



News from the Reef Check Global Network

Site Spotlight: Australia

Australia is home to the Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest coral reef, stretching over 2300 km along the northeast coast of the country. Reef Check Australia is headquartered in Townsville and led by Executive Director Jos Hill. Every year, teams of divers survey dozens of reefs. For many of these sites there are data to provide a year-by-year picture of the health of the reef. As an award for their hard work, Reef Check Australia recently received the Townsville City Council's Community Group Award for Environmental Excellence and Sustainability 2006 by Deputy Mayor Ann Burnell at the Townsville EcoFiesta celebration. The awards recognize Townsville community members and groups for their efforts in environment protection, conservation and sustainable management and are designed to motivate the community to care for their environment.

The award has added to what has been a breakthrough year for Reef Check Australia. Not only did they recently become an official environmental charity (donations are now tax deductible and can be made through their website, www.reefcheckaustralia.org), they also came up with a unique fundraising idea: Townville's beer lovers can now help save reefs by diving into a new brew called Beeramundi.

The new beer was named as part of a competition held in partnership between Reef Check Australia and the Townsville Brewing Company. Beeramundi was launched on April 21st at the Brewery in Flinders Mall, Townsville. Reef Check Australia's Marketing and Communications Manager, Roger Beeden, said that the competition was

designed to raise community awareness of the threats to our coral reefs. "We asked people to come up with a name, and a slogan for the beer, and an educational concept that would help make reef conservation into a conversation topic," Mr. Beeden said. "We were very pleased to get more than 100 entries, and some really great ideas," he added.

The name 'Beeramundi' was the brainchild of Eion Howe. The judges were particularly impressed with his entry as it relates to two fish, the highly prized estuarine Barramundi and the protected Barramundi Cod found on the reef, which also is a Reef Check indicator organism for the Indo-Pacific. The artwork for the beer shows a Barramundi Cod peering out of the label. A team effort by Dean Miller, Alana Grech and James Moloney was responsible for the slogan "Saving the reef one beer at a time." Johnston Davidson was the winner of the educational concept part of the competition with his idea to feature a reef quiz on beer coasters, with questions on one side and answers on the other. Beer and reef enthusiasts can now support Reef Check simply by enjoying a Beeramundi from Townsville's own microbrewery; financial support will come in the form of a percentage profit donation from each Beeramundi sold.

If you cannot make it to Townsville but would like to support Reef Check Australia and Beeramundi, you can do so by purchasing Beeramundi clothing and gift items through cafepress.com. Profits will directly support the Reef Check Australia volunteer network. If you like what you see, then send your friends a link or perhaps buy them a Reef Check Australia gift...it's all for a good cause. You can find Reef Check Beeramundi goodies at:

www.cafepress.com/reefcheckaus

For more information about Reef Check Australia, contact support@reefcheckaustralia.org or visit www.reefcheckaustralia.org



RC Australia's Loren Hartley, Jos Hill and Zoe Andrews after receiving their award

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Check out our website
www.ReefCheck.org

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California Corner

By RC California Director, Dr. Craig Shuman

After one year of development and field testing, Reef Check California is officially underway. We have successfully completed three trainings and the newly trained volunteer divers have been hard at work completing three full surveys with several additional surveys in progress. We have also added a new staff member to our team, Cyndi Dawson, who will be coordinating our efforts along the Central Coast. Cyndi previously worked as a biologist for the California Department of Fish and Game on the Central Coast standardizing underwater census methods, so as you might expect, she will be a valuable addition.

Speaking of the California Department of Fish and Game, the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative is moving forward with the Fish and Game Commission expected to select a preferred network of Marine Pro-



Cyndi Dawson
RC's new Central Coast Manager

tected Areas (MPAs) during their upcoming meeting this August. To help evaluate the effectiveness of the new network of MPAs, we will be locating survey sites inside and outside the new protected areas. Now is the time to voice your opinion for the network(s) you feel will most effectively meet the goals of the Marine Life Protection Act. I encourage you to visit the Department's website to learn about the alternative proposals and submit your comments to <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/MRD/mlpa/>

Our 1000 Diver campaign is going strong but we still need your help to get the word out. If you haven't already, please sign up and encourage your dive buddies to do the same.

