



EDA

جمعية الإمارات للغوص
Emirates Diving Association

DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

SEPTEMBER 2007 VOLUME 3 ISSUE 3



CORAL REEFS

CORAL SURVEY

OF EAST COAST'S POPULAR DIVE SITES

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF 2008

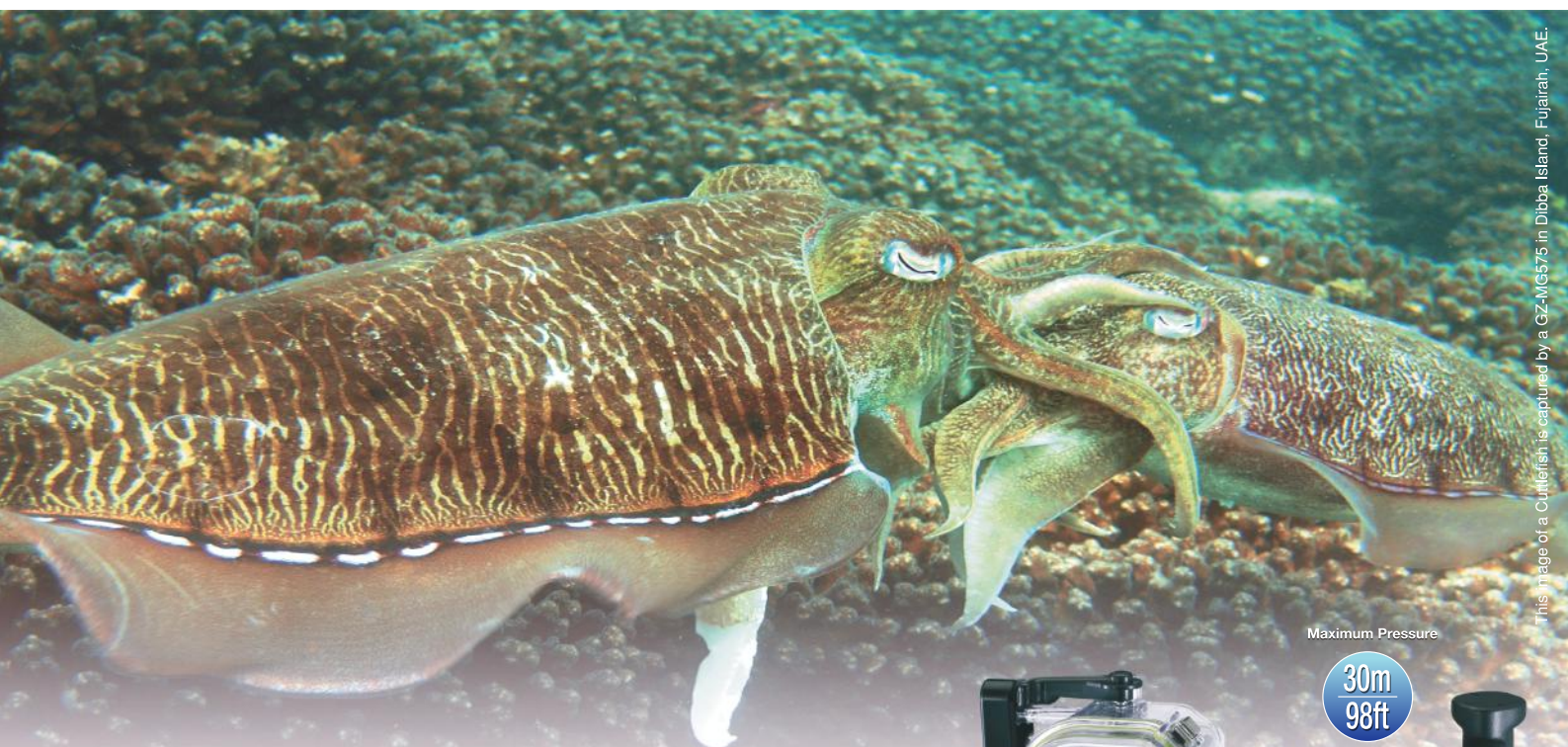
THE ECO DIVER CHALLENGE

PRESERVATION OF THE AQUATIC WORLD

TAWASUL

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Photos by Yuki Ochiai



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 December 2007. Send all articles/comments to Head Office: diving@emiratesdiving.com.



CORAL AWARENESS



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We all know that many countries with coral reefs generate significant portions of their income through tourism. Studies show that on average, countries with coral reef industries derive more than half of their Gross National Product from them...

According to the United Nations Environment Programme—World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), coral reefs generate around \$30 billion in goods and services to the world economy each year; and about a billion people depend on them for food, income and livelihood. And yet conserving them is proving to be a complicated task, and much remains to be done to find the necessary finance.

At first sight this may seem strange. Very recent research at the UNEP-WCMC using satellite images from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has shown that marine protected areas (MPAs) cover about 20 per cent of the 284,300 square kilometers of the reefs documented in the Centre's World Atlas of Coral Reefs – and most of this is specially safeguarded under World Heritage designation.

In marine areas (around coastal waters, reefs, beaches and shorelines, offshore waters, uplands and lagoons) many tourist activities occur in or around fragile ecosystems.

Anchoring, snorkeling, sport fishing and scuba diving, yachting and cruising are some of the activities that can cause direct degradation of marine ecosystems such as coral reefs, and subsequent impacts on coastal protection and fisheries.

There are 109 countries with coral reefs. In 90 of them, reefs are being damaged by cruise ship anchors and sewage, by tourists breaking off chunks of coral, and by commercial harvesting for sale to tourists:

- One study of a cruise ship anchor dropped in a coral reef for one day found an area about half the size of a football field completely destroyed, and half again as much covered by rubble that died later. It was estimated that coral recovery would take 50 years.
- The casting of a single anchor can destroy 190 square meters of coral.
- The world has lost an estimated 27% of its coral reefs, and if nothing is done to change current trends, 60% of the world's reefs could be lost by 2030**.

The UAE diving industry may have gone back to normal and years from now, cyclone Gonu could be just a memory but we here at EDA

believe that there is a need to raise more awareness on the state of our coral reefs, hence the focus for this issue.

2008 has also been declared as the International Year of the Reef (IYOR) so it's just but proper that EDA brings you this information first, courtesy of coral expert ICRAN (International Coral Reef Action Network).

We also give you more information on the Eco Diver course being offered by Pavilion Dive Centre (PDC), which will raise your level of environmental awareness all the more. Also go through the Tawasul Project that PDC aims to launch next year to spread awareness to schools.

Going back to Gonu, despite the devastation, it brought out the best in our diving community. We had a dive center offering help to another; a dive club pestering EDA how they can help, and volunteer divers giving up their workday to accompany EDA on documenting the effects of the cyclone. Many divers also heeded our call of doing their share to help by just going diving and supporting the industry and giving us "before and after Gonu" photos of their dives. We also received feedback that although some dive sites are virtually bare rocks now, completely devoid of corals, others, like the car cemetery, benefited from the cyclone which cleansed the sediment in the area and improved visibility. I would like to thank the EDA members who are trying to do their best to help the community and the environment.

I hope you were enlightened with some facts and figures that I got from the UNEP about coral reefs so at least we can all appreciate and try to conserve our marine life. You can MAKE A DIFFERENCE and help protect these "rainforests of the sea" by being an Eco Diver (www.emiratesdiving.com).

"Every drop of water that existed when the earth was formed still exists today, whether presently in the form of liquid, gas or solid."

"The oceans create 90% of the earth's oxygen. Most of this oxygen is produced by phytoplankton (single cell sea plants)." – **Living Oceans.org**

**The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, "Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2000".

Eco Regards,

Ibrahim N.Al-Zu'bi

MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITIES: THE DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY

The Dow Chemical Company is a leader in sustainable development. A diversified chemical company that harnesses the power of innovation, science and technology to constantly improve what is essential to human progress, it is actively committed to the communities in which it operates.

In the UAE, Dow has committed to the Emirates Environmental Group and the Emirates Diving Association (EDA). Globally, Dow has created an alliance with Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ocean Futures Society (OFS) to help educate the public about marine conservation to encourage responsible behavior and create opportunities that make a difference.

OFS' mission to explore and preserve the global ocean by educating people around the world to act responsibly for its protection is closely aligned with Dow's commitment to operate sustainably.

The two groups jointly rolled out a Don't Be a Beach Bum educational program at the National Science Teachers Association conference in Anaheim, California in 2006. Designed to help children understand the impact of their behaviors on the oceans, this program builds upon Dow's exclusive corporate sponsorship of Jean-Michel Cousteau: Ocean Adventures - an inspirational six-part television series which aired for the first time in April last year on PBS stations nationwide.

While Dow continues to use science and technology to offer sustainable solutions that help protect ocean habitats and a freshwater supply, the series aims to help build awareness about our oceans and to encourage everyone to play a role in keeping them healthy.

"The first step in solving a problem is in understanding it, which is what educational programs like Ocean Adventures and Don't Be a Beach Bum are designed to do," said Andrew Liveris, Dow's president, CEO and chairman. "They raise awareness that everyone is part of the problem and that we all have a role to play in being part of the solution. At Dow, we are proud to be a part of the solution not only through educational support, but through science and technology solutions as well."

People are not always aware of the impact their land-based activities have on the oceans around the world, especially as a result of the great quantities of trash generated. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says that reusing and recycling efforts have helped but that a great deal more needs to be done. EPA says we can be part of the solution and

that through collaboration and education, the global footprint can be lifted.

Here are some tips for reducing our impact on beaches from the EPA:

- Dispose of trash properly. This will help reduce the amount of trash that is washed into our waterways from storm drains.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Cut the rings of plastic six-pack holders. This lowers the risk of entanglement to marine animals if the holders do make it out to sea.
- Participate in local beach, river or stream clean ups.
- Practice good housekeeping.
- Look for alternative materials or avoid excessive packaging when deciding on purchases.
- Educate others about marine debris.
- Get involved in your local area.

Dow's education support extends beyond the ocean and a variety of innovative Dow products improve water quality, fuel efficiency, food and water delivery. For example, Dow offers FILMTEC™ reverse osmosis membranes that improve the quality of our freshwater supply, plastics for pipes that help conserve water and packaging materials that are easily recycled with the help of the public to minimize the impact on the environment.

Dow is a sponsor of The Keystone Center's 'Key Issues: Bringing Environmental Issues to the Classroom' program, which supports middle school teachers in professional development. The Keystone Center is a non-profit public policy and educational organization, headquartered in the United States.

Key Issues provides teachers from across the world with a balanced, non-biased, comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to investigate environmental issues within the context of scientific investigation. On average, Dow sponsors between 10-15 teachers each summer for the Key Issues workshops. Dow sends educators from its manufacturing locations and the teachers in turn implement the inquiry-based hands-on science program with their students.

While Dow sets aggressive goals to grow its business around the world and in our region, it does so responsibly, in ways that reduce its global environmental footprint, strengthen its communities and solve some of the world's most pressing problems, including those related to food, water, shelter, health, energy and climate change. Dow believes that together, we can make a difference in our world.



Reducing our collective impact on our beaches protects marine life around the world.



FIND OUT MORE AT:
www.dow.com

SOURCES:

The Dow Chemical Company
www.dow.com

The Ocean Futures Society
www.oceanfutures.org

The Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov/beaches

* The DOW Chemical Company is an annual sponsor of EDA.

THE ALVIN APPEAL UPDATE



Photo courtesy of Al Boom Diving – The Alvin Appeal team and EDA turned over the Dhs 47,700 cheque to Joseph Vestil (third from right), brother of Alvin, two days before the brothers flew to the Philippines.

Alvin Vestil, the PADI Course Director from Al Boom Diving who was severely brain damaged from a car accident, is safely back home in the Philippines. Thanks to the Alvin Appeal, a fund-raising raffle established in his honor, Alvin was flown to the Philippines on the 21st of July together with his brother Jojo and a nurse. With the support of the UAE diving community, the raffle generated Dhs 47,700, surpassing the target of Dhs 40,000.

Jojo happily reveals that there has been a marked improvement in Alvin's condition ever since he was reunited with his wife Cathy and daughters Martina and Kemi and being cared for 24/7 by an army of loving relatives.

"Before, when he was in the hospital in Ras Al Khaimah, I could not see any sign of recognition when I spoke to him. He just stared at one side. But in the Philippines, we can see that when we talk to him, he now looks at us and follows our movements. Also, we never heard a sound from him before. But now, when someone talks to him, you will hear him moan, like he wants to talk but cannot," said Jojo.

Jojo also shares that Alvin has round-the-clock nursing care courtesy of his two nieces who just graduated from nursing school and a helper-turned-nursing aid whose education Alvin had previously paid for:

Jojo and the whole Vestil family's expression of gratitude to the UAE diving community can best be summed up by this heartfelt letter from one of their brothers, Jonathan Vestil:

Hi friends!

Alvin is now back in the Philippines. Thanks to your unselfish act, he is now back home with his wife Cathy and little Martina. It will be a long road to recovery, but with his family, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces and all of you, he will manage it.

It was an emotional reunion for Alvin and me with my other brother and one sister in Manila when he arrived last July 21. His wife and our sister, who is a nurse, were already at the airport infirmary waiting for him. When I first saw him, I could not help but shed a tear when I saw his condition but I was grateful that he is back. Seeing him in his present condition, I feel that the mere act of blinking an eye is a blessing.

To all of you, the Vestil Family would like to extend our gratitude for all the support that you extended to bring him home.

I really hope that one day, I could personally thank you and do what we love most, dive together!

Sincerely yours,

Jonathan S. Vestil
PADI Course Director

EDA SUPPORTS GO GREEN DUBAI FOR LIVE EARTH

FRIENDS OF



LIVE EARTH

EDA supported the latest awareness campaign on global warming of Go Green Dubai, an official "Friends of Live Earth", by exhibiting alongside other environmental organizations at Dubai Festival City (DFC).

Go Green Dubai screened Live Earth, the global concerts to combat the climate crisis, via seven TV screens strategically placed around the DFC's Festival Square.

Other participants at the event were Envirofone, a phone recycling company, Philips, WWF-EWF and Nomad Ocean Adventures.

