



Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTSRF) December 2008 Milestone Report

Project 1.1.2– Status and Trends of Species and Ecosystems in the Great Barrier Reef.

Project Leader: Jos Hill, Reef Check Australia.

Summary

This report summarises the dive operator interpretation materials developed.

For reference: Milestone extracted from Project Schedule

The milestone task is to report on finalised operator interpretation materials (with appropriate attribution of MTSRF funding)Project Results

Description of the results achieved for this milestone

This section should include a short statement assessing whether the project is 'on track' or not. If not on track then the details of the issues for the project can be elaborated in the section below on 'Forecast Variations to Milestones'.

This project is currently on track. Activities include

Finalisation of interpretation materials for the dive operators that are contained within an Operator Information Pack which is a folder on board the supporting dive boats that contains information about Reef Check, sites monitored and a back catalogue of newsletters:

Information brochure: this brochure was funded by Envirofund (pdf attached). Brochures will be available for tourists to take home from their dive trip.

Information booklet: the information booklet was in part funded by MTSRF (RRRC) and GBRMPA (see link:

<http://andrewharvey.xsmail.com/Reef%20Check%20flip%20chart.pdf>

Content for the information booklet has been finalised. It is currently being reviewed and will have typos fixed mid December in time for printing and distribution during 2009.

Volunteers will also update the Operator Information Packs with copies of the latest Reef Check Australia newsletters as requested by dive operator managers in the 2008 feedback survey.

Explanation of Activity changes

No changes

Problems and opportunities

No problems identified.

Other issues

Communications, major activities or events

During milestone reporting period

Reef Check Australia monitoring database. The construction of phase 1 of the Reef Check Enterprise Information System is underway. This system will enable online data entry by Reef Check volunteers and easy data-sharing between other databases such as the Reef Atlas. Basic data reporting through Google Earth will also be available as this is the preferred method for data reporting by our dive industry partners according to our industry surveys during 2008. We aim to complete phase 1 of our database by March 2009.

Reef Check Australia Contacts Database. Further development work has been done on the contacts database which enhances our ability to manage our volunteers and their certifications. We aim to complete the updates on our contacts database through 2009 to enable participants to book and pay for courses online as well as for Reef Check to be able to track the training level of volunteers inputting data into our monitoring database.

Business plan. We have completed our first business plan in partnership with PriceWaterHouse Coopers.

Presentation to AMPTO board of directors. Jos Hill presented an update on Reef Check Australia activities and plans for the future to the AMPTO board during November. This provided AMPTO members with the opportunity to provide feedback on Reef Check activities. To date positive feedback has been provided.

Training Courses. We have run 2 part time training courses (Townsville and Port Douglas), which has resulted in 14 new Reef Check Australia volunteers. There are now 111 trained volunteers in Queensland. We have also trained our first Indigenous Reef Check team on Palm Island. This team include the Palm Island sponge farm divers who will monitor the surrounds of the sponge farm in coming years.

Community Service Announcement for International Year of the Reef. Our 30 second CSA has played on Channel 10 and 7 and through every Australian State between March and is still on Air in Queensland at the time this report was written. This CSA has resulted in a membership increase of 7% since April 2008.

Port Douglas International Year of the Reef Event and Climate Change Panel. We ran educational activities for Port Douglas children at the Port Douglas show as well as participated on a panel to discuss Climate Change and the future of coral reefs with local people.

Newsletters. The RCA newsletters are released on a quarterly basis and are currently distributed to our contacts database. (August, November, February & May newsletters attached). Newsletters have been sent to RCA's increasing membership as well as our stakeholders. We have also sent a specific newsletter to our dive operator contacts following this year's survey season as well as a copy of the 2008 status report of the dive sites monitored by Reef Check volunteers.

Reef Check Australia International Year of the Reef photography competition "What do coral reefs mean to you?". This competition was designed to showcase the multitude of different ways that 'we' value our reefs. These "values" include social activities and recreational pastimes such as diving, snorkeling, sailing and fishing, traditional cultural activities for many indigenous Australians and commercial ventures such as tourism and gathering seafood. The overall aim of the competition is to raise public and political awareness of the importance of responding to climate change and other global threats to coral reefs.

This year's competition was a success with 139 entries. The winners were announced during October. See the attached sheet for more information. Since the announcement of winners 2 Australian papers have showcased the competition. The photography competition in 2007 and 8 have increased our membership by 8.5%.

BREAKING NEWS

11:23 am

Date: Tuesday 2nd December 2008 |

SHARE

Weather Townsvi

News

Amazing underwater images

November 26th, 2008

AN image of a baby sea-turtle opening his beak wide mid-swim has taken top honours in Reef Check Australia's annual underwater photography competition.