Welcome once again to Cyndi and we look forward to seeing you all in the water soon!

Words from a trained volunteer: "Holy Mackerel, there's a lot of stuff to count in the sea!"

By Claudette Dorsey

I had the pleasure of being a student in the first California Reef Check course in Los Angeles, including a three-day training tour of Anacapa and Santa Cruz Islands. Sixteen students were accompanied by two instructors and three marine biologists aboard the dive boat Explorer out of Ventura Harbor. It was an unforgettable experience that will fuel all of us for years to come as we join the Reef Check California Survey and Monitoring Team.

We spent the first training dives alternating between being excited new volunteers and overwhelmed new research divers. Not everything looked like the flash card pictures! Giant kelp and sea palms? Easy. The rest?? You've got to be kidding me!! How can I count what I can't ID, at 9 feet-per-minute over jungle-covered boulders, with a frisky surge swinging us around? What's the difference between a warty sea cucumber and a California sea cuke?? I'm terrible at this! What was I thinking? I'm a nurse, not a scientist. I dive for fun, not work. Oh my... three days of being an idiot! I should not be here!

Back on deck, the instructors talked us all down off the ledge, showing us what part of our data was good, and what was... not so good. We were taught what we didn't know (red urchins can be black... who



Claudette Dorsey, Chris Knight and Kathryn Kempton show off the first survey

knew?) and given plenty of opportunities to practice. Our confidence grew as the instructors poured on the teaching and encouragement. The second day focused on teaching Fish ID and counts. Like a slow-mo shooting gallery (without the armaments), we cruised the

transect line, identifying, estimating sizes and numbers, noting all on our survey data sheets, thumping our heads over the vagaries of black rockfish versus blue rockfish, pile perch versus rubberlip sea perch, and senoritas versus female rock wrasses.

I was getting better at this. Wow. Who was I? And what had they done with the idiot who had been wearing my dive gear yesterday??? Just



RC California's first group of trained volunteers!

Photo: Kathryn Kempton

yesterday... Wow! Proficiency testing began to go very well. Day 3 instructions: Be ready to splash in by 9 to begin Fish ID and count proficiency testing. And then the BIG SURPRISE was revealed: WE were about to do the first all-volunteer California Reef Check site survey. Us. Not the scientists. Not the Reef Check Head Honchos. Us. The calibrated, the validated... the nervous and eager. After passing the final tests, we began. Survey tasks were assigned to buddy teams: transect lines, fish counts, invertebrates, algae, and Uniform Contact Points. The instructors and scientists looked like proud papas as all these brand-new Reef Checkers turned in data sheets, got new assignments, and rolled off the deck to get back to work. Leaders Craig Shuman and Chris Knight couldn't stop grinning. Craig completed the final site description form, and our graduation celebration was complete. WE are California Reef Checkers now, baby!!! As the final divers returned, photos were taken, hands were shaken, and the smiles got bigger. This was a great trip of learning for both the students and the instructors, who are dedicated to turning enthusiastic volunteers into accurate data-gathering divers with scientific knowledge and rigor. We are only the first of many as this program gathers power and rolls out. I'm still smiling because of this great experience. My diving has been changed again. And I get another way to give back. Thank you Craig, Chris and Reef Check for MAKING this happen. We did it, and you made it fun and wonderful.

Reef Check News



Reef Check Adventures book for kids now available!

In this exciting and challenging activity book, Reef Check brings to children ages 7-12 the dazzling and diverse coral reefs of the world. With over 40 pages of engaging activities and fun factoids, children will discover the mysterious and magical undersea world of color and light. Readers will also be exposed to the importance of conservation and what they can do to insure the survival of these ecological wonders. This book promises hours of fun and enjoyment with educational lessons to last a lifetime.

