



October - November, 2008

Welcome to the sixth issue of the MFF e-Newsletter!

This E-Newsletter aims to keep MFF National Coordinating Bodies, partner organisations and other stakeholder groups up to date on MFF activities and other marine and coastal news. We warmly welcome your contribution!

News/Announcements



Ms. Aditi Mehendiratta has joined MFF India. Aditi is a TERI University post-graduate with a wide range of environmental working experiences, including coastal ecosystem management for fostering climate change adaptation in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, as well as development of monitoring framework using IDRC's outcome mapping tool. In addition, she has also volunteered for awareness generation, community mobilization and capacity building programmes for watershed management in India. Her responsibilities include managing and implementing the MFF India Small Grants Programme from the IUCN India Office in New Dehli. She can be contacted at: aditi@iucnt.org.

Myanmar shows keen interest to join MFF

Government and NGO representatives from Myanmar attended the recent MFF *Scientific and Technical Symposium on Sustainable Mangrove Ecosystem Management* in Ranong, Thailand. They shared their recent experiences in mangrove ecosystem restoration after Cyclone Nargis and gained the lessons learned by the MFF countries from the December 2004 tsunami. Participants from Myanmar also joined a working group to discuss transboundary coastal resource management issues with their counterparts from Thailand.

Myanmar, with a coastline of about 2279 km and a large number of estuaries, rivers and islands, as well as a large area of pristine mangrove forests (a recent study conducted by Europe Conservation Switzerland (ECoSwiss) Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA) revealed that the Lampi and adjacent islands have 50 mangrove and associate species), faces restoration challenges after Cyclone Nargis. However, there is now a realisation that public awareness campaigns are needed to maintain the current state of mangrove forests.

Both the Forest Department and BANCA recognized the great value of the MFF initiative and the collective experiences of its institutional partners CARE, FAO, IUCN, UNDP, UNEP and Wetlands International, as well as the wealth of scientific research conducted in the MFF focal and dialogue countries. In addition to expressing their interest in joining MFF, an invitation was made to the MFF Secretariat to visit mangrove areas in Myanmar early next year.



Launched at IUCN World Conservation Congress, 2008

Protect Planet Ocean is a unique global collaboration between some of the leading names in ocean conservation, namely The Nature Conservancy, IUCN, WCPA and WWF. These together with other founding partners have come together to develop a web site as a way of bringing the best information on Marine Protected Areas to a global audience. The Protect Planet Ocean website www.protectplanetocan.org was launched at the recent IUCN World Conservation Congress.

This websites intends to develop pages to best serve the global community, both those specialists and those with a more general interest in our oceans. If you wish to become a contributory partner and help develop this site, please contact: admin@protectplanetocan.org.

Fantastic response received for MFF calls for proposals

Fantastic response for the MFF calls for proposals for Small Grants Facilities (SGF) and Large Project Proposals have been received. Sri Lanka alone received more than 30 SGF proposals. India has already short-listed and approved six SGF proposals. Numerous large project proposals have also been submitted, which are currently being reviewed.

From Tsunami Relief to Self Reliance: Community tourism in Thailand wins a prestigious award - World Travel Market, 11-13 November, 2008, London, UK

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) honored Andaman Discoveries for their contribution to sustainable development at the recent World Travel Market in London. The Responsible Tourism Awards Ceremony took place on November 12. Andaman Discoveries is a grass-roots responsible tourism group in Thailand that has won the 2008 SEED Award, Travel+Leisure Global Vision Award and is a finalist for the Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Award. Andaman Discoveries will use the Award to expand its partnerships with the local Community Tourism Network.



Homestay © Andaman Discoveries

Recent Events

IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC)- Barcelona Spain, 5-14 October



7,800 people from 178 countries participated in the 2008 IUCN World Conservation Congress, the largest conservation gathering the world has ever seen. 3200 invited participants enjoyed the opening ceremony with an address by **Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand**, and IUCN's 60th birthday celebration, 5 October. More than 800 workshops, learning opportunities, exhibitions and other events took place at the **World Conservation Forum, 6-9 October**.



