

# Cambodia Reef Conservation Project (CRCP)



## Monthly Project Update

January, 2012

### Location:

Koh Rong, Sihanoukville, Cambodia

Expedition Leader/Project Scientist: Kate Longhurst



Ministry of Agriculture,  
Forestry and Fisheries  
Administration

## CRCP Project Aim

**The Cambodia Reef Conservation Project (CRCP) is a collaborative project surveying the coral reefs of Koh Rong and Koh Rong Semleon Islands in the Municipality of Sihanoukville. The programme provides training and conservation education opportunities for local Cambodians as part of an integrated programme to develop local capacity, and to ensure the long-term protection and sustainable use of marine resources throughout the region. Coral Cay Conservation (CCC) is working at the invitation of and in partnership with the Fisheries Administration of the Royal Government of Cambodia.**

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## Latest News

The start of a new year is always an exciting time. Here at Coral Cay, Cambodia, we are looking forward to taking the project forward over the next twelve months, with a focus on our surveying effort and community engagement work.

In mid-January we were very pleased to welcome another new addition to our staff team. Jen Jackson, a qualified nurse, has taken some time off from working in an Accident and



Surveying the reefs around Koh Rong will be our focus in the coming months

Emergency unit in a UK hospital to join Coral Cay Conservation as Medical Officer. Her training and experience will make her an invaluable asset to the team here in Cambodia and she is also looking forward to going through her Skills Development Programme so that she can assist survey teams with data collection!

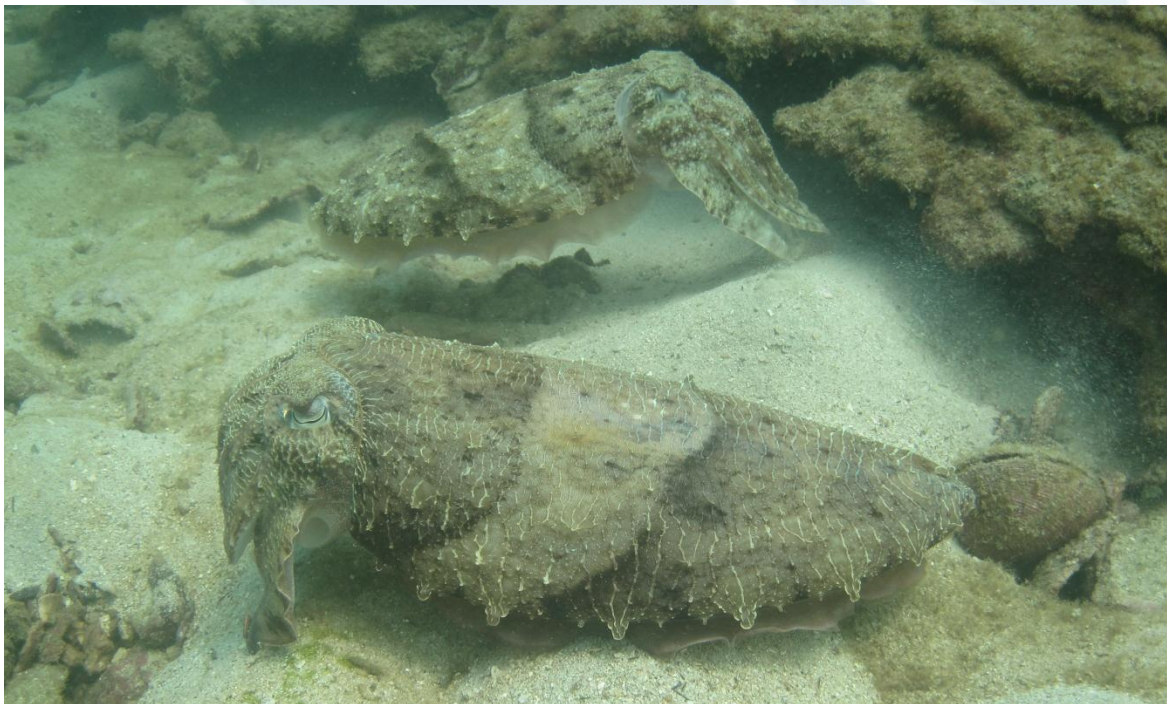
## *Story of the month*



*Pink Anemonefish (Amphiprion perideraion)*

This month, we are very pleased to be able to present a report on the species recorded on the reefs around Koh Rong and Koh Rong Samloem along with a selection of images and videos to our partners at the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). The images, all taken by Coral Cay Conservation staff and volunteers represent the hard coral, fish and other invertebrate species which have been recorded in the area thus far.

The report and the images which accompany it provide a snapshot of life on the reefs of Cambodia and show some of the beautiful species which make Koh Rong special. While the report does not focus on the conservation status of any of the species it contains, it certainly highlights the fact that the fascinating and beautiful marine life in this area is worth protecting.