GOGREENDUBAI!



Photos courtesy of Go Green Dubai & EDA

SAVE ANIMALS

CHILDREN'S PAINTING COMPETITION LAUNCHED TO CREATE AWARENESS ABOUT GLOBAL WARMING

FEATURE **HINA BAKHT** PHOTOGRAPHY **SUPPLIED BY CORAL INTERNATIONAL**

Under the patronage of the Ministry of Education and AGMC – BMW, Coral International Hotels, Resorts & Spas, in association with Hamriyah Free Zone Authority, Qanat Al Qasba, Philips and Western Union, recently launched Save Animals Children's Painting Competition.

Save Animals Children's Painting Competition is targeted at all school children between the ages of 6 and 13 years in the UAE and brings leading companies together under one roof to show their concern and responsibility towards the environment. The objective behind this hugely popular annual painting competition is to generate awareness about pressing environmental issues in order to step up efforts to combat global warming.

The Save Animals competition is being held in conjunction with Just a Drop (the only global travel and tourism industry charity dedicated to providing clean water to children). The Grand Prize for the contest is a 3-day trip to Africa for the winner and two adults. In addition, there are over 100 exciting prizes sponsored by Toy World. There is also a very special prize by Philips. The support sponsors for the competition are Reef Real Estate, Manafa, McDonald's, Virgin Megastores, United Arab Bank, Coca-Cola, Giordano Junior and



(From Left) Antoine Chaccour, Hazem Sawaf, Aisha Abdull Rahman, Mdm Laila Ahmed Al Thawadi, Lama Kanan, Mamdouh Khairallah, Michel Noblet, Antoine Chamas and Emad Jawad Hussein

Diamondlease Car Rental. The media partners are Khaleej Times, Channel 4 Radio, City 7 and Young Times.

Save Animals Children's Painting Competition will run from September 6 to October 16, 2007.

Over a 100,000 entry forms will be distributed in all participating schools in the UAE from September 6 onwards. The last date of receiving back entries is October 16, 2007. The winners will be selected by a panel of judges headed by the Ministry of Education. The Grand Award Ceremony for the winners will be held on November 15 at the Qanat Al Qasba.

The children's participation in this competition is absolutely free of cost. Hurry up as forms are limited.

Join Us in the Fight Against Global Warming!

For more information call:
04-212 8220 or 050-126 9327



Last year's winner



(From Left) Hazem Sawaf, Madam Laila Ahmed Al Thawadi, Mohamed Juma'a Ben Hindi, Michel Noblet, Mamdouh Khairallah, Hadi Kassem

BE A COUSTEAU KID

Jacques-Yves Cousteau founded The Cousteau Society to protect and inspire love for our ocean. In the USA, The Cousteau Society publishes Cousteau Kids (CK), an educational program for kids aged between eight and twelve which explores nature and science around the world.

The Cousteau Society believes that environmental education is becoming an essential part of today's school's curricula. The aim is for children not to lose touch with nature in an ever-more computerized world. Environmental education programs have been showing their effectiveness in stimulating the environmental awareness of children, teaching simplified methods for understanding and appreciating nature, and giving children the concept of working together on the local and international levels to solve environmental issues.

It is our aim at The Cousteau Society's regional office in Lebanon to make environmental education an intra-collegiate activity hopefully to become the dominant element in the extra-curriculum in the main Arab colleges and high schools.

It is therefore intended to establish, using various sources and publications including CK's North American initiative, an environmental education program for Arab kids aged between eight and twelve. The program will be inspired by Cousteau's spirit as a pioneering environmentalist, and will aim to create a grass-root movement to protect our region's oceans, rivers, lakes and forests, preserving the rights of current and future generations of Arab youths.

This school program is meant, for effectiveness' sake, to be a two-tier experience; involving in-class lessons and field trips. For this purpose, it will go hand-in-hand with a Cousteau Kids TV series on Al Jazeera Kids. The Cousteau Society intends to launch the program in 2008 at chosen pilot schools, hoping for a gradual introduction to as many schools as possible in the UAE and other Arab countries.

In this program, Cousteau Kids Instructors play an important role in teaching and evaluating the workbook done by children, also leading field trips and making sure students get a positive feedback.

The main language of instruction will either be English or Arabic with some keywords retained in the other language – or fully bilingual; for educational purposes. Geographical, biological and nature-physical quizzes and games will make such a course fun to take.

The educational material will consist of a book with course contents and a complementary workbook with quizzes and answers. These will be part of the "Cousteau Kids Crew Pack" which will include useful objects for nature trips, such as a magnetic compass, pencil and slate, and identification sheets for fauna and flora.

“THE AIM IS FOR
CHILDREN NOT TO LOSE
TOUCH WITH NATURE
IN AN EVER-MORE
COMPUTERIZED WORLD”



COUSTEAUkids

**AN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAM FOR KIDS AGED 8-12**

Inspired by Jacques Cousteau's spirit
as a pioneering environmentalist

•
Geographical, biological and nature-physical
quizzes and games

•
Explore nature and science around the world

•
In-class lessons and field trips

**COMING SOON
TO A SCHOOL NEAR YOU**

For more information contact
c.francis@cousteau.org

International Declaration of Reef Rights

All coral reefs have the right to be free from:

- Over-fishing and destructive fishing
- Pollution
- Human caused coral bleaching and ocean acidification
- Direct damage from divers, snorkelers and boaters
- Damage due to poorly planned coastal development
- Coral diseases



In recognition of these rights, I pledge to:

- Ask if my seafood is sustainably caught and to only eat fish and shellfish that are from well-managed stocks and caught in a sustainable manner
- Use products that will not pollute the sea and dispose of all wastes properly
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support efforts to reduce global climate change
- Not disturb, damage or collect corals and other reef organisms
- Ask tour operators, cruise lines, hotels and restaurants in coral reef areas what their policy is towards coral reef protection and to support reef-friendly businesses and best practices
- Patronize tour operators that use mooring buoys or anchor away from living corals
- Support environmentally friendly development that does not damage coral reefs.
- Support government efforts to improve sewage treatment, promote sustainable land use practices and to protect and restore coastal open space and coral reefs.
- Encourage my friends and family to sign this INTERNATIONAL DECLARATION OF REEF RIGHTS

As a citizen of planet earth, I pledge to abide by the principles of this

INTERNATIONAL DECLARATION OF REEF RIGHTS

www.reefcheck.org

INTERNATIONAL YEAR **OF THE REEF**

FEATURE **INTERNATIONAL CORAL REEF ACTION NETWORK (ICRAN)**

The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), a partnership among governments, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations throughout the world, has designated 2008 as the International Year of the Reef. Take action, get involved and help give our reefs a greater chance of survival.

The International Year of the Reef 2008 (IYOR 2008) is a year-long campaign of events and initiatives hosted by governments, individuals, corporations, and schools around the world to promote awareness, conservation action, and strengthen long-term support for coral reef conservation. Everyone is encouraged to participate actively in this initiative.

The first campaign took place in 1997 in response to the increasing threats and loss of coral reefs and associated ecosystems (mangroves, seagrass beds, estuaries, etc.). It was a global effort to raise awareness and understanding of coral reefs, the threats they face, as well as to support related conservation, research and management efforts. Over the last few decades, the health of coral reefs and their associated ecosystems have degraded considerably around the world, and marine resources within and surrounding coral reefs have significantly declined. This is primarily due to human influences. Despite IYOR 97's success in raising global awareness with participation from over 225 organisations in 50 countries and territories, ten years later, there remains an urgent need to take action to conserve and manage coral reefs.

YFOR 2008 aims to promote urgent conservation and management to better protect our coral reefs on a global scale. The goal is to communicate effectively the value and importance of the world's coral reefs to local communities, children, tourists, governments, even people who live far away from the coastline, and to motivate these target audiences to take action to protect coral reefs.

The overall objectives of IYOR 2008 are:

- To strengthen awareness about the ecological, economic, social and cultural value of coral reefs and associated ecosystems.
- To improve understanding of the critical threats to reefs, and generate both practical and innovative solutions to reduce these threats.
- To generate urgent action to develop and implement effective management strategies for conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems.

The Emirates Diving Association will be working with the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN), and other partners on a variety of activities throughout 2008, to encourage the understanding of the value of our reefs, and start fostering the behaviour that could help save them.

ICRI will be launching the Year to “kick start” efforts around the world in conjunction with the ICRI General Meeting during the week of 21st January, in the United States. For more information on the IYOR 2008 effort and ideas on how to take part, visit the IYOR website on www.iyor.org. An online calendar will soon be available where event organisers will be able to post their activities.

Stay up to date with exciting news and activities from around the world by signing up to the IYOR 2008 newsletter at:
<http://www.iyor.org/newsletter.html>



Beach clean up, Fiji - Nic Barnard 2003



Education and Awareness activities, Tun Sakaran Marine Park, Borneo - Elizabeth Wood 2007



Diver, Indonesia - Dan Exton 2006

[illegible]

English-Arabic Responsible Tourism Guidelines, available at the EDA office and downloadable from <http://www.emiratesdiving.com/Guidelines.htm>

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON ICRAN, PLEASE VISIT
www.icran.org

GLOBAL WARMING COULD BE COOKING FISH

FEATURE JANETTE ELLIS



Reprinted with permission from Cosmos (www.cosmosmagazine.com)

SYDNEY: As if life wasn't tough enough for young fish which battle to survive while dodging hungry predators, a new study reveals that climate change could be cooking them in their delicate hatching stage.

In a find that could spell trouble for many marine species, Australian biologists have found that increasingly warm tropical waters are killing some embryos and shortening the lifespan of survivors.

To probe the effects of climate change on reef fish, experts at the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies at James Cook University in Queensland, painstakingly studied populations of Ambon damselfish (*Pomacentrus amboinensis*) around Lizard Island, part of the Great Barrier Reef.

DAMSELFISH IN DISTRESS

Damselfish embryos are produced when eggs laid by a female are enveloped by the male's sperm and fertilised. Tiny larvae develop which, if they manage to avoid being eaten – sometimes by their own dads – will grow into adults.

The team found that elevated water temperatures during development of the young fish have devastating consequences

for their future survival. Summer breeding temperature currently vary between 25 and 31°C – but the top of the range is already affecting survival. In experiments up to 50 per cent of embryos died at 31°C.

"Survival of fish embryos was dramatically compromised at 31°C, which is [no longer] uncommon at this location during summer," said lead researcher Monica Gagliano.

"For the first time, we have been able to establish the fate of young fishes in their natural environment by following them through time, from leaving their parents up to months after settling back on the reef," she added.

DOUBLE-WHAMMY

Furthermore, the researchers found that climate change may be having a double-whammy effect on reef fish survival, as climate change is affecting the scarcity of food resources too. Poorly fed damselfish mothers produced smaller eggs, which themselves were found to be more at risk of dying in warm waters than large eggs.

"There is no doubt that the quality of parents and the early environment experienced by fish as they develop have major effects on who will survive," said Gagliano.

The results are published in recent papers in the *Journal of Animal Ecology* and *Oecologia*.

The findings may well extend beyond damselfish, and have implications for many reef fish species, said the researchers. Increased temperatures on the Great Barrier Reef have resulted in mass coral die-offs of late, meaning that fish have less to eat. If this translates into poor quality eggs and hatching death, fish populations could severely diminish, they said.

Sea temperatures on the Great Barrier Reef are predicted to rise by between a further one to three degrees by 2100 and "Impacts on reef biodiversity, fishing and tourism are very likely," said Gagliano.

"This study, while only on one species and under lab conditions, suggests that even a slight increase in ambient water temperatures of 2°C could have profound negative effects on reef fish production," commented David Booth, a marine ecologist from the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia.

Gagliano's team will now focus on determining whether or not environmental stress has implications for successive generations of fish. The level of environmental stress is significant because global warming-induced changes are happening so rapidly.

MODEL PREDICTS HOW CORAL WEATHERS STORM

FEATURE MARIE THERESA BRAY

Reprinted with permission from Cosmos (www.cosmosmagazine.com)

SYDNEY: The amount of damage a coral reef will suffer in the face of stormy seas can now be predicted by an engineering model developed by Australian scientists.

In a paper published in the British journal *Nature*, researchers from James Cook University in Townsville use mathematical models to calculate the forces that coral is subjected to by waves, storm surges or tsunamis. They also calculate the probability of the coral being destroyed.

"The predictive tool we have developed allows managers to assess the vulnerability of their reefs to extreme wave events," said lead author Joshua Madin, now at the University of California in Santa Barbara.

"The ability to estimate the potential damage on a reef for different disaster scenarios could help managers plan for economic losses, as well as promote strategies that help the reef recover," he said.

The model predicts the probability that coral will be dislodged in any given year, based on only three factors: the colony's shape, the strength of the reef to which it is attached, and the likelihood that there will be a storm that exceeds the critical level that year.

The researchers borrowed from engineering theory to translate the movement of waves into the mechanical stresses that would be felt by coral in different parts of a reef.

They also introduced a new concept - 'colony shape factor' - to translate the myriad shapes and sizes of coral colonies onto a simple scale that measures their vulnerability to dislodgment. Any severe weather event can be scored on the same scale, allowing scientists to determine which corals will live and which will die.

The most vulnerable are table corals: their broad, flat top and narrow supporting stalk make them more susceptible to strong wave forces than bushy or mounded corals.

In the model, vulnerability also depends on whether the coral grows on the front, crest, flat or back of the reef, where the force of the waves progressively dies away.

The team ran a field test of their model at Lizard island, in the northern part of Australia's Great Barrier Reef, taking digital photographs of corals, and calculating their vulnerability. Using data from the previous year's biggest storm, they found that their model predicted the pattern of coral sizes and shapes almost perfectly.

According to the researchers, global warming will have a dramatic impact on coral reefs, but not only because of the increase in severe storms. "Corals are adapted to life in stormy seas. Even the vulnerable species are quite stable when they're young," said co-author Sean Connolly. "They also tend to grow and mature quickly, so the species can recover before the next big storm arrives."

However one effect of the increased production of greenhouse gases is an increase in the acidity of the ocean. This is likely to reduce the stability of coral reefs, and amplify the damage done by tropical storms in coming decades.