Judges selected Steve Rosenberg's powerful image of a loggerhead turtle, with its mouth agape in a seeming expression of horror from 140 entries into the competition, now into its second year.

- MORE GREAT REEF CHECK PHOTOS**

They declared it 'perfectly captured this well-loved icon of coral reefs, at the same time reminding us that the existence of this remarkable creature is at risk.' "All seven species of marine turtles are considered endangered or threatened, as they are particularly vulnerable to rising marine debris such as fishing nets, and ongoing coastal development which has devastating effects on their nesting sites," the judges said.

Entrants of all ages were asked to capture images of coral reefs in five different categories including: people and the reef; the reef in our hands; animal behaviour; icons of the reef; and creative visions of the reef.

Category winners included Chris Hamilton, Justin Gilligan, Steve Rosenberg and Sacha Unger.

Other stand out images included Damien Siviero's beautifully composed image of a colourful nudibranch slinking towards a branch of pink coral.

Reef Check Australia managing director Jos Hill said the competition attracted more entries than last year.

"The message is getting out there that the reef needs your support," Ms Hill said.



THE WINNER: *Screamer* by Steve Rosenberg was judged the best photograph in the annual Reef Check underwater photography competition

[MORE PHOTOS](#)



Loggerhead screams for a win

NOVEMBER 22, 2008 12:00AM

Email article 

Share article 

Printer friendly 

Text size A⁻ A⁺

THE gaping expression of the young turtle is enough to make the most dedicated photographer flinch.



Have your say!

[Add your comments](#) or
[read what others are saying](#)

But Steve Rosenberg's image, aptly named "Screamer", was the winner of the International Year of the Reef photography competition.

The competition, which is run by Reef Check Australia in partnership with Project AWARE, was created to raise awareness about the effects of climate change, over-fishing and pollution to our national reefs.

The image of the loggerhead turtle, which was picked from 139 entries, perfectly illustrates that many reef species are at risk of extinction.

[Gallery: More amazing photos](#)

"Everybody loves turtles," Reef Check Australia managing director Jos Hill said.



Screamer ... The winning photo of the Loggerhead turtle by Steve Rosenberg. Pic: Reef Check Australia Photography.

RELATED COVERAGE

- ▶ Praising Arizona, the sunkissed region
NEWS.com.au, 21 Feb 2008
- ▶ Reader's Comments: Optus cable fault causes widespread outage
NEWS.com.au,
- ▶ Reader's Comments: PlayStation 3 update crashes game consoles

"It was an astounding image. We've got six species of turtle in Australia and they're all endangered, so it's a really good image to show."

The competition was split into five categories, all of which had an environmental theme.

"It's a really nice way for us to showcase how beautiful the reefs are and all of the different ways that we use them, and then use that as a platform to talk about how we can protect them," Hill said.

During next milestone reporting period

Run a Training Course in Townsville and Port Douglas.

Conduct volunteer surveys of 25 dive sites as per the survey list below.

Distribute the interpretation materials.

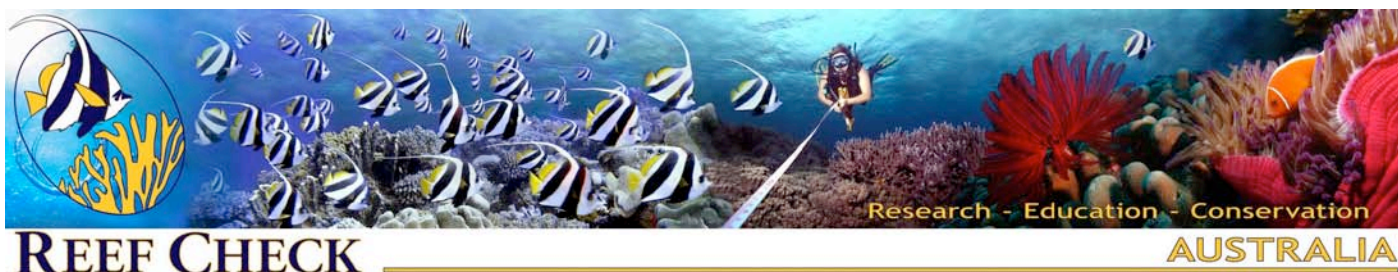
Conduct dive operator meetings

Complete phase 1 of the Reef Check monitoring database and distribute initial data reports to stakeholders.

Provide Reef Check Australia monitoring data to the Reef Atlas.

Reef Check Australia survey sites planned for 2009.

