



What's Inside...

2	Conservation Note	10	News & Update
3	Community Note	12	Your Shots
4	Thailand Inside and Out	13	Dish of the Month
5	Volunteers Account	15	March Activities
8	Feature	17	Contact Details



Marie Goarin
Marine Conservation Director
Projects Abroad

Welcome to the March Newsletter,

Sawasdee to all of you, kah!

You may have heard about the floods in the south of Thailand in the news so please be reassured: we are all doing well and there was not much damage in the Klong Haend area! Thanks for all the messages of support and concern!

Two of our volunteers who were travelling to Bangkok got stuck on the way and had to be evacuated by the army though, and Gildas, one of our field coordinator, and his mum who were on a visit trip got stuck for the night in Krabi town.

Our storage room got completely flooded and when we got to it, there were boots, water bottles and other odd things floating around. It took a lot of effort to clean it all up.

Luckily the J. Nursery did not suffer too much damage.

In other important news this month we've had some changes in the staff. Chane was transferred to Projects Abroad in Shanghai!!! She was very excited to leave and we have had good news from her since her arrival there.

Ben is our new Media and Social Manager so you will probably hear a lot from him on Facebook, MyTripBlog and in this Newsletter.

Our new Field Coordinator is Chok, a dive-master from Trang (the same town as Dear comes from). Chok has already made himself a good reputation amongst volunteers as being the one who can spot the coolest fish and other marine life! (But that's only because I have not been diving much since he got here!)

Finally, our last piece of big news is that we are now diving with Aquavision Dive Centre, meaning that we are using speedboats to get to the dive sites. This makes our trips much faster and also gives us more flexibility in the choice of dive sites. They have 2 boats that are much smaller than the big dive boats we used in the past, but the good thing about this is that most of the time there are only us aboard!

Hope you are all doing great, don't forget to drop us a line when you can!

Marie

New Staff for Conservation

It is our pleasure at Projects Abroad Thailand, to welcome Pi Chok as our new conservation field co-ordinator.

If you want to read more about how the project's activities are progressing, please go to <http://www.volunteer-conservation-thailand.org/monthly-update>

Community's Note



PARICHART CHAIPIKUL

**Community Projects Director
Projects Abroad**

Welcome to Projects Abroad Thailand

First of all, I would like to pass on my condolence to Japan. This disaster reminds us again how bad our world is at this moment and how bad the world reacts to our treatment to her. Wishing everything will be better soon.

This month brings huge changes in Thailand. Firstly Chane, our previous Social Manager has been promoted to move to China to help setting up the Social Media section there. This is a good opportunity for her, congratulations Chane! Secondly congratulations to Ben, our new Social Manager. Ben has been working as Field Coordinator for the conservation project but since Chane's move to China he has replaced her position. We hope you enjoy your work and look forward to joining in your awesome activities ☺.

It gave community projects great honour to find out that Baan Naichong Mittraphab123 School has thanked us for our contributions by having our logo and volunteers' picture on their banner at the schools main gate. Thank you very much for this honour, we are very pleased.

The school holidays are almost here again, and as is the same every April, it's time for fun at English Camp! This year we divided the activities in to three parts. First part is an English camp which we organised with 80 students from 4 schools where we send volunteers. The camp will be held from 4th-22nd April 2011, with one week break from 9th-17th April for the Thai National New Year (also known as 'Songkran Festival').

The second activity organised is an English Training Workshop for the teachers from the schools where we work. The workshop will run from 4th-6th May. This workshop has been set up to solve the problem of communication that we found in school.

The last activity is 'Material Preparation Day' where volunteers will help to prepare material for the kids. The materials will be donated to our Daycare Centre in Phuket, explained to the teachers so they can be properly used and we will have lunch with the kids there too. Those plan sound awesome, don't they?

I think it is the time to leave the rest to Ben as he is excited to meet you inside with tons of incredible stories. Enjoy our newsletter and don't forget to love our world by stopping hurting her.

Until we meet again.

Sincerely,

Ant

www.projects-abroad.net

Thailand Inside and Out

Thailand is a wonderful country, not underdeveloped nor over populated. It sits comfortably away from poverty but still enjoys a simplistic existence; the contrasts are exquisite, scary, funny and sometimes just downright weird. Differences aside, Thailand is a definite choice for travelling nature lovers, shopaholics, religious and cultural scouts, young couples looking to chill on the beach for a month and pretty much anyone else who finds the comforts of the western world getting to be a bit boring. There is an effort of western comfort in Thailand, but for the most part, it has failed spectacularly, which gives Thailand another to add to its collection of unique edges.



