



Preparations for 2012 SocMon Global Report underway

By Maria Dillard

In March, we embarked upon the preparation of the 2012 Global SocMon Report. This report is intended to synthesize information from the six regions in which SocMon is being implemented. This year, the SocMon report will coincide with a larger report from the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN).

The proposed process for the report has been shared with the regional coordinators. Key activities for the coming months include: May 2012: development of qualitative reports for regions; June 2012: survey of SocMon trainees and team leaders; and July 2012: collect relevant stories and photos from regions. We hope the schedule will help us move through the process of compiling an excellent report that well represents the work and regions in which SocMon is being used.

Regional coordinators provided the following feedback on the 2008 report:

Who did you distribute the report to? Who were the users of the report?

SocMon partners, government agencies, NGOs, fisheries councils, resource managers, development practitioners, social scientists and academicis, and attendees of international conferences were among the diverse users of the 2008 report.

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Did the users provide feedback?

Though users did not provide a significant amount of feedback on the 2008 report, there was a desire to see more examples of the direct application of SocMon results in policy making, planning, and on-the-ground intervention.

What changes would improve the report?

More personalized narratives from SocMon community members, trainees, and team leaders regarding their experiences with the SocMon process are desired for the 2012 report. Coordinators also thought that highlighting the formation of new partnerships as well as adaptations of SocMon (e.g. add-on training modules) would be excellent illustrations of the value and flexibility of the process.

The feedback the regional coordinators provided will be very helpful in tailoring the 2012 report to the regions' needs and expectations. Along with Christy Loper (NOAA, CRCP), Maria Dillard (NOAA, JHT, Inc.) will be assisting in the preparation of the 2012 report. Both Christy and Maria are looking forward to working with the regional coordinators in the coming months. If any SocMon partners have ideas about creative and effective ways to present

SocMon data and other information, please send these suggestions to maria.dillard@noaa.gov

SocMon in Honduras: The Mosquito Coast

By Denisse McLean

The SocMon initiative currently analyzing the socio-economic characteristics of artisan fishermen in the Northern Coast of Honduras and exploring the potential impacts of external shocks concluded its second survey round in March. Four indigenous communities from the area of the Caratasca Lagoon along the Mosquito Coast were selected to collect 180 livelihood surveys on the main sources and composition of household income and expenses.



Conducting livelihood surveys

The area was of particular interest for the study due to the strong reliance of the population on marine resources extraction through artisan methods, in contrast with the communities around the area of La Ceiba previously analyzed in the first phase of the study.

While households

from the area of La Ceiba often combine fishing with other types of activities –such as tourism and retail– and use migration as strategies to generate cash income, the communities from the area of Caratasca rely strongly on a combination of fishing and agriculture as their main livelihoods. Moreover, as communities move further away from the municipal capital of Puerto Lempira, their activities become less integrated with the cash economy and are sometimes exclusively of subsistence character.

Likewise, the Mosquito Coast is relatively isolated from the rest of the country in terms of geography and culture, and hence not frequently the focus of social research. This increased the potential of the study by providing participants with a tool to evaluate the impacts of expected changes on fishery-related policies which they depend upon.

Field observations and preliminary data show that the reliance on marine resources in the area is based on two main seasonal markets: dried fish and spiny lobster. These markets combined employed 51% of the surveyed households.



Fish laid out for drying

The dried fish market is focused on processing snook and other species of lower value (mojarra corvine, jacks, mullet) through the artisan technique of salting and drying. The technique has long been practised and is compulsory in the area due to the lack of electricity in the communities. The area currently represents one of the main sources of dried fish for the Honduran market. Fishing takes place in the Caratasca Lagoon and in the sea around the sand bar using artisan fishing methods such as trammel nets, hooks and cast nets. The catch is collected and stored throughout the year, starting in September when the snook

season begins, through March when the fish is sold for Easter when demand is highest. Dried fish is sold directly to buyers, who travel from inland cities to pick the product, for USD \$2.30 per pound. While not all fishermen can invest in the business, as it provides strictly seasonal income, many fishermen sell their product or hire their labour to wealthier fishermen who centralize the production. During the rest of the year, the catch – mainly consisting of mojarras – is sold fresh in Puerto Lempira or consumed by the fishermen.