Unusually hot temperatures can also cause coral bleaching, where the symbiotic algae that corals depend on is lost, and coral cells become toxic.

"To predict how coral reefs will look under different future scenarios, and to plan accordingly, we needed to know exactly how wave forces impact who lives and who dies on the reef," said Connolly. "These new models provide us with that essential tool."

CORAL REEF MONITORING IN FUJAIRAH

FEATURE **DR. CHRISTOPHE TOURENQ, EWS-WWF**
 PHOTOGRAPHY **MARAL KHALED SHURIQI, FUJAIRAH MUNICIPALITY**



Coral reefs are one of the most biologically diverse and productive marine ecosystems in the world. In the UAE, they play important ecological, economic, recreational and cultural roles by providing food and shelter for numerous fish and marine species, protecting coasts from erosion, supporting commercial fishing and an array of recreational activities. However, according to recent estimates, up to 35 per cent of the coral reefs worldwide may have been lost already due to natural causes like fluctuation of temperatures, attacks by the Crown of Thorns starfish (*Acanthaster planci*), and anthropogenic stresses such as oil pollution, unmanaged coastal development, unregulated commercial and recreational fishing and diving. When a natural catastrophe appears, like the recent cyclone Gonu on the eastern coast of the UAE, the coral reef suffers but is able to recover if no other supplementary stress, such as mentioned above, occurs.

Identified as one of the priorities of Global 200 Ecoregions of the World identified by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) as the "Arabian Gulf and Sea", the coastal and offshore waters of the Arabian Sea in Fujairah Emirate support a rich and diverse fish fauna, including many species of reef-associated fish, seasonally abundant large pelagic species, and small schooling fish. While contributing to the cultural heritage of the UAE, and the Fujairah Emirate in particular, these fish support moderate to large local commercial and artisan fisheries of substantial economic value to the people. Fujairah Emirate also has a number of unique seafront attractions, including wonderful beaches and islands. Tourist traffic to the emirate rose by more than 50 per cent during the last couple of years. The construction in the north of Bidiyah, of the first international hotel to open on the East Coast in over two decades has generated renewed interest in Fujairah and has been a catalyst for further development of the tourism sector; a further five hotels and marinas in the same area already started in 2005 and further projects are expected.

With the tremendous industrial and tourism development of the country, the pressure is increasing on the coral reefs, used as breeding, foraging and shelter for numerous fish and

marine species. There is then an urgent need to better understand the role of Fujairah's coastal waters in conserving marine biodiversity, acting as spawning and nursery grounds for the regional coral reefs and fish stocks, and mitigating the impacts of coastal development and other activities.

HH Sheikh Hamad Bin Mohammad Al Sharqi, ruler of Fujairah Emirate, already issued an Emiri Decree in 1995 to establish four marine protected areas in Fujairah: Dibba, Al Faqheet, Dadna and Al Aqa. A further step in developing effective conservation and management of coastal marine habitats, as vital resources for biodiversity, fishery and tourism, is the provision of information on the distribution, abundance, composition and health of these habitats through a mapping and assessment of the status of coastal marine habitats.

Between the 29th July and 7th August 2007, four coral reef monitoring stations have been installed along the coast of Fujairah Emirate between Fujairah and Dibba.

This operation was initiated by the Department of Environment of Fujairah Municipality, National Coral Reef Institute (NCRI, Florida, USA) and the Emirates Wildlife Society (EWS) in association with the WWF. The survey benefited from the extraordinary help of the Fujairah Marine Club that provided a boat to conduct surveys on the Fujairah, and the Dibba-Fujairah Municipality and the Marine Research Centre of the Ministry of Environment and Water that provided all logistical support on the Dibba sites.

The National Coral Reef Institute (NCRI, Florida, USA) is an internationally renowned research centre, which was involved in a three-year project in the region – the Abu Dhabi-Qatar coral reef survey implemented by the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi (EAD) and the Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves of Qatar (SCENR). The project was managed by the EWS-WWF (for more information, see: http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/asia_pacific/where/united_arab_emirates/projects/index.cfm?uProjectID=AE0007).

The presence on emirati soil, in August, of coral reef experts of NCRI, meant that the Department of Environment of Fujairah Municipality can benefit from the on-going research program in the Abu Dhabi waters.

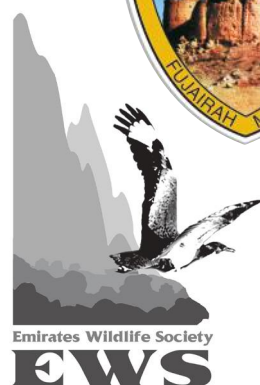
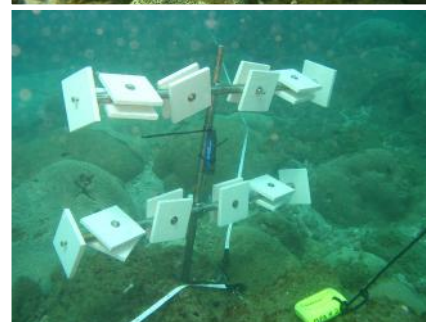
A team of experts visited Fujairah to install monitoring stations on the East Coast where the situation, after the Gonu cyclone, is a unique opportunity to study the re-growth and re-colonisation of the damaged coral. By installing similar monitoring stations to the one

already installed in the Abu Dhabi and Qatar waters, we will also be able to compare the two populations of coral: the Arabian Gulf one with the Oman Gulf one.

The coral monitoring stations design included three basic components:

1. A settlement plate rack, resembling a tree, with steel branches supporting small limestone tiles that act as artificial substrate on which the coral larvae will attach.
2. Photo transects along three lines of about 12m disposed in a "Mercedes star" pattern from the settlement plate rack.
3. Temperature recorders.

A formal meeting is planned this autumn in Fujairah, with all the stakeholders to discuss the preliminary results of the survey and further collaborations. An information notice was already provided by the NCRI to alert all divers associations, clubs and centres about the operation.



MAIN FEATURE

CORAL SURVEY OF EAST COAST'S POPULAR DIVE SITES

FEATURE **VESELA TODOROVA AND BARBARA LANG-LENTON ARRIZABALAGA**
PHOTOGRAPHY **BARBARA LANG-LENTON ARRIZABALAGA**



YUKI OCHIAI – (From Top – Bottom) Dibba before and after Gonu



(This article includes excerpts from the report “Effect of cyclone Gonu on Martini Rock and Anemone Gardens” by both authors. For a full copy of the report, please visit www.emiratesdiving.com/Divenews.htm)

DIBBA ROCK

Days after Cyclone Gonu struck the UAE, EDA's Coral Reef Awareness and Monitoring Programme (CRAMP) committee, decided to visit Dibba Rock to check the coral damage. Our visit was facilitated by Mr. Qassim Barwani, Head of the Dibba Marine Environment Research Centre. We were accompanied by Nizar Fakhoury, our fellow CRAMP committee member; Juma'a Bin Thalith, EDA's Heritage Department Coordinator and Ali Abdullah Ali Al Dhanhany, Dibba Marine Environment Research Centre's Manager.

We were on our way to Dibba Rock, and all of us were nervous after having heard from Qassim and Ali about the thousands and thousands of dead shells and pieces of broken coral being washed up ashore a couple of days before.

We had been on the water for about four minutes when the boat stopped and Ali and Juma'a jumped in the water to snorkel and briefly evaluate the reef. They came back onboard and our fears were confirmed – a lot had been damaged by the powerful waves, they said.

We stopped once more and by the time we were ready for our dive around Dibba Rock, we all knew we should brace ourselves for bad news.

Still, it was a shocking sight. The side of the rock, which faces the sea and had witnessed the strongest wave action was completely stripped of coral, while on the other side, the damage was about 90 per cent. Only a small, sheltered enclave of the reef was left not so severely damaged.



Broken corals found here and there near Dibba Rock

The main coral species around Dibba Rock is *Acropora pharaonis*, also known as staghorn coral. It forms branching structures and is usually a reddish-brown color. Other, hardier species, such as *Platygyra*, or brain coral, and *Favia*, else known as knob coral, had fared better.



An overturned branching coral (*Acropora Pharaonis*) found at Dibba Rock

We were happy to see the colorful reef fish alive. However, we also spotted fin and scale damage on a few fish. We could also see that the destruction of their natural habitat meant there was more competition over resources.

We saw a group of five clownfish all clustered around one anemone, which normally is not inhabited by more than a couple of these colorful creatures. Homelessness, it seemed was also affecting the hamour, as we saw a couple of baby hamour fish fight over one and the same hole in the sand.

MARTINI ROCK

The following week, we headed for Martini Rock. We were joined by Leena Abbas, the CRAMP committee coordinator and CRAMP members Bassem Abu Daga and Hana Abu Samra. Everyone on the boat was nervous as this site is home to the cute teddy bear or thistle coral (*Dendronephthya* sp.), which is common around Martini Rock but rare elsewhere.



The colorful Teddy bear or thistle coral (*Dendronephthya* sp.) that Martini Rock is known for

Other coral species common in that area include soft purple whip coral, thorny coral (*Antipathes* sp.), and daisy coral (*Gonipora lobata*). All these species were badly affected, especially on the east side of the rock, where very big areas were completely stripped of corals.



Spectacular soft purple Whip coral



Close detail of the polyps of a yellow Whip coral

We also observed many pieces of teddy bear coral, some of them larger than 20 centimetres, lying broken in the sand. The coral was trying to re-attach itself to a hard substrate. However, as large amounts of sand have been brought on by the stormy water, it was difficult for the coral branches to find a suitable surface.



Two pieces of teddy bear coral on the sand

Besides strong wave action, which had destroyed a large amount of the coral, the large amount of sand was another problem we observed. So much so, that the sand and water level at the site were and still are now a few metres higher than before.

There was a particularly big quantity of sand in between the rock's two pinnacles. In this area, we witnessed corals, which were buried under the sand. Some of the sand was found high up on the rock and the team witnessed goby fish, usually bottom dwellers, nesting high up on the rocks.

Because this is a relatively deep site, the level of damage was not as large as previously witnessed at and around Dibba Rock. We also noticed many healthy juvenile coral colonies, a ►

MAIN FEATURE

fact which augurs well for the site's recovery. There were many broken shells, showing that many invertebrates have been killed. Later, at the end of our trip, the team saw a dead boxfish washed ashore some 20 metres in toward the beach. This suggests that other fish might have experienced the same fate. But overall it was still a lovely dive site, full of lionfish, scorpion fish, moray eels, hammour and puffer fish.



Bare rock partially covered in sand on the East Face of Martini Rock

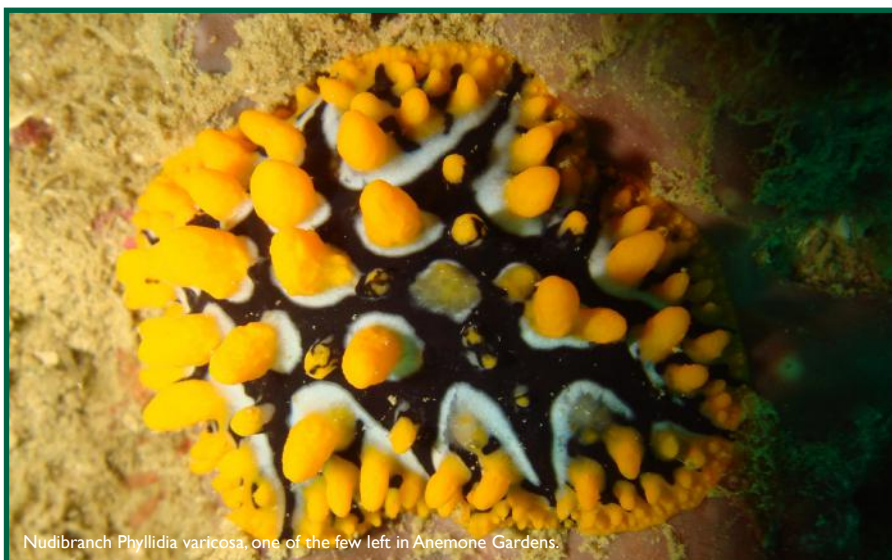
ANEMONE GARDENS

We also saw large scores of fish – big schools of snappers, some trumpetfish, lionfish as well as moray eels at Anemone Gardens. But sadly the coral damage observed there appeared larger than that at Martini Rock. Previously it was full of black or thorny corals (*Antipathes* sp.) but now there are very few of them left. The site was also famous for the amount of Nudibranchs, but we now only saw a few of them left.

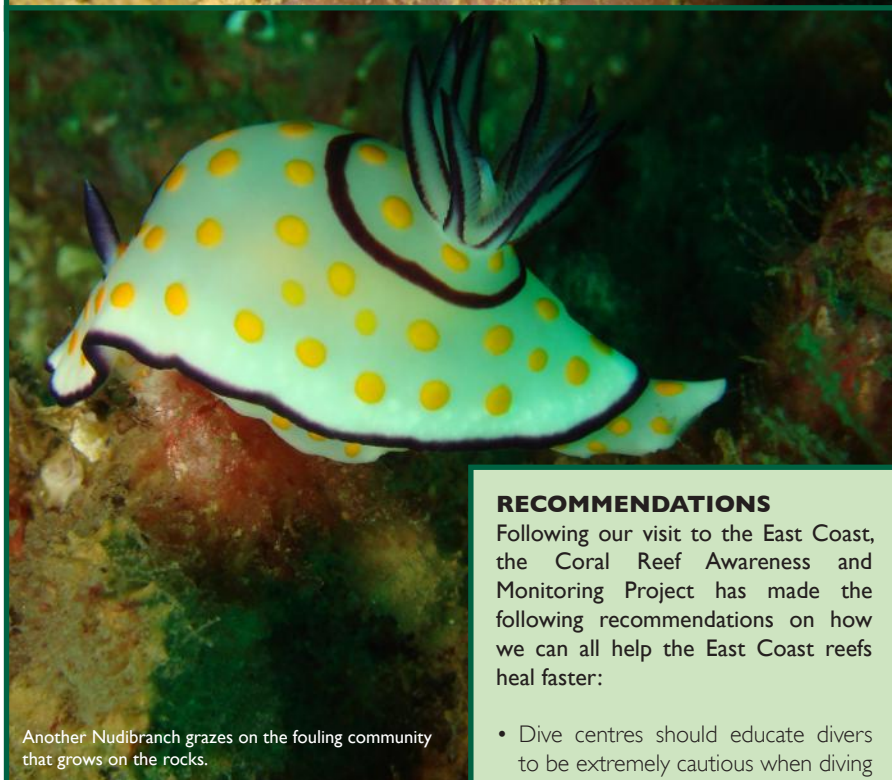
All in all, these were three difficult dives. But the hardest part of the whole experience were the conversations we had with Qassim and Paul Sant of Divers Down, both of whom said that they are more concerned by the man-made damage that the East Coast is being subjected to rather than the one caused by the storm. Both said a major worry for them is the damage caused by fishing boats and illegal fishing practices.