LOCATION/SITE NAME	REEF NAME	DIVE OPERATOR
Pixie Gardens	Ribbon # 10	Undersea Explorer
Challenger Bay	Ribbon # 10	Undersea Explorer/Mike Ball
Tracy's Wonderland	Ribbon #3	Undersea Explorer
Clam Beds	Ribbon # 3	Undersea Explorer/Mike Ball
Agincourt Reef (Pontoon)	Agincourt 3D	Quicksilver Connections
Phils Reef	Agincourt 3	Poseidon
Barracuda Bommie	Agincourt 2	Poseidon
The Point	Agincourt 4	Poseidon
Low Isles	Low Isles fringing reef	Quicksilver Connections
Bashful Bommie	Opal Reef	Calypso / Haba
Split Bommie	Opal Reef	Calypso Dive
The Wedge	Opal Reef	Calypso / Haba
North Point	St Crispin's Reef	Haba
Playground	Agincourt	Haba
Marine World	Moore Reef	Reef Magic Cruises
Downunder Mooring	Hastings Reef	Downunder Dive
Downunder Mooring	Saxon Reef	Downunder Dive
New Horizon Mooring	Flynn Reef	New Horizon
New Horizon Mooring	Thetford Reef	New Horizon
Hastings Encounter site	Hastings Reef	Reef Encounter
Cairns Diver Centre Mooring	Briggs Reef	CDC
Adrenalin Dive	Wheeler Reef	ProDive Townsville
Adrenalin Dive	Davies Reef	ProDive Townsville
Reef World	Hardy Reef	Fantasea
Blue Pearl Bay	Hayman Island	Hayman Island Resort
Pontoon	Knuckle Reef	Cruise Whitsundays



What do coral reefs mean to you?

Photography Competition 2008



Pictures speak a thousand words

In celebration of the Second International Year of the Reef, Reef Check Australia and Project AWARE partnered to promote the “What do coral reefs mean to you?” photography competition.

This competition was designed to showcase the multitude of different ways that ‘we’ value our reefs. These “values” include social activities and recreational pastimes such as diving, snorkeling, sailing and fishing, traditional cultural activities for many indigenous Australians and commercial ventures such as tourism and gathering seafood. The overall aim of the competition is to raise public and political awareness of the importance of responding to climate change and other global threats to coral reefs.

Reef Check Australia Photographer of the Year 2008

Overall Winner:

Steve Rosenberg (Screamer)

Prize: 1 x 6 day, 6 night Osprey Reef Shark Encounter trip for 1 person worth \$2215 on board Undersea Explorer and “The Great Barrier Reef” book by Steve Parish.



Overall Second Place

Chris Hamilton (Found You)

Prize: 1 x weekend sail and dive trip on board New Horizon and 2 DVDs of choice from the Australian Natural History Unit.

PO Box 404, Townsville, QLD 4810. Tel +61 7 4724 3950 www.reefcheckaustralia.org

Reef Check Foundation Ltd. (Australia) ABN: 46 108 200 933

Registered Australian charity with tax deductible gift recipient status.

Overall Third Place

Sascha Unger (Gentle Giant)

Prize: 1 x underwater photography course by PADI and 2 DVDs of choice from the Australian Natural History Unit.



Voter's Choice

Damien Siviero (nudibranch)

Prize: Intova IC 500 Digital camera from Digital Divers & Reef Teach.

Category: People and the Reef

Category Winner:

Chris Hamilton (What's below)

Prize: 1 pair of Maui Jim Sunglasses worth \$219



Category Runner Up:

Gary Brennand (Wally and me)

Prize: Dive mask by Cape Byron Imports

Category Second Runner Up:

Seanna Cronin (Shark Bay)

Roger Beeden (Bleaching Nemo)

Prize: Selection of Quiksilver Merchandise



Category: Icons of the Reef

Category Winner:

Sascha Unger (Gentle Giant)

Prize: 1 pair of Maui Jim Sunglasses worth \$219



Category Runner Up:

Gary Brennand (Fly)

Prize: Dive mask by Oceanic



Category Second Runner Up:

Joint Winners:

Justin Gilligan (Unexpected Surprise!)