Each copy is \$14.95 (tax and shipping included), buy yours today! Books can be ordered through our website at <http://www.reefcheck.org/kids/>

Reef Check Adds Four to the Board

Four new members have been added to the Reef Check board in past months. They include Eddy Medora (former marketing director for Disney), Shepard Smith (talent manager), Will Knox (restaurant consultant) and Mara New, who is featured below as this issue's Reef Check Champion.

Thank You BBQ for Volunteers

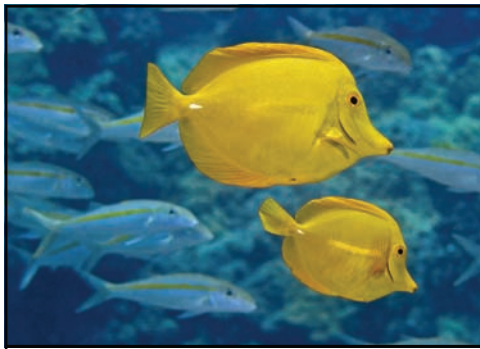
Reef Check is an organization that depends primarily on the involvement and support of volunteers. Whether worldwide or in California, we always welcome the help of reef enthusiasts. As a proof of our gratitude, we opened our headquarters to the California volunteers who completed their recent training, and to those who donated their time and energy to help us with Reef Rescue 2006. "I always enjoy opportunities to promote important causes," said volunteer Athena Trentin. "Volunteering with organizations such as Reef Check empowers me to feel I have had the chance to influence our environment in a positive way," she added.

It was a warm and beautiful day in Pacific Palisades and after a delicious BBQ by RC chef Chris Knight, volunteers and staff went down the beach to play volleyball and enjoy the afternoon sun, a nice way to kick off the 4th of July weekend. Our sincere thanks goes out to all our fantastic volunteers!



Photo: Tekau Frère

Reef Check at the Kona Classic 2006



Jim Squires' winning shot

Some of the world's top underwater photo bugs got a crash course in reef ecosystems and conservation at this year's Kona Classic on the Big Island of Hawai'i. In our third year of participation, Reef Check was once again partnering with Body Glove to bring a sustainable environmental aspect to this prestigious week-long photography celebration. Over 50 aspiring photographers and pros Marty Snyderman, David Fleetham, and Ty Sawyer worked with Reef Check staff members, talking about Reef Check and conducting surveys with the event participants. The highlight of the week was Body Glove Kids' Day at the Kailua-Kona Pier. Over 100 local kids, ages 6-17, showed up to collect their free set of snorkel gear from Body Glove and to go on a snorkel treasure hunt while learning some basic things to help protect their local reefs. Reef Check offered special prizes to the following event participants who took the best shots of local indicator species for Reef Check: Jim Squires (1st Place), Lance Hansen (2nd Place), Dee Wescott (3rd Place), and Cynthia Hankins (Honorable Mention). These shots will be used in Reef Check training materials for the benefit of all Reef Check divers.

Reef Check was very proud to participate in this annual event and we owe special thanks to Body Glove and its President Russ Lesser for making our presence at this year's Kona Classic a huge success.

Reef Check Champion: Mara New



Photo: Glen Lipton

Over the past two years, Mara New has been an invaluable asset to Reef Check. First introduced to Reef Check by her good friend Carol Connors, Mara's support of our efforts recently led her to a spot on our Board of Directors. Her love of the ocean first started in Italy, where she spent three months of every summer at the beach.

Born in Milan and hailing from the Beltrami House of Fashion that was launched in the early 1900s, Mara's family began as tailors and shoemakers and evolved into clothing designers and manufacturers in the early 1920s. Mara's passion for clothes had her start the Golden Needle Awards in 2004 to recognize and award emerging designers.

