

DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**



**TEN YEAR
CELEBRATION**



EDA'S THAILAND TRIP

The Tsunami efforts underwater in Thailand six months on



"CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SUCCESSIVE CLEAN UPS AND 10 YEARS SINCE EDA WAS FOUNDED"

Plus! EDA Abu Dhabi Diving Committee, Clean Up Arabia 2005, The Nature Network, EDA's Heritage Department...

CELEBRATING THE 10th ANNIVERSARY OF SUCCESSIVE CLEAN UPS AND SINCE EDA WAS FOUNDED



The loyalty and the determination of EDA members making a difference inspires my work. I keep saying to them, "EDA members, you make me proud!" Working and diving with members and volunteers of over 25 nationalities, is like living in a big family home.

This year EDA is celebrating its 10th Anniversary. Lots of nice memories come to my mind as I am also celebrating my 5th year with EDA as the Director of Environment & Research Dept.

In December 2000, EDA started the Crown of Thorns Starfish Project with a \$3000 donation from the United Nations Environment Programme - The Regional Office of West Asia (UNEP – ROWA), and now in the year 2005 we managed to upgrade the project to be the Reef Monitoring Project, registered with Reef Check International and releasing Mooring Buoys to protect the UAE dive sites.

Clean Up Arabia is one of EDA's biggest events. It is an annual celebration which EDA members, volunteers, sponsors, supporters and their families enjoy as a fun day out helping to preserve the marine environment.

In the Pearl Dive Awareness Project, the most popular project in EDA; we are trying to conserve and promote for the UAE's diving heritage.

Getting the accreditation of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme - UNEP is so far the best reward EDA received for its environmental efforts.

In EDA, we do our best to help the environment in the UAE and our small fragile Planet. We wouldn't be able to do this without the help of all our members, volunteers, sponsors and supporters.

This newsletter edition will be dedicated to a special project that we are starting "Thailand Tsunami Clean Up Dive" as you will read in the feature story of this edition written by Ms. Sarah Naarden, EDA's Asia Pacific Correspondent.

EDA is now working on a Turtle project in Thailand and diving with the Malaysian Dugongs.

Thank you all and we still need your support, you are making a difference.

Eco Regards,

Ibrahim N. Al-Zu'bi

West Asia Coordinator,
UNEP YouthXchange Project

Director of Environment Dept.
Emirates Diving Association

CONTENTS

EDA DIRECTOR	2
AUH CORNICHE CLEAN UP	4
ERWDA SPONSORS	5
EDA'S THAILAND TRIP	6
CLEAN UP ARABIA 2005	10
EDA'S HERITAGE DEPARTMENT	14
EDA'S PEARL DIVES @ WAFI MALL	15
RUNDE ARTIFICIAL REEF	16
THE NATURE NETWORK	18
UPCOMING EVENTS	19
ONCE IN A LIFE TIME EXPERIENCE	20

DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Please note that EDA's newsletter, "Divers for the Environment" includes articles written by individuals whose opinions, whilst valid, may or may not represent that of EDA. It is hoped that the newsletter can become a platform for individuals to voice their opinion on marine and diving related issues. You are welcome to submit an article for the next edition of "Divers for the Environment" released in June 2005. Send all articles/comments to Head Office edadiver@emirates.net.ae

SUMMARY OF ABU DHABI CORNICHE UNDERWATER CLEAN UP

FRIDAY 27th MAY 2005

Timings: 8am-12pm

Sponsors: ESNAAD & ERWDA

Organizers and Participating dive clubs:

Emirates Diving Association, Abu Dhabi International Marine Sports Club, Abu Dhabi Marine Police, Al Masood Marine and Engineering, ADCO Dive Club, ADMA Dive Club, ADSAC, GASCO Dive Team, Frog legs Dive Team, ERWDA-MERC.

The Abu Dhabi Corniche Underwater Clean Up was a huge success! On Friday 27th May 67 intrepid divers from Abu Dhabi assembled to lend a hand in one of the largest underwater cleanup in Abu Dhabi sponsored by ERWDA and ESNAAD. It was well attended by some professional divers, local dive clubs and volunteer divers from Emirates Diving Association, Abu Dhabi International Marine Sports Club (ADIMSC), Abu Dhabi Marine Police, Al Masood Marine and Engineering, ADCO Dive Club, ADMA Dive Club, ADSAC, GASCO Dive Team, Frog legs Divers, ERWDA-MERC and local volunteer divers.

