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Reef Check Teams in Action

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: Youth Program Starts in Santo Domingo

By Rebecca Albright



New RC youth volunteers from New Horizons School of Santo Domingo Photo by Rebecca Albright

This fall, Reef Check established a group of 20 youth volunteers, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Under the direction of Rebecca Albright, Marine Ecology professor at New Horizons School, the students, ages 15-17, attended the first meeting on September 15, 2004.

This meeting was a forum to discuss the importance of coral reefs and the perils they currently face in the Dominican Republic, and the importance of the younger generations involvement in organizations such as Reef Check.

When asked why they attended the meeting and why they felt Reef Check was an important organization, Valery Adams, fifteen years old, responded: "It is horrible how this beautiful environment is going to disappear simply because most people don't know that the problem exists, or don't know what they can do about it. I discovered what is going on and a project that can help me save my country, an island that I love and that I strongly want to preserve. So I am not going to ignore it and stay with my arms crossed- I want to help do something about it!"

All students are extremely enthusiastic to begin training and surveying; they carried out their first snorkel survey at the end of October at a local shallow reef site in Boca Chica. Specialized underwater guides are being prepared, catered towards young people. Please contact Rebecca Albright (albright_r@hotmail.com) for more information on this program.

ANTIGUA AND ST KITTS: RC coordinator organizes new programs



Volunteers outside Dive Antigua doing a "dry" run of the RC methodology Photo by Andre Miller



Kenneth does a line transect on Ponds Reef, St Kitts Photo by Andre Miller

RC Barbados coordinator Andre Miller continued his training activities in the Eastern Caribbean, making stops in Antigua and St Kitts to train divers in the Reef Check protocol. Two surveys were conducted in Antigua and one in St. Kitts. Both members of the Fishery Division and the private sector came out to participate and learn about Reef Check. Andre previously traveled to St Vincent, Grenada, and Dominica, as well as Tobago at the end of November. Please contact Andre Miller (wetrootz@yahoo.com) for information about teams and future training dates. Members of the Amadis Project (see below) are planning to help

these new teams organize their second set of RC surveys this Spring.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: 2004 OUCARE Expedition

Submitted by Eleanor LaTrobe-Bateman

In August, the Oxford University Coral Awareness and Research Expedition (OUCARE) team ventured to Papua New Guinea on their 2004 expedition, previously having traveled to Madagascar in 2003. Oxford University and the Royal Geographical Society backed the expedition which visited Kavieng, parts of New Hanover and the Tigak Islands within the New Ireland Province of Papua New Guinea (PNG). New Ireland is one of the least researched provinces within the country.



Members of OUCARE's 2004 PNG Expedition
Photo by Michael Dowell

The expedition team, made up of 8 graduate and undergraduate scuba divers from Oxford University, brought many different talents and left with newly acquired skills, along with a greater appreciation of PNG and its people. For over 6 weeks the team conducted baseline surveys of the coral community composition, fish and invertebrate diversity and abundance. Overall, Reef Check data was collected for 15 sites in the regions of Lovongai, Nonovaul and Enang.

The aim of the expedition was to describe the status of unknown coral reefs of Kavieng. The data the expedition generated provide a baseline to enable future monitoring of marine environmental change in the Kavieng region, as well as providing an approximate comparison to other regions. Data also were collected alongside socio-economic data gathered by the 'PNG National Fisheries Authority Coastal Fisheries Management and Development Project' to look for possible correlations between community activity and reef status.

A total of 253 20m transects were surveyed on 16 different sites in 3 different wards. From these transects the reefs appeared to be, true to their reputation, highly diverse and healthy, with a high diversity and abundance of key indicator fish and invertebrate species. Preliminary analysis shows a high percentage of live hard and soft coral cover, and low incidence of both coral bleaching and coral disease.

The expedition attracted a large amount of attention both at the provincial and national level. The team headlined the national newspaper 'The Post Courier,' and were featured on local radio on several occasions. Radio was useful in raising the profile of the team's work among the local communities, and also in highlighting the environmental concerns for reefs. The team hopes that this combined with a speech at a local education forum helped to increase the awareness of coral reefs as a valuable resource within the Province.

For further information regarding any OUCARE expeditions, please contact Ellie La Trobe-Bateman (eleanor.latrobe-bateman@hertford.ox.ac.uk) or Roman Popat (roman.popat@jesus.ox.ac.uk).

