



people and the sea  
COMMUNITY DRIVEN MARINE CONSERVATION

# 2020 SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES REPORT



# FISHERIES PROJECT

**The Sustainable Fisheries Programme was added to the core project activities of People and the Sea in 2019. It offers a holistic approach to achieve the goals of marine conservation in Malapascua Island.**

**Many families still rely solely on fishing as their primary source of income, despite tourism having quickly developed over the past 20 years. Tourism has brought more jobs and opportunities for the community; however, it also raises important socio-economic challenges.**

**The need for this programme arose from People and the Sea's observation of the economic and social divide between the tourism industry and the fisherfolk community.**

## MISSION AND VISION

The Sustainable Fisheries Project “Get the Fisherfolk Involved” is People and the Sea's initiative to support the members of this community, and provide linkages between all marine resources stakeholders (government, fisherfolk, private businesses, dive sector).

In 2020, People and the Sea has made significant progress in bridging this gap, thanks to our dedicated Fisheries Liaison Officer.



# OUR FISHERIES LIAISON OFFICER

Our Fisheries Liaison Officer, Evangeline S. Faburada, “Vangie”, graduated with a Bachelor of Science and Commerce, but her interest and heart belong to the community.

She is very passionate about community organising, specifically in the farmer and fisherfolk sectors. With 13 years of solid experience working with various NGOs, PO (People Organizations), IP (Indigenous People groups), and religious institutions, Evangeline has conducted a variety of livelihood trainings on community enterprises relating to seaweed.

Vangie joined People and the Sea in April 2019, and has been instrumental in developing and managing the first steps toward sustainable fishing in Malapascua.



# FISHERIES MONITORING

Fisheries data are key to understanding fishing activities and their impact on fish stocks. The data collected supports a more sustainable management of fisheries.

Initial data will help build a baseline of fishing stocks around Malapascua. Data collected are (1) Fish Landing Data, and (2) Fish Catch Measurement. Data analysis for these datasets is currently being done and will be part of the Malapascua Fisheries Baseline report to be issued in 2021. Details of these activities are as follows:

## 1) FISH LANDING DATA

Catch (in numbers or weight) represents the removal of biomass and individuals from the ecosystem, and is the fundamental way of measuring the impact fishing has on fish populations. Fish catch data can also be used in calculations of revenue for economic purposes (fishermen income), and as a rough measure of resource seasonality. This dataset will be an important tool for the local government to establish a fisheries management plan.

People and the Sea initiated fish catch monitoring on July 2019. The process relies on community fish consolidators (comprador). Their role is to sell the fish on behalf of fishermen, which means fishermen will bring their catch to them every day. They agreed to record the fish landed each day. They identify and weigh the catch and record the data for People and the Sea in notebooks. The data is then regularly encoded by Vangie.

In 2020, we have collected data from 260 fishermen who caught an average of 2,950 kilos of fish per month.



## 2) FISH CATCH MEASUREMENT

Fish catch measurement is another set of data that will inform government decision-making, as well as support the community in managing its fish stocks in a sustainable way.

Measurement of fish length is one of the most commonly used datasets in fish biology studies. Other closely related biological factors such as weight, age and maturity of fish species can be determined using length data collected per species.

The methodology for fish catch measurement was designed in October 2019, with the help of Simone Franceschini, an Italian researcher from the University of Rome, collaborating with People and the Sea. Prior to starting data collection, the methodology was shared and compared with the collection protocol of the National Stock Assessment Program. Our collaboration with the BFAR field enumerator (Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources), assigned in Daanbantayan, ensures the database will be useful for the relevant government offices.



Fish measurement data collection is limited to 4 landing areas around Malapascua. These are the most accessible landing sites and also the landing place for fish caught with the most used fishing gears. Fish measurement is limited to reef-associated and bottom-dwelling (demersal) species.

Fish measurement data collection is done (at least) twice a month, weather permitting. We record total length (nearest centimetre) per fish and total weight for each species. Name of fishermen and date of fishing are also recorded, as this data will be useful to trace common fish caught by specific fishing gear type.

Photo-documentation was also conducted to aid in the identification of fish species, and local names were recorded. A database for local common names, English names and scientific name is also maintained. This will be helpful to record the number of commercial species or Philippine native species using the Fishbase database ([www.fishbase.se](http://www.fishbase.se)).

