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## Reef Check Teams in Action

### MEXICO

Since its start in 1997, RC Mexico has flourished and is now being used by local conservation projects, hotels and dive operations as a way to educate local people and tourists about Mexico's coral reefs. Co-coordinators Françoise (Fafou) Houdebine and Rosa Maria Loreto Viruel have worked hard to include RC in their own personal work and have been successful in joining RC with other projects in the Yucatan Peninsula. Rosa is Coral Reef Program Coordinator at Amigos de Sian Ka'an, <http://www.amigosdesiankaan.org>, where she uses RC to monitor coral reefs within the Sian Ka'an Biosphere. Tourists are encouraged to participate in RC at the Hotel Barcelo Maya, <http://www.barcelo.com>, where Fafou has brought RC into diving activities at the hotel. RC Mexico is also working with local dive operations, including Akumal Dive Adventures, <http://www.akumaldiveadventures.com>, a dive center that has begun to integrate RC methods into its dive trips. Akumal Dive Adventures is committed to helping conserve Akumal's coral reefs and will be making future RC trips available. For more information contact Heather Froeming, [ecologyakumal@yahoo.com](mailto:ecologyakumal@yahoo.com).

In May of this year, the Regional Workshop of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) for the Tropical Americas, was held in Cancun. Both Rosa and Fafou participated in the event and spoke about their involvement with RC. Given the excellent new system of marine protected areas in Mexico, we look forward to seeing RC being used to demonstrate management success in these parks. For more information about RC Mexico contact Rosa, [sian@cancun.com.mx](mailto:sian@cancun.com.mx) and Fafou, [fafouh@yahoo.com](mailto:fafouh@yahoo.com).

### SOUTH AFRICA

For the last five years, RC South Africa has been led by Kevin Lee Payne through the South African Underwater Ecology Society (SAUES), <http://www.saues.co.za>. From the start, the link between RC and SAUES brought together sport divers and marine scientists to research and protect coral reefs. SAUES works with a number of local organizations, including Kwa Zulu Natal (KZN) Wildlife, [http://www.rhino.org.za/diving\\_dest.htm](http://www.rhino.org.za/diving_dest.htm), to increase reef awareness and promote conservation within South Africa. SAUES has also launched an "Adopt a Coral Reef" program as a way of supporting their ecological research and increasing public participation. SAUES was the official RC representative at the World Summit for Sustainable Development which was held in Johannesburg on August 27 - Sept 4. A special thank you to all of the volunteers who helped make this event so successful, especially Claire Broom. For more information on RC South Africa contact Kevin, [saues@mweb.co.za](mailto:saues@mweb.co.za).



### FLORIDA

Cry of the Water, a non-profit organization dedicated to reef health, has been using Reef Check methods for the past five years to survey reefs in Broward County, Florida. Spearheading this effort are husband and wife team Dan and Stephanie Clark, [reefteam@yahoo.com](mailto:reefteam@yahoo.com). Recently, Cry of the Water, local volunteers, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission have been working to prevent a local development to widen beaches along the Broward County coastline. The project would deposit massive amounts of sand leading to the destruction of fish habitat and increased silt, sedimentation and turbidity to hundreds of acres of adjacent reef. By using RC methods, Cry of the Water has been able

assess the area's ecological significance and persuade developers to reduce the amount of sand used in the project. Cry of the Water is continuing to bring their concerns to state and federal agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers to work to minimize the impact of these beach nourishment projects on their local coral reefs. For more information, visit Cry of the Water at <http://www.cryofthewater.org>.

## Spotlight on Reef Check Site- Egypt

**The Red Sea** spans a distance of over 1000 miles, joining the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean Sea and providing exquisite coastline for eight countries. Comprised of mainly fringing reefs, this region is known for its rich diversity and beautiful colors. Divers from around the globe travel to the Red Sea to experience this unique underwater world.