Matt Curnock (Eyeconic)

Prize: Selection of Quiksilver Merchandise



Category: Animal Behaviour

Category Winner:

Steve Rosenberg (Screamer)

Prize: 1 pair of Maui Jim Sunglasses worth \$219

Category Runner Up:

Chris Jones (Seranid Swallows)

Prize: Dive mask by Oceanic



Category Second Runner Up:

Chris Hamilton (Devour your brother)

Prize: Selection of Quiksilver Merchandise



Category: The Reef in Our Hands

Category Winner:

Justin Gilligan (Taking The Bait)

Prize: 1 pair of Maui Jim Sunglasses worth \$219



Category Runner Up:

Dean Cropp (The New Generation Swims By)

Prize: Dive mask by Cape Byron Imports

Category Second Runner Up:

Chris Jones (Nautilus Release)

Prize: Selection of Quiksilver Merchandise



Category: Creative Visions of the Reef

Category Winner:

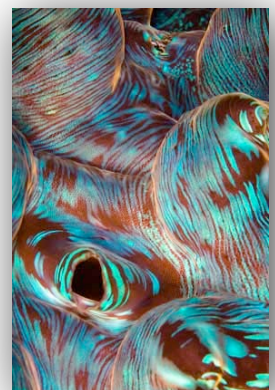
Chris Hamilton (Found You)

Prize: 1 pair of Maui Jim Sunglasses worth \$219

Category Runner Up:

Sascha Unger (Fragile World)

Prize: Dive mask by Cape Byron Imports





Category Second Runner Up:

Roger Beeden (Lady Elliot Magic)

Prize: Selection of Quiksilver Merchandise

Highly Commended

Silke Baron (Results of Dynamite Fishing)
Steve Rosenberg (Caribbean reef Shark at the surface)

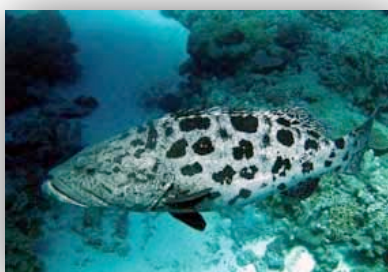
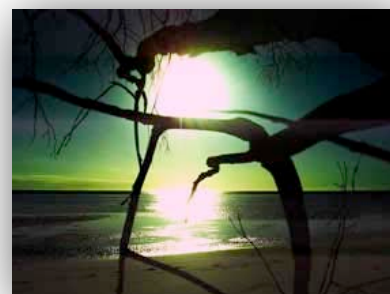
Prize: Selection of Quiksilver Merchandise



Reef Check Australia Young Photographer of the Year 2008

Catti Butler (Creative Sunset?)

Prize: Dive trip on SunSea Cruises and 1 x PADI Underwater Photography Course



Young Photographer Animal Behaviour Category Winner

Andrew Jeffries (Potato Cod)

Prize: Selection of Quiksilver Merchandise



Reef Check Australia August 2008

Photo Competition Entries

Thank you to everybody who entered their photos into this year's competition and for voting for your favourites, some of which are shown below. The judging will commence in September and winners will be announced in October.

People and the Reef:



*Bleaching Nemo
by Roger Beeden*



*What's Below
by Christopher Hamilton*

Creative visions of the Reef:



*Standing on the outside, looking in
by Steve Schober*



*Creative Sunset
by Catti Butler*

The Reef in our hands:



*Lets keep it looking this way
by Dave Swinburn*



*The new geneeration swims by
by Dean Cropp*



The ICRI International Year of the Reef 2008 is a worldwide campaign to motivate people to take action to save our coral reefs.

Your tax-deductible donation will help us to protect Australia's coral reefs.



Staff Changes

Sadly Cherryn Huggon (Administration Coordinator) has moved on from Reef Check. We'd like to wish her well with her next role with Volunteering North Queensland. Cherryn's lively self will be missed in the office.

Animal Behaviour:



Screamer
by Steve Rosenberg



Devour your brother
by Christopher Hamilton



Unexpected surprise
by Justin Gilligan



Shark Water
by Chris Jones

The Great Barrier Reef Project

This year our volunteers conducted 26 surveys of dive sites this year. We'd like to extend a thank you to our supporting dive operators as well as the many volunteers who have dedicated their free time to surveying the reefs. A special thank you to Steve Prutzman and Tara Swansborough who have volunteered through this season to lead our surveys.

To view our data collected to date download our Google Earth layer from:

<http://www.reefcheckaustralia.org/research/data/index.cfm>



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



South East QLD

During July & August, our second lot of Reef Check trainees completed their course at Sea World on the Gold Coast. Thanks to the support of Sea World and the provision of Sea World I vessel Reef Check trainees were able to visit Palm Beach Reef to complete training. Once the Reef Checkers were back on Sea World I, two visiting humpback whales displayed some spectacular aerial work to top off a great day of diving.



The first of 12 surveys has been completed at Palm Beach Reef. The dive team overcame the initial "bite" from 18 degree water and a stone fish swallowing a plume line! (Photos by Rowena Hawnt & Stephen McConchie).



