



EDA

جمعية الإمارات للغوص
Emirates Diving Association

DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MARCH 2008, VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1



IYOR 2008

IS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED IN THE U.S.

SCUBA DIVING COMMUNITY

SHOWS SUPPORT FOR IYOR 2008

EAD LAUNCHES CAMPAIGNS

TO ADDRESS MARINE DEBRIS PROBLEM

WHY DIVE FOR EARTH DAY?



DMEX 2008

DIVE MIDDLE EAST EXHIBITION

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04-2726374

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04-3318386

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02-6417075

Diving Centers

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04-3939390

|| Scuba Tech
04-3348988

|| Technical Diving
04-3930303

|| Divers Down
09-2370299

|| Freestyle Divers
09-2445756

|| Sandy Beach
09-2445555

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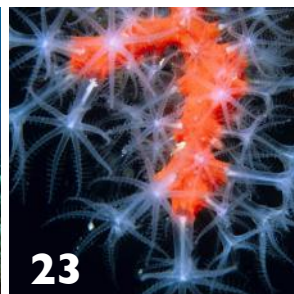
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IYOR 2008
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF

DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Please note that EDA's magazine, "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 magazine 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 issue of "Divers for the Environment" released in June 2008. Send all articles/comments to Head Office: diving@emiratesdiving.com.

EDA COVER
DMEX 2008



WHAT'S NEXT?



IBRAHIM N.AL-ZU'BI
EDA Environmental Advisor

Emirates Diving Association
www.emiratesdiving.com
Tel: +971 4 393 9390
Fax: +971 4 393 9391
Email: diving@emiratesdiving.com

I would like to welcome you all to our first issue for this year. Although it is the first issue for this year, we have been busy in EDA. For the first time in this region; we organized with Warner Brothers the Middle East movie premiere of Leonardo DiCaprio Documentary "The 11th Hour", I was so delighted to see more than 350 people attending this function. Having had EDA organize this premiere is a confirmation that divers really care for the environment. We are the first people affected by a polluted marine environment so we are the first people to report an environmental disaster. We act like an early warning system. We enjoy a nice and healthy underwater life, this is why we DIVE. The premiere was also an excellent opportunity for me to catch up with EDA members that I had not seen in a long time.

Before I focus on a major concern, I would like to inform you that this issue includes your complimentary entrance ticket to the Dive Middle East Exhibition (DMEX 2008). DMEX, for the second time, is taking place alongside the world-famous Dubai International Boat Show (DIBS). We are pleased to be in partnership with DIBS again as we promote the UAE as a diving destination. Based on the very constructive feedback we gathered from the 2007 exhibitors, DIBS relocated the DMEX section and included a dive pool for exhibitors to offer free "Discover Diving" to visitors and/or conduct product demos. We are confident that DMEX 2008 will be a success and can only get bigger and better next year.

Due to the fact that EDA and the dive centers themselves are trying hard to promote the diving industry in the UAE, I want to highlight in this editorial, the oil spill that occurred on the East Coast of the UAE in February 2008. I received a lot of calls from the radio, newspapers, dive centers asking for comments and what is our stand and people asking how they can help. To give you a clearer background, we knew that it was a manmade disaster. They just cleaned a tank and that caused pollution to our marine life! Hotels had to close their beaches and dive centers could not take divers out for diving.

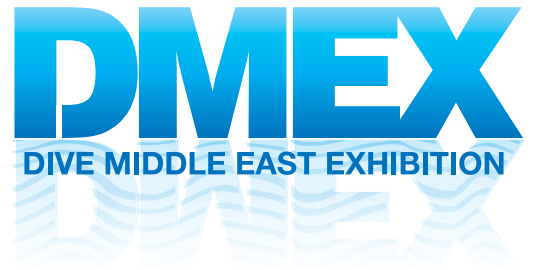
Our stand in EDA; we believe that a Federal body i.e. the Ministry of Environment and Water; MUST take the initiative and prepare a prevention plan. We cannot always tackle the issue after it happens. We need to have a clear law for irresponsible people (make them pay a huge fine and/or put them in jail) and we should be tough in implementing this law. We just cannot let too many oil spills affect our fragile marine environment. ENOUGH!

As the Environmental Advisor to EDA, part of my job is to plan environmental activities for our members and as you all know, 2008 is the International Year of the Reef (IYOR 2008). We have a lot of activities planned for this year; but whenever we organize an activity, at the end of the activity people keep asking us, "What's next?" Either they mean what is the next activity and/or think "We have done this, what's next"? I believe that as EDA members, we have to act daily in a sustainable way. It is not a project or a plan not to litter so my answer would be to "spread the word". Yes, get more members to join EDA because we have managed to place ourselves as a caring, pressure group. We have a common hobby (diving) and most of us, if not all of us, love this planet and appreciate a healthy one, so you yourself decide what's next, what is your next environmental event, what is your next activity to enjoy the outdoors, what is the next step in your diving certification, what's next?

You can ***"be the change you wish to see in the world"*** Mahatma Ghandi.

Eco Regards,

Ibrahim N. Al-Zu'bi



THE DIVE MIDDLE EAST EXHIBITION 2008



11 – 15 March 2008
Dubai International Marine Club, Mina Seyahi

To book your stand or for more information please contact:

DMEX Team

Dubai World Trade Center.
P O Box 9292, Dubai, UAE.
Tel: + 971 4 308 6451
Fax: + 971 4 318 8607
Email: boatshow@dwtc.com
www.boatshowdubai.com
www.emiratesdiving.com

Held alongside the Dubai International Boat Show (DIBS), the Dive Middle East Exhibition (DMEX) will run from 11 - 15 March 2008 at the Dubai International Marine Club – Mina Seyahi. The synergy of DIBS and DMEX for both exhibitors and visitors alike, makes this a natural meeting point for all those with an interest in the diving sector.

Offering a unique platform to showcase the very latest in diving equipment, supplies, services and techniques, DMEX has something for everyone, from exciting educational activities aimed at children to new diving pursuits for the enthusiastic leisure divers.

Organised by



In Conjunction with



In Association with



A Member of



Venue



MAIN FEATURE

(DMEX) 2005

DMEX is now on its third year of promoting the UAE as a dive destination.

The first DMEX was held in 2005 and was the first diving trade show in the Middle East. EDA hosted the event at the Madinat Convention Centre which saw exhibitors from as far as France, US and Malaysia participating in the two-day exhibit.



MAIN FEATURE

DMEX 2007 was held for the first time within the Dubai International Boat Show. It proved to be a natural meeting point for divers and marine enthusiasts. This collocation brought together exhibitors from across the UAE and surrounding regions. EDA hosted a series of diving demonstrations that included underwater wireless communication, underwater photography and freediving from world renowned free diver Emma Farrell.



DMEX 2008 PRESENTATIONS

DAY ONE: Tuesday, 11 March 2008

TIME	SUBJECT	PRESENTER
15:30 - 17:00	Al Boom Diving Product Demo	AL BOOM DIVING
17:00 - 18:00	The "F" Word	SCUBA DUBAI, DIVELINK AND SONY
18:00 - 19:30	Free "Discovery Diving"	BEUCHAT
19:30 - 20:30	Product Demo	AL JAZEEERA DIVING CENTER/EQUIPMENT

DAY TWO: Wednesday, 12 March 2008

TIME	SUBJECT	PRESENTER
15:30 - 17:00	Al Boom Diving Product Demo	AL BOOM DIVING
17:00 - 18:00	The "F" Word	SCUBA DUBAI, DIVELINK AND SONY
18:00 - 19:30	Free "Discovery Diving"	BEUCHAT
19:30 - 20:30	Product Demo	AL JAZEEERA DIVING CENTER/EQUIPMENT

DAY THREE: Thursday, 13 March 2008

TIME	SUBJECT	PRESENTER
15:30 - 17:00	Al Boom Diving Product Demo	AL BOOM DIVING
17:00 - 18:00	The "F" Word	SCUBA DUBAI, DIVELINK AND SONY
18:00 - 19:30	Free "Discovery Diving"	BEUCHAT
19:30 - 20:30	FREE DIVING	AL JAZEEERA DIVING CENTER

DAY FOUR: Friday, 14 March 2008

TIME	SUBJECT	PRESENTER
15:30 - 17:00	Al Boom Diving Product Demo	AL BOOM DIVING
17:00 - 18:00	The "F" Word	SCUBA DUBAI, DIVELINK AND SONY
18:00 - 20:00	Free "Discovery Diving"	BEUCHAT
20:00 - 20:30	Product Demo	AL JAZEEERA DIVING CENTER/EQUIPMENT

DAY FIVE: Saturday, 15 March 2008

TIME	SUBJECT	PRESENTER
15:30 - 17:00	Al Boom Diving Product Demo	AL BOOM DIVING
17:00 - 18:00	The "F" Word	SCUBA DUBAI, DIVELINK AND SONY
18:00 - 20:00	Free "Discovery Diving"	BEUCHAT
20:00 - 20:30	Product Demo	AL JAZEEERA DIVING CENTER/EQUIPMENT

DMEX EXHIBITOR PROFILES



AL BOOM DIVING

STAND A1 – 1

Address: Villa #254, Corner Al Wasl Rd. and 33rd St. (next to the Iranian Consulate), Jumeirah 1, Dubai, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 4 342 2993

Fax: +971 4 342 2995

Email: abdiving@emirates.net.ae

Website: www.alboomdiving.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

PADI Courses; Daily dive trips to the East Coast and Musandam; Full retail shop; Air and Nitrox fills; Service center.

COMPANY PROFILE:

Al Boom Diving is the largest dive operation in the U.A.E., with PADI dive centers in Dubai and Fujairah. Boats leave daily bound for the favorite local dive sites around Al Aqah (Fujairah) and Musandam. Students can take their pick from the PADI courses on offer, ranging from Discover Scuba Diving to Instructor. The Al Boom retail stores cater to all of the divers' retail-therapy needs, stocking well-known brands AQUALUNG, TUSA, CRESSI and SUUNTO.



AL MARSA Musandam

AL MARSA MUSANDAM

STAND B1 – 4

Address: P.O. Box 32261, Sharjah, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 6 544 1232

Fax: +971 6 544 1094

Email: info@musandamdiving.com

Website: www.musandamdiving.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Diving charters; Dive cruises; Liveaboards; Speedboats trips; Dhow cruises; Fishing trips; Dive courses; Equipment rental; Paragliding and motor gliding.

COMPANY PROFILE:

Positioned as the biggest diving / cruising operator sailing out of Dibba port in Musandam, an easy 1 1/2 hrs drive (120Km) from Dubai, Al Marsa Dhows, with its fleet of 4 luxury purpose-built fiber glass Dhows and 7 speedboats, have the privilege of entering the breathtaking world of the awesome rugged 'fjord-like' coastline know as the Eastern Musandam Peninsula.



AL JAZEERA DIVING CENTER & AL JAZEERA DIVING EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES TRADING, EST.

STAND B2 – 5

Address: Near Fish Market, Mina Zayed, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 2 673 1717

Fax: +971 2 673 3132

Email: alromathi@gmail.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Dive Courses and dive trips, snorkeling trips; Full retail shop carrying different diving equipment, fishing equipment, Garmin products, boat parts, and other watersports activities equipment; Also offers tank air filling, equipment rentals, visual inspection of tanks, and other forms of diving equipment maintenance.

COMPANY PROFILE:

Al Jazeera Diving and Swimming Center was established in April 2006. It boasts of a pleasant and satisfactory environment classroom for students and has the equipment for any diving needs. We have PADI Certified Instructors to help beginners and advanced students in their pursuit for underwater adventures. The showroom for diving equipments is also situated in the same location as the center and carries different brands like Mares, ScubaPro, Oceanic and IST. Al Jazeera Diving Equipment and Supplies is also the agent/supplier for AERIS equipments in UAE.



Arabian Diver

ARABIAN DIVER

STAND B2 – 6

Address: Bin Majid Beach Resort, Ras Al Khaimah, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 50 242 8128

Fax: +971 7 236 3102

Email: adel@arabiandiver.com

Website: www.arabiandiver.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

PADI, IANTD and TDI dive courses; Technical diving; Diving and Sailing Excursions across the UAE and Musandam; Technical gases filling station; Marine Biology Lectures; Work opportunity programs; Membership programs for unlimited diving; Snorkeling; Sunset dining

COMPANY PROFILE:

Based in Ras Al Khaimah, Arabian Diver represents a number of world-renowned innovative associations such as PADI and IANTD, and brands such as Beuchat and Cochran which compliment Arabian Diver in offering solutions for company excursions, holiday seekers, and youth contingencies.



BARCKLY TRADING L.L.C

STAND A2 – 4

Address : M- 014, Al Safeena Bldg., Oud Metha Road, Bur Dubai, Dubai, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 4 3359728

Fax: +971 4 3359729

Email: info@barckly.ae, sales@costrisub.it, bruno@coltrisubegypt.com

Website: www.barckly.ae, www.aerotecnicacoltri.com

Products/Services:

CNG/NGV, Oil & Gas, Compressors, Diving Equipment, Cylinders

Company Profile:

Barckly Trading is very active in the field of Oil & Gas in general, and in CNG in particular. Barckly is also the exclusive representative in the Middle East of Aerotecnica Coltri S.p.A. Aerotecnica Coltri designs and produces high pressure compressors for breathing air and technical gases. Aerotecnica Coltri also sells a full range of diving equipment which compliments diving compressors. The diving equipment range includes BCD (Buoyancy Control device), Diving Regulators, Masks, Fins, Snorkels, Wetsuits, Bags, Accessories and Cylinders. The factory has achieved certification for UNI EN ISO 9001: 2000 and ISO 9001. In addition, compressor air output quality is monitored and certified using the Lab On Locale system from Lawrence Factor Laboratories.



BEUCHAT INTERNATIONAL S.A

STAND B2 – 1

Address : 34 Ave. Boisbaudran – 13015 Marseille – France

Tel: + 33 491094460

Fax: + 33 491600694

Email: scannelle.comex@orange.fr

Website: www.beuchat.fr

Products/Services:

Scuba diving equipment

Company Profile:

Beuchat, an innovative manufacturer "inspired by the sea". For more than sixty years, Beuchat has been at the forefront of the design, development, manufacturing and marketing of new products which have marked the history of diving and spear fishing. Distributed around the world in 80 countries, Beuchat is recognised worldwide as a market leader in the fields of scuba diving and spear fishing. Our team of research and development divers, passionate about their sport, continually listen to the comments of our users. Our aim is to anticipate the desires and needs of our customers and then design and produce products increasingly more desirable and more comfortable to use, whilst fulfilling the safety requirements. To implement our projects quickly and to guarantee the quality & reliability of our products, we decided to integrate our various expertises (plastic injection, machining, and assembly) into our factory in Marseilles. Extremely proud of our history and convictions, we will remain a world leader in diving & spear fishing.

DIVEARABIA

STAND B1 – 5

Address: c/o Alsanbouk Marine & Diving Supplies, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Tel: +966 2 699 9249, + 966 50 565 7251

Fax: + 9662 6941123

Email: kamal@divearabia.com

Website: www.divearabia.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Recreational diving business marketing consultants; Publishers of Diving An Advanced Science & Technology Encyclopedia – The first Diving Encyclopedia in Arabic.



DIVERS DOWN

STAND B1 – 2

Address: P.O. Box #10472 Khorfakkan, Sharjah, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 9 237 0299

Fax: +971 50 553 1688

Email: diversdown@emirates.net.ae

Website: www.diversdown.ae

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Full range PADI courses including Instructor Development; MARES Diving Centre; Dive retail shop; Full equipment rental; Rental of underwater cameras, camcorders and diver propulsion vehicles; Swimming pool and classroom on site; Fleet of purpose-built diving boats.

