



Naucrates Times

conservation biology

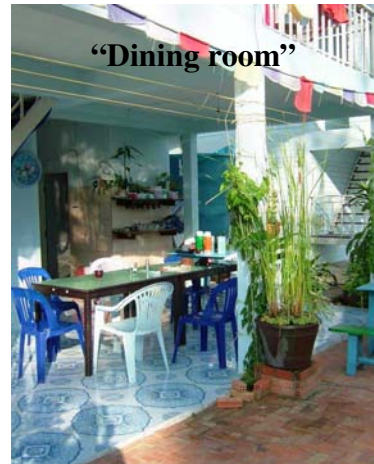
April 2008- No. 19— newsletter

Thailand Conservation Project 2008: a new start

As it happened in the last 11 years, at the beginning of January, Naucrates group flies to Thailand to conduct the conservation project at Phra Thong island.

As most of you already know, the project is now based in the Lion Village (locally called Pak Choke). On 4th of January 2008 we arrived on the island and settled in the new community. Nok and Mion organized the "dining room" for the team, where nice Thai food is served every day. Tu rents her house to Naucrates, where an office (or field station) has been set up and where the assistants can stay for the all period of the project. Volunteers stay in various rooms rented in different local people houses. It is a sort of homestay.

The morning of 5th January, we were woken up by an exciting phone call from Goa, a local person from Pak Choke village who has known us for 11 years and who has built a Thai camping site on the beach. He said "... there is a nest on the beach, it is fresh ... come and check!". As we are used to do on these occasions since the beginning of the project in 1996, we started calling each other organizing ourselfMonica, Claudio, Lory, Alex, Ampon, Luna, Pipap and Ning... jumped on Lory's jeep and drove to the



"Dining room"



Thai food by Ning



Naucrates center in the village



Volunteer room

beach. There was a fresh olive ridley track! After few minutes of searching in the sand, we found the eggs: the first fresh eggs of 2008 season for the project!

At the beginning of the season efforts were spent to organize different activities, the logistic and the coordination of a new team. Volunteers were enthusiastic and understood the situation, and provided useful suggestions on how to

improve the conservation work. Naucrates would like to apologize...if the accommodation was not exactly as described in the project description on our website. It was our first attempt to live together with villagers and it was the first time for the villagers to have foreigners in their houses. We have now updated in details the description of the accommodation.

Naucrates in collaboration with Mangrove Action Project (MAP) has asked support to Lion International. After they visited the project, they agreed to provide two houses for the project. We named one house "Ban Tau " (turtle house and "Ban PaakonKhan" (mangrove house). Naucrates center, includes an office-museum and accommodation for volunteers. Naucrates will plan to conduct fund raising in order to provide more support to the local community, working during the year.



Measuring eggs by Ning



Olive ridley eggs by Ning

Naucrates will plan to conduct fund raising in order to provide more support to the local community, working during the year.

turtle conservation and local fishermen

Let me tell you there is a long history leading to this story

It's been nearly two years since Monica asked me to try and go out with the fishermen. The idea was to study the interaction between local fishermen and sea turtles.

After stopping at nearly every household to explain my objectives and convince them to take me onboard, most fishermen were not cooperating or simply not available. But at the very last house of Tapayoi, I finally got an appointment. I was to meet Pom the following morning at 5:30. This was just the beginning..

The following season, things got more organized. I elaborated 2 questionnaires, one for the fishermen, the other one for the community. Ning, from MAP (Mangrove Action Project) joined the team with one of her volunteers (Shawna) to help me carry out the questionnaire and convince the fishermen to take me out. Since only 2 villages were still standing (Tapayoi and Thung Dap), we concentrated on those ones.

This year, we were to continue the study in the new village of Baan Lion. The village is very different since it gathers people from other villages as well as newcomers. We also visited the other villages to follow up and do some more work.

A dead hawksbill found in the sea



by Ning

aware of our work. They are very positive about it. They are willing to get involved.

Last year, we hired a villager from Thung Dap to monitor the second half of beach one. This year we hired a fisherman from Baan Lion to cover Koh Ra over several weeks. He will report nests and stranded turtles. It is clear that the village wants to be part of our conservation effort.

With all those actions taken in collaboration with the local communities, we also had an economical input. We provide financial support to some and spent some money in local businesses.

When we started to go out with the fishermen, their first impression was that they were taking out tourists. This quickly changed. They saw us as observers checking their cages hoping to prove that they caught turtles. Later on they opened up and saw us as collaborators.

The villages we visited last year were keen to provide us with updates on turtles. They were looking forward to taking us out again. The fishermen of today are the students we taught at school a few years back.

Those fishermen provide us with precious data about sea turtles. Whether they catch them by accident or if they are caught by bigger industrial fishing units, they can help us understand the situation and take mitigating measures.