Training Courses - Join our coral reef surveyor team

Townsville: Part time: 1st - 28th September (\$495 or \$395 students). **2 SPACES LEFT!**

Cairns: Part time: October (dates TBA) (\$495 or \$395 students).

Download the training course details from www.reefcheckaustralia.org/training or register your interest by emailing support@reefcheckaustralia.org.

Thank you to all our volunteers, sponsors & supporters!

We are unable to list all our supporters here for more information please see our website



Great Barrier Reef Project

End of Season News-Update 2008

Firstly I'd like to extend a thank you for your ongoing support on behalf of Reef Check Australia. I believe we have achieved another successful survey season and now have 8 years of data from some of our sites! The data provides us with a sound baseline from which to measure future changes in coral reef health. The importance of the Reef Check program increases with the urgent issue of climate change that is predicted to have a serious impact on the health of our coral reefs. Through regular and targeted monitoring we aim to increase our understanding about how important coral reef sites respond to future pressures in order to help to identify and monitor the key elements that help them to recover from coral bleaching or other impacts, and to increase public action to protect them.

Reef Check Australia currently runs all its programs with only 2 members of staff, however we have continued to gather enormous in-kind and volunteer support each year and all those who have participated should be proud of the achievements we have made together. The next steps are to increase the financial support we attract in order to sustain and expand upon the benefits of our projects into the long term.

Jos Hill
Managing Director, Reef Check Australia

Operator Meetings

Thank you to everybody for making the time to meet with us at the start of the season and for your feedback on our operations. At this meeting we discussed:

1. 2008 GBR Project survey season plans
2. Communication materials
3. Reef Check data reporting
4. Volunteer conduct onboard tourist vessels
5. Reef Check EcoAction Program
6. Fundraising

Monitoring - 2008 GBR Project Survey Season

Our Reef Check volunteers have conducted 26 surveys of the sites listed below and have put in 114 survey days collectively. A special thank you to our volunteer Project Officers Tara Swansborough and Steve Prutzman who organised and led all the surveys.

LOCATION/SITE NAME	REEF NAME	DIVE OPERATOR	RC SITE MAP COMPLETED	SURVEY COMPLETED
Port Douglas				
Pixie Gardens	Ribbon # 10	Undersea Explorer	YES	20 04 08
Challenger Bay	Ribbon # 10	Undersea Explorer/Mike Ball	YES	20 04 08
Tracy's Wonderland	Ribbon #3	Undersea Explorer	YES	24 04 08
Clam Beds	Ribbon # 3	Undersea Explorer/Mike Ball	YES	24 04 08
North Horn	Osprey Reef	Undersea Explorer	YES	21 04 08
Admiralty Anchor	Osprey Reef	Undersea Explorer	YES	21 04 08
Agincourt Reef (Pontoon)	Agincourt 3D	Quicksilver Connections	YES	17 05 08
Phils Reef	Agincourt 3	Poseidon	YES	04 05 08
The Point	Agincourt 4	Poseidon	YES	04 05 08
Low Isles	Low Isles fringing reef	Quicksilver Connections	YES	08 05 08
Bashful Bommie	Opal Reef	Calypso / Haba	YES	01 03 08
Split Bommie	Opal Reef	Calypso Dive	YES	02 03 08
The Wedge	Opal Reef	Calypso / Haba	YES	01 03 08
North Point	St Crispin's Reef	Haba	YES	04 05 08
Cairns				
Marine World	Moore Reef	Reef Magic Cruises	YES	29 03 08
Downunder Mooring	Hastings Reef	Downunder Dive	YES	15 03 08
Downunder Mooring	Saxon Reef	Downunder Dive	YES	15 03 08
New Horizon Mooring	Flynne Reef	New Horizon	NO	30 05 08
New Horizon Mooring	Thetford Reef	New Horizon	NO	30 05 08
Hastings Encounter site	Hastings Reef	Reef Encounter	YES	14 06 08
Cairns Diver Centre Mooring	Briggs Reef	CDC	YES	30 03 08
Townsville				
ProDive Site	Wheeler Reef	ProDive Townsville	YES	02 04 08
ProDive Site	Davies Reef	ProDive Townsville	YES	02 04 08
SunSea Site	Kelso Reef	SunSea Cruises	NO	27 04 08
Airlie Beach				
Reef World	Hardy Reef	Fantasea	YES	24 05 08
Pontoon	Knuckle Reef	Cruise Whitsundays	YES	05 04 08

Communication Programs

Reef Check Data

The most important part of collecting data is ensuring it is available and used for the sustainable management of our coral reefs. The development of a suitable database system has been more challenging than we initially anticipated. However, we are proud to announce we have completed a detailed specifications plan for the database and have begun implementation of phase 1 which will enable basic data entry by our volunteers and basic reporting. We aim for this part to be completed by early 2009 and will be grateful to receive your feedback on the system once it is in place. In the meantime you can download a Google Earth layer from our website and view our substrate data to date: <http://www.reefcheckaustralia.org/research/data/index.cfm>

We have also compiled a status report which I have attached with this newsletter.

