



Reef Check
MALAYSIA

COMMUNITY-BASED MARINE CONSERVATION

CMCG ANNUAL SUMMARY 2025



INTRODUCTION

Community Marine Conservation Groups (CMCGs) are a proven approach to empowering local communities and building capacity in marine management and conservation.

EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sustainable Development Goals highlight the need for a community-based approach to management and conservation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

As a signatory of these international conventions, Malaysia is similarly encouraged to take a holistic approach to management of its Marine Parks that involves the participation of local communities. This is reflected in the National Policy on Biological Diversity and RMK 12 (the long term Malaysian economic planning system). CMCGs provide the vehicle for this to become a **reality**.

An initiative with small beginnings in Tioman has now grown to cover nine locations, with programmes growing in 2025. We are working to establish CMCGs in new groups in 2026 and beyond.

HOW IT STARTED...

Reef Check Malaysia (RCM) established its first community-based conservation group on Tioman island in 2015. Named the Tioman Marine Conservation Group (TMCG), it was set up in response to demand from local islanders who were keen to participate in management and conservation of their island's marine resources. TMCG now has over 80 trained volunteers – all local islanders – who regularly participate in conservation activities including **coral reef monitoring, ghost net removals, coral predator management, mooring buoy management and coral rehabilitation programmes**.

In early 2020, the Department of Fisheries (DoF) introduced the Reef Care programme, which was designed to give limited responsibility for coral reef management to suitable local community groups. RCM and the TMCG were appointed Reef Care partners in Tioman; Fuze Ecoteer and Anak Pulau were appointed Reef Care partners in Perhentian. Recognising the importance of this approach, RCM applied to DoF to establish new community groups in Mersing and Redang and we were able to collaborate with Reef Care partners in Lang Tengah and Langkawi, growing the network to new locations.

At the same time, RCM was introducing the community-based conservation model to communities in Sabah, and the groups are now operating in four islands in the south of Sabah: Lrarian, Selakan, Mabul and Kulapuan.

A special thanks to the **Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah (KePKAS)** for supporting the CMCGs in Semporna.



CMCG GUIDELINES

Following a series of consultations in 2023 with DoF, Reef Care partners and other stakeholders, advisory guidelines for community-based conservation were published. The guidelines are intended **to support communities seeking to establish their own community conservation programmes**. The generic title “Community Marine Conservation Group” was adopted to ensure **broader inclusion of groups other than those in the original Reef Care network**.

Collectively, these CMCGs are leading the way in showing just how the involvement of local communities in marine ecosystem management can have significant conservation outcomes, as well as creating a way to mainstream environmental protection at community level.

CMCG IMPLEMENTERS

REEF CHECK MALAYSIA

Reef Check Malaysia (RCM) is part of the worldwide Reef Check network. Since it was registered in 2007, RCM has become established as a leader in coral reef conservation in Malaysia. Our activities are organized around three core pillars: Science – training survey divers and conducting coral reef surveys at over 300 locations around Malaysia to monitor coral reef health, conducting studies on reef resilience and rehabilitation to better understand coral reefs and impacts; Management – working with stakeholders to improve the management of coral reefs in Malaysia to secure long-term conservation goals; and Advocacy – raising awareness of the importance of coral reefs and the valuable ecosystem services they provide.

RCM has field teams based in five locations around Malaysia. Through these field offices we support CMCGs in seven locations: Tioman, Redang, Mersing, Larapan, Kulupuan, Selakan and Mabul.

FUZE ECOTEER

Fuze Ecoteer leads conservation and community projects in Malaysia’s Perhentian Islands, protecting marine life and empowering locals. The Turtle Project safeguards sea turtles, the Eco Education Project nurtures young environmental stewards, and the Marine Research Station supports marine studies. The Anak Pulau Programme trains island youth in conservation and eco-tourism, shaping future guardians of their home. By uniting conservation and community, we drive lasting change.

PULIHARA

PULIHARA is a marine conservation organisation based in Terengganu. It carries out coral rehabilitation, maintenance and monitoring at one of its project sites which is Pulau Lang Tengah. PULIHARA is also a Reef Care partner and is involved in the annual Reef Check surveys around the island. Additionally, PULIHARA also carries out regular underwater clean-ups removing ghost nets, discarded fishing gear and other marine debris from the surrounding waters of Pulau Lang Tengah. It is also actively involved in outreach and awareness programmes.

CMCG PARTNERS



Perhentian Marine Conservation Group (PMCG/ Anak Pulau)

- Established in 2022
- 31 members trained



PULIHARA

- Established in 2023
- 3 members trained



Redang Marine Conservation Group (RMCG)

- Established in 2023
- 21 members trained



Tioman Marine Conservation Group (TMCG)

- Established in 2014
- 89 members trained



Mersing Marine Conservation Group (MMCG)

- Established in 2024
- 10 members trained



Larapan Marine Conservation Group (LMCG)

- Established in 2023
- 18 members trained



Kulapuan Marine Conservation Group (KMCG)

- Established in 2023
- 11 members trained



Pemimpin Iklim Mabul (IKLIM)

- Established in 2021
- 15 members trained



Selakan Marine Conservation Group (SMCG)