From Italy, Mara moved to Australia where she graduated in Architecture and studied acting and dance, which led to a number of appearances in shows and on television during her stay there. Now based in Los Angeles, Mara is still acting and performing live theatre, doing 3 to 4 plays a year with her favorite theater, "Secret Rose" in the NOHO Arts District.

Always believing that "Giving is receiving," Mara stays very active with several charities. She also is an accomplished painter having won several European competitions. Mara and her husband of 20 years, Ron, are fine art collectors and several of their paintings have been loaned and displayed in different museums throughout the country.

Mara dreams to start a museum dedicated to Art Nouveau, to open her own theatre in Hollywood, and to spend more time in their country home in Tuscany.

Currently she is helping Reef Check prepare for our next event, the Inhabitants dance show in Las Vegas on September 26.

Reef Rescue 2006

Jean-Michel Cousteau, Carol Connors, and Barbi Benton Recipients of Top Honors At Reef Rescue 2006 in Beverly Hills, June 11th

Reef Check once again teamed up with top celebrities for our 4th annual Reef Rescue 2006 fundraiser on Sunday, June 11th, at the private estate of actress Suzan Hughes in Beverly Hills.

Spearheading Reef Rescue 2006 as Event Chair was Beverly Hills philanthropist, environmentalist and art collector, Mara New. Major sponsors included Diageo, Body Glove, and Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP. Guests entered the event through a magnificent coral reef arch constructed by world-renowned aquarium designer David Manwarren, and viewed a healthy reef system up-close and personal via a custom-built 100-gallon salt-water aquarium.

This year's gala MC'd by actor Ron Masak, honored the legendary Jean-Michel Cousteau (Founder and President of Ocean Futures Society, son of the late Jacques Yves Cousteau) with the "Poseidon Award" for his lifetime achievements in marine conservation. Sharing the honoree spotlight were two-time Oscar nominated songwriter Carol Connors along with actress and singer Barbi Benton, who both received the "Mermaids of the Reef Award" for their dedicated support and advocacy of reef conservation.

The attendees of the event included Kelly Slater, Kelly Hu, David Chokachi, Billy Davis Jr., Marilyn McCoo, Cheryl Holdridge Post, Russ and Charlotte Lesser, Deanna Lund, Kate Linder, Merrie Lynn Ross, Leyla Milani, Kimberly Burke, Erin Cahill, Barbara Morrison, Tahitian Pearl Ambassador Nancy Morgan, and many more.

Barbi Benton performed a hula with music by Hawaiian artist Keali'i Reichel, and Carol Connors entertained the crowd with a special performance of her legendary hit, "To Know Him is to Love Him".

The attendees bid on a wide variety of silent and live auction items, including fabulous travel opportunities, rare memorabilia and collectibles, fine jewelry, and scores of desirable items from around the world. Also showcased were unique items from the private collection of Ronald and Mara New, many of which have graced the halls of top museums.

The event also carried out one of RC's top mission goals: education and awareness. Surf champion Kelly Slater reminded the attendees of the benefits of maintaining the reefs for the surf community, and Jean-Michel Cousteau stressed the necessity of preserving the world's most precious treasures in a passionate speech in which he pleaded to the crowd that, "When you leave today you must continue to help save our oceans." Actress Kelly Hu introduced a new way of supporting Reef Check: the Honolulu Marathon in December to benefit Reef Check Hawai'i (see page 7), for which she has been "running her butt off" as she trains with legendary Olympian, Carl Lewis.

The success of the event was made possible through the generous donations from sponsors, individuals, as well as the hard work and commitment of volunteers who helped us put this event together. Reef Check would like to thank them for helping us carry on with our core mission, "Saving Reefs Worldwide!"