# AFFILIATION WITH FISHERFOLK GROUPS

## MALAPASCUA FISHERFOLKS ASSOCIATION (MAFA)

MAFA was established in 2004. However, it lacked organisation and capabilities to drive empowerment projects for the fisherfolk community. People and the Sea's Sustainable Fisheries programme aims to support the association through organisational strengthening. This was initiated by arranging regular meetings with the existing set of officers. These meetings highlighted that officers were unsure of their roles and responsibilities.

Therefore, a proper officers' meeting protocol was introduced and monthly meetings were scheduled. The recurring meetings created a good relationship between the officers and fisherfolk community as it opened up communication for all ongoing projects and the sharing of their progress.

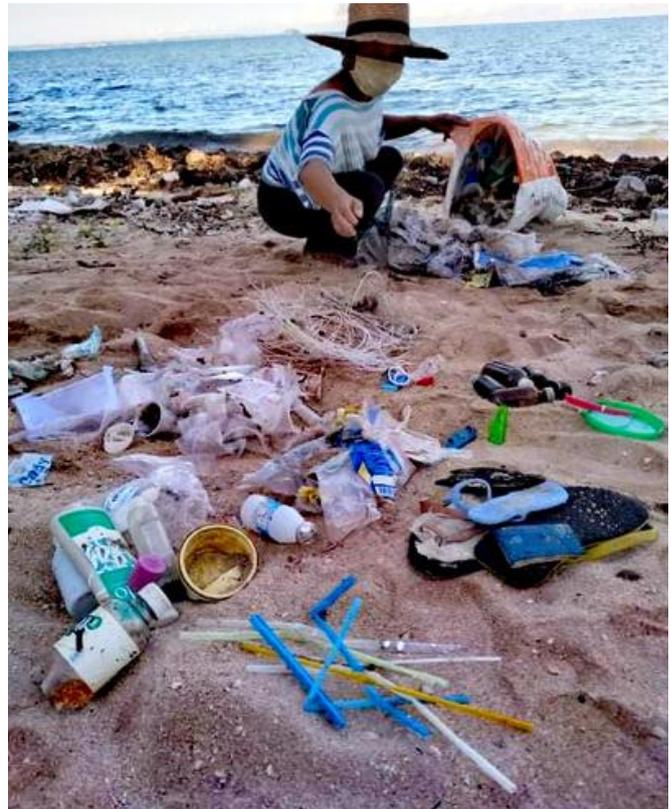


REGULAR CLEAN-UPS WITH NORTHERN FISHERFOLK COMMUNITY

Due to our close relationship with the fisherfolk community in the northern part of the island, People and the Sea was able to organise two monthly clean-up with the northern communities, who currently lack any sort of collection services.

People and the Sea taught the fisherfolk how to segregate the garbage properly and provided each month garbage transport options to the Barangay common collection point in Barrio.

The fisherfolk participation made organizing the activity easy and smooth; from the clean-up to loading the transport boats, they became used to this activity and voluntarily presented themselves every 2nd and 4th saturday of each month.



