

Vanguard of Dugong and Seagrass Protectors in Kotawaringin Barat

By: Idham Farsha (Marine Species Site Coordinator – Kotawaringin Barat), Casandra Tania (Marine Species Officer)

As the vanguard protectors of dugong and seagrass in Kotawaringin Barat, Community Surveillance Group (Pokmaswas) at four villages in Sub-District Kumai, Central Kalimantan, took the Community Surveillance training of Dugong and Seagrass Conservation at Teluk Bogam Village Hall, last 21-23 August. The training was held as material briefing about functions and tasks of Community Surveillance Group members who were responsible to monitor activities related marine natural resources utilization, regarding threats to dugong and seagrass.

During the training, Idham Farsha, Marine Species Site Coordinator WWF-Indonesia, gave a presentation about Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Program (DSCP) Indonesia. The formation of Community Surveillance Group in Kotawaringin Barat was supported by DSCP Indonesia, at this matter was a form of collaboration between Conservation and Sea Biodiversity Directorate from Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fishery with WWF Indonesia, Oceanography Research Center- Indonesian Institute of Sciences, and Marine and Fishery Faculty- Bogor Agricultural University.

The participants were citizens of Kubu Village, Sungai Bakau Village, Teluk Bogam Village, and Keraya Village. The participants did not only get material about protected marine animal conservation, but also involve in many discussion sessions. One of the discussion was created to reach the same comprehension between Community Surveillance Group (Pokmaswas) and Village Owned Business Entity (BUMDes).

The participants got materials about dugong and seagrass from Casandra Tania “Cassie”, Marine Species Officer WWF-Indonesia. Inside her presentation, Cassie told that dugong and seagrass, also aquatic animals and another type of ecosystem within the sea, could be monitored by Community Surveillance Group in a very simple way: by using “community map”. This community map was made by WWF- Indonesia and members of Community Surveillance Group to show the work areas for each of the member. Later on, this community map would be put in a place that is accessible for anyone. The members of the group could report their discovery in the field by marking several things on that map, like marine biota sighting, ecosystem monitoring, and threats that have been agreed to be monitored together. The result of monitoring would be recapped every month by Yuanita Mediawati as Marine Species Site Assistant special for Kotawaringin Barat area.

Besides, the participants were taught how important community organizing is, by Nur Syamsuddin Buchori, a lecturer from Sekolah Tinggi Ekonomi Islam (STEI) SEBI. This topic had objectives to make participants dig and understand the potentials of their own work areas, also to determine strategical steps to develop the village through various activities as a member of Community Surveillance Group (Pokmaswas) and Village Owned Business Entity (BUMDes). This comprehension, along with rules regarding fishing gears, also marine and fishery activities, starting from administration related to boats, until fishing channel that is adjusted by the type of the boat, had been delivered to the participants by Suhartaya from Marine Natural Resource and Fishery Supervisor Unit Pontianak, at the second day of the training.

During the training, the participants showed a lot of enthusiasm. "I hope in the future there will be more trainings like this, and there will also be comparative study to another regions who had Community Surveillance Group before," said Mr. Poliyono from Keraya Village.

From the topics that had been delivered, the members of Community Surveillance Group must be able to compose work plan in the future, one of them is monitoring activity along with another people who are not a member of the group. Hopefully, from this training the Community Surveillance Group could do their jobs optimally as their tasks and functions to monitor their surrounding ecosystems. Evaluation of Community Surveillance Group would be conducted at the third month after training. This evaluation would also review the topics that had been delivered before.

Happy working to all of the members!