



# Roatán Marine Park Newsletter

## February 2011 Highlights

### RMPS's Birthday Beach Bash



You're all invited to the RMP's 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday Beach Bash on Saturday April 9<sup>th</sup> at Bananarama in West Bay. Festivities start at noon and we'll have a tasty buffet with smoked pork and chicken, as well as an auction, raffle, games, and more. All proceeds to benefit the RMP. For more details, check out page 6.

### Patrol summary



The patrols were busy this month with 34 dead conch, 27 dead lobster, 11 live conch, 6 masks, 4 sets of fins, 4 dead fish, 3 gaffs, and 2 spears confiscated. In addition to these, we confiscated a net near Turquoise Bay.

### Marine Infrastructure



Nick was busy this month. Routine maintenance of the northside dive and yacht moorings was performed and new moorings were installed. He also trained Arlene on how to install and maintain moorings on the south shores.

### Lionfish Derby & Cook-Off



Over 1,200 lionfish were removed from Roatan's waters during the Derby. Congratulations to the Derby's winning team: Barefoot Cay, Team Africa, and AKR and to the cook-off winners, Coconut Tree Restaurant and Lighthouse.

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## Introduction

*While February is the shortest month of the year, it was one of the busiest for the Park. Our Rangers not only patrolled within the Park but made trips as far as Turquoise Bay, Flowers Bay, and Port Royal. Grazzia was busy attending inspections and meetings while Nick was training Arlene, the new Southside manager, on installing and maintaining moorings. In addition to our regular duties, we organized the Lionfish Derby and Cook-off in the beginning of the month and are still working on our Birthday Bash on April 9<sup>th</sup>. We did a lot in 28 days, lets see what March's 31 bring!*

## Patrols

### Sandy Bay West End Marine Park Patrols



*29 conch and 5 lobster confiscated in S.B*

Our rangers were either out on the water or on land patrolling every days this month. This resulted in 7 separate incidents leading to one imprisonment. In total, 34 dead conch, 23 dead lobster, 5 masks, 4 sets of fins, 4 dead fish, 4 live conch, 3 gaffs, 2 spears, and a net were confiscated in February. Most of the offenses occurred in Sandy Bay and involved minors which were given warnings or sentenced to community service. However, one Saturday morning the office received a call about men with snorkel gear and spears driving to Pirates Cove in Flowers Bay. While Flowers Bay is not within the Reserve, spearfishing is illegal throughout Roatan and the Police have the authority to confiscate masks and fins and incarcerate people found spearing anywhere around the island. The men were found with 5 lobster and after much discussion were released with a warning but without their snorkel gear or spears.

Our Rangers spend a large majority of their time patrolling within the Reserve but they do go beyond the boundaries when necessary. One morning we received a call reporting a large net being set in the lagoon near Big Bight, close to Turquoise Bay. As nets are so indiscriminately damaging to marine life, we stop at nothing to confiscate them. After receiving the call, our Rangers and Police from West End and Oak Ridge rushed to the scene. Subway Watersports were kind enough to lend us their boat and, with constant updates from the original caller, we were able to track down the culprits. Four teenagers were found in a dory with a 400ft net. Fortunately for the Rangers, they were all minors and offered little resistance when the net was confiscated. While seine nets have a variety of uses such as securing palm fronds to thatch roofs, gill nets are made of microfilament and have no other functions. Therefore it was decided that it should be burned along with several other confiscated gillnets which we've been storing at the West End office for several years.



*Four teenagers found with a 400ft gill net near Big Bight near Turquoise Bay*



*Gill net confiscated near Big Bight being destroyed*

One of the first programs implemented by the RMP more than 5 years ago were the patrols within the Sandy Bay-West End Marine Reserve. BICA has rejoined the fight and is patrolling with their boat in Sandy Bay. As the patrols must run as seamlessly as possible to be effective, we have made Barie Jackson the Patrols Coordinator. Our reefs are now more protected with more patrols and a new strategy. We still rely heavily on community participation so if you see poaching or suspicious activity, please call our office on 2445-42-06/08 or the cell on 3349-4138, on the radio on channel 16 or Barie on 9661 3030 or 3299-6213.