# ADJUSTING TO LIFE WITH COVID-19

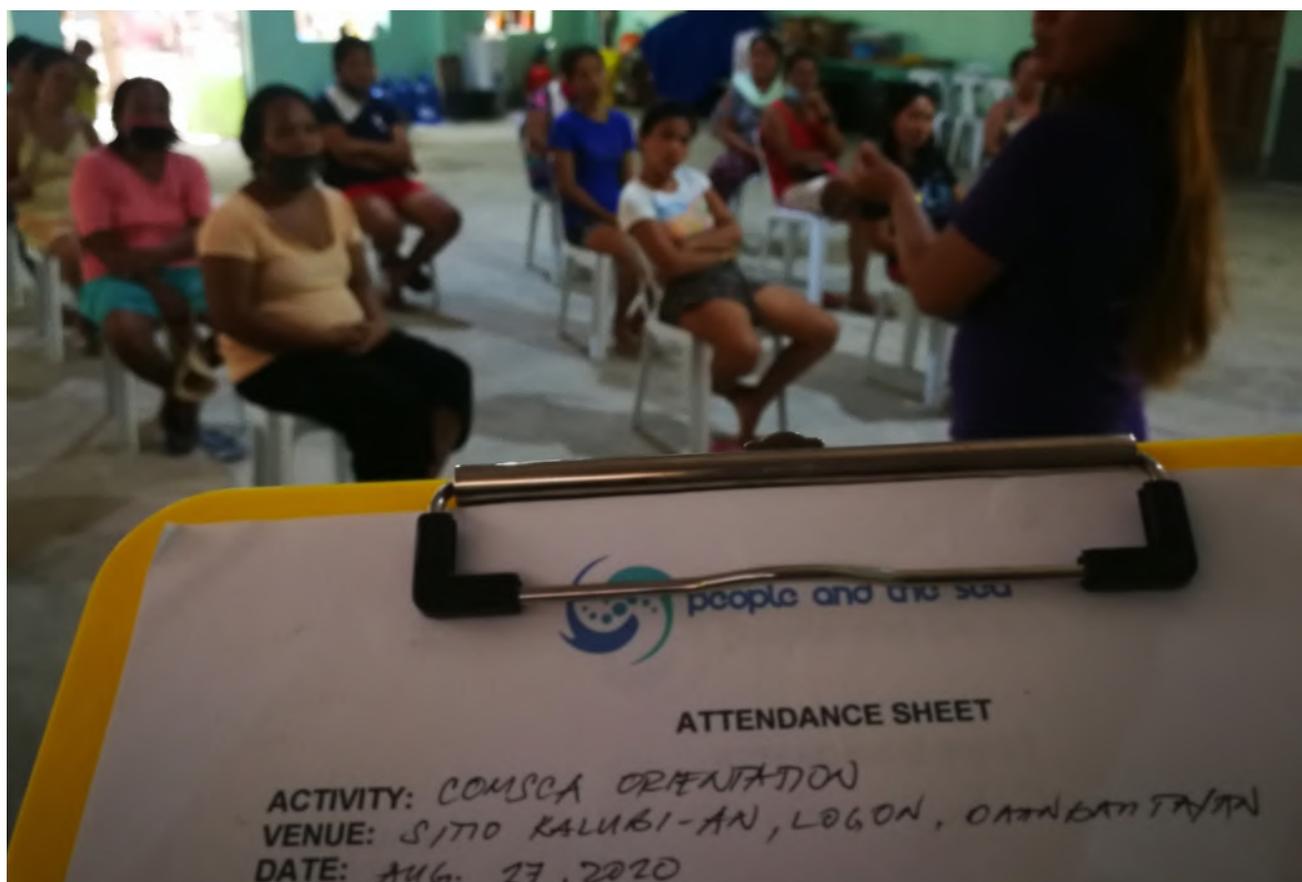
It is still difficult to measure the impact the Covid-19 crisis specifically had on the fisheries sector. In Malapascua, the demand for fish dramatically dropped as all businesses were forced to close and tourism was totally stopped. This put strain on the fisherfolk community as their families lost their tourism-related jobs and also their capacity to make an income from fishing.

A result of the pandemic is an increase in 'subsistence level' fishing activity as many people (normally employed in the local tourism sector) have been forced to turn to fishing to ensure they could feed their families. Witnessing these challenges, the importance of our fisheries programme became even more evident.

People and the Sea has continued to assist with the registration of local fisherfolk with the relevant government agencies, in order to claim government assistance. 562 fishermen and fisheries sector workers were registered during a 5-day long event held in the island. This figure confirms that the local government needs to give a reasonable priority to the island's fisheries sector. These registrations, coupled with the information we collect during our ongoing fish-catch monitoring programme, will serve as basis for the application for government-funded services and grants that can be made available to these fishing communities.



## DEVELOPMENT OF SAVING CLUBS



In 2019, we began a partnership with World Vision International–Philippines and launched the “Community Managed Savings and Credit Associations” (CoMSCA). CoMSCA is a savings scheme which aims to empower vulnerable families. Through this partnership, People and the Sea personnel were trained to organise CoMSCA groups in the community to help facilitate behavioural change and instil financial literacy.

In a disadvantaged community, families are often held back by poor control of their finances. This lack of control is enhanced by ignorance of saving practices and the absence of services such as banks and financial organisations in the area.

People and the Sea has established, and continues to support, three CoMSCA groups on the island. There are 47 active members with cumulative savings of Php 331, 284 (approx. EUR 52,700).

