



Annual Report

2015

Knowledge, education, and nature conservation to ensure sustainable use for coastal and marine natural resources.

Oceânica – Research, Education and Conservation

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Our Mission and Partners

Our Mission

To support coastal and marine conservation through research and education, respecting cultural assets, and aiming towards human-animal wellbeing for current and future generations.

Our Partners

We work with partners from governmental agencies at national (the National Environmental Agency - "IBAMA"), state (environmental state agency - "IDEMA") and local levels (municipalities) fomenting participatory coastal governance based on scientific and local knowledge. Researchers are also important partners in our ambition to increase information about marine biodiversity, human coastal occupation and the use of resources. Thus our researchers work with experts from the Federal University in the state of Rio Grande do Norte. Local entrepreneurs are also important partners and support activities developed along the coast. Finally, we have also partnered with local grassroots organizations such as local communities and fishermen organizations, and we strongly support their networking with governmental agencies and their participating in activities to bring about coastal management and marine conservation.



Biodiversity Research and Monitoring

The South coast of Rio Grande do Norte state consists of a mosaic of reefs varying from formations in very shallow waters on the beach to reefs 30m deep. Previous studies indicate high biodiversity level and social economic importance for traditional communities. In 2015, our researches focused on biodiversity inventories of deep reefs not yet studied and on monitoring shallow reefs in touristic areas.

Reef Biodiversity

New 11 deep reefs were included in the baseline data. General marine biodiversity inventory for the studied area includes 500 species distributed as 84 species of macro algae, 32 of sponges, 17 of cnidarian, 19 of polychaeta, 98 mollusks, 39 of crustaceans, 19 echinoderms, 10 ascidians, 177 fishes, 3 turtles, 2 marine mammals. Complete results are available in the scientific reports.



Reef Monitoring

Monitoring included coral bleaching and recruitment of *Siderastrea stellata* at the main reef “Parracho de Pirangi”, and fish and invertebrates dynamics in two other reefs: “Ilha Verde” and “Pirambúzios”. *Siderastrea stellata* is a Brazilian endemic species and the most abundant coral in the south coast of Rio Grande do Norte state. Corals in general are good indicators of