PHILIPPINES: RC Takes Part in Maritime Threats Workshop

Submitted by Domingo Ochavillo

Military defense attaches from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and the United States were trained in the Reef Check survey method by the staff of Reef Check Conservation Program, Inc. (Philippines) last July 26 to 30 at the Maribago Blue Waters Resort in Mactan Island, Cebu, central Philippines. The Reef Check training was part of the 'Maritime Threats Workshop' of the United States Pacific Conference. The workshop was sponsored by the Defense Environmental and International Cooperation (DEIC) conference and funded by the

United States Department of Defense's Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations and Environment) and co-sponsored by the U.S. Army, Pacific (USARPAC), and the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) Center for Strategic Leadership.

The training formally introduced Reef Check to the military for the first time anywhere in the world. Reef Check recognizes the importance of the military, especially in law enforcement for the conservation of coral reefs worldwide. Some reefs are also found in very remote areas where the military has installations, emphasizing its potential role in generating data from surveys.



Workshop participants pose for a picture
Photo by Domingo Ochavillo

The participants included William van Houten, representative from the office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations and Environment); Gregory Flick, Deputy Chief IMA USARPAC; Lt. Col. Curtis Turner and CDR Robert Wohlschlegel from the USAWC; Col. Harun bin Hitam and CDR Saifudin bin Kamaruddin from the Malaysian Ministry of Defense; Pol. Lt. Col. Yanapong Somabha and Pol. Lt. Col. Chalernpol Maliwan from the Royal Thai Marine Police Division; Clare Gatehouse from the Australian Embassy in Manila; Col. Avianto Saptono from the Indonesian Army; CDR Joe Agra from JUSMAG-Philippines; and Asst. Secretary Alejandro III, Asst. Secretary Jose Ferrer, Jr. and Joji Aragon from the Philippines Dept. of National Defense.

Local participants included Pepe Berido, chairman of the Lapu-lapu City Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council and Efren Tarong of the Talima Marine Sanctuary. The RC Philippines team consisted of the country director Dr. Domingo Ochavillo and staff Mario Marababol and Mylene Grace Arinasa. The team was also joined by marine biology student volunteers from University of San Carlos- Marie Frances Chiong, Danilo Delizo, Jr., Johann Georsua and Eduardo Amante Jr. Myrtle Arias of the Region 7 Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources also joined the RC team. Please contact Domingo Ochavillo (ochavill@yahoo.com) for more information.

PHILIPPINES: Talima MPA, A Family Affair

Submitted by Mike Ross



"Nong" Alipio Dano and his wife
Photo by Mike Ross

Since March 2003, Reef Check-related project activities have supported the establishment of the 15-hectare Talima Marine Sanctuary and adjacent 10 ha Baring MPA. Together, they form the largest protected and monitored reef area within the Philippines' second largest urban area – Metro Cebu. In addition to Reef Check, innovative socio-economic assessment and monitoring (SocMon) approaches supported by NOAA have been pioneered for the Talima MPA. This MPA is led by "Nong" Alipio Dano and his wife, who have personally watched and helped to enforce this new MPA on a daily, 24-hour basis. Their son "Pogoy" also has an active role as a support diver for surveys and reef conservation activities, such as establishing mooring buoys and planting corals. Key results were

reported at the 10th International Coral Reef Symposium. In the Philippines and perhaps many similar areas, it may take such personal sacrifice to achieve success. It is with great sadness that we report the loss of Mrs. Dano in September due to natural causes. Please visit www.cebudive.com for more information.

TANZANIA: Oregon Students Travel to Tanga for Reef Check



Students from Lewis and Clark join forces with RC Tanga
Photo by RC Tanga

In September, students from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon traveled to Tanzania to visit RC Tanzania's local Tanga team to learn about Reef Check. Following 4 days of training led by RC Tanga's Hassan Kalombo and Eric Verheij, the 22 students surveyed two sites at Maziwe and Fungu Zinga reefs. For more information on RC Tanga, contact Hassan (tangacoast@kaributanga.com) or Eric (ericv@kaributanga.com).

Site Spotlight- Belize

2004 marked the first year Reef Check became well established in Belize. Green Reef Environmental Institute (www.greenreefbelize.com), in San Pedro, was named the regional training center and Green Reef Executive Director, Guillermo "Mito" Paz, is serving as the regional coordinator.