***“CoMSCA became an emergency resource for my family’s food and basic needs when we don’t have enough. Using my savings, I was able to repair our boat, which my husband uses to go fishing. After a year, I became more mindful of how I manage my finances and eventually enrolled for health insurance, as well as invest on other finance generating platforms.”***

Mattie, People and the Sea staff and member of Kalubi-an COMSCA club

## COVID-19 EMERGENCY FOOD PACK RELIEF

As the Covid-19 pandemic worsened, the driving force behind Malapascua's economy - tourism - all but disappeared overnight.

People and the Sea partnered with the Malapascua Business Association and organised food assistance to the most vulnerable families of Malapascua. There were 130 beneficiary families spread across all villages of the island. This programme intended to focus on those households who were most in need of assistance; families that had not received financial support from a social welfare services programme, COVID-related financial support or other private assistance. Each food pack contained rice, lentils, eggs, fresh fish, vegetable seeds and sacks.

In an effort to support the fisherfolk community of the island, all the fish for the distribution packs was sourced from local fisherman, on the condition that it had been caught using 'long-line' methods only - a local sustainable fishing practice.



Sadly, funding constraints have limited our ability to continue distributing these relief packages. The harsh reality of this action is that it only provided temporary relief, which made us all the more committed to empower these families with independent livelihoods and ways of life.

# ECOCEAN

Ecocean visited Malapascua in February 2020 to demonstrate their methodology and train fishermen in the capture and safe release of post-larvae reef fish. The research requires the use of CAREs (Collection by Artificial Reef Eco-friendly), that have currently been lent by Ecocean. People and the Sea obtained the yearly research permit for the Ecocean Post-Larvae Research in August and started the first month of data collection in September 2020.

People and the Sea aims to undertake a monthly data collection, with the help of trained local fishermen. Being part of this study will increase the fisherfolk community's acceptance in fishery-related management interventions. People and the Sea has also involved the local fisheries government authorities and is regularly liaising with them.



Five fishermen alternate 9 nights each month to deploy post-larvae fish nets (CAREs) and retrieve them in the morning. Our team then counts and identifies the fish caught. Once this is done, the baby fish get back to the sea unharmed!

Early results are positive - they show a healthy abundance and diversity of species around the island.

More information on Ecocean here: [www.ecocean.fr](http://www.ecocean.fr)

# ARTIFICIAL REEF STRUCTURE

Another critical activity led by People and the Sea is to establish a participatory, science-led reef mineral accretion habitat restoration. This restoration project is aimed at seeking to improve the state of the habitat and resilience of the ecosystem. Mineral accretion utilises low voltage electricity to improve the health and growth rates of corals and other marine organisms. As electricity flows to the metal structures placed underwater, limestone will accumulate onto those structures, which is the building material of most hard corals.

Corals attached on these electrified artificial reefs tend to grow 3-4 times faster, and survive much better during bleaching events, disease outbreaks, and other disturbances. This technology will be shared by the NGO Coralive, with start-up materials partially funded by Coralive and Tapanee Beach Resort. The fisherfolk community will be involved from the outset of the project; from building the underwater coral domes, collecting Coral of Opportunities (COPs), attaching the corals to the coral domes, to ensuring the monthly monitoring of the reef restoration structure. LGU permit was already secured for this project, and the technology had been approved by regional offices of both DENR and BFAR 7.