COMPANY PROFILE:

Divers Down is a PADI 5 Star Gold Palm Instructor Development Centre and Official Project AWARE Partner, which offers the diver and non-diver a chance to plunge into the tropical warm waters of the Indian Ocean, and explore the diverse and prolific marine life it has to offer. The centre is nestled between the tropical gardens of the Oceanic Hotel and the white sandy beach of Khorfakkan, offering a view out across the Indian Ocean. Palm trees shade the diving centre and the cool breeze from the ocean gives the place a calming "I'm on holiday feel."



eastman

EASTMAN TRADING

STAND A1 – 2

Address: P O Box 8874, Dubai, U.A.E.

Tel: + 971 4 338 1526, + 971 50 644 3735

Fax: + 971 4 338 1526

Email: eastrade@eim.ae

Website: www.eastmanuae.com (under construction)

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Wet suits, masks, fins, cylinders, BCDs

COMPANY PROFILE:

The company, formed in 2006, is the proprietor of Eastman brand of sports goods. Main business activity is the retail of diving goods and equipment such as wet suit, fins, masks, BCD, Luxfer air cylinders and other recreational and professional diving equipment. The company is 100% owned and operated by national workforce. No expatriate work force employed in this company. The company's aim is to market quality diving equipment and accessories at competitive price.



EMIRATES DIVING ASSOCIATION (EDA)

STAND A1 – 7

Address: Diving Village, Shindagha Area, Bur Dubai, P.O. Box 33220 Dubai, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 4 393 9390

Fax: +971 4 393 9391

Email: diving@emiratesdiving.com

Website: www.emiratesdiving.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Holds regular activities (Coral Reef Awareness and Monitoring Program, Clean Up Arabia, Presentations, School Campaigns, Mooring Buoy, Artificial Reef installation and other special projects) to fulfill its mission.

COMPANY PROFILE:

EDA is the non-profit umbrella organization of all dive operators, equipment vendors, dive clubs, certified instructors and recreational divers in the UAE. EDA was created in 1995 by UAE Federal Decree No. (23), Article No. (21) to oversee the diving industry. EDA's mission is to conserve, protect and restore the UAE marine resources. It founded the Dive Middle East Exhibition (DMEX), the first dive show in the Middle East, to promote the UAE as a diving destination. It is also one of EDA's goals to promote safe, recreational and environmental diving in the UAE.



EXTRA DIVERS WORLDWIDE

STAND A2 – 7

Address: P.O. BOX 199, PC 115, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

Dive Center locations:

Musandam – Khasab at the Golden Tulip Resort

Muscat – Oman Dive Center & Bungalows

Salalah at the Crowne Plaza Resort & the Royal Tulip Resort in Mirbat

Tel: +968 248 24240, +968 957 70586 (mobile)

Fax: +968 248 24241

Email: oman@extradivers.com

Website: www.extradivers.info, www.omandivecenter.com, www.divesalalah.com, www.musandam-diving.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Diving holiday packages, accommodation in nature resorts, live-aboard dive safaris, diving courses, equipment rental and aqua sport activities (kayaking, surfing, snorkelling and dolphin-watching)

COMPANY PROFILE:

Extra Divers Worldwide is one of the biggest dive center operators with diving centers and dive resorts in Europe, Egypt, Middle East, Asia and the Caribbean Sea. Extra Divers Nabucco Resorts are planned for divers and nature lovers. You will find them at remote places, well adapted to the environment without any disturbance to the nature. Extra Divers' priorities are to protect the environment and to promote eco-friendly dive tourism. Courses are held according to the standards and policies of SSI and PADI. Our dive instructors are multilingual and are able to teach in English, German, Arabic, French, Italian, Spanish and Dutch.

JVC®

The Perfect Experience

JVC GULF FZE

STAND B2 – 3

Address: Jebel Ali Free Zone (South), Dubai, U.A.E.

Tel: + 971 4 886 0300

Fax: + 971 4 886 0305

Email: puru@jvcgulf.com

Website: www.jvc-me.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Consumer Electronics – Camcorders, Marine Case, Car / Boat Audio.

COMPANY PROFILE:

JVC Gulf (JGF), a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Victor Company of Japan Ltd, commenced operations in Jebel Ali Free Zone, Dubai in 1994 to oversee the distribution of JVC products in 80 countries in the region comprising the Middle East, Africa, West Asia region and CIS countries. Looking to improve the lives of customers and create truly moving experiences through superior technology, JGF has constantly strived to live up to the brand's promise of 'The Perfect Experience'. Keeping the focus on innovation as the key driver, it introduced cutting-edge products in the region in tandem with their launches in other countries.

TOURISM MALAYSIA



Celebrating 50 Years of Nationhood

Malaysia Truly Asia

MALAYSIA TOURISM BOARD

Stand A2 – 1

Address: P.O. Box 4598 Dubai, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 4 337 7578 – 79

Fax: +971 4 335 3318

Email: mtpb.dubai@tourism.gov.my

Website: www.tourism.gov.my

Products/Services:

Tourism Promotion Board

Company Profile:

Tourism Malaysia is one of the agencies under the Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia. Our mission is to promote Malaysia as a destination of excellence and to make the tourism industry a major contributor to the socio-economic development of the nation. For further details, log on at <http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my>. Malaysia, Truly Asia!



THE PAVILION DIVE CENTRE

Stand B1 – 3

Address: The Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Dubai, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 4 406 8828

Fax: +971 4 348 4754

Email: divecentre@jumeirah.com

Website: www.thepaviliondivecentre.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

PADI Courses including Instructor Development; Diving Excursions in West Coast and Musandam; Live-aboard charters to Musandam

COMPANY PROFILE:

The Pavilion Dive Centre in Jumeirah Beach Hotel is an accredited Padi 5 Star Gold Palm IDC resort and the only PADI National Geographic Dive Centre in the UAE. The Pavilion Dive Centre is located in the luxurious grounds of the award-winning Jumeirah Beach Hotel and managed by highly qualified PADI Instructors. The Pavilion Dive Center is the PADI Professional Development Centre in the Gulf Region. Aspiring dive professionals come from near and far to gain quality professional development and a start in the diving industry. PADI Divemaster, Instructor Development (IDC), Instructor Specialty, IDC Staff Courses, EFRI and Instructor Examinations take place at several times of the year on fixed schedules. The Pavilion Dive Centre also offers daily dive excursions to certified divers and has a large selection of MARES Diving Equipment along with PDC branded diving apparel and PADI Products.



DELMA INDUSTRIALS SUPPLY & MARINE SERVICES

SCUBAPRO-UWATEC (represented by Scuba Dubai in Dubai and the Northern Emirates and by Delma Industrial Supply & Marine Services in Abu Dhabi)

STAND B1 – 1

Address: DUBAI c/o Scuba Dubai, PO Box 51753

ABU DHABI c/o Delma Industrial Supply & Marine Services, PO Box 53382

Tel: DUBAI +971 4 341 4940

ABU DHABI +971 2 666 8153

Fax: DUBAI +971 4 341 4960

ABU DHABI +971 2 666 8154

Email: info@scubadubai.com, issa@delmamarine.ae

Website: www.scubapro.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Premier manufacturer of scuba diving equipment.

COMPANY PROFILE:

Scubapro-Uwatec are introducing an innovative new diving computer at DMEX – The Galileo Terra. This computer is just one of Scubapro-Uwatec's major contributions to the diving industry and is destined to be one of Scubapro-Uwatec's many advanced designs which become industry standards. Scubapro started in the

early 1960s and is responsible for many of today's diving products. Uwatec was started in 1983 in Switzerland and brought the famous Aladin Pro dive computer to the diving industry. The two companies combined forces in 1997 as Scubapro-Uwatec. Safety is their first concern, producing state-of-the-art high quality diving equipment their second. They are the leading quality manufacture worldwide, employing over 400 people in 4 continents with at least 50% of those employees being divers or instructors. They are proudly represented in the United Arab Emirates by Delma Industrial Supply & Marine Services for Abu Dhabi, and by Scuba Dubai for Dubai and the Northern Emirates. During DMEX, Scubapro will hold technical repair updates for government departments and Scubapro dealers. The Galileo Terra will be presented at the show by Mick Robertson, Scubapro's Sales Director for Europe, Africa and The Middle East.



SCUBA DUBAI WORKSHOP

& DIVE LINK UNDERWATER COMMUNICATIONS

STAND A1 – 8

Address: Scuba Dubai, PO Box 51753, Dubai, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 4 341 4940

Fax: +971 4 341 4960

Email: info@scubadubai.com

Website: www.divelink.net

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Scuba Dubai Workshop – repair and maintenance of scuba equipment and high pressure breathing air compressors.

DiveLink – underwater communications for aquarium, military and specialist use

COMPANY PROFILE:

Scuba Dubai Workshop opened in September 1989, in a small back area of Scuba Dubai. It has remained under the expert eye of Stevie MacLeod ever since. It was the first repair workshop in the UAE to dedicate staff purely to the maintenance and servicing of diving equipment and high pressure breathing air compressors. From its humble beginnings, it is now the premier repair workshop in the UAE (and possibly the whole of the Middle East), employing five Technicians, an Administrator and Stevie as the Workshop Manager. These people are all dedicated to producing high quality repairs, service and maintenance of almost all brands of diving equipment. Stevie welcomes enquiries about whether his workshop can service your equipment. Call him, he normally can!

DiveLink International Technologies has developed DiveLink, the first totally hands free wireless underwater communications system in the world. DiveLink is used worldwide as an invaluable tool in the fields of search & rescue, aquarium interaction between viewers and animal handlers, scientific data gathering, movie productions, underwater photography, sea food harvesting, salvaging, weapons retrieval and scuba diving instruction. The Canadian based company is proudly represented in Dubai by Scuba Dubai.



SEYCHELLES TOURISM BOARD

STAND A1 – 3

Address: 100 Al Fattan Plaza, PO Box 36345 Dubai, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 4 286 5586

Fax: +971 4 286 5589

Email: seychelles@stome.ae

Website: www.seychelles.travel

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Promotes Seychelles as a Diving, Sailing, Fishing, Gold and Spas destination.

Company Profile:

Seychelles Tourism Board – Dubai Office is the Tourism Representative of Seychelles in the Middle East. Our role is to promote the Destination throughout the Middle East to its target consumer segments and in particular to Niche Segments such as Diving, Sailing, Fishing, Golf and Spas. Seychelles offers an impressive array of diving opportunities both for experienced divers and those taking the plunge for the first time. Colorful reef fish, octopus, lobster & turtle can easily be spotted in the shallows surrounding the inner islands, while more adventurous dives offshore are the playground for large groupers & stingrays. At certain times of the year, it is possible to dive with whale sharks, those elusive gentle giants of the sea that are regular visitors to the Seychelles' waters.



SONY GULF FZE

STAND A1 – 5

Address: P.O. Box 16871, Jebel Ali, Dubai, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 4 881 5488

Fax: +971 4 881 7808

Email: Ankit.Dadhich@ap.sony.com

Website: www.sony-mea.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

Sony Marine Accessories.



SPORT DIVER

STAND B1 – 6

Address: PO.Box 26926, Sharjah – Almajarra, U.A.E.

Tel: +971 6 564 6666

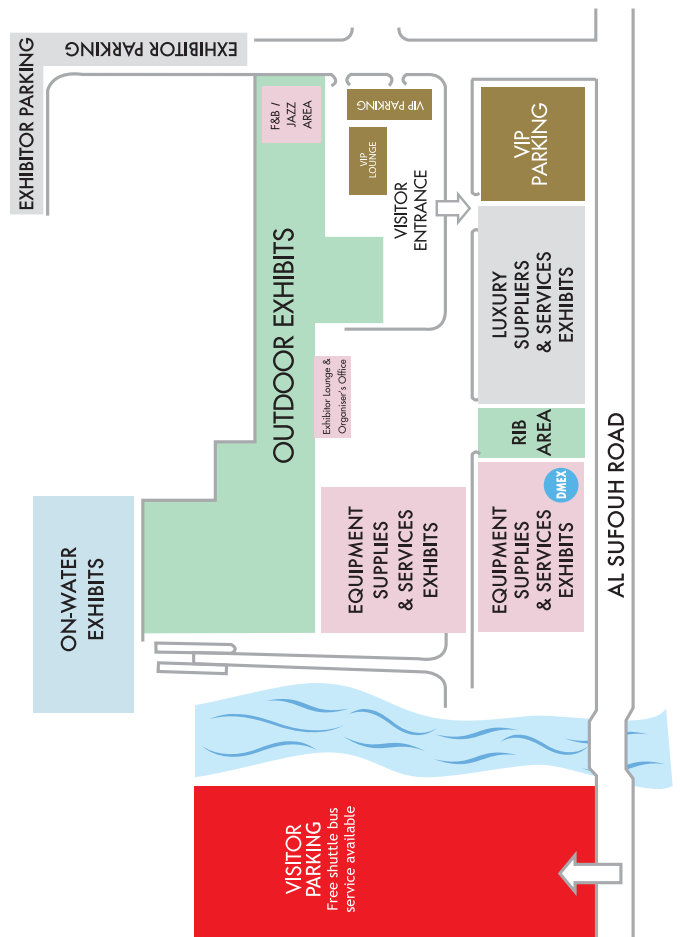
Fax: +971 6 564 6644

Email: s_diver@emirates.net.om

PRODUCTS/SERVICES:

All diving equipment, accessories and specialized spearguns; Offers diving courses, fishing trips and equipment maintenance.

DIVE MIDDLE EAST EXHIBITION FLOOR PLANS



DMEX	B2-5	Al Jazeera Diving	B2-6	Arabian Diver	DMEX
	B2-3	JVC	B2-1	Beuchat	
DMEX	B1-5	Dive Arabia	B1-6	Sport Divers	DMEX
	B1-4	Marsa Musandam	B1-3	Pavilion Dive Centre	
DMEX	A1-5	Sony	A1-7	EDA	DMEX
	A1-3	Seychelles Tourism Board	A1-2	Eastside	
DMEX	B1-1	Scubapro	B1-2	Divers Down	DMEX
	A1-1	Al Boom	A1-8	DiveLink Scuba Dubai Workshop	

CONSERVATION WORKSHOP FOCUSES ON ARABIA'S PROTECTED AREAS

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY RITA BENTO

The Environment and Protected Area Authority of Sharjah (EPAA) recently hosted the 9th Annual Conservation Workshop for the Fauna of Arabia at the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife in the Emirate. The workshop was held under the patronage of Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council member and ruler of Sharjah.

The general theme of the 2008 workshop was the evaluation and development of protected areas in the countries of the Arabian Peninsula. It was attended by specialists and conservation delegates from the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Under the guidance of Dr. Philip Seddon, Wildlife Management Director of the Zoology Department of the University of Otago, New Zealand, the workshop continued the evaluation and development of protected areas which was first started in the 2007 Conservation workshop.

Leading herpetologist Dr. William Branch also directed an assessment of the status of the snakes of Arabia. This was the first time that Arabian snake species have been evaluated on such a large scale.

The workshop primarily stressed the need for joint work by the countries in the region to protect the wildlife and natural habitats.