RC Belize shows off their colors
Photo by Green Reef

Through a grant from the Oak Foundation, Reef Check Belize trained Marine Protected Area staff in the Reef Check methodology and conducted RC surveys along the coast of Belize. A core team of four was trained before the expedition and conducted all the surveys. Team members included: Mito Paz, Regional Coordinator and Team Scientist, Mario Graniel, Green Reef Tour Guide Instructor and Team Leader, Laurie Smith, Hol Chan Marine Reserve Peace Corps Volunteer, and Kristen Stelljes, Green Reef Peace Corps Volunteer. This team traveled the length of Belize to reach the marine protected area staff in their reserves, making it easier and less time consuming for them to participate in the trainings. All staff present at the

Marine Protected Areas, and the University of Belize staff working at Turneffe-Calabash were trained in the Reef Check methodology. The staff at Bacalar Chico, Hol Chan, and Caye Caulker were trained in October.

During the expedition, the survey team noted few groupers on the reef, attributed to overfishing. *Diadema* are starting to come back on some reefs, especially in shallow areas. Almost all massive starlet corals (*Siderastrea siderea*) showed bleaching, and black band, white plague, and Aspergilliosis diseases were seen.

Green Reef is also planning to bring Reef Check into primary schools using hands-on activities developed by Robyn Woodman Jones and Reef Check. The activities will teach students about reef ecology in an interactive, entertaining manner and complement presentations and field trips Hol Chan Marine Reserve has been conducting with primary

school students. The San Pedro High School environmental club, Guardians of the Reef, will be trained in species identification and Reef Check in order to assist Green Reef and Hol Chan in their basic research activities. The students were SCUBA certified this summer and will be able to use their skills to expand their knowledge of the reef and learn how to do basic marine research.

Green Reef will also be working with 28 students from the University of Belize SubAqua Club to train them in Reef Check methodologies. SubAqua is the dive club at the University and many of its members are biology and marine biology students. The Reef Check experience will help them develop research skills and practical knowledge of the reef ecosystems in Belize.

Also earlier this year, the British organization Reef Conservation International Ltd (Reef CI) (www.reefci.com) started to bring divers to Belize to do reef monitoring. Green Reef is partnering with Reef CI to teach the Reef Check method to Reef CI participants and use them to do surveys. Reef CI is located in southern Belize and Green Reef is located in the north. This will allow each organization to focus on their region while making it easier to survey the whole country.

RC Belize has appeared in the San Pedro Sun newspaper twice as part of its weekly Green Reef column, "Reef Brief." (www.greenreefbelize.com/reefbriefs/index.html) For more information on activities, contact Green Reef (greenreef@btl.net) or Reef CI (info@reefci.com).



Green Reef diver collects substrate data
Photo by Green Reef

Mark Your Calendars

REEF CHECK REUNION DAY AT BOOT FAIR IN DUESSELDORF

Reef Check will be present at the "boot"-fair in Duesseldorf, Germany January 15-23 at the booth of Blue Heaven Holidays and Sinai Divers. RC scientists and team leaders will be present to inform visitors about RC activities in Germany and the Red Sea. Be sure to stop by Saturday, 22 January 2005 for The 2nd Reef Check Reunion Day, held at the Blue Heaven Holidays booth in Hall 3, booth C/81. All Reef Check participants and everybody interested to meet RC scientists and volunteers is invited to meet at Blue Heaven Holidays' booth in the afternoon. Please visit <http://www.boot.de> for more information on the event or contact Constanze Conrad (constanze@blueheavenholidays.com).

REEF CHECK EUROPE EXPEDITION TO MYANMAR (BURMA)

In 2005, Europe Conservation Switzerland will have a Reef Check Expedition to the Mergui-Archipelago. Next year's trip will be held from February 21st through March 6th. Starting in Thailand, participants will sail on Marinasia's Catamaran SeaNomad to the islands offshore Southern Myanmar and survey the reefs, snorkel from golden beaches, and anchor in tranquil bays. Click here for more information on the trip or check out the RC Europe website (www.reefcheck.de).

THE AMADIS PROJECT GETS UNDERWAY



The Amadis Project is set to get underway in January 2005. By using the crew and yacht *Amadis* as a roving research, Reef Check training team and environmental education platform, access to many small islands in the Caribbean and South Pacific which have had little previous study can be surveyed.