Photos of the event can be accessed at www.reefcheck.org/events/reefrescue2006, or purchased at www.collages.net (15% of each purchase will benefit Reef Check; Username: reef rescue 2006; password: 10878). For more information about future Reef Check events, check out our website: www.reefcheck.org/events/event_calendar.asp

Top to bottom: Mara New, Barbi Benton, Jean-Michel Cousteau, Carol Connors, and Cheryl Holdridge Post; Suzan Hughes, Mara New and Barbi Benton; RC Honoree Jean-Michel Cousteau giving a passionate speech; Tahitian Pearl Ambassador Nancy Morgan

Bottom left to right: David Chokachi, Gregor Hodgson and Kelly Hu; Kelly Slater with RC's Tekau Frere and Erin Benke; David Manwarren's beautiful coral reef arch served as the entrance to the party

Photos by Glen Lipton



Reef Rescue Dominican Republic

Special Event Marks Official Launch of Reef Check Dominican Republic

On June 17th, the beautiful facilities of the Yacht Club at La Marina Casa de Campo hosted the official launch of the Reef Check Foundation in the Dominican Republic. The successful evening saw the attendance of many local media and representatives of the national press.

A select group of invited guests accompanied Guest of Honor, actress and RC spokesperson Kelly Hu, and enjoyed the proceedings. Mrs. Elena Brineman, director of USAID in the Dominican Republic, spoke about the global importance of marine conservation. Dr. Rubén Torres, director of RC Dominican Republic, informed everyone about his goals and dreams for RC Dominican Republic. Kelly Hu spoke about Reef Check's accomplishments and about the important role it plays in educating and motivating society towards world reef conservation. Kelly also got a first-hand look at the Dominican reefs as she spent some time snorkeling among the beautiful corals of Catalina Island.



The night was also an opportunity to welcome the new members of the Reef Check Dominican Republic Board of Directors. The event ended with a video presentation about the Reef Check learning adventure experienced by 28 children from a school in the mountains of Jarabacoa. Together with their tutors and teachers, the students spent one week in Frontón Beach in Samaná being close to nature and receiving hands-on education about coral reefs and the importance of their preservation. Reef Check thanks everyone who attended Reef Rescue DR including the wonderful people, businesses, and organizations who helped sponsor the event and who donated items and time.



Left: (top) Philip Silvestre, Mitch Allen, USAID Dominican Republic Director Elena Brineman, USAID Dominican Republic Program Manager Michael Donald; (bottom) Kelly Hu snorkeling
Right: (top) Kelly Hu and RC Dominican Republic Director Ruben Torres on the boat to Catalina Island; (bottom) Tony Torres, Alexis Medina, RC volunteer Oswaldo Orgini, Reef Check DR board member Humberto Ruiz

Reef Check Teams in Action

Reef Check French Polynesia

French Polynesia, a French overseas country in the South Pacific, is made up of over 100 islands spread out over an area as vast as Western Europe. Because of this, implementing a coral reef monitoring network like Reef Check is a challenge.



Reef Check team from the island of Moorea
Photo: Elodie Lagouy

Reef Check surveys have been conducted in the territory since 2000, but the lack of personnel and funding have limited the scope of action; only a handful number of sites have been studied. Bora Bora was the only island that hired a Reef Check team leader since the prestigious Blue Flag certification required

CRISP agreed to provide a financial contribution to help launch a permanent program headed by Elodie Lagouy.

Born in Martinique, Elodie arrived in French Polynesia in 2000 and soon volunteered for Reef Check. Her exemplary dedication made her an excellent candidate for such a position. Since her nomination, Elodie has traveled to 4 of the 5 territory's archipelagoes, visiting islands and reefs never before surveyed nor studied.

In addition to CRISP, Reef Check French Polynesia (RCFP) found a valuable partner in the local Department of Sustainability headed by Georges Handerson. "We support Reef Check because we like the idea of locals managing their own resources. Our ancestors used to do so, and it is natural that our generation do the same," he said. "Environmental sustainability cannot be achieved without the support and contribution of each and every one in the preservation of our environment," he added. For this reason, the Department launched the Heipuni Days, during which the Minister and environmental partners, including the RC coordinator, travel to different islands of French Polynesia to meet locals and educate them about environmental issues. "I really like this concept," Elodie said, "because I am able to make new contacts, find volunteers and team members in new islands...It's a valuable help for RC." RC French Polynesia is now working on a local logo, regional data sheets, field guides, an advertisement campaign, and network expansion. If you would like to know more about RCFP, or to be trained during your next vacation, contact Elodie: elodie@reefcheck.org.