125 Resolutions were voted on during the **Members' Assembly 10-14 October**. IUCN members at the Congress called for strong action to protect biodiversity and to regulate the human activities impacting on biodiversity. There was a strong impetus for protecting the high seas. Among the high profile commitments that have been made to support IUCN's mission during the WCC was, the commitment of Regional heads of state who agreed to a summit at the **World Ocean Conference, 11-15 May, 2008 Manado, Sulawesi** to launch the **Coral Triangle Initiative** to protect the world's richest coral reefs. For more information about the Congress visit: www.iucn.org/congress.

Sailing to Barcelona

Sailing to Barcelona was an international, high-profile event featuring a diverse array of boats each representing contributions towards marine and coastal conservation. The fleet was based in Barceloneta, Barcelona's harbour, where citizens and tourists of Barcelona could jump on-board and learn about marine conservation. The parade sailed from Barceloneta to the CCIB followed by TV crews. Sailing to Barcelona gave a voice to creative marine conservation efforts from various corners of the world, while helping to build new and innovative partnerships for future action, and raise awareness beyond the conservation community.



Barceloneta © Epps, M

MFF Events at the IUCN World Conservation Congress

Launch of MFF short film at the Futures Pavilion 7 October, 2008

WCC participants gathered over some drinks and snacks at the futures pavilion for the launch of the MFF short film, *Investing in Coastal Ecosystems*. Participants exchanged experiences and challenges in coastal management from across the globe. [Click here](#) and watch the MFF short film!



Futures Pavilion, CCIB

MFF Workshop at WCC

MFF – A Unique Partnership for Healthy Coasts, Ecosystems and Communities in the Indian Ocean, 9 October 2008



MFF Press Conference, October 9, 2008 © MFF Secretariat

One hundred marine and coastal professionals joined the MFF team for a 1.5 hrs workshop at the IUCN World Conservation Forum, *MFF, A Unique Partnership for Healthy Coasts, Ecosystems and Communities in the Indian Ocean*. The workshop was opened by screening the newly launched MFF short film. A comprehensive overview of the MFF initiative was presented before conducting an interactive exercise with stakeholder groups representing governments, UN agencies, University/ Research Institutions, civil society and the private sector, discussing future opportunities for MFF. These opportunities include the need to highlight the interlinkages between coastal ecosystems (wetlands, seagrasses, corals and mangroves). The opportunity to use the MFF platform for both ICZM and climate change investments was also discussed. The World Bank saw an opportunity for partnering with MFF using mangroves as a “sub-forest group” in their larger forest programme.

Based on a survey questionnaire at the workshop, suggestions for MFF future direction and priorities included:

- Replicating MFF in other regions
- More Civil Society Participation
- More focus on improving livelihoods
- Include Myanmar
- Carbon reduction
- Fundraising
- Regional partnership for strengthening awareness
- More focus on mitigation and adaptation to climate change
- Focus on sustainable capacity building by incorporating interactive teaching methods
- Repeat training to secure training of trainers
- Academic partnership and research dialogues

Regional Training Course on How to Apply Project Cycle Tools to Support Integrated Coastal Management, 27 – 31 October, 2008, Semarang, Indonesia.



Opening ceremony, Novotel Hotel Semarang

36 trainees from nine different countries in Asia and Africa, from NGOs and Government, local authorities and port authorities participated in the MFF Regional training course held at Novotel Hotel, Semarang (north coast of central Java, Indonesia). This was a five-day technical training course intended for coastal resource managers and project staff. The course encompassed training in practical tools and methods applicable at the field/project level, largely based on the tools and methods presented/discussed at the MFF Review Forum (Sri Lanka in April 2008¹).

¹ Please visit www.mangrovesforthefuture.org for a summary report

The training course participants were greeted during an opening ceremony by **Prof. Johannes Hutabarat**, Dean of Faculty of Fisheries & Marine Science, DIP Universit, **Prof. Donald Macintosh**, MFF Coordinator, **Dr. Nur Hygiawati Rahayu**, ST., MSc, BAPPENAS, Indonesia National Coordinating Body Representative, **Mr. Galih Riyonu**, MSi, Head of Marine Affairs and Fisheries representing the Governor of Central Java Province, and **Dr. Muhamad Nur**, Vice Rector on Development and Cooperation of Dip University

This was the first regional training course organized by MFF. This course is being evaluated to enable the MFF Secretariat to develop training manuals for future courses. The training course was a combination of plenary presentations, parallel working groups and field work. The emphasis was placed on interactive learning involving practical demonstration and the application of tools and methods in real life situations with field examples from Demak District, a coastal area near Semarang. This allowed government representatives to engage with communities in the field. On the final day of the course, participants presented concept notes for MFF proposals based on their group work and mini-projects.