The Amadis mission is to train communities about the value of coral reefs, their ecology and how to scientifically monitor them in areas where monitoring is scarce in order to help further public stewardship and understanding of the threats facing coral reefs around the world.

The Amadis Project is working closely with Reef Check and regional partners to: conduct surveys of coral reef health and human impact using SCUBA, coordinate and train new Reef

Check teams, and to assist several partner projects by providing a research vessel and team of 5 divers.

The *Amadis*, following its journey from the United Kingdom, will start in the Caribbean and then take off on its Pacific leg, where it will end in New Zealand. The following is a tentative itinerary for the Caribbean leg of the journey:

DECEMBER 29 - JANUARY 9, 2005: BARBADOS- training of *Amadis* crew, surveys

JANUARY 10 – 16, 2005: ST. LUCIA- surveys, assist Kai Wulf and SMMA team

JANUARY 17 – 24, 2005: ST. VINCENT- assist newly formed team in 2nd set of surveys

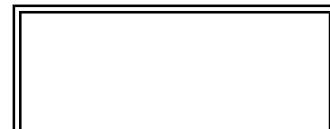
JANUARY 25 – MARCH 12, 2005: GRENADINES- train 5 new teams on BEQUIA, MAYREAU, CANOUAN, UNION ISLAND, and CARRIACOU; assist established team with surveys; collaborate with Sustainable Grenadines Project; Public Service Announcement, teacher training workshop in marine conservation

MARCH 13 – 30, 2005: GRENADA- train and assist new team; monitor effects of Hurricane Ivan

Click here to view a summary of the Amadis Project, or visit www.theamadisproject.co.uk

Reef Check Champion- Keith Kei

Most people do not think of coral reefs when they think of Hong Kong. Hong Kong's reefs are primarily concentrated along the northeast coast but corals are found throughout. While the



common stereotype of Hong Kong people is that they only think about commerce, there is a surprisingly strong environmental movement there. Keith Kei began his Reef Check career while still a graduate student in Hong Kong. As an avid diver, biologist and scuba instructor, he was a natural to become Reef Check coordinator. Starting from a few teams in 1997, he has devoted long hours to building up the program to become one of the largest in the world. Imagine, tiny Hong Kong with more than 30 Reef Check teams. Keith has been assisted by Terence Fong a colleague in grad school and by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. Together they have shown how a training program and extensive network of survey sites can be assembled at very low cost. They have also strongly demonstrated how Reef Check can build public support for conservation. Check out their website at:

http://parks.afcd.gov.hk/newmarine/event/reefcheck/index_e.htm



Keith Kei, RC Hong Kong
Coordinator

If you know a Reef Check Champion you feel should be highlighted, please email a brief description of his/her contribution as well as a photo to rcinfo@reefcheck.org.

Methods Check

2005 CHANGES TO REEF CHECK PROTOCOL

For 2005, a number of changes will be introduced to the current RC Methods. First, after a great deal of detailed discussion at the Okinawa ICRS Workshop, the consensus was reached that all macro-algae except turf and coralline algae would be included in the NIA category on the Reef Check substrate survey. This is because all algae can potentially become problematic if nutrients are elevated.

The second change would be to specifically include all long-spined black sea urchins from the Genus *Echinothrix* with the Genus *Diadema*, currently a Reef Check indicator organism. It was felt it was too difficult for volunteers to distinguish these two groups and that most likely this was the default position since all these urchins perform essentially similar ecological roles.

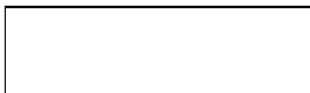
Reef Check News

TSUNAMI RESPONSE- LATE BREAKING NEWS

Amazing reports of survival of Reef Check teams around the Indian Ocean indicate that all survived. Our sympathy goes out to all those who suffered injury or lost loved ones. RC Teams are already surveying the damaged reefs.

REEF RESCUE 2004 A HUGE SUCCESS

Photos by Rich Schmitt



Singer/actress **Jessica Simpson** cheered as husband **Nick Lachey**, a fellow singer/actor, and actress **Kelly Hu** received the Triton and Guardian of the Reef awards for their support of coral



Nick Lachey & Jessica Simpson

reef conservation at Reef Check's annual charity event, **Reef Rescue 2004**, held September 30 in Santa Monica, California.