Thailand has a very unique geographical diversity. Paradise can be found in the south in the form of idyllic jungle ridden islands drenched in the baking sun and fringed with squeaky white sand. The waters here are turquoise blue, crystal clear havens for a vast multitude of marine biology. The local people here would originally (and some still are) have been involved in the fishing, tin and rubber cultivation industries however, these days, the tourist trade plays a vast majority role in the occupational pursuits of the local people.

Central Thailand (around Ayudhya and Sukothai) has a rich history and agricultural disposition. The original Royal Capitol of the Kingdom of Siam – Ayudhya, was destroyed in 1767 by the Burmese army resulting in the collapse of the kingdom. The ruins of the old city now form the national park. The area is widely used for the cultivation of rice, fruit and livestock farms. The north features lush rainforests and mountains which play host to a number of hill tribes, accessible by crossing the railway over the river Kwai or from boats on the same river.



Thai people in general are friendly, smiling and warm hearted. As part of Asia, 'face' is the dominating respect level for the nation. As such, when a problem or misunderstanding arises, direct conflict and confrontation is not advised. When travelling here try to settle matters in a calm, friendly way and always do it with a smile. If for any reason the Thai person feels you have made them lose face, receiving help will become difficult and they may lose the respect they initially had for you. Stay on the right side of the face and you'll be shown the best spots, cheapest deals, nicest people and the best food. Just remember, you're travelling. This is not your country and a western mentality doesn't get you very far. Look, listen, learn, adapt and enjoy!

Conservation project in Krabi



Welcome to the Projects Abroad conservation project in Krabi, Thailand for February and March 2011. This project, while it is first and foremost an ecological project, has shown itself to be a really unexpected combination of scuba diving, mangrove protection, community outreach, and cultural immersion that I hardly expected when I arrived here.

My name is Hillary Kurland, I am 18 and graduated last spring from Upper Dublin High School just outside Philadelphia, PA on the east coast of the US. Not quite willing to settle down for four more years of schooling, I decided to get out and see a bit of the world first. My gap year started in Australia, where I travelled down the east coast from Cairns to Sydney, luckily missing most of the foul

weather which turned the cattle station I worked on in the outback into a lake. My next stop was New Zealand; I travelled both islands and had the rather singular joy of seeing Santa in flip-flops and shorts south of the 45th parallel.

Throughout the trip, while I learned quite a lot of useful and not so useful skills, the one past time I really came to love was scuba diving. I learned to dive on a whim, having reached the Great Barrier Reef and deciding it was too good an opportunity to pass up. After about 20 dives in three different countries, it's clear to me now why I became so hooked on diving. I think the most accurate way to explain it is not with my own words but with a friend's from this project, who said that it just feels like your flying. More like soaring really actually, past fish and coral, maybe a wreck and if your really lucky a shark or a ray. The experience seems like something out a dream, and produces a certain high; a way of connecting with other people that I really haven't seen in any other past time. And the best part is you can do it again and again, and no two dive sights are the same. Diving has now become the connecting thread of my year abroad, training with PADI I got my open water certification on a live-aboard boat outside of Cairns, my advanced on the Whitsunday Islands near Airlie Beach, and even managed to do a wreck dive in the Bay of Islands in New Zealand.

When it came time to sort out the Asia part of my trip, a full three months I had left unplanned when I set out in September, it was clear to me that I would have to find a project that involved diving. I stumbled across this project on the website and can safely say it was absolutely perfect for what I wanted to do. On this project not only did I get the opportunity to receive my rescue diver and a photography certification, I also got the real joy of putting my diving to good use. We would dive about three times a week, everywhere from local islands just outside our base in Ao Nang, to the very popular dive sights in Koh Phi Phi, and occasionally the remote islands past Phi Phi, like Koh Hai Yai where we were on March 6th. On every dive we took scissors, a salvage bag, and a slate. While we are tourists in this region, none of the volunteers here are Thai, we each stay for at least a month, if not three, and dove as often as possible. The project,

therefore, makes it our job to keep these sights clean of fishing lines, fishing cages, and general litter found on the ocean floor. Furthermore, volunteers have the option of getting certified with Reef Watch, a project that counts the endangered fish of this region and reports them to a central board that noted the trends in population.