Flat fish, master of the camouflage resting over some sponges covered in sand.



Nudibranch *Phyllidia varicosa*, one of the few left in Anemone Gardens.



Another Nudibranch grazes on the fouling community that grows on the rocks.



A lobster hiding under a rock. The many shells in this photo proves that a large number of invertebrates were killed during Gonu's strike.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following our visit to the East Coast, the Coral Reef Awareness and Monitoring Project has made the following recommendations on how we can all help the East Coast reefs heal faster:

- Dive centres should educate divers to be extremely cautious when diving on the East Coast, focusing on their buoyancy and streamlining their equipment. It is also important for divers to always remember not to collect anything from the bottom.
- Dive centres need to coordinate more to avoid the overcrowding of dive sites, which increases the risk of the site and its marine life being disturbed by divers.
- EDA volunteers should obtain a copy of all the UAE laws pertaining to fishing practices. Review those laws and lobby the government for their stricter implementation.
- EDA volunteers should lobby the government to perform environmental impact studies before starting any works near the coastal area.

BEFORE AND AFTER GONU IN PHOTOS

PHOTOGRAPHY **YUKI OCHIAI**

In response to EDA's call on photos documenting the damage caused by Gonu, we received these contributions from Yuki Ochiai, Assistant General Manager of Marketing and Sales Administration of JVC, an EDA supporter. Yuki has been diving for 27 years and has been an avid photographer for the past 5 years. Her favourite dive site in the UAE is Dibba Rock.



Inchcape looking bare after damage from Gonu

A clear view of where the cabin and mast used to be



Inchcape has lost all its soft coral



Divers inspecting the damage to Inchcape



Moray Eels searching for new places to shelter



THE ECO DIVER CHALLENGE

FEATURE **ERNST VAN DER POLL** PHOTOGRAPHY SUPPLIED BY **PAVILION DIVE CENTRE**



"In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand and we will understand only what we are taught."
Baba Dioum, Senegalese Conservationist.

Educational television programs like the National Geographic channel heighten people's interest in aquatic life. But it is experiencing the aquatic realm ourselves that provides us with the ultimate experience in exploration and discovery.

Through scuba diving you become acquainted to a different world. Each dive becomes a personal encounter or adventure; you never know what fascinating creature or object might cross your path.

As you carry on diving, a transformation takes place inside you. You change.... You look at the ocean and underwater realm through different eyes. You are no longer a stranger to this world and its creatures. You are acquainted with them and you become their voice.

All dives require a conservation ethic as the future depends on having healthy oceans, lakes and waterways – not only to visit as divers, but also to keep the earth's ecosystems in balance.

World-wide, PADI has certified 18 million divers over the last 40 years. Current statistics

show that about a million divers get added each year to this demographic. Can you imagine how great it would be if all these people stood up to protect our oceans, reefs and lakes.

As divers and explorers of the under water realm we have a responsibility to become the ambassadors and protectors of the underwater world we have learned to love, and carry the plight of our troubled oceans.

We live on a planet that is covered by more than 70 per cent of water. For the biggest part of history, the ocean has always been a realm of mystery and unknown depth.

All this is changing.... Oceans are becoming a new frontier of knowledge and we are making an amazing amount of new and valuable discoveries every day.

We are finding that the ocean is both staggeringly more interesting and gravely more troubled than we ever expected. Current threats to our beloved underwater realm include over fishing, pollution and global warming, which through a complex mechanism, is making the oceans more and more acidic, threatening the health of the entire planet.

You will find that the more you learn about the oceans the more you will understand our

dependence on it for our very existence and survival.

Oceans are in real trouble. Pollution is causing 'hypoxic' dead zones, where too little oxygen exists to support life of any kind. A quarter of all fish stocks are nearing extinction, and another half are at the limits of sustainability.

Coral Reefs, essential to the ocean ecosystem, are dying around the world, victims of sewage, human carelessness and rising ocean temperatures.

The effect of global warming on coral reefs – the rain forests of the ocean – is more direct. Warming waters can cause 'heat shock', bleaching reefs and quickly killing them, while increased carbon dioxide in the water makes reefs more acidic and brittle.

Research suggests that by the midpoint of this century, the rate of degradation of reefs will out pace their ability to self-repair; essentially killing them off.

Quite a sombre thought and a reality check to us as scuba divers...

Fortunately, such a result is not inevitable. Swift action to reduce greenhouse – gas emissions will help slow the acidic-reef effect, and there are several ways to encourage greater coral

reef growth.

At the Pavilion Dive centre we have committed ourselves to finding ways to support research and implement the restoration of coral reefs in our local community and abroad. We are actively involved in coral monitoring and establishing new projects that restore new coral reefs.

Through our Tawasul and Adopt a Reef projects we are able to engage the community to get involved and make a difference. Through our Eco Diver Challenge course we help divers gain a sense of investment in the health of the local reefs.

By engaging our divers and volunteers in our projects, we help form an attachment and commitment to the underwater environment, a relationship that can be as important as family and civic attachment. Our projects help divers learn the injurious toll human activities take on coral reefs by experiencing how hard it is to restore something after it has already been damaged.

The Pavilion Dive centre would offer 20% off any Eco Diver Speciality to any EDA member wanting to join the Eco Diver challenge.

Mahatma Ghandi once said: "Become the change you would like to see in the world".

The decision to make a difference to change in the world starts with you and me. Come join us in our efforts and become an ambassador for our under water world.

DETAILS ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

These programs are part of the Pavilion Divers Eco Diver Challenge.

- The Eco Diver challenge consists of five PADI specialties that focus on cultivating an interest and obtaining the skills to actively get involved in the preservation of the aquatic world and its resources.
- On completing the Eco Diver Challenge you would receive five PADI specialties that together with a Rescue Diver qualification would earn you the Master Scuba Diver rating – the highest and accolade that can be achieved by a recreational scuba diver.
- Completion of the Eco Diver Challenge is also a pre-requisite to participate in Pavilion Dive centre's Tawasul and Adopt a Reef restoration projects.

- The Eco Diver challenge also includes a workshop on sustainable living and responsible consumption. This workshop is part of the UNEP and UNESCO Youth Exchange program.
- Part of the Eco Diver Challenge will give divers the opportunity to take part in an Xtreme Eco Action Outreach. Xtreme Eco Action allows our divers to experience first hand the issues and challenges facing the world's communities.
- Xtreme Eco Action is part of our Tawasul Project that gives divers the opportunity to educate themselves, participate in a travel experience beyond their expectations, and offers their help as volunteers – all in an effort to reach out.
- Imagine travelling to a remote part of Borneo with some of the best diving in the world. During this trip you would get to dive in a location with one of the most diverse ecosystems of the world and participate in a project that allows you to use all the skills you have learned on the Eco Diver Challenge. You will be working side by side with villagers to construct a tourist eco-lodge that utilises grey water and solar power. Future visitors will pay for their accommodation at the lodge and the villagers can invest in a community clinic or build a school to increase access to elementary and secondary level education for the village children.

The 5 PADI Specialities are:



1. National Geographic Specialty

During the National Geographic Portal, you will take your exploration skills to an advanced level by learning how to collect data to construct a visual representation of what you explored. This project may result in a map, graph, sketch, diagram, photo essay or video. You and your instructor will decide on your area of focus and plan your dive accordingly. You will also gain navigational skills that will aid in the exploration process. Your exploration skills will give you a new appreciation for the aquatic environment and add enjoyment to each dive. You will find yourself sharing your discoveries with other divers and becoming a true underwater ambassador.

2. Coral Reef Conservation Course

The AWARE – Coral Reef Conservation Speciality course teaches divers, snorkelers and non-divers about the vital role of coral reefs in the marine environment. The course also familiarises participants with the current state of the world's coral reefs.

There are no dives or age limits. Divers and non-divers alike can enjoy learning about the aquatic environment.

- An introduction to the Project AWARE Foundation
- Covers the importance of coral reefs to marine ecosystems and coastal areas
- Coral reef biology, association and competition
- The status of the world's coral reefs
- How participants can help, including responsible diving and snorkelling practices
- Certification counts toward the PADI Master Scuba Diver rating

3. The AWARE Fish ID course

Have you ever asked yourself, "What was that?"

The PADI Project AWARE Fish Identification Speciality course provides you with the fish identification basics so that next time, you know the answer:

During two dives you gain hands-on experience in looking for and identifying the fascinating fish you see underwater. You must be a PADI Open Water Diver or Junior Open Water Diver (or qualifying certification from another organization)

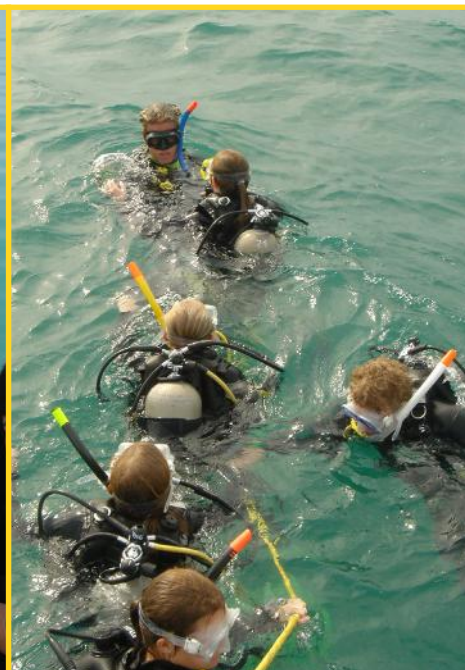
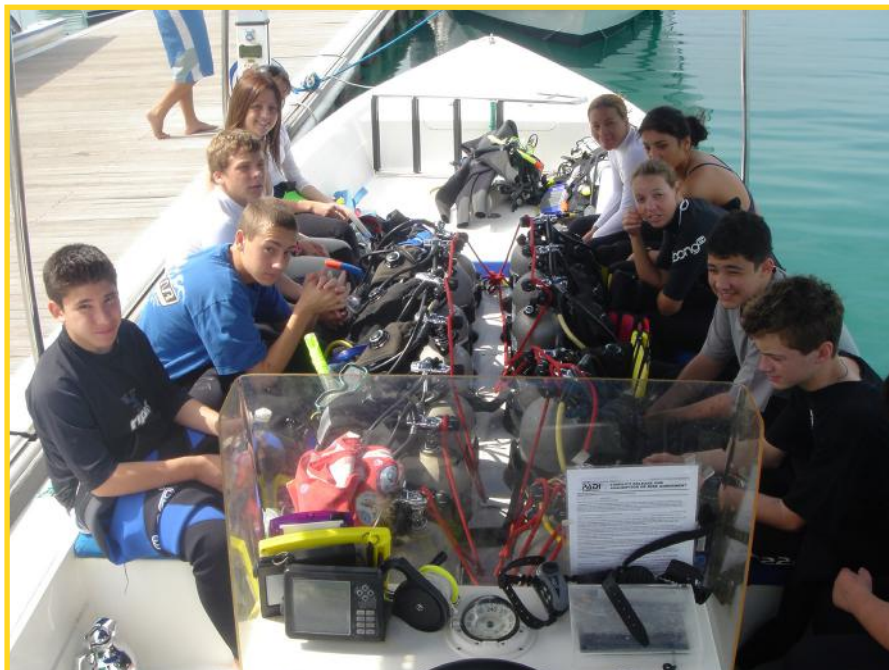
- Covers Project AWARE and aquatic protection worldwide
- Characteristics of local fish families and species will be explained
- Fish survey techniques and strategies
- Fish identification dive planning, organization and procedures will be practised
- Including the two open water training dives, the course lasts about 12 hours
- Certification counts toward the PADI Master Scuba Diver rating

4. Peak Performance Buoyancy

Float effortlessly, drifting over reefs. Be the diver you want to be, with ultimate buoyancy control, able to hover close to the bottom and examine underwater organisms without touching them.

Buoyancy skills separate the good divers from the great divers. In the Peak Performance ►





CoralWatch makes monitoring coral reefs easy. The CoralWatch chart uses a series of colours representing different stages of bleaching and recovery. Just match the colour of the coral with a corresponding colour on the chart and record the colour code along with coral type on the data sheet. Data collected from monitoring activities is then entered on-line and analysed by scientists to answer questions on coral bleaching and recovery patterns as well as the severity and duration of bleaching events.

The Reef Surveyor Speciality makes your dives count.

DID YOU KNOW?

How do you feel about phytoplankton? You should be a big fan. These microscopic creatures swim around at the bottom of the ocean food chain, and are pretty much the closest thing on the planet to a foundation for life. They feed the ocean's animals and also produce around half of the oxygen in our atmosphere.

The thing about phytoplankton is that they are very sensitive to water temperature – crank up the heat, and they do not feed or breed so well. Because of this, they serve as some of the most important indicators for ocean researchers studying the effects of global warming. If phytoplankton is not faring well, this is a pretty good warning sign. They are the canaries in the oceanic coal mine.

You can learn this and more as part of your Eco Diver Challenge education.

Buoyancy Speciality course, you will learn how to precisely weight yourself for optimum control, poise and balance. You learn to ascend and descend so effortlessly, it seems like you only think about it and it happens. By mastering streamlining, you move through the water cleanly, efficiently and gracefully. You swim near fragile environments without harm to them or yourself.