Kelly Hu was presented with the Guardian of the Reef award in recognition of her outstanding leadership and creativity to raise public awareness, promote coral reef education, and foster community participation in the protection of coral reef ecosystems. **Nick Lachey**



Nick Lachey & Kelly Hu receive their awards

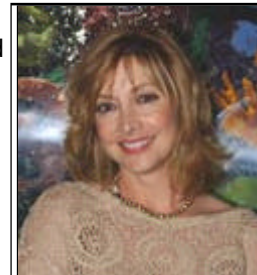
received the Triton Award to recognize his environmental consciousness and commitment to keeping our reefs healthy for people and marine life. Both honorees took part in the inaugural Kelly Slater Invitational in Fiji in May. Nick and Kelly snorkeled on local reefs with RC Fiji team members, learning more about coral reefs, the impacts reefs are facing, and how Reef Check is contributing to the solution.



“When we were in Fiji last May, we learned about the work that Reef Check is doing to save coral reefs, and they need our help,” said Lachey.

Kelly Hu, originally from Hawaii, felt a very personal connection to the cause. “I grew up in the islands and I have personally seen the problems that overfishing and pollution have caused on our reefs. I was very impressed with how Reef Check works with local villagers in Fiji to help them take care of their reefs.”

Actress **Sharon Lawrence** emceed the event and said, “I started diving in the Caribbean right after college and went on to become an advanced diver. I love it. Sadly, the coral reefs that I saw more than twenty years ago have been so badly damaged that they are hardly recognizable. Thank goodness that Reef Check has teams in over 70 countries working to save the reefs.”



Sharon Lawrence



Carol Connors, RC's Gregor Hodgson, & Barbi Benton

Other celebrities lending their support to the evening included **Barbi Benton, Carol Connors, Cheryl Holdridge, Ryan Carnes, Brody Hutzler, Kate Linder, Terry Moore** and **Kyla Pratt**.

The surf industry was also heavily represented with attendees including 2004 World Long Board Champion **Daize Shayne** and **Body Glove** Founder and diving/surfing legend **Bob Meistrell** .

The funds raised will benefit Reef Check programs and the new and upcoming Reef Check California.

REEF CHECK HEADQUARTERS MOVES TO THE BEACH

At the beginning of November, Reef Check Headquarters in Los Angeles moved from the UCLA campus to a new location in Pacific Palisades. Reef Check staff are excited to be right across from the beach along Pacific Coast Highway. Please make note of our new contact information, including new email addresses.

Reef Check Foundation PO Box 1057 17575 Pacific Coast Highway Pacific Palisades, CA 90272-1057 Line #1: 1-310-230-2371 Line #2: 1-310-230-2360 Fax: 1-310-230-2376	General Information (Jenny Mihaly):	rcinfo@reefcheck.org
	Executive Director, Gregor Hodgson:	gregorh@reefcheck.org
	Marketing Director, Chris Knight:	chrisknight@reefcheck.org
	Data (Jenny Mihaly):	rcdata@reefcheck.org
	Team Registration (Jenny Mihaly):	rcregist@reefcheck.org
	Public Relations (Anais Smith):	outreach@reefcheck.org
	Website (Caritta Lee):	clee@reefcheck.org

ARRECIFES DE COZUMEL MARINE PARK GETS REEF CHECKED TRAINED

By Ruben Torres

Dive masters and staff from the Arrecifes de Cozumel Marine Park were recently trained in the Reef Check protocol to monitor the reef health of one of the Caribbean's top dive destinations. Visited by at least 2 cruise ships a day, Cozumel is considered one of the top destinations for travelers wanting to experience Caribbean culture and environment. Local characteristics and spectacular water clarity at the reefs in Cozumel entices most of these travelers to get off their cruise ships and snorkel or scuba in the Arrecifes de Cozumel Marine Park.



Newly trained Reef Check divers in Cozumel
Photo by Ruben Torres

This high visitation sometimes means trouble for the shallow reef and its inhabitants and it is the duty of the Park's staff and local Dive Masters to minimize the effects of visitors to their reefs. They decided to do what many divers around the world are doing-- get trained in Reef Check to conduct their own reef monitoring. By doing so, they have placed themselves in a position to track the effects of all those divers.

When visiting Cozumel, look for these Reef Check trained Dive Masters and Park Staff so they can show you their recent results and guide you on the right dive on Cozumel's reefs.