Unfortunately the database system will be much more expensive than we initially anticipated. We have split the implementation of the project into 3 phases and urgently need to fundraise to be able to complete it.

Operator promotional material

We discussed the materials that would be most beneficial to dive operations to help provide information for the crew and tourists on Reef Check Australia projects. These materials include:

1. Brochures (now completed ready for distribution)
2. Information booklet (completion date end November 2008)
3. Operator Information Packs (completed and ready for distribution along with the Info Booklet)
4. DVD (Ready for distribution with information packs)
5. Poster (aim to develop during 2009)
6. PowerPoint presentation (aim to develop during 2009)

During 2007 we initiated the development of our Operator Info Packs, which include a back catalogue of newsletters, an overview on Reef Check, a promotional DVD and a draft version of a “flip chart”.

We would like to acquire your feedback on these materials and to discuss options for further promotional materials such as brochures, posters and PowerPoint presentations to assist with delivering our conservation messages and in promoting our EcoAction program materials. As a GBRMPA-supported program we will also be working in collaboration with GBRMPA to ensure our communication materials are complementary to those developed for GBRMPA partnership programs such as Eye on the Reef.

Volunteer Conduct

This year we developed an operator comments form on which your dive supervisor or skipper provided feedback on the volunteer conduct on board your boats. The aim of this is to be able to acquire immediate feedback from your crew and to better understand how we can improve our operations if this is needed. We received very positive feedback from crew this survey season with two operators requesting our team speak more to the crew about Reef Check. Due to the minimal financial resources that we currently run Reef Check on, we rely heavily on volunteer marine biology graduates to lead our surveys each year. These individuals have differing levels of experience with public speaking and team leadership. We aim that our operator packs will help to provide additional information on Reef Check and to provide our volunteer team leaders with some training on leadership, team work and public speaking to give them more confidence when discussing our activities with your crew and tourists.

Reef Check EcoAction

The aim of the Reef Check EcoAction program is to provide ecotourism opportunities for snorkellers and new scuba divers to become involved in world-standard coral reef monitoring activities and to bridge the gap between new and experienced snorkellers and scuba divers by providing a meaningful way for them to become involved with Reef

Check. The program activities are designed to be sold to tourists by dive operators and to provide an income for both Reef Check EcoAction facility operators as well as Reef Check.

The program consists of 3 activities:

1. Underwater Reef Guide
2. Discover Reef Check (2 hour introduction to Reef Check)
3. EcoDiver (International level, simplified version of Reef Check surveys)

A number of operators have been selling the Underwater Reef Guide. The feedback we have had to date is that the guides sell well when integrated with a guided snorkel or the underwater naturalist part of an Advanced course. Unfortunately we have had some issues with printing that have now been solved and we are taking the opportunity to make some small changes to the guide prior to re-launching it during 2009.

To launch the Discover Reef Check and EcoDiver courses we have put together a special dive policy and aim to implement this at tourist resorts and to engage young people who are learning to snorkel or dive. Unfortunately we don't have the human resources to initiate a launch of this program and are urgently fundraising to increase our capacity. Thank you for both your interest in these programs and your patience.

Fundraising

We also discussed the possibility of placing donations boxes or envelopes on some of the tourist boats. To give you an update we now have boxes and are still working on the envelopes. We need to establish specific company policies and administrative procedures that enable us to deploy this system and aim to be in a position to do so during 2009.

To date we have relied heavily on one-off grants, medium-term government contracts, volunteers and in-kind support from local businesses such as yours. In order to ensure we are sustainable in the long-term we need to increase the amount of donations we receive (private and corporate). We have recently been working with PriceWaterhouseCoopers on a business plan for Reef Check Australia. Along with our first Annual Report and Sponsorship Package we aim to find some corporate Reef Partners to help to sustain and expand our projects into the long-term. These documents will be finalised and distributed in early November 2008. We would welcome any assistance in the corporate fundraising process.

Volunteer Training

This year we have run 2 training courses in Port Douglas and 2 in Townsville and have 29 new volunteers. Thank you for everybody who has supported these programs.