Workshop delegates mingling around during the break



A presentation of a working group during the workshop



Dr. Christophe Tourenq, Science and Research Manager of the Emirates Wildlife Society – World Wildlife Fund for Nature (EWS-WWF) talks about the Fujairah Emirates Protected Areas



Venue of the Conservation workshop

CORAL REEF PRESENTATIONS



EDA's Environmental Advisor Ibrahim Al-Zu'bi, Marine Biologist Rita Bento and IYOR Project Manager Leena Abbas with speakers Christophe Tourenq and Maral Khaled Shuriqi

EDA recently hosted presentations on coral reefs in Fujairah for its members. The speakers were Christophe Tourenq, the EWS-WWF Science and Research Manager and Maral Khaled Shuriqi, Geologist and Oil Spill Emergency Team Member from the Environment Protection & Development Department of Fujairah Municipality.

Maral made the first presentation and talked about the "Digital Corals: Basic Survey for Coral situation in the East Coast", explaining in detail the Coral Benefits; Marine Protected Areas and Coral Distribution in the East Coast; Pressure Factor on Corals and the UAE Diving Map. Maral also highlighted the comparisons between: coral reef and wreck dive sites in each emirate, Fujairah and Musandam's coral reefs, and Gulf of Oman and Arabian Gulf's coral growth, variety and conditions.

Christophe's talk was entitled "Coral Reef Monitoring, Fujairah" and centered around the importance of monitoring the coral reefs in the emirate due to: Dependence on coral reefs for livelihood (tourism industries and fishermen); Cultural link to the sea; Local Capacity; Comparison with Abu Dhabi & Qatar's study; Cyclone Gonu's effect; and the Interest for Biodiversity. He also discussed the preliminary findings of the study and potential impacts of desalination plants and new marina development projects in Dibba marine protected area. He concluded his presentation by recommending solutions/mitigations directed towards the decision-makers (local government), desalination/sewage treatment plants and real estate developers.

For a copy of these presentations, please contact EDA:

diving@emiratesdiving.com

(Prior approval from the authors is needed before copies can be made).



EDA AND UNEP YOUTHXCHANGE CELEBRATE THE MIDDLE EAST PREMIERE OF LEONARDO DICAPRIO'S THE 11th HOUR



SHOOTING STARS (L.L.C.)



★ That's what I want ★

In celebration of the UAE National Environment Day, Warner Bros. Pictures and Shooting Stars LLC collaborated with the Emirates Diving Association (EDA) and Dubai UNEP YouthXchange project to hold the Middle East Premiere of The 11th Hour, the Leonardo DiCaprio produced documentary at Cinestar Mall of the Emirates.

Prior to the screening, EDA hosted a small reception for the guests in a dedicated area outside the cinema specifically closed for the occasion. Inside the theatre, a short opening ceremony was held with a speech from EDA's Environmental Advisor Ibrahim Al-Zu'bi, followed by the screening of a photo essay by two young UAE nationals, siblings Jamal and Noor Falasi. The photo essay, set to music, documented the siblings' recent trip to Antarctica. The siblings also gave a short speech, representing the young Emiratis' voice on global warming before introducing the movie which included a greeting from Leonardo DiCaprio himself.

The 11th Hour premiere was attended by the UAE Minister of Environment HE Dr. Mohammed Saeed Al Kindi and the Director General of the Federal Environment Agency HE Salem Al Dahri. The event was strictly by invitation only and was attended by more than 400 people.

*The organizers would like to thank Cinestar for their valuable assistance during the movie premiere.

ABOUT THE MOVIE

The 11th Hour describes the last moment when change is possible. The film explores how humanity has arrived at this moment – how we live, how we impact the earth's ecosystems, and what we can do to change our course. The film features dialogues with experts from all over the world, including former Soviet Prime Minister Mikhail Gorbachev, renowned scientist Stephen Hawking, former head of the CIA R. James Woolsey and sustainable design experts William McDonough and Bruce Mau in addition to over 50 leading scientists, thinkers and leaders who present the facts and discuss the most important issues that face our planet.

The 11th Hour examines the human relationship with earth from its earliest glimmers of innovation to the challenges humanity faces in the present to the possibilities of the future.

"We, as citizens, leaders, consumers and voters, have the opportunity to help integrate ecology into governmental policy and every day living standards," concludes Leonardo DiCaprio. "During this critical period of human history, healing the damage of industrial civilization is the task of our generation. Our response depends on the conscious evolution of our species and this response could very well save this unique blue planet for future generations."



The 11th Hour DVD will be released on the 15th April.



UAE nationals Jamal and Noor Al Falasi giving a speech on global warming



EDA Environmental Advisor Ibrahim Al Zu'bi giving the opening speech



A full house! More than 300 members and supporters attended the premiere

Visit the official websites:

www.11thhourfilm.com / www.11thhouraction.com for more information.



EAD LAUNCHES CAMPAIGNS TO ADDRESS MARINE DEBRIS PROBLEM

The Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) recently embarked on a marine debris awareness campaign with the theme "Marine Debris is a Silent Killer... Help Keep Our Seas Clean". The aim of the intensive campaigns is to address the growing threat of debris pollution affecting Abu Dhabi's coastal and marine environment.

EAD started with presentations to fishermen to educate them that it is against Federal Law to discard of their fishing nets in the sea as this has been the cause of deaths of some marine life. This was followed by succeeding clean up campaigns in Mussafah channel and Al Mirfa Public Beach.

Majid Al Mansouri, EAD's Secretary General said that Abu Dhabi's coastline is in dire need of the public's help. Waste from construction sites and other sources have littered the emirates' coastline, not only causing an eye sore but also endangering precious marine life such as dugongs and sea turtles, people's health and the environment. "Abu Dhabi Government is really very concerned about this issue," he stressed.

Al Mansouri added that part of the campaign's message to the public is that marine debris is not just a problem for the Government to solve. The community plays a large role in keeping the UAE's seas safe and clean. The campaign stresses that a careless moment by an individual can impact the marine life through his lifetime, his children's lifetime and those of future generations.

The Agency noted that the source of Abu Dhabi's marine debris is mostly industrial waste as well as the garbage dumping by individuals and recreational and commercial vessels.

HOW CAN THE PUBLIC HELP?

- Discard of your litter in the specified places
- Volunteer whenever possible with clean-up campaigns. (Join the next EAD clean up. Register at: www.ead.ae)
- Remember that whatever you throw on land may end up in the sea.



MARINE DEBRIS CLEAN UP CAMPAIGN

February 09, 2008 (Data on Waste collected)

No		Type of waste	Weight in kg
7	Waste from Construction site	Wood	5420
1		Thermocol	482
	Land	Plastic	524
6		Mixed waste	259
3		Glass	19
2		Rubber	9
4		Steel	7
		TOTAL	6720

EWS-WWF

HOSTS A MARINE TURTLE PRESENTATION

FEATURE **RITA BENTO** PHOTOGRAPHY **DR. NICOLAS PILCHER**



The Emirates Wildlife Society – World Wildlife Fund for Nature (EWS-WWF) recently organized a presentation by Dr. Nicolas Pilcher, Founder and Executive Director of Marine Research Foundation*, on “Marine Turtles: their biology and conservation challenges” at Dar Al Nadwa, Bastakiya Quarter in Bur Dubai.

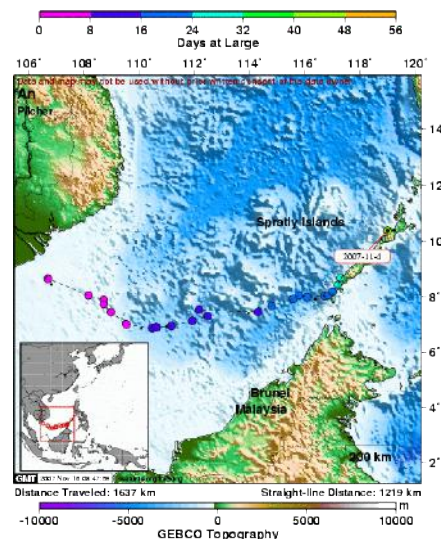
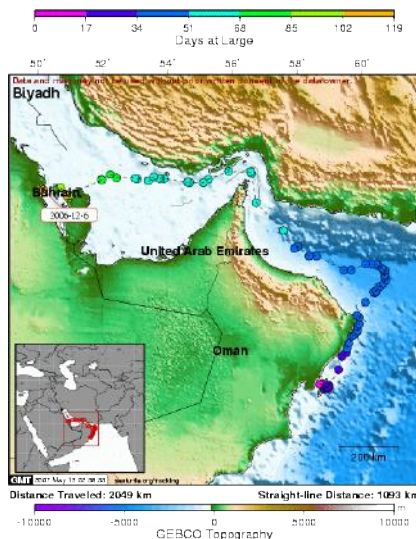


The talk was attended by 45 people that include environmental consultants, EDA members, and representatives from universities, corporations, NGO's and the media.

Dr. Pilcher's presentation focused on the biology of turtles – why a turtle is a turtle and how it got to be that way – and what we can and have to do, to make sure their populations survive. Dr. Pilcher also discussed the research projects that the Marine Research Foundation has been conducting in Qatar, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Malaysia and India. These include satellite tracking, population dynamics and determining the natural mortality of sea turtles.

In some of his projects, Dr. Pilcher was able to tag several sea turtles by putting satellite transmitters on their carapace. The tagged sea turtles were followed throughout their migrations as long as the transmitters remain attached to their carapaces. Satellite tracking can yield information on turtle migration by providing the geographic location of the animals as they move away from the local area where they were released.

*Marine Research Foundation is a non-profit agency established in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, to carry out studies which lead to the conservation of marine resources. For more information, please visit <http://mrf-asia.org/>



Examples of migrations of satellite-tracked turtles



ABOUT DR. NICOLAS PILCHER

Dr. Nicolas Pilcher took his Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Technology and Aquaculture in 1986 at the Florida Institute of Technology in the US, with emphasis on the environmental factors affecting marine and coastal environments, marine life, culture techniques and water and waste water systems. In 2000, he took his PhD degree entitled 'Aspects of the reproductive biology and early life stage survival of sea turtles' in the Southern Cross University of Australia.

His research programme was centered on the analysis of marine turtle nesting grounds and their environmental threats, and conservation issues affecting the marine turtles *Chelonia mydas* and *Eretmochelys imbricate*.

Dr. Pilcher's work on turtles has spanned much of the globe and today, he is the Co-Chair of the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group, the world's authority on sea turtle conservation and biology.

NEW BOOK ON ARABIAN MARINE LIFE

"Entering the underwater realm is like arriving in a new and wonderful watery world. Everything that you know and experience on land is immediately forgotten. Sound is dampened, your movements become slow and languid and you feel the gentle pressure of the constantly moving blue ocean that engulfs you. But what is perhaps most striking is the life that you see. Creatures of all shapes, sizes and colours surround you, some so stunning that their beauty and grace defies imagination. And amongst this marine life, even though you know that you are a visitor to its world, you feel more part of nature than ever you could on land."

So begins, a book by Robert Baldwin, entitled 'Marine Life of Arabian Seas'. Filled with striking photos on all kinds of marine life from the region, the book celebrates all that is best about Arabian Seas. The research for the book took more than ten years to complete and the photographs were taken during dedicated trips to some of the region's most popular as well as some of the least known, remote locations.

To obtain a copy of the book, simply log on to www.seawordsbooks.com, or head for your nearest bookshop.

Imagine
the world's most
isolated seas...

...Immerse
yourself!

AVAILABLE NOW
FROM ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS
LIMITED AVAILABILITY IN GCC REGION ONLY

- Dugongs
- Dolphins
- Sharks
- Whales
- Starfish
- Coral Reefs
- Seagrass Beds
- Sea Snakes
- Sea Birds
- Turtles
- Beaches
- PLUS MUCH MORE!**



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF

IYOR 2008 IS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED IN THE U.S.

FEATURE **TERRI YOUNG** PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF **ICRAN***

The International Year of the Reef (IYOR 2008) was officially launched on the evening of January 24th, 2008 in Washington DC. World Bank hosted the event where guests from international governments, organisations, embassies, private sectors and the conservation / scientific community gathered to celebrate the beginning of the year's activities which aim to draw attention to coral reefs as sentinels of the ocean environment.

2008 has been designated the International Year of the Reef (IYOR 2008) by The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), an intergovernmental initiative that aims to halt the decline of the world's coral reefs. IYOR 2008 is a year-long campaign of events and initiatives hosted by governments, individuals, corporations, and schools from around the world to promote awareness, action, and strengthen long-term support for coral reef conservation. The goal is to communicate effectively the value and importance of the world's coral reefs to local communities, children, tourists, governments, and to motivate these target audiences to take action to protect these reefs.

This year also marks the first of a two-year term of the Governments of Mexico and the USA co-hosting ICRI. The new secretariat, in their first general meeting, already placed the support for IYOR 2008 as high on their agenda.

The launch was preceded by a press conference that detailed planned international activities for the year and included an exciting live web and telephone hook up with an ongoing scientific mission on the reefs of Bonaire (Netherlands Antilles, Caribbean), that is using autonomous underwater vehicles and other cutting edge technologies to examine the reefs. A report on the 2005 coral bleaching event in the Caribbean that affected more than 80 percent of the reefs in the region, was also released.

This provided just a brief glimpse of the phenomenal effort that the coral reef

community and general public are putting into making this year a success. On the 25th of January, a mini-symposium was held at the Mexican Cultural Centre in Washington DC to celebrate the coming year through a showcase of IYOR 2008 activities taking place around the world. Opening remarks were given by Arturo Sarukhan, Ambassador of Mexico to the United States of America, an avid diver and lover of the ocean. The wealth and variety of planned activities that the countries and organisations presented on regional launches, is hoped to inspire others from all corners of the globe.

During the mini-symposium, children from the Chesapeake Bay Middle School, Maryland, a "green signature" school committed to environmental initiatives as part of their integrated curriculum, performed 'The Year of the Reef'. The song was written by Russ Lesser, President of Body Glove International and member of the band 'Thin Ice'. The song is for children and adults to sing out to protect and save the reefs. The lyrics consist of easy to understand concepts about the preservation of the coral reefs and their importance to our global environment. The song is part of a worldwide educational program sponsored by Body Glove, in conjunction with Reef Check and Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ocean Futures Society, to endorse the International Declaration of Reef Rights.

The launch of IYOR 2008 does not just provide a platform to facilitate collaboration and share plans for the coming year; it also nourishes aspirations and gives one a sense of honour in being part of a movement that is bringing people together from all levels to stand up and fight for coral reefs. The international, regional and national launches taking place throughout the world are just that – a catalyst to propel efforts into 2008, to inspire and encourage others to join and take action, ensuring that this initiative gathers momentum.

As part of the coral reef community, there are many things you can do to help make this year a success. For more information on the symposium, a calendar of events, your country focal point contact details, a wealth of

suggestions on things you can do, and how you can get involved, visit www.iyor.org.

*ICRAN (The International Coral Reef Action Network), a United Nations Foundations-funded global network involving some of the world's leading coral reef scientists and conservations organizations, was formed in response to a Call to Action by ICRI. For more information, please visit www.icran.org.

