



What's Inside...

2	Conservation Director's Note	9	News & Update
3	Teaching & Care Director's Note	11	Your Shot
4	Thailand Inside and Out	12	Dish of the Month
6	Volunteer's Account	13	Arrivals in June
7	Volunteers' Corner	13	Mail Bag
8	Feature	15	Contact

Conservation



Marie Goarin
Conservation Director
Projects Abroad

Welcome to the May Newsletter,

Again, thank you for the messages inquiring about the situation in Thailand. Things have settled now after the intervention of the army but really all this was confined to the Bangkok area and a few cities in the North of Thailand. Krabi is getting very quiet as the low season is coming and we have seen no political demonstration at all. Life just goes on as normal and we continue with our regular activities.

The last few weeks have been very busy, we have 12 volunteers at the moment and we had 18 at the beginning of April! Amongst the highlights, we have set up a small mangroves nursery at the back of our storage room behind J. Guesthouse and are now observing the first seedlings as they grow. This allows us to try out different mangroves species that require more attention. We went to Trang for a couple of days and you can read more about this in Dear's article.

The biggest and saddest news is coral bleaching. The water temperature has been very high since March and as a result up to 90% of the corals have bleached around Phi Phi and locally. A lot of them are dying already and we have started to monitor the effects of bleaching with the hope to observe recovery very soon.

I hope you are doing great. Don't forget to drop a line on Facebook sometimes so we know what each of you are doing. This month we will get our 500th volunteer on the conservation project! I think I've known more than 300 of them! And yes, I remember all of them!

Take care all of you and remember that even though you're not on the project any more, you can still help us by watching your carbon footprint, remember the 3Rs... This is what will keep coral bleaching the exception rather than the norm...

Marie

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>

Teaching & Care Director



PARICHART CHAIPIKUL

Teaching and Care Director
Projects Abroad

Although the situation in Bangkok has become even more serious, everything in the South still carries on as usual. School has started in Thailand as well as the rainy season. The scenery around you will be green with blossoms. Not only the green that you will see but also the air is fresher and cooler from the rain.

Our feature for this month is English Summer Camp! This is our 3rd year, which was organised by the Cooperate with Child Watch Phuket Association in Phuket. Unfortunately, there were only a few volunteers this year. The camp was so awesome!

The camps were broken into 2 Camps for 2 different target groups. The first camp started from 5th – 23rd April. We had 30 children from around Phuket Town.

The second Camp started from 27th April to 7th May. We had 30 orphans from the Sunshine Village Foundation. Both Camps were under the management of Child Watch of Phuket Association. This organization gives opportunities to the unfortunate children and to protect and rescue children from abuse.

Once both Camps had finished, I was so happy to be able to help fulfil some of their needs. Thank you to all our volunteers who took part in this activity.

We met with the Director of the Association afterwards and she's a very nice woman and always has a smile on her face. She thanked us for reaching out to these children.

Please take a moment to enjoy what we have prepared for you this month.

Yours sincerely,

Ant



“Raek Na Khwan Ceremony”

May 13, 2010

Another name for this is “The Royal Ploughing”. This practice was started during Sukhothia period over 700 years ago and stops until His Majesty King Rama IX revived it in 1960. This old practice continues till today and is important to ensure the success in the New Year rice planting season.

In several royal speeches, His Majesty The King often stressed the important of farming. He believes that in order for a nation to survive we have to pay attention to our agriculture and farming. Half of Thailand’s people still depending on farming for a living; the Royal Ploughing Ceremony is a yearly event that honors the bond between the King, the government and the farmers. They all play an important roll in making the King’s wish for a more sustainable living.

Awards are given to farmers who have done exceptionally well with their crops or contributed to the Agriculture Success. His Majesty The King hands out these awards on a yearly basis. The Crown Prince carries out some of His Majesty duties now.

This is more than just a religious ceremony...this ritual is a State-sponsored event that involved upper level civil officials. His Royal Highness oversee their perform functions from start to finish; supervise the blessing of the Lord of the Harvest (wear a special hat and robe) and the four Celestial Maidens (balancing the two rice baskets on their shoulders). He also gives a ceremonial ring and sword to the Lord of the Harvest to use the next day’s ceremonies. This ceremony is performed in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, within the Grand palace. The Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture takes on the position of Lord of the Harvest; four single female Ministry officials are appointed to assist him.

The Ceremony is composed of two separate rituals.

The Cultivating Ceremony or Phraraj Pithi Peu Mongkol: At this time the Lord of the Harvest blesses the rice paddy, seeds, and ceremonial items to be used for the Ploughing Ceremony.