- Established in 2023
- 15 members trained



COMING SOON IN 2026

- Kunak Marine Conservation Group
- Iskul Marine Conservation Group
- Mantanani Marine Conservation Group

SUMMARY OF CMCgs 2025 PROGRAMMES OUTPUTS

REEF CHECK MONITORING SURVEYS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reef Check monitoring surveys conducted at 140 sites by 7 CMCgs 	CORAL RESTORATION/REEF REHABILITATION AND MAINTENANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 7,200 coral fragments attached • Monitoring and maintenance at 8 islands by CMCgs 	GHOST NET REMOVAL/ MANAGEMENT; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 50 ghost nets and 1,600 pieces of fishing gear were removed • Total weight almost 3,600kg 	UNDERWATER CLEANUPS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 30 underwater cleanups conducted • 757kg of marine debris collected 	BEACH CLEANUPS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beach cleanups were conducted by 9 CMCgs • Over 7,600kg of trash was collected
COTS/PREDATOR MANAGEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12,951 COTs removed by 7 CMCgs 	MOORING BUOY MONITORING/ MAINTENANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 mooring buoys installed/maintained by 7 CMCgs 	DIVE TRAINING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 community members from 5 CMCgs trained as EcoDivers, to conduct monitoring surveys 	SNORKEL GUIDE TRAINING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 92 snorkel guides trained 	BLEACHING MONITORING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bleaching monitoring conducted at 62 sites by 7 CMCgs
CEPA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion: More than 2,500 people reached through education and public awareness activities 		STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder consultations conducted by 6 CMCgs with over 2,000 people 		MARINE RESOURCE MAPPING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine resource mapping at 18 sites

CMCG HIGHLIGHTS



REDANG MARINE CONSERVATION GROUP (RMCG)

- Revived the Coral Reef Camp which was last done in 2013. In 2025, 30 students and 10 teachers from SK Pulau Redang participated, with help from 2 RMCG members.
- Sessions included learning about coral reef ecosystems and snorkelling trips.



MERSING MARINE CONSERVATION GROUP (MMCG)

- Established the first reef rehabilitation site at Pulau Aur with MMCG members from Pulau Aur.
- 31 coral block structure with 234 fragments were deployed



TIOMAN CONSERVATION GROUP (TMCG)

1. Conducted several bleaching monitoring surveys to assess the health of coral reefs
2. Successfully deployed 187 coral block structure with 1,240 coral fragments at our reef rehabilitation sites.



CMCG HIGHLIGHTS

KULAPUAN MARINE CONSERVATION GROUP (KMCG)



- Co-organized a joint CEPA (Community Education and Public Awareness) programme with the Sabah Wildlife Department on Sea Turtles in Kulapuan Island "Bokko ta Kalasahan" (Love our sea turtles).
- The main aim: share the importance of sea turtles with the local children

PEMIMPIN IKLIM MABUL (IKLIM)



- Participated in the Community Exchange Leadership Camp 2025;
- IKLIM secured a mini-grant to run a community-based patrolling activity in Mabul Island.

SELAKAN MARINE CONSERVATION GROUP (SMCG)



- Completed their training as Eco-Friendly Snorkel Guides (EFSG) through a programme supported by KePKAS and Sabah Parks, funded by the Resilience Fund.
- This certification equipped the members with skills to conduct tourism activities sustainably and respond to emergency situations at sea while snorkeling.

LARAPAN CONSERVATION GROUP (LMCG)



- Joint Crown-of-Thorns (COTs) Removal in East Coast of Sabah with Buwan, SCCA and CMCGs;
- The joint intervention removed 2,188 Crown-of-Thorns starfish (COTs)

SUPPORT CMCs

PARTNER

with us to strengthen CMCs

Work alongside us to build stronger community marine conservation groups and expand their impact.

DONATE

to support CMCs

Contribute funds that directly sustain marine conservation projects and empower local groups to protect our oceans.



SHARE

CMCs work with your network

Help spread awareness by sharing CMCs' initiatives and successes with your community and colleagues.

Before

COLLABORATE

with CMCs in their marine conservation work

Join forces with CMCs on hands-on conservation efforts, creating meaningful change together.



SUPPORT CMC GS

Adopt seKarang

“Adopt SeKarang” is a play on the word ‘sekarang’ which means **now** and “satu karang”, which means **a coral**.

Supporting the Adopt seKarang programme means supporting our reefs and the CMC GS who are the guardians of these reefs.

Every adoption is a step toward protecting our shared future. Whether you choose **A Fragment of Life (RM200)** or **A Shape of Hope (RM2500)**, your support helps corals thrive and keeps the ocean’s story alive.



ADOPT SEKARANG
REEF CHECK MALAYSIA

ADOPT SEKARANG
REEF CHECK MALAYSIA

ADOPT SEKARANG

A Fragment of Life (RM200)
You will adopt a single coral fragment

Receive:

- an E-certificate,
- a shout-out on social media, &
- Two photo updates

A Shape of Hope (RM2500)
You will adopt one set of Metal Frame

Receive:

- an E-certificate,
- a shout-out on social media, &
- Two photo updates

ADOPT HERE



www.reefcheck.org.my



CMCGS IN ACTION



CMCGS IN ACTION





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Saving our marine ecosystems



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