



**TAMAN MARIN TUN SAKARAN  
DARWIN INITIATIVE**

*Capacity building to enhance Marine Protected Area effectiveness*



**Community Marine Life Appreciation Art Workshop  
Pulau Sibuan, Tun Sakaran Marine Park, Semporna**

By

Helen Brunt

April 2010





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## Report of Community Marine Life Appreciation Art Workshop Pulau Sibuan, Tun Sakaran Marine Park, Semporna

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2010

By  
Helen Brunt

*Semporna Islands Darwin Project*  
April 2010

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### SIDP Contact details

Website: [www.sempornaislandsproject.com](http://www.sempornaislandsproject.com)

Email: [info@sempornaislandsproject.com](mailto:info@sempornaislandsproject.com)

*SIDP Sabah Coordinator*

Helen Brunt  
[helen@sempornaislandsproject.com](mailto:helen@sempornaislandsproject.com)

*Sabah Parks*

P.O. Box 163, 91307 Semporna, Sabah, Malaysia  
[www.sabahparks.org.my](http://www.sabahparks.org.my)  
[sabahparks@gmail.com](mailto:sabahparks@gmail.com)

*Marine Conservation Society*

Unit 3 Wolf Business Park, Alton Road,  
Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5BU, UK  
[www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)  
[info@mcsuk.org](mailto:info@mcsuk.org)

## Summary

- The Community Marine Life Appreciation Art Workshop at Pulau Sibuan was a 1 day event held on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2010. It consisted of a variety of activities including a practical painting and drawing session, a snorkelling session and a fact-finding/questionnaire session.
- The organising team consisted of 11 members of staff from Semporna Islands Darwin Project (SIDP) and Sabah Parks, as well as the guest artist, Mr. Ajis Mohamad from Kuala Lumpur.
- The art activity produced 9 finished canvases which were retained by SIDP, with agreement from the artists, to be converted into postcards. More than 20 children were also involved in painting and drawing on art paper, which they brought home at the end of the day.
- Each of the families involved received a gift of a block of art paper and a set of oil pastels, in order that they might continue depicting artistically the marine life they encounter.
- Questionnaires concerning resource use and important species were completed by eight members of the community.

## 1. Introduction

The aim of the Semporna Islands Darwin Project (SIDP) is to develop and carry out programmes that will help to consolidate support and conservation action for the Tun Sakaran Marine Park (TSMP). The project is directly linked to enhancing the twin management goals of promoting biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the Park.

The project is focusing on three main outputs a) increased public awareness about TSMP, b) increased knowledge of marine biodiversity & conservation within Sabah Parks and c) alternative livelihoods programme in TSMP expanded and enhanced.

One of the key target audiences for the education and awareness component of the project is the resident population of the Tun Sakaran Marine Park, including the community living on Pulau Sibuan, who previously have participated in and benefited from the travelling 'roadshows' organised by SIDP and Sabah Parks. However, in recent times the community of Pulau Sibuan have not been directly involved in many of our outreach and education activities. Nevertheless, this community continue to be some of the heaviest resource users in the Park, with few other options for making a living and finding food. Pulau Sibuan is also one of the most popular destinations in the Semporna area for divers and snorkellers receiving roughly 20-30 visitors each day.

Currently, none of the children living on the island are attending school or receiving an education of any sort. However, from our previous observations during roadshow activities in 2005 - 2008, these children enjoy colouring and drawing and often depict the marine life that they see everyday in an artistic form.

In order to attract the community to get involved in this activity, we invited the acclaimed Malaysian artist Mr. Ajis Mohamad, who is a diver and committed conservationist, and whose work captures the beauty and fragility of the marine environment, to give a demonstration and art workshop. Through Mr. Ajis Mohamad's demonstration and the workshop it is hoped that this community might develop an appreciation of the marine life surrounding them and better understand the benefits of the existence of the Tun Sakaran Marine Park.