Reef Check would like to thank the following for their support:

Dive Paradise (Paraiso del Buceo): www.diveparadise.com

Scuba Du: www.scubadu.com

Presidente InterContinental Cozumel Resort & Spa: www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/ex/1/en/hd/czmha?&

Society of Akumal's Vital Ecology (Salvamento Akumal de Vida Ecologica):

www.cenotes.com/save/home.html

QUIRRC RAISES MONEY FOR REEF CHECK

On November 13, the Queen's University Initiative for Reef and Rainforest Conservation (QUIRRC) in Ontario, Canada held a beach-themed fundraising night at local bar, Alfie's Pub. The bar generously lifted their usual bar quota so QUIRRC could donate all the proceeds to Reef Check. In all, \$207 was raised. QUIRRC's key objective is to help raise money for reef and rainforest conservation organizations. Many thanks go out to QUIRRC President, Monique Dufault, the members of QUIRRC, and Alfie's Pub for their support! For more information, visit the [QUIRRC website](http://clubs.myams.org/quirrc/) (clubs.myams.org/quirrc/).

RC FIELD GUIDES AVAILABLE

This easy-to-use 8-page underwater guide, featuring full-color photos of key indicator species and survey techniques, is made of professionally-bound, waterproof plastic for durability.

Available individually or in bundles of five and ten, these guides are ready to ship today. Order yours now for the Atlantic or Indo-Pacific. Visit www.reefcheck.org/methods/fieldguides.asp to order.

GET YOUR DATA IN!

Reef Check will soon be launching its online WRAS database system and we want to make sure we have all the data you have collected for us over the years. Please send us your data- even if from previous years- so it doesn't go to waste! Please send your sites to rcdata@reefcheck.org.

SEND US YOUR UPDATES

If you would like to submit a story or photographs for the next issue, please contact rcinfo@reefcheck.org.

Coral Reefs in the News

STATUS OF CORAL REEFS OF THE WORLD 2004 NOW AVAILABLE

The *Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2004* report documents how human activities continue to be the primary cause of the global coral reef crisis. The report details many new initiatives aimed at reversing this degradation such as by conserving the biodiversity, the economic value and beauty of coral reefs. The report recognizes that the major stresses to coral reefs are sediment and nutrient pollution from the land, over-exploitation and damaging fishing practices, engineering modification of shorelines; and the global threats of climate change causing coral bleaching, rising sea levels and potentially threatening the ability of corals to form skeletons in more acid waters. If reefs are to survive as our natural heritage, we need to act locally to reduce direct human impacts and, globally, to combat greenhouse emissions. Visit www.aims.gov.au/pages/research/coral-bleaching/scr2004/index.html#scr2004-abstract to read the full report.

CITES PROTECTS THE HUMPHEAD WRASSE

In their October 12, 2004 meeting in Thailand, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) approved protection of the Humphead Wrasse, a large coral reef fish targeted for the live food fish trade in Asia. The approval will regulate, not ban, the trade of this fish, but now requires importing and exporting countries to ensure that trade is sustainable and legal. The humphead wrasse is also a Reef Check indicator fish recorded on Indo-Pacific surveys, chosen to indicate overfishing and presence of the live fish trade. Click here to read the full article.

POTENTIAL LISTING OF ACROPORA SPECIES UNDER US ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Excerpts from paper *The potential listing of Acropora species under the US Endangered Species Act* (Precht, Robbart and Aronson, 2004)

Disturbances of various types have been invoked to explain the changing face of Caribbean reefs over the last 25 yr. Coral mortality, especially mortality of the *Acropora* species, has been a major driving force in the transition...A number of factors have been responsible for *Acropora* mortality, with white-band disease (WBD), temperature stress, predation, and hurricanes having been some of the most significant at reducing populations both locally and regionally...To increase awareness of the catastrophic decline of the *Acropora* spp., the United States National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) identified elkhorn coral (*Acropora palmata*) staghorn coral (*A. cervicornis*) and fused staghorn coral (*A. prolifera*, a hybrid of *A. palmata* and *A. cervicornis* [Vollmer and Palumbi,2002]) as candidate species for possible addition to the List of Threatened and Endangered Species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (Diaz-Soltero,1999;Bruckner, 2002;Bruckner and Hourigan,2002;Precht et al.,2002).

Candidate status does not add legal protection, but it is designed to promote efforts to obtain reliable information on the species and to encourage voluntary conservation strategies for the protection of remaining populations. [Click here to read the full paper.](#)

The global coral reef education, monitoring and management program.

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