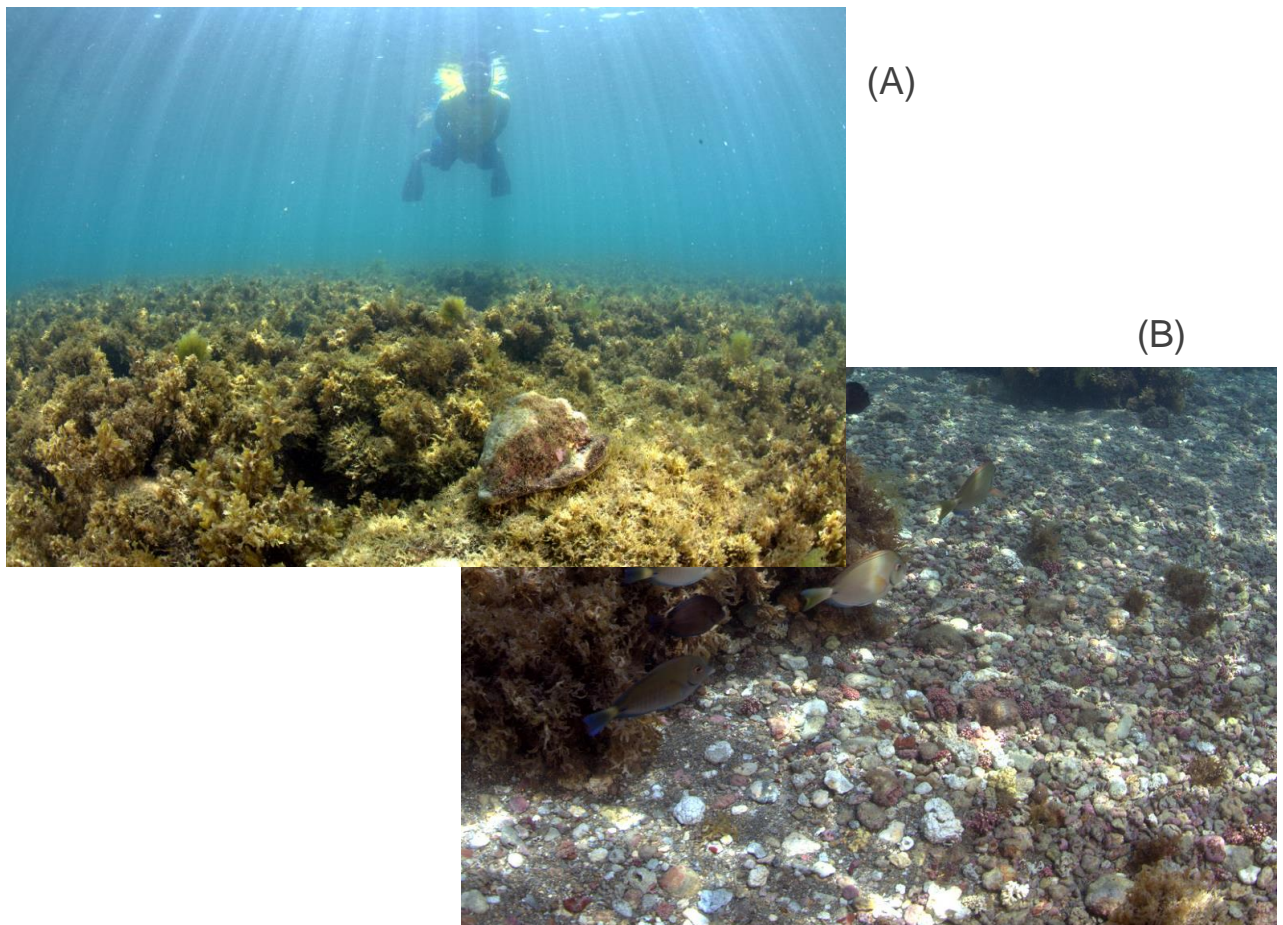
environmental conditions. Bleaching phenomena indicate significant environmental changes. In 2015, corals did not show significant bleaching and recruitment at the main reef was very low.

Monitoring fish and invertebrates dynamics, on the other hand, gives baseline information about local ecological reef patterns, which are fundamental for management purpose. Considering that “Ilha Verde” and “Pirambúzios” are beach reefs in a very touristic area, understanding these dynamics are essential to manage visitors’ impact. Monitoring results indicate a significant fish biomass increase in summer; the most frequent species are the following:



Damselfishes: (A) *Stegastes fuscus* - adult, (B) *Stegastes fuscus* - youth, (C) *Stegastes variabilis* -youth, (D) *Abudefduf saxatilis* – adult. Parrot fish: (E) *Sparisoma* sp. - youth

Macro algae are the most frequent covers for studied sea bed at shallow reefs. At “Parracho de Pirangi” reef, seaweed is abundant (A), while coralline free-living algae such as rhodoliths (rounded, free-living specimens) dominates the surrounding areas of “Pirambúzios” and “Ilha Verde” reefs (B).



Environmental Education and Communication

Environmental Education refers to organized efforts towards sharing the knowledge of the environment and its associated problems, increasing awareness of the solutions to these problems, and motivation to solve them. In order to increase coastal knowledge about natural and cultural resources and support communities' engagement in coastal governance and marine conservation, we developed several activities such as a training program for public school teachers and three environmental campaigns. Furthermore, we published one book, two marine conservation kits (poster & leaflet) and developed two others books which were published in March 2016, besides attending to local demands of fishers, teachers and local grassroots organizations.