The lobster market is active during the spiny lobster season from July to February in the sea around the Bay Islands. Men are recruited and hired by industrial fishing boats and the catch is sold directly to boat owners and processing plants from the Bay Islands where the product is exported. The lobster is caught by diving with minimal equipment to depths of more than 40 meters for several hours, thus resulting in incidences of decompression sickness. Divers work for 12 days in a row, twice per month, catching about 130 pounds of lobster per trip. Men who are hired as divers receive USD \$3.10 per pound and pay USD \$0.60 per pound to the “cayuquero” or boat assistant.

For those households identified as dedicated to artisan fisheries, fishing generates 62% to 93% of household income, while for those households dedicated to lobster diving, diving provides 78% to 86% of income. Our hypothesis is that these households are likely to be negatively impacted by changes in policies related to these markets; in particular, the government’s plan to close the lobster diving industry in upcoming years. We expect to test the effect of these policies and to present the final model and results of the study by the end of June 2012 and in the following issues of the SocMonitor.

Philippine SocMon project in final year

By Marissa Pontillas and Michael Pido

The project titled, “*Socio-economic Monitoring (SocMon) Program in the Philippines to Support Effective Coral Reef Conservation and Coastal Resources Management: Initiation in Occidental Mindoro Province and Continuation in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan Province, Philippines,*” is on its final year.

Data gathering using key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and household interviews has been completed for all four research sites at Puerto Princesa City, Palawan and Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro. The project has been extended up to June 2012.

Data analysis is currently being undertaken by the research team. Key informant interviews and focus group discussion results have been summarized while summary tables are currently being generated for all the quantitative data gathered from the household interviews. Validation of results is scheduled for May 2012. The final report is targeted to be completed by 30 June 2012.

Socio-economic monitoring field trials and baseline surveys in South Asia

By Vineeta Hoon

The NOAA-supported, “*Socio-economic Monitoring for Coastal Managers of South Asia: Field Trials and Baseline Surveys,*” comes to an end this quarter. The project began in December 2010 and it has been challenging to coordinate the activities at the five sites – one site each at Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and three sites in India. The SocMon South Asia Guidelines published in English and Tamil were tested during the project period. The



field team at the Gulf of Mannar, Tamilnadu that used the Tamil translation of the guidelines did not find the translation useful since the Tamil words used to describe coral reefs in Srilanka and Tamilnadu differ. This was a new finding for us to note that the Tamil spoken and written language can vary so much between Srilanka and Tamilnadu.

The project reports for the two sites, the Maldives and Lakshadweep in India, have been completed. The Maldives report highlights peoples' perceptions and attitudes towards Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The survey results show that the existing protected area management guidelines need to be reviewed. Involvement of communities in MPA management is very important. Most of the local people were in agreement with leasing the protected area to private parties for management and suggested that the government lease MPAs out to the private parties under a management plan and closely monitors them.



Lakshadweep, Agatti field team in discussion with fishermen

The socio-economic monitoring conducted at Agatti Island was a repeat with a baseline available from 2002. The report has highlighted the changing trends in the intensity of reef-related activities. MPAs do not exist in Lakshadweep. However peoples' attitudes and perception towards conservation measures and MPAs were studied. The survey highlights that a transparent management plan to manage the ecosystem goods and services is needed and the people feel that enforcement and compliance can be made stronger by involving the community stakeholders in management.

Caribbean Challenge SocMon update

By Maria Pena

Site monitoring plans for each of the eight project sites for the “*Socio-economic monitoring by Caribbean Challenge MPA managers*” project have been reviewed with six of the eight sites in a position to initiate monitoring within the next few weeks. Sites have chosen to focus the assessments and monitoring on determining current and potential alternative livelihood options and opportunities for MPA communities; collecting socio-economic data to inform management planning; identifying changes and impacts that will accompany the introduction of management planning; collecting baseline data on impacts, attitudes and perceptions of communities within and surrounding MPAs; determining MPA awareness; collecting data to guide strategies to mitigate the impacts of planned development with MPAs; and developing core indicators to assist with decision-making and effective management of the MPA. Keep following the project's progress here.



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