When not diving, which was about four days a week, we helped out in other ways. The other concentration of the project was the preservation of the ever dwindling mangrove forests of this area. Rich in resources and often in the way of building projects, mangrove forest is chopped down to excess, leaving many native species without a home. Our job was to collect seeds, defiantly a favourite part of this for me, with kayaks on the outskirts of the local forests. We then brought the plants back to our nursery in Ao Nang and helped them to grow until we re-planted them a few weeks later. We often got the local schools involved in nursing the saplings, like the international school about fifteen minutes from our base where we worked with kids of several age groups to build a nursery in their courtyard.



The rest of our days were taken up by purely community based projects, like painting the living spaces for a local Muslim school. On our days off we would get to know the south of Thailand a little bit better. A favourite for the volunteers here was a visit to the Tiger Temple, about half an hour away. It was built on the ancient den of a tiger that would roar so loudly the locals deemed the tiger and its lair holy. There are about 1237 steps to the gold plated Buddha at the top of the temple; it is both a humbling and empowering climb and definitely a rite of passage for the volunteers of this project. There is also a lookout point, another great climb, several temples where volunteers can get involved in ceremonies, and more than one amazing beach or island to spend a day in the sun.

Having been with this project for three weeks I know that it will be very hard for me to leave come April. I've learned a huge amount here about diving, Thailand, and the native counties of each of the volunteers here. I am looking forward to the rest of my travels in South East Asia and am hoping to visit Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia before I return home for my studies. Perhaps the last parting gift of this program is something I could not find in about four and a half months of travelling in Australia and New Zealand, and that is travel buddies!

Wish me luck!

Hillary Kurland

Krabi Special Education Centre

I have been teaching special needs (SEN) children for five years now in London. Previously I taught in mainstream settings across England and America. I came to a point in my career where I wanted a new challenge so decided to become a volunteer. I found Projects Abroad on the internet and applied to teach special education in Krabi, Thailand for two months. When applying I was advised to do so through Projects Abroad Pro.



When I first arrived in Krabi it was a total culture shock but I was very excited and ready to start work. I was given a two day ordination which helped me adjust to my new surroundings and familiarise me with my placement.

As I was the first SEN teacher in Krabi I used the first week of my project to observe the school and children so I could arrange my timetable. I found the school and Projects Abroad staff very flexible and supportive.

I was given a small but adequate classroom and the freedom to teach a range of children. In the mornings I took a group of 4-5 children aged between 4-8 years with a variety of needs including Downs Syndrome, Autism and Global Delay. I focused my teaching on the topic 'Ourselves'. We learnt about the body looking at similarities and differences. I tried to make the activities as creative as possible so all children could be included. In the afternoon I worked one to one with a severely autistic girl introducing a sensory curriculum and music therapy. I then worked with two other volunteers focusing on the older children; a group of six aged between 13-22 years. We used this time to work on social skills playing games and encouraging interaction. Although it was difficult to communicate with the children they quickly picked up what was expected of them and enjoyed taking part.

I introduced the children to a visual timetable and set up a daily routine. The children picked up on the routine very quickly and could follow the visual timetable. I also introduced a TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped Children) workstation where each child would complete three activities independently a day.

In both groups I could see progress after my two months. The children were able to focus for longer periods of time and would engage more with each other.

I found my time in Krabi very rewarding especially being given the opportunity to work with the staff and parents. I discussed different methods that can be used to teach SEN children including TEACCH, PECs (Picture Exchange Communication) and visual timetables. During my time at school I had a number of people come to observe me teach gaining ideas for their own practice.

One memory I will always have from my time in Thailand is that of a 5 year old boy who would not eat. He had a fear of food (from being force fed). Each day I took him out the lunch room into a quiet area where I would sit with him at a table and slowly introduce first an empty bowl then a little bit of rice. I did not expect the boy to eat the rice but I wanted him to tolerate it in front of him without the fear of it being pushed into his mouth. If he sat independently for one minute I rewarded him with a sticker. I used visual clues to indicate what will happen now and later and a timer so he could see how long he had to sit for. On my last day at school the boy ate 5 mouthfuls of food without being prompted or force feed. I was so pleased with the progress he made.

I would recommend this experience to anyone who is interested in a new challenge and who wants to offer their expertise and knowledge.