For more information on ICRI, please visit: www.icriforum.org

SOME EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES SHOWCASED AT THE SYMPOSIUM WERE:

Barbados IYOR 2008 Programme – Each new month brings a new activity, such as:

- National reef monitoring and management task force
- Film festival
- Dance festival
- Outreach through radio
- Coffee table book

Japan, the Ministry of the Environment

- Develop a National Action Plan for the protection of coral reefs
- To hold a regional / international meeting on coral reef marine protected area networks
- Outreach through Japan's national IYOR mascot!
- Launch of a national IYOR website www.iyor.jp



©Ministry of the Environment, Japan

South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Pacific Year of the Reef – Strong reefs, strong islands

- Development of a Pacific coral reef atlas
- Competitions for school children
- Working with communities on developing alternative / supplementary livelihoods assessment tools
- Promoting the value of coastal ecosystems through economic valuation
- Pacific festival of the arts

US National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) – Involvement in International Year of the Reef 2008

- IYOR messaging campaign, developing a vast array of materials – www.iyorcreative.com
- Reef festival
- A series of 6 Public Service Announcements to be released on national television throughout the year

PADI Project Aware – Divers Taking Action for IYOR

- Reef clean ups
- Coral reef monitoring in partnership with Coralwatch
- AWARE coral reef conservation specialty courses

Brazil, Ministry of the Environment

- Coral reef monitoring programme
- Coral reef conservation campaign
- Research on spawning aggregations of reef fishes
- Development of educational resources, including exhibitions and the production of a DVD on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and fisheries



Singing the IYOR song – Anthony Hooten, 2008

Most of the presentations from the symposium are now available on the IYOR 2008 website at the following link http://www.iyor.org/IYOR_symposium.asp. Keep an eye on the website for awareness and outreach resources, as these will be developed throughout the year.

To find out what is happening in your area, view the online calendar of events on http://www.iyor.org/events_list.aspx



International Coral Reef Action Network

SEAWEB, 'TOO PRECIOUS TO WEAR' INITIATIVE

'Too precious to Wear' is a campaign created by Seaweb (www.seaweb.org), a communications based non-profit organisation, to empower consumers and industry professionals to create a demand for coral conservation. It aims to reduce threats to corals by recruiting influential fashion and design leaders to be leading voices for coral conservation, and raising awareness of products that celebrate the ocean without harming it by highlighting real coral alternatives.

www.tooprecioustowear.org

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC A CORAL REEF IN YOUR HOME

National Geographic's 'Cittercam' is a scientific video and data gathering tool worn by wild animals, offering researchers insights into animal behaviour and clues to protecting animals. You can swim through tropical landscapes with turtles, or dive beneath the ice with penguins. National Geographic are now looking for partners to locate appropriate coral reef sites for a network of reef cams, that will not only allow the world over to enjoy the wonders that we, as divers, see under the surface, but provide scientists with a unique observation tool with which to gather data.

<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/cittercam>



Germany launch



IYOR 2008 Launch – Anthony Hooten, 2008

SCUBA DIVING COMMUNITY SHOWS SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF 2008

DIVERS WORLDWIDE REPRESENTED IN WASHINGTON, DC



Bristol – January 25, 2008 – Project AWARE Foundation Chairman and the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) President and Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Drew Richardson represented the scuba diving community today during the invitation-only World Bank event launching the International Year of the Reef (IYOR) 2008. The year-long, global initiative will raise the profile of coral reefs and threats to the sustainability, encouraging public action for their protection.

This year's International Year of the Reef campaign comes more than a decade after the United Nations' first Year of the Reef in 1997. During the first campaign, hundreds of groundbreaking studies were conducted to determine the status of coral reefs and numerous international policies were enacted to protect these vital resources. It is time to address the plight of coral reefs again before these precious ecosystems disappear completely.

Dr. Richardson, who was invited to speak at the launch event today, shared the views and concerns of divers worldwide. "As divers, we have a personal relationship with reefs and often see firsthand the short and long term impacts on reef ecosystems," said Richardson. "The diving community has an important role to play in helping protect declining coral reefs."

Additional advocates from coral reef and marine communities were present at the event including Dr. Clive Wilkinson, Coordinator, Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, VADM Conrad Lautenbacher, US NOAA Administrator, Undersecretary of Commerce, as well as the US Department of State and National Commission for Protected Areas, Mexico.

Project AWARE Foundation, a non profit organisation dedicated to conservation of underwater environments worldwide, also marked its official partnership with the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) during the launch events. ICRI is comprised of global

governments and organisations striving to preserve coral reefs and related ecosystems. Project AWARE Director, Jenny Miller Garmendia, shared plans for IYOR underwater efforts including reef cleanups and monitoring initiatives.

"Public awareness and action is critical to reef conservation," said Garmendia. "For more than 16 years, Project AWARE has worked with divers and water enthusiasts making great strides towards the conservation of fragile underwater environments. We're proud to be a partner of ICRI and contribute to this vital initiative."

To celebrate the campaign, the UK office of the Project AWARE Foundation together with the Blue Ventures group, which works within local communities to help conserve marine habitats, and Coral Cay Conservation, an eco tourism organisation, will be holding events to raise awareness of the destruction of coral reefs around the world.

Each year Project AWARE coordinates reef cleanups and coral monitoring projects in partnership with dive professionals and volunteers. Project AWARE is calling for increased participation in IYOR events this year. A global list of activities can be found on Project AWARE's International Year of the Reef page at www.projectaware.org.

Project AWARE is a non-profit organisation dedicated to conserving underwater environments through education, advocacy and action around the world. Project AWARE Foundation offices located in Australia, the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom and Switzerland combine efforts to conserve aquatic resources in 175 countries of the world. Project AWARE Foundation (International), formerly known as Project AWARE (UK), was established as a charity in 1999 specifically to offer regional assistance in the UK, Eire, Middle East, Africa, Russia, Mediterranean and the Nordic Regions. For more information on Project AWARE's environmental initiatives visit www.projectaware.org.

PADI – the Professional Association of Diving Instructors is the largest recreational scuba diver training organisation in the world. PADI serves professional members and dive consumers in more than 180 countries around the world. For more information, please visit www.padi.com



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF (www.iyor.org)

HEALTHY CORAL REEFS PROVIDE:

- **Habitat:** Home to over 1 million diverse aquatic species, including thousands of fish species
- **Income:** Billions of dollars and millions of jobs in over 100 countries around the world
- **Food:** For people living near coral reefs, especially on small islands
- **Protection:** A natural barrier protecting coastal cities, communities and beaches
- **Medicine:** The potential for treatments for many of the world's most prevalent and dangerous illnesses and diseases.

Several attempts have been made to estimate the value of coral reefs in terms of dollars. Benefits from coral reefs can be categorized into 2 types: "direct use values" (fisheries and tourism industry), and "indirect use values" (benefit derived from coastline protection). According to a United Nations estimate, the total economic value of coral reefs range from US\$ 100,000 to 600,000 per square kilometre per year.



Photo courtesy of EDA

CORALS:

WHAT ARE THEY REALLY?

FEATURE **RITA BENTO** PHOTOGRAPHY **MARINE PHOTOBANK**

Most of us have already dived in coral reefs or, at least, have already heard about them. But who really knows what corals are, or can explain their biology? I can assure you that it's not easy to understand or even guess at a first glance what they are. It's a typical question I keep hearing: what are they really?

Before starting to describe corals in a much elaborated way, we can generally outline corals as anemone-like animals that can, most of them, secrete a skeleton. They are small animals (called polyps) which are characterized by having only one opening – the mouth, which is surrounded by several tentacles used to defend themselves or to catch prey. The rocky corals that make up the coral reefs produce a skeleton beneath each polyp, allowing them to grow by several meters on a hard surface. A few of them have natural pigments but most of the reef-building corals have a photosynthetic microscopic algae (called zooxanthellae) that live in their tissues and are responsible for their colours.

Corals are either solitary or colonial polyps that live attached to a surface on which it grows (substrate). There are also soft corals and deep water corals that live in dark cold waters. Depending on the species, coral polyps may measure a few millimetres to several centimetres in diameter. One of the largest corals, *Fungia* (mushroom coral), is a solitary coral that can extend up to 25cm in diameter. Colonial coral polyps are much smaller and average 1-3mm in diameter.

Corals belong to the Phylum Cnidaria (or Coelenterata), which, besides stony and soft corals, also includes: hydroids, jellyfish, sea fans, sea pens and sea anemones. All cnidarians are exclusively aquatic animals, with a single body opening, the mouth, which they use for most purposes – water; food and feces. They have a crown of tentacles, around the mouth, usually armed with stinging cells (called nematocysts). Cnidarians are carnivorous and they use these cells to paralyze their prey or to defend themselves.

The skeletons of stony corals are secreted by the lower portion of the polyp. This process produces a cup (called calyx) in which the polyp sits. Periodically, a polyp will lift off its base and secrete a new basal plate above the old one. While the colony is alive, calcium carbonate is deposited, adding partitions and elevating the coral. When polyps are physically stressed, they contract into their calyx so

that no part is exposed above their skeleton, protecting the polyp from predators.

Within this Phylum, corals, sea anemones and sea pens, belong to the Class Anthozoa meaning "flower-like animals". While most of anthozoans retain their stinging cells and may feed on large preys or particulate food, a number of anthozoans supplement their diet by growing symbiotic algae in their tissues, the zooxanthellae. In addition to providing corals with essential nutrients, zooxanthellae are responsible for the beautiful colours of many stony corals. Algae that live within the tissues of some corals may make the coral appear brown, green, or orange. The corals with natural pigments in their tissue produce a range of colours including white, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple.

The corals and algae have a symbiotic relationship. The coral provides the algae with a protected environment and compounds they need for photosynthesis. In return, the algae produce oxygen and help the coral to remove wastes. Most importantly, the zooxanthellae supply the coral with energy-rich compounds of photosynthesis: glucose, glycerol, and amino acids. The coral uses these products to make proteins, fats, and carbohydrates, and produce calcium carbonate. In fact, up to 90 percent of the organic material photosynthetically produced by the algae is transferred to the host coral tissue.

Sometimes, when corals become physically stressed, like under the conditions of increased temperatures, the polyps expel their algal cells or the algae degenerate in the tissue. This results in a dramatic decrease in the densities of zooxanthellae within the coral tissue and the colony takes on a bright white appearance of the skeleton beneath, visible through the unpigmented tissue. The corals appear 'bleached' and this phenomenon is commonly described as "coral bleaching".

Corals also face other threats such as predation from parrotfish, butterflyfish, and starfish; human interaction (e.g., pollution, coastal development, destructive fishing methods, souvenir trade and careless water recreations); and natural disasters such as changes in sea level, major tropical storms and global warming. Depending on the environment the corals live in or the level of stress they endure, they may live from several decades to centuries. It also depends on us the lifetime we want them to have.



A healthy *Acropora* table coral.
© Pete Faulkner, Mission: awareness/Marine Photobank



When coral polyps are out, it's possible to count the tentacles and identify if it is a hard or a soft coral. Hard coral polyps have 6 or multiples of 6 tentacles whereas soft corals only have 8.
© G. Marola, 2007/Marine Photobank



Partially bleached or diseased coral head
© Wolcott Henry, 2005/Marine Photobank

ECOCEAN

A SMALL GROUP MAKING BIG WAVES

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **BRAD NORMAN**

Whale sharks – the biggest fish in the ocean – can be encountered in many places around the globe but are regarded by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) as 'vulnerable to extinction'. This means that this species is facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.



Brad Norman began studying the whale sharks of Western Australia 13 years ago. He demonstrated that the spot patterning on the skins of the whale sharks could be used to identify individuals. This fact then formed the basis of the ECOCEAN Whale Shark Photo-Identification Library (<http://www.whaleshark.org>), which today has input from 38 countries and has identified 1200 sharks from 4400 logged swimmer/shark encounters.

The database has the potential to reveal the migratory movements of whale sharks across the globe, identify their critical habitats, and establish population health in places where whale sharks aggregate. Despite being the biggest living fish in the sea, there remains more that we don't know about whale sharks than we do. How far do whale sharks travel? Where do they mate and have their young? How serious is the impact of fishing in the developing world on global whale shark numbers?

For example, in January 2008, the ECOCEAN team published a paper in the US journal *Ecological Applications* on the health of the population of whale sharks at Ningaloo Reef, Western Australia. The largest study of its type for whale sharks, it showed that the population of sharks returning to Ningaloo was stable and had even grown marginally. This was contrary to the findings of previous studies, which had suggested declines.

One of the benefits of the study is that its findings can be used to support an argument that management of the species (and the habitat whale sharks rely upon) appears to be working effectively in Western Australia. Therefore, these practices have the potential for application in other places in the world where similar industries are already operating or in the planning stage.

ECOCEAN has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

to develop and make available materials on sustainable practices to countries with existing or new whale shark industries.

ECOCEAN and the team have been acknowledged by a string of international awards. ECOCEAN won the Peter Benchley Award (for shark conservation) in 2007, while the advanced computer programming efforts of Information Architect Jason Holmberg resulted in the ECOCEAN Library winning an award from Sun Microsystems in 2005 for its innovative use of Java technology. Past winners of the award include Boeing, eBay, and NASA for its Mars Rover mission. Brad Norman has also received the Rolex Award for Enterprise (2006) and more recently, a National Geographic Magazine's Emerging Explorers Award (2008) (see separate story).

The ECOCEAN team continues to develop their powerful software and now has a third program added to their suite of tools. "Spot!" enables the virtual 'unravelling' of a whale

shark's skin from a 3D representation to an accurate two-dimensional pattern. This technique makes more photographs useable and the database more accurate.

ECOCEAN is keen to explore the potential for its systems to support research into other species as resources allow. The team have received interest from researchers working with more than 30 other species, including manta rays, whales, dolphins, turtles, African wild dogs, lions and cheetahs. For now, it will continue its focus on whale sharks and the full development of this important project.

A major focus will be to establish a whale shark research program in the Gulf region and look for supporters. Brad Norman has been to the UAE on two occasions to scope the potential of setting up a centre for whale shark research there.

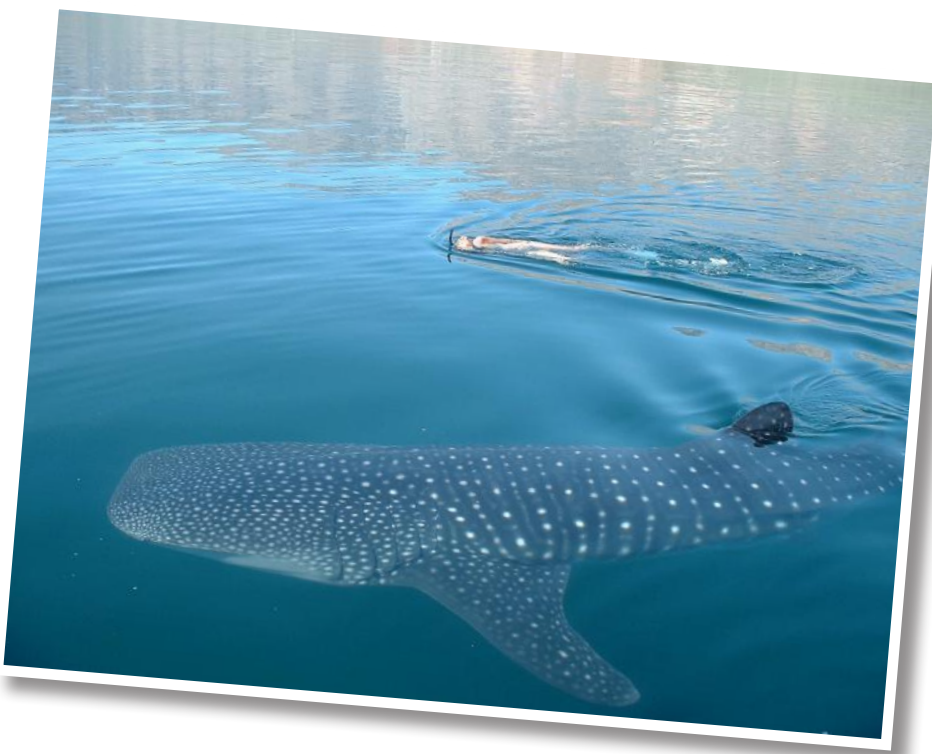
Whale sharks make an excellent flagship species for marine conservation and lend themselves to opening debates about habitat protection and the interrelated nature of marine system health. In the long term, ECOCEAN hopes to effect positive change in the protection and restoration of the oceans, especially in developing countries.