Reef Check data to confirm the pristine state of the lagoon. This problem was fixed in February 2006 when Reef Check partnered with the Coral Reef Initiative for the South Pacific (CRISP), in which

First Reef Check Survey in Bangladesh

Submitted by Zahirul Islam

In December 2005, biologists from the MarineLife Alliance successfully conducted the very first Reef Check survey in Bangladesh. The survey and subsequent work was done on the island of St. Martin, the only continental island in Bangladesh with coral communities.

The coral habitat in Bangladesh has long been under threat from anthropogenic impacts. Despite the island being designated as an Ecological Critical Area (ECA) under the Bangladesh Environmental Conservation Act in the mid 1990s, damage has increased since 2002 with the development of mass tourism. During their survey, MarineLife Alliance found numerous problems including underwater garbage and anchor damage by tourist boats. They also determined that curio items bought by tourists was higher than any other community-based damage, such as fishing or boat anchoring. Although the island has its mandate under the ECA regulation, no conservation initiative has been taken yet and to add to the existing environmental problems, a recent oil exploration initiative by the government will pose a major threat to reefs.

The MarineLife Alliance in collaboration with Reef Check is working to restore the island coral habitat through the involvement of the local community. Current activities include:

- Establishing a MarineLife Education & Research Center (MERC);

- Capacity building of local community to monitor and survey coral;
- Developing a laboratory facility on St. Martin Island for coral research;
- Initiating coral and marine life based eco-tourism for community livelihood;
- Reducing pollution originated from tourism by field activity and raising awareness among tourists;
- Developing a diving facility for research and ecotourism.



Members of the first Reef Check survey team in Bangladesh
Photo: MarineLife Alliance

For more information on MarineLife Alliance, contact Zahirul Islam at: marinelife_al@yahoo.com

Reef Check Indonesia: "The Sea is My Life"



To celebrate Earth Day, children from a Bali elementary school participated in a painting competition themed "The Sea is My Life." Organized by Reef Check Indonesia, the competition aimed to raise awareness about the importance of conserving the country's marine environment. "It was surprising that they showed incredible interest in the coastal and marine ecosystem. Their knowledge of marine subjects was clearly reflected in their paintings," said Naneng Setiasih, RC Indonesia coordinator.

The young painters also produced amazing paintings that captured the Indonesian creativity. "Most of the judges found it extremely hard to choose the best 18 out of more than 100 contestants," Naneng said. Five-year-old Namira Putri Imansa received the first place prize for Pemandangan Pantai (The Sea View) in the kindergarten competition. Her painting is one of 30 works that is displayed for sale at the Mercure Hotel in Sanur, Bali. The exhibition was launched as part of "The World Kid's Day Celebration" at the Mercure Resort Sanur on June 24, during a charity dinner and auction for those affected by the earthquakes in Jogja and Central Java. The exhibition, that ran in July, also was part of the celebration of Indonesia National Children's Day on July 23rd.

A few of these paintings traveled to California and were auctioned off at Reef Rescue in Beverly Hills. The bright colors, cheerfulness, optimism and honesty impressed art connoisseurs. "Children with high creativity and sensitivity are our best hope," said Primadi Tabrani, a professor at the Bandung Institute of Technology. "We need more than just knowledge and rational thinking to manage our ocean, sea and coastal area. Without creativity, it is almost impossible to address these issues."