- Must be a PADI Open Water Diver or Junior Open Water Diver certification (or qualifying certification from another organization) and 10 years old
- Number of dives: Two
- Buoyancy fundamentals, weighting and adjustments
- Streamlining, balance and trim
- Fine tuning buoyancy and mastering hovering
- Materials: You'll need the Peak Performance Buoyancy video
- Certification counts toward the PADI Master Scuba Diver rating

5. Reef Surveyor Distinctive Speciality

This Speciality combines Coral Surveying techniques used by Reef Check and CoralWatch, 2 pioneer non profit organisations dedicated to reef rehabilitation and conservation affiliated to The University of California and the University of Queensland.

Become certified to conduct your own Reef surveys and take an active role in conserving your favourite coral reefs. This course is designed to teach you everything you need to know to conduct full scale Reef surveys. In this program you will learn all about the globally standardized Reef Check methodology as well as how to identify key indicator fish, invertebrates and substrates selected by Reef Check for global monitoring and conservation of coral reefs! Sounds like a lot? It is! But all those who have taken the course have fully enjoyed every last bit. This course will allow you to join the EDA's Coral Reef Awareness and Monitoring Programme (CRAMP) team and assist in underwater surveys.

TAWASUL

REACHING OUT TODAY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

FEATURE **ERNST VAN DER POLL**

Growing up in South Africa has had a definite impact on how I see the world and life today. You can not help but feel the very close bond between nature and the community and very often this bond is so strong that one cannot imagine the one without the other.

I grew up in a small town called Port Edward. We went to school barefoot. For science and biology classes, instead of sitting in a lab, we used to cross the road, walk up to the beach and snorkel in the rock pools, finding and identifying new and amazing creatures.

Once a year, the whole South Coast would buzz with excitement, anticipating the arrival of the Sardine Run.

The Sardine Run as a wild life event can be compared to the oceans' version of the wildebeest migration on the Masai Mara. The migrations of sardines begin in the cool waters south of the African continent, where they form into hundreds of large swimming shoals.

These shoals would run north-east into the warmer waters of the Indian Ocean and mass into a huge shoal, which because of its great size, has been dubbed the "Greatest Shoal on Earth" and has even been observed on satellite images from space.

It is not just the waves of shimmering sardines that are so spectacular but also the legions of predators that congregate in anticipation of the feast. Thousands upon thousands of dolphins can be seen chasing the sardines into tight bait balls with sharks crashing through the hordes coming out the other side with mouths full of fish.

Cape Gannets and Cormorants rain down from the sky like World War II bombers and even unusual visitors like seals, orcas and penguins could be seen in the area, having travelled thousands of kilometres to enjoy the feast.

I remember when the sardines washed up in the thousands on the beach. The whole town was there and the principal would usually close the school so all the kids could go down to the beach to experience this amazing phenomena. Kids would be bathing waist deep in the wriggling little fish and sometimes empty their school bags to scoop up the sardines, to great dismay of their mothers upon their return home!

The sardine run also coincides with the humpback whale's mating season when they move North in search of warmer water to



mate and calve. The sight of these colossal creatures breaching majestically out of the blue ocean is something that will be etched in my mind for as long as I live.

Growing up in Africa was a blessed experience, with many memories and intimate encounters with the wonders of nature. These encounters would very often become part of my daily routine and not much thought was given of how lucky I was to be able to experience such things.

One memory in particular stood out for me...

We were on an Environmental Awareness school camp in St. Lucia, a beautiful nature reserve on the North Coast of Kwazulu Natal. There was a new boy from Amsterdam in the Netherlands that joined us. It was his first week in Africa and he was so amazed by everything that he saw.

We camped outside under the trees next to the beach, gazing at the stars and falling asleep to the sound of hippos and night owls. At dinner time the teachers got all the kids together to do a head count but one boy was missing, our new friend from Amsterdam.

A search was started immediately and the whole camp was frantically looking for the young lad. We eventually found him lying between the long grasses... at first we didn't know what he was doing. He was lying on his stomach sniffing the grass and the rich soil... after a while he would turn around on his back and look at the stars, just to later turn around and sniff the grass again. Quite perplexed by this strange behaviour we slowly approached him to ask what he was doing. He explained that in the city where he was from it was almost impossible to see the stars. Once a year some of the people from his city would get together on a football field to look at the stars. All the lights in this neighbourhood would be switched off or dimmed so they

could see the sky. This was the first time in his 14 years of life that he has seen such a clear night sky and experienced such a close bond with nature. This made me realise how lucky I was and that I should not take for granted a clear night's sky or the fresh smell of tall grass after the rain. Sadly, this is something that many kids living in the cities around the world would never experience.

In today's fast-paced world we are slowly losing our grip and precious bond with nature and the environment. In a city full of high-rise buildings, traffic jams and fast food we are rushing along like hamsters on a treadmill, too busy keeping up with the Jones's to look at the way our lifestyles affect the environment around us.

This is particularly true in a place such as the UAE. And the saddest part of it all is that our young people are growing up with different priorities and interests. It is all about the latest mobile phone or video game with more time being spent hanging out in shopping malls or surfing the net than interacting with nature.

We do not need to kayak untamed rivers or climb distant peaks to be able to interact with nature. In the UAE, one of the most accessible ways to interact with nature is through scuba diving.

The country might not be a comparable diving destination to the likes of the Red Sea, Maldives or Malaysia, but it gives divers the unique opportunity to interact with nature. And for those who want to get more involved, there are now several coral reef restoration programmes to consider.

Following is an overview of a list of volunteer programmes you or your children can participate in.

TAWASUL/REACH OUT

The Arabic word for "Reach out" is Tawasul. Tawasul is also an opportunity for our community to get involved in the restoration and rehabilitation of local reefs by joining our Adopt-a-Reef program.

Participants learn the injurious toll human activity takes on coral reefs by experiencing how hard it is to restore something after it has been damaged. They also gain a sense of investment in the health of local reef systems. Tawasul's restoration efforts serve as a new schoolhouse for environmental responsibility, but only if we personally make the choice and take the steps to get involved. ►



What is Tawasul/Reach out's purpose and mission?

- Tawasul/Reach out is a project to cultivate an environmental awareness and interest within the youth of the U.A.E. In preserving and restoring the aquatic environment and its resources.
- Through Environmental Education and practical workshops Tawasul/Reach out mobilises the youth of the diving community to participate in environmental conservation and community relief projects, locally and internationally.
- Tawasul/Reach out promotes corporate support and alliances between local schools and organisations to reach out together to strengthen their goals and commitment to the conservation of the aquatic environment.
- Tawasul/Reach out reaches out between cultures to teach the importance of working together to raise awareness and understanding of the fragile nature of the aquatic world. It creates a sense of unity through diversity by allowing communities to work together with common goals and advocacy for the conservation of the aquatic environment by applying techniques that preserves underwater life, resources and cultural heritage.
- Tawasul/Reach out supports research and places emphasis on environmental sound approaches to anybody interacting with the aquatic environment on a recreational or commercial level.

What steps would be taken by participating in the Tawasul/Reach out project to conserve the aquatic world?

1. An emphasis on environmental training programs and sustainable lifestyle and consumption workshops that are educational, interactive and activity based. During these training workshops the youth

will learn skills and knowledge that would be applied in the field to gather research and develop techniques to preserve and restore underwater life, resources and cultural heritage.

2. These workshops and programs will be held in alliance with commercial and industrial organisations in both the governmental and private sectors. These organisations can either provide financial support for worthwhile endeavours and innovative projects or donate their time and expertise to teach the young people skills that can be applied in the field.

3. The skills and knowledge would be of a nature that would be practical and used in community relief and conservation projects. Examples of possible workshops could be:

- Recycling
- Carpentry
- Water purification and sanitation
- Reef monitoring and sustainable fishery
- Beach rehabilitation
- Agricultural techniques
- Construction
- Foreign languages
- Sport coaching
- Creative Arts and drama

ADOPT A REEF

The Adopt-a-reef project is being launched within the local schools, colleges and universities within the U.A.E.

The objective would be to train up young people in reef monitoring techniques set out by the international, non-profit organisations Reef Check and CoralWatch.

In supporting them the project's mission would be to:

- Educate the youth of the U.A.E. about the value of coral reefs and the crisis facing them.
- Becoming part of a global network of volunteer teams, trained and led by scientists, that regularly monitor and report on reef health using a standard method.
- Stimulate local action to protect remaining pristine reefs and rehabilitate damaged reefs worldwide.

School groups would adopt a permanent monitoring site that would be established with mooring buoys in locations where very accurate long term data is required. These sites will most likely be marine protected areas. Permanent transects will be established by installing mooring buoys at these sites to prevent anchor damage. These permanent transects will enable teams to efficiently conduct quarterly reef checks and will provide consistent data over time.

A web-based interactive database will be created for each school group that adopts a monitoring site. This database will enable the teams to input data and compare it with past data they have collected. With the help of Reef Check and CoralWatch this database will include management recommendations based on an analysis of the local and regional Reef Check data.

Each school team would be able to access these sites with links from their own sites as well as the Emirates Diving Association site.

XTREME ECO ACTION MAKING THE MOST OF OUR PLANET

Xtreme Eco Action is an international outreach project working in collaboration with U.A.E. school teams, Borneo Divers, Xtreme Earth and the Malaysian Government.

The project will focus on reef restoration on the islands of Sipadan and Mabul and on creating awareness of sustainable living and consumption among the children living on the island.

Sipadan Island is located 30km off Semporna on the East coast of Sabah and is rated as the world's top dive sites by renowned oceanographer and filmmaker Jacques Cousteau. It is unique as the only oceanic island in Malaysia. Its geographic position puts Sipadan in the centre of the richest marine habitat in the world. More than 3000 species of fish and hundreds of coral species have been classified in this richest of ecosystems.

Mabul Island is 25 minutes north of Sipadan and is a macro diving paradise of some of the world's most rare macro world inhabitants.

Mabul has a village of local fishing families that have been living on the island since 1974 and is also one of two islands that hosts a number of the dive operations that frequent Sipadan.

Some of the problems the islanders are currently facing are:

- Sand and soil erosion.
- A drop in the water table of the island.
- Increase of soil salinity due to the depletion of ground water.
- Effects of grey water and sewage from the Islands inhabitants.
- Destructive fishing practises off Semporna.
- Effects from daily habits of littering, pollution, waste water treatment of the local villagers on the island as well as the environmental footprint left by visiting divers.

Application of Tawasul Sustainable living and responsible consumption Workshops.

Visiting Tawasul/Reach out teams will use knowledge and skills learned from Tawasul/Reach out workshops to support the efforts of Borneo divers and the Malaysian government to assist in the rehabilitation and conservation of the Mabul and Sipadan region.

School teams will establish cultural bonds with the local school on the Island by offering peer training through grass root conservation efforts, games, sport, and arts and drama. A strong emphasis is being placed on getting a message across focusing on sustainable lifestyle techniques and responsible consumption among the community of the village.

Our Goals would be to:

- Increase the environmental awareness of the local school children and local families on the island.
- Work in collaboration with the local school to incorporate environmental session in their general science subjects.
- Provide a range of teaching methods and opportunities for the children to express themselves through different media.
- Monitor the increase in the children's knowledge levels to evaluate the success of the teaching methods applied.
- Work side by side with villagers to build a tourist and Eco Long House using recycled building material that utilizes grey water and solar power.

As part of Tawasul, an Environmental Scholarship Award will be awarded to a group of the islands' local school children to visit Dubai on an exchange program for one week to participate in Tawasul/Reach out work shops and experience the culture and heritage of the U.A.E. During this exchange, students will rekindle their ties with the Tawasul teams by visiting their schools.

During their visit to Borneo, Tawasul teams will also participate in:

- Trash for toys clean up.
- Reef monitoring.
- The construction of an Eco Long House using recycled building material.
- A visit to the Sepilok Orangutan Sanctuary.
- Complete their Exploration project of their National Geographic Diver Program.



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THE QUIET ISLAND

AL KHUDRA - PEMBA - TANZANIA

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **FARHAT JAH**



While Pemba Island is one of the most unvisited locations in Tanzania, most Gulf tourists who visit Tanzania actually do see the island as their Emirates plane flies over it on its way to landing at the capital city of Dar es Salaam. At this point, passengers on the plane are usually craning their necks to see the clearly laid out coral reefs and the cloud formations that seem to hang over the island.

The Emirates flight also means that any Dubai resident can leave their house at 7am and be in Pemba by teatime.

The introduction to Tanzania is easy – it is one of the friendliest countries on the African continent. The immigration guys seem genuinely pleased to see tourists, and if you have a visa already endorsed in your passport (recommended by all local operators) then you breeze through customs.

On the inside of the baggage hall the Zanair rep wanders around herding his passengers like sheep. He shunts you out of the back door onto a minibus, back across the tarmac and into a Cessna plane. The last time we did this, my wife and I were airborne 55 minutes after landing with Emirates. There are ferries to Pemba, but they are tediously unreliable, so flying is really the only option for the busy professional.

It is also the way to arrive in Pemba. Planes often stop in Zanzibar and then continue for the 30-minute hop to Pemba. As the aircraft crosses the Pemba coast, you know that you are in a different world. Where Zanzibar is full of tin roof towns and roads, Pemba has only one road and a few villages. Where Zanzibar is flat, Pemba is rugged and where Zanzibar has long flat brown tidal stretches, Pemba has deep blue waters and clearly visible reefs.

Much more visible from 1000ft in the Cessna than 20,000!

Upon landing, depending upon where you stay, you are not yet at your destination. Now that Swahili Divers have moved from Chake Chake to the coast, there are no dive operations in the airport town and Capital. Fundu Lagoon, the barefoot luxury hotel, is an hour and a half to the south. Manta Reef Lodge, and the Kervan Saray Beach resort are an hour's drive to the north. There are only three dive operations on the island of Pemba. Ben Barker, an EDA member, used to manage Swahili Divers in 2001-2002. Now back in Dubai, he reminisces "I have dived everywhere since, but I still have not seen coral fields like Pemba".

Wherever you choose to stay on the Island, you'll be looking at the Sea with a cocktail in hand by sunset. Your diving will start the next morning.

