



The Houseion

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College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, University of the Philippines in the Visayas, Miagao, Iloilo

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UPV-MNS conducts First National Training

by Soledad S. Garibay

Finally the dream came true! The UPV Museum of Natural Sciences successfully conducted the "First National Training on the Collection and Preservation of Common Seashore Animals" last October 17-19, 2005, at the Umali Hall, College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (CFOS), UPV Miagao, Iloilo.

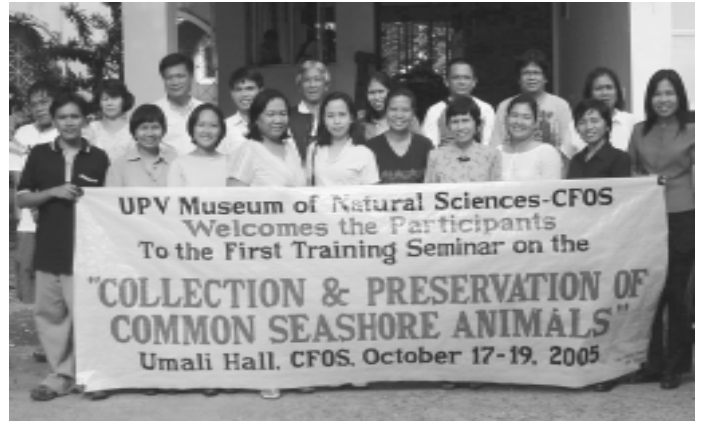
To realize the Museum's vision and mission, the training program was conceptualized with the following set of goals: 1) to equip high school biology teachers, extension specialists and fishery workers with the basic methods used in the collection and preservation of seashore animals and at the same time increase their awareness on the biodiversity and conservation of the aquatic flora and fauna, 2) to enhance the class instructions in aquatic biology, this in turn will develop the awareness of students in the conservation of our natural resources and 3) to develop fishery workers and extension specialists as semi-professional taxonomists who can be tapped by their institutions particularly the local regional policy makers and educators in their conservation program.

The training included topics on the "Biological Diversity and its

Conservation" which was presented by Dr. Teodora Bagarinao of SEAFDEC, AQD. For the main topic, Dr. Enrico P. Viloso, a faculty of Institute of Marine Fisheries and Oceanology (IMFO), shared his knowledge on the "Biology, Collection and Preservation of Common Seashore Animals." The fishery laws related to conservation was handled by Ms. Michelle Tumilba, another IMFO faculty. The topic on "Protecting Marine Life through Conservation Advocacies" was presented by Prof. Nestor Yunque of the Division of Biological Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences.

The training was made more interesting with the exposure trip held in Nogas Island, Anini-y, Antique. Nogas Island has served as our biological laboratory to enable our participants to enjoy God's wonderful creation by observing the organisms in its natural habitat.

The training was participated by 14 delegates coming from various secondary schools, colleges and universities and fisheries agencies including Iloilo National High School, Ramon Avanceña National High School, Philippine Science High School, Miagao National High School, Colegio de las Hijas de Jesus, Samar State University, Mariano Marcos



The training participants composed of highschool biology teachers, fishery workers and extension specialists together with the lecturers and UPV-MNS staff. (Photo Courtesy of Ellen Flor Doyola, SEAFDEC, AQD.)

State University, Northern Iloilo Polytechnic State College, Sultan Kudarat Polytechnic State College, Fishworld SEAFDEC AQD., and a representative from the Provincial Agriculture Office, Fisheries Division, Iloilo City.

Three days turned out to be very short, for the participants suggested for MNS to conduct another similar training which will focus on the taxonomic identification. More hands on activities and exposure trips will be pursued on the succeeding trainings. Additional topics on how to properly display and catalogue the specimens will be included in the said activity.

The training program concluded with a simple closing ceremony held on the last day of the training. Certificates of participation were distributed to trainees who had completed the program. Tokens of Appreciation were also given to the Resource Persons to acknowledge their efforts and commitment to the museum activities.



Dr. Viloso discussing the proper way of preserving the collected specimen during the laboratory session.

ON FOCUS ...

Trumpet Shell, *Charonia tritonis* by Cornelio M. Selorio, Jr.

