

## Project Update: April 2020

- Field work:

First, we have been very fortunate to be able to perform all of our planned field work in February and March 2020, before the COVID19 pandemic arrived in Costa Rica. We were able to monitor Caño Island as planned and did 8 days of diving fieldwork around the island. At Marino Ballena National Park we also did the 8 days of diving fieldwork. We do have additional fieldwork planned for Marino Ballena (monitoring the beaches walking and snorkelling) that we expect to be doing as soon as the national park reopens. In addition, we have been collecting data of the water quality at multiple sites over the course of our field work. We have collected water samples at Caño Island, at Marino Ballena National Park and at several rivers that empty into the park.

- Results:

We have been able to collect many new observations of invertebrates both in Caño Island and the national park. We are using this time at home to update the database with all observations and to compile the books. In the course of our observations we have been able to identify species that had never been reported before in those areas. We have also received many observations from local guides and tourists through the online form. These include one species that had never been reported before on the island: *Argonauta argo*. Finally, in February 2020 we were able to organise training classes for local guides about coral taxonomy and INMOLO. These classes were held in Drake, Uvita and Sierpe.

- Sharing results:

At least twice a week, we post on our Instagram and Facebook page about different invertebrate species encountered during the field work, their importance and role in the environment. Our website for sharing results is now under construction. We are working on an interactive way to present all our results, including the database and the book. Moreover, I am now working on an article for our blog, that will be published once the website is ready.

Unfortunately, due to the shutdown it is impossible to visit schools and organise talks. Due to the limits on social interaction Innoceana created an online webinar series in both English and Spanish in order to share our work and raise awareness. Last week we had 180 live attendees for a webinar describing the INMOLO project. In addition we will organise another webinar this next Thursday, designed to reach local guides, authorities, rangers and local organizations in Costa Rica in order to share the results of the project and encourage more people to participate in the collaborative part. Finally, we are thinking of a way to reach school age children to educate and share the value of environmental conservation. We are in discussions with the local authorities to create a special presentation for them.

- Conservation Impact:

We have already been able to observe the impact of INMOLO project on awareness of the local community, as they have been showing an improved interest for invertebrates and corals. Moreover, through INMOLO, we have asked the local authorities to provide a boat for the rangers of Caño Island. The rangers on Caño Island had been without a boat for more than 2 years and therefore had limited ability to protect the island from fishermen and other illegal traffic in the area. We are very

happy to report that very recently the rangers of Caño Island received a boat from Sinac. With these enhanced capabilities the rangers of the island were able to arrest poachers illegally fishing endangered Giant conchs in waters near Caño Island. The rangers arrested the poachers and released 48 live conchs back in the ocean.