Overview of other Reef Check Australia projects

Education ~ Reef IQ

Jo Roberts (UK) was our volunteer Education Officer for the first half of this year and has continued development of our school education program, Reef IQ. Jo is now a casual staff member working towards completing the first phase of Reef IQ with the aim of making available free, high-quality educational materials that can be downloaded from our website.

These materials will support users in educating young people on coral reefs in Australia (and ultimately world wide) and help them to motivate young people to become interested and involved in caring for their environment. There will also be a fun Kids section available on the website that will provide interactive games and educational activities on coral reefs for young people to be used at home or in the classroom. We are urgently fundraising with the aim of keeping Jo on staff through 2009.

Reef Check Townsville

During 2008 we surveyed 2 sites around Magnetic Island with the support of local dive operators.

Reef Check SE Queensland

During 2008 we have trained 6 volunteers who are currently monitoring 12 sites in the Gold Coast, Brisbane and Sunshine Coast inshore region.

Recreational fish monitoring

We have developed a coral trout monitoring protocol which can be done on snorkel by tourists or recreational fishers when they are visiting the reef. The next step is to develop an online data entry and reporting system for participants to use. We aim to launch this program in April 2009.

Fishing line clean-up

Our Palm Islands fishing clean-up project has come to an end with a total of **28800m²** of reef covered around Orpheus, Pelorus and Curacao Islands over 5 collection trips. Our final trip saw 140 pieces of line collected, but in total the volunteers collected **544** pieces of fishing line!

Reef Check Palm Island

We have completed a Reef Check Australia Training course for sponge farm divers on Palm Island. The team aim to conduct a number of surveys around the island.

GBR Project Partners:



Thank you for supporting Reef Check Australia

Why is coral reef monitoring important?

Dazzling, breathtaking *and* life-saving! Coral reefs feed, protect and inspire hundreds of millions of people around the world.

Coral reefs are the world's most biologically diverse marine environment and home to a quarter of all ocean dwelling fish. Hard corals are the architects of these amazing formations, and they take thousands of years to create structures that feed and shelter a huge variety of plants and animals.

In fact, experts have barely begun to identify and catalogue this stunning biodiversity.

Hidden within the coral reef's biodiversity, scientists are continually finding unique chemicals that can be developed into life saving drugs. If we lose our coral reefs, we also lose the chance of making these exciting discoveries.

Unfortunately our coral reefs are under serious threat from climate change, coastal development and overfishing. We need to look after these amazing places so that they continue to feed, protect and inspire us.

Reef Check volunteers monitor the health of our coral reefs and provide an 'early warning system' of any adverse changes. This information helps reef managers to identify coral reefs that are in trouble, before it's too late.

Find out how you can get involved and help to protect our reefs.

Get involved!

There are many ways you can dive in to help protect Australia's coral reefs.

At home - You can help protect the reef:

- use less fertilisers and household cleaning products that pollute the sea;
- eat seafood caught from a sustainable fishery;
- use less fossil fuels by cycling to school or work.

Kids - Get your school to join our **Reef IQ** program, read 'Reef Adventures' kid's book, and find out about the amazing world under the sea.



Snorkellers and divers - Take **EcoAction!** Use our 'Underwater Reef Guide' to identify animals you see on the reef, and log what you find in our online database. Visit our website to find our **EcoAction** tourism outlets.

Experienced divers - Take your reef experience to a new level by joining your local Reef Check team. Becoming a **Reef Check volunteer** is a fun way to help conserve your local reef, meet new friends, and be part of the global Reef Check network.

Be part of our scene - Join our membership for free. You'll receive quarterly newsletter updates and notifications of key activities.



See our website for more information:
www.reefcheckaustralia.org

Cover photo: Justin Gilligan
Design by Imaginocean Productions



Healthy reefs help you



www.reefcheckaustralia.org



Reef Check Australia is monitoring reef health somewhere near you, and there's a few ways you can help us!

What is Reef Check?

Reef Check Australia is part of an international network of volunteers that monitor the health of coral reefs in over 90 countries.

Reef Check Australia was set up in 2001 by a passionate group of Australians dedicated to saving our coral reefs. We collaborate with government and coral reef managers to strengthen their capacity to protect the environment. Our programs promote community education, provide research information to scientists and managers and result in coral reef conservation.

Because our work is done almost entirely by volunteers, your support goes a long way to help us raise awareness and protect coral reefs that are currently not monitored.

Our amazing achievements have only been possible through the support and goodwill of many businesses and community members like you.

The Reef needs YOU!