First the divers received a safety and orientation briefing and collected clean-up T-shirts and caps at ADIMSC. In shaded areas, divers then prepared their scuba equipment, collection bags and protective gloves and boarded their designated dive boats. With radios in hand, a team leader on board, excited divers made their way across the calm waters of the Corniche and took the plunge to collect marine debris. Volunteers were advised to leave and mark the large rubbish and let the professional divers retrieve any hazardous and heavy matters. Some debris had to be left in the water since they already harbored aquatic life in its crevices. For example a few rubber tubings had small coral encrustations and tiny crustaceans living on them. Several divers saw small shoals of breams, Arabian Angelfish, snappers and a colorful decorator crab just beneath the Corniche. Its no wonder divers came out to keep the Abu Dhabi marine environment clean and beautiful. Bystanders strolling along the Corniche also pointed out visible debris to the divers. Truly it was a community event.

With the backdrop of Abu Dhabi's beautiful cityscape, divers headed back to ADIMSC to learn how much marine debris and what type of debris were amassed. Initial observations told divers there were plenty of plastics, glass and metals like electrical cable wiring. The most interesting finds were several rusty shopping trolleys and a heavily corroded outboard engine. Staff of ADMISC, ERWDA and Al Masood MED conducted final trash counts. A summary report of items collected will be prepared and given to ERWDA and EDA and sent to Project Aware UK.

ERWDA and ESNAAD express their appreciation to all the participants on the success of the Abu Dhabi Corniche Underwater Clean-up and look forward to future collaborations.

©Written by Kathleen Russell
Al Masood Marine and Engineering



Divers coming back with collected rubbish



More bags of rubbish being brought back for proper disposal



Working together and making a difference



Kathleen Briefing



Registration



Thank You



Students working together to make a difference

ERWDA SPONSORS ICZM SYMPOSIUM IN ABU DHABI

Under the patronage of HH Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Chairman of the Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency (ERWDA), a symposium on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in the UAE was held from 5-8 June 2005 in Abu Dhabi.

International delegations came from Australia, Bahrain, Qatar, Iran, New Zealand, UAE, UK, and from various NGO's, Federal agencies and stakeholders of the coastal regions.

The main themes of the symposium were Integrated Coastal and Marine Area Management Planning; Natural Resources Conservation and Management; Legal Instruments and Arrangements; Governance and Institutional Arrangements and Capacity Building. Keynote speakers were invited from Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the UAE addressing each of the themes. There was also a 2 day workshop held that focused on a proposed course of action on coastal management in the UAE and on the recommendations of the framework on integrated coastal and marine area management for the UAE.

The success of the symposium is the first of its kind and hopefully in the near future there will be ICZM in the UAE.

More details about the symposium are found on the ERWDA website: www.erwda.gov.ae

THE SUCCESS OF THE SYMPOSIUM IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND

“LOVING PHUKET, REVIVING ANDAMAN”

AN EDA - THAI AIRWAYS INITIATIVE, JUNE 15-20

Reported by Sarah Naarden (Asia Pacific Correspondent)



Sarah Naarden

“UNDERWATER CLEAN UP DIVES ARE OUR SPECIALITY”. EDA Environment Director, Ibrahim Al Zu'bi remarked at an awards ceremony in Phuket, where 28 UAE divers, comprising of 14 nationalities, joined with Thai dignitaries celebrating their participation in the First International Tsunami clean up group in Thailand organised with Thai airways from 15th-20th June.

After a turbulent night of sailing from Phuket, EDA divers joined forces with the Ko Phi Phi Tsunami Dive camp. Andrew Hewett, the camp General Manager, arrives on the boat with his team and a sense of humour; their t-shirts read “deep down and dirty”. Hewett, begins to brief the EDA team about the clean up specifications, while handing out gloves and bags. He mentions after living on the island for 11 years in the diving business, he considers himself blessed to be a survivor in the Tsunami disaster - a survivor who can now help and inspire others to help. “We have collected over 150 tonnes of debris from the sea but still have another six months of work to do. We require divers with at least 75 dives or more to assist us, and we understand that the UAE has some of the worlds best experts like Joe Valance in coral transplanting and Tsunami affected areas could do with some expertise help”.

