

Reef Check - WIOMSA - ICRAN/UNEP Workshop Training - of - trainers for voluntary coral reef monitoring

The workshop “Training of trainers for voluntary coral reef monitoring” was held 30th June - 4th July at the Marine National Park in Malindi, Kenya. It was organized by Reef Check together with the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) and supported by National Fisheries and Wildlife Foundation (NOAA), USA, WIOMSA, Coral Reef Task Force, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), CORDIO - Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean, Ministry of Environment - Mauritius,



Participants of the Malindi Workshop

Tanga Coastal Zone Conservation and Development programme, Tanzania, ICRAN/UNEP- International Coral Reef Action Network/ United Nations Environment Programme, and Wildlife Conservation Society/ Masoala Nat. Park (WWF), Madagascar.

The workshop brought together 26 potential Reef Check coordinators from the East African and island countries in order to be trained in the Reef Check monitoring protocol and to make plans on how to carry out Reef Check trainings and surveys, fundraising and Public Relations. The workshop was attended by participants from Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania from organizations and institutions such as Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, MPA Authority (SCMRT-MPA) Seychelles, Menai Bay Conservation Area (Institute of Marine Science), Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Faculty of Aquatic Sciences and Technology, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanga Coastal Zone Conservation and Development programme, Institute of Marine Sciences, Wildlife Conservation Society/ Masoala Nat. Park, Ministry of Environment-Mauritius, CORDIO Diani, Malindi Boat operators association and Mombasa Boat operators association.

Reef Check is an international coral reef conservation and volunteer program that has been enthusiastically supported by hundreds of scientists and thousands of divers around the world who work with communities, governments and businesses to scientifically monitor and manage coral reef health. Reef Check is active in over 40 countries and territories throughout the tropical world and dedicated to achieve the following goals:

- to educate the public about the coral reef crisis;
- to create a global network of volunteer teams which regularly monitor and report on reef health;
- to scientifically investigate coral reef processes;
- to facilitate collaboration among academia, NGOs, governments and the private sector;
- to stimulate local community action to protect remaining pristine reefs and rehabilitate damaged reefs worldwide using ecologically sound and economically sustainable solutions.

The participants were trained to lead teams to carry out the Reef Check surveys in which the teams collect four types of data:

- 1) a description of each reef site based on over 30 measures of environmental conditions and ratings of human impacts,
- 2) fish counts along an 800 m² section of shallow reef,

- 3) invertebrate counts over the same area, and
- 4) a measure of the percentage of the seabed covered by different substrate types including live and dead coral.

Sixteen global and eight regional indicator organisms have been selected to serve as specific measures of human impacts on coral reefs. The indicators were chosen based on their economic and ecological value along with their sensitivity to human impacts. In areas where these organisms are over-exploited, their populations are expected to decrease. Through this process, Reef Check has raised public awareness about the global coral reef crisis and potential solutions in addition to collecting a wealth of valuable data from reefs around the world.

After the workshop several participants expressed that they are planning to use the RC monitoring protocol for their future work in their respective protected areas. With the new Reef Check team leaders the network has now a major component in the Western Indian Ocean and the condition of reefs will be monitored on a regular basis.

More information on
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