## South Side Chapter Patrols

The patrols on the Southside were not blessed with the best weather this month. Many days the wind was blowing well over 20 mph, making it difficult for the boat to patrol anywhere between the airport and Oak Ridge. Even still, they managed to catch several poachers. One incident occurred near French Cay and resulted in the confiscation of 4 lobsters and 7 small conchs. While the partols weren't too effective, weather permitting, the boat was being used for maintainig the marine infrastructure.



*Speared lobster and fish confiscated from Sandy Bay*

## Infrastructure

### Dive moorings on Roatan's southern shores



*Location of the new dive moorings near Dixon Cove*

Nick used the great weather this month to install and maintain dive and yacht moorings on both sides of the island. Within the Reserve, several moorings that had been ripped out were reinstalled and several old lines were replaced with new ones at other sites. In the mooring field between West End and West Bay, all the yacht moorings were inspected and a new one was installed bringing the total number of moorings to 21.

Nick also trained Arlene, Licario's replacement as South Side field director, on the techniques to install and maintain dive moorings. For several days, Nick, Arlene, and volunteers went around installing new moorings, fixing old ones, inspecting lines, and GPSing the coordinates of existing moorings. In total this month on the Southside, 4 new moorings were installed, two to replace the

damaged blocks at Anka's Place and 40ft Point, and two at new sites near the cruise ship's outer channel marker by Dixon Cove. In addition, five dive sites were repaired, and a bag of cement was added to reinforce an existing mooring.

As more and more people around the world come to dive Roatan's waters, the demand for more dive centers is increasing. To fill this need, two new shops, Aqua Adventures in Half Moon Bay on the south shore and Tobri Divers in Las Palmas, will be opening their doors very soon. The RMP held a meeting with each shop to discuss what we do and how the new shops can support us.

## Education

### Volunteers from Minnesota

While the RMP is not currently employing a Director of Education, we are still actively involved with educational matters. This month, a group of teenagers from Minnesota visited Roatan to learn to dive and also get involved with the RMP. After receiving a presentation about our organization, the group was more than happy to assist in doing beach cleanups in West Bay, Sandy Bay, and Flowers Bay. The group of 18 kids were more than willing to tackle any task given to them and spent the majority of their trip helping out.

With months of discussing volunteer programs with several US based groups, we expect the coming months to be pretty busy. One group called [Common Tides](#) who provide free marine science education and sail training to local school children from developing countries will be visiting Roatan this spring/summer. If you know any teenagers interested in the program, please contact us so we can work with the coordinators in getting then involved with the project.



*Kids on their way to a beeach cleanup*

## Meetings and Workshops

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### Patronatos learn about environmental legislation



*Barie and Arlene presenting at the workshop*

The Honduran Institute for Environmental Legislation (IDAMHO) held a meeting with Patronato leaders from different communities on Roatán. The RMP was invited to make a presentation about reef conservation and what our communities can do to contribute to conservation. We also discussed the lionfish problem with the leaders and they were full of questions about the invasive species and what we can do to combat them. Finally, participants were divided in groups to discuss different environmental problems the island is facing and to propose solutions that can be implemented and supported by the RMP. With more community leaders involved in environmental matters, the greater the possible results for the island.

### West End's Road

For almost a decade, the West End community and the Municipal have been discussing what to do about the road. The debate has always been about paving the road or not? Now the Municipality has hired a group of consultants from FUNDEMUN (Foundation for Municipal Development) which has been working hand in hand with West End's Patronato to socialize the project which includes a sewage treatment plant for West End. Several meetings have been held to discuss the but it seems that an agreement is still far away. The RMP hopes that an agreement can be reached regarding the proposed sewage system sooner rather than later as the majority of systems here in West End are definitely not environmentally sound.