Pemba's diving is unique. It has coral-covered walls, fast drifts, and immense, untouched coral reefs. The Manta Point dive site is actually an underwater mountain that rises from a depth of 1,500 metres to just below the surface.

At Swahili Divers the diving is done on a combination of comfortable wooden Dhows and speedboats. The fibre-glassed ribs run out to the farther sites and the dhows service the excellent local diving. The dive sites have funny names such as Murray's Wall, Ataturks Wall, Deep Freeze Wall and so on. You might be getting the picture here. Western Pemba's diving is steep. The walls are in passages that flow out to the open sea. This means that there is no need to dive down to the head of the wall, it is literally the continuation of any given island.

This also means that on a strong tide you end up being thrown along the reef at an incredible speed. Happily for those of us who like calm serene diving, there are a host of coral reefs around the island. These have huge tabular acropora corals and fields of staghorn acropora. To you and me, this means that you can dive for 55 minutes at 15 metres and never see sand – only endless reefs of coral and school after school of reef fish.

At some of the coral bommies, there are so many fish that you could spend 45 minutes in a ten-metre section. Indeed, this is exactly what the macro fiends do. They get a guide, and hang out with twin cameras, multiple strobes and an eye for: leaf fish, mantis shrimps, nudibranch, flatworms, and every other kind of mini creature that you can image. For the larger creature minded, schools of large pilot jackfish and tuna can regularly be seen on top of Murray's wall at the world famous Misali Island. There are also massive giant trevallies and the elusive thresher sharks that haunt Pemba in the "colder" months of August and September.

After two dives, it's back home for lunch and a snooze and then out again to a closer dive site for the afternoon's, slightly shallower dive.

For non-diving days, the Island of Pemba has much to show the adventurous tourist. Snorkelling, cycling, village tours, and mangrove kayaking all contend with the pool. To add to this, the north of Pemba is cut off from the rest of the island by a primeval tropical rain forest called the Ngezi Forest. This holds many species of bird and the blue vervet monkeys. But remember; if Africa were to have a railway line, Pemba would be the very last stop on the Tanzania branch line. That is, there are no five star hotels, no air-conditioning and no 24-hour room service. While the beds are comfortable and the service reasonable in every resort, this is still an island for the adventurous. Sometimes, the island simply runs out of lettuce or a specific vegetable. And seeing as everything comes on dhows, there is definitely no express delivery service!

On a more recent visit, Ben Barker wore a 5mm suit and a rash vest while diving in Pemba during July and August. He used the Swahili Divers regulators and BCDs which were recently imported. Swahili Divers have just built the Kervan Saray Beach Resort near the village of Makangale. This has eleven rooms in six exclusive bungalows laid out in a green plot. Each room has a double bed and a single bed and has its own toilet and shower; so it is really laid out for divers.

All of the rooms are comfortable, fan-cooled and clean. They have tranquil views and are a ►





DIVING DESTINATIONS

two-minute walk to the restaurant and the sea. For those divers on a budget, we have a bunkroom that has only six berths in a huge room with a great view. This is perfect for families or backpackers who want to inject a bit of luxury into their holiday without giving their bank manager a heart attack.

GETTING TO PEMBA

As I mentioned in the first paragraph, Emirates serve Dar es Salaam daily. Zanair is Zanzibar's leading air carrier. They operate twice daily flights from Dar es Salaam to Pemba. Flights are also operated by coastal airlines.

Slightly less convenient, but also more moderate in price, Qatar Airways and Ethiopian Airlines, all serve Dar es Salaam from Dubai via their hubs.

Useful links:

www.swahilidivers.com

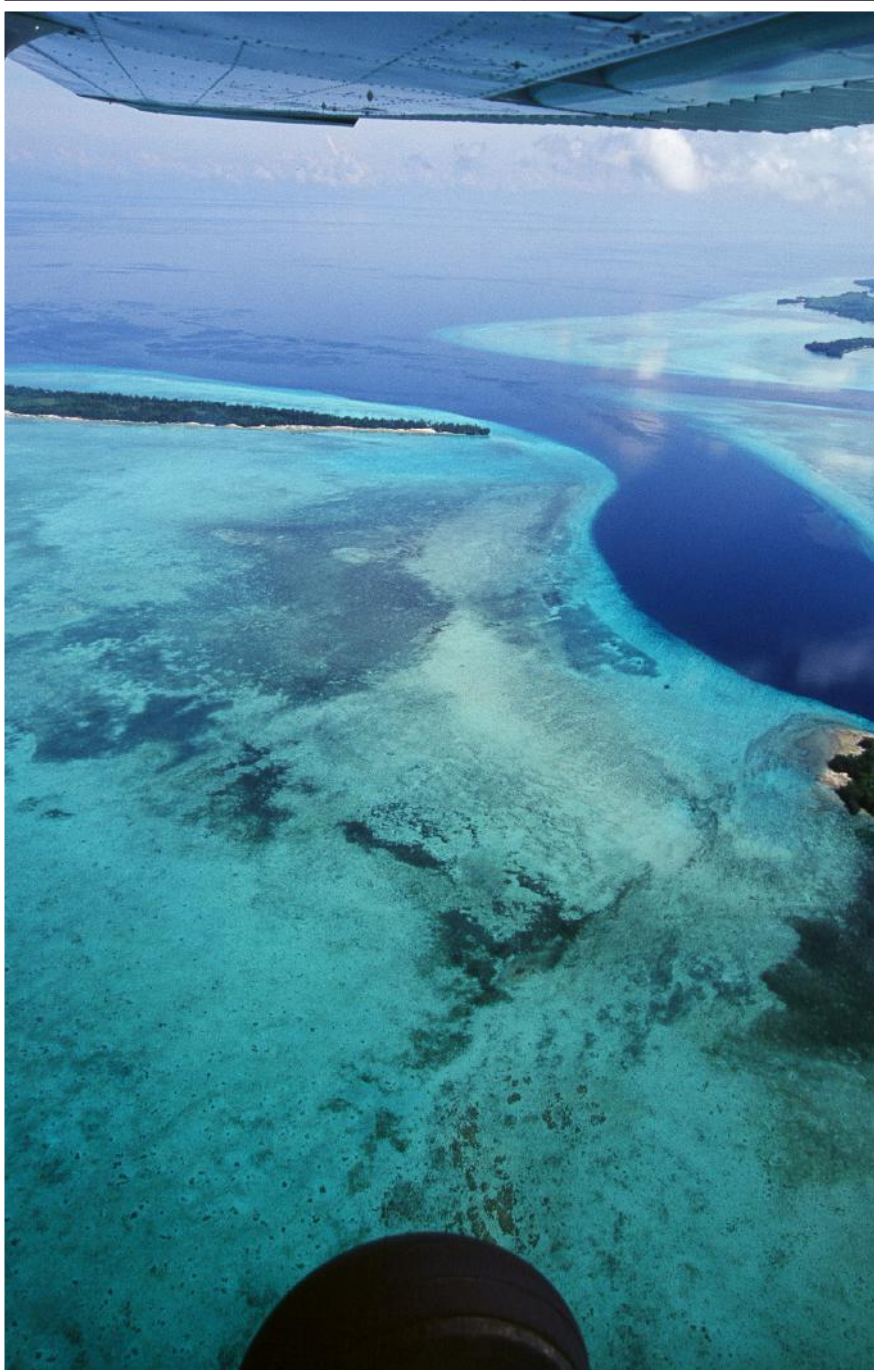
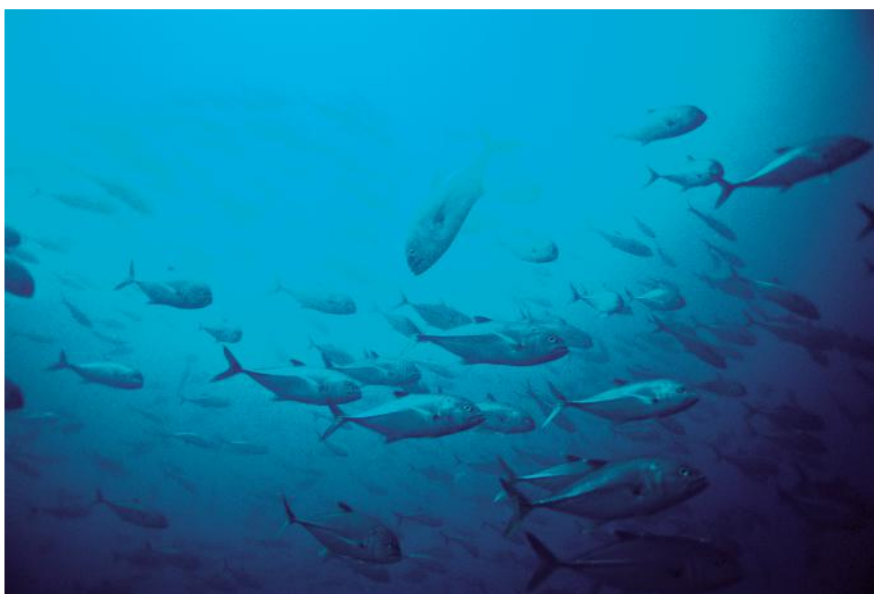
www.kervansaraybeach.com

www.zanair.com

EDA members are entitled to a 20% discount on diving, accommodation and meals at Swahili Divers and Kervan Saray Beach Lodge. Please book in advance and quote your EDA membership number at the time of booking. Discount is valid at all times except for the period of 21 December until 07 January.



Baby Thresher shark off Coral Mountain by Joe Graham



SWAHILI DIVERS (P) LTD

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KERVAN SARAY BEACH

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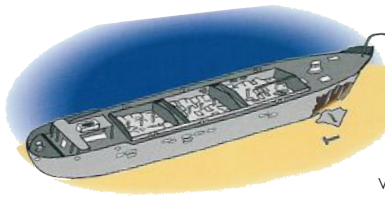
Website: www.kervansaraybeach.com

Tel: +88 216 52 01 2134

Fax: +255 24 2452768

A DIP IN THE SEA NOT SO FAR AWAY

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY MARC ANTHONY VILORIA



Living and working in the big city of Dubai, life can easily become a blur of work and infamous traffic jams!

And as divers, we occasionally ship off on short getaways to explore other countries' dive sites.

But a good escape need not be far. In the middle of Dubai's modernization and the constructions of artificial islands there still sits an artificial wreck that is worth diving for – the Cement Barge!

OWN ESCAPE

After a year in Dubai, I first dived the Cement Barge in March 2001. The experience was so overwhelming that I immediately fell in love with the wreck. As I waded in the warm shallows of the wreck, I began to think: "Yep, I could really get used to this". As I ventured around the wreck, the oysters, scallops, barnacles and hard corals built up have measured the history of the wreck that covers most of its parts. There is a swim through at the bow area where the wreck's frame is visible. I found several varieties of larger fish including arabian angelfish, groupers and snappers.

The most recent dive I made there (7 dives in 3 consecutive days) gave a chill of mixed emotions of sadness and joy. Sadness, because the construction of artificial islands in the area worries environmentalists concerned about the future of the marine habitat, and divers like me, who are worried about the site's alarming present state.

However, my mood was not altogether gloomy as the Cement Barge is still a dive site to reckon with. I had the privilege of roughly mapping out the entire barge on these dives. What first caught my attention was the accumulation of silt that obviously was not something I have observed diving at the wreck site some six years back. However, as I ventured the wreck, I found that although there have been changes for the worse, there are still things to see.

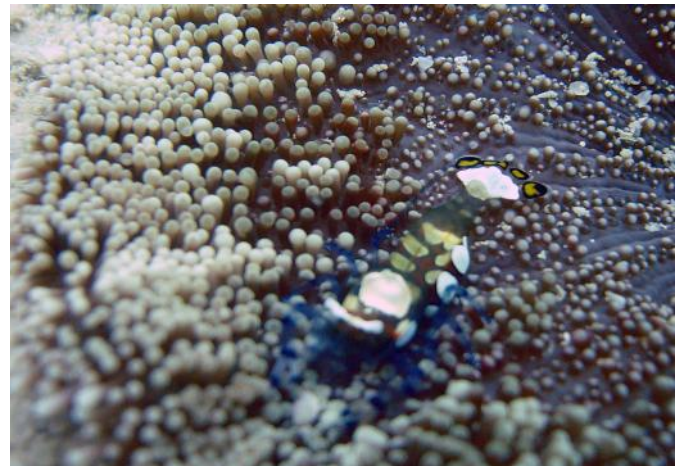
In addition, there was a family of batfish and a lone puffer fish swimming at the upper bow area. On the sandy bed, a few meters from the front starboard was an anemone shrimp sitting calmly in its resting ground. On one of my dives, I got to find a pair of nudibranch hanging on the port side of the wreck and a few barracudas nesting around the middle deck. The mooring and the engine of the barge still resemble their original shape. I swam through one of the open cabins and to my surprise, there were still plenty of local fishes nesting quietly, not wanting to be disturbed. The view from the inside gave a perfect silhouette of the barge's openings. On the deck, the cement bags that solidly sit in every haul can still capture your imagination of the event that transpired on this ill-fated vessel.

Over the years, the Cement Barge is truly a dive site for a good weekend dive where you can blend your diving schedule with weekend chores, appointments, brunch or maybe a lazy day without having to worry about being too far away from home.

THE SHORT TALE

The Alamina Marine Vessel famously known as Cement Barge, sank on May 6, 1971 when it ran into heavy weather on the way to Dubai. The open haul cargo bay where the cement bags were located got wet, causing the barge to start sinking. The barge is 25 meters long and seven meters wide. It is resting intact and upright at 12 meters at the bottom with the deck almost five meters from the surface. Signs of deterioration are very evident especially along the hull.

(The Short Tale – excerpt from Underwater Explorer 3rd Edition.)



DAYMANIYAT ISLANDS

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF GLOBAL SCUBA



Oman's spectacular Musandam Peninsular and its pristine waters are so loved by UAE divers that the respondents in our recent EDA survey listed the beautiful peninsular among their top diving UAE sites!

And while the Musandam is a regular weekend getaway, the rest of Oman's marine wonders are far less known.

