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Reef Check Teams in Action

IRAN

Since 1999, RC Iran has been lead by Mohammad Reza Shokri at the Iranian National Center for Oceanography (INCO). After three years of hard work, RC Iran has been granted funding from INCO to conduct the annual monitoring of four islands in the Northern Persian Gulf: Hurmuz, Kish, Lavan, and Khark. With financial support from the International Oceanographic Commission and the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment, RC Iran is also planning a Reef Check methods workshop which will train participants from around the Persian Gulf region to monitor coral reefs. For more information, contact Mohammad at mrshok@hotmail.com

PALAU

RC Palau has thrived under the leadership of Lori Colin and Ann Kitalong since 1997, adding valuable data to Reef Checks global database on coral reef health. Special thanks to Ann for coordinating Palau's annual Earth Day Reef Check training for local schools. This program has helped educate students of all ages about coral reef ecology and conservation. With Ann's assistance, RC Palau has found a new home at the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC). Data collection and coordination will be supervised by PICRC scientist and GCRMN node coordinator Carol Emaurois. PICRC education director, Sherry Ngirmeriil, will run education and outreach activities. Newly certified trainers at the Palau Conservation Society and at Fish n Fins dive shop will be coordinating with Carol and Sherry at PICRC to expand Reef Check Palau to a year-round activity in all the Palauan states. (See Training workshops/meetings for more information about the recent RC training in Palau). For more information, contact Carol at emaurois2000@yahoo.com



Jason Kuartei, Palau Conservation Society, records Hard Coral (HC) cover during a Reef Check training dive at Lighthouse Reef, Palau. Photo by L. Penland

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PNG)

Funded by a grant from NOAA and the International Marine Life Alliance (IMA), Reef Check PNG has grown by leaps and bounds this year. Matthew Mowtell, RC PNG Coordinator has been working to develop the Reef Check monitoring program as part of a collaborative effort between RC and IMA to help build local capacity in PNG and local and international awareness for the protection of PNG's biodiverse coral reefs. Reef Check PNG began in 1997 under the guidance of Norman Quinn, now one of our coordinators in Jamaica. Since October of last year, Matthew has been building on the network begun in 1997 by conducting week-long training sessions in dive safety and RC methods. University of PNG students, dive resort staff, visitors and others have been trained in Reef Check methods and are establishing permanent monitoring sites at Kimbe Bay, Madang, Milne Bay and Port Moresby. For more info, contact Matthew.

Spotlight on Reef Check Site- Kosrae

KOSRAE is one of the jewels of the Federated States of Micronesia, a tiny (43 square miles) and mountainous island in the Central Tropical Pacific just five degrees north of the equator and south of the typhoon track. Due to its unique location, the island has some of the most diverse and healthiest corals in the world. The local fringing reef has provided sustenance to the islanders for centuries and as a result the Kosraeans are very committed to the protection and continued good health of their reefs.



Map courtesy of Kosrae Village

Reef Check Kosrae was established in 1999 by Katrina Adams at Kosrae Village Resort (www.kosraevillage.com). She recruited volunteer sport divers who were visiting the region and willing to donate their vacation time to a worthwhile cause. Over the past five years, Katrina and Kosrae Village have continued to host RC Kosrae and have teamed up with the Kosrae State Fisheries and Marine Resources and the Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organization to expand conservation projects on the island.

Early efforts by RC Kosrae have grown to include an annual month-long training for all 9th grade students on the island in reef ecology and monitoring techniques. This program, run in collaboration with the Marine Resources Dept, also teaches the students to analyze the data gathered, thereby strengthening their math skills. Marine Resources has also added a monthly monitoring session that is carried out by local volunteers and staff year-round. The collaboration between RC Kosrae and the Kosrae State Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources works well, with RC Kosrae and Kosrae Village providing the manpower and equipment and Marine Resources providing direction and supervising data collection.



Table Acropora growing on the Utwe coast, Kosrae.
Photo by Katrina Adams

Other conservation projects on Kosrae include the Kosrae Reef Protection Project, which was established in 1996 and has since involved the community in the installation of 56 mooring buoys around the island at the most popular dive and fishing spots. The buoys protect the reefs by providing anchorage to anyone using the ocean: fishermen, divers, swimmers and snorkelers. These mooring buoys also serve as permanent markers for the 20 coral monitoring sites established by RC Kosrae over the past three years.