*View of road in front of Baptist Church*

### Coral Reef Leadership Program continues



*CRLN representatives with DMs from AKR*

The CRLN program which focuses on promoting good environmental practices within dive shops and other marine users is drawing to a close regarding the dive shops operating within the Sandy Bay West End Marine Reserve. With only a few shops left, we hope that this section of the project will finish shortly. This month, CRLN representatives, along with Nick, visited Anthony's Key Resort and spoke to their dive masters. The DMs were kind enough to put aside a few hours of their time to go over their dive and snorkel briefings and we recommended how they can be improved. With AKR being the largest dive operation within the Reserve, its vital that their guests are briefed properly. This also provided a perfect opportunity to find out more about the RMP and our projects.

## Inspections

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### Sewage and dead mangroves at Parrot Tree

SERNA received a complaint last month about the illegal discharge of sewage and mangrove killing by Parrot Tree Plantation. Members of the SINEIA were called inspect the site. Sadly, both accusations were proven to be true. A large swath of dead mangroves were found as was a pipe discharging raw sewage into the water. The Ministry of Environment will take action on this as Honduras Law of Environment and Fisheries clearly states both actions are considered environmental crimes and must be punished.



*Dead mangroves discovered in Parrot Tree*

## Grand Roatan Caribbean Resort

Roatan is definitely becoming a hotspot for tourism. As a result, new developments are springing up all over the place. A project which acquired a license several years ago, Grand Roatan Caribbean Resort, was visited this past month by the SINEIA (National System of Environmental Impact Assessment) composed of representatives from SERNA, Honduran Institute of Tourism, Health Department, BICA, ZOLITUR, Municipality of Roatan and the RMP. The project will be built on the western tip of the island, next to the ironshore in West Bay. We hope the guidelines and mitigation and compensatory measures established by SERNA are followed as the place now is a dense forest with heads of iron shore and hosts an abundance of wildlife including a bat cave and a large population of endangered Wish Willies.



Members of the SINEIA at the inspection

## Public awareness

### Lionfish derby and cook-off...



Over 476 lionfish caught in 1 day

The RMP's first islandwide Lionfish Derby was held in February. In total over 1,200 lionfish were killed over the 2 weekend event. The results were as follows: **Most fish caught in a single day:** 1<sup>st</sup> Karl Stanley and Luc Pacqin of Barefoot Cay with 177 fish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Team Africa from Subway Watersports with 168 fish, 3<sup>rd</sup> John Carter and Orvill Henry from AKR with 144 fish. The prize for the **largest fish caught** went to Reno Jackson and Wilf Stroihl from Atlantic Sea Divers with a 361mm (14.5inches) fish. The prize for **smallest lionfish** went to Nick Bach and Caroline Power with a 1.3 gram fish.



Our new anti-lionfish T-Shirt

We would also like to thank everyone that showed up at the Cook-Off and to the contestants. First place went to Coconut Tree Restaurant and 2<sup>nd</sup> went to Lighthouse Restaurant. All the dishes were delicious, hopefully next time there will be enough to go around! We are planning another Derby and cook off for the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of May so get your spears ready and help out with controlling the spread of the lionfish.

## 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). For more information, please visit our [website](http://www.roatanmarinepark.net) or stop by our offices in Half Moon Bay and Barefoot Cay.

Grazia, Nic,  
Arlene and Cesy



# Roatan Marine Park's Birthday Beach Bash

Saturday April 9th at BananaRama in West Bay Starts at 12pm

## Fun and Games for All Ages

\*Snorkel Races \*Face Painting \*Auction  
\* Raffle \*Horse Shoes And More

**Tasty Buffet:** smoked pork and chicken,  
BBQ pork ribs, Jambalya, & Southern style sides  
\$13 Adults \$8 Kids 6-12 5 yrs & under free  
\$1.50 Hot Dogs, \$4 Smoked Sausage

Beers 3 for L100 Rum & Vodka-L50 Sodas-L25



Cheap transport to & from West End  
All proceeds to benefit the Roatan Marine Park

