

NOVEMBER, 2010



MAR Fund Update

Mesoamerican Reef Fund www.marfund.org / info@marfund.org / facebook.com/mesoamerican.reeffund

Fisheries co-management initiatives

Greetings! We are happy to share our latest news with you, but we're giving you a heads up that soon you will receive our Annual Report 2009 with a summary of last year's activities.

Through the pilot projects in our Community Fisheries Program, we evidence that co-management is an effective way to link fishermen and authorities in conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources.

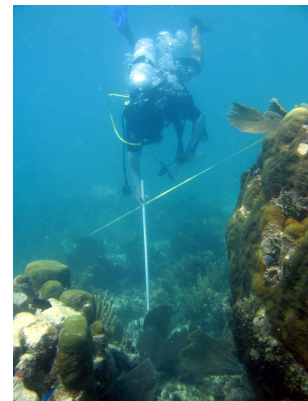
It is easy to see how fishermen that are part of a co-management project, have increased their interest and improved their knowledge and skills in doing so.

Fishermen monitoring the reef

In Mexico, after the Puerto Morelos Fishing Cooperative completed two full monitoring exercises and developed the baseline of the reef's status, a workshop was delivered to evaluate the monitoring techniques learned and used by them for the registration of fish, corals, key invertebrates, bottom complex, and substratum type data. The workshop was conducted by the Natural Protected Areas National Commission (CONANP), the Akumal Ecological Centre, and COBI.



The evaluation workshop was held at the Fishing Cooperative's head-quarters



The fishermen have improved their monitoring skills and now data is more accurate

After this workshop, the fishermen have completed eight additional monitoring exercises, which include data collection in 65 transects. Staff from CONANP and COBI verified an improvement in the quality of the collected data, and authorities are considering including some of the trained fishermen as part of their monitoring staff.

Winner of the Gladding Memorial Award 2010

Last October 2010, the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) announced that Ms. Angelica Mendez, a fisherwoman from Livingston, Guatemala and Manager of the Guatemalan Caribbean Network of Fishers, was the recipient of the Gladding Memorial Award (GMA), 2010. This, in recognition of her efforts towards conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources.



We are very proud of this dedicated hard-working woman's accomplishment and we are convinced that she represents the Mesoamerican Reef fishing community with great dignity and honor.

Congratulations Angelica! You are an inspiration to other fisher women in the MAR region.

Our New Website

We have just completed our new web site and invite you to visit it.

We'd love to hear from you and learn what you liked about it and what you didn't. Check us out at:

www.marfund.org

Co-management agreement signed in Cuero y Salado, Honduras!

In Honduras, Olvin Cayetano, President of APROCUS, the fisher's association, and René Lafitte, Chairman of FUCSA, have signed an agreement for fisheries co-management in the Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge. The agreement is for three fishing territories, which include a total of four no-take zones with a diameter of one kilometer each, within the Refuge.

A co-management plan for the fishing territories is being prepared jointly by APROCUS and FUCSA.

A training program is being developed for the members of APROCUS. It will be delivered in a four-month period and will include the following topics: environmental education, alternative economic activities, protection of natural resources and conservation techniques, and fisheries regulation enforcement.



Signing of the co-management agreement between APROCUS and FUCSA

Love+Water Designs

We are very excited to be a part of this innovative on-line community that creates Wearable Philanthropy by connecting artists with charities through Weekly tshirt Design Projects. You can vote for your favorite design and the most voted design will later be sold on cool tshirts that you will be able to buy and wear.

To learn more about this new initiative please visit:

<http://loveandwaterdesigns.com/>

GlobalGiving = huge support

We are moving ahead with our project "Empowering Fishing Communities in the MAR Reef", and the continuous support received through GlobalGiving has been a key factor in this success story. In only nine months, we have increased our list of sponsors by almost 50%.

We encourage you to become involved and invite you to visit www.globalgiving.com/projects/mesoamerican-reef-conservation/ to discover an easy and practical way to support community fishing projects.

Patrolling the Southern Barrier Reef Complex of Belize

In late 2008, the Southern Environmental Association (SEA) launched a "Special Enforcement Program" to address rampant illegal fishing, especially in areas around marine protected areas in southern Belize. In 2009, SEA reported more than 140 fishermen contacted, 85 charges issued and 70 convictions for illegal fishing.

The four main outcomes of this project are:

- Fisheries violations in southern Belize declined 25% in relation to 2009 levels,
- Increased interagency collaboration in patrols through established partnerships,
- Increased and active engagement from key stakeholder groups and community members, and
- Strong database of information about the number, type and locations of infractions, is being gathered.

This year, the Special Enforcement Team successfully conducted 57 patrols throughout the entire Southern Barrier Reef Complex between the months of April through August, maintaining a sound presence in the region, and proving that the interagency approach to enforcement is highly effective.