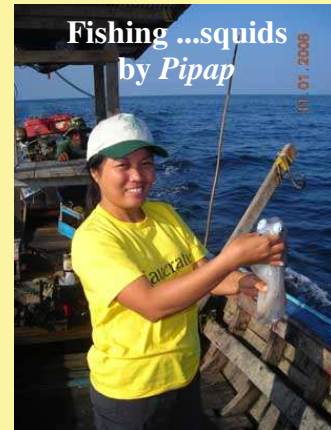
Overall, the island communities have grasped their environment in their own hands. Some villages have an unofficial environmental group. These people are contacted for different issues including our marine turtles. They also want to show that they can protect their endangered species and avoid the creation of a national park which, to their belief, would limit their livelihood.

This is the beginning of a new collaboration. Let us hope that soon we will pass on the project to the local community.



Squid cage by Ning

In Baan Lion, the situation was different since we also live there now. It was easier to create contacts. The fishermen that had already been interviewed helped us with the new ones. The complete results will be available at a further date but the findings were above my expectations. The important numbers of volunteers that helped out with the conservation effort created a positive ground for local environmental awareness. Monica, with her work over the last decade, made a strong impact on the local population. First of all they all know her (as Monica, Manca or Mazda). They are all



Fishing ...squids by Pipap



Local boats by Monica

School Programme and Awareness in the Lion village



Lesson at school
by R.Sheperd

Part of the "Lisa and Rebecca Memorial Fund" was invested to conduct an environmental education program in the local school of the Lion Village and other schools of Phra Thong. Thitiya Seekhasamban (Nook) was employed to work with us for the all season as teacher and translator. She was trained and worked together with Jaruwan Kaewmahanin (Ning) from Mangrove Action Project (MAP) and Carole Beauclerk. The programme included daily English lessons, environmental education, conservation, mangrove ecology, sea turtle, reef ecology. Side project like how to make compost at home, how to manage a home-garden, how to snorkel, how to make a transect, ect. were carried out during the season.



Monica, Nook and Claudio



Mangrove transect
by M.Aureggi

The sala built in 2005 by Naucrates in Tapayoi village was damaged by the strong and heavy rainy season. Naucrates together with Aiutare i Bambini gave financial support and repaired the roof. In addition, Naucrates centre was often visited by tourists, local visitors, other project members and school children.



Children visit
Naucrates centre
By M.Aureggi



Snorkelling lesson by M.Aureggi



Naucrates team and kids by R.Sheperd



Lesson at school by R.Sheperd

NAUCRATES ANNOUNCEMENTS



The **VII Naucrates Annual Meeting** will be held in Italy, in Giulianello di Cori (LT), on Saturday 11 October at 15:00. More details on how to book the weekend in the Italian countryside with Naucrates friends can be found at www.naucrates.org



2008 Meeting location
in Italy by R. Shepherd

Naucrates Photographer of the Year Competition 2008

After the great success of the first and second Naucrates Photographer of the Year Competition, Naucrates is now proposing to continue the initiative in order to involve all of you who participated in Naucrates field work or who have the passion for being a photographer.

It is an amateur competition, everybody can participate (you are not required to be a professional photographer!). Details at www.naucrates.org

Naucrates needs volunteers in Thailand and in Italy

Naucrates Wedding

On 8th September 2007, Lucy Young and Oli Perusson got married on the Isle of Wight. They both worked as research assistants for Naucrates in Thailand. They met on the island of Phra Thong while working with us in 2001.



WHO IS HIDING ?



Visitors at the Mangrove Restoration Project

Mangrove Restoration Project

In January, Alfredo Quarto (Director of Mangrove Action Project), Jim Enright (MAP Asia Coordinator), Dominic Wodehouse (Wetlands International), Bodhi Garret (NATR) visited the study area of the mangrove restoration project. During the survey, different restoration techniques were discussed. In particular, it was emphasized how important is the field work and observations during a restoration project. Trees (planted after the tsunami) were shown growing well and looking very healthy.

During MAP visit at the project, children from Ban Talee Nok (an adjacent community) were invited to perform their puppet show related with mangrove conservation and other environmental issues.



3-yrs old trees

A message from one of Naucrates Assistants 2008



Nadja, Nook and Jeff

Aren't we lucky...

...to work at such a beautiful little spot on earth?

...to do our part in saving admirable creatures like sea turtles?

...to meet interesting people with idealism and enthusiasm?

...to gain insight in the thai way of living?

...to enjoy everyday amazing thai food, cooked with love for the detail?

...to have the opportunity to soak up the energy of sun and moon?

...to learn from others and share our knowledge of nature?

...to learn about ourselves?

It doesn't matter...

...that mosquitos and sandflies make our bodies full of spots.

...that the alarm clock is ringing at 5 in the morning.

...that we are sometimes without water or electricity.

'Cause things are coming down to the essential things of life. And we are overwhelmed by our surroundings, everyday new.

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR NAUCRATES MEMBERSHIP?

MEMBER ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

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25 Euro Member

12 Euro Student

Donation of

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Signature

NAUCRATES – Conservation Biology Colle tenne—04010 Cori (LT) - ITALY

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Text revised by Cristiana Aureggi.

NaucratesTimes is dependent upon your free and voluntary contributions in the form of articles, news items, announcements and other contributions. Please do not hesitate to contact us or send us any news or contributions.

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