

Tioman Marine Conservation Group



Annual Report

2022

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1. Introduction

A study in 2014 by Reef Check Malaysia (RCM), based on 100 interviews within the local community on Tioman, revealed that the vast majority of respondents showed an interest in working for the Department of Marine Parks (DMPM). Respondents felt they should be given the first priority to fill available jobs within the DMPM Pahang/Tioman compared to ‘outsiders’ whom they claim have little understanding of, or interest in, the island, its culture and relevant conservation issues.

During discussions between RCM and DMPM, DMPM acknowledged that it is aware of this situation but is constrained by government hiring regulations. Recruitment of staff for government positions is managed by the JPA (Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam – Public Services Department) which requires a minimum of SPM results plus evidence of further training (supported by “Certificates of Competence”). Few islanders have SPM certificates and therefore do not qualify for jobs within the DMPM. Some islanders do qualify but do not like the idea that they might be transferred out of Tioman to be stationed in one of the other Marine Park islands around Malaysia.

In an attempt to resolve this problem in the past, the DMPM improvised by hiring some islanders as contract workers, subsequently recruiting them full time after they had gained sufficient training and experience. DMPM is also actively looking for capable individuals within the local community, as well as identifying additional tasks that can be sub-contracted to the local community, to provide local employment opportunities where possible.

2. Tioman Marine Conservation Group

Based on discussions between RCM and DMPM (now- Department of Fisheries, DoF) the quickest and most viable option for recruiting members of the local community to work with the DMPM would be to sub-contract additional tasks to them, providing them with the opportunity to work alongside DMPM staff and build their experience. These would be tasks that are simple, yet play an important role in reducing local threats and managing the Marine Park Island.

In 2015, few local people were select to undergo training to participate in the Tioman Marine Conservation Group (TMCG). The training was designed to empower them to undertake a variety of tasks that would normally be the responsibility of DMPM, providing members an opportunity to participate in the management of the Tioman Marine Park. The following training was provided:

- Rescue diver certification
- Reef Check EcoDiver certification
- Bleaching monitoring protocols
- Coral rehabilitation and maintenance
- Mooring buoy management
- CoT removal
- Net removal.



3. Programme Activities

In March 2016 DMPM allocated RM 200,000 to fund the TMCG. But in 2018 DMPM allocated RM 75, 000 to fund the TMCG. The funding was provided to cover the costs of undertaking the following tasks:

- i. Mooring Buoy Monitoring/Maintenance
- ii. Reef Rehabilitation Monitoring/Maintenance
- iii. Reef Check Monitoring Surveys
- iv. Coral Bleaching Surveys
- v. Crown Of Thorns Monitoring/ Removal
- vi. Reef Clean Ups
- vii. Rapid Response
- viii. Liaison With Tourism Operators
- ix. Snorkel Guide Training
- x. Assist in Marine Park organised Programmes
- xi. Progress Reporting.

4. Review of Achievements

Monthly progress reports have been provided to DoF, detailing the activities undertaken in the preceding month. This report reviews achievements over the 12 month operating period of the Group.

The past 12 months have been an interesting period of implementation. It took some time to gain momentum, with members learning to juggle their full time jobs as well as the above activities. However after a couple of months, team members started to find the correct balance and activities were carried out more consistently and smoothly.

The table below summarises activities carried out by the team in the last 12 months and pictures are shown in Appendix 1.

Programme	Action taken
i. Mooring Buoy Monitoring/Maintenance	6 new mooring lines were installed. All the lines were tied to concrete blocks already in the sea.
ii. Reef Rehabilitation Monitoring/Maintenance	TMCG members have been responsible for the maintenance and monitoring of reef rehabilitation projects in Reef care territory. For this year, there were 37 monitoring sessions and over 1700 coral fragments were planted.
iii. Reef Check Monitoring Surveys	TMCG members were involved with 61 Reef Check Monitoring Survey over the past 12 months, contributing to the national monitoring survey effort.
iv. Coral Bleaching Surveys	Within the last 12 months reefs around Tioman experienced some bleaching. 4 bleaching monitoring program has been done. During this period, TMCG members were involved with monitoring for reef care area. They were also involved in visual surveys of reefs around the island.