ECOCEAN is growing on a global scale. The group is based in Australia, although has recently registered in the USA with programs now underway in several countries (including the Philippines, India, Mozambique, etc.). ECOCEAN plans to expand research and monitoring in the Gulf region, and it is hoped that the necessary support can be secured to enable the non-profit group to live up to its potential. For more on ECOCEAN's programs, how to help as a volunteer or to make a much needed donation, please visit:

www.ecocean.org



Brad Norman. Photo by Kurt Amsler / Rolex Awards.



BRAD NORMAN RECEIVES NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC 'EMERGING EXPLORER' AWARD

Australian whale shark researcher and Rolex Laureate Brad Norman was recently named as one of the 2008 Emerging Explorers by National Geographic.

He is the first Australian to be honoured.

National Geographic's Emerging Explorers Program recognizes and supports uniquely gifted and inspiring young adventurers, scientists, photographers and storytellers who are already making a difference early in their careers. National Geographic awards \$US10,000 to each of The Emerging Explorers to further support their research and exploration.

Every year, 10 National Geographic Emerging Explorers are selected from diverse fields such as anthropology, space exploration, earth sciences, mountaineering and music.

BRAD NORMAN PROFILE

Marine conservationist Brad Norman is dedicated to the understanding and protection of the highly elusive and endangered whale shark, using photography as his main conservation tool. Together with a computer engineer and an astronomer linked to NASA, he developed a breakthrough photo analysis technique, automating the examination of the whale sharks' unique skin patterns. This allows scientists to recognize, record and track each individual whale shark, based on photographs.

Norman founded ECOCEAN, the not-for-profit conservation group that manages an extensive photo-identification database on the Internet (see: www.whaleshark.org). He encourages divers and tourists around the world to submit photos of whale sharks for the database, thus creating a public awareness campaign for this threatened species. With 12,000 photographs of whale sharks submitted from 38 countries, ECOCEAN's database has recognized 1,200 individual whale sharks to date.

MORE INFORMATION

Brad Norman, Tel: +61 (0)414 953 627 or email: brad@whaleshark.org

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORERS

See: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/field/explorers>

THE WHALE SHARK PROJECT

Reaching 18 metres in length, the whale shark is the largest fish in the world. A harmless plankton eater, its slate blue body is painted by a myriad of pale spots and stripes, a pattern unique to each individual. We have very little knowledge of the biology of this relatively rare species but we do know they roam enormous distances in the world's warmest tropical oceans. Whale shark populations are in decline and we don't want to wait until they face extinction but without having more information, we cannot prove just how endangered they are. You can help Project AWARE contribute to the protection of these magnificent creatures by contributing your photographs and reporting your whale shark sightings.

Much like tracing human fingerprints, the unique colour "body print" on an individual shark is key to current research. Photographs of specific parts of the shark can be matched against existing records, so we can understand how these creatures migrate and how their populations are structured. This information is essential for planning the conservation management of the whale sharks.

Very little is known about the life of the whale shark, partly because of the difficulty in conducting field research into an animal which spends most of its life underwater, out of sight. However, a number of groups have worked hard for years to try to assess the number of whale sharks and to obtain more information about their life cycles and habitat. These groups have produced much useful information and helped to reinforce the need for global conservation of whale sharks.

The Project AWARE Whale Shark Project is intended to complement their work. This initiative incorporates a pre-approved, Distinctive Specialty that gives participant's essential knowledge and skills to enable them to dive responsibly with whale sharks and to obtain information or photographs that can be uploaded to a central website. A Photo Identification website has also been created. All divers and snorkelers are encouraged to report their sightings and submit their Whale Sharks images to the website. Photo-identification potentially provides a powerful field technique for studying live sharks in their natural environment. Each photo submitted will make a genuine contribution to the understanding and future conservation of these huge harmless animals and will aid researchers to better understand life histories and shark movements – especially important for an endangered and highly migratory species like the Whale Shark. To further raise awareness on the need to respect and protect this vulnerable shark species, Project AWARE has also developed

a Code of Conduct poster which provides simple guidelines to encourage responsible behaviour when diving with whale sharks. To get your copy of the poster visit the 'Education and Awareness' section of www.projectaware.org

HOW YOU CAN HELP PROTECT WHALE SHARKS AS AN INDIVIDUAL

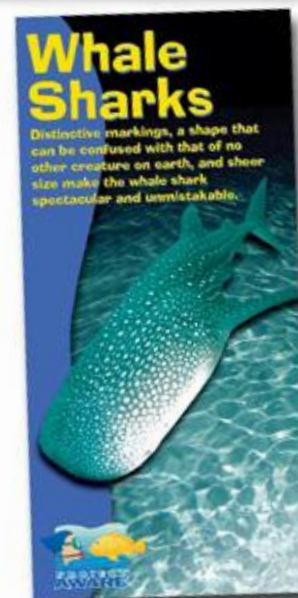
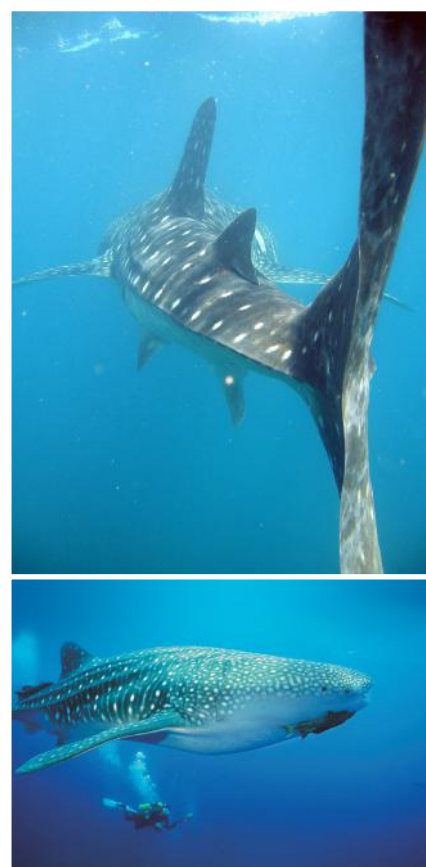
- Get a copy of the Project AWARE Whale Shark project brochure and submit your completed quick reference form and photographs, or report your logged whale shark dives. Brochures are available by emailing: info@projectaware.org.uk
- Follow these 10 simple guidelines when diving with whale sharks:
 1. Maintain a minimum distance to avoid injury to yourself and the whale shark
 2. Resist the temptation to touch, ride or chase a whale shark
 3. Allow normal movement, behaviour and direction in which the shark is travelling
 4. Take photographs without the use of a flash as this could cause harm or stress to the animal
 5. Swim slowly and deliberately without using motorised diver propulsion vehicles
 6. Follow and abide by local regulations
 7. Support legislation for increased whale shark protection
 8. Further your knowledge by completing a Whale Shark Awareness Diver Distinctive Specialty
 9. Pick up a Project AWARE Whale Shark brochure
 10. Record and report your sightings, visit: www.projectaware.org and find out more about whale shark conservation.

ASA DIVE CENTRE

- Display the Project AWARE Code of Conduct poster in your facility along with the Project AWARE whale shark brochures.
- Sign up to participate in the whale shark project by promoting whale shark conservation or teaching the Whale Shark Awareness Distinctive specialty Course.

Visit the 'Education and Awareness' section at www.projectaware.org to find out more.

If you have been fortunate enough to come across a whale shark whilst diving or snorkelling and have photos you can submit, please visit www.whalesharkproject.org, if you would like to learn more about the whale shark project you can visit www.projectaware.org or for a brochure please email info@projectaware.org.uk



JOIN THE WHALE SHARK PROJECT

© Project AWARE Foundation 2006 - © Copyright Phillip Colla Photography



- Maintain a minimum distance to avoid injury to yourself and the whale shark
- Do not attempt to touch, ride or chase a whale shark
- Allow normal movement, behaviour and direction in which the shark is travelling
- Take photographs without the use of a flash as this could cause harm or stress to the animal
- Swim slowly and deliberately without using motorised diver propulsion vehicles
- Follow and abide by local regulations
- Support legislation for increased whale shark protection
- Further your knowledge by completing a Whale Shark Awareness Diver Distinctive Specialty
- Pick up a Project AWARE Whale Shark brochure
- Record your sightings online at www.projectaware.org and participate in whale shark conservation



WHALE SHARK ADOPTION AND MONITORING INTERNSHIP IN SEYCHELLES

FEATURE **VANESSA BARKER** PHOTOGRAPHY **JOANNA THORNTON**



You can call me Mama Whale Shark! That's because, on the 19th of January 2008, I became the very proud foster parent of a 6m whale shark from Seychelles called 'Hasi'. And because my husband Ben and I couldn't possibly look after just one, we decided to adopt 'Mazarin' as well, a 4.5m juvenile male whale shark.

Both our sharks were tagged in 2003 by the Marine Conservation Society Seychelles (MCSS) and for the sum of US\$50 per whale shark, we will help MCSS continue their research and conservation programme for whale sharks in the Seychelles for a whole year.

If you're in love with these giants as much as we are, then this is definitely worth getting involved in!

MCSS runs a Whale Shark Monitoring programme which is partly funded by the World Bank Marine Global Environment Facility and also by local and international sponsors. The aim of the project is to understand the whale shark movements and behaviors in the Seychelles waters, and all the data collected assists them to make recommendations on any necessary conservation measures required for these animals, both regionally and globally.

There are currently 5 other tagged sharks that need adopting:

- "Pas-Par-Tou", a 6m juvenile male whale shark tagged on the 21st of August 2002 near the main island of Mahé.
- "Lennart", a 5½ - 6m juvenile male whale shark tagged on the 15th of August 2003 in the channel between Conception and Therese Island.
- "Randy", an 8.5m male whale shark who was tagged on the 4th of October 2003 off the northern tip of Therese Island.
- "Seren", a 4m whale shark tagged on the 2nd of October 2003 near Rays Point, North of Mahe.
- "Pa-Seye", a 5m juvenile male whale shark tagged on the 7th of October 2003 off Beau Vallon, North of Mahe.

All it will cost you is US\$50 a year and in return, MCSS will keep you posted on your shark with pictures and news and also update you on their work throughout the year.

They also run a similar Turtle Monitoring Programme which anyone can get involved in.

But for those who want to get more hands-on with the programme, MCSS is offering a fantastic internship opportunity throughout the programme season in 2008.

6 internships are on offer on a full-season basis for the 2008 Seychelles Whale Shark Monitoring Season. This internship will run for 10 weeks and starts from the 24th of August to the 31st of October 2008. The first two weeks will be spent on orientation and training in the programme, including helping the pilots set up the micro-light aircraft. Monitoring activities will properly start from the third week onwards. The 6 interns will be divided into two teams and will work closely with the local, more experienced staff in tracking the whale sharks, tagging new ones and recording all necessary data. Accommodation will also be provided on a self-catering basis.

Not only will this internship give you the chance to really get involved in protecting one of the most gorgeous marine creatures around but you will get to spend 10 weeks in the stunning surroundings of the Seychelles! What more can you possibly ask for?

Ben and I have decided that 2008 is the year that we were going to stop talking about doing something and instead actually do something!

If you feel the same, please log on to their website www.mcass.sc to apply or send me your application at vanessa.barker@hotmail.com and I'll pass it on.

WHY DIVE FOR EARTH DAY?



www.projectaware.org

Since 2000, divers around the world have been creating their own ways to celebrate Earth Day and renew their commitment to protect the future of our blue planet. Our underwater environments are under numerous threats including pollution, climate change, overfishing, and coral bleaching. We've reached a critical moment in the history of the Earth and it's time for change. Once again, the Project AWARE Foundation is asking all divers to Dive For Earth Day during the week of 22 April to put aquatic issues on the Earth Day map.

"With nearly 60% of the world's remaining reefs at significant risk of being lost in the next three decades, this year's events offer a unique opportunity for divers to not only raise awareness for Earth Day but to make their dives count for International Year of the Reef 2008", commented Domino Albert, Project AWARE Foundation (International) Marketing and Fundraising Coordinator.

"Water covers nearly 80% of the earth's surface and every living creature depends on it for life. Yet, less than 1% of marine habitats are protected. There is an element of wake up call" she added.

Dive for Earth Day 2007 celebrations included thousands of Project AWARE divers and community volunteers taking part in more than 235 conservation activities across the globe. Together we are making a difference.

WANT TO DIVE FOR EARTH DAY?

Make a personal commitment: participate in or organise Dive for Earth Day activities such as shoreline and underwater cleanups, CoralWatch surveys, AWARE Kids activities, Dive for Earth Day display/seminars or a fundraising event. Follow the instructions below and visit the activity section of www.projectaware.org.uk to register your participation and find out more about the event packages available.

"WITH NEARLY 60% OF THE WORLD'S REMAINING REEFS AT SIGNIFICANT RISK OF BEING LOST IN THE NEXT THREE DECADES, THIS YEAR'S EVENTS OFFER A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR DIVERS TO NOT ONLY RAISE AWARENESS FOR EARTH DAY BUT TO MAKE THEIR DIVES COUNT FOR INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF 2008."

DIVE VOLUNTEERS

1. Search the list of registered Dive for Earth Day activities for an event near you.
2. Contact the local organiser to sign up and gain further event details if necessary.
3. Dive for Earth Day this April!

DIVE FOR EARTH DAY ORGANISERS

4. Select a Dive for Earth Day activity to benefit your local aquatic environment.
5. Gain any necessary approval from relevant governing bodies and entities involved.
6. Register your Dive for Earth Day activity online at www.projectaware.org and receive Project AWARE support materials and tools for your event.
7. Gather local dive volunteers and Dive for Earth Day!

Make a fundraising commitment: Please help Project AWARE protect our underwater environment and its wildlife by donating to the charity. If you would like to hold a fundraising event in aid of Project AWARE during this week and are looking for ideas and resources please visit www.projectaware.org

EDA will organize its own activity for Earth Day. To join, just email us at diving@emiratesdiving.com or call 04-3939390.



COMMEMORATING EARTH DAY AT BANYAN TREE AND ANGSANA RESORTS WORLDWIDE



ANGSANA
Resorts & Spa

Since the company's inception in 1994, the people at the Banyan Tree Group have strived to promote green awareness, none more so than the programme the group established in 2006 in conjunction with Earth Day. In this programme, the Banyan Tree Group promotes green awareness on a global scale through exclusive activities at Banyan Tree and Angsana resorts worldwide. In addition, Banyan Tree Gallery also channels five per cent of total sales proceeds from the newly developed Marine Laboratory collection to the Group's Green Imperative Fund.

Following the success of 2006's inaugural packages, Earth Day promotions give guests a greater range of hands-on activities and opportunities to get personally involved with Mother Nature. Banyan Tree holds Corporate Social Responsibility as a key corporate value, which is integrated into the management of its resorts in the most beautiful locations in the world. All Earth Day activities are available in the months of April and May.

BANYAN TREE GALLERY

To create greater awareness of the marine conservation efforts of Banyan Tree Maldives Vabbinfaru's Marine Biology Laboratory, Banyan Tree Gallery has developed an exclusive range of casual apparel featuring the laboratory logo. The logo showcases the green sea turtle – one of the key research subjects in the group's Green Sea Turtle Conservation Program carried out in the Maldives. In support of Earth Day, five per cent of all sales proceeds from this collection will be channelled to the Group's Green Imperative Fund. These products are available at Banyan Tree Galleries located within the resorts in Bintan, Maldives and Phuket. They can also be purchased from Banyan Tree Gallery in Singapore and online at www.banyantreegallery.com.

EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES

At Banyan Tree Phuket, the Group's flagship establishment that was built on ecologically destroyed land in 1995, guests can enjoy a "Dive Into Earth Day" activity that includes a day-trip snorkelling excursion at Ko Kai Nok. This excursion allows guests to identify different kinds of marine corals and experience the thrill of swimming with corals and fishes with the help of expert guides. The fulfilling session includes snorkelling lessons, boat trip and a participation certificate.

At Banyan Tree Bintan and Angsana Resort & Spa Bintan, a Snorkelling Safari aims to introduce visitors to the wealth of corals and marine life that lies beneath the surface of the South China Sea. Additional options include a guided Tree Trail Walk amongst Banyan Tree Bintan's gracious old growth trees, as well as a guided nature hike.

Experience Earth Day within the confines of a bustling city with Banyan Tree Bangkok. Guests may opt for a tour of Chulalongkorn University's Environmental Studies faculty, a Japanese, Thai or Western vegetarian dinner at a choice of venues, or an urban tree planting experience.

A visit to the wetlands, an excursion to the World Heritage Site of the Vallee de Mai, and morning bird watching treks are options for guests visiting Banyan Tree Seychelles. Famed for its wetlands and unique flora and fauna, the attractions close to the resort are a worthy day trip for commemorating Earth Day in style.

Banyan Tree Maldives Vabbinfaru and Angsana Resort & Spa Maldives Ihuru bring guests on adventures including guided dawn or night snorkelling, planting coral under the guidance of a marine biologist, a marine biology and ecology session that includes a tour of ongoing Banyan Tree Marine Laboratory research projects, reef surveys to compare and contrast two different reefs, planting coconut palm trees, construction of bird nesting boxes, and a dolphin cruise led by the Marine Laboratory's own resident Marine Biologist.

The signature treks at Banyan Tree Ringha have been specially designed to delve deeply into the cultural and environmental landscape of



BANYAN TREE
HOTELS
AND RESORTS

the region's Tibetan community. Guests are invited to participate in tree planting along Shu Du Gang River as the highlight of a Banyan Tree trek of their choice.

Banyan Tree Lijiang welcomes Earth Day with a choice of tours sharing the beauty of spring around Lijiang. The options include trekking at Jade Dragon Snow Mountain or a private tour of Dayan old town, where residents live in harmony with nature, utilising ingenious canal system to harness glacial runoff to provide water for each home.

Deer Park Hotel by Colours of Angsana boasts a stunning location in the 'golden triangle' of Sri Lanka. Bordered by the grassy plains of Minneriya and Kandulla National Parks, this nature lover's paradise offers opportunities for guided elephant drives, bird watching, bush walks and an excursion to Sigiriya, the royal palace built on a rock in the fifth century.

All activities are valid during the months of April and May each year*. More information on the Earth Day activities can be found online at www.banyantree.com and www.banyantree.com/greenimperative.

*Activities may vary slightly year on year.

ABOUT THE GREEN IMPERATIVE FUND (GIF)

Since its first resort opened in 1994, Banyan Tree has continually sought to embrace the environment and empower people. To formalise and integrate its corporate social responsibility efforts, the Green Imperative Fund (GIF) was established in 2002. At all Banyan Tree and Angsana properties, the Fund provides critical financial support to worthy environmental action and community based projects, such as the Turtle Head Start and Coral Protection and Growth programmes.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

To give back to the communities supporting its resorts, Banyan Tree conducts regular educational and health enrichment initiatives, and also provides scholarships for primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education for the underprivileged.

ABOUT BANYAN TREE HOTELS & RESORTS

Banyan Tree offers an intimate retreat experience featuring its own signature blend of romance and Asian sensuality. The philosophy behind the hotels, resorts, spas and galleries is based on providing a place for rejuvenation of the body, mind and soul – a Sanctuary for the Senses.

Banyan Tree resorts are found in Phuket, Thailand (1994), Maldives Vabbinfaru (1995), Bintan, Indonesia (1995), Bangkok, Thailand (2002), Seychelles (2002), Ringha, China (2005) and Lijiang, China (2006). Flagship Banyan Tree Phuket was the first to introduce a tropical garden spa concept.

ABOUT ANGSA NA RESORTS & SPAS

Launched in 2000, Angsana is the sister brand of Banyan Tree, inspired by the exotic Angsana Tree noted for its crown of golden flowers. Angsana resorts are designed as contemporary, chic and vibrant retreats to live life spontaneously and sense the moment.

Angsana resorts are found in Bintan, Indonesia (2000), Great Barrier Reef, Australia (2000), Bangalore, India (2001), Maldives Ihuru (2001) and Maldives Velavaru (2006).

In 2003, Colours of Angsana joined the Angsana portfolio. This boutique hotel collection appeals to the soft adventurer and cultural tourism sector. The current hotels are Gyalthang Dzong (Shangri-La, China), Deer Park Hotel (Giritale, Sri Lanka) and Maison Souvannaphoum (Luang Prabang, Laos).

To date, the Banyan Tree Group manages and/or has ownership interests in 20 resorts and hotels, 58 spas and 68 retail galleries and two golf courses.

“TO GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITIES SUPPORTING ITS RESORTS, BANYAN TREE CONDUCTS REGULAR EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH ENRICHMENT INITIATIVES, AND ALSO PROVIDES SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PRIMARY, SECONDARY, AND TERTIARY LEVELS OF EDUCATION FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED.”



Marine Laboratory Apparel Collection



Intendance Pool Overlooking Indian Ocean, Banyan Tree Seychelles



Yak in front of Banyan Tree Ringha

ALDABRA CELEBRATES 25th ANNIVERSARY AS A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

FEATURE SEYCHELLES ISLANDS FOUNDATION PHOTOGRAPHY FOTONATURA

The 19th of November 1982 is earmarked in global history as a day when one of the smallest nations in the world shared one of the largest coral atolls with the rest of the world: Aldabra Atoll became a gift to humanity by the people of Seychelles. In doing so, we Seychellois committed to the protection of Aldabra Atoll – “Wonder of Nature” as it is inscribed on the commemorative plaque.

Aldabra Atoll, one of the Republic of Seychelles' southernmost islands, is approximately 1100km south west of the main island of Mahé, 420km north west of Madagascar and 640km east of Tanzania. Aldabra has a total land area of 153sq.km, but together with the mangrove, lagoon and the channels, occupies an area of 346sq.km. Aldabra's geographical isolation, rough terrain and scarcity of fresh water have been the primary factors deterring permanent human settlement, and subsequently have served as the atoll's semi-protective shield.

HISTORY OF ALDABRA

According to records, the name Aldabra is derived from Arabic, although it is uncertain whether it's from the Arabic word for 'green' (perhaps relating to the green reflection of the lagoon on clouds above it) or from the name of a bright star which the Arabs used for navigation. Although the harsh environment and isolated location have spared Aldabra from a large human population, the atoll has not escaped natural resource exploitation. Beginning in the 1600s, passing ships stopped to fill their holds with giant tortoises and turtles to use as food. By 1842, there was concern that the tortoises were being over-exploited, but plans were already being made to exploit mangrove wood as well as turtles and tortoises. Around this time, goats and pigs were also introduced to serve as a mid-voyage food source. The pigs are thought to have preyed heavily on tortoise and turtle hatchlings but apparently died out. The goats, however, slowly multiplied and competed with the tortoises for food and killed many of the shade trees used by the tortoises.

By the 1890s, the atoll was being leased out. One lessee is said to have killed 12,000 turtles. He also brought in Chinese workers to harvest sea cucumbers. Various other commercial ventures were considered, such as guano extraction, salt fish, copra and maize but the conditions on Aldabra defied their logistic and financial feasibility. By 1929, it is reported that over-harvest by labourers threatened many of the sea and land birds with extinction. Eventually, by the 1940s and 1950s, modest restrictions on tortoise and turtle harvests were mandated, although other animals and plants remained unprotected.

By far, the greatest threat that Aldabra ever faced was in 1962 when the British military conducted a secret survey to evaluate the atoll's potential as an Anglo-American military base. By 1965, the military's plans were exposed and the Royal Society requested that two scientists, Dr. D. R. Stoddart and Dr. C. A. Wright, accompany a survey conducted by the Ministry of Defence. The public outcry which followed the Royal Society's report and the broadcasting of Tony Beamish's television documentary about the atoll, combined with economic cutbacks by the British Government, resulted in the plans being abandoned.

The Royal Society then built a research station on Picard in 1971 and acquired the lease on Aldabra. There followed a period of intense research into the terrestrial and marine ecology, including important contributions by the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, DC.

In 1981, the Royal Society surrendered its lease to the newly formed Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF). SIF was formed with the expressed purpose of managing and conserving the natural life of Aldabra and of initiating further scientific research. A few years later, SIF took over the management of Vallée de Mai on Praslin. Revenue raised from Vallée de Mai, which is the most important and most visited nature reserve in Seychelles, funds a major part of the running costs of Aldabra.

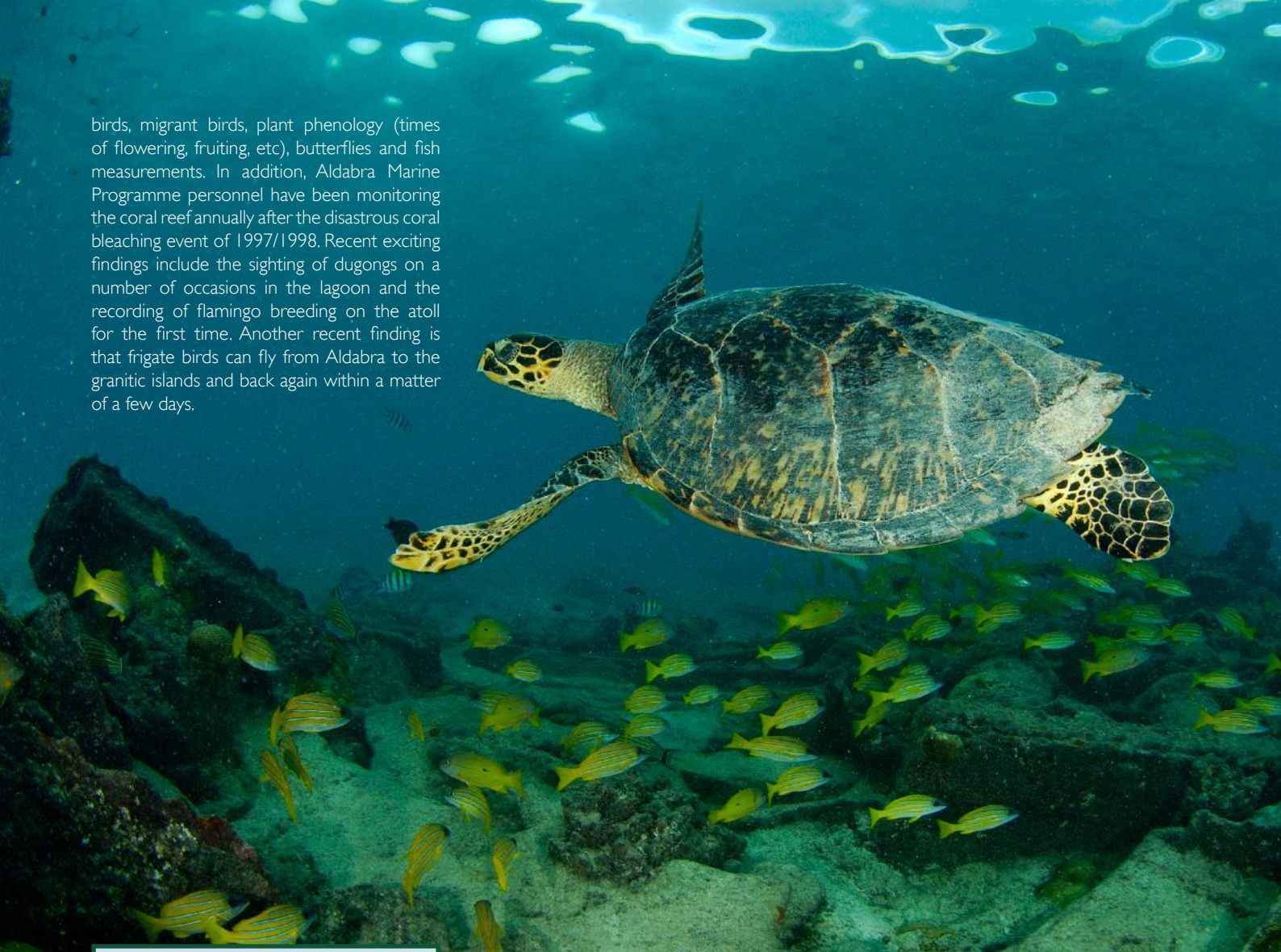
ALDABRA: UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Aldabra is a prime example of a raised coral atoll and is significantly less disturbed than most other atolls in the Indian Ocean and elsewhere in the world. It is a refuge for many endangered and unique species. Amongst these are the Aldabra giant tortoise (*Dipsochelys dussumieri* = *Geochelone gigantea*) of which there are about 100,000; one of the largest congregations of nesting green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in the Indian Ocean; the world's second largest breeding population of greater and lesser frigate birds (*Fregata minor* and *Fregata ariel*); the last flightless bird species in the Indian Ocean – the white-throated rail (*Dryolimnas cuvieri aldabranus*); and many endemic taxa of plants and animals. As a result of Aldabra's unique ecosystems and species, it was listed as a Seychelles Special Reserve (1981) and as a World Heritage Site (1982).

In 1992, SIF initiated the complete renovation of the Aldabra research station with the financial support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which also included the purchase of a new rapid reaction boat, the implementation of a first goat eradication programme and the preparation of a management plan. At the same time, the SIF used much of its own financial resources to renovate the accommodation block, the dining room/recreation area, and much of the general infrastructure. A few field camps located around the atoll at various sites provide basic shelter for field excursions and monitoring.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

The Royal Society set up a number of research and monitoring programmes in the late 1970s, some of which are still ongoing, e.g. rainfall measurements around the atoll, measurements and statistics of the giant tortoise population and the green turtle population. The latter represent some of the longest continuous monitoring programmes for reptiles in the world. Other monitoring and research programmes that are undertaken mainly by the SIF's Aldabra rangers cover seabirds, land



birds, migrant birds, plant phenology (times of flowering, fruiting, etc), butterflies and fish measurements. In addition, Aldabra Marine Programme personnel have been monitoring the coral reef annually after the disastrous coral bleaching event of 1997/1998. Recent exciting findings include the sighting of dugongs on a number of occasions in the lagoon and the recording of flamingo breeding on the atoll for the first time. Another recent finding is that frigate birds can fly from Aldabra to the granitic islands and back again within a matter of a few days.

25th ANNIVERSARY AS A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

The support extended to SIF to earmark the 25th anniversary of Aldabra as a UNESCO World Heritage is a reminder once more of the importance and need of partnerships and a nationwide engagement. SIF is determined to engage the international community in the quest for Aldabra to stay a "Wonder of Nature" with the assistance of the Aldabra Foundation.

SIF is extending its gratitude to everyone for contributing to the protection of Aldabra in whatever way, including having a dream of a remote place, difficult to visit but in all our hearts.

