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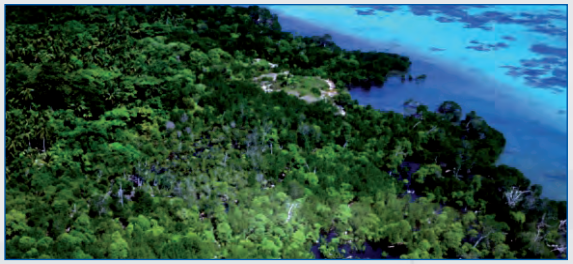
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Behaviour guidelines

for divers and snorkelling tourists

It's not too late!

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The fascination of the ocean - hardly anyone is immune to it.

And so every year millions of people visit the coral reefs of our earth to experience the vast biodiversity under water first hand. This is all too understandable but unfortunately the most important thing is often overlooked:

The protection of the coral reefs which we admire so much.

Coral reefs are extremely fragile ecosystems and already parts of them are irretrievably destroyed.
Global warming, pollution, exploitation of Natural resources, but also strongly expanding Tourism in and at the ocean holds responsible for all that.

Anyhow... it is quite simple for anyone to make his own small contribution to the protection of coral reefs. How simple it is, is what we want to show with our behaviour guidelines for divers and snorkelling tourists. Moreover, you can find in this flyer valuable information and interesting facts to know of the builders our oceans - the corals.

Behaviour guidelines for divers and snorkelling tourists

- Just Look, Don't Touch!
The touch of marine life can be dangerous for both sides, and is always stressful for the animals. In particular corals should not be touched. The polyps are very sensitive and the coral skeleton is very fragile.



...that coral reefs are mainly made up of dead coral material and that coral organisms themselves would be related to plants?
Most corals produce a hard lime skeleton (a specific form of calcium carbonate called aragonite) continuously deposited by innumerable small polyps. These coral polyps characteristically harbor in their tissue thousands of small unicellular algae called zooxanthellae. These algae provide their host corals with energy derived from photosynthesis. The coral in return supplies its symbionts with important plant nutrients which are taken up from the water column. Beside these metabolic interactions zooxanthellae are due to the basic brownish pigmentation of symbiotic corals besides other colors like bluish, greenish or reddish which are related to specific protein pigments derived from the corals themselves.

- Do not stir up sand! Coral polyps need very long to be freed from impurities and can not feed at this time.

- Buoyancy! Be careful of neutral buoyancy, with that you do not sink suddenly and it does not come to touches. If it still happens you must behave calmly and do not paddle with the fins in order to avoid major damage.



...that corals need centuries to repair damage which occurred in a single small moment? It does not make any difference whether it was wrecked by unwary divers, ships that rammed the reef or threw their anchor in the top of the reef.



...that coral can become very old and big but so much slower is their growth? There are corals of two meters, but they need decades for this size. The average growth of a coral is only 10 cm per year - that is less than 1 cm per month.

- Take a break only freely floating in the water!
If there is no other way, because you are exhausted or your equipment must be set up:
Search for a free place in the sand, but move cautiously. Assumed empty sand beds hide some biting surprises!

- On the beach: Swim as soon as possible!
Also near the beach in shallow water are many sensitive organisms.

- Never feed!
Feeding damages the social structure of the animals.

- Do not light up animals directly!
Remember that many fishes rest in the night. If they are chased from their hidings by direct light, they could not find their way back later (without light) and are defenceless against predators and other dangers.

- Collect no starfish, mussels, crabs or coral sticks!
The harm that you cause in the reef is irreversible. The animals will die and lose their colour. The export is prohibited. Please forgo the purchase of such souvenirs, because you would support the depletion.

For more information::

www.marubis.de