



Member’s report on activities to ICRI

Presented by Reef Check Foundation, USA

Reporting period April, 2009 – December 2010

Please note that the purpose of this report is to help you share information about your activities within the ICRI community to allow discussion at the next ICRI General Meeting. The reports will be made available on the ICRIForum prior to the meeting. The ICRI secretariat is well aware of your busy schedule, thus don't hesitate to submit an incomplete report.

1. General Information

Are you an ICRI Member?	Yes
Representation to ICRI (Country / Organization):	Reef Check Foundation, Headquarters,USA
Focal Point 1:	
<i>Name:</i>	<i>Gregor Hodgson</i>
<i>Organization:</i>	<i>Reef Check Foundation</i>
<i>Email:</i>	<i>gregorh@reefcheck.org</i>
Focal point 2:	
<i>Name:</i>	Ruben Torres
<i>Organization:</i>	Reef Check Dominican Republic
<i>Email:</i>	ruben@reefcheck.org
Last meeting attended:	April 2009
How do you circulate ICRI information within your country and/or organization?	Email, listserve, website, forum, newsletter
Budget allocated for coral reef related activities (please mention for year/period):	\$750,000 2009

For countries only:

National Action Plan / Initiative	
Do you have a National Coral Reef action plan?	YES / NO
Is this plan publicly available? If so please provide location:	
Do you have a National Coral Reef Initiative or Task Force?	YES / NO
Are you engaged in any regional programs / initiatives relating to coral reefs:	
If yes, please indicate which programmes/initiatives:	

2. Updates on your activities (new initiatives/programs/projects of your government /organization which will be of interest to the ICRI Members)

Reef Check continues to offer regular training for its EcoDiver program as well as comprehensive Workshops on Monitoring for Climate Change. The latter includes monitoring program design, implementation, data management, analysis, interpretation and reporting.

Reef Check has recently begun a new program in the Gulf of California to help monitor and manage sustainable fisheries.

- 3. Contribution to the ICRI GM:** Your responses to the following questions will assist the Secretariat in assessing contributions towards the major themes of the current ICRI action plan and objectives of the general meeting. Due to the heavy schedules of ICRI members, we have tried to keep the questions to a minimum and value any response you can provide.

NOTE: The Secretariat will compile Members' responses to the below questions into a general presentation to be given during the GM. The Secretariat will also request specific Members to highlight certain initiatives, should additional information be of interest to the full ICRI membership.

- a. **Fisheries session:** Please provide any lessons you have learned from your experiences in managing fisheries and any projects/programs you are involved in.
- What was The Problem or the Challenge? – including information on the location, the perceived problem and the effects on the coastal resources.
 - Reef Check has been heavily involved in the marine aquarium fishery for the past 8 years and continues to work in this area.
 - Major issues are:
 - Mom and Pop business structure makes it difficult to manage – no Microsoft conglomerate to work with.
 - Fishers often migrate to distant locations to catch fish during different seasons and so monitoring all locations is difficult and expensive.
 - While the value per pound of aquarium fish is very high relative to food fish, the profit margin is relatively low – so it is often difficult to find the funds to pay for the extensive monitoring required to estimate sustainable catches.
 - Given the structure of the trade, it is difficult to require certification, hence a Best Practices approach is probably the best alternative.
 - What was done? Both ecological and sociological interventions
 - We used the fishery to leverage the creation of several Marine Managed Areas in the Philippines, Indonesia and Mexico. Sustainable fisheries were created based on detailed MAQTRAC Monitoring and modeling.
 - How successful was it? E.g. has fisheries improved; positive effects on coral reefs; better reef resources exportation ?
 - The results were successful, however, still too early to determine long term effects.
 - Lessons learned and recommendations; Key messages to convey to other people
 - See above – this is a very complex fishery and only the simplest approaches will work.
 - References (can be downloaded from ReefCheck.org)
 - [Ambrose, R., Hodgson, G., Shuman, C. \(2005\). Population impacts of collecting sea anemones and anemonefish for the marine aquarium trade in the Philippines, Coral Reefs, Volume 24, Issue 4, Dec 2005, Pages 564 - 573](#)
 - [Ochavillo, D. and G. Hodgson. \(2006\). MAQTRAC marine aquarium trade coral reef monitoring protocol data analysis and interpretation manual. Reef Check Foundation. California, USA. 39 pp.](#)
 - Hodgson, G and D. Ochavillo. (2006). MAQTRAC Marine Aquarium Trade Coral Reef Monitoring Protocol Field Manual. Reef Check Foundation. Pacific Palisades, California USA.
 - Author/s Contact – gregorh@reefcheck.org

- b. The ICRI secretariat is planning on revisiting/updating the ICRI “call to action” (http://www.icriforum.org/library/call_action.pdf) and ICRI “framework to action” (http://www.icriforum.org/library/framework_action.pdf). Please provide any guidelines you think would be useful.
1. ICRI is the highest inter-governmental/NGO body available to focus solely on coral reefs. Looking back, it is important for ICRI to focus on goals and gaps. Regular regional evaluation of progress will reveal how spotty this has been with large areas being missed. Ideally this can be improved.
 2. After 13 years, most coral reef countries still do not have regular coral reef monitoring programs. This is a huge impediment to tracking climate change. ICRI needs to prioritize coral reef monitoring as a core element. Everyone needs to recognize that most countries are unwilling or unable to allocate sufficient funds for regular coral reef monitoring. Therefore the volunteer Reef Check program fills a big gap. With relatively tiny resources, it will be possible to regularly monitor every coral reef country with dozens of sites. There are now many examples of countries that use Reef Check as their primary monitoring program – e.g. Hong Kong, China, St. Lucia, and others that integrate Reef Check with more detailed monitoring protocols. Both work well. ICRI should promote and support regular training for Reef Check and other methods in all coral reef countries as part of its core goals.
 3. Reef Check was formally recognized and selected by ICRI to serve as the community-based monitoring program for GCRMN at the 1998 Australia meeting. The partnership between Reef Check and GCRMN has been extremely successful and should be formally supported. GCRMN has worked well at the Regional Node level while Reef Check has worked at the country and sub-country level. Reef Check has focused on training of monitoring design, implementation, data analysis and reporting. GCRMN has focused on producing regular global monitoring reports that have been extremely effective in gaining political support for coral reef activities.
 4. Both Reef Check and GCRMN have been providing a public service at extremely low cost, however, significant improvements could be made with regular core support.
- c. During the meeting, a full day will focus on the Caribbean region. If you have any question about the region, ongoing projects in the region,... please let us know.
1. Reef Check will be offering regular EcoDiver and Monitoring for Climate Change training in 2010 in several Caribbean countries starting with BVI. Refer to the RC website for training dates.
- d. During the meeting, we are planning on having a presentation on the “Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)”. Could you please list your coral reef sites listed under the MAB programme.
- e. What other new initiatives/programs/projects/progress, in particular since April 2009, has been made by your government/organization relative to Marine Protected Areas, Ramsar site designations containing coral reefs, policy changes, economic valuation of coral reef ecosystem services, etc., which you believe would be of general interest to other ICRI Members?
- f. Please list publications, reports you have been released since April 2009
1. [John F. Bruno, Hugh Sweatman, William F. Precht, Elizabeth R. Selig, Virginia G. W. Schutte \(2009\) Assessing evidence of phase shifts from coral to macroalgal dominance on coral reefs. Ecology: Vol. 90, No. 6, pp. 1478-1484.](#)