RC Egypt got off to a spectacular start in 1997 when Moshira Hassan and Gert Woerheide led over forty surveys throughout the Egyptian Red Sea, involving more than 200 tourist volunteers and 13 scientists from Australia, Germany, Egypt, Netherlands, UK and Egypt. Since then, Moshira Hassan and Georg Heiss, co-coordinators of RC Europe (Germany) have continued to coordinate RC in the Red Sea.



Stretching 2,250 kilometres from the Suez Canal in the North to the Yemen in the South, the Red Sea contains more than 1,000 species of fish and has over 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> of fringing reef, making it one of the most bio-diverse seas in the world. Photo courtesy of Camel Dive Club & Hotel

2002 continues to be another great year for RC Egypt. RC has been adopted as a standard survey protocol by a number of local scientific groups. Dr. Mohammed Kotb, of the University of Ismailia, has used RC to train rangers at the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency and the Park Authority in Egypt. There are plans to train students at the Suez Canal University in Ismailia and at the American University in Cairo in RC methods. RC will be included in the curriculum to engage students in field surveys.



RC Egypt and PERSGA team found Southern Sinai reefs to be in good condition, particularly in Ras Mohammed National Park. Photo by Francisco José Cueto Bercian.

In June of this year, RC Egypt partnered with PERSGA (The Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment for the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden), <http://www.persga.org/>, to conduct an expedition of eight sites ([www.reefcheck.org/redseamap.htm](http://www.reefcheck.org/redseamap.htm)) in the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt. Reef Check Europe, [http://141.84.51.10/riffe/reefcheck/index\\_en.shtml](http://141.84.51.10/riffe/reefcheck/index_en.shtml), and Sinai Divers, <http://www.sinaidivers.com>, organized the trip which involved a core team of 5 enthusiastic volunteers from Germany and England as well as a group of local volunteers. Two of the volunteers were RC veterans, having participated as RC Egypt volunteers in 1997 and 2001. This program

was especially significant because it was the first time that the whole Red Sea was surveyed according to the same standard method giving a regional snapshot of reef health.

The expedition included revisiting many of the sites that were surveyed in 1997, 2000 and 2001 including Sharm el Sheikh and Ras Mohammed National Park. The team also surveyed reefs off Dahab, 80 km north of Sharm el Sheikh, with a group of local volunteers. A Crown-of-thorns outbreak, which has destroyed many of the reefs of the area, was observed first hand by the team where several large dead *Acropora* tables recently killed by the starfish were found in deeper waters.

Overall, the team was happy to report that Southern Sinai reefs are in very good condition. It was noted, however, that in areas where diving pressure and urban development were high, reefs were visibly degraded. Where diving activities are regulated, such as in the National Park, reefs were found to be in much better shape where "no take" regulations and visitor education programs have been established. RC Egypt would like to send a special thanks to Ghazala Hotel, <http://www.ghazala.com>, photographer, Francisco José Cueto Bercian, [Francisco.Cueto@urz.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:Francisco.Cueto@urz.uni-heidelberg.de), and all of the volunteers who helped make this expedition a success.



RC Europe, RC Egypt and Blue Heaven Holidays, <http://www.blueheavenholidays.com>, have organized additional surveys in Masrsa Alam, Egypt, September 1-14. Look for an update on this trip in the next issue of The Transect Line. For more information on how you can participate in future expeditions, contact Moshira, [moshira@gmx.net](mailto:moshira@gmx.net).

## Trainings, Workshops, and Meetings

### WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

August 26 - September 4, 2002. Johannesburg Summit 2002 – the World Summit on Sustainable Development – brought together 100,000 participants to focus the world's attention and direct action toward improving people's lives and conserving natural resources. Reef Check was an accredited participant in the Summit and presented Reef Check's report entitled, ***The Global Coral Reef Crisis: Trends and Solutions***. For more information on the results of this meeting visit [www.reefcheck.org/summitsummary.htm](http://www.reefcheck.org/summitsummary.htm).

### INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR REEF STUDIES

September 4 - 7, 2002, ISRS 2002 European Meeting was held in Cambridge UK. RC Germany coordinator Georg Heiss, [georg@reefcheck.de](mailto:georg@reefcheck.de), and RC UK coordinator Alastair Harborne, [A.R.Harborne@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:A.R.Harborne@ncl.ac.uk), represented Reef Check at this event and presented RC's Five Year Report. For more information visit <http://www.uncwil.edu/isrs/meetings.html>. Thanks to Kristian Teleki for lugging a box of reports from South Africa to the meeting!

### NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

RC was invited to attend an NAS meeting in Washington DC on September 17, 2002 and helped to design a plan for a special NAS report on the coral reef crisis.

#### **CORAL REEF TASK FORCE**

The United States Coral Reef Task Force will meet October 2-3, 2002 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The meeting is open to the public and opportunity for public comment will be provided. For additional information on agenda, location, etc. visit <http://coralreef.gov/> or contact Roger.B.Griffis at [roger.b.griffis@noaa.gov](mailto:roger.b.griffis@noaa.gov).

#### **CWWA/CEF CONFERENCE**

The 11th Annual CWWA Conference, CWWA/CEF 2002: Partnering for the Environment, in conjunction with the 1st Caribbean Environmental Forum & Exhibition will be held in St. Lucia, October 7-11, 2002. For more information visit [http://www.cehi.org.lc/cwwa\\_cef/cwwa.html](http://www.cehi.org.lc/cwwa_cef/cwwa.html).

#### **CEA MEMBERS DAY**

October 10-12, 2002 - Akumal, Mexico. Centro Ecologico Akumal (CEA) is hosting their annual Members Day celebration. For more information visit [http://www.ceakumal.org/bmembers\\_day\\_2002.html](http://www.ceakumal.org/bmembers_day_2002.html).

#### **DEMA**

October 22-25, 2002, DEMA (Diving Equipment and Marketing Association) will hold their annual show in Las Vegas, Nevada. The DEMA Show is the world's premier trade exhibition for scuba diving, snorkeling, ocean sports, and adventure dive travel products. For more information visit <http://www.dema.org>.

#### **CARIBBEAN CORAL REEF CONFERENCE**

Reef Care and the NACRI (Netherlands Antilles Coral Reef Initiative) are hosting the Caribbean Coral Reef Conference, which will take place in Curaçao from the 24th to 29th of October 2002. For more information contact DeeVon Quirolo at [reef@bellsouth.net](mailto:reef@bellsouth.net) or visit <http://www.reefrelief.org>.

#### **ITMEMS, PHILIPPINES**

November 25-28, 2002, the 2nd International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium II (ITMEMS-II) will be held in Manila. Stay tuned for more details about the Reef Check post-symposium workshop. For more information on ITMEMS, visit [www.icriforum.org/router.cfm?show=http://www.icriforum.org/itmems/itmems2.html&Item=1](http://www.icriforum.org/router.cfm?show=http://www.icriforum.org/itmems/itmems2.html&Item=1).

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## **Reef Check Champions**

This month we are highlighting those RC representatives who were recently awarded grants from the United National Environment Programme East Asian Seas Regional Co-ordinating Unit (UNEP EAS/RCU). For more information visit <http://www.unep.ch/coral/eassgf.htm>. If you know a Reef Check Champion that you feel should be highlighted, please email a brief description of their contribution as well as a photo (if possible) to Kelly at [rcheck@ucla.edu](mailto:rcheck@ucla.edu).

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#### **Andre Uychiaoco - Marine Science Institute, Univ. Philippines**

Collaborative Monitoring of Priority Protected Coral Reefs in the Philippines

This project will bring the Biodiversity Monitoring System of the Philippines' National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS), <http://sunsite.nus.edu.sg/apcel/dbase/filipino/primary/phanip.html> into compatibility with more mainstream GCRMN and Reef Check reef monitoring systems. The project will organize and disseminate NIPAS coral reef data to provide easy access to managers and trouble-free reporting to national (PhilReefs) and international (ReefBase) databanks. NIPAS will integrate reef monitoring and evaluation into a regular, multi-sectoral/participatory, and adaptive management (decision-making) activity. This project will also provide the opportunity to validate and upgrade the skills of NIPAS field personnel and collaboratively monitor 3 high priority NIPAS sites.

