

UPDATE REPORT



DECEMBER 2013

Mesoamerican Reef Fund www.marfund.org / info@marfund.org

Picture by CCO

Dear Friends,

We have come to the end of another productive year and we did not want to finalize it without letting you know about our initiatives during the final quarter of 2013. Please, read on and share!



Conservation of Marine Resources in Central America Project, Phase II

After two and a half years of field work in the four protected areas targeted in Phase I of the Project, we have signed the financial contract and the Separate Agreement with KfW for the implementation of Phase II of the Project.

As with Phase I the objective of the project is to strengthen selected priority coastal and marine protected areas to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in the medium term.

The coastal and marine protected areas for this Phase are:

- South Water Caye Marine Reserve, Belize,
- Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Belize,
- Río Sarstún Multiple Use Area, Guatemala,
- Turtle Harbour / Rock Harbour Special Marine Protection Zone, Honduras, and
- Manatee Sanctuary State Reserve, Mexico.

The managers of the protected areas in each country, who are also the local partners and implementers of the project in the field, are:

- Belize Fisheries Department, in Belize;
- Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development (SACD), in Belize;
- Fundación para el Eco Desarrollo y la Conservación (FUNDAECO), in Guatemala;
- Bay Islands Conservation Association – Utila (BICA – Utila), in Honduras, and
- Secretaría de Ecología y Medio Ambiente (SEMA), in Mexico.

The initial workshops for these areas are planned to be held during the month of March, 2014. We look forward to starting activities in the field in July, 2014.

We will be sure to keep you posted!

Joint Requests for Proposals

Fifth Request for Proposals Conservation, Management and Sustainable Use of Marine Protected Areas in the Mesoamerican Reef



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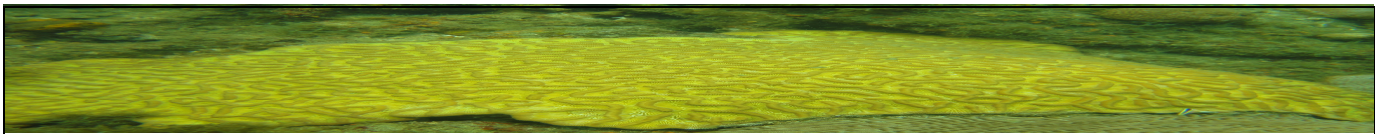
The approved projects of the 5th Request for Proposals are progressing as scheduled and have already obtained very interesting results. Some of these are:

1. Enhancing enforcement and compliance within the South Water Caye Marine Reserve, Belize (Fisheries Department)

- The demarcation bouys for the marine reserve and the solar system equipment for the ranger station was purchased.
- To date, as a result of their enforcement efforts, the Fisheries Department has done a total of 158 enforcement patrols which have led to two arrests.
- As a harmonious negotiating strategy, a first meeting has been held with fishermen from Riversdale Village to discuss the boundaries of the conservation zone in the southern portion of the marine reserve.

2. Participatory design of fisheries recovery sites and fisheries co-management areas in Río Sarstún Multiple Use Area and adjacent zones, Guatemala (FUNDAECO)

- A recognition boat visit was made to potential fisheries recovery sites within the Protected Area and prioritized according to their current ecological status.
- Four fisheries recovery sites have been proposed and FUNDAECO designed a research protocol to establish their baseline for commercial fish species.
- With the collaboration of Water Quest, a dive shop that selflessly wants to support Guatemalan Caribbean fishermen, seven fishers were trained and obtained their scuba diving certification.
- The first workshop on biological monitoring techniques was held for Sarstún, and the seven certified fishers actively participated.
- Through this grant we are also providing continuity to a RARE initiative that FUNDAECO began in the King Fish reef site. A technical study on the biological relevance was developed and submitted to the Research Department of the Fisheries Authority. As the Research Department has approved the technical study, we are supporting the next phase: the follow-up meetings with the Legal Department of the Fisheries Authority.



3. Conserving fishery resources through their rational use in the Marine Area of the Cuyamel-Omoa National Park, Honduras (CCO)

- CCO and fishers from Cuyamel-Omoa National Park developed a diagnostic on the diversity and abundance of fish in three ecosystems: Chachaguala Lagoon, Chahaguala River and five sites within the coral reef ecosystem of Omoa.
- Based on the results, they have jointly defined approximately 900 Ha for a fisheries recovery site and have proposed it to the authorities.
- The process has been undertaken with the full support and involvement of the ICF (protected areas authority) and DIGEPESCA (fisheries authority).
- CCO, DIGEPESCA and fishers from Cuyamel – Omoa made a field visit to Cuero y Salado Refuge to learn from their experience on establishing fisheries recovery sites.

4. Strengthen inspection, surveillance and environmental education in the Santuario del Manatí State Reserve, Chetumal Bay, México (Amigos de Sian Ka'an)

- The eight informative signs planned were designed with the following topics: Waste, Mangrove, Manatee and Flora-Fauna.
- The strategic points for installing the eight signs and eight buoys were determined, covering all the reserve.
- A map for conducting patrolling and surveillance routes was generated also covering strategic points near fishing communities.
- Amigos de Sian Ka'an has developed four environmental education workshops addressed to fishermen, students, general public and the Navy.

5. Signaling the Protected Natural Area Arrecifes de Xcalak National Park, Mexico. (Amigos de Sian Ka'an)

- The points where the demarcation buoys of the northern and southern boundaries of the Protected Area will be installed have been established.
- A map to identify diving sites within the Protected Area was created to guide tourists and tour operators.
- The mooring chains of the buoys have been installed. However, the buoys are pending due to bad weather that did not allow the exit of vessels. The buoys will avoid anchoring incidents in the coral reefs.
- There is a design for the informative signs and the sites where these will be installed have also been established.
- A total of four workshops to strengthen environmental awareness have been developed for fishermen, children schools and authorities.

6. Status of fishery resources in Quintana Roo: A socioeconomic approach to fishing activities (COBI)

- The socioeconomic questionnaires were designed and all of them have been completed in the 27 fishing cooperatives targeted. A total of 25 audio interviews were developed in order to strengthen the information.
- The project is now in the stage of integration of the information collected in the field.



Sixth Request for Proposals Reducing Threats and Improving Management in Key Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in the Mesoamerican Reef



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During our 6th RfP entitled “*Reducing Threats and Improving Management in Key Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in the Mesoamerican Reef*”, fourteen proposals were submitted distributed as follows: five from Mexico, two from Belize, six from Guatemala and one from Honduras.

On November 26, 2013, the Grants Review Committee meeting was held in Guatemala City and, as a result of this meeting, six proposals were recommended for funding.

The proposals are now under revision and we expect to have the final decision in January 2014.

We will keep you posted!

French Global Environment Facility

We want to share more great news with you. On June 24, 2013, the MAR Fund and the French Development Agency acting on behalf of the French Global Environment Facility, signed a Financing Agreement for a total amount of one million sixty thousand Euros (€ 1,060,000.00). The grant will be used to ensure and strengthen the management of the marine and coastal protected areas network of the MAR. This objective will be pursued through the establishment of a sustainable financing mechanism for the participation of civil society and local communities in the management of natural resources.



Happy Holidays!

The MAR Fund Team wishes you a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2014! We will keep in touch to let you know about our programs and relevant news!

If you wish to share or have any comments and/or questions, please do not hesitate to write to us at the following address: info@marfund.org.