Kosrae 10th Annual Monitoring Project

This year's Kosrae coral monitoring project, held annually since 1996, will be September 16 – 29 and you are invited to help out! The collected data will be submitted to the Kosrae State Fisheries Department for their use in managing the essential reef resources, as well as to Reef Check for inclusion in the global database. Reef Check coordinator Katrina Adams tells you what you can expect:

"With a Saturday arrival, we generally plan on acclimation and jet lag recovery Saturday, land training on Sunday and Monday we DIVE! The Monday dives are usually check out dives and more hands on training, lots of coral, fish and critter ID as well as how to deploy 20 meter tapes underwater! We plan on starting our working dives on Tuesday. Generally, we have enough time so that we can do one working dive and one fun dive each diving day (Shhh, don't tell anyone)- as far as they are concerned you are slaving away- in 150+ foot vis, in 84 f. degree water, with turtles, barracuda, rare tropicals and rainbow runners dancing around you. Maybe some mermaids...Sigh- it's a rough life..."

So what do you need in order to join the survey team? You just need to be dive certified, and the Kosrae team will teach you the rest! And, as a bonus, you will strengthen your diving and buoyancy skills. Dive, have fun, learn something AND make a contribution to the continuing health of our oceans. If you have questions please email katrina@kosraevillage.com. Photos and data collected by previous teams can be found on the OceanEarth site at www.oceaneearth.org.



Purple Queen Anthias

Photo: Katrina Adams

Mark Your Calendars

Reef Check EcoAction Workshop in Cozumel, Mexico: October 12-14, 2006

Reef Check will be offering a 3-day Training of Trainers Certification Course from Thursday, 12 October to Saturday, 14 October preceding the ITMEMS 3 Symposium in Cozumel, Mexico. The course will include the new 2006 training and testing EcoDiver materials and will provide participants with a formal Reef Check Trainer Certification. This course will include at least one dive at the marine park. A specialty certification may also be obtained from one of the major dive certification organizations. This Training Course is primarily targeted at existing RC Coordinators for a maximum of 25 participants. For more details, please email Dr. Ruben Torres at ruben@reefcheck.org.

Reef Check Hawai'i's Luau With The Stars: December 11, 2006

On December 10th, actress Kelly Hu will be running for the reefs in this year's Honolulu Marathon. Be sure to join Kelly and her celebrity friends at a special fundraising party on the 11th. All proceeds will benefit Reef Check Hawai'i. For more information, email Melissa Mac Garrett at Melissa@reefcheck.org or visit <http://www.reefcheckhawaii.org/Events/events.html>

CoralWatch "Focus on Corals" Workshop in Heron Island, Australia: January 5-9, 2007

This workshop will show marine educators how they can use the simple CoralWatch coral bleaching charts both in the classroom and on the reef. Attendees will learn how they can use the CoralWatch technique to collect scientific data while increasing awareness about coral reefs and environmental issues. Visit www.coralwatch.org today to book your spot.

SAVE THE DATE
 September 26, 2006 Doors open @ 8pm
 Reef Check Foundation and Chameleon Studios Present "INHABITANTS"
 Featuring dancers from the Celine Dion show & the Nevada Ballet Theater
 Choreographies by Elijah Brown, Greg Sample, Paco Villalta, Eboni Adams, Caroline Sicard, Sonia Dawkins and Mark Swanheart
 Musical score by internationally renowned musicians & composers Claude Lemay, Yves Frulla, Marc Langis & Paolo A. Santos
 Video Projections by Paolo A. Santos
 Event Chair: Mara New
 For more information please contact: Paolo A. Santos (Las Vegas) (702) 341-9133 or pa3s@cox.net
 Erin Keala Benke, Reef Check Headquarters (310) 230-2371 or ebenke@reefcheck.org
www.reefcheck.org

Support Reef Check

A tax deductible gift of \$25 or more entitles you to all the benefits of a Reef Check Membership:
 - RC's newsletter, The Transect Line - RC pin and sticker - RC Annual Report - Invitations to trainings & special events
Sign up for a \$50 membership & receive a free t-shirt or hat!