The Ploughing Ceremony or Phraraj Pthi Jarod Phranangkal Raek Na Kwan: This takes place the following day at Sanam Luang or "The Royal Ground" outside of the Grand Palace and the Emerald Buddha Temple. The Lord of the Harvest performs several rituals that are supposed to predict this coming rice seasons' conditions. First he chooses one of the three cloth garments –the longest one predicts little rain for the coming season. The medium length one predicts average rainfall, and the shortest one predicts a lot of rain.



Two chosen oxen pull the wooden plough, the Lord of the Harvest initiates by ploughing a furrow in the ceremonial ground, while rice grains is sown by Phraya Raek Na, accompanied by the sacred bulls, drummers, umbrella bearers, and his helpers bearing baskets filled with rice grains. Afterwards the oxen are presented with plates of seven foods consist of rice, corn, green beans, sesame seeds, and fresh-cut grass, and water and rice whiskey. Depending on what the oxen eats, the Brahmin (wearing white with hair tied back in ponytail) makes a prediction on whether this year's crops will be bountiful or not.

This year the Short clothes was chosen and the oxen ate fresh-cut grass. Brahmin's prediction for this year's rice crop; we will have a lot of rain fall and rice grown on lower plains will do well, while rice grown on higher ground will not produce as much. Fruits and vegetables should be plentiful, while exports may face some challenges.

Thai people come from all over Thailand to watch this ceremony year after year. At the end of the ceremony, the Lord of the Harvest will scatter rice seeds over the furrows. Guests will try to collect some of the scattered rice grains for their own planting back at home or keep it as good luck charms.



In writing about this ceremony I hope to share with you a little more of Thai Culture, Customs and the link that we have with our Buddhist religion. To some, it may seem so old fashion and not important but to the Thai people, it is a way of life here.

Chananan Sutsadang / Desk Officer & Social Manager

*Info. & Photos: courtesy of Bangkok Post

"Thailand, an adventure of a lifetime!"

I arrived in Thailand on the 27th of January and Projects Abroad were already in the airport to pick me up. I was very curious about what was waiting for me? Of course I had a picture in my head but I really couldn't imagine how my stay would be at all?



After 15 minutes in the car I arrived at my family. I was living together with a girl from Germany and a boy from France. They were both very excited about meeting me and we quickly became friends. My host mum's name is P'nong. She was living as a single mum together with her two sons aged 9 and 10. They were both very kind.

The day after, Dear (the project leader) took me to Krabi town where we bought some clothes for work and had lunch. The next day was the day I was most excited about. It was the day I start my care project in the Kindergarten. When I came to the school all the kids looked excited to see me, and I totally fell in love with them. Thai kids are so beautiful and cute, and many of the children were hugging me and saying "Sawat Dee Kha" – which is "Hello" in Thai. I brought gifts from my sponsors in Denmark with me, 10 kilo of LEGO Duplo and I also bought a lot of colours, paper and pearls to make a lot of fun and creative things with the children. The kids and staff in the Kindergarten were so thankful and excited about all the stuff.

My work days were mostly about caring for the kids, teaching a little English, for example, English songs, the alphabet and games. But I also helped them with personal hygiene, giving them lunch, drawing, doing gym and learning how to behave and treat the other kids in the school. I was also cleaning and painting the school while the kids were having a nap.

On the weekends, other volunteers and I would take trips around the area. We traveled to Kho Phi Phi, Kho Phanang, where we celebrated the big full moon party and I also took a dive course at one of the local dive centre. It is one of the most beautiful places to dive, and I saw sharks, sea turtles and the most colorful corals. I also join the local yoga class every Tuesday and Thursday. It was fun to be around all the fantastic local Thai people and I had so much fun!

Now I'm back home in Denmark, and I really miss everything about Thailand. It has been the most fantastic journey, and I learned and met the most wonderful people from all over the world. It has been the best two months of my life and I will always thank Projects Abroad for giving me that good support and experience.

Kristine Bårdsen (Care, Denmark)

English Camps in Phuket
Teaching & Care Group
5 April to 7 May 2010



Tahne van Wonderen with students



Stine Moller and Lisa van Schijndel



Stine Moller working with kids



Group picture after English Camp

More photos can be seen on Facebook Projects Abroad Thailand - The Official Group

www.projects-abroad.net



“We do not remember days; we remember moments”

Time flies when you are having fun!!

This phrase means more to me now than ever before; after a month and a half in Thailand, I can't believe the time has come to leave!! I hope that you all enjoy your

experience as much as I have enjoyed mine.

