarpo to teach them about the importance of sustainable fisheries. This included informing them about minimum and maximum size restrictions, catch seasons, and species such as turtles and sharks that are never to be caught. Both of the groups also received information about the marine reserve on Roatan and the programs the RMP is involved in including protection, education, conservation, lionfish eradication, and the Sustainable Seafood/Restaurant program.



*CORAL visits fishermen from Diamond Rock*

## FORCE Project meets with West End's Stakeholders

With the purpose of developing tools to assist resource managers and decision makers to conserve the ecological integrity of coral reefs, the Future of Reefs in a Changing Environment (FORCE) Project is working throughout several countries in the wide Caribbean leading research in different areas. The social science field team within the FORCE project visited Roatán and undertook 3 weeks of hard work interviewing key stakeholders and organizing a meeting in West End to have a consultation with members of the community. A historical timeline and stakeholder influence mapping were developed and project representatives promised to share the information once everything is compiled.



## AGGRA workshop in Tela



*Participants from the AGGRA workshop*

In May, two RMP staff members were trained in the AGGRA Methodology (Atlantic and Gulf Rapid Reef Assessment). This methodology is the same used by Healthy Reefs to evaluate the state of the reefs in Mesoamerica and is now the official methodology for Honduras. This last training was aimed at 27 participants ranging from park rangers to university professors, NGO staff and private sector, from Honduras and Guatemala. The RMP is proud to say that one of their Board Members, Jenny Myton, is now an Official AGGRA trainer. The funds for this 10-day training came from the private sector, the Honduran Ministry of Environment through ICF, WWF, TNC, Procorredor, Fucagua, Prolansate, CURLA, RMP and Healthy Reefs, who organized the event.

## Inspections

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### Request for expansion of Mahogany Bay's Channel

The SINEIA (Evaluation and Assessment Impact National System) integrated by members of the Municipality of Roatán, ZOLITUR, DIGEPESCA, Tourist Honduran Institute (IHT), Secretary of Environmental and Natural Resources (SERNA), and RMP was called to attend a meeting in May to evaluate the request for expansion of the channel that enters Mahogany Bay Cruise Terminal. The company is requesting the dredging of 12,000 m<sup>2</sup> of coral from the east side of the channel. Technical reports were submitted to SERNA by each of the attending institutions and the Secretary of Environment is now in the process of analyzing the request.



*Sediment trap installed at the site*

## Public Awareness

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### Shark release (Shark's Sanctuary)



*One of the sharks swimming past Nick to freedom*

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, President Porfirio Lobo Sosa signed a law that makes Honduras a shark sanctuary. The Shark Legacy Project was the driving force in the push for the protection of sharks in Honduras. We join Palau, the Bahamas, and the Maldives as the only countries in the world that have banned shark fishing. To celebrate the occasion, two sharks taken from the pens at the old Coral Cay were released in West Bay. Members from the SLP, RMP, and Barefoot Cay were charged with the release. The event was attended by the President, Vice President, ambassadors from the UN, members of the Honduran Press, and many others. Except for a delayed release because the President was late, the release went off without a hitch and both sharks swam calmly away.

## Responsible seafood guide launched



Workers at Tranquil Seas introduced to the program

This month we began the Responsible Restaurant Program. The aim of this is to promote sustainable and responsible seafood choices in restaurants and homes. The first step of the program will be to meet with 40 restaurants from West End, West Bay, Sandy Bay, Flowers Bay, Dixon Cove and Paya Bay. After a month, the restaurants will be revisited to see if they are following the guidelines. In addition. The second part of the program will be to advertise those restaurants that are participating in the program, as well as those that refuse to, in as many guides, websites, and books about Roatan as possible. The idea being that the only way some people will change is if there is a financial reason. The restaurants we have met so far are Cannibal Café, Tranquil Seas, Land's End,

Lily Pond, Argentinean Grill, Half Moon Bay Cabins, and Coconut Tree Restaurant. If you are a restaurant owner and would like to join the Responsible Restaurant Program or learn more about it, please visit the Marine Park Office.

**Best Choices** include species that:

- Produce lots of eggs
- Have a high rate of population increase
- Have healthy population numbers in the wild
- Grow fast & reach sexual maturity at an early age
- Have minimal associated environmental concerns

**NOTE:** The tuna species recommended in this guide are considered a viable seafood choice around the Bay Islands.

**Choices with Cautions** include species that have certain restrictions to consider such as:

- **Minimum Length Restrictions**  
Lobster: Tail length > 5.5in / 14cm - Law  
Barracuda: 36in / 91cm - Law
- **Closed Seasons**  
Lobster: March to June - Law  
All Snappers: February to Sept - Recommended  
Red / Rock Hind: Dec to April - Recommended

**NOTE:** Conch sold by restaurants must only be bought from legally registered processing companies.

\*Minimum length restrictions ensure that juveniles are not caught and are allowed to reproduce.  
\*Closed seasons ensure that species are not fished during spawning or migration events.

**Avoid Eating** includes species that:

- Have already been **overfished** and are listed as **vulnerable** or **endangered** (groupers and turtles)
- Are **illegal** to fish in Honduras (sharks)
- Are vital to the overall **health of the reef** (parrotfish and triggerfish)

Best Choices	Choices with Cautions	Avoid Eating
<b>Tuna</b> (Skipjack, Blackfin & Little Tunny)	<b>Lobster</b>	<b>All Other Grouper</b>
<b>Cero</b>	<b>Conch</b>	<b>Reef Snappers</b> (Gray, Schoolmaster, Lane, Mahogany)
<b>Kingfish</b>	<b>Barracuda</b>	<b>Parrotfish</b>
<b>Spanish Mackerel</b>	<b>Dog Snapper</b>	<b>Shark</b>
<b>Wahoo</b>	<b>Mutton Snapper</b>	<b>Triggerfish</b>
<b>Jack &amp; Trevallies</b>	<b>Deepwater Snappers</b> (Black, Blackfin, Red, Queen, Yelloweye)	<b>Sea Turtle</b>
<b>Mahi Mahi</b>	<b>Red Hind Grouper</b>	
<b>Yellowtail Snapper</b>	<b>Rock Hind Grouper</b>	
<b>Lionfish</b>		
<b>Squid</b>		

## Wrapping things up



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).

Grazia, Nic, Wendy, Arlene and Cesy