Special Enforcement Team in their patrol boat

Grant Program: community-managed fisheries and enforcement of fishing regulations initiatives

The objective of the Third Request for Proposals was to support innovative initiatives for community - managed fisheries and enforcement of fishing regulations. The approved projects initiated activities in January of 2010. Here are examples of what they have accomplished so far.

Building the capacity of fishermen associations for involvement in community management of Port Honduras Marine Reserve (PHMR), Belize.

TIDE hired Dr. Joseph Palacio and Mr. Dwight Neal to facilitate the training workshops for a total of 25 fishermen from Punta Gorda and Punta Negra. The main topics covered were: decision making skills, legal status of associations, leadership, financial management, and conflict resolution. The training's goal is that the fishermen associations can play an active, long-term role in the management of Port Honduras Marine Reserve's resources.

Mr. Joseph Palacio (standing) and Mr. Dwight Neal (sitting at the top right hand side of the table), facilitating the workshops



Enforcement of fishing regulations within the Gulf of Honduras: Phase II.

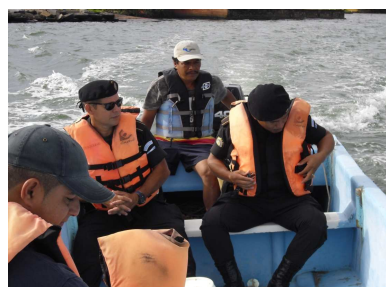
During Phase I of this project, vinyl banners were designed, printed and posted in strategic sites to be seen by fishermen and seafood buyers, announcing and reminding about the shrimp, lobster, and Queen Conch no-take seasons in Guatemala. Now, in Phase II, the same strategy is being implemented across the Gulf of Honduras, in Belize and Honduras.

A consensus workshop between fishers, NGO's and UNIPESCA, the Guatemalan fishing authority, to schedule the 2010 no-take seasons for every species that is captured in Guatemala, was successfully organized.

Also as part of the project, monitoring and surveillance patrols have been undertaken by FUNDAECO jointly with UNIPESCA and the Police Wildlife Protection Division of Guatemala.



Mr. Manuel Ixquiac, former UNIPESCA Coordinator, during the consensus workshop



Guatemalan surveillance team on patrol

Sustainable use of Queen Conch and Spiny Lobster fisheries within the Banco Chinchorro Biosphere Reserve and the Arrecifes de Xcalak National Park, Mexico.

Thanks to the strategic work of the Committee against Environmental Crime, authorities confiscated 72 Kg of lobster, 250 Kg of Queen Conch, and 45 Kg of fish from illegal fishers from February to July this year.

During 45 and 64 marine patrols realized in the Banco Chinchorro Biosphere Reserve and Arrecifes de Xcalak National Park, respectively, a total of 45 illegal vessels were dissuaded and went home empty handed. It is estimated that each vessel extracts around 30 Kg of Queen Conch per fishing day.



Patrolling the Banco Chinchorro Biosphere Reserve and the Arrecifes de Xcalak National Park

Confiscated fishing products from illegal fishers



Optimization of sustainable use, artisanal innovation, and alternatives for the co-management and use of the lobster Collective Brand: "Chakay", Mexico.

The Fishers Integrator Cooperative has built 100 "casitas" (lobster refuges) made out of "zapote" wood, and installed ten of these in Cayo Centro, a Banco Chinchorro core zone. This has become a very good alternative for the reproduction, protection and sustainable use of lobsters.

The "casitas" allow fishermen to capture lobsters selectively. They can handle the lobsters, measure and weight them, and release the individuals that haven't reached the commercial size.

The Fishers Integrator Cooperative is also monitoring the "Chakay" brand, so they can guarantee their buyers the origin of the lobster and the sustainable conditions under which it was captured.



Lobster "casitas" built and ready to be installed

Installation of a lobster "casita"



The fisherman returns undersize lobsters back to the ocean

Restocking the Cayo Centro zone with Queen Conch individuals for its protection and management by the Banco Chinchorro fishing community, Mexico.

Seven thousand Queen Conch individuals were successfully collected from non-patrolled fishing zones. They were transferred to an area with minor risk from illegal fishing, located in front of the research station located in Cayo Centro. Here, fishermen and rangers are constantly monitoring the area.

Two thousand of the seven thousand individuals were measured, tagged with stainless steel numbered labels, and registered. These individuals have been monitored to measure growth, abundance and distribution in their new home area.



Collecting the Queen Conch individuals

Queen Conch tagged with stainless steel label



Fishermen transferring the Queen Conch in their boat

Queen Conch tagged and reallocated in the new area



Recommended references and news

- **Connectivity Handbook**

We recommend that you have a look at the Connectivity Handbook elaborated by Dr. Peter Sale and partners.
<http://www.gefcoral.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=wJelZOi-9Ql%3d&tabid=3260>

- **A terrible threat for coral: extreme heat**

We invite you to read a very interesting article with facts about coral bleaching worldwide.
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/21/science/earth/21coral.html?_r=1&emc