History would tell the long time use of "trumpet shells" in communication whether be it for rituals, celebrations, wars, or even just for calling out "pan de sal" lovers. Aside from its value as

communication device, science has its own interesting story to tell about this trumpet shell, the *Charonia tritonis*.

Locally known as "Budyong"

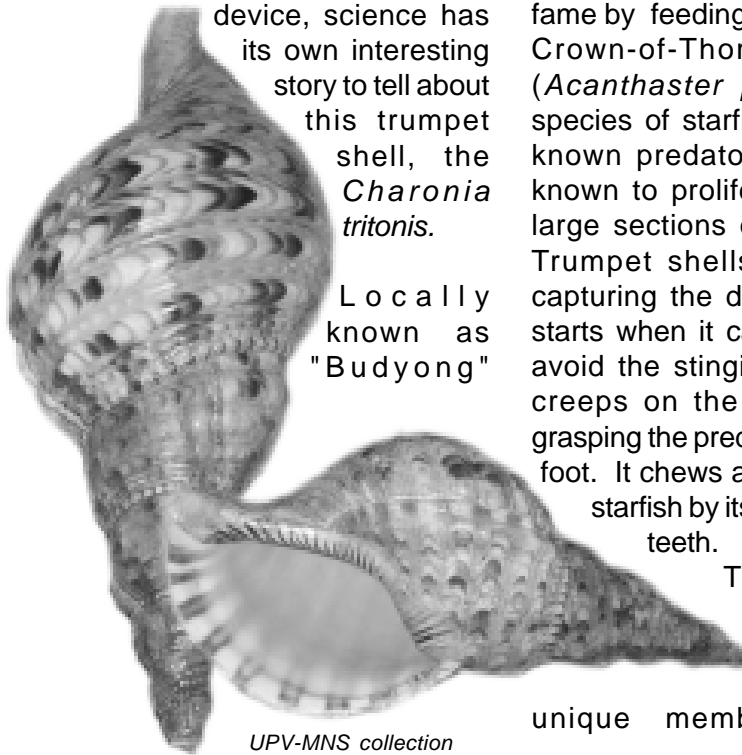
because of its traditional use in calling out native people, the *Charonia tritonis* is characterized by a very elegant spire, rounded whorls, large flaring lip, deep orange aperture and distinct brown markings. This shell has gained fame by feeding on the destructive Crown-of-Thorn Starfish (*Acanthaster planci*), a large species of starfish which has few known predators and has been known to proliferate and destroy large sections of coral reef. The Trumpet shells' mechanism of capturing the destructive starfish starts when it capsizes the prey to avoid the stinging thorn, it then creeps on the body and starts grasping the predator by its powerful foot. It chews and even sucks the starfish by its strong mandibular teeth.

Trumpet shell have separate sexes, which makes it a unique member of the class

Gastropoda or the univalves that are known to be hermaphrodites. The female deposits a cluster of white capsules, each of which contains many developing larvae. The larvae emerge free-swimming and then drifts to open water for up to three months.

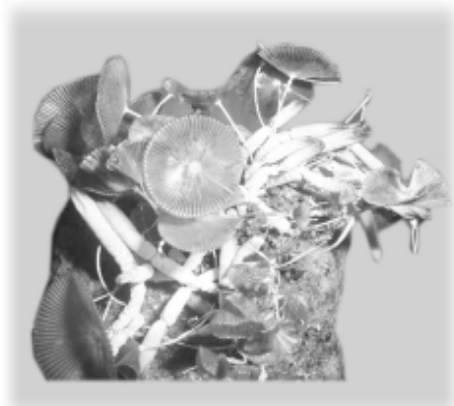
Budyong can be found in sandy area at about 25 meters depth. Diving is the common way to gather it. Trumpet shell is collected for souvenir purposes, for "curio trade" and as a trumpet. Newly gathered, medium-sized shell has a commercial value of Php 500. Moreover, its meat is also marketable, some natives even claim that it can be used as an aphrodisiac.

Charonia tritonis was once included on the list of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) as Appendix III. Presently, this gastropod is reported to have increased in abundance and is commonly found in the Philippine waters.



UPV-MNS collection

Umbrella of the Sea by Soledad S. Garibay



Acetabularia spp. collected along the inter-tidal zone of Miagao, Iloilo.