Contact details for Andrew Hewett:
andrew@hidef.com

Many of the best diving spots in Phi Phi and the Andaman Sea areas remain completely intact. According to the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Phuket's initial media reports were inaccurate, reporting three quarters of the reefs were damaged, when in actual fact, some reefs only suffered 10-15% damage.

The hardest hit dive areas in Thailand were the Surin and Similian Islands that are home to beautiful large Sea Fans. The United Nations Development Program along with the Departments of National Parks, Wildlife, Plant Conservation, Marine and Coastal resources and Thailand which hosted 40 volunteers set out to rescue the coral by securing the broken pieces to the rock beds with wire or bonding them with cement. Water pressure during the monsoon season can effect the bonding process and ideally the corals are nursed in safe waters then returned to their original site when stronger.



Phuket Airport

THE TSUNAMI EFFORTS UNDERWATER IN THAILAND SIX MONTHS ON



At the Hotel



Rubbish Pile 1



Rubbish Pile 2



Eddie and Anthony at the Gala Dinner



Ivan and Raghu at the Gala Dinner



Dubai Airport

After witnessing Joe Valance speak at the March EDA talk, it is evident coral nurseries and coral transplanting expertise used in the Palm Island Dubai could be beneficial for such Tsunami recovery projects.

Once Hewett had finished the clean up brief, EDA Divers entered the water very cautiously. Amongst zero visibility in the water an identity card was found and reported to the authorities, such documents are still vital in identifying missing persons. Other divers emerged from the water a little emotional with bags containing children's clothes, soft toys, cowboy boots and bath robes to name a few. Corrugated iron sheets, doors, irons, plates and restaurant menus were added to the collected debris by other dive camp volunteers who come for weeks at a time. Some items like vanity basins and toilets were salvaged for reuse and sold with proceeds toward rebuilding programs.

The final dive at Phi Phi was to monitor the conditions of the reef in Tonsai Bay. Small areas of coral had minimal damage. Unusual species of Trumpetfish, Minature Clown Fish and Lionfish flourished amongst Bubble Coral and large Barrel Sponge Coral. As divers emerged from the sea they rested buoyantly amongst beautifully natural cliffs and untouched rainforest, monkeys collected coconuts from the beach and butterflies flew around the boat. Empty speed boats docked in the bay awaiting the flourish of tourism to begin again. Looking out towards the devastation of the coast, many Thais think that a positive aspect of the Tsunami is that of a fresh start to get the right balance of tourism in. There is the need for tighter government control in sustaining development due to the delicate eco system.

Help International a non government organisation of Ko Phi Phi invited EDA to a presentation of their relief efforts. Clare West, Hi Phi Phi's Project Manager, had told the island about the expected arrival of 28 divers from the UAE because her family living in Dubai had read about the trip in the newspaper. Clare had been living on the Island for 4 years and happened to be visiting her family in Dubai on the 26th of December, 2004. She returned to the devastated island to see several dozen bungalows entirely swept to sea, the ground floor of one hotel completely washed away and the main shopping strip lying in 2 metre high debris.

"Amongst the devastation a Thai lady approached us and wanted to rebuild her shop. We had to clear the path to get to her shop, which led to clearing the business next to hers, and one by one, we opened each business and now have 150 shops". The few tourists that arrive are greeted with smiles, there is no haggling and life is slowly getting back to normal helping the psyche of the community take their minds off the loss of loved ones. "The Thai Government have not yet released funds for rebuilding which is probably a good thing as much debate is going on about the proper development of the Island. We don't want make-shift mistakes to be repeated, however there are hundreds of refugees in Krabi waiting to return to their homeland so the debate needs some answers soon".

The Hi Phi Phi tour ended in the make-shift medical centre where a nurse only visiting the island for a holiday before the Tsunami, has now become the core of the centre. During December she was working through the night stitching people up. "Doctors and Medical Aid is still desperately needed here". Unfortunately most of what Hi Phi Phi staff are doing is self funded, donations through their website are essential. Many individuals who visit the island return to their homeland to do fundraising and make sure that the money they donate actually goes to the active projects.