*Kelly Bennett
Krabi Special Education Centre.
January 19th - March 14th 2011*

Feature



This month's feature focuses on the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project in Khao Pra Theaw, Phuket. The project was set up in 1992 by Mr Noppadol Preuksawan – Chief of the Phuket Royal Forestry Department at that time, Mr Thavrn Sri Oon – Bang Pae Substation chief, the Asian Wildlife Fund and American zoologist Terrance Dillon Morin. In 1994 the Wild Animal Rescue Foundation of Thailand (WARF) began to support the project and is now a research division of

WARF.

For those of you who don't know, Gibbons are apes which occur in subtropical rainforests from northeast India to Indonesia, north to south China, Sumatra, Borneo and Java. They are also known as 'lesser apes' as they differ noticeably from 'great apes' – chimps, bonobos, gorillas, orang-utans and humans.

They are smaller; they do not make nests and sometimes display certain details in which they more closely resemble monkeys. Also, unlike most of the great



apes, they display pair-bonding. They are quite incredible creatures, upon a visit to the sanctuary in Phuket, or anywhere with Gibbons for that matter; you are greeted with the distinctive songs (lung-bursting whoops) of the animal which is an important part of species identification. They are the masters of brachiation (swinging from branch to branch) and can swing distances of up to 15m between branches at speeds of 35mph. They can also make leaps of up to 8m and walk bipedally with their arms raised above their heads for balance. They are the fastest and most agile of all tree dwelling, non-flying

mammals. If ever you encounter a Gibbon, you are sure to be charmed.

However, there are many threats to this wonderful creature. In Phuket, Gibbons were poached to extinction about 30 years ago. Nowadays we can still see gibbons in Thailand, except they're in the uncaring hands of tourist tradesmen being dragged up and down a scorching hot beach or chained to a busy bar in the middle of Patong, being forced to smoke cigarettes and drink whisky for the amusement and photographic opportunities of tourists.



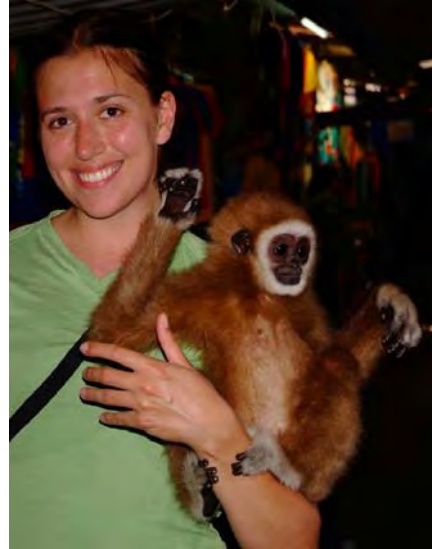
The GRP aims to repopulate the forest at Bang Pae through the rehabilitation of gibbons that were previously held in captivity and has been testing methods of re-introduction for the past 17 years. As reintroduction is still uncharted terrain for research and that it is still a relatively new division of conservative movement, every single reintroduction – successful or not, is a discovery and a huge learning opportunity.

The program also takes on volunteers to help in the final stages of rehabilitation and providing a once in a lifetime experience. Volunteers can look after and observe the gibbons in the few weeks before reintroduction, and when the day comes they take the gibbons deep into the jungle where they will be released – well away from human contact.

A camp is set up and for 2 weeks both volunteers and a staff member will remain observing the gibbons to see if they re-adapt to the wild and to make sure they're completely out of human contact.

Ever been to Thailand and had your picture taken with someone's gibbon on your shoulder? In order to get that gibbon on your shoulder, the mother would have been shot out of the trees – still holding the child. For every successfully captured baby gibbon, 9 don't survive the fall or the gunshot. So please, think harder about any captive animals you see abroad, the animals usually endure a lifetime of suffering in exchange for a couple of photographs.

Be nice. Think of the animal. Supporting the tradesmen by taking pictures only tells them that their business is good. Put the camera away and take the picture home in your head.



Firstly, our deepest condolences go out to Japan and its people. The catastrophe of the earthquake has claimed thousands of lives and immeasurable damage. We are doing our part to support Japan in any way we can and sincerely hope that you are too.