RC Kosrae is currently recruiting volunteer divers for Kosrae Reef Check Week 2002. During this week, Kosrae Village will be running a Reef Check training and RC surveys. Participants are scheduled to arrive in Kosrae on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2002 and depart on Friday, October 4, 2002. For more information on the September project or to join the team, please contact Katrina Adams at kosraevillage@mail.fm or Steve Smith at nauticos@oceanearth.org.

Trainings, Workshops, and Meetings

GCRMN/MAREPAC NODE PARTICIPANTS LEARN RC METHODS IN SAIPAN

A one-day Reef Check training was conducted on March 27th in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) in conjunction with the GCRMN/MAREPAC regional node coordinators meeting. The training was led by RC Program Manager Jennifer Liebeler and RC Saipan Coordinator and the CNMI Coastal Resources Management coral reef biologist, John Starmer. The twenty-two participants included government officials and scientists from Chuuk (FSM), Kosrae (FSM), Pohnpei (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Guam, Palau, Rota (CNMI) and Saipan (CNMI). Also attending the training were thirteen volunteers from the Northern Marianas Dive Association who plan to train visiting Japanese tourists in RC methods. As a result of the training, Reef Check teams are now being set up in Chuuk (Federated States of Micronesia) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Look for updates on these new teams in the next newsletter! A big thank you to John Starmer for helping to organize this training.



John Starmer, RC Saipan, explains to Lisa Skilag, RC Rota, and Erica Cochran, Coral Reef Coordinator for CNMI, how to estimate distance underwater. *Photo by J. Liebeler*

TRAINING OF TRAINERS WORKSHOP HELD AT PICRC

A three-day RC training of trainers workshop was held in Palau from April 1-3, 2002 at the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC). PICRC CEO Francis Masutaro and the honorable delegate of the house, Noah Idechong, officially opened the training. Other guest speakers included Ann Kitalong, RC Palau, Jason Kuartei and Liz Matthews, Palau Conservation Society, and Theo Isamu, Chief of the Division of Marine Resources. The 21 participants from Guam, Kosrae (FSM), Yap (FSM), and Palau included managers, educators, scientists and volunteers from the Helen Reef Conservation Project, the Palau Conservation



Newly certified Reef Check trainers smile for the camera. Participants came from Kosrae, Guam, Yap, and six states in Palau to attend the training hosted at PICRC. *Photo by L. Penland*

Society, the Nature Conservancy, the Peace Corps, PICRC, and local dive shops. Several Palauan fisherman who participated in the training from the states of Hatohobei, Kayangel, Ngarcchelong, Ngiwal, and Peleliu, said that the knowledge they gained during the training workshop would be very useful for monitoring fish populations and they plan to conduct at least two Reef Check surveys a year in their home states. Additionally, newly certified RC trainer Melissa Iwamoto has been working with Andy Tafileichig, Chief of Marine Resources Management Division, to set up Yap's first Reef Check team. Look for updates from RC Yap in an upcoming

newsletter. Special thanks to Lolita Penland, Francis Masutaro, and Carol Fmaurois at PICRC.

shop for their logistical and financial support.

RC EUROPE AD SANAI DIVERS TO LEAD RC TRAINING/SURVEYS

Reef Check Europe and Sanai Divers (<http://www.sinaidivers.com/>) will be conducting a Reef Check training in June in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt. To volunteer or for more information on this educational opportunity, please contact Georg Heiss at georg@reefcheck.de.

COLLEGE AT SEA, AUSTRALIA

College at Sea (<http://www.collegeatsea.marine.uq.edu.au>) is a new five-week course in marine science that combines the adventure of sailing through the Coral Sea with hands-on research experience. It is being held this July and August by the Centre of Marine Studies at The University of Queensland, Australia. 20 students and five staff members aboard the *STS South Passage*, a 100 foot gaff-rigged schooner, will investigate the marine ecosystem of the Great Barrier Reef from Townsville, in Northern Queensland to the Capricorn Bunker Group of coral atolls, at the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef. Students will receive lectures on coral reef ecology, including topics relating to tropical marine ecosystems, oceanography, nutrient dynamics and remote sensing. Students will be trained in Reef Check methodology and conduct Reef Check surveys of reefs along the Queensland coast to determine their health and identify the impacts of the recent bleaching event. For more information please contact the College at Sea Director, Dr. James Udy collegeatsea@marine.uq.edu.au

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.

Reef Check Champion

This month we are highlighting Dr. Beatrice Padovani Ferreira, who runs Reef Check Brazil. 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 Rcheck2@ucla.edu.