Training Program for Teachers

For the first time in the state south coast, public school teachers had the opportunity to better understand coastal area and discuss strategies and tools to include these areas in their daily educational activities.



The training program included social and historical approaches of coastal occupation, the rich biodiversity, a guided firsthand experience diving at

Pirangi reef with biologists and ecologists, a discussion panel on coastal governance and citizenship.

After our introductory course (2014), teachers had to plan activities with their students, implement and present them during the event in celebration of World Environmental Day (2015).



During the event students and teachers presented their projects. Projects included a play discussing pollution impact on marine resources, a model of our coast using recycled material and an installation of mock turtles made of recycled material in which



children drew short stories inside their plastron.

Community mobilization through environmental campaigns

“Clean up the beaches”: We organized this campaign in three different beaches, with the support of two public schools, one local organization and undergraduate students from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte. At the end of the campaign,

which was covered by TV news, members collected 900kg of waste improperly disposed around these beaches.



“Summer Campaign”: As summer is the highest touristic season, we also organized a campaign to highlight the importance of our coast and its conservation. Our experts and volunteers had friendly chats about conservation with tourists at the beach and on the reefs.



“World Environmental Day”

In order to celebrate World Environment Day, we organized an event on the main square of Pirangi, the biggest and most populated community in the region. Schools, grassroots organizations, environmental NGOs and members of Oceânica got together to present their activities, to network and reinforce the importance of participatory coastal governance and marine conservation.



EA Posters and leaflets Series

In order to promote public awareness about the importance of the south coast, we printed a series of posters and leaflets to be distributed to local entrepreneurs, associations, tourism companies and governmental agencies. The first poster-and-leaflet pair stressed the richness of our biodiversity and the different forms of coastal resources use. The second pair focused on the rules to visit our main reef (“Parrachos de Pirangi”).



Books

We also developed three books in order to highlight the natural and cultural assets of the state south coast. We published the first one “*Mar Doce Lar*” in 2015 and the two others in March 2016.



Kit “Mar Doce Lar” (Sea sweet home):



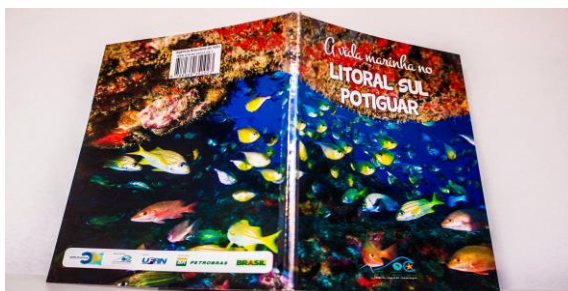
This kit is a combo of a CD, book and activity set for children. It tells a musical story of a kid who saved a coral fairy and got the opportunity to know the marine environment as a fish. During his dive, he meets several animals (turtles, dolphins,

octopus, corals, shrimps and crabs) and learns that species struggles to survive due to human impact on coastal and marine environments. Impacts include mangrove deforestation, floating garbage in the ocean, water pollution, fishery over-exploitation, etc. At the end of his adventure, the child returns to his community and tells everyone what he learned and starts to advocate for marine conservation.

“Vida marinha no litoral Sul Potiguar”

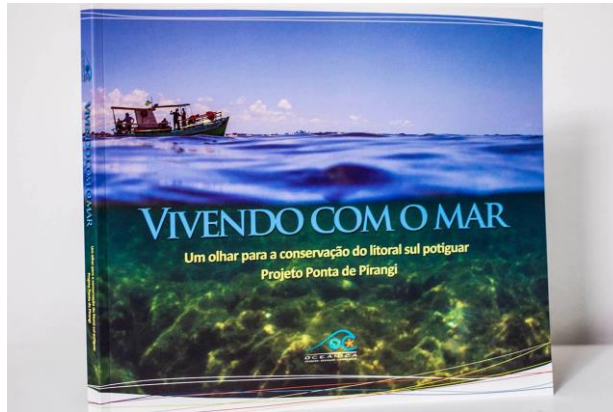
(Marine Life on the South Coast of Rio Grande do Norte)

This is a marine biodiversity guide created to support general education, based on a 6-year research conducted in the area. It presents the main marine biological groups that inhabit the state south coast, highlighting its rich biodiversity.