For further media information contact: clarewest@hiphiphi.com / www.hiphiphi.com



At the Gala



At the Gala



Having fun after the Dive



More fun after the Dive



Fish Face



The Becketts



Kalfan - UAE



Ready to Clean



EDA Divers

EDA volunteers, Leena Abbas, female Emirati and American dive buddy Aspen Aman, participated in the dive clean up and experienced an emotional calling to return to Phi Phi. "We believe that we can return during Ramadan this year and make a difference in this community". Aspen, an American expat in Dubai became fluent in Arabic while living in Yemen for several years and wants to let the people of the United States know about the rewarding life and opportunities available to expats in the Middle East. "Some people believe we come here because we cant make it back at home or that we are trying to escape problems." Activities like coral monitoring, pearl diving, turtle tagging, dive clean ups are all readily accessible in Dubai through the EDA, mixing with people from all professions and different nationalities bonded by diving for a cause, something unique to the region.

After the dive clean up and tiresome 4 hour boat ride back to Phuket, Royal Orchid Holidays treated the EDA volunteer group with a stay in Thavorn Beach Village and Spa. Here lie luxury Thai chalets in pristine condition overlooking the bay and set high into the mountains surrounded by semi tropical rainforest and accessed by a Hong Kong style cable train. A deserted Japanese restaurant amongst the picturesque pool awaits its Japanese customers to return to Kittu Phatanachinda. The Vice President of Phuket Tourist Association, was thrilled to host the first Thai airways, "Loving Phuket, Revivng Andaman" campaign. The first attempt was a great success and with Dubai tourists, this campaign can be a model for tourist groups interested in real Eco tourism from around the world.

Al Zu'bi from the EDA has been invited to speak at the Global Sports and Environment Alliance at the World Expo in Japan, July 31. The focus of the presentation will be the Tsunami Clean Up model from the UAE and how groups of divers and non divers from all over the world can participate in such events and make sporting activities and holidays environmentally and socially responsible.

Ibrahim Al Zu'bi
West Asia Youth Exchange UNEP Coordinator
EDA environment director edadiver@emirates.net

For more media information please contact Sarah Naarden at: sarnaar@hotmail.com



CLEAN UP ARABIA

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

15th, 16th SEPTEMBER 2005

An exciting local project called 'Clean Up Arabia' will be held in the Emirates this September. It aims to make our beaches and dive sites in the UAE on the east and west coasts clean again by removing the rubbish that is spoiling them.

It will involve people from all walks of life to get in action to make a real difference. This year we plan to invite EDA members and sponsors together with their families to come and participate in the Beach Clean Up, to help shape their consciousness concerning the littering.

We shall record the quantities and types of rubbish collected by individual groups and fight for regulations that stop pollution. Where possible, the collected rubbish is then recycled. Information dissemination will be delivered to participants on such aspects of the environmental behavior.

Emirates Diving Association in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme - Regional Office of West Asia / UNEP - ROWA are the organisers of this year's Clean Up Campaign that will be held on Thursday 15th and Friday 16th September.

We are backed by both the Australian 'Clean Up the World' campaign and the USA based 'International Coastal Cleanup' and PADI PROJECT A.W.A.R.E. All these campaigns have years of experience around the world, coordinating groups of people to join each other for the good of the earth.

This is the 10th year that the UAE will participate in this event and will carry with it a lot of press coverage.

The campaign aims to clean the marine environment from pollution, as well as directing people towards positive attitudes in maintaining a clean and sound environment by practice and participation.

The Emirates Diving Association carries this work out with volunteers, who will be provided with T-shirts and caps, as well as the tools needed to achieve a high level of clean up.

THE MAIN AREAS TO BE COVERED WITHIN THE UAE WILL BE:

1. East Coast (Fujairah & Khorfakkan): both underwater with divers and along the shore with school children and other volunteers - Partnership with the East Coast Dive Centres and The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.
2. Abu Dhabi: Organized by EDA Abu Dhabi Committee.
3. Dubai Creek: Organized by Dubai Police Rescue Team.
4. Oman

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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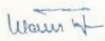
Clean up  the world

Presented to

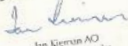
Emirates Diving Association

In recognition of an invaluable contribution to Clean Up the World 2000.
The combined efforts of dedicated volunteers from communities around the globe
have helped to make a difference to our shared environment.

Thank you for your support.



Klaus Töpfer
Executive Director
United Nations Environment Programme



Ian Kiernan AO
Chairman & Founder
Clean Up the World

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Clean up  the world

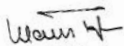
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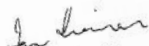
In recognition of an invaluable contribution to Clean Up the World 2001.

The combined efforts of dedicated volunteers
from communities around the globe
have helped to make a difference to our shared environment.

Thank you for your support.