v. Crown Of Thorns Monitoring/ Removal	1542 COT were killed by injection in the last year. 50 culling programs were conducted. Team members also conducted frequent monitoring of COT numbers at sites to ensure numbers were in check.
vi. Reef Clean Ups	TMCG was handle 24 beach clean-up activities involving visitors and local communities. 2142.5 kg of trash was collected from beach and underwater clean-ups around Tioman.
vii. Ghostnet removal	In the last 12 months, TMCG members has respond 37 ghost net removal. with more 7028kg net was removed.
viii. Liaison With Tourism Operators	Ongoing beach clean-ups and recycling programmes with resorts and dive operators 12 programme include awareness programme, community survey, and conversation talk
ix. Snorkel Guide Training	No training for snorkel guide this year cause by the pandemic. However, TMCG members have also been receiving reports and feedback from current EcoFriendly Snorkel Guides regarding issues they come across or witness when at sea.
x. Progress Reporting	TMCG have been providing Monthly Reports to DoF for the past 12 months.



5. Costs

The TMCG received RM75,000 from DMPM in 2018. The fund was mainly used for materials, gear rental and salaries. In 2021, TMCG received RM18,500 from DoF to use in Ghost Net removal programme.

6. Summary and Recommendations

6.1 Summary

The Tioman Marine Conservation Group is still in its infancy. However, during the last 12 months it has shown great potential, fostering good relationships between the local community, tourism operators as well as government agencies on the island.

The team has gained the attention of other members of the local community, some of whom have shown interest in joining the group and getting involved in the above activities. The team has also gained the trust of dive operators, with some even contributing where possible by sponsoring scuba tanks, boats and even assistance.

This pilot project of involving the local community in co-management of the island's marine resources has proven successful. It has demonstrated that with a small budget, basic training and a little support the local community can rise to the challenge of participating in the management and protection of its natural resources.

6.2 Recommendations

Going forward we envision recruiting and training more members to TMCG. This year, we are able to recruit 14 new TMCG members. Since 2014 we have now trained and recruited 82 islanders as TMCG members from the 7 villages around Tioman.

We recommend recognising members of the TMCG as Auxiliary Marine Park Officers (or similar) to give them more of an official position within the Tioman Marine Park.

With continued support and endorsement from DoF we believe the TMCG can evolve into a structured body responsible for assisting the Department in co-management of the Tioman Marine Park. Their focus would continue to be on conducting the various activities listed above. However, we recommend that they also develop a stronger community focus, including education, awareness and liaison between community, resorts, dive operators and the management authority, DoF.

We recommend that DoF consider integrating the TMCG into a co-management structure to continue to improve the management of the Tioman Marine Park. This would allow it to be more effective in the long run. Its focus should be on building community support and involvement in the management of the Tioman Marine Park.



Finally, we recommend DOF consider establishing and funding the TMCG as a full time body, with full time staff and an agreed annual “Management Plan”. An estimated annual budget is shown below.

Item	Annual cost (RM)
Manager	65,000
Assistant Manager	50,000
Rangers/operating staff (2)	48,000
Office rental	12,000
Operating budget	60,000
Total	235,000




We recommend using the conservation charge paid by visitors to the island to fund this operation. In 2014, TDA reported a total number of visitors to Tioman of 268,784, comprising 191,795 Malaysians and 76,989 foreigners. Assuming visitor numbers remain similar today, at current conservation charge rates (RM 5 for Malaysians; RM 30 for foreigners) the total revenue in 2017 could be an estimated RM 3.2 million. For less than 10% of this, DoF could support the establishment of a community-based co-management structure that could make a significant contribution to conservation and management of the Tioman Marine Park.

There would be numerous benefits to this, most importantly:





- Conservation charge being seen to be used for a conservation programme on Tioman
- Provides jobs and revenue into the community.



Appendix 1

Programme	Pictures
i. Mooring Buoy Monitoring/ Maintenance	
ii. Reef Rehabilitation Monitoring/ Maintenance	
iii. Reef Check Monitoring Surveys	



<p>iv. Coral Bleaching Surveys</p>		
<p>v. Crown Of Thorns Monitoring/ Removal</p>		
<p>vi. Reef Clean Ups</p>		
<p>vii. Rapid Response</p>		



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viii. Liaison With
Tourism
Operators

