

## **Project Update: September 2016**

- During underwater survey using SCUBA diving, I recorded one dugong ascending from the surface to feed on the seagrasses in front of Shams Alam Resort. Some photos were taken underwater for the dugong from each side to identify the individual using Photo ID to analysis it on the computer.
- The dugong was approximately 2.5m long with one distinct notch as V shape in the middle of the left flipper. In addition to the notches along the fluke margin especially the left side. It was observed at an average depth of 6 m and a distance of 250 m from the shore. With comparison with the previous identified dugongs before, it was confirmed with a male dugong that sighted in the same site before at March 2016. This concluded that using the Photo ID techniques for dugong notches can used effectively to identify the dugong.
- On other hand, during our interview survey that conducted before, some interviewees confirmed us with dugong sighting at Marsa Alam region. This area located outside of Wadi El Gemal National Park by 50 km north. They confirmed us that there are many sited for dugong in this area and have a human impacts from a tourism visiting these sites.
- I select only site (Marsa Mubarak) to do a quick survey and assess the situation of the human impacts on the presence of the dugong. Many boats visit this site every day and a lot of snorkelers follow the dugong without any regulations. I recorded some negative impacts like touching the dugong during ascending at the surface for breathing.
- Photo ID was conducted to identify the dugong of Marsa Mubarak. The individual was a male and approximately 3 m long with two distinct notches on the left flipper. One big notch as wide opening v-shape in the lower third of the left flipper and a very small v-shape notch above. In addition to the one clear notch and wide notch at each side of the fluke near to the edge. Remora fishes were recorded attached to this individual.
- Finally, further study is suggested to conduct at Marsa Alam to assess the human impacts on the dugong and assess its different behavioural categories. Photo ID is a very essential tool and suggested to improve the understanding of movement and use patterns within and between regions.



Re-sighting of the same male dugong identified in front of Shams Alam Resort



Many of tourists snorkeling with the dugong of Marsa Mubarak at Marsa Alam region. The photos represent the human impacts by touching and swimming over the dugong.



Photo identification for a big male dugong at Marsa Mubarak from underwater. The left photo shows the two notches of the left flipper in comparison with the right flipper.