Klaus Töpfer
Executive Director
United Nations Environment Programme



Ian Kiernan AO
Chairman & Founder
Clean Up the World


2001
Volunteers...
ordinary
people,
extraordinary
contribution.

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A project held in cooperation
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**Your
Community.**
Clean up  the world
Our Earth.

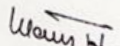
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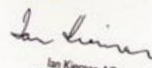
In recognition of an invaluable contribution to Clean Up the World 2002.

The combined efforts of dedicated individuals,
community groups and organisations around the globe
have helped to make a difference to our shared environment.

Thank you for your support.



Klaus Töpfer
Executive Director
United Nations Environment Programme



Ian Kiernan AO
Chairman & Founder
Clean Up the World

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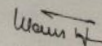
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2004

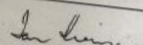


Member of
Clean Up
the World

Emirates Diving Association



Klaus Töpfer
Executive Director
United Nations Environment Programme



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TRADE**



Clean Up Arabia 2000



Clean Up Arabia 2001



Clean Up Arabia 2001



Clean Up Arabia 2002



Clean Up Arabia 2002



Clean Up Arabia 2004

“CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SUCCESSIVE CLEAN UPS AND 10 YEARS SINCE EDA WAS FOUNDED”



Clean Up Arabia 2003



Clean Up Arabia 2003



Clean Up Arabia 2004



Clean Up Arabia 2004



Clean Up Arabia 2004



Clean Up Arabia 2004

EDA'S HERITAGE DEPARTMENT

AN EDA PEARL DIVING TRIP FOR MAF STAFF

ماجد الفطيم



MAJID AL FUTTAIM

What a wonderful way to kick off the hot summer months! Emirates Diving Association recently joined forces with the Majid Al Futtaim Group of Companies to organize a pearl diving trip to communicate the importance of protecting UAE marine life, experience the UAE's underwater world and discover the beauty of pearl diving. MAF employees were whisked away from Dubai's fast track and taken out for a day of fun in the sun! With 16 staff members, 8 EDA experts on board, and 1 PR representative, the fully equipped, advanced diving vessel took off from the Dubai Creek in the early morning and headed out towards a local pearl dive site, an ideal location for fishing, swimming, diving and snorkeling. Certified divers joined the EDA team on a dive near Jumeirah Beach Park while non-divers enjoyed a swim in the cool waters just off The World Islands coast of the UAE. With EDA, you get it all - there is something for everyone!

All who attended had a fantastic time, and we've had very positive feedback from the group, so we're already planning our second trip together in the near future - we can hardly wait! Majid Al Futtaim Group of Companies has been a sponsor of the Emirates Diving Association for three consecutive years. The Group's ongoing support is in line with its strategy to promote sustainable development throughout the UAE as well as protect and restore the UAE's marine resources.



Mr. François de Montaudouin/Chief Executive Officer



Registration



Getting ready to dive



Searching for pearls



Enjoying traditional lunch

COMMENTS FROM MAF STAFF:

"Well, all that I can say is Thank you. Thank you for this beautiful day. An opportunity to sail away from the office, get a breath of fresh air in a friendly ambiance. The EDA team were professional and careful with us, putting safety as a priority."

CAROLINE

Communication and Marketing Executive

"Despite the limited visibility on the dive, it was a fantastic day both in and out of the water - thanks to EDA for creating a great atmosphere and feeding us well, as well as providing some local knowledge about the place!"

GISELLE

Events & Business Development Manager, Ski Dubai

"I was thrilled to be invited by EDA to join the MAF employees on what turned out to be a fantastic diving experience for us all. I am looking forward to the next trip already!!!"

NADA LOTFY

Senior Account Executive, Hill & Knowlton

EDA PEARL DIVES @ WAFI MALL



Rare collections on display to "Open & Search for Pearls in an Oyster"

Wafi Mall has launched their Cultural Exhibition, "Timeless Dubai" in association with the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) & The Emirates Diving Association. The event which will run throughout Dubai Summer Surprises will last 8 weeks showcasing Dubai's cultural heritage, both past and present.

A marine exhibition designed with the help of the Emirates Diving Association, creates an atmospheric walk-through underwater scene.

Visitors can learn about the varied marine life in the region via film and explore the rare and beautiful pearl and seashell collections. Traditional boats and tools used by pearlers and fishermen will also be featured, giving a very real account of how people existed in past times.