“Vivendo com o Mar – um olhar para a conservação do litoral sul potiguar”

(Living by the Sea: conservation efforts towards south coast protection)



This book aims to give a thorough understanding of the Rio Grande do Norte south coast, based on scientific and local knowledge. It also includes the results of a 4-year social environment project

we developed in the area called “Ponta de Pirangi”. It brings a wealth of information about the historical process of human occupation, social and cultural aspects of coastal communities, geodiversity, biodiversity and fisheries. It also illustrates the environmental education projects we developed in the area, such as our Clean up the beaches campaigns, training programs for teachers, and children and youth involvement. The last chapter describes our efforts towards marine conservation including discussions with the local community to create a protected area, to set up reef visitation rules, our conversations about the importance of coastal governance based on local participation and our plans for the future.



Public Policies

Advocating for the creation of a protected area in the south coast of the state of Rio Grande do Norte

We organized 10 public exhibitions of the natural and cultural resources available in the south coast.



Advocating for participatory coastal governance and marine conservation



While the federal agency was not able to create a coastal marine protected area, governmental agencies, tourism companies and Oceânica signed a legal agreement to organize the visitation process (i.e., diving) at “Parrachos de Pirangi”, the main reef in the region. We represent the NGO sector and contribute with scientific information, networking with fishermen and other sectors. Part of

the agreement includes inter-institutional evaluation. (The picture on the left depicts federal and state representatives working with NGO members). In addition, in 2015, we also proposed a Monitoring Plan for the visits at “Parrachos de Pirangi”.

Supporting artisanal fisheries organizations and their campaign to have traditional fisheries territories recognized by the federal government

Through a partnership with CPP (a grass root organization dedicated to supporting fishermen) and the two fishermen organizations in the region, we held 11 meetings along four coastal communities discussing fishermen’ needs, views and strategies to enforce their rights.



Supporting natural resources conservation in the region

Oceânica is the official representative of the NGOs in the Management Council of “APA Bonfim Guaraíra”, a protected area in the mainland that also includes part of the coast we work at. During 2015, we participated in four meetings to discuss the PA Management Plan and its zoning process.



Financial Resources

During 2015 Oceânica developed the 2nd year of Ponta do Pirangi Project – Phase 2 (2014 - 2015), with full funding from PETROBRAS (the Brazilian Oil Company). Project objective is to promote marine conservation in the Rio Grande do Norte south coast, based on participatory coastal governance. Total income from PETROBRAS in 2015 was R\$ 575.536,34 or US\$ 145,816.15.

Oceânica annual financial resources were around US\$ 153,500.00. Expense details involves the development of the strategic plan of Ponta do Pirangi project. All activities reported in this annual report relates to this project and fund, as illustrated bellow.

Expense Details	R\$ (Real)	%	US\$
Salaries and Employees benefits	146.683,11	24	37.163,19
Service	355.217,45	59	89.996,82
Transportation	6.044,05	1	1.531,30
Administrative Expenses	54.894,08	9	13.907,80
Taxes	430,61	0	109,10
Equipment	620,50	0	157,21
Depreciation	29.596,78	5	7.498,55
Consultant fees and student fellowships	6.300,00	1	1.596,15
Travels and accomodation costs	6.368,00	1	1.613,38
Total	606.154,58	100%	153.573,49

Information

Our team includes experts from different areas (Biology, Ecology, Geography, Sociology and Psychology) as well as undergraduate students and volunteers.



World
Environmental
Day - 2015

Institutional Information

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