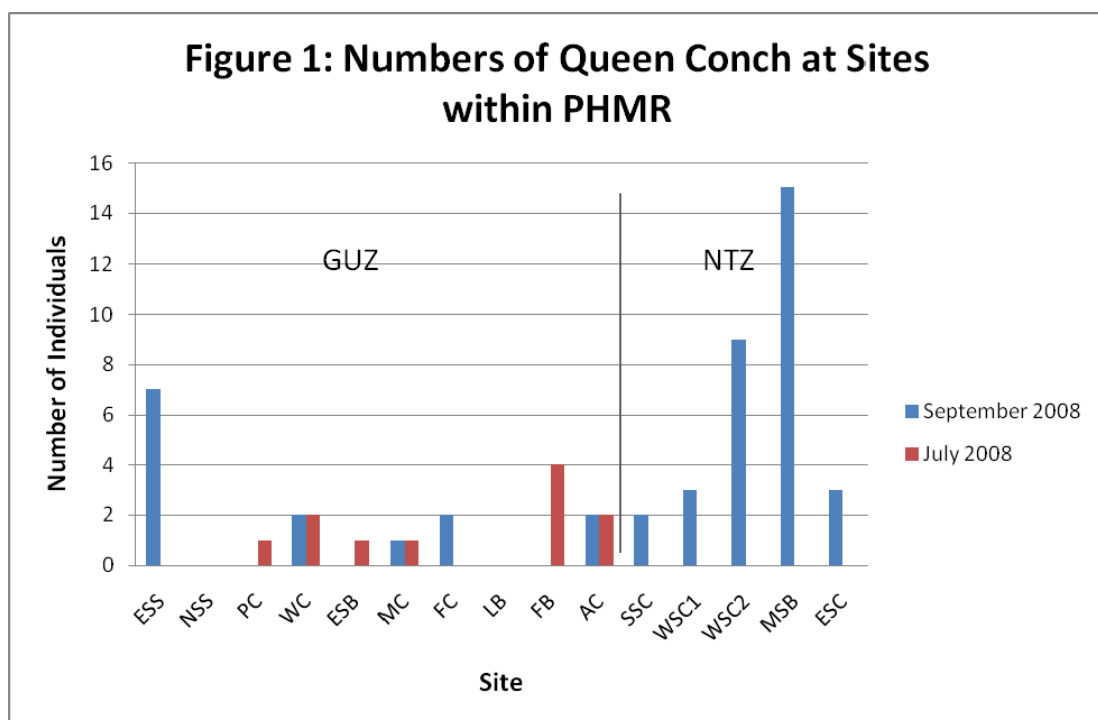




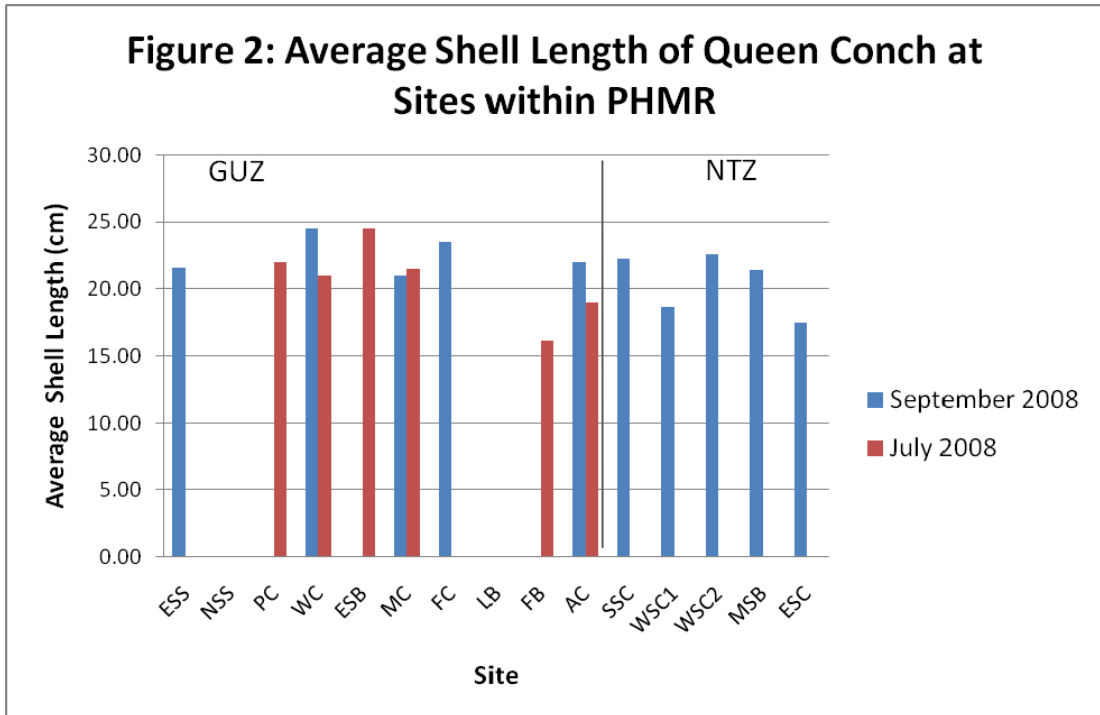
Conch Monitoring within PHMR - 2008

Monitoring of Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*) has been undertaken twice in 2008 within the Port Honduras Marine Reserve. The first survey was conducted in June, just prior to the start of the closed season and the second survey was conducted at the end of September, just prior to the fishery re-opening. Data were collected from 16 sites within PHMR, from both No Take Zones (NTZ) and General Use Zones (GUZ). At each of these sites a minimum of four 30metre by 2metre transects were conducted. For each adult and juvenile *S. gigas* individual located within the transects shell length (mm) was recorded.

The results show a greater number of *S. gigas* individuals in September, after the closed season, as would be expected (Figure 1). In addition, sites within NTZ's showed higher abundances of *S. gigas* compared to sites within the GUZ's.



The shell length of *S. gigas* individuals showed a slight increase between July and September (Figure 2), however comparisons between GUZ's and NTZ's are limited as no individuals were observed within NTZ's during the July survey.



The results show that the conch populations at sites within PHMR are highly variable and in some instances no individuals are observed. Further analysis of the data is required, but based on these findings the area of No Take Zones within PHMR need to be increased to provide adequate protection for Queen Conch populations and associated fisheries.