## 2. Aims & Objectives

- To promote the existence and benefits of Tun Sakaran Marine Park among the community of Pulau Sibuan.
- To promote the existence and benefits of Tun Sakaran Marine Park to the local dive operators and tourists who visit Pulau Sibuan.
- To promote the existence and benefits of Tun Sakaran Marine Park to the local Semporna community and promote a pride for their local Marine Park.
- To engage with the local community of the Tun Sakaran Marine Park.
- To facilitate collaboration and links between Sabah Parks, the local dive operators and the community of Pulau Sibuan.
- To provide the children living on Pulau Sibuan with a chance to express themselves artistically.
- To gain information about occurrence of various species through consultation with the community and the children's artwork.
- To update information on livelihoods and resource use within the Pulau Sibuan community.

### 3. Organising Team

1.	Helen Brunt	SIDP	Organiser
2.	Bobita Golam Ahad	SIDP/Sabah Parks	Facilitator
3.	Salamat Lumma	Sabah Parks	Facilitator/translator
4.	Abdul Jalil Mapait	Sabah Parks	Facilitator/translator
5.	Raziah Amir Salleh	Sabah Parks	Facilitator/interviewer
6.	Maznah Laggu	Sabah Parks	Facilitator
7.	Benedict Busin	Sabah Parks	Facilitator
8.	Reemy Edai	Sabah Parks	Facilitator
9.	Salmiah Amir Salleh	Volunteer	Facilitator/interviewer
10.	Asri Abd. Muis	Sabah Parks	Facilitator/translator/boatman
11.	Razali Patiha	Sabah Parks	Facilitator/translator/boatman
12.	Ajis Mohamad		Artist

### 4. Logistics

A 'recce' visit was made to Pulau Sibuan on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April (morning) to meet the village head, confirm the number of participants, inform the Army and find a suitable location for the activities. From this visit we estimated that there would be approximately 40 - 50 participants.

Based on the number of participants, a team of staff from SIDP and Sabah Parks was formed, with a number of Bajau language speakers included in the team.

For both the recce on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April and the actual event on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April all boat and road transportation was arranged by Sabah Parks. The art materials for the event and 20 sets of snorkelling equipment were provided by SIDP. The National Art Gallery of Malaysia generously donated blocks of art paper and sets of oil pastels which were given to the community as gifts.

## 5. Programme

The workshop was carried out on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2010 and the programme was as follows:

- 08.00 Sabah Parks boat with team departed from Semporna jetty
- 08.30 Arrived at Pulau Sibuan and set up activities
- 08.45 Introduction by Sabah Parks/SIDP staff
- 08.50 Art Demonstration by Mr. Ajis Mohmad
- 09.30 Snorkelling session for community members and visitors
- 11.00 Interactive Art Workshop for island children (and adults) and ‘fact-finding’ questionnaire session with adults
- 12.30 Prize giving and ‘thank you’ session
- 13.00 Lunch/refreshments
- 14.00 Sabah Parks boat returned to Semporna

The day ran very smoothly with the Sabah Parks boat departing on time from Semporna. This was important as we needed to utilise the high tide in the morning for the snorkelling session. When the team arrived at the island we divided into various groups to prepare for the activities. Some of the taller team members, with help from the local community, erected some canvas to create a shaded area as there is no shade on Pulau Sibuan. Meanwhile, other members of the team organised the art materials and invited the community to congregate.

The event started with a short welcome speech (in Bajau language) by Sabah Parks staff, who introduced our guest artist, Mr. Ajis Mohamad, to the community. Mr. Ajis then gave a simple demonstration about how to use and mix the paints and how to paint on canvas and art paper. The audience were captivated and thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Ajis’ entertaining demonstration.

After the demonstration, there was a short briefing for those participants who wished to go snorkelling to look for inspiration for their art work. Unfortunately, we only had 20 sets of masks and snorkels so not all the participants were able to snorkel. Also, in hindsight we should have snorkelled at reef at the south-western end of the island where the coral is in considerably better condition, rather than on the eastern reef which is lacking much coral and fish life. Nevertheless, the participants, Mr. Ajis and members of the team enjoyed the snorkelling session.