Rarest Pearl Collections from EDA's Treasure Box



Rare Pearl Trader's Tools, which EDA is proud of to Show Case for the public



Section of the Under Water Exhibition with the Display Units



Juma Bin Thalet, EDA's Heritage Coordinator putting the final touches prior to the Opening



Demonstrating how to Open & Search for Pearls
AUGUST 2005, **EMIRATES DIVING ASSOCIATION 15**

RUNDE ARTIFICIAL REEF

Diving and Technical Dept.

The Palm Jumeirah, the worlds largest man-made island is situated off the coast of Dubai. When these plans were announced environmentalists raised concerns about the impact this development would have on the Gulf's delicate ecosystem. On completion of the major super structural work, Nakheel have begun the process of re-introducing marine life. The man-made island is surrounded by a crescent-shaped breakwater and, beyond that, four artificial reefs have been installed to encourage coral growth and so attract fish and other marine life. The artificial reefs can be found at GPS location N25° 07' 570" - E055° 06' 597" and are marked with a buoy seen below in fig 1.



Fig 1. Buoy marking trial Runde artificial reefs

Kyodo international, have taken on the project of trial artificial reef deployment. The Runde Reef was developed by the Norwegian company Reef Systems. The Runde Reef, comprises of a 2.5 metre high concrete core from which dozens of recycled polyethylene tubes sprout to create a large growing surface area of 250 square metres, as well as 340 metres of cavity inside the tubes. The basic structure can be seen in fig 2.



Fig 2. Runde artificial reef in position

In addition larger reefs were deployed as can be seen in fig 4. The diver gives the scale of the polyethylene tubes projecting from the concrete cylinder (approx 2m in length). This gives the scientists the ability to determine whether reef size affects coral formation and organism re-colonization.

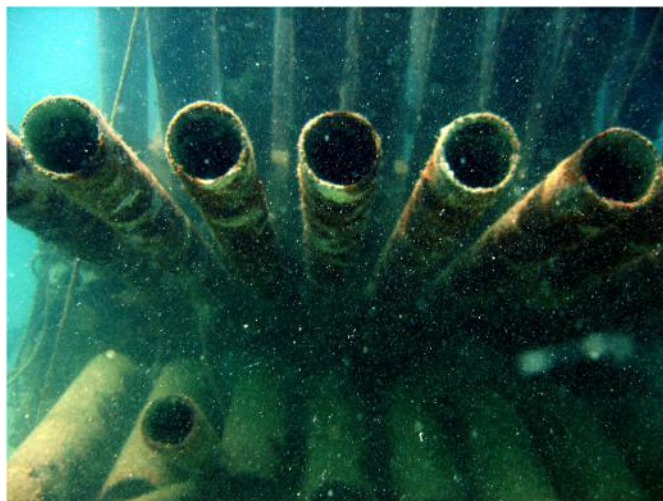


Fig 3. Runde reef showing numerous recycled polyethylene



Fig 4. Large Runde with diver for scale

Trials in Nordic Fjords have seen great success in just two years. Massive deterioration suffered by the marine environment has shown remarkable improvement with re-colonization of micro organisms, fish, crustaceans and vegetation. However; the marine environment of Norway is very different to that of the Gulf.

Temperature and salinity are high and it takes about seven years to change the water in the Arabian Gulf as few rivers flow in and the Gulf has a narrow entrance at the Straits of Hormouz, whereas in comparison the Baltic Sea in Scandinavia takes only three years. Kyodo International has taken on a marine biologist from Sweden to monitor the progress of the reefs alongside scientists from the UAE University in Al Ain, and optimism remains high for the success of the project in Dubai.

The main advantage of the Runde Reef system is its ability to produce a large growing area in a relatively small space, an area covering five square metres produces a growing area of 250 square metres and the reef can easily be moved and transported to a new location.

Interest in the project has already been shown from Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. If the trial proves successful then many artificial reefs may be implemented throughout the Gulf.

Four months from initial deployment and coral growth and fish colonization is better than expected. As can be seen in fig 5, and 6, above juvenile corals cover the complete surface area of the concrete cylinder and the polythene tubes (fig 5, and fig 6, respectively). These corals are from the families Dendrophyllidae and Acroporidae. With further growth the plates and branches will develop. An example of a more developed coral can be seen in fig 8. This is from the family Dendrophyllidae and Genus *Turbinaria mesenterina*.



