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PRELIMINARY RESULTS:

Coral families:

- Fungiidae : 38 species
- Agariciidae : 28 species
- Euphylliidae : 14 species

- Reef fish census: 430 species
- Ovulidae snails : 25 species
- Macroalgae : 130 species

Reef Status of Reefcheck Sites : (Total of 55 transects)

- Excellent : 7 % (4 transects)
- Good : 49 % (27 transects)
- Fair : 40 % (22 transects)
- Poor : 4 % (2 transects)



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WHAT IS IT?

A scientific survey to document marine biodiversity, physio-chemical oceanography and socio-economic benefits of marine ecosystems to local communities in the proposed Tun Mustapha Park. The research team spent 19 days surveying the proposed park area to meet the objectives. A total of more than 800 man-hours were spent under water, while corresponding amount of surface sampling effort was also carried out. The results will be published into a formal report and several scientific papers are expected soon.

WHY?

The proposed Tun Mustapha Park covers a complex and linked habitats including coastal forests, rocky shores, sandy beaches, mudflats, coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds. It encompasses the second largest concentration of coral reefs in Malaysia. The proposed park is shared among diverse ethnic groups including Bajau Laut seafarers and the Bonggi islanders.

Tun Mustapha Park is identified as a Globally Significant Priority Conservation Area in the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion and lies within the boundary of the Coral Triangle. The proposed park is threatened by overfishing, destructive fishing, and pollution. There is an urgent call to protect this wide area to maintain its ecological integrity and to ensure that the rich marine resources are used in a sustainable manner through collaborative management among the stakeholders.



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URGENCY

Human activity impacts were observed at all the surveyed sites. Coral reefs are showing apparent signs of stress from overfishing and destructive fishing methods used around the proposed park.

A total of 15 bombs (home-made explosive device) were heard, with a maximum of 6 bomb detonations in one dive site. Several abandoned fishing nets were observed in a few dive sites. Turtle carcasses were also observed including three large green turtles, likely to have been butchered. Many reefs have good coral cover but low numbers of fishes of high market value and commercially traded invertebrates such as sea cucumbers and giant clams. There is also lack of functional and iconic species such as sharks and turtles, which presence indicate a stable and balanced ecosystem.

As an area known to be an important source of fisheries, it is important to ensure human activities within the proposed TMP are sustainably managed by reducing fishing pressures and destructive fishing methods. This could be achieved through diversification of economic prospects, such as eco-tourism in order to provide alternative livelihoods to the local community.



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COLLABORATION

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Watch videos of the expedition at:

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TMPE2012>

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/TunMustaphaParkExpedition>

Or at **Naturalis blog site:** <http://blog.naturalis.nl/?p=7347>

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