On another note, it's been an interesting last couple of weeks here in Krabi in terms of weather. When it's not like sitting in a 35 degree oven, it's full force tropical rainstorms. Tuesday evening saw a very heavy downpour and an exciting and beautiful electrical display of almost too-close-for-comfort lightning strikes which lasted for more than 3 hours; some of our volunteers acquired some excellent lightning strike pictures! Roads turned to rivers, but no reports of any serious flooding. Anyway, the weather still continues to be sporadic, unpredictable and downright inconvenient. As much as we all love to sit and watch the rain, listen to the thunder and jump every time lightning strikes, sometimes we'd also like to get some food, go home or visit a friend. Since we're in Thailand and the predominant mode of transport is motorbikes, it becomes a little frustrating trying to formulate a plan. Mind you, as we ARE in Thailand, a formulated plan usually throws 3 sheets to the wind and never comes around, replaced always by the complete opposite of what you had in mind. And that's what we love about this place 😊

The start of February saw the conservation volunteers initiate mangrove rehabilitation program with the local international school Nawathaphum in Ban Na Tin. Each volunteer prepared and presented their own piece of a 15 part mangrove presentation to the kids there to make them aware and educate them on the benefits and welfare of an extremely important yet vulnerable key habitat in the environment. We re-visited the school following the kids' holiday to help them build their very own mangrove nursery next to the river that runs alongside the school. Plans are in effect to take the kids on a fieldtrip to collect mangrove seeds so they can begin to make their mark in the conservation movement.

As the Thai New Year is approaching (April 13th) the community volunteers are working with the local schools preparing a 2 week long English Camp. The kids will have plenty of activities, excursions, games and other fun things to do that the volunteers will be helping with.

NEW UPDATE

When I wrote the above sections of the newsletter, it was true. However, times have changed slightly and at present we have been experiencing at least a solid week of heavy rain. The waters are rising, Ao Nang's main road is half submerged, and the Krabi townspeople have to deal with floodwaters threatening their businesses. Koh Samui has been hit quite hard too, with the main ring road through Lamai under at least 3m of floodwater. The rest of the island is partially inaccessible, businesses have been destroyed, homes wrecked and people left stranded. We are facing some trying times in Thailand at the moment, and no-one can wait until they're back to drier times. Hot sun, dry wind....where are you?

And the Earth continues to tremble...

Another earthquake was recorded at 6.8 on 24th March in Burma. Chiang Mai and certain areas of Bangkok were affected by the tremors.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at thailandmediamanager@projects-abroad.org

Projects Abroad Thailand The Official Group – We now have 485 Members and climbing!

Now you can view our Newsletters on Projects Abroad Thailand The Official Group on facebook. You just click on the link and that's it! Photos of our weekly activities can be seen in our Projects Abroad Thailand the Official Group on Facebook.

Thanks guys!

Articles: Hillary Kurland & Kelly Bennet

Your Shot: Louise Gyllich

Cover Photo: Gildas Glemarec

Best Wishes,

Social/Media Manager/Editor

Media Link

Join our official Facebook Group: Projects Abroad Thailand – The Official Group

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2423896856>

Read our monthly newsletters

<http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteer-destinations/thailand/newsletters-from-thailand/>

See what is going on with Projects Abroad! Read our Country Blog!

http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group_blogs.php?gl=true&group_guid=3042

Your Shots



Sunset at Aonang by Antz

Wing Bean Salad

Wing bean salad (yum tua pu – ยำถั่วพู) is a central Thai dish featuring “wing beans” which are blanched and tossed with coconut milk, roasted chilli paste, toasted coconut, tamarind, palm sugar and peanuts. If you can't get wing beans where you are, they can be substituted with green beans or sugar snap peas.



You will need:

2 cups wing beans

2 eggs

1/4 cup toasted coconut *see note

2 teaspoons roasted peanuts

3/4 cup coconut milk *see note

1 tablespoon lime juice

2 tablespoons roasted chili paste

2 tablespoons tamarind paste (about 2 teaspoons tamarind pulp + 2 tablespoons hot water)

1 1/2 teaspoons fish sauce

1 teaspoon palm sugar

Vegetable oil for frying the shallots

3-4 small dried chillies

2-3 medium sized shrimp

2 tablespoons shallots (1 tablespoon if you use pre-fried shallots)

Directions:

Slice the fresh coconut meat into match-stick size strips, about 1" (2cm) long. Remove the skin from the shallots and slice thinly.