**Nguyen Van Long - Institute of Oceanography, Viet Nam**

Coral reef monitoring for sustainable uses of resources around the island groups in the coastal waters of south-west Vietnam

While monitoring activities of coral reefs have been established for seven sites since 1998, they do not cover an adequate area to provide enough data and information for widespread coral reef management in Vietnam. This project will focus on coral reef areas that do not have established monitoring sites. This project will establish two new sites for coral reef monitoring at Nam Du and Tho Chu islands as well as a training workshop for local communities on coral reef monitoring at Phu Quoc islands, Kien Giang province. The project will provide information on the status of coral reefs in south-west waters of Vietnam (Gulf of Thailand) and promote awareness in local communities on marine conservation on a provincial level. The mechanisms to maintain long-term monitoring of coral reefs will be in the framework of the project.

**Abigail Moore - Yayasan Adi Citra Lestari (YACL) Indonesia**

Coral Reef Survey & Monitoring for Management in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia

YACL carried out a programme to train a local team in SCUBA and coral reef survey/monitoring in 2001/2002 with major support from The David & Lucille Packard Foundation, UNEP EAS/RCU and a contribution from PADI Project AWARE. This team now has the equipment and skills to carry out coral reef surveys and monitoring activities using Reef Check and Manta-Tow methodologies. YACL will continue to increase the capacity of its survey team through the further training of existing members and recruiting/training additional members. The existing and additional capacity will be used to carry out survey and monitoring activities at previous and new sites. The project will give priority to survey sites where management programmes exist or are in preparation, especially MPAs or proposed MPAs. In order to demonstrate the usefulness of survey/monitoring data to communities and decision-makers alike, YACL intends to implement a pilot project at the Pulau Pasoso MPA site, for which YACL now has substantial data and stakeholder support. For more information, contact Abigail at [abigailyacl@yahoo.com](mailto:abigailyacl@yahoo.com).

**Ketut Sarjana Putra, Reef Check Indonesia and Wisnu Widjatmoko, Diponegoro University, Indonesia**

Coral Reef Monitoring and Coral Campaign by Reef Check Program in Karimunjawa Marine National Park

The Reef Check Karimunjawa 2002 program is part of the Reef Check Indonesia program. This program focuses on reef monitoring in Karimunjawa National Park by involving general public (volunteers), local community, local government and NGOs. This program has three main activities: Training of Trainers (ToT), Field Data Collection (monitoring), and a Campaign and Socioeconomic survey. This program will monitor coral reef condition in Karimunjawa and carry out the information to be used by local government and National Park Authority for creating decisions and implementing rules and policy for the management of the Park. For more

information, contact Ketut at [KPutra@wwfnet.org](mailto:KPutra@wwfnet.org).

## Methods Check

### WHY IS THERE NO *OLD DEAD CORAL* CATEGORY IN RC?

Reef Check was designed for volunteers to actively manage coral reefs rather than as an academic survey that a coral reef ecologist or geologist would perform. Reef Check's goal is intended to alert managers to take action based on survey results. Changing levels of indicator organisms or substrate signify impacts of the reef (both positive and negative) and overall reef health.

Reef Check combines non-living, hard substrate into two categories: Recently Killed Coral (**RKC**) and Rock (**RC**). The **RKC** category is only coral killed in the past years, which is an important indicator of negative impacts. The **RC** category includes true rock and coral that has been dead for over a year, which can be distinguished from **RKC** in that it is usually covered with algae and other encrusting material and has lost any skeleton characterizations. Making the distinction between the two categories allows managers to monitor how much coral is actually dying.



## Other Reef Check News

### RC PHILIPPINES RECEIVES GRANT

For the second year in a row, RC Philippines has received a grant from the PADI Foundation to support their efforts in establishing the Maribago Marine Park in Maribago, Mactan Island, Cebu. Congratulations! For more information visit [www.cebudive.com](http://www.cebudive.com).



RC scientist Craig Shuman and volunteer demonstrate "point sampling" method for director Aaron Metchik. Photo by Lena Maun.