Dr. Beatrice Padovani Ferreira.

One of our newest teams, Reef Check Brazil, was started last year by Dr. Beatrice Padovani Ferreira, Departamento de Oceanografia, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco. In the past year, Beatrice has recruited 65 volunteers, including divers, students, researchers, fishermen, and members of the local community. The group's activities have included RC surveys in five different reefs of Tamandaré in the Coral Coast MPA. Beatrice has extended Reef Check activities to the land, by recruiting a team of land-based volunteers who have been running beach cleanups. Last Earth Day the group removed 15 bags of garbage from a local beach.

RC Brazil has just received approval from the Brazilian government to monitor the 3,000 km of reef along the Northeastern coast. Four pilot locations have been selected: Abrolhos Reef, Fernando de Noronha Archipelago, the Coral Coast MPA and the Maracajaú Reefs. Monitoring has already started in the southernmost of the four sites, the Abrolhos complex, which has the largest and most diverse coral formations in the area, including seven endemic

popular tourist destination. In addition to surveying the reefs and collecting valuable data, Beatrice and her colleagues have built a remarkable Reef Check team by recruiting local dive operators, park rangers, and environmental managers from around the area.

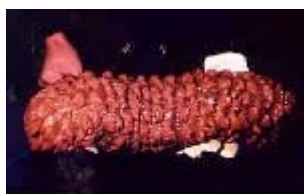
Another exciting project in the works from RC Brazil is the Reef Check Center for Kids, a project helping to educate Brazilian children about coral reef biology and solutions to the impacts threatening Brazil's coral reefs. During 2001, with funds from the Boticario Foundation, the Center pioneered an environmental education program that educated 600 school children about ornamental fish, which are over-fished in the region. We expect to hear more great things from the Reef Check Center for Kids as they continue to grow and expand. To support this program, or for more information, contact Beatrice at beatrice@ibama.gov.br.



Reef Check Brazil, led by Beatrice, poses before jumping in the water to survey the reefs in the Coral Coast MPA.

Beatrice and her team would like to thank the Brazilian Institute of Environment, Aratur turismo and all the volunteers who have been helping them. RC Brazil has also received support from the Project Coastal Reefs, and integrated coastal management project executed by the Federal University of Pernambuco, Center of Research and Fishing Extension of the Northeast, Ibama, Foundation Sea Mammals and Interamerican Bank of Development. Our gratitude goes out to all the people and organizations that have helped Beatrice make RC Brazil one of the fastest growing teams in the world!

Methods Check



Thelenota ananas



Thelenota ananas
(covered with sand)



Stichopus chloronotus

WHICH SEA CUCUMBERS SHOULD I COUNT?

Many people have been asking us which "Edible Sea Cucumbers" they should count during their Reef Check surveys. Although many species of sea cucumbers are eaten around the world, Reef Check only counts two: *Thelenota ananas* and *Stichopus chloronotus*, both found only in the Indo-Pacific region. We picked these two species because they have a wide

These species are heavily over-fished and are easy to identify due to their distinguishing characteristics. *T. ananas* (above, left and middle) is bright red or orange with multiple conical papillae sticking up all over. *S. chloronotus* (above, right) is dark purple to black and covered with two rows of simple papillae, each with a bright orange dot at its tip. In addition to the Reef Check indicators, we encourage you to count any additional species (including other sea cucumbers) that have high value in your area. Just remember to record any additional species you count on separate lines on the belt transect form and clearly explain what you are recording in the comments section. Happy counting!

Other Reef Check News

REEF CHECK CELEBRATES EARTH DAY WITH ANGELS AT UCLA

On April 22nd, Reef Check and UCLA's Institute of the Environment hosted an Earth Day celebration on the UCLA campus. Joining the festivities were RC board member Irmelin DiCaprio, representing the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, and Diane Behrens. Diane generously donated her time and artistic talents by painting a "Reef Angel." The Reef Angel is part of *A Community of Angels*, (the largest and most popular Public Art Exhibit ever staged in the City of Los Angeles.