Left: RTC trainees conducting focus group interviews.



Right: Pietra Widiadi, community participation expert from CARE Indonesia with community members and MFF RTC participants in Moro Demak.

Drastic decline in Tambak Productivity on the North Coast of Central Java, threatens thousands of people. Demak District is extremely low-lying and is severely affected by sea level rise. **50 cm rise in average sea level over the past 12 years** has resulted in flooding of the *tambaks* affecting the daily lives of thousands of people. Interviews in the field revealed that the communities showed an enormous adaptive will, however, their adaptive capacity to climate change is limited. Efforts to restore and maintain livelihoods are being taken by the communities themselves, with the help of the government and NGOs such as OISCA.



Aerial shot of the Northern coast of Central Java, © Epps, M, MFF Secretariat

Lack of employment opportunities in the *tambaks* forces young people to take up fishing, increasing the pressure on fisheries resources. A decrease in fish catch and reduced size of caught fish is already being witnessed by the coastal communities in **Moro Demak**. Tambak owners and operators expressed their urgent need to receive technical assistance to increase tambak yields after years of reduction in their productivity. Possible adaptation options include investment in higher dykes, technical improvements and innovation in tambak aquaculture, more mangrove planting, and building houses on stilts. There is also a need to diversify livelihood opportunities for young people away from just fishing and tambak farming.



The Role of Women in Fisheries

Participants also had the opportunity to visit the mangrove areas and enjoyed a good home cooked lunch with the community. A visit was also made to the new fishing port. Although, informal interviews with households in Demak indicated that only 2 percent of the women worked, all the fish traders were women. The days are long, but the supplementary income to the household that some women earn is vital for the local socio-economy.

More information about the regional training course, full modules, resource documents and presentations, including the mini-projects is available on the MFF website.

<http://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/Events/Semarang.html>

© Epps, M. MFF Secretariat

Ranong hosts Major Regional Scientific and Technical Symposium on Sustainable Mangrove Ecosystem Management,

22-25 November 2008, Tinidee Hotel Ranong, Southern Thailand



181 mangrove experts, NGOs, local communities and government representatives from 13 countries gathered in Ranong, Thailand to look back at 25 in Ranong and within the region on how we can combine scientific knowledge with traditional knowledge to protect and sustainably manage our mangroves.

The Scientific and Technical Symposium on Sustainable Mangrove Ecosystem Management was co-hosted and organized by the [Department of Marine & Coastal Resources \(DMCR\)](#), Thailand and [Mangroves for the Future \(MFF\)](#)

Secretariat, in collaboration with the [Asian Institute of Technology \(AIT\)](#), [cenTER \(University of Aarhus\)](#), [Good Governance for Social Development and the Environmental Institute \(GSEI\)](#), [International Society for Mangrove Ecosystems \(ISME\)](#), [Thailand Environment Institute \(TEI\)](#), and [Wetlands International \(WI\)](#).

The Symposium addressed the sustainable management issues affecting mangrove ecosystems throughout the Indian Ocean Region, and how local communities can be better informed and involved in sustainable mangrove management as a way to protect their traditional livelihoods.

For more information and to download presentations visit:

<http://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/Events/Ranong.htm>

Symposium Field Trip

Ranong Biosphere Reserve



Symposium participants visited the Ranong Biosphere Reserve (RBR) established in 1997, the first Biosphere Reserve to include coastal habitats and mangroves. It covers about 30,000 hectares, of which 40% is marine habitat. It is the largest and comparatively the most undisturbed mangrove area in Thailand. It connects the Ka Poe Estuary a RAMSAR site and Laem Son National Park, a part of a large contiguous area of protected habitats along the north Andaman coast. The mangroves in Ranong form a diverse ecosystem supporting about 300 animal species and 54 plant species. The mangroves

now have conservation forest status under the jurisdiction of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR). The DMCR also manages the RBR and has been involved in rehabilitating the mangrove forest after many decades of destructive exploitation, mainly for charcoal production, tin-mining and shrimp farming.