RC T-shirt M-L-XL: \$10*

Quantity _____ Size _____



Front



Back

Reef Check Hats: \$15*

Quantity _____



* Please include \$2.00 shipping & handling for each item, contact us for international orders

Name _____

Mail/Billing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip/Postal Code _____ Country _____

E-mail _____ Phone No. _____

Credit Card No. Check Enclosed Exp. Date _____

\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$Other _____

Signature X _____

By signing here, I agree to the above charges being made to my credit card.

Detach & Mail to: Reef Check | P.O. Box 1057 | Pacific Palisades, CA 90272-1057 | USA | Tel 310-230-2371 | Fax 310-230-2376

Coral Reefs in the News

Elkhorn and Staghorn Corals: New Threatened Species Under the Endangered Species Act



Acropora coral

Photo: NOAA

On May 4th, 2006 at the Coral Reef Task Force meeting, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced their decision to list elkhorn (*Acropora palmata*) and staghorn (*Acropora cervicornis*) coral species as threatened under the 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA) (as amended). "This is the first time a

coral species has been listed as threatened in the United States," said Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries Service, Bill Hogarth.

A species is considered endangered by the ESA when it is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, and a threatened species as one that is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range (section 3(6) and 3(19) of the ESA).

In response to a formal petition addressed in March 2004, the NMFS initiated a status review by the Atlantic Acropora Biological Review Team in June 2004. Section 4 of the ESA specifies that for a species to be qualified as either threatened or endangered, a list of five factors are

to be considered: 1) damage to, or destruction of a species habitat; 2) overuse of the species for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; 3) disease or predation; 4) the inadequacy of existing protection, and 5) either natural and human related threats to the species' survival. At the end of their 10 month investigation, the team correlated their findings with the ESA guidelines. They found that the primary factors affecting the future of these two species included disease, temperature-induced bleaching, physical damage from hurricanes, as well as commercial and recreational activities, sediments, and contaminants from land-based sources. Although neither the elkhorn or staghorn coral meet the definition of an endangered species under the ESA, the research team found that both species were likely to become extinct throughout their entire ranges, possibly within the next 20 to 30 years.

"As we look ahead, NOAA Fisheries Service is committed to recovering these species, but we cannot do that without the help and participation from our constituents and resource users," explained Bill Hogarth. Even if this decision appears as a major step forward in the conservation of coral reefs, the participation of each and every one of us is necessary to ensure a healthy future for these coral species.

Reference: <http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2006/s2627.htm>

A Presidential Decision: The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument

On June 22nd, a study released by Dr. Camilo Mora at the University of Auckland, New Zealand stated that only 2% of the world's coral reefs were safeguarded by Marine Protected Areas. This number can now be revised with the June 15th Presidential declaration establishing the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands as a National Monument. This presidential decision was influenced by a White House private screening of Reef Check Poseidon Award honoree Jean-Michel Cousteau's documentary "Voyage to Kure" in April 2006. "He was immediately and decisively affected by the impending plight of what he witnessed. I remember him turning to his guests and staff after he watched the episode and saying about the sanctuary designation, 'We need to get it done,'" said Cousteau about the documentary screening.

Determined to expand a no-fishing zone in the region, President Bush called on the Antiquities Act of 1906 to declare the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands a Marine National Monument. This area covering 139,793 square miles includes the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, the Midway National Wildlife Refuge, the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, and the Battle of Midway National Memorial, while supporting a dynamic ecosystem with more than 7,000 marine species, half of which are endemic to the region. This Marine National Monument is the largest protected marine area in the world.

In his speech, the President said, "We're going to work together with volunteers to make our oceans safer for marine life. And to give this remote and special place our nation's highest

level of protection— as we give it this kind of protection, we're also reminded of our responsibility to be wise managers of marine resources living off every coast." According to the White House, the new monument will create a new opportunity for ocean education and research for decades to come.

References:

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