The country's Daymaniyat Islands area is considered the jewel in the crown, when diving in Oman is concerned. It is a group of nine islands, all of them protected by UNESCO since the past 20 years. The area boasts what many consider Oman's most beautiful coral gardens and the scope of marine creatures that you can see is on par with what one can enjoy in any world-famous diving destination.

The nine islands are formed from ancient fossil reefs and limestone that have emerged from the ocean. There are also many submerged rocks, around which beautiful coral reefs have developed. All in all, the area spreads to roughly 200 square kilometers and boasts some 12 dive sites.

Coral growth extends to a depth of up to 20 metres. Very few of the sites are more than 30 metres deep. The area has easily the best visibility compared to other coral-rich sites

in Oman and the currents are quite gentle, especially in the mornings.

Because of its rich marine life, including large pelagic fish, hawksbill and green sea turtles, rays, leopard sharks, and even whale sharks, the area is Oman's oldest national marine nature reserve.

The area's protected status means that creatures such as bottlenose dolphins, spinner dolphins, and even, occasionally, a few humpback whales, are also visitors.

These impressive animals can be seen against a background of what is the most varied coral gardens in Oman. Pore, table, bush, boulder, teddy bear and cauliflower corals can all be seen, along with brightly coloured sponges.

The islands are breeding grounds for the endangered hawksbill turtles who visit the area to nest and breed between March and June each year. Because of the area's importance to the turtles and other marine creatures, diving in Daymaniyat is forbidden between May and October.

Visitors are also forbidden to hassle the marine creatures or to take any shells, fish and plants from the area. Camping is only allowed on two of the nine islands.

The best time to visit Daymaniyat is between November and January each year.



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DIVING IN AUSTRALIA

MARINE SANCTUARIES NOT TO BE MISSED

FEATURE **TOURISM AUSTRALIA**

It's no secret that Australia has sensational scuba diving. There are many reasons for this, including a healthy marine environment, a huge diversity of underwater conditions, warm seas and a vast array of sea life. This is all in addition to Australians' natural passion for the sea which means that for anyone new to the sport, Australia is one of the least expensive places to train as a certified diver, with the assurance that Australian diving operations are professionally run, with well-maintained equipment, and an eco-friendly approach to diving.

Dive sites can be found right across the length and breadth of Australia. While Queensland's Great Barrier Reef gets the lion's share of the attention, there are great dive sites from Tasmania to the coast of Western Australia as well.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Jervis Bay: Jervis Bay covers an area of more than 126 square kilometres, yet despite its proximity to Australia's capital, Sydney – just a two-and-a-half-hour drive to the south – it is one of the most untouched parts of the New South Wales coast. The bay's crystalline waters, a fantastic underwater rock garden of arches, staircases, caves and stacks and a marine population that includes groper, wrasses, sharks, cuttlefish and sea dragons also make this one of the finest dive locations in the state – both for the novice and for the expert. It is also varied. In this area you could dive for a month without revisiting the same dive site.

Most of the dive sites are located on the seaward faces of the northern and southern headlands that guard the approaches to the bay, where the highlights include caves, gutters, swimthroughs and natural arches, mixed with a huge variety of sea life and clear water. Some of the leading sites outside the Bay include Smugglers Cave, Crocodile Head, The Arch, The Labyrinth, Drum and Drumsticks, Stoney Creek, Spider Cave, as well as a large seal colony at Steamers Beach. Shore diving is possible from Hyams Beach and Green Patch, but the best sites require a boat. Dive boats leave from the town of Huskisson, which is tucked inside the jaws of Jervis Bay.

Jervis Bay also has several high quality dive operators. Two stores located in the township of Huskisson operate day charters to various locations inside and around the bay. However, the best way to see Jervis Bay would have to be by liveaboard, such as the MV Indulgence, operated by Jervis Bay Liveaboard Charters.

DIVE OPERATORS

- **ProDive Jervis Bay**
www.prodiverjervisbay.com.au
- **Oceantrek**
www.oceantrek.com.au
- **MV Indulgence**
www.jervisbay.com

Lord Howe Island: Although this tiny island – just 11 kilometres long and barely three across – is administered by New South Wales, its very remoteness puts it into a special category. Situated 780 kilometres north-east of Sydney,

this volcanic island is lapped by warm ocean currents and ringed by coral reefs that provide a habitat for many exotic species of tropical fish. The snorkelling and scuba diving is sensational. Divers can find plate coral, black coral trees and an impressive array of fish – including lionfish, bull rays, leopard fish, box fish and the ubiquitous parrot fish, and several dive sites are located within swimming distance of the beach.

DIVE OPERATOR

- **ProDive Lord Howe Island**
www.prodivelordhowe.com

Byron Bay: is home to one of the top-ten dive sites in Australia – Julian Rocks Marine Reserve, which offers a spectacular dive both for the novice and the very experienced underwater explorer. Named by Captain Cook in 1776, Julian Rocks Marine Reserve is only a few minutes' boat ride from the main beach. It is an all-year-round dive destination with water temperatures of up to 25 degrees Celsius and visibility of 20 metres at most times, although the best time to dive is between the months of April and June before the plankton blooms.

Tropical and temperate currents meet here, resulting in a unique mixture and incredible

abundance of marine life. During the winter months, the grey nurse sharks come to Julian Rocks, presumably to breed. Although these sharks look ferocious with their mouths slightly opened and their teeth sticking out, it is perfectly safe to dive with them. In spring the blue tang pays Julian Rocks a visit. This is a fish, which can be easily distinguished by its blue body and bright yellow tail. Schools of big-eye trevally are most common in summer. The docile leopard sharks can be seen on almost every dive during mid-summer when the waters are warmest. The spotted patterns on their skin gives them their name. Most of the time, they lie resting on the sand, but if you are lucky you can see them swimming, slowly moving their long tails. In summer and early autumn, manta rays cruise elegantly through the waters surrounding the rock. Sometimes feeding and definitely curious, they are fantastic to encounter.

There are of course the 'regulars' like different species of wobbegong sharks, turtles, cuttlefish (family of the octopus), schools of white-spotted eagle rays, egg-cowry shells, moray eels, banner fish, giant guitar fish and shovel-nose rays. Not to mention all sessile animals (attached to substrate) like tunicates, colourful sponges, both hard and soft corals, giving you the feeling that you are floating through some beautifully landscaped underwater garden. ►



Photo courtesy of Tourism Queensland – Green Turtle, West Australia Coral Coast

DIVING DESTINATIONS

DIVE OPERATORS

- Byron Bay Dive Centre
www.byronbaydivecentre.com.au
- Sun Dive
www.sundive.com.au

DIVE ACCOMMODATION

- Planula Divers Retreat Byron Bay
www.planula.com.au

EVENTS

- May 2008: Byron Underwater Festival
www.underwaterfestival.com.au

QUEENSLAND

The Great Barrier Reef: The Sunshine State is home to the Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest reef system – an awesome total of more than 2,800 individual reefs stretching for more than 2,000 kilometres along the east coast. The Great Barrier Reef also forms a bulwark against the Pacific Ocean. Inside this breakwater is a 250,000 square kilometre maritime province – a vast labyrinth of smaller reefs, coral cays, lagoons, rocky inshore islands, deep channels and underwater caverns. In these warm, shallow waters Mother Nature has run riot and created a vast, chaotic profusion of marine life. Add steep green islands scalloped with palmy shores, squaking colonies of sea birds and beaches so empty it seems that no human has ever set foot there before, and you have a natural paradise for the scuba diver as well as for the sun-worshipper.

The dive sites are located some distance from the coast, and most divers choose day-boat diving, using the services of one of the many day-boat operators in Townsville, Cairns and Port Douglas. These are also the ports for the liveaboard vessels, which offer anything from three to ten-day trips for divers who want maximum bottom time. Some of these boats venture far into the Coral Sea, where you will be diving in isolation in the most pristine conditions. Visibility in the Coral Sea can extend to almost 70 metres.

Another option is to choose accommodation on one of the island resorts that are situated on the Great Barrier Reef. While there are about 30 Queensland islands that offer resort-style accommodation, only three of these islands – Heron, Green and Lizard – are actually situated on the Great Barrier Reef.

Heron is a coral cay smack on the Tropic of Capricorn, and just about everything a tropical resort should be – a small, relaxed island with some of the finest diving on the Great Barrier Reef. Between October and March, giant sea turtles lumber ashore to bury their eggs on the island. Green Island is situated close to Cairns – a coral cay with superb diving and low accommodation costs that make this a favourite with many travellers. Lizard Island is the most northerly of all the Reef resorts



Photos courtesy of Tourism Queensland – Great Barrier Reef

and the consummate retreat for the dedicated island worshipper. The underlying philosophy of the resort is total isolation. Close to Lizard Island is the Cod Hole, one of the legendary sites of Queensland diving. For any diver who wants to see big fish up close, the Cod Hole is very hard to beat.

DIVE OPERATORS

- Cairns Dive Centre
www.cairnsdive.com.au
- Rum Runner
www.rumrunner.com.au

TASMANIA

Bicheno: Australia's coolest and most southern state, Tasmania holds some real treats for the diver, including magnificent sponge gardens, anemone, basket stars, squid, octopus and butterfly perch. The east coast town of Bicheno, a nineteenth-century sanctuary for sealers and whalers is now a busy crayfishing and abalone port. Diving is best in winter, with water visibility reaching 30 metres and more, which is also the period when many divers come for the chance to swim alongside migrating whales and dolphins. This is an underwater photographer's dream, with masses of fish and invertebrate life.

DIVE OPERATOR

- Bicheno Dive Centre
www.bichendive.com.au

VICTORIA

Phillip Island: Close to the city of Melbourne, Phillip Island has a number of outstanding dive sites. High on the list of divers' favourites is The Pinnacle – a towering granite rock with a base at 37 metres and a top at 8 metres – and

fish life on the vertical walls that has to be seen to be believed. The site is especially good for advanced divers. Collins Cave has a small reef with towering vertical walls that extend almost to the surface, with swimthroughs and a profusion of fish and crayfish that adds up to a huge dive for such a small area. The wreck of the George Kermode is located off Smiths Beach and Cunningham Bay at Phillip Island. The vessel is completely intact, upside down on its superstructure. It is still in excellent condition and is easy to penetrate. Originally scuttled to form an artificial reef, the wreck is over 100 metres long. Nightdiving on this wreck is excellent with a full moon and calm conditions.

DIVE OPERATOR

- A.B. Ocean Divers
www.abocean.com.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Shark-Diving: South Australia offers a diving experience that makes it unique in the underwater world – cage diving with Great White Sharks. A lonely and isolated stretch of South Australian coastline in the state's south-west is the ultimate viewing area for Great Whites, one of nature's ultimate predators, which can grow to six metres in length.

Based in the town of Port Lincoln at the southern tip of the Eyre Peninsula, the Calypso Star operates in the Sir Joseph Banks group of islands, which include Dangerous Reef, Thorny Passage, North and South Neptune Islands. Dive packages include boat, shark cage, underwater video, food and provisions, and overnight accommodation onboard.

En route to the shark grounds, divers have a chance to swim with and film Australian ►



DIVING DESTINATIONS



Photo courtesy of South Australian Tourism Commission – Diving with Great Whites in Eyre Peninsula

sea lions. Upon arrival at the shark-diving destination, the crew will begin burleying for the Great White Shark. If a Great White detects the burley trail, it will follow it to the boat. This is when the excitement begins. From the boat, you can watch and film one of the most majestic creatures of the sea. Even better is the view from inside the underwater cage. The cage is a state-of-the-art design incorporating an aluminium frame with clear lexan windows, which gives an astonishing degree of clarity without bars in the way. From the safety of the cage, divers will come face-to-face with the Great White Shark at its magnificent best. Calypso Star also has underwater video equipment with cameras to record divers' encounter:

DIVE OPERATOR

- Calypso Star Charter
www.calypsostarcharter.com.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Exmouth: Measuring up to 18 metres from nose to tail, the whale shark is the largest fish in the oceans. It is one of the most awesome sights of the underwater world, yet this vast, slow creature is a passive plankton feeder, and totally non-threatening to humans – behaviour that has earned it the title 'gentle giant of the sea'. Although they are rarely found in shallow waters, whale sharks frequent the warm waters of Ningaloo Reef, 800 miles from Perth on the northwest coast of Western Australia. For several years now, the Exmouth Dive Centre has offered an unforgettable opportunity for snorkellers – the opportunity to swim with whale sharks. From about March through May each year, more than 100 whale sharks can be found along the Western Australian coast near Exmouth. The exact season varies, depending on the time of the spawning of the coral of Ningaloo Reef.

A light aircraft is used to locate the whale sharks

and a high-speed inflatable is deployed from the dive boat. Accompanied by a divemaster, snorkellers then slip over the side and into the domain of the whale sharks. According to Dave Hall, owner of Exmouth Diving Centre, snorkellers are totally overwhelmed by the sight. "It's just fantastic to see their eyes widen in their masks when they jump in and find themselves within a few metres of this giant creature. And this is the only place on earth where whale sharks return year after year." Up to 12 whale sharks have been seen at once in the area, and the company guarantees a whale shark sighting – or a free trip the next day. The whale shark season runs from the beginning of March until early June, when the plankton-rich waters entice them close to the coast.

Australia's second largest marine park after the Great Barrier Reef, Ningaloo Reef is a fringing reef rather than a barrier reef. In places, the coral reef comes within a few yards of the shore. As well as whale sharks, the area provides a habitat for manta rays, sea turtles and a tremendous variety of corals and tropical

fish. Humpback whales can be seen in the area from June until the end of November.

DIVE OPERATOR

- Exmouth Diving Centre
www.exmouthdiving.com.au

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Darwin Harbour: The capital's harbour has a number of wreck dives that offer superb diving. A short distance off Darwin's East Point is the DSAC Barge dive site, which consists of a sunken barge, boat, yacht and a variety of other debris. The site was established to attract fish, which now school in abundance. The sight is easy to navigate and makes an excellent night dive. The colours of the soft corals growing on the base of the upturned barge are especially brilliant by torchlight.