Locally known as "Payong payong", the *Acetabularia* spp. is a kind of seaweed that normally grows in coralline rocks, in shallow but always submerged areas. *Acetabularia* spp. belongs to the green group or Phylum Chlorophyta under the Order Dasycladales.

So called for its shape, this seaweed looks like small umbrellas. Its cap measures between 1.5 to 5.0 mm in diameter consisting of sporangial rays which are laterally coherent due to lime deposition. True to all its species, when still young,

Acetabularia spp. is green and becoming whitish with age.

At least seven species can be found in the Philippines as listed in the "Book on Philippine Seaweeds" by Dr. Gavino C. Trono and Dr. Edna T.G. Fortes (1988). One or two of the species listed in the said book can also be observed growing on rocks along the inter-tidal zones of Miagao, Iloilo (UPV-MNS Collection, 2004). More studies regarding its biology and economic uses have to be considered being one of the most common species that grow in Miagao.

A Day in Nogas Island

by Sheryll S. Santander

I heard a great deal about Nogas Island, the treasure of Anini-y, Antique known to be the haven of shell collectors, the garden of divers and the treasured sanctuary of bird lovers. But I only knew this through stories of those who had been there and through research at google.com. I have never been to Nogas, not until October 18, 2005.

It was the second day of the national training hosted by the museum, the day scheduled to have an encounter with the live version of the museum's collection. The chance to see the fishes and the other specimens alive, swimming, nesting in their natural habitat is something not to miss in one's lifetime.

The three-hour drive and the 20-minute sea travel you needed to endure in order to reach the place is more than worth if you'll be welcomed by a serene picture of clear sky and crystal blue sea, which forms like a mantel, clothing the island in different hues of blue, from gun-metal to deep turquoise.

As we set foot on the island, the municipal officer gave us a short orientation about the place. Geographically located at 10°24' North Latitude and 121° 53' Longitude East, Nogas Island was declared a Marine Protected Area (MPA) and named "Nogas Island Fish Sanctuary" in October 15, 1994. An MPA is any area of inter-tidal or sub-tidal terrain, together with its overlying waters and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by legislation to protect a part or the entire enclosed environment. Thus, Nogas' 150 ha-coral reef area, 25 ha-mangrove forests, and 2ha-sea grass beds allows no fishing activity or collection of any sort.

The first hour of the exploration trip was spent in discovering the wonders of the terrestrial area of the place. From the "durungkaan" or port, a path neatly lined with coral rocks and beautifully

covered with a canopy-forming, "Kalachuchi puti" (*Plumeria* sp.) leads you to a lighthouse. The lighthouse is an attraction by itself, as it is solar powered, a non-conventional but environment friendly source of energy. As we proceed to explore the irregularly oblong-shaped island, we noticed an amazing variety of wild trees, shrubs, and vines growing. But above all these plant species, it is the mangroves that dominate the vegetation of the Island. According to a survey conducted by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), six identified families of mangrove trees can be found in the area. These trees forming a "mangrove ecosystem" serve as nursery to many aquatic organisms. The number of birds nesting in the place is also incredible of which 32 species were reported. This includes the "Local Tabon", a flightless bird species which is reported to be on the verge of extinction.

Soaked in sweat after an hour or more of engagement with the land biota, we then went for a plunge at the extremely inviting white sand beach of Nogas. On that swim, we experienced a real communion with the underwater garden, a breathtaking scene of brightly colored corals, sponges, and fishes gracefully dancing in the rhythm of the water current, a picture, I had previously enjoyed viewing on a television screen. Now, I learned the mile difference between seeing these awesome creatures while sitting on a couch and while swimming with them.

Among the organisms found around the continental shelf of the island are the butterflyfishes. Butterflyfishes or Papillons are deep-bodied, highly compressed fishes with striking coloration of bright yellow, orange, or brown bands. Angelfishes which are similar in habit and structure to the butterflyfishes are also prominent in the area. Added to the scene of these coral residents, are the silvery-blue, cloud like



The path lined with coral rocks and covered with "Kalachuchi" forming a canopy which leads to the Island's lighthouse.

aggregation of damselfishes. Aside from these multi-colored aquarium fishes, I also spotted one or two groupers, *Epinephelus* sp. enjoying the shelter provided by corals. Grouper, locally known as lapu-lapu are prized foods in the restaurants. Sea cucumber (*Holothuria* spp.), another valuable ingredient to Chinese cuisine is as well, abundant in the area. The shore of the Island is also a home to numerous sea shells including the endangered Giant clam, the *Tridacna gigas*.