Ranong Mangrove Research Centre © MFF



Koh Lao

Participants also visited Koh Lao (Lao Island) by boat, a traditional Thai Muslim fishing community to look at mangrove-based livelihood activities (push-net fishing, shrimp-paste making, oyster collecting, and cage aquaculture). The villagers of Koh Lao explained the process of making shrimp paste and let participants try the freshly made paste.



Supporting the *Moken*

Traditionally, the Moken people (or “Sea-Gypsies”) were seafaring people inhabiting the coastal and island areas of the Mergui Archipelago; their boats (Kabangs) served as both a home and a means of transportation. The Moken often build miniature boats to float away their bad luck and illnesses from the community.

Before the tsunami, Moken villagers would sell hand-carved miniature boats to visiting tourists in order to supplement their income during the off-season fishing period. Although many Moken families have received considerable assistance since the December 2004 tsunami, they are still “stateless” and are struggling to sustain their heavily fishery-dependent livelihoods.



Miniature boat-making, © Andaman Discoveries

MFF decided to support the Moken community by purchasing 150 hand-carved “Kabangs” - Houseboats of the Moken people as a gift for Symposium participants. The boat order provided much needed labor for four Moken craftsmen from Koh Surin, and they were able to return home with a boatload of supplies as a result of the income.

Community conservation efforts to protect the threatened Water Lily of Southern Thailand



Blooming Water Lilies, October, 2008 © IUCN Thailand

Na Ca River is located in Na Ca Sub district of Suk Sam Ran District. The river is home to a rare and endemic species, the Water or Lily Yah Chong as it is known locally. A recent socio-economic and resource assessment of the area conducted by IUCN Thailand, found Water Lilies in 11 rivers and canals in the area. The assessment found that Klong Na Ca River has the highest Water Lily population, covering 8,825 m². This represents 56 percent of the existing Water Lilies in Thailand.

This fresh-water plant has unusually long leaves and delicate white flowers that bloom from October to December. Locals have been actively conserving the water lily for over 10 years, but ongoing threats include commercial collection, habitat loss due to river excavation and changing land-use patterns, plus a lack of government legislation to protect the Water Lily. The Na Ca Centre focuses on conservation and has adopted eco-tourism to support conservation objectives.

MFF Symposium participants visited the Na Ca Centre during a post-symposium field trip organized by IUCN Thailand. The centre offers bamboo rafting for 450 baht per person in the river three months a year. Last year the centre received 600 visitors, amongst them mainly Thai government official tourists and school children. The income is shared and used for conserving the Water Lily. The Na Ca centre has teamed up with IUCN, UN agencies and Thailand Nature Conservation Council for advice on how to protect the species and produce a long-term conservation plan, as well as to produce awareness raising materials for the centre.

A Na Ca conservation member said that the most important and efficient way of raising awareness about the Water Lily has been through local media and therefore welcomed members of the press during a recent MFF Press trip in conjunction with the Mangrove Symposium in Ranong.

Upcoming Events

MFF Fourth Regional Steering Committee Meeting (RSC-4), 19-22 January, 2009, Sunderbans, India

MFF's Regional Steering Committee meets twice a year. This is where MFF's future direction is decided and other important strategic decisions are taken. The Steering Committee has two co-chairs, Aban Marker Kabraji, IUCN and Marcia J. Kran, UNDP, the NCB chair from each MFF country and representatives from the respective MFF core partners and donors, as well as the MFF Secretariat. The next Regional Steering Committee meeting will be held in India, 19-22 January, 2009.

Coral workshop 29-30 December in Tamil Nadu, India

To celebrate the International Year of the Coral Reef, 2008, A National Workshop on the Current Status, Threats and Conservation of Coral Reefs in India will be held in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, 29 - 30 December 2008. This workshop is being organized by the Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute, Tuticorin, under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, with financial support from the MFF India Small Grant Programme. For more information contact Dr JS Rawat, IUCN India: jsrawat@iucn.org.

MFF in the Media



Ranong Radio

Local media such as radio is still one of the most efficient ways of reaching out to fishing communities for awareness raising. During the recent MFF Mangrove Symposium in Ranong, Don Macintosh, MFF Coordinator aired live from Ranong Radio spoke on why Ranong was selected as the venue for this meeting and explained that 35 local community members would be discussing how to use both scientific and local knowledge to better support mangrove management.