Reef Check boardmember Irmelin DiCaprio looks on as Artist Diane Behrens adds the finishing touches to the "Reef Angel" part of the Community of Angels, artwork that can be found throughout the city of Los Angeles. *Photo by J. Liebeler*

Quiksilver Boardriding Company made huge waves at the event by providing gifts to all new members who joined Reef

Check. UCLA students also appreciated the posters and stickers donated by Quiksilver. The Dolphin Class from the UCLA's University Parents Nursery School stopped by to learn about coral reefs and to see firsthand what life on the coral reef looks like. The preschoolers expressed their newfound knowledge of reef life by painting a huge mural, which hung on display for the rest of the day. Special thanks to Kelly McGee, Reef Check Outreach Coordinator for organizing such a successful educational event.



A preschool student gets her first look at a starfish.
Tanks were provided by Sea Dwelling Creatures.
Photo by J. Liebeler

REEF CHECK BECOMES MEMBER OF IUCN

Sponsored by other IUCN members, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Earthwatch, Reef Check has become and official member of IUCN, the World Conservation Union. Reef Check programs worldwide support the mission of IUCN to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

FIVE YEAR REPORT TO BE PRESENTED AT ITMEMSII

We have been working hard to prepare the five year report of results from Reef Check surveys and programs, 1997-2001. This report will be available on the web and distributed at ITMEMSII. Several important results have already been determined, stay tuned for details.

IMAX, THE CORAL REEF ADVENTURE

Reef Check's debut in the upcoming IMAX film "The Coral Reef Adventure" (<http://www.coralfilm.com/>) is readily approaching. First cut screenings will be taking place in May and June in Los Angeles, New York, Washington D.C., Chicago, St. Louis, and Boston. These screenings will be used to generate interest from patrons seeking to support the development of environmental educational materials which will be distributed to school aged children worldwide. If you are interested in helping to sponsor the development and distribution of these educational materials, please contact us at Rcheck2@ucla.edu.

QUIKSILVER CROSSING ENTERS EUROPE

The Indies Trader will be entering the Mediterranean at the beginning of June and traveling to different ports-of-call throughout the summer, including France, Italy, UK and Spain. Check out the Crossing's website at (<http://203.84.237.42/crossing/>) to keep up with their travels.

Read recent press coverage of Reef Check's involvement in the crossing. at <http://dsc.discovery.com/news/reu/20020114/crossing.html>

JOIN REEF CHECK!

Join Reef Check and help support of the largest volunteer-driven coral reef monitoring program in the world! [Click here](#) for more information.

SEND US YOUR UPDATES!

If you would like to submit a story or photographs for the spring issue, please contact [Kelly](#). To be highlighted in the next edition of The Transect Line, all submissions must be received by July 15th, 2002.

REEFS AT RISK RELEASES SOUTH EAST ASIA ASSESSMENT

In March, 2002, World Resources Institute released Reefs at Risk in Southeast Asia. The report provides a detailed analysis of threats to coral reefs across Southeast Asia. About 88 percent of Southeast Asia's coral reefs, which are among the world's most rich and extensive, face destruction from overfishing and pollution. The goal of the project is to raise awareness about human pressure on coral reefs and to provide resource managers with specific information and tools to manage coastal habitats more effectively. The project was implemented in collaboration with twenty partner institutions in the region, including Reef Check. More info at <http://www.wri.org/wri/reefsatrisk/>).

BLACK WATER IN FLORIDA (FROM CNN.COM)

Researchers who have been studying a giant, mysterious area of "black water" in Florida Bay say it seems to be associated with a diatom, a type of algae. The algae was found in the water, according to Scott Willis at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the black water may be an algal bloom -- an explosion of microscopic marine life. Algal blooms are not rare in Florida waters, but blooms of this size are. At its peak in February, the black water covered an estimated 700 square miles north of the Florida Keys and west of the tip of the mainland. More info at (<http://www.cnn.com/2002/TECH/science/03/27/black.blob/>).

CRY OF THE WATER CAMPAIGNS AGAINST BEACH DREDGING PROJECT

A massive dredge and fill project is being planned in Broward County, Florida. Cry of the Water, a local non-profit and Reef Check member, is urging the public to submit comments on the Environmental Impact Statement just released for public review. More info at (<http://www.cryofthewater.org>).

INTERIM RESULTS FROM THE 2000 SURVEYS OF THE NORTHWEST HAWAIIAN ISLANDS NOW AVAILABLE

Interim results are now available from the 2000 Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Reef Assessment and Monitoring Program (NOWRAMP) expedition. This expedition conducted rapid ecological assessments and benthic habitat mapping over vast areas within the largest expanse of remote coral reefs in the world. More info at (http://www.hawaii.edu/ssri/hcri/reports-nwhi_report.htm).

The global coral reef education, monitoring and management program.

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