Because of this highly diverse flora and fauna, be it aquatic or terrestrial, Nogas Island was chosen as the site for the Coastal Environmental Program (CEP) of DENR in southern Antique. This program started in 1994 through Executive Order No. 192 and Republic Act No. 7586 known as the "National Integrated Protected Areas System" (NIPAS) Act of 1992. Presently, the Municipality of Anini-y is also implementing the "Nogas Island Development Council" (NIDC), a multi-agency and multi-sectoral coastal resource management program which aims to conserve and protect the island's natural resources especially the rare and endangered ones, provide area for environmental and ecological researchers, tourism, and recreation and maximize sustainable yield and utilization of the resources.

Our trip in the Island is just like a sneak preview of a very interesting film of our rich natural resources. And as we packed home, I promised to myself to visit Nogas Island again, and on that visit, I hope it will be the same Island, if not, let it be the richer and greener Nogas!

"Now I learned the mile difference between seeing these awesome creatures while sitting on a couch and while swimming with them. "

MNS Launches "Museum Volunteer Program"

by Sheryll S. Santander

Museums in almost all locales are always associated with volunteers! A volunteer is defined as a person who enters into or offers any service of his own free will. The word volunteer rooted from the Latin term *volontarius*, which is from *voluntas* or free will.

Last October 17, 2005, the UPV Museum of Natural Sciences officially launched the "Museum Volunteer Program" at the College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (CFOS) - Umali Hall.

The pioneer batch of volunteers were called to assist the organization of a National Training sponsored by MNS. This appeal was answered by employees of the University who are all connected with CFOS, namely: Cornelio Selorio, Jr., Marie June Esprella, Edna Abunol, Shiela Villamor, and Remy Villoga.

The program was originally intended for the upper classmen of CFOS who wish to develop their sense of responsibility and who are interested in the field of taxonomy and environmental science. Their duties will include both "Behind the Scenes" and "Visitor Services". The volunteers will play an important role in maintaining the collection of the museum and in further developing its activities. They will assist during field collection and laboratory activities like in the preservation and

proper identification of the biological specimens. Volunteers will also participate in the conceptualization of museum exhibits and help facilitate museum guiding.

But with all the demands of the academic load, maybe one would ask, "Why join the volunteer program?" . By being a Museum Volunteer, one will be able to develop its communication skills and sense of responsibility. Their duties will provide them a venue to gain more experience on the methods of the proper taxonomic identification and at the same

time be more knowledgeable of the UPV-MNS collection. This will also give them the chance to be more oriented to the uses of the Fishbase and

Reefbase computer programs. Their laboratory and field exposures are expected to enhance their performance in subjects in Ichthyology, Aquatic Invertebrates and many other courses. This will also give them the opportunity to become ambassadors of nature in all the conservation programs of the museum.

So if you are enthusiastic and reliable, and looking for a challenging and rewarding experience, the "Museum Volunteer Program" is for you! The program is also open for faculty and researchers who are willing to share their expertise in the field of taxonomy, biodiversity and conservation.

"A volunteer is defined as a person who enters into or offers any service of his own free will."

• MUSEUM HOURS:

Mondays to Fridays,
8 am-5 pm
Entrance fee

to Non-UPV Visitors:

* age 1-12: Php 2.00

* 13 and up: Php 5.00

*Senior Citizen: Php 4.00

• MUSEUM ACTIVITIES:

Exhibit on Fish Conservation and Marine Biodiversity:

February and October

International Coastal Clean-up:

Third week of September

Trainings/Workshops:

October

Extension Services:

*Identification and documentation of ecologically important aquatic plants and animals

*Offers access to Fishbase and Reefbase Programs

"The Mouseion" is a bi-annual publication of the UPV Museum of Natural Sciences

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CHELO, THE SEA TURTLE

by Leo N. Plasus

