



Dedicated to a healthy Sea of Cortes

Happy Holidays and thanks for your support in 2010

2010 was a year devoted to the vigilance program Sea Watch helped start and fund in 2009. It is called Observatorio Ciudadano (OC, Citizen Observers). In its first year of operation it has been successful beyond what many imagined and you can see more fish on every reef around the Bay of La Paz.

For 12 years, hookah divers have been killing the reef fish in the Sea of Cortez. By 2007 there were few fish left. In 2007 Sea Watch attorneys sponsored a federal regulation "prohibiting hookah use for fish extraction in all Mexican waters." It was enacted in May of 2009. Now, no compressed air (hookah or tanks) can be used to extract any fin fish in any Mexican waters. [Watch Video of the destruction.](#)

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In the last year, in the La Paz area where OC patrols work, conservative estimates put the decrease in illegal activity at 80% .

	Pangas Working	Nightly Catch	Weekly Catch	Weeks Worked/yr	Tons/yr Per Panga	Tons all Pangas
Last Year	29	200 kilos	1000 kilos	20	22 tons	638 tons
Now	5	200 kilos	1000 kilos	20	22 tons	110 tons
Reduction in reef fish killed illegally in La Paz area in last year:						528 tons

That translates into the minimum tonnage of reef fish saved from being illegally shot at night (pistoleros) or netted using hookah during the day (encerradores) at 500 plus tons. See some of the latest short videos showing the dramatic return of fish. [Fish returning to Islotes](#), [Fish returning to San Diego Island](#)

OC patrols, advanced communication and reporting techniques, follow up, and publicity has been a catalyst for new governmental and civil society involvement. OC's operational success is now a model for addressing similar problems in other areas of Mexico.

OC has triggered a unique government-society collaboration effort that had never taken place before, by doing the work for the authorities it has initiated a new and different relationship in which the authorities feel more obligated to participate.

The OC program, with former pistoleros running the patrol boat has facilitated a relationship with illegal fisherman that has enabled Plataforma to understand motives and offer economic alternatives, a major part of the programs success.