*Cuttlefish (Sepia sp.)*

## Education and Community Projects



Children from the local school design posters to advertise the beach clean-up

On Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January, Coral Cay Conservation staff and volunteers were joined by staff from Dive Shop Cambodia, as well as local business owners, tourists, and adults and children from the local village, to clean the beach where we live on Koh Rong. With the help of Katie, Dive Shop Cambodia's English teacher, children from the local school made posters to advertise the event which were displayed in shops, restaurants and resorts up and down the beach and we were delighted by the enthusiastic response.

During the clean-up the team gathered paper, plastic, glass, rope and even some old clothes. There are several benefits to carrying out a beach-clean like this; firstly, it keeps the beach where we all live looking beautiful; secondly, it stops the rubbish being washed into the sea where it can damage or kill marine creatures such as coral and fish; and thirdly, it raises awareness of these issues within the local community. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who gave their time to this good cause and made the event such a success.



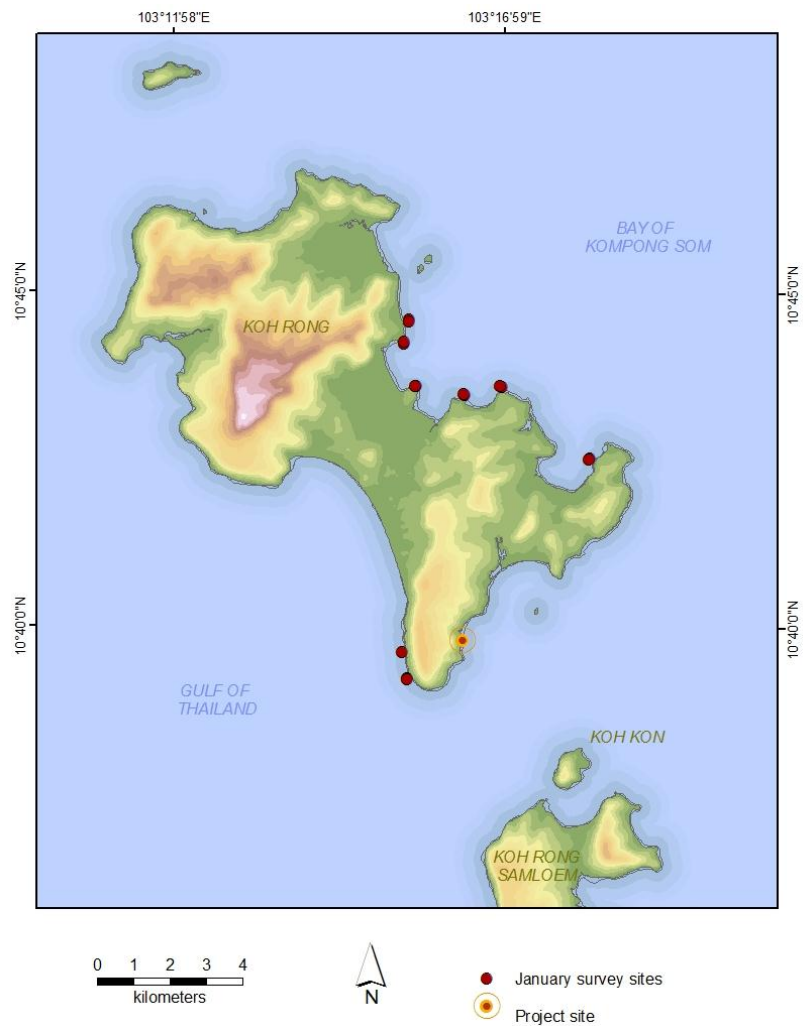
Enthusiastic volunteers clean the beach!

## Survey Update

**Survey background: Our baseline-surveying programme is designed to gather data about the biological and morphological standing of Koh Rong and Koh Rong Samloem Islands. This data is combined with information on human and natural impacts on the reefs, along with oceanographic data, to ultimately produce a Geographical Information System 'map' of the various habitats of the islands. It is like a 'stock-take' of the current marine resources. This will provide policymakers and concerned institutions with information necessary to effectively manage those resources. We are also monitoring the recovery of reefs from the recent mass-bleaching event in May of 2010.**

January has been a successful month for surveys. While unable to reach distant sites earlier in the month due to high winds and unpredictable waves, we were able to successfully conduct a number of surveys at sites nearer to our base. Volunteers were particularly pleased to be given the opportunity to conduct surveys at 'Buddha Reef', a popular dive site for visitors to the island due to its interesting communities of coral and fish. Later in the month we were able to extend our efforts further away and had a very productive few weeks. The survey sites visited this month are shown in the map on the next page.

# Cambodia Reef Conservation Project January, 2012



## Marine Creature of the Month

### *Diploastrea heliopora*

The presentation of the species summary report to MAFF this month gave us an interesting opportunity to reflect on all of the species which we have seen over the last two years. None could be more important than the hard corals which form the basis of the reef. Hard corals are colonies of several tiny animals which create a stony skeleton in which to live. These hard structures are what make up coral reefs and without them these beautiful and diverse ecosystems which are so important to us would not exist.

This species, *Diploastrea heliopora*, is particularly common around Koh Rong and is really quite beautiful when observed closely.