Fig 5. Juvenile coral covering concrete cylinder



Fig 6. Juvenile coral covering polythene tube

In addition to coral growth, fish are inhabiting the artificial reef. Fig 7, 8 & 9 show Arabian Angel Fish and the Grouper.

The Grouper is common to reefs which is an encouraging sign that the artificial reefs are providing the habitat required by reef fish. Both nutritionally and also in the shelter provided.

FUTURE PLAN

Judging on the development seen over a year it is suggested that a regular bimonthly diving program be implemented. The following should be documented:

- Species of marine organism and corals present on the reefs
- Growth of corals
- Compare species of organisms present on large and small reefs
- Compare growth rates of corals on large and small reefs



Fig 7. Arabian Angel fish with other reef fish swimming around artificial reef



Fig 8. Coral growth of family Dendrophyllidae and Genus *Turbinaria mesenterina*



Fig 9. Grouper hiding inside tube of artificial reef

Photography by Moe Bitar

EDA REWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS

BY CERTIFYING 6 YOUNG LOCAL MEMBERS IN THE NATURE NETWORK

In cooperation with the Pavilion Dive Centre, 6 students from the Dubai Women's College will get the PADI OW Certification.

THE NATURE NETWORK:

It is an environmental programme that aims to make a difference in the UAE. Read on to understand how you can make a difference too.

WHAT IS THE NATURE NETWORK?

The Nature Network is a student run environmental programme that aims to increase the level of environmental awareness pertaining to critical conservation issues in the UAE, applied in a global context.

Run by a team of students from various colleges and universities, the programme encourages youths to interact with their environment and participate in the creation of a sustainable lifestyle among their family, friends and community.

The Nature Network is recognised, and has several associations with international and local NGOs, such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF UAE), Emirates Diving Association (EDA) and United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) YouthXchange Project.

HOW DOES NATURE NETWORK MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Since its inception in December 2004, the Nature Network has assembled a UAE wide network of over 100 members from universities and colleges. Activities have included:

- WWF, EDA, UNEP and Nature Network environmental challenge workshops
- UNEP YouthXchange Project and Nature Network Global Youth Gathering Conference
- Field trip to Khor Khalba
- American College in Dubai (AUD) nature club environmental fashion show
- American College in Dubai (AUD) nature club inter-school environmental awareness and art competitions
- 5 public environmental club launches at the Higher College of Technologies and private institutions
- Recruitment of Nature Network clubs in 11 UAE universities

WHAT HAS NATURE NETWORK PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE?

The Nature Network will cement its relationship with the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) YouthXchange Project. The relationship will focus on increasing awareness on



sustainable living and the importance of reducing our individual impact on the earth, highlighting the UAE's ecological footprint and actions to be taken.

The Nature Network is also planning a Middle East wide eco-challenge, inviting universities from 8 Middle East countries to compete in the design of a regional online resource of environmental information. The challenge will be launched at an environmental conference and series of workshops, with representation from regional environmental agencies and NGO's. This will be announced shortly.

HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

As a student, you can become a member of the Nature Network - as an individual, as groups or by enlisting your own club. Specific tasks or project guidelines are provided to assist in the conservation of the UAE's fragile ecosystems, to halt further degradation, and create an environment where people can live in harmony with nature. The Nature Network plans events, seminars and activities throughout the year that focuses on education, action and fun, providing a framework and forum for youth interaction. Simple tasks such as spreading awareness or getting others involved with the Nature Network can help in the establishment of a network of environmentally conscious youth that can positively influence the countries business leaders, government and community at large.

The UAE is a rapidly developing and influential country and the action taken today has an impact across the region.

To find out more or to join the Nature Network, contact: info@mashup.ae

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY

The Nature Network is in an initiative from the MASH UP community - a dedicated student lifestyle resource accessible through an online youth portal and quarterly magazine, 'MASH UP Guide to Student Life'.

If you would like to know what is going on, log onto: www.mashup.ae

We look forward to hearing from you.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MONTHLY MEMBER TALKS

Monthly Member Talks is a discussion series on topics that EDA believes will be of interest to its members. Led by individuals who are experts in their respective fields, the talks aim to provide members the opportunity to gain knowledge whilst interacting with each other and the speaker.

SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

Working with Schools Campaign - Monthly basis (involves Environmental Awareness, Diving and Heritage info. etc...)