Photo: John Rumney

Education

You can get involved at any level. At school or at home you can discover what the reef can teach you about sustainable living and learn how to monitor reef health. You could get active by joining Reef Check's EcoAction program to help us find out what lives on your local coral reef. And if you really want to dive in, join our Reef Check Monitoring Team and learn how to collect important information about coral reef health from sites all around Australia.

Research

The survey information our volunteers collect each year tells us a story about how our coral reefs are changing through time. Where changes do occur, Reef Check acts as an 'early warning system' for coral reef managers.

Conservation

Our projects are about stimulating local action to protect the remaining pristine reefs, and rehabilitate damaged reefs worldwide.

This brochure was
sponsored by Envirofund





Reef Check Australia December 2008

Photo Competition Winners Announced!

Congratulations to Steve Rosenberg, the Overall Winner of the Reef Check Australia and Project Aware Photography Competition of 2008! Steve was selected as the Overall Winner based on his compelling and highly original photograph entitled 'Screamer' of a loggerhead turtle. Congratulations also go to Chris Hamilton and Sascha Unger, both category winners and runners up overall. [Click here to see all the winners and runners up.](#)

A selection of winning images from the Photography Competition.



*Screamer by
Steve Rosenberg*



*Found You
by Chris
Hamilton*



*Gentle Giant by
Sascha Unger*



*Eyeconic by
Matt Curnock*



*Fly by
Gary
Brennand*

Christmas Gift Ideas

Stuck for Christmas Ideas? Why not buy your friends and family Reef Check Australia gifts that will help protect coral reefs. You can either purchase a gift donation for your intended recipient or buy limited prints of the amazing Photography Competition Winners (see above) with all profits going to Reef Check Australia. These beautiful prints look fantastic framed. [Check out our website for more information.](#)



The **ICRI International Year of the Reef 2008** is a worldwide campaign to motivate people to take action to save our coral reefs.

Your tax-deductible donation will help us to protect Australia's coral reefs.



First Annual Report

We have recently published our first *Annual Report* showcasing all our impressive achievements over the last few years. To obtain a copy of the report [please click here](#).

Corporate Sponsorship Package

In a bid to find corporate partners Reef Check Australia has launched a Corporate Sponsorships Package. We have set the following fundraising aims for each of our projects.

To find out the many benefits of partnering with Reef Check Australia or find out more details please view the new [Sponsorship Package](#) or contact us at manager@reefcheckaustralia.org

Project	Cost
Development of an Enterprise Information System database	\$110,000
Continuation of the Great Barrier Reef Monitoring Project - northern reefs, 30-40 dive sites	\$120,000 p.a.
Expansion of the Great Barrier Reef Project – southern reefs, 10-20 dive sites	\$120,000 p.a.
Establishment of a Coral Trout Monitoring Program	\$120,000 p.a.
Further development of the new Indigenous Community Engagement Project	\$160,000 p.a.
Continuation of the new South East Queensland Reef Monitoring Program	\$200,000 p.a.
Continuation and expansion of the Inshore Monitoring Program	\$120,000 p.a.
Finalise and launch the Reef IQ Education Program nationally	\$220,000 p.a.
Continue development of and launch Reef Check's EcoAction Program	\$110,000 p.a.

First Business Plan

To support our corporate fundraising plans we have developed our first Business Plan in partnership with PriceWaterHouse Coopers and associates who provided significant in-kind support. Thank you to those people who dedicated their time towards this project.

Palm Island Kids Workshop

Reef Check Australia's Education Officer, Jo Roberts, conducted a series of workshops at Bwgcolman School on Palm Island with great success. The Year 9-10 pupils were introduced to coral reef monitoring and sustainable practices that can help protect coral reefs. We hope to run more workshops over there in the future including in-water activities with kids monitoring local reefs around the Palm Islands.

3 New Trainers

Three scuba instructors have been certified as our new Reef Check Australia Trainers. Congratulations to Mark Miller, David Glover and Carol-Ann Edwards who undertook the course in Port Douglas under the careful supervision of Pete Faulkner.



South East QLD

The SEQ team have completed 4 of their 12 surveys in the Gold Coast and at Flinders Reef during late November. The aim is to complete these surveys over the Christmas period and New Year.



Training Courses – Join our coral reef surveyor team

Townsville: Full time: 19th January to 1st February 09 (\$495 or \$395 students). **Full**

Port Douglas: Part time fish and video course 23rd January to 1st February 09. **3 spaces**

Cairns: Part time: March (dates TBA) (\$495 or \$395 students). **5 spaces**

Download the training course details from www.reefcheckaustralia.org/training or register your interest by emailing support@reefcheckaustralia.org.

Thank you to all our volunteers, sponsors & supporters!

We are unable to list all our supporters here for more information please see our website

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