Ranong Radio Station, © MFF Secretariat

Press Trip, 19-22 November, 2008

A press trip was organised in conjunction with the *Scientific & Technical Symposium on Sustainable Mangrove Ecosystem Management* in Ranong, Thailand.

The Press trip was aimed at environmental and development journalists based in Thailand, interested in getting an insight in to some of the threats and challenges facing natural resource management of Thailand's coastal areas, and how local communities are tackling degrading and diminishing resources.



Kam Puan Community Network being interviewed by journalists, © MFF, Secretariat

The press trip visited MFF supported community conservation projects which has adopted eco-tourism to support conservation objectives and the Ranong Coastal Resource Station which uses community environmental monitoring tools involving coastal communities in data collection and monitoring of climate change indicators.

The press trip also visited the **Ban Bang Tip community group**, an award winning conservation group. After years of conservation and water management efforts using their own funds, the Ban Bang Tip community received a USD 24, 000 grant from USAID. With additional funding from the Thailand Research Fund, they focused on sustainable mangrove management as a way to increase productivity of commercially valuable species and to improve water quality by establishing a 160 ha research zone. Do to the reliance on mangrove wood for house building; the group enforced a rule that community members who cut one tree have to replant 10 trees. A ban of the use of poison to catch fish has also been banned. Fishers from outside can fish in the area provided that they comply with the local laws. The group has also recorded traditional ecological knowledge from the area. The centre is now running on solar energy. There is now a total of ten organisations working in the area.

Mangroves for the Future, a good recipe to share



I am contemplating what my new role in MFF should be. I've been its critic, designer, skeptic, salesman, and convert. What is next in line, a cheerleader? Well, there would be plenty to cheer about. We have done well in setting up NCBs, and made significant progress on the programmes of work, and we are all looking forward with excitement to the first batch of small grants and large projects. But, there have been some developments that were not part of our strategy or action plan which have been pleasant surprises worth recognising and call for celebration.

From the perspective of a UN staff, there is the salutary collaboration among the 3 UN agencies that have built on their respective strengths at regional and country level. It is the theme of partnerships that runs through MFF, bringing disparate sides together. Its training sessions have put senior and junior practitioners working side-by-side; field trips and fieldwork have allowed desk-bound officers to get closer to the realities of coastal life; scientists and community activists have explored together the current gaps in research needs.

The innovative value of MFF I would posit is in the space, the context it has created for such interactions to form and grow. MFF is turning into a large extended, welcoming family. The MFF has raised interest among stakeholders we did not clearly conceive of back in 2006, such as the Thai Department of Navy, and brought on supporters one doesn't immediately associate with coastlines, such as Google. The level of active participation of representatives of "dialogue" countries in all MFF events has been outstanding. They are telling us, MFF is a club I want to join. There is also demonstrated interest about MFF as a framework for engagement from places like Panama, Brazil, West Africa, and the Pacific. Worry not, I don't anticipate we will extend the MFF club membership that far! However, we certainly have a good recipe we can share with other oceans! So, cheers to Mangroves for the Future, and best wishes for 2009 to all.

Sergio Feld, UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok.

THE MFF SECRETARIAT WISHES YOU ALL THE VERY BEST IN THE NEW YEAR AHEAD!

Put your news in the next issue of the MFF E-Newsletter!

Do you have any news or stories that you would like to feature in the next issue of the bi-monthly MFF Newsletter? We invite you to send in your latest news and updates on projects and other activities to: e-news@mangrovesforthefuture.org.

About MFF

Mangroves for the Future (MFF), is a unique partner-led initiative to promote investment in coastal ecosystem which builds on a history of coastal management interventions before and after the 2004 tsunami, as well as extensive consultations with over 200 individuals and 160 institutions involved in coastal zone management. It focuses on the countries worst-affected by the tsunami; India, Indonesia, Maldives, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, as well as dialogue countries in the region that face similar issues. MFF uses mangroves as a flagship ecosystem but is inclusive of all coastal ecosystems.

MFF provides a collaborative platform among the many different agencies, sectors and countries who are addressing challenges to coastal ecosystem and livelihood issues, to work towards a common goal. Through generating knowledge, empowering institutions and individuals to promote good governance in coastal ecosystem management MFF seeks to achieve demonstrable results in influencing regional cooperation, national programme support, private sector engagement and community action.

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