

Mobile Firm Shockoe Creates App to Help Save the World's Second Largest Reef

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RICHMOND, VA (PRWEB) JUNE 08, 2017

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The barrier reef system stretches nearly 700 miles (over 1000 km) from the tip of the Yucatan in Mexico down through Guatemala, Belize, and finally the Bay islands in Honduras. It's here that the Roatan Marine Park (RMP), a small not-for-profit based on Roatan island, does its part to protect the reef from invasive species, poaching, dredging, mangrove cutting, and a host of other threats.

“Education and community outreach is a huge part of our work. That’s the long game. But in the short term we have seen a lot of traction and improvement through our patrol efforts,” - says Eduardo Rico, Executive Director of RMP, noting, “but we just can’t be everywhere at once.”

A Drop in the Ocean

RMP has a patrol crew of just six people, rotating night and day, tasked with conducting environmental inspections and following up on cases where people are poaching protected species such as conch and turtle, spearfishing illegally, or a number of other environmental infractions that harm the reef. With no way of keeping eyes on the waters at all times, RMP relies on reports from citizens and tourists by phone or word of mouth. In most cases by the time reports come in and a patrol member can be sent on scene there is no hope for intervention and little evidence of who was involved.

RMP realized they needed a new approach. Working with an advisor and former employee of mobile development platform Appcelerator, RMP was put in touch with the mobile design & development firm Shockoe out of Richmond, VA.

“Hey guys, we have an idea for an app.”

Shockoe worked closely with the Roatan Marine Park employees to create a mobile application that would augment their patrol staff by allowing citizens to be RMP’s eyes and ears.

“What makes this a great mobile app is that it encourages the general public to take photos or videos of the incident and mark the location along with the report so that RMP has better evidence,” says Samantha Carbonell, a designer at Shockoe.

This week the Roatan Marine Park employees are gearing up for the initial launch as Shockoe works with partner Axway on plans for expanding the app's capabilities. Ralston Brooks, Patrol Coordinator for RMP, is optimistic. “It really comes down to connecting communities. Our work protecting Roatan and the Mesoamerican reef relies on it, and we’re excited to see what this partnership with the tech community will bring to the table.”

The application, RMP iPatrol, is scheduled to launch on iTunes and Google Play on June 8th, World Oceans Day.

About Shockoe

Shockoe is a cross-platform mobile solutions firm that specializes in building mobile applications and integrating legacy systems. Since 2010, we've been helping clients to develop mobile strategies which result in consumer and employee-facing mobile applications that meet users' needs. We believe that technology can make business better and make that belief a reality every day with the tools we build.

About Roatán Marine Park

The Roatán Marine Park(RMP) started as a grassroots, community based, not-for-profit organization located on the island of Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras. Our aim is to empower the local community to thrive sustainably alongside our ecosystems treasured throughout the nation and worldwide. Our efforts are delivering obvious returns and our effective management has received global acclaim from marine conservationists. We are now co-managers of the Bay Islands National Marine Park and have 501c3 status in the USA.