The participants then divided into 2 groups - those using paints and canvas, and those using paper and oil pastels. The team from SIDP and Sabah Parks, distributed the art materials, buckets of water and the workshop began. The participants had been briefed that they could draw or paint anything they wished on the theme of the marine environment, and this led to a fantastic variety of art work. The organisers explained to the participants that one of the objectives of the activity was to convert the art work produced into t-shirts and/or postcards that would be distributed or sold to raise awareness about the Tun Sakaran Marine Park. All of the participants gave their permission for their art work to be used for this purpose.

The artists were provided with refreshments throughout the morning. These refreshments were in the form of fresh fruit and carton drinks, to minimise the amount of litter produced and provide the island community with some healthy snacks.

Once the artists had finished their paintings and drawings, a second activity was introduced which was the innovative idea of painting Chinese-style paper umbrellas. This was a group activity, with one family or group of friends working together to decorate one umbrella. This was a hugely popular activity and the community produced beautifully coloured umbrellas to take home.

The activities were concluded with a small closing ceremony where thank you gifts were presented to Mr. Ajis Mohamad and also to the head of the community of Pulau Sibuan. Each household was also given a block of art paper and a set of oil pastels (donated by National Art Gallery of Malaysia) in the hope that the community might continue to produce art work depicting the marine life that they encounter on a daily basis.

The team packed up all the materials, took down the canvas and the Sabah Parks boat returned to Semporna, arriving at 2:00pm.

## 6. Expenses

The following expenses (in Ringgit Malaysia) were incurred in the preparation and running of the activity:

Return flights from KL to Tawau for Ajis Mohamad	446.00
2 nights accommodation for Ajis Mohamad	130.00
Art materials (paints, brushes, palettes, paper)	340.00
Art canvases x 50 pcs	300.00
Refreshments for participants (fruit and 75 carton drinks)	100.00
Chinese-style paper umbrellas	110.00
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>RM 1426.00</b>

The National Art Gallery of Malaysia generously donated the prizes/gifts which were presented to the head of each household.

## 7. Fact-finding questionnaire

As a side activity, and to collect some data from the community, a questionnaire session was conducted among some of the older members of the community whilst the children were engaged with the art activities. The questionnaire was kept deliberately simple and contained only a few questions about key species of interest to SIDP and Sabah Parks, namely turtles, sharks, humphead wrasse and giant clams. It was also an opportunity to distribute anti-fish bombing postcards among the community and ask about the community's perceptions of visitors to Pulau Sibuan.

The questionnaire was written in Bahasa Malaysia but conducted verbally in Bajau by Bajau speaking staff from Sabah Parks. Unfortunately we were not able to conduct many questionnaires as most of the adults were also heavily involved in the art activities!

Questionnaires were completed by 8 respondents (7 male and 1 female).

	Age	No. family members	Time living at Pulau Sibuan	Place of birth	Primary income	Secondary income	Monthly income (approx.) (RM)
1	25	3	16 yrs	Sibuan	Gleaning		100-200
2	38	6	10 yrs	Tungku	Fishing		150
3	25	5	4 years +	Maiga	Fishing		30-40
4	40	5	4 yrs	Semporna	Fishing	Making mats	100
5	30	5	10 yrs	Sibuan	Fishing	Gleaning	35
6	57	4	2 yrs 2 months	P. Bait	Fishing		100-200
7	65	6	3 yrs	Philippines	Fishing		150
8	50's	9	3 yrs	Philippines	Fishing		150 (RM5/day)
Av.	41.25	5.38	6.5 yrs				115



The following specific questions were asked to each respondent:

### Turtles

- Qu. 1. Have you, or your family members, ever caught turtles?
- None of the respondents said that they, or their family members, had ever caught turtles. We know from previous research that the Bajau Laut community do not target turtles as they consider them a sacred animal.
- Qu. 2. Do you, or your family members, still catch turtles now?
- None of the respondents said that they, or their family members, catch turtles now.
- Qu. 3. If yes, from where?
- Although none of the respondents said that they do catch turtles, 1 person said that turtles could be commonly seen around Pulau Sibuan and Kea-Kea area on the Pondoan reef top.
- Qu. 4. Which species?
- The same 1 respondent replied that it was the 'usual species' which we can assume is the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*).
- Qu. 5. Have you ever collected turtle eggs?
- None of the respondents said that they had ever collected turtle eggs.
- Qu. 6. If yes, from where?
- None of the respondents said that they had ever collected turtle eggs.
- Qu. 7. Which species?
- None of the respondents said that they had ever collected turtle eggs.
- Qu. 8. Do you know of any turtle nesting sites on Pulau Sibuan?
- 4 respondents said that they knew of turtles occasionally nesting during the season of southern winds, but they did not give specific locations.
- Qu. 9. If yes, how often, from where and which species?
- 1 respondent said that they had observed a turtle nesting on 2 occasions and another respondent had once seen a turtle nesting. No information was given on location or species.
- Qu. 10. Do you think that turtles should be protected? Yes/No/Maybe etc.
- 5 respondents thought that turtles should be protected with 1 respondent adding that she felt sorry for turtles.
  - 1 respondent thought that maybe turtles should be protected and another turtle thought there was no need for turtles to be protected.

## Sharks

Qu. 11. Have you, or your family members, ever caught sharks?

- 2 respondents said that had caught shark in the past.

Qu. 12. Do you, or your family, catch sharks now?

- 3 respondents said that they did catch sharks now.

Qu. 13. If yes, from where?

- 2 respondents said they caught sharks from the area of Tun Sakaran Marine Park, and 1 respondent said from Pulau Sibuan.

Qu. 14. Which species?

- 2 respondents said that they caught black tip reef sharks in the Tun Sakaran Marine Park, and 1 respondent said that they caught the 'spotted shark' (possibly White spotted Shovelnose Ray (*Rhynchobatus djiddensis/R. australiae*) around P. Sibuan.

Qu. 15. How easy is it to find sharks in Tun Sakaran Marine Park?

- 4 respondents said that it was not easy, or that it was difficult to find sharks in Tun Sakaran Marine Park now and 1 respondent said that there were not many sharks left in the Park.

Qu. 16. Where?

- 2 respondents replied that they could catch sharks around P. Sibuan in the rocky areas.

Qu. 17. What size?

- 2 respondents said that the size of the sharks was small.

Qu. 18. Do you think that sharks should be protected?

- 4 respondents thought that sharks should be protected, with 1 respondent adding that they are scared of sharks.

## Humhead Wrasse

Qu. 19. Have you, or your family, ever caught humphead wrasse?

- 3 respondents said that they occasionally caught small humphead wrasse.

Qu. 20. Do you, or your family, still catch humphead wrasse?

- 2 respondents said that occasionally still caught humphead wrasse.

Qu. 21. If yes, from where?

- 2 respondents said that they caught humphead wrasse around Sibuan, Church Reef and Kea-Kea.

Qu. 22. How easy is it to find humphead wrasse in Tun Sakaran Marine Park?

- 1 respondents said that it was difficult to find humphead wrasse in the Park.
- Another respondent said that they can sometimes find humphead wrasse in the Park.
- A third respondent said that there are still some humphead wrasse in the Park, but not many.
- A fourth respondent said that there are still a lot of humphead wrasse in the Park.
- A fifth respondent said that you can usually see them around the area of Sibuan.

Qu. 23. Where?

- 2 respondents said you could find humphead wrasse around Pulau Sibuan
- Another respondent said that you could find them around Pulau Sibuan and Church Reef.
- Another respondent said that you could still find them everywhere.

Qu. 24. What size?

- 1 respondent said that the size was small, 2 said the size was average and 1 respondent was not sure of the size.

Qu. 25. Do you think that humphead should be protected?

- 4 respondents thought that humphead wrasse should be protected. 2 other respondents thought that they should be protected for extra income while another respondent thought that they should just be left alone.

### Giant Clams

Qu. 26. Do you, or your family, collect giant clams and if so, what species and from where?

- 3 respondents said that they did collect giant clams from Church Reef and Kea-Kea.
- N.B. Not all of the respondents were asked this additional question about Giant Clams.

### Species of importance

Qu. 27. What are the 3 most important marine species for you and your family?