Roast the coconut on a medium heat in a dry pan until light brown. Keep stirring so it doesn't burn. Set aside on a flat plate to cool.

If your peanuts are not already roasted, dry roast them now like you did the coconut. Crush the peanuts with a stone mortar & pestle or the side of a heavy knife.

Fry the shallots in enough vegetable oil to cover them on medium heat until golden brown. Be careful not to burn. Remove before dark brown as they will continue to cook for a minute or two once removed from the pan. (You can cheat here and buy pre-fried shallots in a container at many Asian groceries.)

Fry the chillies in the oil until browned.

Boil the eggs in water until hard-boiled, about 10 minutes. Replace the hot water with fresh cold water to stop the cooking. Peel and slice however you wish (halved, quartered, or sliced thin like shown).

Clean the shrimp by peeling off the heads and legs, and removing the "vein" (intestine), but leave the tail on.

Trim off the ends of the wing beans and boil whole in salt water for less than a minute — just enough time to turn a darker green. You want them to still be crisp & crunchy. Rinse in cold water and slice into 1/4" pieces (as shown).

Heat the coconut milk in a pan until boiling. Add the shrimp and cook until pink. Turn off heat and add the palm sugar, tamarind paste, roasted chilli paste, lime juice, fish sauce, peanuts and coconut. Mix well.

Add the wing beans and mix. Remove to a plate and arrange the eggs along side. Garnish with the fried shallots and chillies.

Note:

There are a few variations on this dish which include adding small pieces of boiled chicken or pork along with the shrimp. If you cannot get fresh coconut where you are, or are too lazy to do that step, do not substitute for the dried coconut in the baking section of the supermarket. It's better to just leave it out. It's essential to use good brands of coconut milk from Thailand. I recommend Chao Koh.

Enjoy!

March Social Activities

Date/Day	Activities	Time
5th March – Sat.	<p>Wat Keaow</p> <p>Offering things to monks and receive Blessed string Cost 100 baht each. Breakfast at The Relax Coffee Shop right afterward (you Pay) RSVP by Tuesday 1 Mar. no later than 17:00 please.</p>	9:30 – 10:30
11 th March – Fri.	<p>Social Outreach at Prateep Tum School Painting Girls' and Boy's Dorms Return to J Guest House Please wear Projects Abroad T-Shirt. RSVP by Friday 20 Feb. no later than 17:00.</p> <p>Monthly Dinner at Bernie's Food & water will be provided. Soft drinks or alcohol You pay. RSVP by Tuesday 15 Feb. no later than 17:00</p>	<p>8:30 – 16:00</p> <p>18:30 – 20:00</p>
14 th March – Mon.	<p>Ben meeting with Community Volunteers in Krabi @Up2U Coffee shop (Community Volunteers must organise your own transportation)</p>	16:00 – 17:00
15 th March – Tue.	<p>Ben meeting with Conservation volunteers @J Guest house</p>	18:00 – 18:30
19 th March – Sat.	<p>Tiger Temple Sunrise climbs Get breakfast at Krabi marketplace and eat on the riverside Kanap Nam Cave (cost 100 baht for boat ride per person) RSVP by Thursday 10th Mar. no later than 17:00 please</p>	4:00 – 10:00
26 th -27 th March - Sat.	<p>Earth Day overnight Camping Trip @ Khao Phanom Benja National Park Leave the guesthouse Returning to Krabi (27th March) Cost around 250B per person for tents, Either bring own food for BBQ or can order from the on-site cafeteria. RSVP by Sunday 20th March by 17.00</p>	<p>9:30</p> <p>9:00</p>

Dive Switch

Projects Abroad Thailand recently made a switch in dive companies to cater for our large group of conservation volunteers; we now dive with Aquavision instead of Kon Tiki. The change came about as a result of tailored diving needs, as Aquavision are more able to satisfy our needs to visit less frequented dive sites to look for new work on fish cages, nets, reef monitoring and crown of thorns starfish removal. Aquavision also have a speedboat, cutting down the 2 hour journey to the sites to around 30 minutes. Bonus! Now the divers get back much earlier to enjoy the rest of the day relaxing on the beach and what not. It has been a pleasure working with Kon Tiki, we've all made some friends there and the courses were enjoyed by all. It's sad to say goodbye but at the same time it's wonderful to say Hello to Aquavision!

A big thanks to Kon Tiki and a very warm welcome to Aquavision – our new partners in the conservation vocation.