REEF MONITORING

Reef Monitoring Committee (RMC) - Monthly Basis

MOORING BUOY PROJECT

Deployment of Mooring Buoy Project - Based on RMC surveys and dive site necessity

EDA'S MAGAZINE - Quarterly Basis

CLEAN UP CAMPAIGNS - Yearly



Chairperson Mr Faraj Butti Al Muhairbi

Vice Chairperson Mr Essa Al Ghurair

The Secretary General Mr Jamal Bu Hannad

Financial Director Mr. Khalfan Khalfan Al Mohiari

Head of the Technical Committee Mr. Omar Al Huraiz

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Graphic Designer

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MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve, protect and restore the U.A.E. marine resources by understanding and promoting the marine environment and promote environmental diving.

LEGISLATION

Emirates Diving Association (EDA) was established by a Federal Decree, No. (23) for the year 1995 article No. (21) on 23/02/1995 and chose Dubai as its base. The Decree stipulates the following responsibilities for EDA.

- To Legislate and regulate all diving activities in the UAE.
- Ensure environmentally respectful diving practices in all EDA members.
- Promote and support the diving industry within the UAE by coordinating the efforts of the diving community.
- Promote diving safety in the commercial and recreational diving fields through standardization of practices.
- Promote and preserve historical aspects of diving within the gulf region and enhance environmental education to diving and non diving communities through EDA activities.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Heritage & Diving Village

Shindaga Area

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Dubai, UAE

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Email: edadiver@emirates.net.ae, projects@emiratesdiving.com

Website: <http://emiratesdiving.com/>

EDA IN KAZAKHSTAN



EDA SUPPORTER:

Kairat from Kazakhstan sent EDA this photo with a Kazakhstan River Turtle

ONCE IN A LIFE TIME EXPERIENCE

By Moe Bitar A.K.A. (Moe FISH)

As usual, I was in the right place at the right time when I received a phone call from one of our affiliated Dive Centres about an unexpected guest swimming around Dubai Marina.

The juvenile Whale Shark was about 3.5 metres in length, swimming in circles not sure which way to go in the shallow depths of the Marina, estimated between 4-5 metres.

I was on site in a very short amount of time, (weird as Dubai is getting busier with traffic) to do an assessment on the area before jumping in with my ECO-Dive Team to try & help guide the Whale Shark back on track to getting out of the Dubai Marina. 15 minutes proved enough time for the dive team to put a plan together & get their equipment and cameras ready for the mission.

A slow and smooth approach was taken to get closer to the Whale Shark as it looked a bit frustrated due to the shallow depths, hot water and no doubt ourselves. After a couple of minutes it accepted our presence in the water:

ECO-Dive Team's first task was to complete a quick survey on the Whale Shark for cuts, bruises and gender. All results were positive, no cuts or wounds were found and it's a healthy male Whale Shark. That's when the entire experience and thrill began. The baby Whale Shark started playing and swimming in close circles around me coming up against my shoulder. It felt like a little kid who only wanted to play and have fun.

The local name for Whale Shark is "Tsheer" and they used to be spotted in the old days when the local Fishermen and Pearl Divers used to sail out to their fishing or Pearl sites.

A total of 4 hours was spent in the water with the juvenile Whale Shark to guide him to the right exit of the Marina with out harming or stressing him as it was in an uncomfortable environment. A huge relief and smile was on all our faces after seeing the Whale Shark out and heading back on its journey.

Last but not least I would like to highlight the partnership between Dubai Rescue Police and their great support for all the activities done in adjacent with each other.

FEW FACTS ABOUT WHALE SHARKS:

Whale Sharks are known by their biological name, Rhincodon typus. Largest known fish. Can grow to over 50 feet in length and weigh more than 10 tonnes. Have a wide, flat head and a rounded snout, with light-yellow stripes and dots on dark grey skin, which is up to 4 inches thick. Found in temperate tropical waters: in and around Australia, Thailand, Costa Rica, and Ecuador. Generally solitary in nature and harmless to humans. Feeds mainly on plankton but also eats sardines and anchovies. Has 300 rows of tiny teeth but is a filter feeder; a fine mesh of rakers attached to the gills sieves the food as it swims. Can process over 6,000 litres of water in an hour. It is viviparous; babies are developed in eggs, which remain inside the mother and are finally born as live young. They are usually about 50cm at birth. The lifespan of a whale shark can stretch between 100 and 150 years.