I spent my first month in Phuket doing the Care Project; this was a fantastic experience which was enhanced by living with a Thai family. I have a hundred memories, from eating beetles to trips to the beach with the day care centre I was working at, all of which will last me a life time. During my placement I worked with children aged 1-10 in the morning and then in the afternoon I taught English to 12-18 year olds; both were awesome and the staff and the children made me feel so welcome. I am already planning my journey back! The weekends and days off were as fun and literally flew by. I spent days on the beach, days with my host family and especially enjoyed the Thai water festival. The advantage of living with a host family is you really get an insight into Thai culture. If you are worried about the customs don't be, because you pick them up so quickly; my main tip would be just relax, never be afraid to just try, the best way to get the most out of the experience is just to do.

The month was over before I knew it, and with a few emotional goodbyes I was off back to Krabi to start the Conservation project. I was immediately greeted again by lovely staff and other volunteers and whisked off for a night out. Diving was incredible, from that first breath underwater in the pool as a complete novice, to seeing turtles in their natural habitat, it was amazing, and I can safely say I am totally hooked. Our days spent not diving were always busy with other projects; beach cleanup, mangrove work, all of which made me feel like I was really doing something worthwhile. Two weeks really wasn't long enough for me, but another reason for me to come back!!

I have just been asked if I am writing a book by another volunteer and in reality I could easily write a book about my experiences, but enough about mine as your upcoming visit will give you enough of your own.

Grace Johnson

(Care, UK)



News & Update from Chane



สวัสดีค่ะ (Swadee ka!) or Hello!

May brought with it rain showers. What a nice change from the hot temperature we've been having. We've been lucky because it's been raining mostly in the late afternoons and evenings. We can still carry on with our day-to-day activities at Conservation Project. Some of our volunteers reported that they have seen large turtles and group of squids during several of their dives. It was just awesome!

Our Monthly Dinner was moved from the Last Fisherman's Bar to "Thai Thai Restaurant" because the Head Cook's father at the Last Fisherman's Bar had died, so the manager decided to close the kitchen early for the season. The rest of the place is still open for business. It had rained earlier, so we were very lucky to have The Thai Thai Restaurant to go to. Our dinner was held inside a nicely decorated Hall. To all our volunteers, thank you for making this Monthly Dinner an unforgettable one! For those who will be leaving us soon, we will miss you and for those who will continue to be with us, we hope to make your time with us a memorable one.

Projects Abroad Thailand - The Official Group Members is now 378!

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!

We welcome our future volunteers and we have many fun activities plan for you throughout the month. If you would like to learn more about us, please check out our Projects Abroad website. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at chanesutsadang@projects-abroad.org.

I would like to say thank you to the following people for their help in putting together this May Newsletter.

Articles: Grace Johnson, Kristine Bardsen
Your Shot: Sebastien Demougin, Kevin Cook
Cover: Kingkan Jitlang

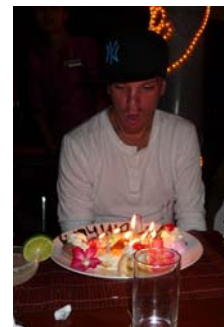
Monthly Dinner will be on 11 June 2010

Thai Holidays

5 May Coronation Day
13 May Royal Ploughing Ceremony Day
28 May Visakha Bucha Day

Best Wishes,

Chananan Sutsadang
Desk Officer/ Social Manager



20 May 2010

Happy Birthday David !

Visitors: We welcome our Alumni Volunteers any time, if you're in the neighborhood please stop by and let us show you our Thai hospitality.

The Thai Thai Restaurant

Ao Nang, Krabi



Long awaited meal...



Great food, great company, great time...

More photos can be seen on Facebook Projects Abroad Thailand - The Official Group



Sebastien Demougin

(Conservation, France)

“Dark Storm cloud over Nopparatthara Beach”

Kevin Cook

*(Conservation,
Canada)*



“The View Point” Krabi, Thailand

Thai Grilled Chicken with Aromatic Herbals

Ingredients

- 4tbsp sweet chilli sauce
- juice of 1 juicy lime, plus 1 to serve
- 4 corn-fed chicken breasts, skin removed
- 325g (11oz) pack fresh egg noodles
- 1tsp sesame oil
- 2tsp soy sauce
- 1tsp grated ginger
- 2 spring onions, shredded
- 1 red chilli, de-seeded and shredded
- a small handful each of basil, mint and coriander leaves



What to do

- Line the grill pan with foil and preheat the grill.
 - Mix together the chilli sauce and lime and drizzle over the chicken breasts, covering them completely. Season with freshly ground black pepper.
 - Grill the chicken for 10-12 minutes, turning once, until it's just cooked through and golden. The marinade will caramelise on the meat in patches.
 - Cook the noodles according to packet instructions and stir through the sesame oil, soy and ginger.
 - Serve the chicken sliced on a bed of the noodles and spoon over any juices. Top with the spring onion and chilli, and scatter over the mixed herbs
-
- *Serves:* 4
 - *Takes:* 15mins