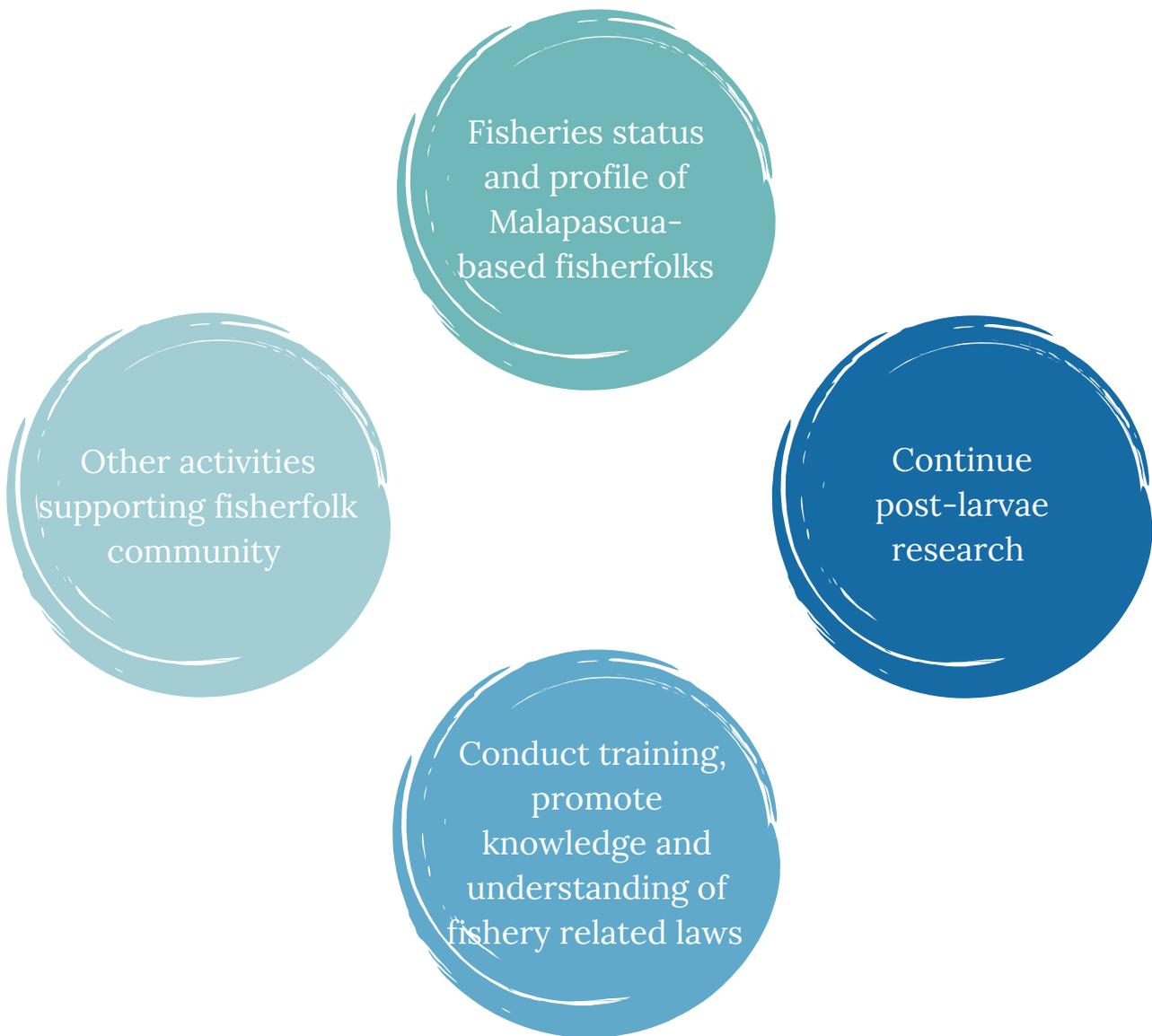
The first artificial reef structure will be established in the Southwestern side of the island, and through collaboration with the fishermen and the local government, People and the Sea will conduct a site analysis for a second community-based reef restoration site. The original site was planned to be implemented in April 2020, but had to be delayed because of the Covid-19 crisis.

Through the strong relationships we have built with the different groups of Malapascua (tour guides, businesses, schools, fisherfolks, etc.), we are hoping to immediately involve the community to ensure everyone is proud for Malapascua to be home to such an innovative and collaborative coral restoration initiative.



More information on coralive here: [www.coralive.org](http://www.coralive.org)

# 2021 OBJECTIVES



- Write and publish Malapascua fisheries profile.
  - Organise training sessions to enlighten other stakeholders on fisherfolk's activity.
  - Continue fisheries monitoring and maintain a comprehensive database to build a robust baseline data of Malapascua's fisheries.
- Post larvae capture research: 12 months monthly data collection.
  - Ensure involvement of fishermen and their community: training, workshops, monthly data collection.
- Primer to Fisheries Code Lectures
  - Continuously feed-back information related to catch, location, etc to the community to support effective co-management of fisheries resources
- Promote production of family gardens.
  - Build Reef Structure with Coralive (pending travel restrictions).
  - Continue to establish Saving Clubs.