For further information, please contact:
SEYCHELLES TOURISM OFFICE

Tel: +971 4 2865586

Email: Seychelles@stome.ae

Website: www.seychelles.com

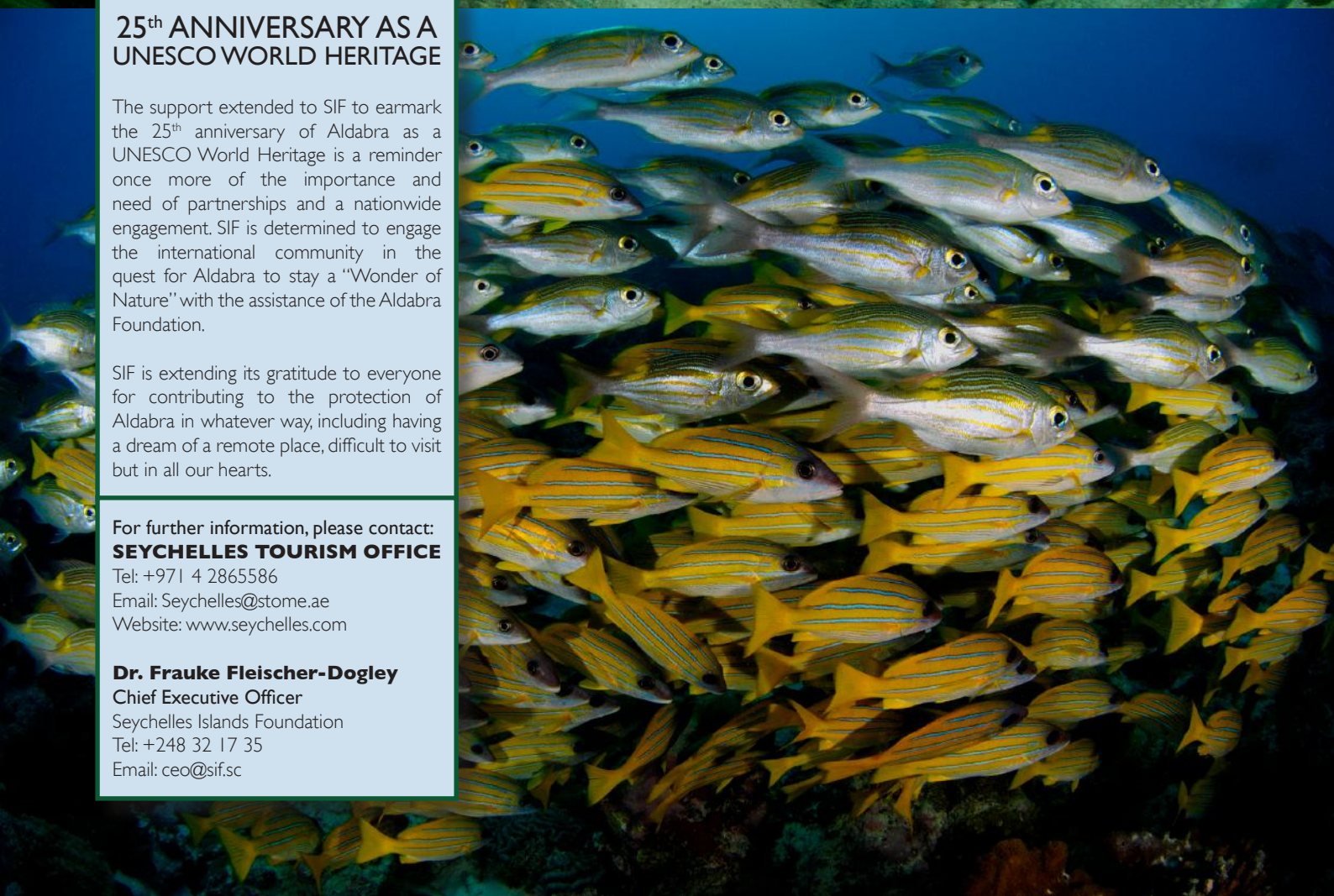
Dr. Frauke Fleischer-Dogley

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MALAYSIA A WORLD CLASS SCUBA DIVING EXPERIENCE

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **TOURISM MALAYSIA**

Malaysia is fast becoming one of the leading dive destinations of the world with one of the richest marine environments in the Indo-Pacific Basin. The incredible bio-diversity of marine life, coupled with beautiful islands, white sandy beaches and clear warm waters, keeps divers coming back time and time again.

Top dive sites around Malaysia include diverse underwater geography such as sloping reefs, coral blocks, wall dives, deep dives, drift dives and wreck dives. A dip below the warm sea's surface guarantees you an astounding experience, with a concentration of vibrant and exotic marine life rarely rivaled anywhere else in the world. From schooling Hammerhead Sharks, to huge schools of barracudas and various species of turtles, to the bizarre Frogfish and Ghost Pipefish, there is always something fascinating awaiting you. It's no exaggeration to say that almost every time a marine bio-diversity survey is conducted in Malaysia's tropical seas, the species list increases!

Dive centers in Malaysia are numerous, well equipped and certified by all the internationally recognized dive agencies like PADI, SSI and SSAC for maintaining their standards of safety and professionalism. Naturally, all scuba diving courses in Malaysian waters are also endorsed by these certifying agencies. After completing your scuba course, get outfitted with the latest scuba equipment as all international brands are available from dive centers in Malaysia. Almost all the islands in Malaysia cater to divers of all levels of experience – be it easy, shallow, drift-diving, to advanced wreck-diving or technical diving.

Located in the heart of the Indo-Pacific basin, the heart of the world's richest marine biodiversity area, Malaysia also offers pristine beaches and professional dive centres for the pleasure and safety of the advanced and novice diver. For a most memorable diving holiday, the time is now, the place is Malaysia.

TIOMAN ISLAND

About 56km off the coast of Pahang lies

Tioman Island, an alluring holiday paradise in the South China Sea. Acclaimed as one of the best island getaways in the world, Tioman was the location of the Hollywood musical, 'South Pacific' in 1959. According to legend, this island is the final resting place of a mythical dragon princess. The warm waters and good visibility make Tioman a paradise for divers. Discover astounding sights such as colorful Gorgonian sea fans, Staghorn corals, nudibranchs and beautifully sculptured sea sponges. Snorkellers can delight in swimming alongside huge Napoleon Wrasse, Golden Striped Trevally, Bumphead Parrotfish and shoals of Fusiliers.

This island is an idyllic spot for leisurely days under the sun. Swim in its emerald waters, enjoy a stroll by the beach or be lulled to sleep by the sound of the waves. There are several villages scattered around the coastline, the larger ones being Salang, Tekek, Genting, Paya and Juara.

Each village offers a different and unique atmosphere. Tioman's verdant greenery is home to a splendid variety of plants and small animals, including butterflies, monitor lizards, deer and monkeys. Its flora and fauna have been featured in National Geographic's documentaries.

The island's granite formations make for excellent rock-climbing expeditions. The more adventurous can attempt to scale the sheer cliff face of the legendary Gunung Nenek Semukut or Dragons Horns. Berjaya Tioman Beach, Golf & Spa Resort offers a luxurious stay amidst a backdrop of rolling hills and scenic views.

KEY TIPS

If you like hiking, you should try the beautiful cross-island hike from the village of Tekek on the west to Juara on the east. It can be done in an easy day and takes in both jungle and beach views of both sides of Tioman.

HOW TO GET THERE BY ROAD

Access the Tebrau Highway from Johor Bahru

and go to Mersing via Kota Tinggi. Access the Karak Highway from Kuala Lumpur through Temerloh, Kuantan, Pekan, Kuala Rompin, Tanjung Gemuk to Mersing. Alternatively, take the PLUS Highway from Kuala Lumpur via Seremban, Bahau, Muadzam Shah, Kuala Rompin, Tanjung Gemuk to Mersing.

BY AIR

Berjaya Air operates daily direct 45-minute flights to Tioman from Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

WHO TO CONTACT

For more information, please contact the Pahang Tourist Information Centre:

Tel: +609-517 7113 / 7115

ACCOMMODATION OVERVIEW

A wide range of accommodation is available, from basic backpacker's hostels to 5-star hotels. Most of these can be found on the island's west coast.



Celebrating 50 Years of Nationhood

For more information, please contact:

TOURISM MALAYSIA (DUBAI)

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Website: www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my







SHARK DIVING IN KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

FEATURE **VANESSA BARKER**

They say there are two kinds of divers – the ones who like the cute, little things and those who prefer anything big and dangerous enough to make a meal out of you. I quite happily belong to the more sensible of the two groups – the Nemo fan club! Honestly, what more do you want than perfect visibility and lots of colourful and friendly marine life?

Apparently that's just not enough for some divers. Bring on the teeth, they say! Bring on the sharks!



I am one of those people who have been scarred for life by the Jaws theme tune, so I have never been quite able to understand the need of some divers to swim with sharks. I admit I am fascinated by these creatures and I could watch hours of National Geographic shows on them but that's as far as it goes.

When deciding what destination to feature in this issue of our newsletter, I kept thinking about this attraction to sharks that some of us have. Where in the world could I go and possibly overcome my fear of sharks? I wanted to understand why seemingly normal-looking people would want to step into the habitat of some of the world's most feared marine creatures. And what country can better answer all of my questions than the Republic of South Africa?

Well-known for its great white shark diving, Cape Town is one of the most talked about dive destinations in South Africa. Being terrified of sharks, I doubt I'd want to go straight for that kind of experience. Better off starting small... I thought of the other coastal provinces; surely, they must offer some superb and safe shark diving?

After a lot of 'googling', I came across the province of Kwazulu-Natal (KZN). This province lies on the South East coast of South Africa with over 600km of Indian Ocean coastline. It is also known as the Zulu Kingdom and its capital is Pietermaritzburg but most people know of Durban, the largest city in the province. Durban is referred to as the 'Playground of the Zulu Kingdom', with loads



of restaurants, shopping malls and beach activities on offer.

The weather in KZN is much warmer than the rest of South Africa, making it a year round destination. Average temperatures range from 23 to 28 degrees Celsius throughout the year so the beach is still packed during the winter months.

KZN also offers some spectacular touristy trips – the historical Battlefields grounds and Zululand, the spectacular Elephant Coast and the breathtaking Dolphin coast and the South coast. It also boasts of two world heritage sites – the Drakensberg Mountains and the Great St. Lucia Wetland Park. Spread along these coasts is also some of the best shark diving in South Africa.

KZN is also home to the "Andy Cobb Shark College". The school is run by Andy Cobb, the SHARK PROJECT South African Ambassador and Honorary Member (SHARK PROJECT is one of the largest international shark protection organizations). The shark college offers an interactive course dedicated solely to the protection and understanding of these creatures. Andy has logged over 4000 dives, 900 of which were shark dives. He has also introduced 7000 divers to sharks. Andy has kept detailed accounts of all his dives over the past 26 years and today, shares this experience and enthusiasm with shark lovers (and haters) all over the world to help protect these species.



Through Andy's Shark College, those of us who are unsure of these creatures can learn about the myths and evolution of sharks, their senses and behaviours, how to dive with them and how we can help to protect them. It's not all coursework and books with Andy though as eventually, you will have to get into the water with these animals – without a cage! Although Andy can't dive with you, there are several experienced operators that he recommends using, so there is no need to worry.

The dives are held at various sites, one of them from Aliwal Shoal which lies about 50km south of Durban. The water temperatures here range from 19-20 degrees Celsius giving rise to a wide range of Indian Ocean marine life. Between July to September, the spotted ragged-tooth shark can be seen here. The "Quo Vadis Dive Centre" is recommended for this area (www.raggiecave.com).

The other more popular site is the Protea Banks which lies 7.5km off Margate, offering caves, ridges and amphitheatres. This site guarantees year round encounters with sharks, although not all at the same time. Depending on the time of year you choose to dive, you could encounter the Zambezi (Bull Shark), the Ragged-tooth, Dusky, Tiger, Black Tip, Bronze Whalers, Hammerheads, Great White and Copper Sharks. Protea Banks depth ranges from 26m-40m so divers need to be experienced and qualified for 30 meter dives. Other than the sharks, Protea Banks also offers a wide array of game and reef fish, rays, skates and moray eels.

Andy highly recommends diving the Protea Banks with "African Dive Adventures" (www.africandiveadventures.co.za), who specialize in this area. The owner has logged over 1250 dives just on Protea Banks alone and will take small groups of experienced divers out to this site for drift dives. African Dive Adventures is also well known for their strict conservation of the Protea Banks and for their shark protection work. Divers are taught about the importance of protecting these animals and are helped to alleviate any fears they may have once had of these creatures. After diving the Protea Banks, the only thing the owner will allow you to walk away with is a greater love and understanding of these animals, and perhaps the odd shark tooth you may have found during your dive!

An even greater way to see these sharks is when they're in full action during the annual Sardine Run. Every year, between June and July, schools of Sardine leave the colder waters around Cape Town and head to the warmer waters of KZN to lay their eggs. Once that is done, they'll return to the Cape with their whole journey closely followed by dolphins, birds, whales and of course, sharks!

The Sardines try to stick together tightly, forming what is known as a 'bait ball', but eventually, every last one of them, is picked out as lunch. The feeding frenzy is incredible and divers can safely watch from beneath the 'ball' at 5-7metres. African Dive Adventures organizes dives during the Sardine Run as well.

To see sharks in their natural habitats, to understand them, to know that they're not as terrifying as we have made them to be and to be able to help protect them, would be a thrilling experience. So perhaps a session at the shark college in KZN would be worthwhile or perhaps a few shark encounters off Protea Banks would ease my worries about them. I guess there's only one way to find out really...



For more information on holidays in KZN and on shark diving operators check out the following websites:

ANDY COBBS SHARK COLLEGE
www.adventurescuba.co.za

QUO VADIS DIVE CENTRE
www.raggiecave.com

AFRICAN DIVE ADVENTURES
www.africandiveadventures.co.za

KWAZULU-NATAL TOURISM
www.kzn.org.za

* Images were sourced from the internet



AL MARS*A Musandam*

MUSANDAM

A LAND OF STARK BEAUTY

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **AL MARS*A***



Are you looking to enjoy a nice day or a full week onboard a cruise near the UAE? Do you want to swim, snorkel, dive or just soak up the sun and take in the scenery? There is no place more relaxing and peaceful than the Musandam Peninsula.

At the north eastern tip of Arabia, overlooking the Straights of Hurmuz, the stark beauty of the rugged fjord-like coastline of the Musandam is bordered to the west by the warm waters of the Arabian Gulf and to the east and southeast by the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean.

Separated from the rest of Oman by the eastern part of the UAE, and guarding the southern side of the strategically important Straits of Hurmuz, the entire peninsula was once a military zone and was largely off limits to tourists.

Musandam is a land of stark beauty, an area of fjords and small villages, most of which are only accessible by sea.

The pristine waters of this beautiful marine zoo offer you one of the widest bio-diversity of species anywhere in the world. The deep drop offs and cool water upwelling provide an abundance of plankton, making this area a rich feeding ground for a variety of marine life.

Combined with the abundant and brilliantly colored coral gardens, this is a must-see dive destination.

Here, divers can do deep, channel, wall and night dives. From peaceful coral reefs to advanced diving in the strong currents of the Straights of Hurmuz, Musandam offers an extensive choice for the diving enthusiasts.

The season for diving is mostly from the middle of September till the end of June.

The temperatures vary during the months from 18 – 34 degrees above water and from 21 – 30 underwater. Visibility varies from day to day.

The species you may see include turtles, reef sharks, dolphins, whale sharks, sting rays, eagle rays, hammerheads, minke whales, lion fish, sunfish, sea horses, and many more, plus a colorful range of reef fish and corals.

Tourists also go there for bird watching and sight-seeing.

Musandam is an area that has bays and fjords where divers can go by boat and relish the tranquility of a safe and secluded anchorage. One cruise and dive operator is Al Marsa Travel & Tourism.