- |    |                            |               |
|----|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. | Sharks                     | 3 respondents |
| 2. | Emperorfish                | 3 respondents |
| 3. | Clams ( <i>T. crocea</i> ) | 3 respondents |
| 4. | Groupers                   | 2 respondents |

5.	Parrotfish	2 respondents
6.	Dolphins	2 respondents
7.	White grouper	1 respondent
8.	Fish	1 respondent
9.	Juvenile fish	1 respondent
10.	<i>Landak laut</i>	1 respondent
11.	Sea urchin ( <i>Tayum</i> )	1 respondent
12.	<i>Ikan batu</i>	1 respondent

Qu. 28. Why? What does each species provide? E.g. for eating, for selling etc.

- All of the respondents said that they collected/caught marine resources for both eating and for selling. Their primary motivation was to provide food for their family and any extra would be sold in order to buy other food such as tapioca.

Qu. 29. Where do get them from?

- All of the respondent said that they fished around Pulau Sibuan, Church Reef and Kea-Kea, with 2 respondents saying that they fish in deep water outside Tun Sakaran Marine Park (presumably for sharks).

Qu. 30. Are they easy to find?

- 4 respondents said that it was hard to find these species, with 2 more respondents saying that they can rarely find the species they are looking for.
- 1 respondent said that there are still a lot of fish at Church Reef and another said that it is easy to find the species that they are targeting.

Qu. 31. Is it easier or harder to find them now or 5 years ago? Or the same?

- All of the respondents agreed that it is harder to catch fish now that it was 5 years ago, with 1 respondent adding that this is because now there are more fishermen and most of the areas are gazetted in the Marine Park.
- 1 respondent commented that there are still a lot of fish at Church Reef.

Qu. 32. If Sabah Parks proposed that Pulau Sibuan became a tourism centre, would the community give their cooperation to work with Sabah Parks to develop this idea?

- 4 respondents replied that they agreed with Pulau Sibuan being developed as a tourism destination but only with approval from the village chief and landowner.

## **8. Lessons Learned**

- The participants enjoyed getting inspiration from the Marine Life identification books that we brought. For future activities we should bring more such books or magazines.
- It would be have been useful to bring along colouring pencils for the younger members of the community to use.
- The activities could have been better coordinated with each team member being assigned a specific role. As it was, we possibly had too many people translating between Malay and Bajau languages!
- The team members conducting the interviews/questionnaires need to write more legibly and include their own name on the form to facilitate follow up questions.
- The content of the questionnaire could have been more specific with the questions phrased in a more succinct way, thus leading to more useful responses. Nevertheless, the questionnaire did enable us to get a general picture of the species of particular importance to the community of Pulau Sibuan and the monthly income generated from their activities.
- The Sabah Parks staff appeared to really enjoy helping with the activities, in particular Maznah Lunggu from the new Community Unit, and Asri Abd. Muis, the boat captain.

## **9. Outputs and Future Plans**

This was the first activity of its kind that we have organised and overall it was considered to be a success. It was a relatively simple and inexpensive event to carry out and produced 9 beautiful and unique designs, painted on canvas, that will now be adapted and made into postcards to promote SIDP and the Tun Sakaran Marine Park.

The activity also generated increased interest from the local community in the Tun Sakaran Marine Park and provided an opportunity for dialogue between Sabah Parks staff and the local community. The head of the village at Pulau Sibuan expressed his commitment to working with Sabah Parks and SIDP and said that he hoped that there would be more activities organised for the community of Pulau Sibuan in the future.

## 10. Photographs



Constructing the shaded area



Art materials



Community of P. Sibuan



Mr. Ajis giving his demonstration



Distributing snorkelling equipment



Snorkelling session





Mr. Ajis giving a snorkelling lesson



The snorkelling session provided inspiration

Artists hard at work



Variety of marine life found around P. Sibuan



Proud artist with his drawings



Adding the finishing touches



Using poster paints on canvas



Sabah Parks staff conducting interview session with community





Sabah Parks staff conducting interview



Painting umbrellas under the house



Group activity painting Chinese-style paper umbrellas



Beautifully decorated umbrellas



Presenting art materials to community



Thanking Mr. Ajis Mohamad  
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Island Artists and activity organisers



