

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

Project Ref No	17-002
Project Title	Managing coral reef fisheries for biodiversity, ecosystem and economic benefits
Country(ies)	Maldives
UK Organisation	Marine Conservation Society
Collaborator(s)	Marine Research Centre, Maldives
Project Leader	Dr Elizabeth Wood
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Project website	http://www.mcsuk.org/conservation_in_action/Coral+reefs/Maldives/Maldives

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up).

1. Reef fish monitoring programme established and coral reef fish stock assessments / habitat assessments completed.

Data collection has been continuing as planned and we have also carried out more training sessions, including 2 local workshops. Data processing has provided details of abundance and distribution of key species targeted for the aquarium trade, reef and grouper fishery. Baseline surveys of several grouper spawning aggregations have been carried out and are on-going.

2. System for long-term monitoring of catch, effort and value of reef fisheries established.

Proforma export forms for aquarium fish and grouper continue to be entered and collated. In addition to the paper logbooks we have been continuing to work on the development of an electronic logbook (Catchlog) for the grouper fishery. We have also held training sessions with the aquarium fishermen and exporters in relation to the new catch and export records that are in the process of being introduced. Work has continued on the programme to enlist the help of resort managers to collect data on reef fish purchase and we also have fishery officers in place to collect data directly from the fishing boats for a 6-month period (June to Dec 2012).

3. Management Plans for coral reef fisheries and biodiversity conservation devised and in operation.

The Grouper Management Plan is now in law and we have been preparing outreach materials for the implementation phase. Preparatory work for a Stakeholder Workshop on the Aquarium Fishery has been undertaken. The workshop is scheduled for Nov 2012 and the aim is to develop Guidelines and a draft Management Plan for the fishery.

4. Results of reef fish stock assessment and reef health monitoring widely disseminated.

The results of Sharkwatch and grouper stock assessments were presented at the International Coral Reef Symposium in June 2012 and the latest report on fishery target species is currently being finalised and will be available in November and discussed at the Aquarium Fishery Workshop.

