

MS22-8

## **EFFECTIVE LONG-TERM MARKET AND COMMUNITY BASED CORAL REEF MANAGEMENT, RESEARCH, AND RESTORATION MODELS**

C. M. Scott\*, D. Zahir and M. Zahir

The New Heaven Reef Conservation Program, Chalok Ban Kao, Koh Tao, Suratthani, Thailand, 84360

E-mail: [MarineConservationKT@Gmail.com](mailto:MarineConservationKT@Gmail.com)

In the face of rapid development and changing climate, there is a definite and immediate need to develop dispersed and localized reef management models that can be applied in a variety of coastal regions. There are some inherent problems and inefficiencies occurring in management and conservation models based on both purely government or non-profit organisations. Some of these problems can be effectively solved through community or market based models as shown in the case study of Koh Tao. The model presented here is adaptable, and can be applied in a variety of ecosystems or demographics to promote effective dispersed and localized coral reef management. Koh Tao is a isolated small island (~19 km. in length) that has become a center of reef tourism and SCUBA diving training in South East Asia due to its abundance of and close access to coral reefs, with an estimation of 300,000 visitors a year. In only 3 years, a variety of long-term coral reef monitoring, restoration, and management projects has been developed and conducted using primarily local resources and volunteers. Activities of current projects include: monthly land and underwater clean-ups, turtle releases/head-starting program, Biorock™ alternative dive site, marine zoning, Giant Clam nursery, reef and water monitoring through the Ecological Monitoring Program (EMP), mooring buoy installation, and much more. Initially, the projects began at implementation of training course related to a market based coral reef management, research, and restoration at the New Heaven Dive School, which replaced a previous non-profit based conservation organization. Through this program, projects and research were funded and conducted by international and local students, creating a flexible and sustainable market based system which does not rely on donors or funding cycles. With the success of this program, the Marine Branch of the Save Koh Tao Community Group was created to unite interested dive schools and business together for larger projects and widespread education.