The John Holland is another barge that was scuttled to form part of Darwin's in-harbour artificial reef system. The barge rests upside-down on its superstructure, which has been colonised by jewfish, a large octopus, estuarine cod, flathead, and a wobbegong shark plus many brightly coloured tropical fish. This is also an outstanding night dive.

Another wrecked vessel, the USAT 'Meigs', is an American Supply Ship, sunk in Darwin Harbour at the height of the air raids on Australia by the Japanese, on 19 February 1942. She was carrying supplies of ammunition, trucks, Bren Gun Carriers and Armoured Personnel Carriers, much of which is still recognisable despite a heavy growth of coral.

DIVE OPERATORS

- Coral Divers N.T.
www.coraldivers.com.au
- Cullen Bay Dive & Fish
www.divedarwin.com

For enquiries, please contact: Andrew Oldfield

Distribution Development Manager – Gulf Countries

Tourism Australia, P.O. Box 121783, Dubai, UAE

Mob: +971 50 6446 205 Fax: +971 4 335 1505

Email: tourism.australia@eim.ae Website: www.tourism.australia.com



Ningaloo Reef, Western Australia

MEMBER

Clean up the world



Thank you for supporting Clean Up the World and helping to clean up, fix up and conserve our environment.

EMIRATES DIVING ASSOCIATION

Ian Kiernan AO
Chairman
Clean Up the World

Clean up

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CLEAN UP ARABIA YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

9th & 10th NOVEMBER 2007

Join Clean Up Arabia now on its 12th year of cleaning up the beaches and dive sites of the UAE!

MAIN AREAS:

Dibba Port, Fujairah
Abu Dhabi
Ras Al Khaimah
Musandam, Oman
Bahrain
Qatar
Kuwait

For further information, please contact:

Emirates Diving Association

Tel: 04 393 9390 Fax: 04 393 9391

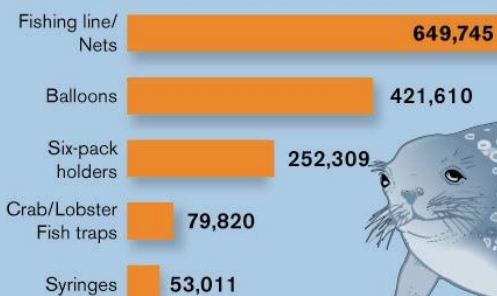
Email: diving@emiratesdiving.com, projects@emiratesdiving.com

Website: www.emiratesdiving.com

Dangerous Debris

Some types of marine litter can hurt or kill marine wildlife, through entanglement or ingestion. Listed below are some of the harmful items found during the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup.

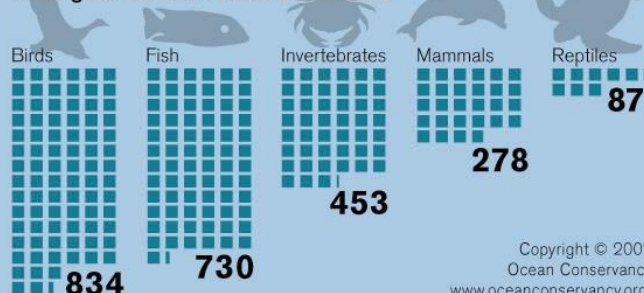
Total number of items found since 2000



Entangled Wildlife

Marine debris can hurt or kill marine wildlife from entanglement or ingestion. Keeping litter off the beach will help keep wildlife safe. Below are the animals found entangled in debris during the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup.

Entangled Wildlife Found Since 2000



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Ocean Conservancy
www.oceanconservancy.org

CLEAN UP ARABIA

THROUGH THE YEARS

2004



2005



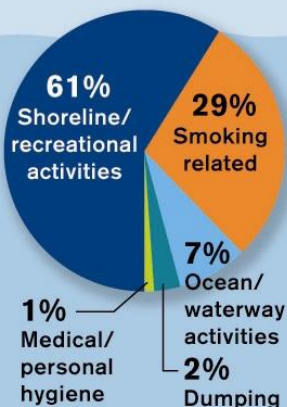
2006



Sources of Debris

Litter in our oceans and waterways are harmful to the marine environment, but most of it comes from activities on land. This means if we change our behavior, we can keep marine debris out of the water. Here are the sources of debris found during the Ocean Conservancy's 2006 International Coastal Cleanup. The International Coastal Cleanup began in 1986.

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Ocean Conservancy
www.oceanconservancy.org





The place where sport starts

JUMP IN.
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WADE THROUGH STILL WATERS. PLUNGE IN DEEP.
SWIM WITH THE SHARKS. CHALLENGE THE TIDE.
LAP THE POOL. CONQUER THE WAVES.
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PLANNING TO CONQUER GREATER HEIGHTS: HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

FEATURE **DR. ROGER HAW**

PROFILE OF THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Roger Haw has more than 20 years of experience in the area of customer service. He is a founding member of Ansted University, a founder of Ansted Social Responsibility International Awards (ASRIA) and the Director of Director of SRW Social Responsibility World of RecordPedia book (the First kind of World Book of Records focused on Corporate Social Responsibility practice aspect.)



**"IF YOU HAVEN'T
WRITTEN GOALS FOR
YOUR LIFE... NOW IS THE
TIME TO DO SO"**

(This is the last part of a three-part article on goal setting. The first and second parts were published in the March and June 2007 issues respectively.)

CHALLENGE

Life is full of ups and downs, just as the economy can go from smooth sailing to stormy weather; seemingly without warning. These are our challenges and as we might have already encountered some rainy days... it doesn't mean we have to stand and get soaked! The best way to alleviate the situation is to challenge ourselves to improve it – to challenge our beliefs that we can weather even the perfect storm!

Don't simply wait for a situation to get better on its own or that your problems will reduce by themselves. Size up the situation, set up a plan to deal with it and challenge yourself to face it as it comes. Challenge yourself to hang on; for if your dissatisfaction and vision are compelling enough, they can anchor you to achieve what you thought was not possible.

We can tell ourselves that we deserve better from whatever situation that we're in, but do we challenge ourselves for better results? If the answer is "no", it is time you have someone to challenge you to take the first step or to raise the bar! It can be your spouse, your children, your friends or even an Action Coach! The end in mind can only begin with you...

"The purest ore is produced from the hottest furnace, and the brightest thunderbolt is elicited from the darkest storm" – **George Caleb Colton**

Belief is a feeling of certainty – but being certain of what? Being certain of possibilities.

When we believe in something, what we really believe is that that thing is possible... success in any endeavor... a cure for cancer or AIDS... we either believe it's possible or we do not. "Impossibility" might simply be defined as "the absence of positive belief." The more certain you feel a thing is possible for you, the stronger your belief. Conversely, you can weaken or even kill a belief if you introduce doubt. Everyone KNEW it was impossible to run a mile in under four minutes. Everyone except Roger Bannister.

The way our subconscious works is that it accepts everything it's told (hears, sees, experiences, thinks, feels, etc.) as if it were the truth. To use the secret success of Belief means turning a deaf ear to any and all disempowering beliefs you may encounter. We can choose what input that the subconscious gets. An Action Business Coach can help you create new, empowering beliefs in yourself and in your business. Positive thoughts and feelings are not the result of positive results. They are the cause!

"What you believe yourself to be, you are."
– **Claude M. Bristol**

ACHIEVEMENTS

Wherever you are now, you have made it so far... and that itself is an achievement.

Achievement begins as we take the first step towards change. "Begin with an end in mind" is merely an idea if we do not acknowledge and celebrate the achievements with each step

forward. Whether it's your business, your work, your friends, your family or for that matter, you knowing that you have taken the first step towards achievement is the beginning of the journey to massive successes!

However, effort alone is not enough. Knowing what the success is that you seek and having the determination is equally important. It will anchor you when times of doubts and failures loom. We all have witnessed testimonials of sheer determination that overcame the odds, however unfavourable they may have seemed. To achieve, you must seek that inner determination, to overcome and ultimately surpass the odds against you!

What also sets you apart from the crowd is whether you dare to dream and go for it! What you can conceive, your mind can create or find support to realize it. Attention determines directions! So, begin to ask for the things you want and through determination, have the achievements that you seek. We can continue to wish for all the achievements but they are merely goals without datelines, if we do not take action! Begin to work towards massive achievement now, and with an Action Coach, we can get you there faster.

"If we are to achieve, we must look for the opportunity in every difficulty instead of the difficulty in every opportunity." – **Walter E. Cole**

So, set out for what you yearn to achieve now!

So, challenge yourself now and be rewarded with abundance always!

INSPIRATION

What inspires greatness? Sometimes, it maybe the simplest of things... Some words, a feeling or even the small miracles we observe around us everyday. We hear of such triumphs of the human spirit, that despite the odds, some are still able to overcome the adversity... What has inspired you today? While you may seek the answers to why it is that you have not achieved, let those who have, inspire you now!

Do not dismay if you think you've had it bad, for there are those who have had it worse. And yet, they are inspired to persevere. On the other hand, do not boast of the greatness of your achievements, but be inspired by the greatness of humility. Many of us may have lost hope or motivation to move ahead. Well, be inspired by those who have, because they did!

Do you lack the inspiration now to seek the greatness in yourself? The biggest inspiration of all is yourself, so take Action now, to reach out and you too, will be inspired!

"If you wait for inspiration, you'll be standing on the corner after the parade is a mile down the street" – **Ben Nicholas**

Life is not meant to be easy!!!

If every aspiration, goal, target, desire or wish was easy to achieve there would be no growth, no learning or development required, rivers would not be forged and horizons would not be expanded.

New cures would not be found for the world illnesses or ailments and new technologies would not be discovered. As a species, we would be resigned to a slow lingering state of mediocrity and decay.

This has been a truism since time began – the simple reality is that no strength or resilience can be forged except with heat and pressure.

"If life is about finding yourself, then education is about creating yourself."

Dare to learn from mistakes. Be consistent in growth and mastery of self-development by imparting practical and useable knowledge rather than just theory. If life is a journey then EDUCATION and self-development will certainly help to determine its outcome!

"Education is one of the keys for success. It has been our guiding philosophy that through education, the world will be a better place to live in. If we look at the problems facing our planet in the third millennium, everything from racial strife, to war, to world hunger can be elevated through better education. It is Ansted University's firm belief that we can equip people not only to cope with these problems but to solve them."

E-MAIL DR. ROGER HAW AT:
bnhaw@tm.net.my



NOTICES

CONGRATULATIONS



EDA would like to congratulate EDA member **Mohammed Ismail** for becoming the first UAE National to become a PADI Course Director.

Mohammed currently works for Technical Diving International Center (T.D.I.C.). He is 32 years old and speaks Arabic, Farsi, Urdu and Balochi.

TECHNICAL DIVING INTERNATIONAL CENTER (T.D.I.C.)

Tel: 04-393 0303 Fax: 04-393 6996

P.O. Box 60174, Shop No. 4/5/6

Diving Village, Shindagha, Bur Dubai

Email: info@tdicenter.com Website: www.tdicenter.com



CONGRATULATIONS



EDA congratulates EDA members Vanessa Nanty and Ben Barker who were married on 7/7/7 in Seychelles.

THANK YOU



EDA would like to thank EDA member Kay Vosloo for taking on the challenge of climbing the Everest Base Camp to raise environmental awareness and funds for environmental NGOs with EDA as one of the beneficiaries.

FOR SALE

EDA and PADI registered mobile dive company for sale. Genuine personal reason. AED 160,000 or nearest offer.

For serious inquiries, contact **Steve Rutter**: +971 50 390 6527

UPCOMING EVENTS

CORAL REEF PRESENTATION (EDA SOCIAL)

A general talk on corals and coral reefs in the region including specific species and coral recovery.

DUBAI WHALE SHARK TAGGING (EDA SOCIAL)

A presentation on the updates on the planned Dubai Whale Shark Tagging.

CLEAN UP ARABIA

9th & 10th of November 2007

Location: UAE - Dibba Port (Fujairah), Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah, Oman - Musandam, Bahrain, Kuwait & Qatar.

DIVE MIDDLE EAST EXHIBITION (DMEX) 2008

11th – 15th of March, Dubai International Marine Club, Mina Seyahi

Held in a new indoor location, DMEX 2008 will feature a dive tank/trial pool for diving demos strategically located in the external area between the two main exhibition tents.

SCHOOL CAMPAIGNS

EDA has teamed up with some dive centers in spreading information on good environmental practices as well as introducing the sport of diving. Interested parties may contact EDA for more information.



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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Yousuf Sayed

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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Dubai, UAE

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

Website: http://emiratesdiving.com/

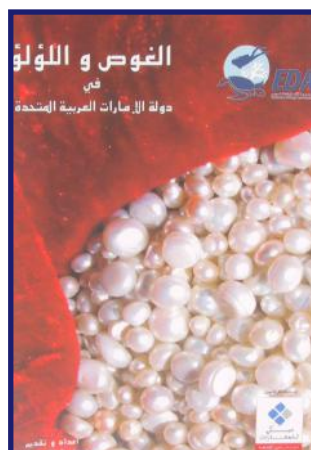
PEARL DIVING BOOK ENGLISH VERSION



Juma'a Bin Thalith

EDA will soon release the English version of the PEARL DIVING book that was printed early this year.

The original 140 page Arabic publication which offers a glimpse of pearl diving's historical significance, also includes a compilation of interviews with old pearl divers and UAE nationals on their diving experiences in the UAE. Juma'a Bin Thalith, EDA's Heritage Department Coordinator, collected the data which was supported by authentic photographs.



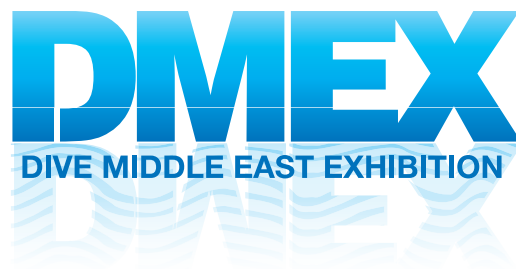
EDA is now looking for sponsors for the publication of this book.

If interested, please contact EDA at:

04 393 9390

Or Email:

diving@emiratesdiving.com



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 Centre
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.

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