### RC VIDEO

Back at headquarters, the Reef Check staff is hard at work on the forthcoming Reef Check Training Video. The video was shot on August 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> by the very talented UCLA film students Aaron Metchik and Amy Duninski. Expanding on the Reef Check training manual, the video will go through, step-by-step, a land-based training to aid RC trainers and volunteers. The video will also present some field pointers and scenes of RC teams in action from all over the world. Eventually, the video will be distributed to all of our teams in a variety of languages. A very special thanks goes to Lena Maun and Craig Shuman for all of their help and hard work on this production. Look for the video in early 2003.

### OCEAN NOMAD

In late August 2002 the Ocean Nomad Expedition departed from the UK, bound for the Middle East and Asia. Organizers Helen and Richard Brian wanted to find a way in which they could make a meaningful contribution to the conservation of the marine environment - and Reef Check provided them with the perfect opportunity to do this. Both PADI instructors, they aim to carry out RC surveys at as many different locations as possible throughout the expedition, in countries such as Jordan, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Iran and India. Helen and Richard would like to thank Bauer, DAN Europe, Underwater Kinetics and Hydotech. If you would like to learn more about the expedition, contact Helen, [helen@oceannomad.com](mailto:helen@oceannomad.com), or visit <http://www.oceannomad.com>.

### REEF CHECK AT JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU RESORT

This year, a number of resort personnel and guests at the Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort, <http://www.fijiresort.com>, in Savusavu, Fiji Islands were trained in Reef Check survey techniques in hopes of establishing a permanent guest participation program. The team spent three days training and carrying out surveys at a number of sites including two that had been surveyed last year. Two permanent transects were also established to aid in long term monitoring of the area. The team was delighted to find many new hard coral colonies at all sites and also found an interesting pattern in regards to invertebrate distribution. The team noted that different fishing methods seem to be influencing the numbers and types of invertebrates on local reefs.



All smiles after RC training at Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort in Fiji, July 2002. Photo courtesy of RC Fiji (Left to right: Ezra, Helen, Didi, Hamilton, Mike, Dan, Gary, Geoff, and Gabby)

Special thanks goes to RC Fiji co-coordinator Helen Sykes, [resortsupport@is.com.fj](mailto:resortsupport@is.com.fj), L'Aventure Cousteau Divers, resort guest Hamilton Rowan (for his enthusiasm!), and the Resort Marine Biologist Mike Greenfelder for persistence in setting dates at a busy time. For information on participating in future RC activities at the resort, contact Dive Operations Manager Gary Alford.

### **JOIN REEF CHECK!**

Join Reef Check and help support of the largest volunteer-driven coral reef monitoring program in the world! Visit [www.reefcheck.org/membership.htm](http://www.reefcheck.org/membership.htm) to join today!

### **SEND US YOUR UPDATES!**

If you would like to submit a story or photographs for the spring issue, please contact Kelly at [rcheck@ucla.edu](mailto:rcheck@ucla.edu) To be highlighted in the next edition of The Transect Line, all submissions must be received by November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

## **Coral Reefs in the News**

### **COASTAL SPRAWL**

In his report for the independent Pew Oceans Commission, Dana Beach of the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League details the effects of urban design and land-use practices on aquatic ecosystems in the United States. Beach presents new strategies and tools that communities may use to preserve the same ecosystems that attract residents, tourists, and businesses to the coasts. For the full report, visit [http://www.pewoceans.org/oceanfacts/2002/04/12/fact\\_25649.asp](http://www.pewoceans.org/oceanfacts/2002/04/12/fact_25649.asp).

### **AMCA**

Access to Marine Conservation for All (AMCA) International, <http://www.amca.50megs.com>, is a group of international like-minded scientists, educationists and other interested individuals who share the commitment to develop and promote a shared vision of enabling all persons, regardless of physical ability, to participate in marine conservation. AMCA was founded by Caroline Walsh to encourage people with physical constraints, such as herself, to become involved in marine research. To become involved with AMCA contact Caroline at [amca.international@btinternet.com](mailto:amca.international@btinternet.com).



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