Al Marsa covers all the Eastern Musandam, from Dibba port all the way up to the tip at the entrance of the Straights of Hurmuz. These areas are Ra's Haffa, Ra's Lima, Ra's Marove, Ra's Samid, Ra's Sarkan, Ra's Dillah, Ra's Bashin, Ra's Khaysah, Ra's Qabr Al Hindi and many more.

Al Marsa also offers rides, tandem flights and

courses in paragliding, para motoring and motor hang gliding. It also recently built the 5 star resort "Six Senses Hideaway Zighy Bay" on the shores of Zighy beach, in Musandam, catering to all the local and international visitors who wish to spend a fabulous time surrounded by the rugged mountains and clear blue waters.

Together with the locals and the local authorities, Al Marsa promotes for eco-tourism to safe guard Musandam and preserve its rich marine life for the enjoyment of divers and tourists and most of all, for the well-being and interest of the local fishermen.

AL MARSA TRAVEL & TOURISM

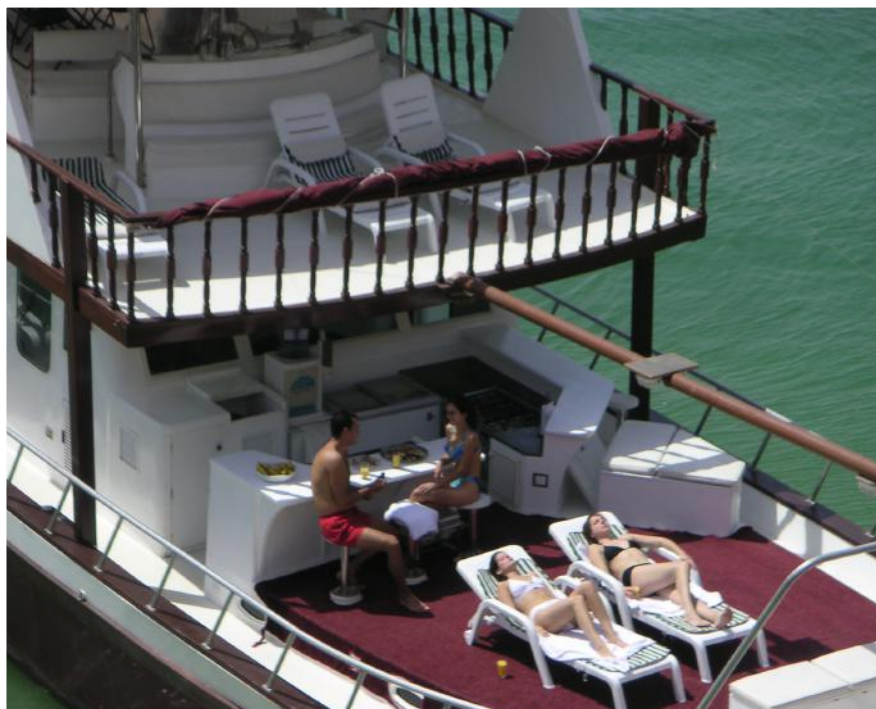
Tel: +971 6 544 1232

+968 26 836995 (reservations)

Fax: +971 6 544 1094

Email: info@musandamdiving.com

Website: www.musandamdiving.com

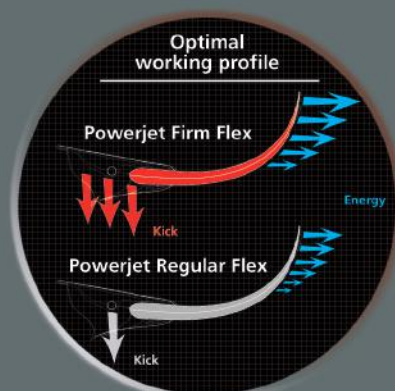


Multiflex Technology

PowerJet



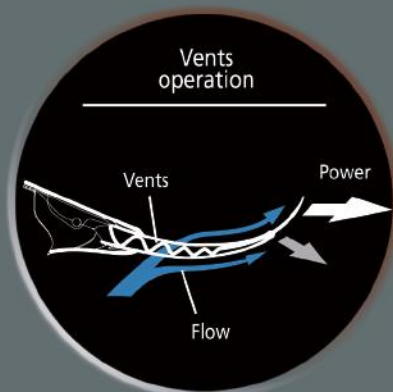
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Two Fin Flex Options are available to suit every diver fining technique, Firm Flex and Standard Flex



The soft vents reduce the negative pressure area of the blade. Whilst the profile of the Side ribs, which are made from two different materials. Induces a "spring effect" which increases the propulsion from the blade.



The vents in the blade, helps to keep the fin stay horizontal in the water increasing propulsion.

PowerJet fin

Constructed from 3 different materials and available in 2 different "Flex strengths" to suit every divers fining ability. Combining the "Spring effect" with a soft blade for best performance and comfort. New rotating buckle and soft foot pocket.

Available in 3 sizes SM, ML & LXL
and 3 colors, black (Firm Flex), yellow and blue (Regular Flex)

CORAL SOUNDS

FEATURE **RITA BENTO** PHOTOGRAPHY **PHILIPPE LECOMTE**



A snapping shrimp and its partner, a goby. Some species of the snapping shrimps "live-together" with Gobies. They have a mutualistic symbiotic relationship, where a shrimp digs a home which it shares with the goby while the latter keeps an eye on possible predators for the virtually blind shrimp.

It's impossible not to notice the loud sound you hear while diving in coral reefs. The constant snapping underwater is amazing and can be so thunderous that sometimes, you wish you could turn it off. What's more incredible is when you realize that the sound is produced by the enormous amount of tiny shrimp that live in the corals, the snapping shrimp.

Snapping shrimp, or pistol shrimp, are crustaceans that are found in tropical and temperate waters, usually growing to about 5cm (2 inches) long. They are burrow-dwelling decapod (meaning "10-legged"), characterized by having two asymmetrical claws on the first pair of walking legs. The larger claw, which can grow up to half the size of the entire body, can be used as a weapon of offense, defense and food capture while the smaller one is used mainly for grasping and handling objects.

These shrimp belong to two main genera, the *Alpheus* and the *Synalpheus*, are highly aggressive and defend their burrows against same-sex intruders. The sound, which is produced by the larger claw, is mainly used to stun prey such as small crabs and other snapping shrimp but this can also lead to serious injury or even death. Shrimp also use the snap sound to communicate with other shrimp.

There are hundreds of snapping shrimp species, members of the family *Alpheidae*. These animals are very hard to see because of their small size and behaviour. They live in the reef's innumerable nooks and crannies, and you have to stop moving and keep staring at a small area

of the coral before you will be rewarded with the sight of one. However, with patience, you can spot more than one individual.

Experienced divers know that the intensity of the snapping sound usually indicates if they are close to a coral reef or not. Recently, researches have revealed that this technique is also used by some fish. Some species of young coral reef fish, which can float out to sea during their larval stage, are attracted to reefs by the sound that is produced in the area.

In the past, scientists assumed that the snapping noise was produced when the two parts of the claw shut. However, latest researches have revealed that, in some species, the production of the sound doesn't come from the clap of the claws, but from the popping of a bubble that is generated by the claws' rapid closing motion. The sound production is so fast that it only takes about 300 microseconds for the claws to shut and produce small bubbles. These low-pressure bubbles are generated from the jet water that shoots out at a speed of up to 100 km/h (62 miles/hr). This high water velocity makes the pressure within the liquid decrease, allowing air bubbles to expand in these fast-moving fluids. This phenomenon is known as Bernoulli's principle and also occurs in a variety of environments, like rivers and liquids flowing through pipes. When the pressure is stabilized, the tiny air bubbles implode, creating a loud snap sound. It also produces light that is called 'shrimpluminescence', due to the high temperatures and pressure found inside the bubbles.

The sound, which can be heard from distances up to a few kilometres, is so loud and constant that it seriously interferes in other bioacoustic studies and in military and scientific sonar used to detect underwater objects. On the other hand, during World War II, submarines used this "sound curtain" to cover the engine and generator noise. It was by that time, when hostile submarines were hard to find, that the study of snapping shrimps began.

The sound of snapping shrimp increases slightly at night, but in a night dive, you will also hear from other fish that have the ability to produce sounds, like the coral reef toadfish and the damselfish.

The sound that fish produce is done intentionally; it's mainly for communication and is used either in stressful situations or reproduction, like a warning to predators or competitors, to attract mates, or as a fright response. In this case, they are referred to as vocalizations and they are done by drumming the swimbladder with specialized muscles or bones. As an example, we have the damselfish, a very territorial group that use sound as a way to protect their area from intruders.

Fish also produce sounds unintentionally while they are feeding; they do this by rubbing together skeletal components or by chewing together hard parts, such as calcium carbonate of corals. This form of sound production is called stridulation. Unintentional sound can also be produced when swimming, by quickly changing speed and direction. This kind of low frequency sound is called hydrodynamic sound.

Despite all the ocean sounds, the snapping shrimp are known to be the largest source of sound in the coastal ocean. This doesn't mean that you won't be able to hear other biological sounds while diving in coral reefs, like the ones produced by some fish, but for sure, the main theme of your underwater adventure soundtrack will be the snapping shrimp.



Damselfish on coral reefs. © ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies/Marine Photobank.



ANTARCTICA

THE GREATEST CLASSROOM ON EARTH!

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **JAMAL AL FALASI AND NOOR AL FALASI**

UAE nationals Jamal Al Falasi and sister Noor Al Falasi recently returned from an Antarctic expedition under the program "Students On Ice" (www.studentsonice.com) with much gained knowledge, hope and a mission.

THE JOURNEY

They left Dubai on the 25th of December 2007 and headed to Ushuaia, Argentina (the southernmost city of the world) via Sao Paulo, Brazil and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

There they met with the Students on Ice team which included 68 students and 20 staff members composed of researchers, doctors and scientists. They spent the next two days absorbing the lectures and workshops and even went on hiking trips before they boarded the MC Ushuaia ship bound for Antarctica.

It took them two dreadful days on the Drake Passage (the narrow sea between South America and Antarctica) to arrive in Antarctica. During their seasick journey, they continued to have lectures and workshops.

After arriving on Antarctic land, they spent 10 full days on the greatest classroom on earth, studying about Antarctic History and politics, Environmental impacts on Antarctica, Environmental leadership and communication, Oceanography, Geology, Marine biology, etc.

With minds filled with knowledge and curiosities quenched, they returned to Dubai via Argentina and Brazil.

THE ACTION GROUPS

From what they have experienced and learnt, the Students on Ice team created 5 action groups to tackle important global issues:

1. Climate Change
2. Human Rights
3. Water
4. Over Consumption
5. Wildlife

While Jamal joined "climate change", Noor joined "wildlife".

Jamal explained that his group "... will try to portray the effects of climate change and how humans are destroying our only planet. We will also host a competition in the six different countries that my group represents and the winner will be sponsored by us (the students) to go to the 2008 Antarctic trip to undergo the experience that we had."

For her part, Noor and her group "...are working on creating a website as well as awareness activities to inform people on the ecological impact of zoos. All animals should be in their natural habitats. Why should their lives be any less valuable than ours?"

THEIR SAY

"It was definitely not a leisure trip. It was exhausting and challenging, both mentally and physically," – Jamal

"I loved it! It was an eye opener for me and it changed my perspective of our earth. I see

it as less tragic now and I have more hope for our generation and generations to come." – Noor

"Yes, people should definitely educate themselves about the impact we are having on the environment because we simply cannot survive without it, but it sure can survive without us." – Jamal

"We can all make a difference. Simple actions done by individuals can have a positive effect on the environment, such as taking shorter showers or switching off the lights when leaving a room. Though they may seem insignificant, they do help in so many ways." – Noor

Jamal would like to thank:

Global Information Technologies, for sponsoring him for an educational trip of a lifetime; Dr. Mariam Al-Shenasi, Head of the Environmental Department at the University of Sharjah for encouraging him and helping him sort out his university exams; and Noor Al Falasi, Jamal's sister, for being by his side and introducing him to the Students On Ice Expedition Program.

* Jamal Al Falasi is the Environmental Awareness Officer of UNEP-TUNZA Youth Advisor for West Asia and is currently taking his degree in Environmental Health at the University of Sharjah.

Noor would like to thank:

Dr. Sulayman Al Jasim, Director General of Zayed University of Dubai, for sponsoring her.

* Noor Al Falasi is studying for a degree in Environmental Science at Zayed University.



FEATURED CREATURE

SPOT-FIN PORCUPINEFISH (*DIODON HYSTRIX*)

FEATURE **RITA BENTO**

EDA accepts text and photo contributions for this page.

FAST FACTS

- Maximum weight 2.8 kg and max size 91.0 cm
- The largest of the porcupinefishes
- Average life-span is 10 years
- Feeds on sea urchins, snails, shrimps and crabs
- Commonly seen in caves and holes in shallow reefs
- Solitary and nocturnal
- Poisonous to eat
- When threatened, it swallows air and water to Inflate its body
- It has spines which lie flat against its body but at the first sign of danger, these spines begin to rise and becomes fully extended when the body is completely expanded

FUN FACTS

- Has no ribs which enables it to expand its body without damaging its skeleton
- Once fully expanded, it will float, often upside down, until the danger has passed
- Fossils of it dates back as far as 26 to 7 million years ago
- The population of Oceania and China uses blown and dried out spot-fins to make Chinese lanterns



PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

NEW LADIES T-SHIRTS – DHS 40

EDA Diver Design available in Black (sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL)

Turtle Design available in Navy Blue (sizes: S, M, XL, XXL)

IYOR Design available in White (sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL)

NEW MENS T-SHIRTS – DHS 40

EDA Diver Design available in Black (sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL)

Turtle Design available in Navy Blue (sizes: S, M, XL, XXL)

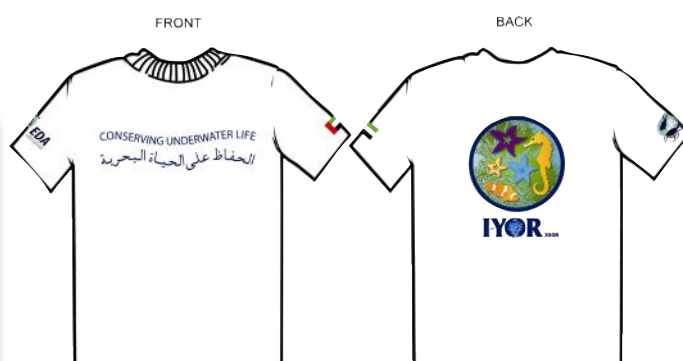
IYOR Design available in White (sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL)

NEW KIDS T-SHIRTS – DHS 35

IYOR Design available in White (sizes: S, M, L, XL)

HOODIES – DHS 130

Available in Black (sizes: S, M, L, XL)



UPCOMING EVENTS

DIVE MIDDLE EAST EXHIBITION (DMEX)

11-15 March 2008, Dubai International Marine Club, Mina Seyahi

LAUNCH

The International Year of the Reef (IYOR) 2008

CORAL REEF AWARENESS AND MONITORING PROGRAM

EARTH DAY

22nd April 2008

EDA GALA DINNER 2008

Date to be confirmed

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

5th June 2008

CLEAN UP ARABIA

November 2008



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

Head of the Scientific Committee Mr. Mohd Al Salfa

Technical Adviser Mr. Ahmed bin Byat

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Graphic Designer, Photographer & Film Maker
Ally Landes

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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Fax: +971-4-3939391

Email: diving@emiratesdiving.com, projects@emiratesdiving.com

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





Dive for Earth Day 2008

Make a world of difference this April.
Find a Dive for Earth Day activity near you.

www.projectaware.org